

Minnesota Musicians of the Cultured Generation

Willard Patton
Friend of Music and Musicians

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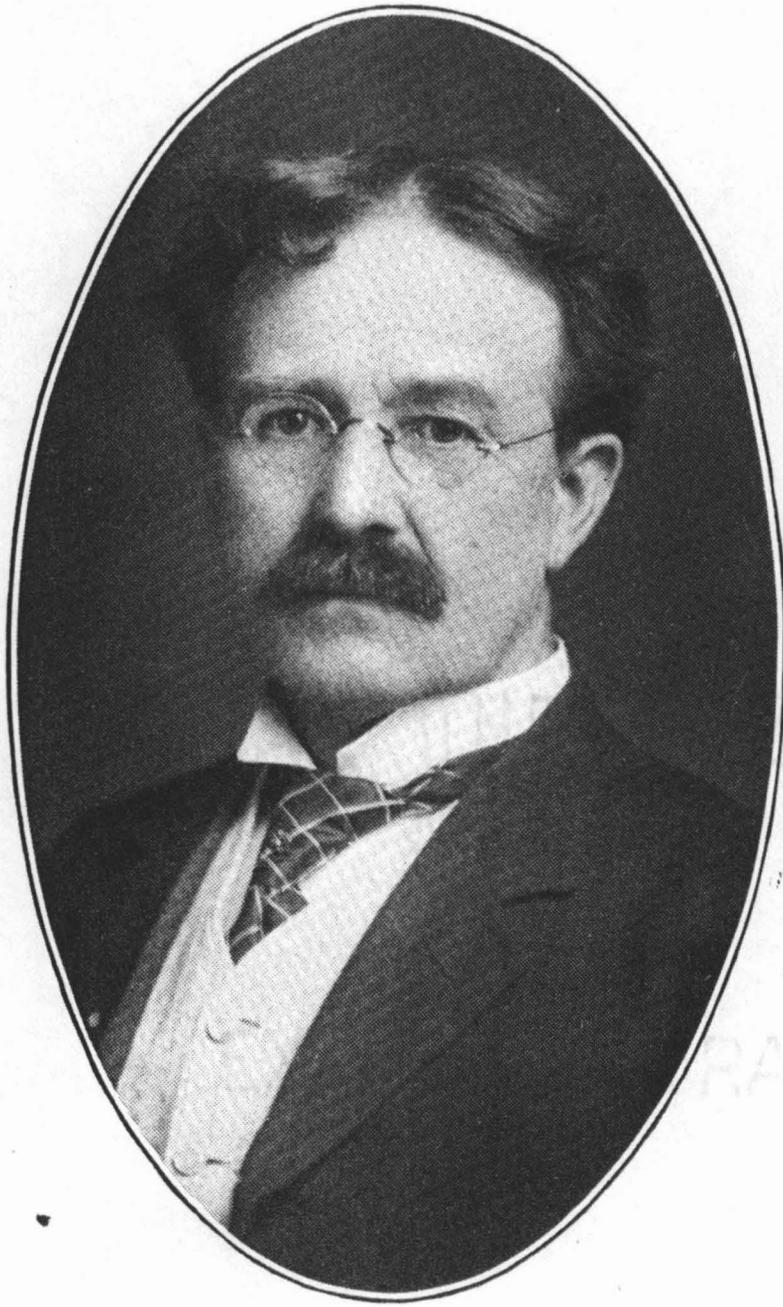
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Willard Patton



Willard Patton
Courtesy of the Evergreen Club



Willard Patton
Courtesy of The Minnesota Historical Society

Willard Patton

Friend of Music and Musicians

I. Early Life

Willard Patton [sometimes spelled Patten] was born in Milford, Maine, 26 May 1853. His father Daniel Hall Patton, a building contractor, was a good amateur musician, a violinist, choir master, and vocalist of considerable talent.¹ His mother was Elizabeth Jones, of Welsh descent, born in Canada.

Willard developed a weakness of the lungs at age sixteen and took up calisthenics and voice culture to counteract this trouble. He left high school before completing the courses and took private lessons in English literature, music notation, theory, thoroughbass and musical analysis. Patton, to an extent self-taught, studied for short periods with F. S. Davenport, J. Whitney, W. W. Davis, A. Errani in Maine and Carl Zerrahn of the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston and with Dudley Buck in New York.² Patton organized the Handel Association in Bangor in 1873³ and from 1877 to 1882, he sang tenor in concerts and oratorios in cities and conducted "musical conventions" in Maine. In Bangor, Patton married in 1875 Miss Alesta Virginia Hebbard. They had one daughter, Ruth Elizabeth, who died relatively young in 1901.

II. In Minneapolis

After a concert tour of the central states and after refusing an offer from Dr. Eben Tourgée of the New England Conservatory, Patton came to Minneapolis in 1883 where he taught voice and harmony.

Patton had much of the fervor of the earlier age to develop singing abilities of the populace to the utmost.

The popular singing-schools, organized by Mr. Willard Patton, though modest in aim and narrow in scope, are a form of music school in the strictest sense. The work last year was carried on in twelve or thirteen different schools, meeting in as many churches, scattered over the four quarters of the city.

These class lessons of the first year were not singing lessons in the sense of vocal instruction. While not ignoring the subjects of the voice, tone, tone production and the

regular singing of songs and rounds, they had for their main purpose the teaching of musical notation and drill—much drill in the practice of sight-singing.

This revival in modified form of the singing-school of our New England fathers is already making considerable headway throughout the land. New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Springfield have choruses drawn from such schools that are now giving standard oratorios. The aim of this teaching is not only to form a great choral club, but ultimately to teach music reading; and, through the singing of selected songs, to foster a taste for music in its simpler forms to be taken into the daily home life.

No musical attainment is required, or examination made upon entering these classes. There is only a minimum age of sixteen years and a fee amounting to ten cents per lesson.

Music and the musical interest of today owe a great deal to the singing-school of bygone years. While there are now other channels carrying and spreading the art, there still may be good, valuable foundation work accomplished by this kind of teaching which adds to the total of each year's increasing musical growth.⁴

He soon was held in high esteem by musicians and public of Minneapolis.

Although coming here from the East only four years ago Mr. Willard Patten occupies a high place in the regard of the best Minneapolis audiences as an able vocalist. He has a well trained tenor voice of good quality and knows how to handle it in an artistic manner. Mr. Patten is a native of Maine and was a resident of Bangor previous to moving West. Among several teachers under whom he studied W. W. Davis of London, and James Whitney, of Boston are the most prominent and they have left well defined traces of their principles in Mr. Patten's present style. The demand for vocalists and teachers in a rapidly growing city found Mr. Patten quite equal to the emergency and since his residence here he has frequently appeared in concert and has done not a little teaching. For several years he was the tenor in the St. Mark's Episcopal choir only resigning last winter to accept the directorship of the music of the First Baptist Church where the duty of organizing an excellent chorus choir was successfully accomplished. In the field of composition, Mr. Patten has done considerable work, principally in the way of sacred music which has appeared from time to time in the St. Mark's Collection. He also wrote the "Exposition March" played at the opening of the Industrial Exposition last summer.⁵

In the cities, he seems to have been into almost every activity, one of the most respected leaders of the musical community, but he seldom settled down to one teaching, performance, or conducting task for very long because he put composition ahead of all other things. He taught voice culture at Hamline University from 1886 through 1889.⁶ Most of his church work was with Wesley Methodist but he served St. Marks and First Baptist as well.

In 1890 a group of young men interested in music organized for their own social enjoyment, a society and called it "The Filharmonix." In 1891 a male chorus and mandolin club were added and programs by invitation were given."⁷ Patton was the first of several directors of this chorus. Patton conducted three concerts for the club each year from 1898 through 1901 when he resigned to devote time to composition.⁸ It soon became a choral society of mixed voices called "The Philharmonic Club," the group out of which the Minneapolis Symphony grew in 1903.

III. Patton the Composer

In the season of 1889-1890, Patton joined with Gustavus Johnson, the other important composer of the cities, to present a series of concerts that marked the beginning of what can be called The First School of Minnesota Composers. Patton led off in mid-October with a comic opera, *La Fianza*, presented at the Minneapolis Grand Opera House. The libretto was by Bert W. Ball, the orchestration by J. Bodewaldt Lamp, leader of the Grand Opera House orchestra. It seemed quite up-to-date: the second act featured a cigar store with a telephone exchange which was still a novelty. It had a run of four performances.



Vignettes for *La Fianza*, *Minneapolis Tribune*, 13 October 1889

In the winter, Gustavus Johnson, presented a one-man show, a concert completely devoted to his own compositions, piano and vocal works and a string trio. Rounding out the season in April,⁹ the Danz Orchestra gave a concert, "Music by Home Composers," which presented further compositions by Patton and Johnson with the addition of a few pieces by Gurney, Shuey and Baldamos.

Such stirrings of American creativity were sweeping not only the Gateway to the Great Northwest but the nation as well. New York founded a Manuscript Club in 1889. Minnesota followed quickly with one in 1893, three years before Chicago organized its club. Beyond the realm of music, the decade of the 1890s witnessed the birth of many items of Americanization—the Pledge of Allegiance, Flag Day, the Star Spangled Banner as national anthem, plus several patriotic associations: the Colonial Dames of America, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the U.S. Daughters of 1812, and the Society of Mayflower Descendants.¹⁰ Why should not music also take its place as a national icon? Many of those musicians who studied "abroad" had returned not as newly-made Europeans but as missionaries—their own word—who wanted to build an American musical culture as worthy as that of the old world but expressive of the ideals of the new. The country, coming of age by 1893, was determined to show the world the vigor of America. Its showcase was to be the World Columbian Exposition on Chicago's lakefront. For this great festival, Johnson composed a Piano Concerto on Swedish Airs; however, as it turned out, the Chicago fair had such a crowded schedule that his concerto had to wait some years for its premiere. Patton, too, contributed to this national movement of pride several years later when he composed two musical epics, *The Star of the Empire* and *Footstones of a Nation*.

At this auspicious moment when the tides of Americanism were running high, Minnesota chose to inaugurate its Manuscript Club with a program by those composers who would later be MMTA members.¹¹

| Program of the Minnesota Manuscript Club Studio Hall, Minneapolis, 9 November 1893 | |
|---|----------------------|
| Quartet "Dream Song" from "Prince and Paradise" by Alice I. Norcross | Clarence A. Marshall |
| Male Quartet R. D. Finel, O. J. DeSale, C. E. Fisher, W. H. Eichman | |
| Song for High Soprano "Awake" (Barry Cornwall) | Willard Patton |
| Miss Mattie Redlon | |
| Sonata for Violin and Piano | Gustavus Johnson |
| Claude Madden and Mr. Johnson | |
| Bass aria from "Triumph of Love" | Samuel A. Baldwin |

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Charles E. Fisher | |
| Songs: | Willam Mentor Crosse |
| "Sweet and Low" (Tennyson) | |
| and other Tennyson songs | |
| "Unless" | Miss Fannie McLeod |
| Songs: | Clarence A. Marshall |
| "Love for Thee" | |
| "Beware" (Longfellow) | Miss Esther Butler |
| Quartets for Ladies Voices | Willard Patton |
| "When Evening's Twilight" | |
| "The Maiden's Rose" | Sappho Ladies' Quartet |
| Song for Soprano | Gustavus Johnson |
| "Two Red Roses" | |
| (Originally composed for Miss Maud Ulmer) | Miss McKay |
| Part Song—Selected | Samuel A. Baldwin |
| | Chorus of Mixed Voices |

Following this came a veritable flood of local programs sponsored by the Schubert Club of St. Paul and the Thursday Musicale of Minneapolis.¹²

In the midst of this encouraging public attention, Patton set to work on a large-scale oratorio, *Isaiah*, given "at the Metropolitan Opera House, Minneapolis, 17 January 1897, with a chorus of 225, the Danz orchestra and competent soloists." This work was destined to have a career.

It proved a great and impressive success and has throughout the years established itself as one of the finest and most popular of American oratorios. In the following year it was given at the great exposition in Omaha with a Minneapolis chorus of 250 taken down there by special train. A wonderful performance was given with the Theodore Thomas festival orchestra for the instrumental support. Five editions of the work have been sold out and performances of it have been given in more than 60 cities.¹³

It was in 1897 that the composer produced his oratorio masterpiece, "Isaiah" which was presented by him at the Metropolitan opera house, Jan. 17, 1897, with a chorus of 225, the Danz orchestra and competent soloists. It proved a great and impressive success and has throughout the years established itself as one of the finest and most popular of American oratorios. In the following year it was given at the great exposition in Omaha with a Minneapolis chorus of 250 taken down there by special train. A wonderful performance was given with the Theodore Thomas festival orchestra for the instrumental support. Five editions of the work have been sold out and performances of it have been given in more than 60 cities. A beautiful silver, jubilee performance of "Isaiah" was given at the auditorium of Central high school Friday, May 21, 1920 with a chorus of 350 young

people and orchestra and local soloists under the baton of the composer and very nearly on the spot identical with the place where Mr. Patton conceived its music 25 years before in a suburban summer garden of his.¹⁴

W. S. B. Mathews came from Chicago to review the concert and published a full-scale critique in his magazine *Music*. He discussed each of the movements and printed pictures of Patton and the soloists. He did not hesitate to point out several deficiencies. Yet he concluded that Patton "has performed a serious undertaking and has succeeded remarkably well for a first effort or for an effort anywhere near the first in larger forms. Many of the crudities of the work can be easily removed and other passages put in their place. "Isaiah" deserves to go upon the list of honorable undertaking by American composers, the list of which is growing now at a rapid rate.¹⁵ Evidently Patton took this criticism seriously because a revised edition was offered some years later.

W. S. B. Mathews of Chicago described his talent in this manner:

Mr. Patton is one of those curious products of Maine which seem to the stranger to set a defiance the laws of heredity and environment. Born in a cold and rather repressed country, his temperament is emotional, sensitive, and very musical. To learn harmony and counterpoint in the usual manner he has found it in vain to attempt. Given exercises to write, his lack of interest and his total unhandiness is his own despair no less than that of the teacher. But given a text to set to music, and his instincts at once direct him to the choice of harmonies which are strong, melodies which sing, and a general handling of the music in the closest degree illustrative of the spirit of the poetry. A musician born, not made.¹⁶

This appraisal seems to accord with the kind of melody that Patton used. His settings abound in phrases that suit perfectly the rhythm of the words but which most often fail to have the kind of organized melody that makes them easily memorable for listeners who would take them to their hearts. There was at this time a great deal of reliance on the standards of the German conservatories where many Americans studied¹⁷ and on the German-influenced textbooks from which many learned. Many of the composers of this period, produced works that have yet to capture today's audience. Still in a casual review of the compositions of the First Minnesota School of Composers one finds occasional works that could be revived.

“Red Cross Presentation”

.. OF ..

Willard Patten's Oratorio

ISAIAH

.. AT ..

Exposition Auditorium,

Monday Evening, June 27, 1898.

Solo Artists:

Mrs. GENEVIEVE CLARK WILSON, Soprano.

Mrs. KATHARINE FISKE, Contralto.

Mr. FREDERICK CARBERRY, Tenor.

Mr. CHARLES W. CLARK, Basso.

Basso in Quartette: Mr. CHAUNCEY E. FISHER.

Full Chorus.

Danz' Orchestra.

Harp Score by Mr. W. S. Marshall at the Piano.

WILLARD PATTEN, Director.

Program of *Isaiah* presented just before the Omaha Exposition
Courtesy, Special Collections, Minneapolis Public Library

AMERICAN BATTLE HYMN.

Dedicated to the Red Cross.

Words by MARGARET LANDOR.

Music by WILLARD PATTEN.

1. The flag un - furl, gird on the sword; Tho' death should frown we
 2. Shall we stand by in wealth and ease, While bro - thers starve so
 3. Too long! O God, with shame we own Our du - ty 'tis the
 4. Thou King of Love, and Prince of Peace; Who hold - est na - tions

fal - - ter not. Th' op - pres - sor's hand is stained with blood; With
 near - our shore? Can we en - joy the fruits of peace, When
 weak to aid. And while we strike the ty - - rant down, We'll
 in Thy hand; Bid war's mad strife and cla - - mor cease: Let

hun - ger's cry the air is fraught. We'll free the land from
 rav' - nous war is scourg - ing sore. The help - less ones, whose
 bind the wounds stern war has made. Where - e'er is pain, in
 love hold sway in ev - - 'ry land. And when this cross we

dark de - spair, And plant the flag of Free - dom there.
 pit - ous cries Have long as - cend - ed to the skies?
 peace or war, Be "Love" our watch - word ev - - er more.
 bear on high In Free - dom's cause, shall Ha - - tred die.

Copyright, 1898, by Willard Patten.

Published by METROPOLITAN MUSIC CO., Formerly Minneapolis House of W. J. DYER & BRO.,
 509 3/4 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

Mathews was impressed by the number of large-scale works produced by the Minnesotans. Most composers around the nation—with the exception of musicians of Boston and New York—were content to produce small songs and piano pieces. Here was something greater. Patton composed a successful oratorio, a genre that was considered to be for the musician “the exact analogy of what the Cathedral is to the Architect—the highest Art-form to the construction of which he can aspire.”¹⁸ Soon another one of these cathedrals of music was premiered. In April of 1906, J. Victor Bergquist imported soloists from the East to join his chorus of 250 voices and the Minneapolis Symphony in a grand performance of his *Golgotha*, a work conceived after his attendance at the Passion Play during his student days in Europe. Like Patton’s, it was performed in a number of cities but never reached the popularity of Patton’s work.

IV. Patton the Teacher

The cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul—and the state of Minnesota too—had grand aspirations. The lumbering and flour industries gave everyone the impression that great cities, the equivalent of New York, Boston, Philadelphia or Chicago could grow up here. Business men, full of optimism, were laying plans for the Great Exposition which opened in 1885.

Among the ideas for civic improvement were those for proper musical facilities. In 1884, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet who had been teaching music ever since their arrival in 1853, opened in St. Paul the St. Agatha’s Conservatory, an enterprise that was to flourish and expand from its humble beginnings into a full-fledged conservatory.¹⁹ In the following year, 1885, Charles Henry Morse, after a nationwide search for the most promising spot, set up in Minneapolis the Northwestern Conservatory of Music, an institution which was modelled on the noted New England Conservatory of Music.²⁰ This was to be shortly followed by institutions formed by other musicians who aspired to found full-fledged conservatories.²¹

Patton, at his arrival in the cities in 1883, found that Minneapolis and St. Paul had some music teachers of fine training and musical ability but at the same time there were many who were not equal to good and lasting work. He realized that, since there were many private teachers, an association with standards and programs for advancement would be of great benefit.

There existed a national organization, the Music Teachers National Association, MTNA, that could serve to implement these ideals. In 1883, Minnesota had sent its first representative, William H. Leib, a fine tenor, to the national convention of MTNA. In turn, Leib, and later others, would be

appointed to the post of Vice-President for Minnesota. This person's duties would be to bring national ideas to the state and to organize the state itself.

In keeping with this possibility, the Superintendent of Music in the Public Schools of Minneapolis, O. E. McFadon, invited Minnesota music teachers to meet in St. Paul at Ford's Music Hall on Wednesday, 19 October 1887. Because the meeting coincided with a concert in Minneapolis, attendance was slim. Despite this difficulty, the group elected state officers and vice-presidents for a few counties of Minnesota. Willard Patton dean of Minnesota composers and prime mover in the establishment of MMTA, became president of the fledgling association which would "further the spirit of good fellowship among the teachers of the *divine art*."²²

This group met again in Dyer Music Hall, Minneapolis, 30 October 1887. After performances by ten of their members, they adopted a constitution. Thirty members were enrolled. Patton considered that a good start. About the same number had launched the Ohio and Indiana Music Teachers Associations.²³

Though the moment seemed propitious, the state organization, MMTA, found it difficult to keep interest alive. Two years after its inception, several Minnesota members formed the opinion that if a national meeting were held in Minnesota, it would boost the faltering state organization. Consequently in Philadelphia in 1889, the Vice-President for Minnesota, Walter Petzet,²⁴ made the plea and received approval for a Minneapolis national convention with the following state officers making local arrangements.²⁵

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| President | Willard Patton | Minneapolis |
| Secretary | William A. Wheaton | St. Paul |
| Executive Committee | Carl V. Lachmund | Minneapolis |
| | S. A. Baldwin | St. Paul |
| | Gustavus Johnson | Minneapolis |

As plans for the convention began to take shape and the Minnesotans began to solicit attendance, another more prestigious event took precedence: the Tenth Republican National Convention in Minneapolis, the first to be held west of Chicago. Faced with this crush of events—some 100,000 to 125,000 visitors were expected—and with the persistent difficulty of recruiting members, MMTA cancelled its plans for a 1892 convention in Minneapolis and the national organization moved it with some difficulty to Cleveland.²⁶

After this setback, the Minnesota association became quiescent for the next nine years. Within this period, certain members continued to attend national meetings where they presented the high ideals of the pioneer Minnesotans. It was not until 1901 that the Minnesota Music Teachers Association, MMTA,

was firmly established, an organization that has now existed for over a century.²⁷

At the Fourth Annual Convention of MMTA, Patton asked his colleagues to inaugurate a series of examinations for teachers of the association. A number of members were aware of the British associations of musicians who already had qualifying examinations for its members. A few of the Minnesotans were actually members of these English groups. The American Guild of Organists, founded in 1896, was based on the examination principles of the British. With these examples before it, MMTA began to set up its own program which was developed between 1909 and 1912 when at the latter date

When Patton became president of MMTA in 1910, he pushed hard for the accrediting of the members through examination. He believed that "those that do not enrich their minds through study will surely become stale as teachers, while those pursuing the opposite course will not only remain fresh and resourceful, but will grow and develop." "After three years of searching debate on this delicate and vital subject which uncovered hidden talent and unhorsed cavorting mediocrity"²⁸ MMTA started a plan for a series of three levels of examinations, the first such plan in the MTNA.

V. Patton and the Evergreen Club

The Evergreen Club of Minneapolis, organized in 1916 and still active, elects as members men who have contributed to musical life of the cities for a period of twenty years or more. Its purpose is friendship and recognition. Since 1969, it has awarded scholarships to talented students, both male and female.

It was instituted on April Fool's Day, 1916, when William Mentor Crosse, a gifted pianist, invited eight Minneapolis musicians to dinner at Schiek's Restaurant and failed to appear until the dessert course. Crosse then proposed an Evergreen Club "based on the theory that a man is not old until he admits it." The charter members, Alfred M. Shuey, Gustavus Johnson, Willard B. Heath, Frank H. Forbes, Willard Patton, Henry S. Woodruff, Harlow Gale, and Heinrich Hoevel, met with Crosse at the Elks Club 18 November 1916 to formally organize the club. They decided that the club should remain informal in nature and should include not just active musicians but critics, patrons, music dealers, etc. In the course of time, all of the conductors of the Minneapolis Symphony [Minnesota Orchestra] have been elected as honorary members.

The ideals of an evergreen memory and the power of friendship fired Patton who expressed these thoughts many times. Upon his arrival in Minneapolis, Patton had met Robert Owen Foster who had— along with Otto Keidel—been teaching pianists and who ran the principal music store of the city. The two men formed a fast friendship, a personal regard that grew even more close because both practiced the art of poetry.

Hearts Evergreen

We are here again
Old boys, young men,
To renew the friendship of years
And the lay we chime
Is a halting rhyme
Shot through with laughter and tears.
Tho' our heads grow bare
With the Autumn air,
Or white with the Wintry snow,
Our hearts evergreen
With Summer's bright sheen
Still keep time to the long ago.

Let the maid and swain
In Light refrain
Sing of love that never will end,
There's a joy as pure
That shall long endure
Deep in the heart of a friend.
So here's to each soul
Striving on to its goal,
And here's to each heart and hand,
May we steadfast abide
Till we cross the dark tide
To the shores of that heavenly land.

—Willard Patten (from the Old Logbook of the Evergreen Club)

Queen of Wabunheim

Where the brightest flowers blossom,
And the birds' sweet voices chime
With the waves soft rhythmic singing,
Dwells the Queen of Wabunheim.

She is queen of all who know her,
And she rules with magic sway
By the beauty of her presence
And her gentle, winning way.

May her reign be true and noble,
Filling hearts with thoughts sublime;
May her name be long remembered,
Mary, Queen of Wabunheim.

by Robert Owen Foster (from the set of songs *Wabunheim Blossoms*
set to music by Willard Patton)²⁹

Patton became the gentle force that served the club well. He wrote the dedication of the Old Log Book of the club.

Dedication

Written by Willard Patton

Banded together by ties of friendship, by a common interest in the welfare of our beloved home city, by a loyalty to the art which we professionally serve or by love of this art which we individually support;

We, whose names appear in this LOG BOOK OF THE EVERGREEN CLUB, do humbly, but with a spirit of joy and thankfulness record our devotion to the cause of Music.

There are those amongst us, who have given many of the best years of their lives; there are others who have sacrificed monetary gains; but there are none who would turn back the pages of the ledger of life and erase one entry given to music; for we have received in return ten fold to bless and cheer us and to make life worth the living.

Whatever we individually, have been privileged to contribute in the advancement of musical life and opportunity, has been with the purpose of present benefit to others, as well as ourselves; with the hope of elevating the aims and ambitions of all sharing in that life, and with the desire in our hearts that our endeavors would produce permanent

results. We have endeavored to lay a good foundation and create in the hearts of those who were to follow, better equipped to climb the heights, an acknowledgement that our labours were faithfully spent.

Because of its distance from the living influence of Arts and Letters, our now great and cultured city was for years dependent upon its own meager resources for musical enrichment. Fortunately there were numbered among its citizens a few devoted musicians, pioneers in an unbroken field, who made it a paramount interest of their lives to cultivate and develop such natural talent as was then found here. Not alone by small orchestras and occasional concerts or singing societies, but also by a most intensive and exhaustive campaign of choir singing and repertoire, stimulated by friendly rivalry brought the general public gradually to crave the enjoyment of music of a higher quality and performers of distinction. Thus the progress of Art, from small beginnings has been steady. It has kept apace with, if not actually out-distanced the city's growth in other lines of greatness until now-Minneapolis proudly stands among the foremost, where Music hold high place.

We have been "on the firing line," we have achieved results; we have tried to do what our abilities and our opportunities enable us to accomplish and we have tried to do it well. A path has been blazed and a way made easier to follow, for those who may more successfully "carry on" and still we are most grateful for the privilege of having some small share in the building of this "city of tone" and hope that the future will remember us kindly.

We have established the custom of meeting around the table on the last Saturday of November, of every year. A fraternal gathering of kindred spirits for mutual enjoyment. Music and reminiscence will our minds. We live again the treasured experiences of the past. Though we of the present membership may pass along, we trust the custom will be continued and that others will come in and take the places—which may in time become vacant. Let the Evergreen Club long endure. Let it always remain as great a joy to those who later come into its membership, as it will always remain a joy to us, for it is the young hand of Spring touching the Autumn of Life.

In 1924, when Patton fell sick, the club took action.

Subsequent to the meeting word was received of the serious illness of Willard Patton, and the apparent necessity of some financial aid. A meeting was quickly called of the Club and a testimonial concert arranged at the Auditorium through the kindness of E. L. Carpenter, who donated on behalf of the symphony, the use of the Hall. Nearly \$1500 was raised in this artistically successful concert, the feature being a mixed chorus under the leadership of Mr. Sidney Morse which rendered some of Mr. Patton's compositions.

Patton died in Minneapolis Friday 14 December 1924. On the Sunday following, his compositions were featured in the church services of St. Marks Episcopal,

Westminster Presbyterian, Hennepin Avenue Methodist, and Plymouth Congregational, the largest churches of the city.

Minneapolis Morning Tribune, 18 December 1924. Notice on the Funeral of Willard Patton [Patten], (Milford, Maine, 26 May 1853-Minneapolis, Minnesota, 14 December 1924), a principal founder of the Manuscript Club of Minnesota Composers (1893), composer of many works including the widely-performed oratorio, *Isaiah*, original founder of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association (1887) and its president 1909-1910. The following was read by Robert Foster.

“When I am gone, I want you to read this at my funeral. It shall be my last message to my friends.”

With this request Willard Patton for many years a leader among Minneapolis musicians, one day about a year ago handed a folded sheet of paper to his friend, Robert O. Foster.

Monday afternoon at Mr. Patton’s funeral in Lakewood chapel, Mr. Foster arose and slowly read what Mr. Patton had written. The message, in the form of a prose poem follows:

The years weighed heavily upon him. He sat in the twilight, with bowed head and drooping hands. One by one his dreams had faded. Little by little the things for which he had planned and toiled had slipped from his grasp. And now a great loneliness was upon him.

Then, as the darkness grew, there appeared before him a shining form. Looking up, he asked wearily, ‘Who art thou?’ And the visitor replied, ‘I am a messenger sent to bring thee that which thou shalt choose from these five gifts.’

‘I offer thee Wealth, Power, Fame, Love or Friendship. Which wilt thou have?’

Long he pondered while the messenger waited in silence. Finally he spoke softly as to himself:

Wealth? It is more often a curse than a blessing, always a burden, never in itself a joy. I will not ask for Wealth.

Power? It breeds tyranny, selfishness, and greed. It may rule through fear, but it is a destroyer of peace. I will have none of it.

Fame? It is but a bubble, glittering for a day or a year, a temporary sun, about which clouds of envy or malice are ever rolling. It may possibly become a crown for the dead, but it is more often a thorn for the living. I do not desire Fame.

Love? It is sweet, it is truly divine. But, alas, we are not divine, and by our own impurity we may pollute it. And when we have thus marred its perfection it becomes a disappointing, weak and wayward thing, oft turning to hate. I fear it.

Friendship? Ah! that may be human, but it is kind, generous and forgiving. It will comfort and inspire. It will lend a hand or cheer a faltering heart. Yes, give me, O wonderful messenger, thy noblest gift. Give me Friendship.

The messenger smiled as he replied:

'Thou hast indeed chosen wisely. Wealth would have hardened thee; Power corrupted thee; Fame embittered thee, and Love disappointed thee. Friendship shall gladden thy heart and uphold thy hand; and thou shalt in turn bestow its blessings upon others at their need.'

Then the messenger vanished. But the light he had brought was shining upon the man's upturned face.

As Mr. Foster finished, the Evergreen club, composed of pioneer Minneapolis musicians, of which Mr. Patton was a former "first fiddle" or president, sang "Friendship" in accordance with the club's traditions.

The Rev. Marion D. Shutter officiated at the funeral service, which was attended by members of all the outstanding musical organizations in Minneapolis. E. L. Carpenter, president of the Orchestral association, and Henri Verbrugghen, conductor, represented the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. H. C. Woodruff, leader of the Apollo club led the members of the Evergreen Club in their song. Harry Phillips sang a baritone solo, "Going Home."

Dr. Shutter read from the Bible passages which Mr. Patton, shortly before he died, had selected to be read at his funeral.

Willard Patton List of Works

MnM = Minneapolis Public Library
 MnHi = Minnesota Historical Society
 Laudon = Laudon Collection
 DLC = Library of Congress
 C = Copyright Office
 NN = New York Public Library

Oratorios and Cantatas

| Ms. or Print | Title | Dedication & Date Publisher | For | Location |
|--------------|--|--|--|-----------------------------|
| Ms | Atonement, an Easter Motette | | chorus, orch., baritone & soprano solos, vocal score, orch. score & parts | MnM |
| Pr | Bring no More Vain Oblations <i>(Isaiah)</i> | c. 1898 | Recit. and Aria for baritone | MnM |
| Pr | Cry Aloud, Spare Not <i>(Isaiah)</i> | Ditson, Boston, 1904 | Aria for soprano | MnM |
| Ms | Isaiah, an Oratorio | First performance, 27 Jan. 1897, Minneapolis | 4 soloists, quartet, mixed chorus and orchestra | MnM (score & orch parts) |
| Pr | | 1897, vocal score by W. J. Dyer & Bro. Mpls, Plate #1 | | MnM, DLC, NN |
| Pr | | Rev. Ed., vocal score by Ditson, Boston, 1904 | | MnM, DLC |
| Ms | Israfel | text by Edgar Allen Poe | vocal & orch. scores | MnM |
| Pr | Strengthen Ye the Weak Hands <i>(Isaiah)</i> | | Aria for tenor | MnM |
| Pr | Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace <i>(Isaiah)</i> | Ditson, Boston, 1902 | Aria | MnM |
| Pr | Usona, A Paeon of Freedom Text by Sharlot Hall | Cantata, Minneapolis, Lloyd Publishing, 1919 | mixed chorus & soprano solo | DLC, MnM |
| Ms | | | vocal score, full score and parts | MnM |

Musical Epics

| Ms. or Print | Title | Dedication & Date Publisher | For | Location |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|----------|
| Ms | Footstones of a Nation | 1906, concert-ode | | |
| Ms | Star of the Empire, The | 1900 | | |

Symphonic-Fantasia

| | | | | |
|----|--------------------|-------|-----------|-----|
| Ms | The Spirit of "61" | score | orchestra | MnM |
|----|--------------------|-------|-----------|-----|

Choral Works for Church

| | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--|------------------|-----|
| | Festival Te Deum in D-flat | | | |
| Ms | Mass in A Major | | vocal with organ | MnM |
| Ms | Requiem | | SATB | MnM |
| Ms | Responses to the Commandments | | SATB | MnM |
| Pr | Deus misereatur in E-flat | # 47 of Molineux Quartette Choir Series | SATB | |
| Pr | Bonum Est (It is a good thing) | # 65 of Molineux Quartette Choir Series | SATB | |
| Pr | Chant Te Deum | # 53 of Molineux Choir Folio | SATB | |
| Pr | Gloria in Excelsis in A Flat | # 40 of Molineux Quartette Choir Series | SATB | |
| Pr | Benedictus in A Flat | # 44 of Molineux Quartette Choir Series | SATB | |

Operatic Works

| Ms. or Print | Title | Dedication & Date Publisher | For | Location |
|--------------|----------------------------------|---|---|----------|
| Ms | Fianza, La (operetta)* | 1889 | | |
| Ms | Gallant Garroter, The (operetta) | 1882 | | |
| Ms | Pocahontas, opera | words, music and orchestration by Patton, reading in the Room of the Radisson Hotel | ational score, full score, libretto | MnM |
| Ms | Pocahontas, overture | | | MnM |
| Ms | Robin Hood | | Chorus and conductor's parts | MnM |

* The Overture to *La Fianza* was played at Danz's 1890 Concert of Minnesota Composers.

Songs

| | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|-----|
| | American Battle Hymn | Text by Margaret Landor (pseudonym of Patton) | | C |
| Ms | Anthem of the River | Text by R. O Foster | song for low vc | MnM |
| Ms | Ashes of Life | Text by Margaret Lander | song for high vc | MnM |
| Ms | Ask Me No More | Words from <i>The Princess of</i> Alfred Tennyson | song for medium vc | MnM |
| Ms | Ave Maria (Latin and English) | | song for medium vc | MnM |
| Ms | Awake | | solo song for high soprano | MnM |

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|----|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| Ms | Bluebird | adapted by Margaret Lander | song for high vc | MnM |
| Ms | Captured | Text by Nora Perry | song for medium vc | MnM |
| Ms | Celestial Voices | text by Margaret Lander | song for medium vc | MnM |
| Pr | Challenge, A | Clayton F. Summy, 1917 | voice & piano | |
| Ms | Dearest and Best | From An Irish Arden | song for medium vc | MnM |
| Ms | Eight Songs from <i>The Princess of Alfred Tennyson</i> My wife and I O Swallow Ask me no more Home they brought her warrior Thy voice is heard The splendour falls | | 1 vol high 1 vol low # 1 missing in both | MnM |
| Ms | Evelyn | text by Frederick Langbridge | song for medium vc | MnM |
| | Farewell | from an unfinished work | voice & piano | |
| | Fond Heart | Text by Margaret Lander | voice & piano | |
| Ms | His Mother (at the peace celebration) | Text by G. E. Bertrand | song for medium vc | MnM |
| Ms | Home they Brought her Warrior | from <i>The Princess of Alfred Tennyson</i> | song for high vc | MnM |
| Pr | Hymn of Consecration | song, Lloyd Pub. 1921 | voice & piano | C |
| Pr | I Will (Life's Watchword) | Text by Robert Owen Foster Lloyd Pub., 1919 | voice & piano | C |
| Ms | In Thy Bower Above | text by Margaret Lander | song for high vc | MnM |
| Pr | Laddie | Text by R. O. Foster 1919 Lloyd Publishing Co. | | MnM |
| Ms | Land of Flowers, The | Text by Margaret Lander | voice & piano | MnM |
| Pr | Light of Freedom, The | Text by Robert Owen Foster Lloyd Pub., 1918 | voice & piano | C |
| Ms | Love | | voice & piano | MnM |
| Ms | Lover's Plaint, A | | voice & piano | MnM |
| Ms | Maiden Slender | Text by Margaret Lander | voice & piano | MnM |
| Ms | Mary | Text by Robert Owen Foster | voice & piano | MnM |
| Ms | Mignonette | A Ballad of June Text by Margaret Lander | voice & piano | MnM |
| | O Swallow | Text by Tennyson | voice & piano | MnM |
| Ms | One Day at the Organ | Text by Adelaide Proctor | voice & piano | MnM |
| Ms | Our Christ | Text by H. W. Farrington | voice & piano | MnM |
| Ms | Remembered | Text by M. L. Magruder | voice & piano | MnM |
| Pr | Return, my Love | Text by Fred G. Smith Mpls: Lloyd Publishing Co. 1922 | voice & piano | MnHi Sheet Music #277 |
| Ms | Rolfe's Wooing | | voice, piano, with violin obbligato | MnM |

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|----|---|---|---------------|---|
| Pr | Six Songs by Margaret Lander (pseud. of Patton) Retrospection Compensation (Robert Burns's If a body meet a body) Warning (Longfellow) Trusting Jeannette Fond Heart | Lloyd Pub. Co, 1903 | | MnM has Compensation Warning Jeannette |
| | Song of the Cavalier | from an unfinished work | voice & piano | |
| Ms | Splendour Falls, The | Text by Tennyson | voice & piano | MnM |
| Pr | Studio Fancies, six little songs Signals Would You? Cradle Song Jeannette O Friend of IMine Lover's Rhapsody | Poems of A. E. Allen c. 1918 Lloyd Publishing Co. Studio Building, Minneapolis | | MnM |
| Ms | Tears, Idle Tears | Text by Tennyson | voice & piano | MnM |
| Pr | Thy Picture Fair | Text by Robert Owen Foster c. 1919 Lloyd Publishing Co. | | MnM |
| Ms | Till the Starlight Dies | Text by Cora Hardy | voice & piano | MnM |
| Ms | Trusting | Text by Margaret Landor | voice & piano | MnM |
| Pr | Two songs On Life's Sea Symbol of Love | Text by Robert Owen Foster c. 1918 Lloyd Publishing Co. 68 S. 11th S., Minneapolis | | MnM |
| Ms | Vision | Text by F. G. Smith | voice & piano | MnM |
| Pr | Wabunheim Blossoms, Songs of a summertime Symbol of Love Mary Laddie On Life's Sea Paloma Street Queen of Wabunheim Friendship True Thy Picture Fair An Anthem of the River The Light of Freedom | Text by Robert Owen Foster c. 1918 Lloyd Publishing Co. Studio Building, Minneapolis | | MnM, DLC |
| Pr | Warning | Text by Margaret Landor | voice & piano | MnM |

Part Songs

| | | | | |
|----|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|
| Ms | America my own | 2 versions | 4 pt, mixed | MnM |
| Pr | Call of Spring | Lloyd Pub. 1919 | women's voices | C |
| Pr | Call of Spring | Poem of G. L. Hosmer c. 1909 | part-song for women's voices | MnM |
| Ms | Cycle of the Season, A | Text by Margaret Lander | 4 pt, mixed | MnM |
| Pr | Evening | New York: J. Fischer 1924 | TTBB | Laudon |
| Ms | Flag of Freedom | Text by Margaret Lander | 4 pt, mixed | MnM |

| | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| Pr | Hey! Dolly O | New York: J. Fischer 1924 | TTBB | Laudon |
| Pr | Hymn of Faith, A "To eyes of faith that pierce the mists...the Lord the Great Jehovah with us on the field" | Text by Harriet B. Stowe Sh Mpls., 1917 Has the Red Cross symbol cover | SATB with piano reduction | MnM (Mpls. Collection) |
| Ms | Hymn of Peace | Text by Margaret Lander | 4 pt, mixed | MnM |
| Pr | If Doughty Deeds | New York: J. Fischer 1924 | TTBB | Laudon |
| Ms | Joy | signed Willard Patton "All American" | women's voices | MnM |
| Pr | Land we Love | Poem of Margaret Lander c. 1916 | Unison, 2, 3 or 4-part chorus | MnM |
| | Maiden's Rose, The | | women's voices | |
| Pr | Minnesota Mine "Where the continent uprose from the deep...then hail thee, Minnesota mine" | Text by Margaret Lander (Patton) Mpls., 1918 Presented to and copyright Minnesota Federation of Women's Clubs, 5th Dist. | Solo verse with SATB chorus, piano accomp. | MnM (Mpls. Collection) |
| Pr | Nature's Lullaby Text by B. W. Ball | New York: J. Fishcr 1924 | TTBB | Laudon. |
| | Paraphrase of "Vacant Chair" (G. F. Root) | | women's voices | |
| | So the Story Goes | | women's voices | |
| | Song to My Love, A | | women's voices | |
| Pr | Summer | Fischer | Women's voices | |
| Pr | Warning | Text by Henry W. Longfellow New York: J. Fischer 1924 | TTBB with Soprano obbli- gato | Laudon |
| | When Evening's Twilight | | women's voices | |

Concertos

| | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|--|-----|
| Ms | Concerto for Violin and Piano | 1st mvt. incomplete, no violin part for 1st mvt. | | MnM |
|----|-------------------------------|---|--|-----|

Piano

| | | | | |
|----|---|---|-------------|------------|
| Pr | The Minneapolis Exposition Grand March | Minneapolis/St. Paul: W. J. Dyer & Brothers [1886] for the exposition that opened 23 August 1886 | Piano score | MnM MHS |
|----|---|---|-------------|------------|

Transcriptions for Violin, Violoncello and Piano

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|--|--|--|--|--|
| | Pantomime and Meditation from "Pocahontas" | | | |
| | Prelude and Cantabile from "Star of Empire" | | | |

Willard Patton, "The Vibrato, Tremolo or Throb in the Singing Voice," *Musical America*, November 13, 1909, p. 10.

W. S. B. Mathews, "Willard Patton and his Oratorio "Isaiah," *Music* (Mathews, Chicago) Vol. 2 (Nov. 1896-April 1897) pp. 573-581.

Waldo Selden Pratt and Charles N. Boyd, eds. "Willard Patton," *Grove's Dictionary of music and Musicians, American Supplement* (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser 1920)

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- 1 Information on Patton's life is drawn from the obituary published in the *Minneapolis Journal*, 15 December 1924 and from *A Half Century of Minneapolis*, edited by Horace B. Hudson (Minneapolis: Hudson Publishing Company, 1908)
 - 2 Organist, composer and teacher (1839-1909) who had studied in Leipzig and then held various posts as church organist. His church compositions were widely performed, among the first American productions to meet with such a reception.
 - 3 George Thornton Edwards, *Music and Musicians of Maine* (Portland: The Southworth Press, 1928) p. 176. Patton's picture appears on p. 178.
 - 4 Robert Griggs Gale, "Chords and Discords," *The Bellman*, 1 (15 September 1906) p. 212.
 - 5 Sketch of Patton in *Tribune* Sunday, 19 June 1887, p. 5
 - 6 Hamline University Bulletins, Hamline Archives
 - 7 *Who's Who in Music and Dramatic Art in the Twin Cities*, compiled by Arthur E. Wascher and Thomas Clayton Ingham (Minneapolis: Associated Publicity Bureau, 1925) p. 116.
 - 8 In 1900, the club presented Patton's musical epic, *The Star of Empire*, and a little later, *Footstones of a Nation*.
 - 9 From this point on, the following material is repeated (with a few slight changes) from pages 15-20 of my *Minnesota Music Teachers Association, The Profession & the Community* published in 2000 by the association.
 - 10 See Scot M. Guenter, *The American Flag, 1777-1924* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990), Chapter 5, especially pp. 106-109.
 - 11 The organization of the Minnesota Manuscript Club was announced 29 October 1893, its affiliation with the New York Manuscript Society was announced 7 September 1894. The Philadelphia Club began in 1892, Chicago's in 1896.
 - 12 See Robert T. Laudon's Chronology, "Concerts of Minnesota Composers, 1889-1935, and other related events" on deposit in the Research Library of the Minnesota Historical Society.
 - 13 *Minneapolis Tribune*, 3 February 1924, article before the Testimonial Concert. The noted critic and editor, W. S. B. Mathews, came from Chicago to hear the premiere. He wrote a full-scale critique in his magazine *Music: a Monthly Magazine*, 11, p. 581, in which he discussed each of the movements. He found several deficiencies but concluded that Patton "has performed a serious undertaking and has succeeded remarkably well—Isaiah deserves to go upon the list of honorable undertakings by American composers, the list of which is growing now at a rapid rate."
 - 14 *Minneapolis Tribune*, 3 February 1924, article before the Testimonial Concert of 5 February 1924.
 - 15 *Music*, 11, p. 581.

16 Mathews, "Willard Patten and his Oratorio "Isaiah," *Music* (Chicago) 11 (November 1896-April 1897), p. 573.

17 At this time, around 40 Minnesotans were studying music in Germany. See Laudon, *Minnesota Music Teachers*, p. 25.

18 W. S. Rockstro, "Oratorio," *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. George Grove (Boston: Ditson, 1880) 2, p. 559. See also George P. Upton's *The Standard Oratorios* which traces the history of the oratorio and the early development of sacred music in America.

19 The full history of St. Agatha's is admirably chronicled by Sister Ann Thomasine Sampson, "St. Agatha's Conservatory and the Pursuit of Excellence," *Ramsey County History*, 24, No. 1, pp. 3-19 and in two earlier monographs *The Ireland Connection and The History of St. Agatha's Conservatory* available in mimeograph print at the Minnesota Historical Society as well as by Sister Wilfreda Hogan, *A Review of 50 Years of Music Teaching, 1851-1901*, available in the Archives of St. Joseph's Academy.

20 For details of this important institution see Robert T. Laudon, "Clarence Alden Marshal: The Northwestern Conservatory of Music & The Music Teachers Association" in the series "Minnesota Musicians of the Cultured Generation," pp. 5-19.

21 *Ibid*, pp. 19-20.

22 *Minneapolis Tribune*, 20 October 1887.

23 *Minneapolis Tribune*, 4 December 1887.

24 Walter Petzet (1866-1941) of Germany, pianist, composer, graduate of the Royal Conservatory at Munich where he was a student of Rheinberger. He was resident at the Northwestern Conservatory in Minneapolis 1887-1890. He then taught piano at the Scharwenka Conservatory in New York before returning to Europe.

25 Carl Lachmund (1857-1928) of Missouri, pianist/violinist, chose the Twin Cities as his residence in 1885 after he returned from study with Franz Liszt (1882-1884). He kept a diary of his lessons and experiences, published as *Living with Liszt*, Franz Liszt Studies Series 4, edited, annotated, and introduced by Alan Walker (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1995), considered one of the most important sources for understanding the way in which Liszt taught. While in the Twin Cities, he established a youth orchestra, played first violin in a string quartet, and accompanied performers on tour. After the death of his wife, a gifted harpist, he left for New York in 1890 where he founded his own conservatory and formed a Women's String Orchestra.

26 June Drenning Holmquist, "Convention City, The Republicans in Minneapolis, 1892," *Minnesota History* 35 (1956), pp. 64-76.

27 See Robert T. Laudon, *Minnesota Music Teachers Association, The Profession & the Community* (Eden Prairie, Minn., by the association, 2000).

28 Patton, "The Examination Plan in Minnesota," *MTNA Proceedings*, 1913, p. 219-221.

29 This poem by Foster uses a curious combination of Wabun, the Algonquian word for the East Wind and the German word for Home. The word *waaban* meant "dawn" and *waabang* meant "tomorrow" along with variants in this extensive family of languages. The name became known to English-speakers principally through the writings of Henry Schoolcraft and later of Longfellow who in *The Song of Hiawatha* used it as the name of the East Wind, the wind of the dawn. Mudjekeewis, the father of Hiawatha, has just slain the Great Bear of the mountains, the terror of the nations., Mishe-Mokwa.

Thus was Mudjekeewis chosen
 Father of the Winds of Heaven.
 For himself he kept the West-Wind,
 Gave the others to his children;
 Unto Wabun gave the East-Wind,
 Gave the South to Shawondasee,
 And the North-Wind, wild and cruel,
 To the fierce Kabibonokka.

Young and beautiful was Wabun;
 He it was who brought the morning,
 He it was whose silver arrows
 Chased the dark o'er hill and valley;
 He it was whose cheeks were painted
 With the brightest streaks of crimson,
 And whose voice awoke the village,
 Called the deer, and called the hunter.