

HAYDEN WHITNEY

1895 – 1924

Hayden Whitney son of Will and Belle Daniels Whitney was born in New Haven on May 29, 1895. He attended the New Haven Village School and the Mexico High School. While in attendance at Mexico High School he showed such musical talent that he later went to the Rochester Conservatory of Music. It was at this Institution that he gained success as a composer. He became engrossed with a religious spirit which manifested itself in a number of hymns, which were published in a collection.

During his engagements with the famous HOMER RODEHEAVER and BOSWORTH BROTHERS, as a pianist, he, too became known as a devout religious man through the outpouring of his music.

He wrote hundreds of poems, which were frequently published in the PALLADIUM TIMES and other newspapers.

Around 1920 he had written over 600 poems in a year. Little did Hayden know when he was chosen poet of his 1914 graduating class from Mexico that his works in the years ahead would be so important. It was through the wanderings over the family farm in New Haven and the happy years spent in the small town that were the subject of his many compositions. In his own words he said, "I find there is so much to the writing of verse that I often get very discouraged. It is only because so many good friends encourage me that I rise over these hills of discouragement. And what are better than friends to help one over the rough places? I do, be it writing a poem, writing a song, or giving a concert. It always seems I never do my best. I crave greater self-expression." (above from 1922 Palladium article).

It is interesting to note that according to the 1922 article he had written: 1 poem in 1912, 1913-none, 1914-two, 1915-27, 1916-7, 1917-26, 1918-59, 1920-300, 1921-602, 1922-?? A total of over 1,125!

He was called into the service on July 23, 1920, reporting to Camp Dix. He remained but a week, rejected for being too heavy for his height. However, he did play at many concerts for soldiers during the war period.

His untimely death came at the time when he was just embarking on a career that would certainly have made him successful in his field. His death came as a shock to the thousands of New Yorkers who knew his work of music and evangelical fields. His death was due to pneumonia, exhaustion, and a weak heart. He passed away at the Hospital of the Good Shepard in Syracuse at the age of 29. He was buried in the New Haven Cemetery along with his parents.

On display are several; copies of his sheet music which were donated by Craig Novak of Morton Grove, IL, his gr. gr. grandparents were Herbert Searles and Flora Whitney.

Above written by Nancy Searles, 1998, from American Legion Book of Veterans,
Palladium Times articles and the copies of songs from Novack.