

Hardware Mutuals

About ten years ago, out in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a fellow by the name of O. C. Cash started, mostly in jest, a movement to Preserve and Encourage Barber Shop Quartette singing in America. The idea caught on at once, and very soon Chapters of the organization were popping up all over the country.

The organizing of Florida Chapter No. 1 in Tampa, is closely tied in with the original movement, for Robert D. Aldrich was a member of the Tulsa group of harmonizers before he came to Tampa in 1944. When Bob reached Tampa he immediately began looking for men who liked to sing. From October of 1944 to April of 1945 his search was fruitless, and then he met Frank Davies who seems to have a continuing knack of unearthing unusual personalities. Frank loves harmony, - singing and otherwise, - and, as an initial step, called his competitor in business, Jim Stevens. Other known and suspected harmony hounds were contacted by calls and letters from Jim, and an organization meeting was held in the Tampa Terrace Hotel May 17, 1945. Forty men joined immediately and the regular charter in the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartette Singing in America, Inc. was presented to this, Florida's first Chapter, the following month.

The Chapter has been particularly fortunate in the men who have served as President. Frank Davies served two terms and was followed by J. Robert Foster. Sam T. Breedon is now both President and Musical Director. Under the leadership of these men, the Chapter has been generous with its time and talent by providing entertainment for a great number of charitable organizations, conventions, civic clubs, hospitals, etc. That the talent is excellent can no longer be disputed, for in November of this year, Sam Breedon took his quartet, the Florida Knights, to Birmingham to compete with the top quartets of the entire South. Sam and his brother Fred, Kit Carson and Bill Bond came back with First Prize and the title "Dixie Champions".

People have been generous in providing temporary meeting places for the Chapter. First the Tampa Terrace, then the University of Tampa, then the American Legion, and

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now Mass Bros. where the Chapter meets every Monday night at 8 P.M. in the Tea Room. It is hoped that some day a Harmony Hall may be owned by the Chapter, and while almost all previous shows have been presented without any remuneration to the Chapter, an occasional performance like the one being given tonight will be used to start a building fund. A permanent home, for the use of the men of Tampa and their friends who love to sing, will be a wonderful asset to community life and to neighborly relationships throughout the State and Nation.

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