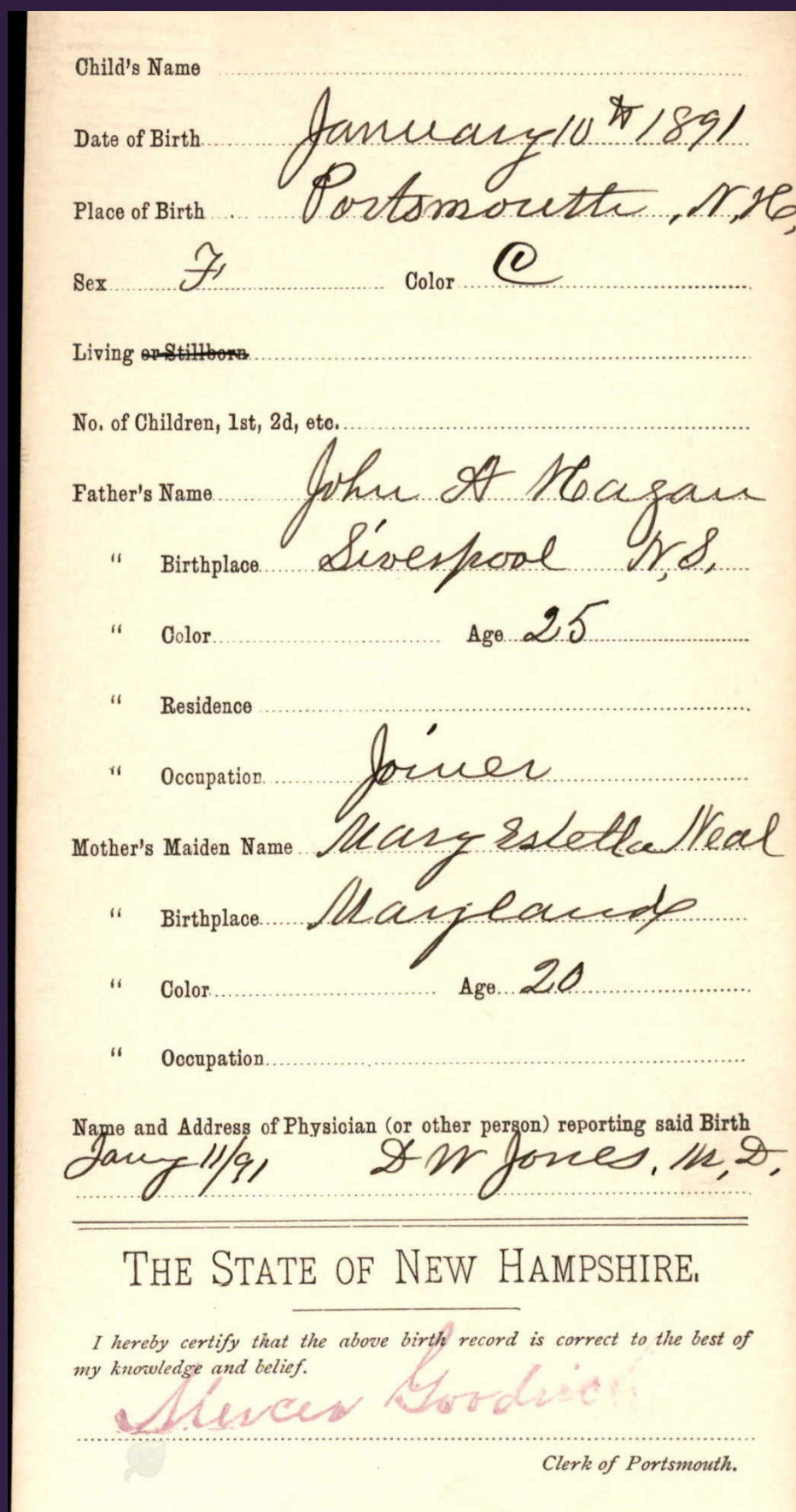


HELEN EUGENIA HAGAN



PIANIST - COMPOSER - TEACHER
(1891 - 1964)

WHO WAS HELEN HAGAN?



Child's Name _____
Date of Birth January 10th 1891
Place of Birth Portsmouth, N.H.
Sex F Color C
Living or Stillborn _____
No. of Children, 1st, 2d, etc. _____
Father's Name John A. Hagan
" Birthplace Liverpool, N.S.
" Color _____ Age 25
" Residence _____
" Occupation Joiner
Mother's Maiden Name Mary Estella Neal
" Birthplace Maryland
" Color _____ Age 20
" Occupation _____
Name and Address of Physician (or other person) reporting said Birth
Jan 11/91 S. W. Jones, M.D.
THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.
I hereby certify that the above birth record is correct to the best of
my knowledge and belief.
Alvin Gordon
Clerk of Portsmouth.

Helen Hagan's Birth Certificate

Helen Eugenia Hagan was born on January 10, 1893 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Her mother taught her to play the piano and she went on to study at schools in New Haven, Connecticut. She began playing the organ for the Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church when she was 9 years old.

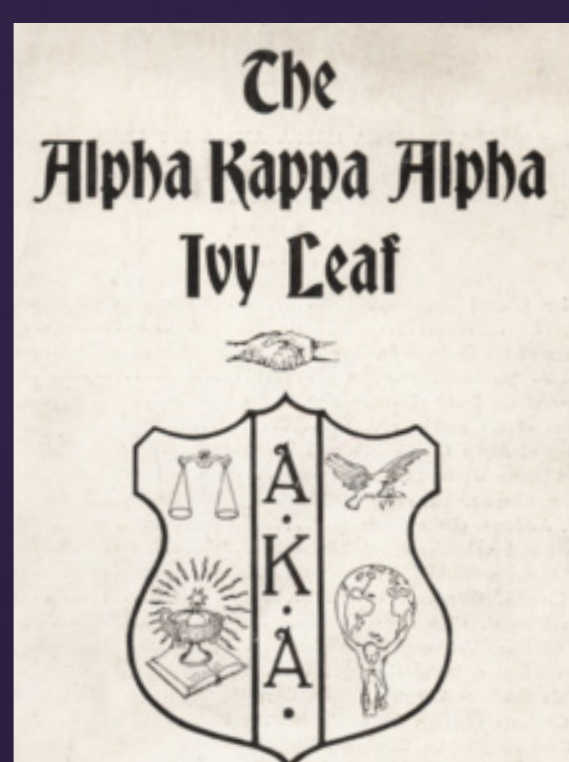
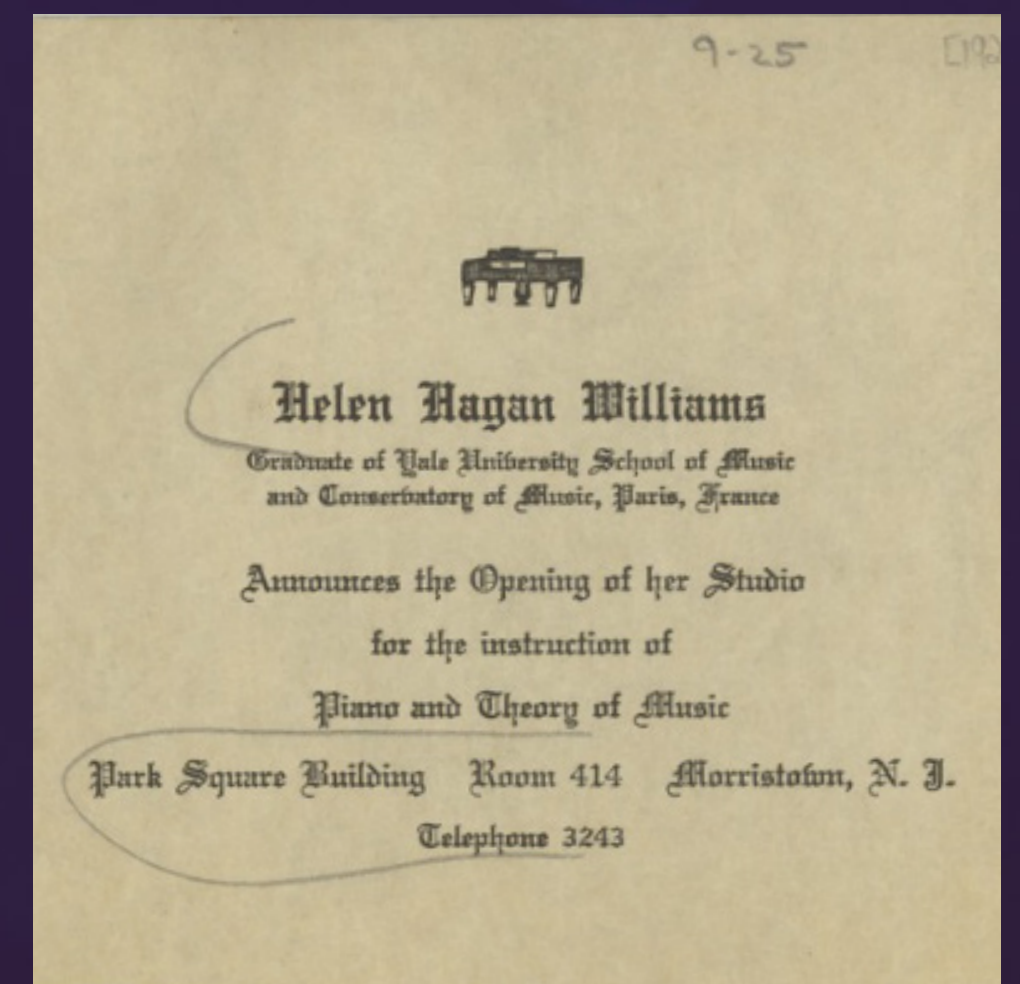
In 1911 she won the coveted Lockwood Scholarship at Yale University School of Music. She earned her degree from Yale in 1912 and was awarded the Samuel Simmons Sanford Fellowship, which granted her two years of music study abroad. It is believed that she was the first Black woman to earn a degree from Yale University.



Helen studied music at the Paris Conservatory of Music and went to Europe during World War I. Under the auspices of the YMCA, she entertained Black troops of the American Expeditionary Forces in France.

WHO WAS HELEN HAGAN?

In 1920, Helen married Dr. John Taylor Williams of Morristown, New Jersey. She continued her concert career and had a music studio in Morristown for at least a decade. She was the first Black woman admitted to the Morristown Chamber of Commerce and was the first Black pianist to present a solo recital in New York's Aeolian Hall (1921).



In 1924, Helen was initiated into the Lambda Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha in New York, and in 1925, she became a charter member of Tau Omega Chapter.



After pursuing a graduate level degree at Teachers College at Columbia University, Helen taught at Tennessee State Agricultural and Mechanical College, became Dean of the School of Music at Bishop College in Marshall, Texas, and established the Helen Hagan Music Studio in New York.

Helen Hagan died on March 6, 1964.

NEW HAVEN YEARS

Gale News
NEW HAVEN, CONN., THURSDAY, MAY 27, 1909.

MUSIC SCHOOL CONCERT.

UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA AND
MUSIC STUDENTS TO PER-
FORM IN WOOLSEY
HALL TONIGHT.

Supply of Tickets Exhausted—An At-
tractive Program Offered.

The students of the Department
of Music, assisted by the University
Orchestra, will give a concert in
Woolsey Hall at 7:30 this evening.
The supply of admission cards has
been exhausted and no more may
be obtained at the Music School.
The program is as follows:

Bach—Fantasia in G Minor for Organ.
Edward S. Barnes, 1910.

Mendelssohn—Concerto for Piano and
Orchestra in G Minor, Op. 25.
Mary W. Deming.

Haydn—Soprano Aria from “The Cre-
ation.”
Effie E. Grant.

Leach—Concerto for Violin and Orches-
tra in D Minor.
Rowland E. Leach, Composer.

Bach—Concerto for two Pianos and
Orchestra in C Major.
Harold C. Davis,
Clarence E. Rolfe.

Saint-Saens—Concerto for Violoncello
and Orchestra, Op. 33.
Leo Troostwyk.

Handel—Baritone Aria from “Semele.”

Elgar—Sword Song from “Caractacus.”
George M. Sneath, 1910 D. S.

Chopin—Concerto for Piano and Orches-
tra in E Minor.
Helen E. Hagan.

After moving to New Haven from New Hampshire, the Hagan family lived at 83 Whalley Avenue. Helen lived with her father, John (a self-employed skilled contractor); her mother, Mary; and her two siblings, John and Gladys. Helen's family attended the historic Dixwell Congregational Church. She attended New Haven High School, which today is known as Hillhouse High School. At the time, the public high schools were located downtown at York Square in close proximity to Yale University. Helen began studying at Yale School of Music while she was still a high school student. She went on to graduate from Yale University in 1912, receiving the prestigious Lockwood award for her performance of her own Piano Concerto with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra.

HELEN HAGAN'S CLASSMATES: YALE UNIVERSITY

Helen Hagan was not the first Black woman to attend Yale. Effie Ella Grant, Class of 1909 at the School of Music, won the Lockwood Scholarship for singing. She is mentioned in the above Yale Daily News article, along with Helen Hagan.

Grant was the first known African American woman to enroll at Yale. (Yale University did not start accepting women until 1969.) She attended from 1906 to 1909, but, for reasons that are unclear, did not receive the Bachelor of Music degree customarily awarded after three years of study. (Helen Hagan, who earned the degree in 1912, is the first known African American woman to receive a Yale degree.)



Jessie Estelle Muse, along with her sisters Florence and Victoria, were New Haven residents (169 Bassett Street) who attended Yale School of Music concurrently with Helen Hagan.

Jessie Muse was a soprano and, along with Hagan, was awarded a Lockwood Scholarship. She may have been the first Black woman to have ever performed with the New Haven Symphony Orchestra (1911).

NEW HAVEN YEARS



Saloon Map of New Haven

RED DOTS INDICATE SALOONS

1890s: After leaving Portsmouth, NH, Hagan and her family lived at 83 Whalley Ave, New Haven, CT.

1901: Hagan had her first performance at Dixwell Avenue Congregational United Church of Christ at 9 years old.

1906-1910: Hagan attended New Haven High School which was later demolished to make room for the current Morse College on Yale's campus.

1964: In Evergreen Cemetery, Hagan was buried in an unmarked grave until 2016.

1912: At Woolsey Hall, Hagan performed her Piano Concerto in C Minor with the NHSO and Conductor Horatio Parker.

1912: Hagan graduated from the Yale School of Music.

HISTORICAL RESOURCE: BEINECKE RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY

The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University holds an incredible collection of New Haven maps, including many that are available to view online. This is a map of saloons in New Haven (saloons marked with a red dot) that was created in 1911. We have marked notable locations where Helen Hagan would have spent time while growing up and going to school.

NEW HAVEN YEARS



HAGAN FAMILY HOME

Helen Hagan and her family lived at 83 Whalley Avenue in New Haven. Pictured here is a photo of 83 Whalley Avenue circa 1978.

Photo courtesy of the New Haven Preservation Trust.



DIXWELL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The Dixwell Congregational Church was founded in 1820 as the African Ecclesiastical Society by Black congregants who, together with abolitionist Simeon S. Jocelyn, withdrew from the Center Congregational Church because of discrimination. It is the oldest African American United Church of Christ in the world.

Pictured here is the former Dixwell Avenue Congregational Church building, which would have been located at 100 Dixwell Avenue during Helen Hagan's childhood. The Hagan family belonged to the church and Helen played organ at the church starting at age 9.

Photo c. 1960, courtesy of New Haven Museum and Walk New Haven.

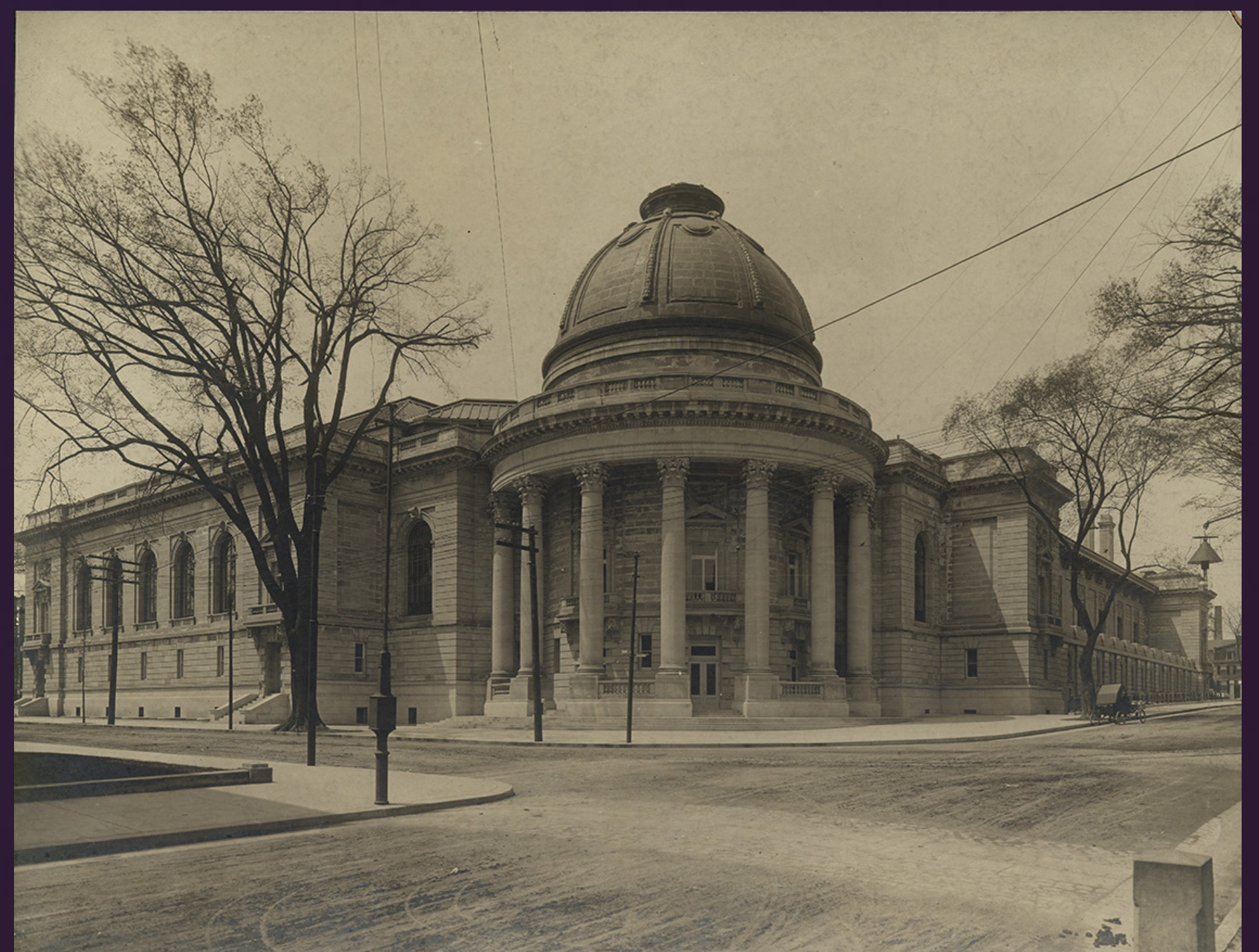


NEW HAVEN HIGH SCHOOL

Helen Hagan attended New Haven High School, which would later become Hillhouse High School. At the time, its campus was located on York Square. It was replaced by what are now Yale University's Morse College and Ezra Stiles College. (Hillhouse High School is now located at 480 Sherman Parkway.)

Helen began her musical studies at Yale while she was still in high school and graduated from the Yale School of Music in 1912 at age 21. The proximity of the high school to Yale School of Music would have made it easy for Helen to walk between her different schools.

Photo provided courtesy of New Haven Museum.



WOOLSEY HALL

Pictured: Woolsey Hall along College Street, Memorial Hall (center domed area), and University Dining Hall (The Commons) along Grove Street. Pictures of buildings constructed for Yale University's bicentennial in 1901. There is evidence of Helen Hagan performing in Woolsey Hall as early as 1909.

Photo from Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

NEW HAVEN YEARS

NEW HAVEN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PIANO CONCERTO, MOVEMENT 1 WORLD PREMIERE (1912)



HISTORICAL RESOURCE: THE CRISIS

The Crisis is a publication of the NAACP founded by W.E.B. Du Bois in 1910. With their tagline being "A record of the darker races," it is a magazine dedicated to the documentation and recognition of activity within Black and Brown communities. The publication features news of Black artists, musicians, and businessmen, and provides a platform for Black essayists and intellectual works on social and political issues. They serve as a space for celebration of Black success as well as for education and rallying against oppressive ideology.

Since her first feature as a nineteen year old Yale first-year in 1911, *The Crisis* had kept a watchful eye on Helen. She can be found in over 37 issues; from concerts in Nebraska, performance tours, and finally at her teaching role at Bishop College in 1934. For 25 years, Hagan's journeys had been noted by *The Crisis*, regularly being the pride of the publication's music section.

cians of New Haven were present, and their opinions constitute for Miss Hagan a "judgment of her peers." Miss Hagan is a "prize student" of the Yale department of music and has been heard several times in concert work accompanied by the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. Her playing has always brought down the house. On the occasion of the Foot Guard concert she appeared twice upon the program in solos by Chopin, Liszt, Rachmaninoff, Schumann and MacDowell, and responded to vehement demands for encores with compositions by Grieg and Mosznowski.

Although Miss Hagan is not yet twenty years of age and was graduated from the New Haven High School only last June, she has gone a long way up on the road toward being a successful concert artist.— New Haven Register.

THE CRISIS: Volume 1, Issue 3. Page 8.

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Miss Helen Hagan, who graduated this year at the Yale University School of Music, has for the third time won scholarships from this school. She has been awarded the Samuel Simons Sanford Fellowship, which provides for two years' study abroad. The fellowship was given for the best original composition. At the concert given in May in Woolsey Hall, Miss Hagan played her concerto in C minor for piano and orchestra. She was accompanied by the New Haven Symphony Orchestra.

Besides the prize concerto, Miss Hagan has to her credit a group of songs, pianoforte pieces, violin and piano sonatas and string quartets.

THE CRISIS: Volume 4, Issue 4. Page 169.

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"The award is made this year for the first time to Helen Eugenia Hagan for a brilliant performance of an original concerto (first movement) for piano and orchestra. Miss Hagan shows not only pianistic talent of rare promise, but also clearly marked ability to conceive and execute musical ideas of much charm and no little originality. It is a source of gratification to her teachers and to all interested in the department that she is thus enabled to develop further the musical gift she has already shown.

"The annual students' concert with orchestra was given in Woolsey Hall on May 23. The audience was larger than we had ever had at a concert by students, and it is not too much to say that more of interest was offered than we have ever had before. The most notable feature of the concert was the piano concerto by Miss Hagan, to which reference has been made above."

THE CRISIS: Volume 5, Issue 2. Page 64.

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New Haven Symphony Orchestra, 1901



WWI SERVICE

“THE DARLING OF THE DOUGHBOYS”

The Y. M. C. A. has sent eleven Negro women overseas as canteen workers with the Army of Occupation. They are Helen Hagan, Rilda Phelps, Florence L. Thomas, Meta Evans, Ernestine Suarez, Hattie Craigwell, Lillian W. Turner, Florence C. Williams, Harriet S. Edwards, Alethea E. Rochon and Laura G. Williamson.

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Helen Hagan proudly went to France to support troops in WWI as an entertainer. She made the sacrifice of putting her budding career and income on hold to perform for the troops. Helen performed for African American soldiers and was one of the only Black female musicians sent to France during this time. Helen was a part of what was called “The Proctor Party,” a group of individuals sent specifically to entertain the Black troops. Throughout her time in France during WWI, it is estimated she and the rest of “The Proctor Party” entertained around 100,000-300,000 troops. These Black soldiers were so moved and touched by her talent that often they shed tears throughout her piano performances. She was so popular and loved that she was referred to as “The Darling of the Doughboys.”

HELEN HAGAN 1918 PASSPORT APPLICATION

FORM FOR NATIVE CITIZEN. Issued MAR 6 1918

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STATE OF Connecticut
COUNTY OF New Haven

I, (Miss) Helen E. Hagan, a NATIVE AND LOYAL CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, hereby apply to the Department of State, at Washington, for a passport.

I solemnly swear that I was born at Portsmouth, in the State of New Hampshire, on or about the 10th day of January 1888, that my father (husband) John A. Hagan, was born in Liverpool, N.S., and that he emigrated to the United States from the port of (Do not know) on or about the year of 1886, that he resided 32 years, uninterruptedly, in the United States, from 1886 to 1918, at New Haven, Conn. & Portsmouth, N.H., that he was naturalized as a citizen of the United States before the some Court in Portsmouth, Court New Hampshire (My father is now in Halifax, N.S. temporarily, and am unable to secure his citizen paper), on as shown by the accompanying Certificate of Naturalization; that I am domiciled in the United States, my permanent residence being at 83 Whalley Ave., New Haven, in the State of Connecticut, where I follow the occupation of pianist; that I am about to go abroad temporarily; and I intend to return to the United States within one year with the purpose of residing and performing the duties of citizenship therein; and that I desire a passport for use in visiting the countries hereinafter named for the following purpose:

France, Y.M.C.A. Work and canteen work (Object of visit.)
(Name of country) (Have no relatives in the service) (Object of visit.)

I intend to leave the United States from the port of New York (Port of departure) sailing on board the unknown on or about this month (July) 1918. (Name of vessel.)

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.
Further, I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion. So help me God.

Sworn to before me this 1st day of July, 1918.
Deputy Clerk of the U.S. District Court at New Haven, Conn.

2 Rectory St
N.Y.S. N.H.C.

FO Received MAR 6 - 1918 Forenoon

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT.

Age: 30 years. Mouth: medium
Stature: 5 feet, 6 inches, Eng. Chin: medium
Forehead: high Hair: black
Eyes: dark brown Complexion: olive
Nose: straight Face: oval

IDENTIFICATION.
New Haven, Conn., 1 July 1918.

I, George W. Crawford, lawyer, solemnly swear that I am a (native naturalized) citizen of the United States; that I reside at 567 Orchard St., New Haven, Conn.; that I have known the above-named Helen E. Hagan, personally for 15 years and know her to be a native citizen of the United States; and that the facts stated in her affidavit are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sworn to before me this 1st day of July, 1918.
Deputy Clerk of the U.S. District Court at New Haven, Conn.

Applicant may be communicated with at the following address:
83 Whalley Avenue, New Haven, Conn.
Passport to National War Work Council of the YMCA
347 Madison Avenue, New York City, N.Y.

A duplicate of the photograph to be attached hereto must be sent to the Department with the application, to be affixed to the passport with an impression of the Department's seal.

NATIONAL WAR WORK COUNCIL
OF THE
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES

WAR PERSONNEL BOARD
A. G. KNEBEL, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

This is to certify that Miss Helen E. Hagan has been appointed a Secretary of the National War Work Council of the Y. M. C. A. of the United States for service with the troops of the American Expeditionary Force in France. We hereby endorse his application for a passport to visit France and Great Britain. Miss Hagan is under contract with the Y.M.C.A. for one year.

Very respectfully yours,
William E. Adams

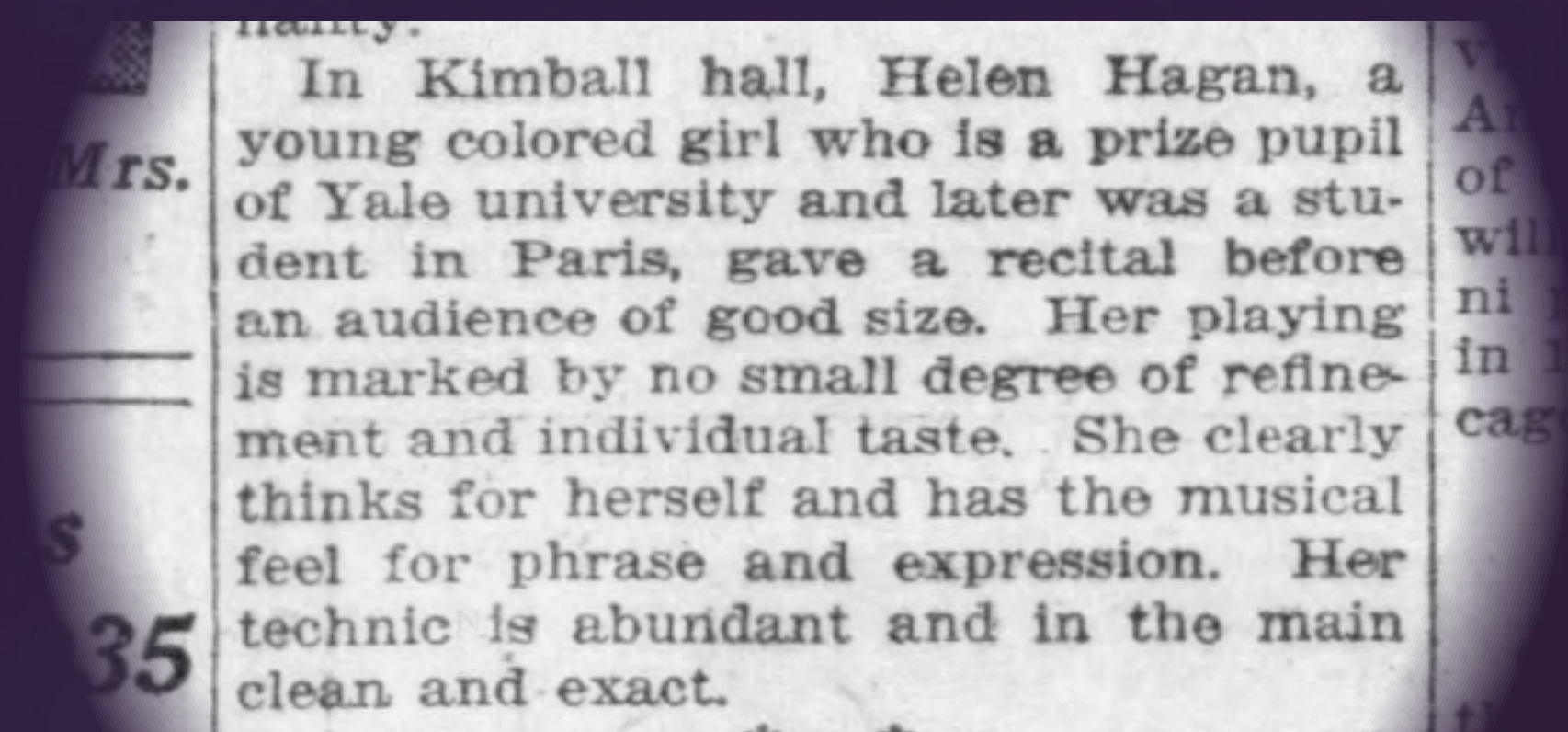
Bureau of Citizenship,
Department of State,
Washington, D. C.

CONCERT PIANIST

“THE GREAT PIANIST, MISS HELEN EUGENIA HAGAN OF NEW HAVEN...”

MISS HAGAN RECITAL.

The great pianist, Miss Helen Eugenia Hagan, of New Haven, Connecticut, who is a graduate from Yale university and won first prize scholarship from said university, appeared in our city last Monday night to a packed house at Union Congregational church. It was the greatest musical recital ever given in Iowa and the largest and most refined and cultured musical loving people of Des Moines of both white and colored. Miss Hagan was truly a master in her art. She held that great audience in rapped attention throughout the entire evening. Her technique, her range her manipulation and her wonderful power to bring out the most difficult parts with modesty, self-control and ease won the Des Moines people as never before. She is not only a credit to the Negro race but a credit to any race or class of people.



CHICAGO TRIBUNE, 1916

In Kimball hall, Helen Hagan, a young colored girl who is a prize pupil of Yale university and later was a student in Paris, gave a recital before an audience of good size. Her playing is marked by no small degree of reginement and individual taste. She clearly thinks for herself and has the musical feel for phrase and expression. Her technic [sic] is abundant and in the main clean and exact.

IOWA STATE BYSTANDER, 1915

MISS HAGAN RECITAL.

The great pianist, Miss Helen Eugenia Hagan, of New Haven, Connecticut, who is a graduate from Yale university and won first prize scholarship from said university, appeared in our city last Monday night to a packed house at Union Congregational Church.

It was the greatest musical recital ever given in Iowa and the largest and most refined and cultured musical loving people of Des Moines of both white and colored. Miss Hagan was truly a master in her art. She held that great audience in rapped [sic] attention throughout the entire evening.

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THE CRISIS, 1921

Helen Hagan
in

Piano Recital
at AEOLIAN HALL

34 Est 43rd Street, New Yrok, N. Y.

MONDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 10, 1921

Prices 75c, \$1, \$1.50; Box (6 chairs), \$15

Tickets on sale now at Box Office, Aeolian Hall and at Martin-Smith School,
139 West 136th Street

“Her playing is marked by no small degree of refinement and individual taste. She clearly thinks for herself and has the musical feeling for phrase and expression. Her technic [sic] is adundant, clean and exact.” - *Chicago Daily Tribune*

YALE DAILY NEWS, 1919

Piano Recital This Evening.

Miss Helen Eugenia Hagan, recipient of the Samuel Simons Sanford Fellowship in the School of Music in 1912, and now of Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tenn., will give a pianoforte recital in Sprague Memorial Hall this evening at 8:15. There will be no charge for admission.

Miss Helen Eugenia Hagan, recipient of the Samuel Simons Sanford Fellowship in the School of Music in 1912, and now of Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville, Tenn., will give a pianoforte recital in Sprague Memorial Hall this evening at 8:15. There will be no charge for admission.

UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

HELEN HAGAN PLAYED AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN ESTABLISHING MUSIC DEPARTMENTS AT TWO HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES

HBCUs, historically Black colleges and universities, were founded to serve Black students before the establishment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. During racial segregation, the majority of colleges and universities were open only to white students. HBCUs were opened to give Black students the educational opportunities they were long denied and helped to raise the Black middle class. Helen Hagan helped to establish music programs at the now-defunct Bishop College, as well as Tennessee State University, which boasts a strong music program to this day.



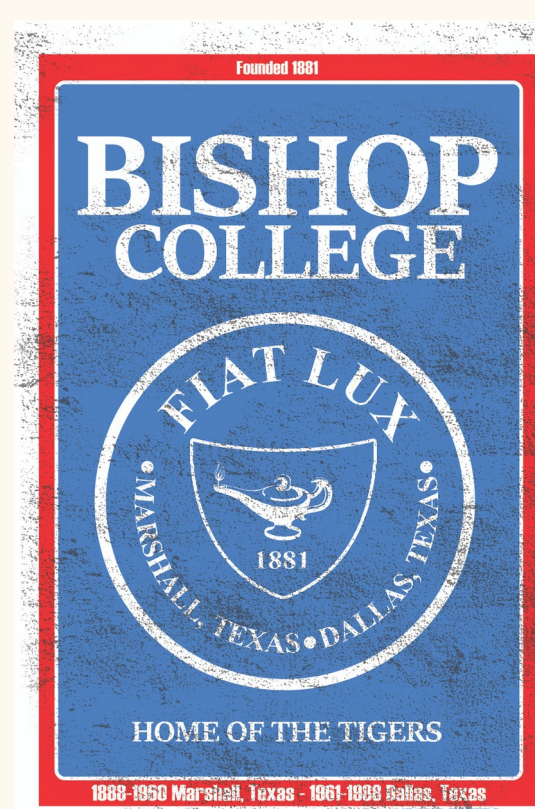
TN State University, H.P. Davidson Co., TN # 16 of 18

Originally founded 1912 in Nashville as the Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial Normal School for Negroes, Tennessee State University provides both bachelor's and master's degree programs. Hagan helped establish their music program and, today, TSU boasts a strong music curriculum, with six Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees and a graduate program in Music Instruction.

Mission Statement: Tennessee State University, through its legacy as an HBCU and land grant institution, transforms lives, prepares a diverse population of leaders, and contributes to economic and community development by providing affordable and accessible educational programs at various degree levels promoting academic excellence through scholarly inquiry, teaching, research, lifelong learning, and public service.

Current Enrollment: There are 8,077 students including 6,375 undergraduate and 1,702 graduate students as of the 2021-2022 academic year.

Bishop College was founded to serve the predominantly Black population of East Texas, specifically for Black Baptists. In 1925, after primarily providing religious studies, Bishop College began instruction in literature, arts and sciences. It was relocated to Dallas in 1961 before closing in 1988.



CORRESPONDENCE WITH W.E.B. DU BOIS

January 5, 1928

Dear Dr. DuBois,

Enclosed is an application blank for membership to the Civic Club of New York which is being filled out but - for me in compliance with their rules. I should be very glad if you would sign it as "seconded" and return it to me at your earliest convenience.

Could you also advise me whether or not Mr. James Weldon Jones is a member of the admissions committee.

Thanking you and wishing you a prosperous and happy year.

Yours very sincerely,
Helen E. Hagan

Feb. 8th, 1934

My Dear Dr. DuBois,

President Rhoads told me a few days ago that you would be in Marshall Thursday, Feb. 5th and would speak at Bishop in the evening. You can't imagine how glad I am to know this. I am looking forward with much pleasure to seeing you. If it is at all possible, and you have the time, I would like so much to have a talk with you. Texas seems so far away from everybody and everything, that is, it seems to me, that you coming here is a rare privilege.

With best wishes
Sincerely yours,

Helen Hagan

March 25th, 1932

My Dear Dr. DuBois,

I would like so much to have your advice, together with whatever information you could give me in a matter that is giving me considerable concern.

This past year I have [] over a thousand dollars in preparing for, and advertising for concerts. It has been such a hard year, for the musician especially. Many of my concerts were canceled and because of the wide [] and uncertain guarantees I gave up the [Wexteau Laws] entirely that was planned for the Spring.

After the adjustment of my marital affairs last Spring I jumped into my career in earnest because it is my life, in spite of the fact that I have had to give it up more or less during the last few years - assuredly if I had known last Spring what Harold Bauer said recently, that is, that the pianist can no longer make a living in the concert field, I might have saved some money.

Fortunately, my major subject throughout my years of study has been in theory of music and composition. The foreign scholarship from Yale and other prizes were given to me for work in composition and not in piano. Also for the past three summers, I have been taking graduate work in Music Education at Columbia so I feel that I have a foundation and further preparation to work in better [niches] of my art.

I expect to be engaged in educational work next fall but it is necessary for me to complete my work at Columbia this summer in order to do so. Do you know of any fund of which I can borrow or receive a scholarship to study this summer? This is my particular problem and I would appreciate greatly any information or advice you could give me.

I am very glad to go into the educational field, not only because I can be of service there but also because it will give me an opportunity to make music, something I have longed to get at.

Will you let me hear from you as soon as possible. I hope you are well - with very best wishes I am very sincerely yours,

Helen E. Hagan



January 11, 1928.
Miss Helen E. Hagan,
24 Columbus Street, Box 631,
Morristown, New Jersey.

"My dear Helen:

Enclosed is the Proposal for Membership signed. Mr. Johnson is a member of the Executive Committee.

Very sincerely yours, WEBD/DW

December 15, 1933.
Miss Helen Hagan,
Park Square Building,
Morristown, New Jersey.

My dear Miss Hagan:

THE CRISIS is trying hard to collect enough of its out-standing debts so that we can end the year and be able to continue next year. You know how desperate our struggle has been to keep the magazine going. I wonder if you could possibly send us a check for the \$13.00 which you owe us by December 20. I do not like to press you but I want to save the magazine.

Very sincerely yours, WEBD/DW

March 29, 1932.
Miss Helen Hagan,
Studio, Park Square Building,
Morristown, New Jersey.

My dear Helen:

The demand for fellowships in these awful times is simply endless and I haven't any idea where to turn. Above all, I do not know of any individuals who have money to spare. If I did know, I should be after them to help THE CRISIS. I'm awfully sorry not to be able to write a more encouraging letter. Of course, if I should hear of anything, I should be very glad to write to you.

Very sincerely yours, WEBD/DW

February 22, 1934.
Miss Helen Hagan,
Bishop College,
Marshall, Texas.

My dear Miss Hagan:

I find to my great surprise that sometimes you tell the truth. Your letter and welcome I found on my return. I am only sorry that I was in such a hurry and could not see more of you. I hope everything will go well, and if you come by Atlanta before I leave, be sure and let me know.

Very sincerely yours, WEBD/DW



Before becoming a founding member of NAACP, W.E.B. Du Bois was already well known as one of the foremost Black intellectuals of his era. The first Black American to earn a PhD from Harvard University, Du Bois published widely before becoming NAACP's director of publicity and research and starting the organization's official journal, *The Crisis*, in 1910.

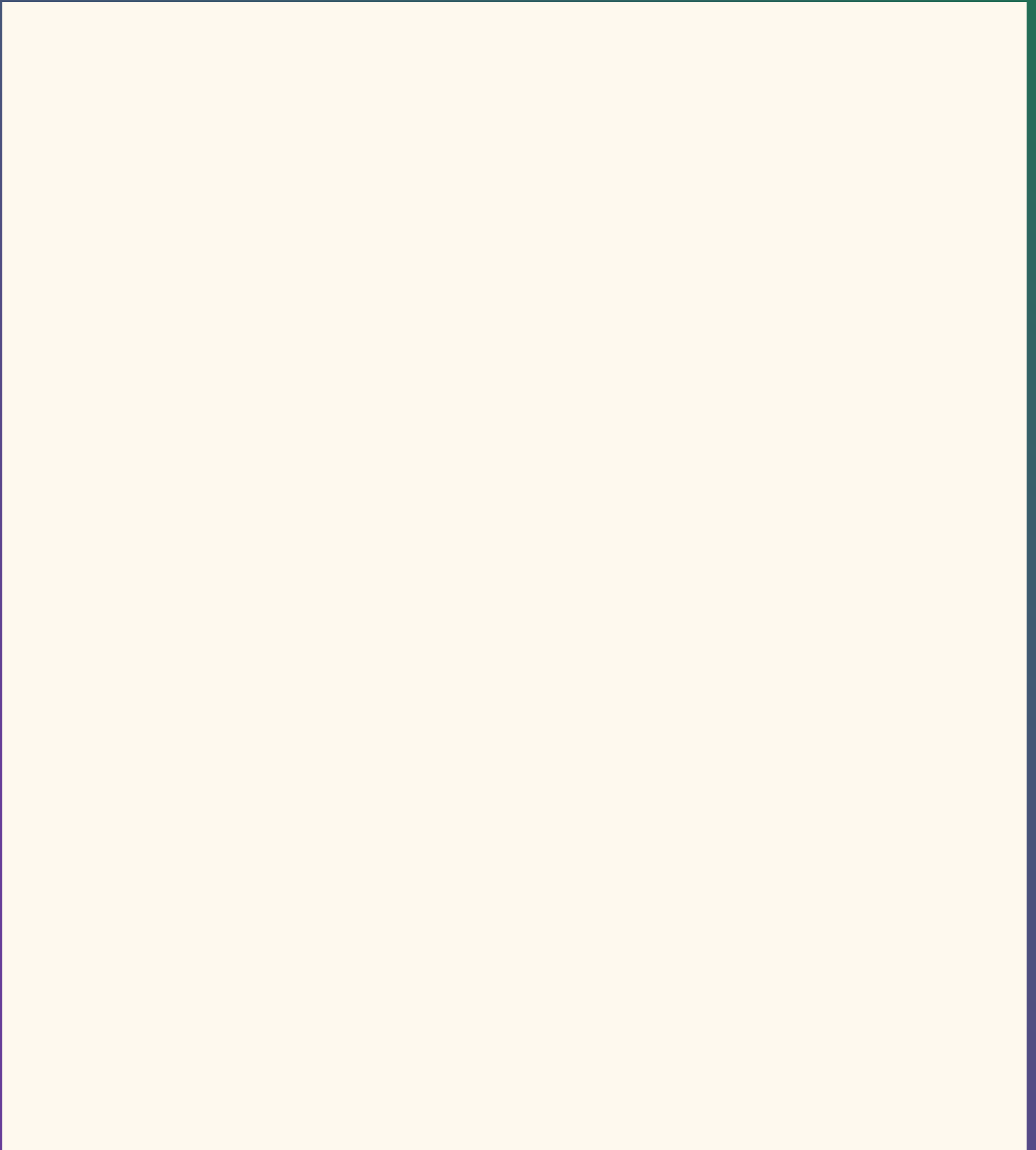


Scan this QR code with your cell phone camera to view the original letters online on the Massachusetts Commonwealth Digital Archives.

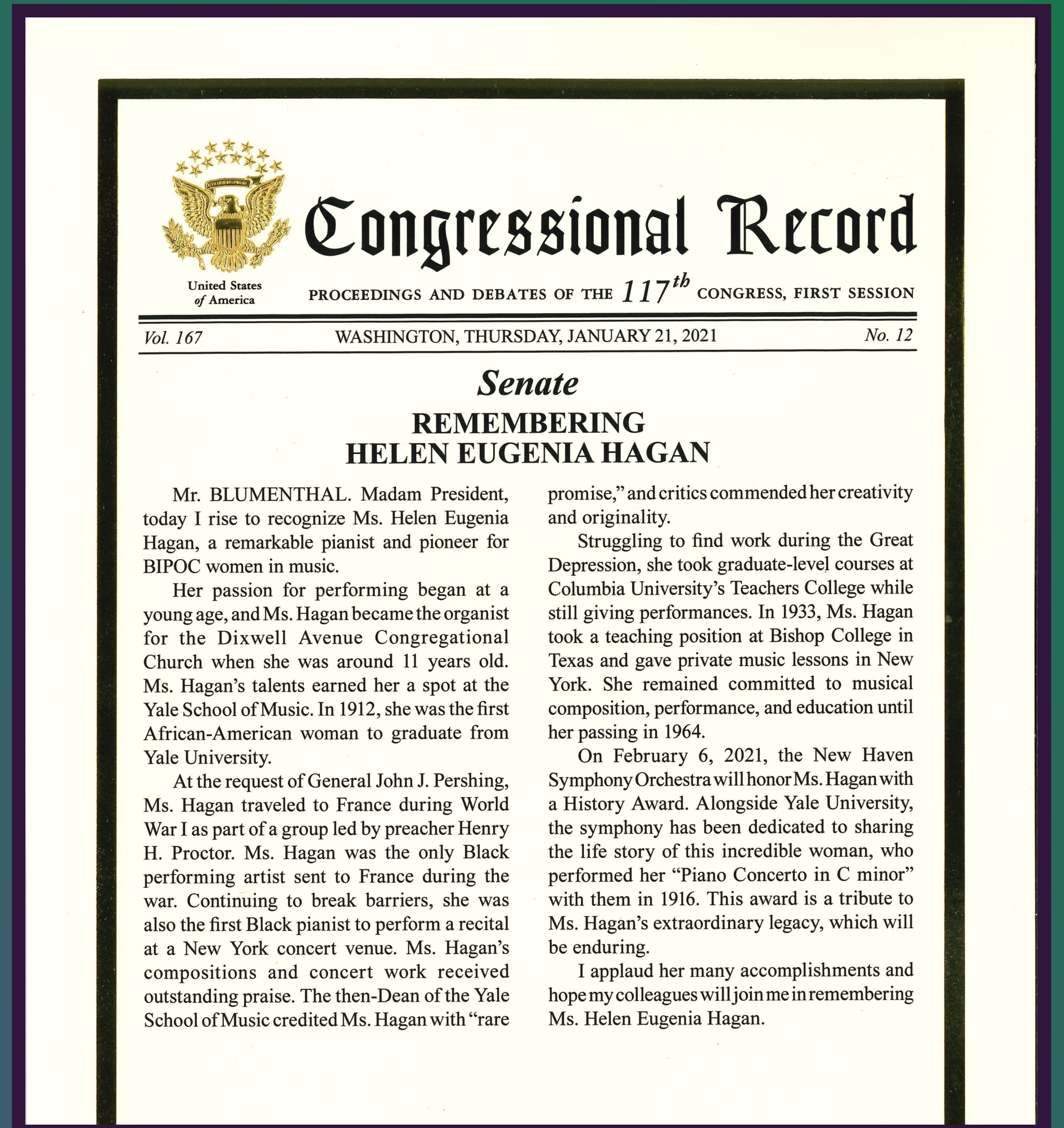
Letters to Helen

Helen Hagan reached out in a letter to W.E.B. Du Bois in search of help finding performance and composition work. It is possible she reached out to others, as well. As seen in the letter from W.E.B. Dubois, help was not always readily offered to her as she navigated her career.

What would you say if you were going to respond to Helen after she asked you for help?
How will you advocate for today's "Helens" who are still being silenced?



HISTORY REMEMBERED



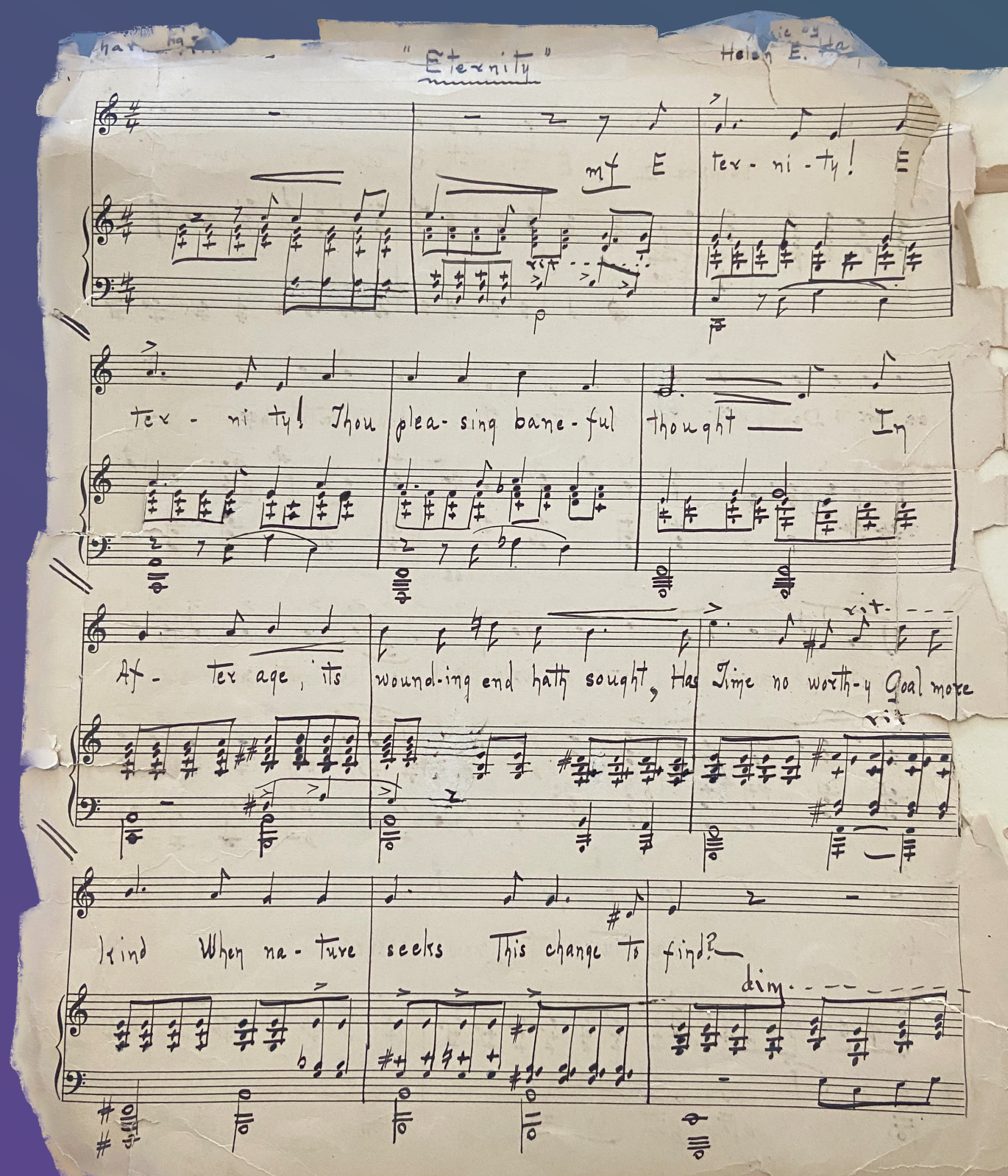
Thanks to the persistence of historian Elizabeth Foxwell, in 2016 funds were raised to add a headstone to Helen Hagan's previously unmarked grave in New Haven's Evergreen Cemetery. The grave marker ceremony ignited a renewed interest in Helen's story and her immense impact on both local and international history.

In 2021, Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal recognized Helen's invaluable contributions as a groundbreaking musician and her dedicated service work during World War I by entering her story into the Congressional Record in Washington, DC.



In the 2022-2023 concert season, two New Haven institutions close to Helen during her lifetime performed her piano concerto again in two different original orchestrations: Yale Philharmonia with soloist Samantha Ege and the New Haven Symphony Orchestra with soloist Michelle Cann.

INSPIRING FUTURE GENERATIONS



Helen Hagan's music and story continues to grow and gain recognition. Her pioneering role as a Black musician has inspired:

The New Haven Symphony Orchestra's Harmony Fellowship for Underrepresented Musicians

The Grant Hagan Society, a graduate-student led affinity group to support people of color in Yale University's Department of Music

The newly discovered manuscript of Helen Hagan's "Eternity" for Voice and Piano is a hopeful sign that more of her music is yet to be revived.

Scholarship Programs and access to music education across the City of New Haven

THANK YOU TO THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY THAT HELPED ASSEMBLE THIS HISTORY:

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