



*Wilfred
C. Bain*

Material prepared by Charles Nelson

Biographical Sketch North Texas State Teachers College Denton, Texas • 1938-1947

In the fall of 1938, the Music Department at North Texas State Teachers College in Denton, Texas, was housed in several houses on the east side of the campus. The faculty consisted of Mary Anderson and Gladys Kelso who taught piano, Floyd Graham who directed the orchestra, the marching band and the stage band, and Lillian Parrill who directed the choir. They shared the classroom teaching for the twenty-five music majors they served.

Dr. Joseph McConnell, the president of NTSTC, hired Wilfred Conwell Bain, a thirty four year old musician with an Ed.D. in Music Education from New York University, to head the Music Department. Born in Canada, son of a minister, Wilfred Bain had attended Westminster Choir College in Princeton NJ where he fell under the influence of the school's founder and president, John Finley Williamson. Movie star handsome, with a deep, resonant speaking voice, in the flower of manhood, Wilfred Bain conveyed an air of confidence that was infectious. When he talked to students, they believed him. When he talked to the mother of a prospective student, her child was destined to enroll at NTSTC. He talked to a lot of mothers and music major student enrollment grew by 109% in the first year of his administration.

By 1939, the NTSTC music department was awarded associate membership in the National Association of Schools of Music; only the second teachers college in the United States to be so designated. Two years later, NTSTC became a full member of NASM. Dr. Bain was elected national vice president of the organization and was appointed to a three-member committee to reevaluate the music curriculum for the 150 member schools. The Music Teachers National Association elected him as a member of its national executive committee.

Though all this happened in the heart of the "great depression", when the economy of the United States was at an all time low, a college education was still affordable. Tuition was just \$25.00 a semester for all the hours a student could take. The college owned the textbooks and loaned them to the students without fee. Applied music lessons were free. Many students did menial work for the college to pay for their tuition and incidental expenses.

Since WCB's early training was in choral music, it wasn't long until he had established an a cappella choir which was impressing the local citizens with its power and polish. He recruited singers from the college at large and in no time at all, everyone on the campus, who was interested in singing, was singing in the choral program.

Practical, rather than musical, reasons determined the size of the touring choir. Since a charter bus held forty passengers, the touring choir numbered forty. Buses were available for charter, but money was not. Since WCB wanted to advertise the NTSTC music department in the larger towns in the area, something must be done. He contacted a large church in downtown Fort Worth and offered them a concert for the price of a bus charter. Since they, too, were short of funds, his offer was rejected.

As the son of a minister, he well understood how churches operated. He offered to sing a concert for a free will offering. They accepted. WCB gambled the bus fare against a free will offering and won. A large and generous audience contributed more than enough money for bus fare. As news of the quality of the choir spread, churches, schools and community organizations were willing to help with travel expenses if the choir would come and sing for them.

Floyd Graham directed the NTSTC symphony orchestra. WCB knew that an excellent orchestra was essential to the establishment of first-rate music department. Besides recruiting within the State, he sent Floyd Graham to high schools in Chicago and St. Louis, to recruit strings players. In turn for playing in the NTSTC orchestra for four years, these players would be given jobs on campus which would allow them to earn their expenses. A significant number of string students responded. The size and quality of the orchestra grew.

With a more than competent orchestra and a significant number of well trained singers, WCB challenged the students with a week-long Bach Festival which brought Bach's masterworks to the North Texas community. The festival opened on a Sunday afternoon with the presentation of the Passion According to St. Matthew. Each day of that week, afternoon and evening concerts were given featuring church cantatas, motets, organ works and concertos. The festival closed the following Sunday with a performance of Bach's B minor Mass.

Not only did WCB know how to plan and build a music department, he knew how

to advertise. The afternoon and evening concerts during the festival were well attended, but the Sunday performances of the St. Matthew Passion and the B minor Mass, played to a full house. Large numbers came from Dallas and Ft. Worth. John Rosenfield, music critic for the Dallas News and Clyde Whitlock, music critic for the Ft. Worth Star Telegram, attended the concerts and wrote complimentary reviews in their respective papers. This festival was a phenomenal achievement for a music department which, just three years earlier, had a faculty of four music teachers and a handful of music majors.

In a short time the music department outgrew the several houses where they met classes and practiced. A new three-story music building was planned and built. The NTSTC Music Department was on the move. Dallas and Houston had professional symphony orchestras. WCB visited Jacque Singer, conductor of the Dallas Orchestra and Ernst Hoffmann, conductor of the Houston Orchestra and offered the NTSTC Grand Chorus as a choral instrument to perform the fourth movement of the Beethoven 9th Symphony. Since neither orchestra had an organized choir available for major choral works, they were happy to use the NTSTC resources. The advanced college singers sang the solos.

Dr. Bain felt that it was a privilege for students to have the opportunity to perform great choral masterworks. He felt so strongly that he required ALL music majors, regardless of their chosen instrument, to sing in the Grand Chorus. Strict attendance was taken and excessive absences were penalized by deducting points from the offenders applied music grade. Though the instrumentalists complained about this requirement, years later, they would boast of having sung the Beethoven 9th and Brahms' German Requiem with professional orchestras.

Multiple copies of all the standard collections of etudes, sonatas and vocal anthologies for all voices and instruments were available from an applied music loan library in the music building. On the way to the practice room, or lesson, the student would check out music and return it when finished. A schedule was posted on all practice room doors with assigned names and hours. The practice rooms were checked hourly and students who failed to meet their practice period were reported to the office. Excessive absences resulted in loss of points on their applied music grade.

There were complaints about this enforced practice, however, most of the students improved significantly each semester. Following the tremendous success of the 1941 Bach Festival, a Brahms Festival was announced for the spring of 1942. This festival encountered a severe impediment on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese

attacked Pearl Harbor. The majority of the college male population rushed to join the military service. Like all other colleges and universities in the country, NTSTC was left with only men who were too young to be drafted or physically unable to serve. The festival was presented but with modest success.

Though the men of the A Cappella choir were committed to military service, it took some time for the mechanics of the draft to call those who did not volunteer. Long before Pearl Harbor and the declaration of war, a four state, twenty-one day tour was planned for March of 1942. Among the stops were: Abilene; Odessa; Amarillo; Roswell NM; El Paso; Alpine; Blanco; Houston; Galveston; Shreveport LA; Russellville and Searcy AK. One can only guess what discussions must have gone on between WCB and the school administration to allow a trip of this magnitude in the middle of a semester. Somewhere near midpoint on that trip, the Chapel Choir, also on tour, joined the A Cappella Choir in Houston and performed Rachmaninoff's The Bells with the Houston Symphony Orchestra.

In 1943, WCB made an arrangement with the Texas Quality Network to broadcast a Bach Church Cantata every Sunday morning for six months. In addition to other music, a cantata was prepared for each Sunday's performance. Often, there was also a Saturday rehearsal. In effect, for one six month period, the choir was rehearsing six days a week and performing on Sunday!

As gasoline and tires were rationed, it became impossible to charter a bus to tour a choir. WCB found creative ways to get his choir about the State. Because of the favorable weather conditions in Texas, Army Air Corps training fields and Army Infantry camps were placed all over the State. Thousands upon thousands of soldiers in these military installations needed some diversion from their military training, so their commanders were eager to have nonmilitary entertainment groups come and perform for their troops. WCB made a deal with the U.S. Army for his choirs to tour these military posts if the Army furnished the transportation. The Army had all the gasoline and tires it needed so the NTSTC A Cappella Choir continued to tour during W.W. II. under the auspices of the U.S. Army.

Though the male population of the school grew fewer, WCB was not willing to discontinue performing the larger choral masterworks with the Grand Chorus. He "invited" the male faculty members to join the chorus. The "invitation" was presented in such a way that, though they complained behind his back, none of them declined. A performance of the Bach Passion According to St. Matthew was scheduled. The work calls for a double choir and a double orchestra. There were enough women to accommodate two choirs, but only enough men for one choir.

Since, for the most part, the choirs sang antiphonally he placed the men in between the women of the two choirs, and had them sing both choir parts. There always seemed to be a way to continue performing great music in spite of a world war and depleted forces.

Some four and a half years after Pearl Harbor, W.W. II came to an end and by the grace of the G.I. Bill of Rights, a flood of veterans enrolled in colleges and universities all over the country. NTSTC was no exception. These were unusual freshmen. Men from 20 to 30 years old who had been ship commanders, piloted war planes, lead troops into battle and even some who had been prisoners of war, enrolled as music students. These were men with a purpose. They knew what they wanted to do with the skills they were developing.

Many new faculty members were added to accommodate the burgeoning student population. To give some idea of the flurry of vocal activity within the school, in addition to regular music classes, in 1946-1947, the A Cappella Choir:

- 1) toured a memorized choir program (for two weeks) throughout Texas and New Mexico;
- 2) performed the choruses from Gluck's "Orpheus" with the Houston Symphony with Anna Kaskas from the Metropolitan Opera, in the garden of Miss Ima Hogg's estate in Houston.

The Grand Chorus performed:

- 1) the Bach B minor Mass with the Houston Symphony;
- 2) the Brahms German Requiem with the Dallas Symphony;
- 3) the Verdi Requiem with the Dallas Symphony.
- 4) The Opera Workshop presented Gounod's Faust to a Denton audience, then toured the show to a number of different towns.

Considering that the entire A Cappella Choir was also in the Grand Chorus, and were, basically, the entire Opera Workshop, this is an astounding amount of music to have performed in one year, while taking enough classes to earn from 15 to 18 hours of college credit!

In the spring of 1947, a rumor was heard, then verified that Wilfred Bain had accepted a position as Dean of the School of Music at Indiana University. Their offer doubled the salary he was making at NTSTC. The School of Music he developed for Indiana University is a matter of record.

In the nine years he headed the Music Department in Denton, the department

grew from 25 to 450 music majors. The solid foundation he laid has sustained a growth that has made the UNT College of Music one of the largest music schools in the United States. He had high standards and expected faculty and students alike to uphold those standards. Those who adopted the standards he set were among those who had an impact upon the choral climate in the State of Texas, and beyond. His work was significant and should not be forgotten in the grand scheme of the history of choral music in Texas.

Wilfred C. Bain Remembered by Charles Nelson

The sources of life's influences are often obscure and frequently complex. However, sometimes a stimulus that causes a certain consequence stands out in one's life in bold relief. It is easy to trace the inspiration for the work I did, in forty-eight years of teaching, directly to North Texas State Teachers College (North Texas State College/North Texas State University) in Denton, Texas and Wilfred C. Bain.

During the 1939-1940 school year, while living in Fort Worth, my sister and I heard that a choir from North Texas State Teachers College in Denton, was going to give a concert at the First United Methodist Church and that we should make an effort to hear this fine choir.

At the appointed time we were seated in the sanctuary watching forty singers, dressed in purple velvet choir robes, process onto the risers, followed by their conductor, elegant gentleman dressed in a tail coat and white tie. It was the most impressive choir I had ever seen in all my thirteen years. Their singing lived up to the impressive picture they presented. Their distinguished conductor gave a verbal introduction to each piece they sang, in a vibrant bass voice. To me, he looked and sounded like a giant!

When my family moved to Denton in October of 1940 I registered as a fourteen year old sophomore in the Demonstration School at NTSTC. Since I had taken violin lessons and singing lessons, I joined Margie Stafford's choir, which was superior to the choir I had sung in at Handley High School in Fort Worth. We got to sing in the big Bach Festival the NTSTC Music Department presented the following spring.

During that festival I heard the great choral masterpieces, Bach's St. Matthew Passion and B minor Mass, for the first time. It was the beginning of a life-altering experience. That Bach festival had been conceived, promoted and accomplished by that "giant" I had seen and heard in Fort Worth a year or so earlier.

The next big change in my life came when my sister, who was a music student in college, insisted that I continue studying singing. The first week of school, she made an appointment with a new voice teacher on the faculty, Frank McKinley. Following my audition, he agreed to take me as a voice student. After my first

lesson, he invited me to sing in the college Chapel Choir which he was conducting. I was ecstatic. Following the Thanksgiving holidays, there came an opening in Dr. Bain's A Cappella Choir. I won the audition for that position, and continued studying singing with Frank McKinley.

Between September 1941 and August of 1944, besides learning the great motets of Palestrina, Victoria, Bach and Brahms, and other choral music for concert tours, I learned and performed great masterpieces like Handel's Messiah, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Brahms' German Requiem, Alto Rhapsody and Schicksalslied, Rachmaninoff's The Bells, Verdi's Manzoni Requiem, Mendelssohn's Elijah, Fauré's Requiem, Bach's St. Matthew Passion and participated in singing a Bach Church Cantata over the Texas Quality Radio Network every week for six months. We sang the first choral/orchestral work the NTSTC Grand Chorus sang with the Dallas Symphony, a collaboration which lasted for decades. We also sang with the Houston Symphony. I know of no other place in the country where one could have sung this volume of choral masterworks in three years. It was an experience which left me giddy with excitement for singing.

Following two years in the U.S. Army (1944-1945) I returned to Denton and earned two degrees in music. Because of the flame Wilfred Bain lit within me, I chose to dedicate my life to the discipline and integrity involved in reproducing magnificent choral art and continued to sing its praises to anyone who would listen.

Respectful and Grateful Memories of Wilfred C. Bain
by J. Carter Murphy Prof. of Economics Emeritus
Southern Methodist University • December 5th, 2003

If I have made any mark at all on the history of my time, it has been through my work as an economist, in academia and in government. Certainly it has not been as a musician. On the other hand, of all the years of formal education that prepared me for my career, those that made the greatest mark on me may have been my final two years as a college undergraduate at North Texas State College where I was a major in music and a member of Dr. Bain's A Cappella choir.

Throughout my youth I sang. On the small farm to which my family had retreated in the Great Depression, I sang to myself in the barn and on my horse. In church I sang. As a freshman and sophomore at Texas Christian University, I sang in the Glee Club. My education had no direction. When I was a college freshman and was asked about my degree plans, I answered "business", since that didn't seem to be much of a commitment. In the second year, I could reply more bravely, "premed". But somewhere in the second year I began to think that what I really wanted to do... the only thing I really wanted to do...was sing. The choir of Trinity University came to Fort Worth, and I was thrilled. The St. Olaf choir appeared in concert, and I was in electrified.

Then the A Cappella Choir of North Texas State came, using a picture of the robed choir in the shape of a cross on the cover of its printed program, and I was convinced that maybe, just maybe, I could, with proper training, make a career of directing such a choir in a college setting. In the fall of 1941, I transferred to North Texas State in Denton and declared myself a music major. My father was displeased with my decision, but he tolerated it because the costs of educating a son were so much less at a state than a private school.

The three floor music building had just been completed on the Denton campus, and the top of floor was in use as a men's dormitory -- a financing arrangement to fund the building. I moved into the third floor and joined the company of men as diverse as the lovable pianist who tried suicide twice but who otherwise consoled himself playing eerily romantic and beautiful midnight piano music in a practice room on the second floor, to the more stern and ambitious baritone who could not tolerate the high jinx that frequented the long hallways. It was a good fellowship that had one powerful bonding agent-- music. What was instantly clear to me was my lack of musical training. A high achiever throughout my high school and early college

years, I was now a babe in the woods, years behind my cohorts in professional skills.

But I wanted to sing. Places in the A Cappella choir were filled, and there were many voice majors seeking to join. Those of us in waiting were assigned to the Chapel Choir under the direction of Frank McKinley. Mr. McKinley (his easy-going nature made it easy to call him Frank, although the serious Wilfred Bain was always Dr. Bain) was a voice teacher to most of us, and presumably made suggestions to Dr. Bain when he thought a student might be useful for the a cappella choir. It was sometime in the spring that I was invited to join at the top Choir, and I couldn't have been more proud and relieved had I won election to a major political office. I could master music theory, music appreciation and musicology and could stumble through Piano and amusedly experiment in the requirement courses in strings, but I mostly wanted to sing, and joining Dr. Bain's choir was fulfillment.

Wilfred Bain was a distant authority to most of us in the music department. He was like a military officer who inspired but did not fraternize with his troops. It was Mary, his wife, who was his soft glove, taking a caring interest in us all. In daily choir rehearsals, however, all eyes were riveted on Dr. Bain, and there was a kind of flow of energy between him and every singer. He was a severe taskmaster, finding nuances in the polyphony and brooking no sloppy phrasing or careless entrances.

When the choir tuned, we held the chord until the overtones throbbed. A choir "secret", like the fraternal handshake, was the dissemination of the opening pitch. I shall not even now reveal the "secret", but it was the source of amusement to many in our audiences who inquired about the techniques of a cappella singing. On several occasions, when the choir's work at practice seemed undisciplined, Bain required everyone to come down from the choir stands to do pushups on the choir room floor.

The two years I was in Denton were exciting ones. The big production in my first year was the Beethoven 9th which we did with the Houston symphony. In the second year, the great production was the Brahms Deutsche Requiem, which I believe we performed with the Dallas Symphony. On tour we opened with the great Bach Motet "Sing Ye to the Lord". On hearing recordings of these massive compositions, I still find myself humming, or imagining, the tenor lines. I remember, too, the excitement of working on a new Bach cantata every week for

many weeks, each for a one time Sunday broadcast. While I subsequently sang in the Midshipmen choir at Riverside Church, New York, was cantor in the choir for Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago, and joined a small professional group at Chicago's First Unitarian Church, never again did I enjoy such a richness of musical experience as I did in those Denton years.

Wilfred Bain's use of his A Cappella Choir and a Great Chorus to attract attention to his burgeoning program at North Texas, garnered many of us who yearned to be part of a fine choral instrument and who had a few other choices in those years. Sometime during World War II, I abandoned the idea of seeking a profession in music in favor of becoming a student of international affairs and public policy. But I shall ever bear the imprint of fine fellowships and musical discipline that I found at North Texas.

Bain's transformation of the North Texas program in only a few years was a feat of academic entrepreneurship at its best. I believe he helped lift and refined tastes and expectations of many Texans who previously had accepted glee club renditions of popular tunes as the norm for university music. His high performance standards, and his flair for marketing them, probably lifted academic norms and expectations in other departments at North Texas State College now University and helped propel the institution along the path to excellence it has since followed.

I am convinced that talented academic leaders make a great difference in quality, as well as size, of institutions they serve. Wilfred Bain built a great music program from scratch at North Texas and in doing so, changed his university, the state and the region. A great many of us are the beneficiaries of his legacy.

Close Up of Wilfred Bain
1947-1948
by Herbert L. Teat

“ Wilfred Bain ... when I think of Wilfred Bain, I see a highly dignified, handsome man of great bearing, walking on the stage in front of the greatest choir sound I’d ever heard...”

Thus spake Euell Porter, a legend in choral music in the State of Texas. I visited Mr. Porter in his retirement home in Waco. Friends told me not to expect him to remember anything when I go to visit. Sure enough, when I said, “Euell, remember...” Right away he waved me off and said, “Herb, I never can remember anything.” Not satisfied, the next visit I avoided the word “remember” and said, “I was thinking of Wilfred Bain the other day, and I ...” Right away, Euell said, “Wilfred Bain... when I think of Wilfred Bain, I see a highly dignified ...”

It was the same with me, and I dare say many, who got the same impression. In 1941 as a senior in Ysleta High School in far west Texas, I went to a choir concert at the auditorium one evening. The curtain opened on a robed choir beyond anything I had seen before. A very suave director in a cut away tuxedo came forward to introduce and conduct the program. His presentation and the choral singing was beyond all I had experienced, and proved unforgettable. Being of typical high school mentality, all I remembered factually was a great choir from a college in Denton, Texas. The name of the college, the name of the director and the repertoire escaped me with the exception of one composition, Ballad for Americans.

Like many young American men in 1946 I went back to college to find my place in the sun. I transferred my prewar credits from Hardin-Simmons University to North Texas State Teachers College. I abandoned the dreaminess of a composer for the more accessible employment in the field of instrumental music education. Biased though it may seem, I could not have attended a school anywhere better than what we had at North Texas. Dr. Bain had the most progressive ideas of any music educator ever to come to the State of Texas. After an interview with him as to my status in light of the two years of music I had studied at Hardin Simmons University before the war, he classified me as a Junior, and I was off and running, and I do mean running.

As an undergraduate, I took the required courses in conducting. Dr. Wilfred

Bain, Dean of Music, required everyone to take both choral and instrumental conducting. He taught the choral conducting and had a peculiar way of testing for the final grade. We students often referred to him as Mr. God, so you can imagine my level of nervousness. I presented myself at the appointed time in his office. He instructed me to go to a music stand across the office from his desk with a piece of choral music on it, closed.

As per his instruction, I opened the piece of music and studied it for a short prescribed time. "If you're ready, Mr. Teat. Please conduct the piece," he said from across the room. I took a deep breath and imagined a choral group before me, waiting for me to lead them through the music. Dr. Bain observed the way I acted out conducting the piece as a finished product. As if his observation weren't enough, I had to conduct a piece of music I had not seen before. What I saw appeared to be written by a starving composer who was still starving. But Dr. Bain allowed me no time for intimidation. The music had multi-metered measures that began in four, followed by measures of twos, or fives, threes, fours, sixes and more mixed meters. All the hours I poured into building those conducting patterns into my motor memory came to my rescue. I could not have done it with anything less than complete abandon.

When I finished, I closed the music, stood drained and heard Dr. Bain say, with a satisfied smile, "You're a choral man." "Thank you, Dr. Bain, but I've invested much in the instrumental area of my training." "That may be, Mr. Teat, but I maintain that you're a choral man."

I left his office that day, at first reminding myself of my love of band, of the instruments and the drama of band music, but I found myself contemplating Dr. Bain's words. For the first time I began to think of the human voice as an instrument as well. From Bain's insight and to paraphrase, "our nature will out". Within four years my transition to choral music education ensued.

On another day, I asked Dr. Bain, "How is it that you get everybody to do so much?" "First, you get them to want to," he said, following a satisfied chortle, "and balance that with afraid not to." "Beyond that," he continued, "If you have time to think and realize how much you are doing, you might be afraid you couldn't do it, and you'd quit."

At the beginning of my second year, during the registration process I saw how Dean Bain cared for each individual among his 400 music majors. When I completed my schedule with a required course in the Education Department, I

presented my registration card to Dr. Bain for his approval. He showed his disapproval of an Education course when he got up and walked over to have a chat with the Dean of Education. His secretary explained that they scheduled me for observation of a teacher in the Demonstration School. Dr. Bain proposed that music majors take a Psychology course instead. The upshot of the Deans' conversation resulted in my taking the course "Seven Schools of Psychology," that contributed greatly to my approach to the teaching/ learning process.

A neutral time in Music Building activities came every afternoon at 5 o'clock. You might hear a couple of pianos practicing, but even Dr. Bain appeared at the frontentrance to be picked up by Mrs. Bain. Occasionally I stood waiting there, and once heard Dr. Bain carry on a conversation with the janitor, Mr. Key. He revealed how he conducted his personal business when he told Mr. Key he bought his new Chrysler in Krum. Maybe it's the sound of the word, but I found it incongruous when I imagined that Mrs. Bain bought her clothes at Neiman Marcus in Dallas, and the elegant Dean Bain bought his car from a dealer in Krum.

Wilfred Bain Remembered by J.W. (Jubby) Johnson

I was a senior at Denton High in the spring of 1939 and my piano teacher, Miss Mary Anderson, thought I should consider majoring in music. There was a new department chairman at NTSTC named Dr. Bain. I got an appointment with him, and since I had roles in the high school musical, I sang for him. He gave me a work scholarship for half of my tuition. That was fine with me because I already had a half grant from the tennis team.

I was in the A Cappella choir as a baritone my freshman year. Frank McKinley came in the fall of my sophomore year and was my voice teacher. He put me in the Chapel Choir which he had formed and from then on I was a tenor. Through my junior and senior years I was in Dr. Bain's choir. During those years several of us from the choir sang in pop vocal groups. I wrote (or copied) the charts. By my junior year I was playing piano in "Fessor" Graham's stage band and we appeared occasionally on the Saturday night stage show.

In the spring of my senior year, 1943, Dr. Bain was booking the choir at various military bases. He asked me if I would write "something popular" for these performances. I wrote an a cappella arrangement of "Stardust" and he liked it well enough to use it. I went on active duty in the Army before he used it and never heard it performed.

After discharge from the Army in January of 1946, I went by the music building to visit. I was given a packet of music and in a few days was on tour with what was then called the North Texas State College Choir. After the tour I started work on a master's degree which I received in June of '47. With the graduate study I also taught secondary piano and directed the stage band and the Saturday night stage show in the summers of '46 and '47 I taught at Wharton County Junior College from 1946 to 1953 and Tyler Junior College from 1965 to 1998.

I have said many times how incredibly lucky all of us were at the time we were at North Texas. We were taught and influenced by such outstanding, talented people as Wilfred Bain, Frank McKinley, Floyd Graham, Walter Hodgson, Myron Taylor and Walter Robert. And then there was blessed Mary Anderson, who took a skinny little left handed tennis player and put up with him through junior high, high school, college and graduated school.

The Influence of Dr. Wilfred Bain by Bob Irby

In the early 1940s Plainview High School brought Ms. Herman Vaughn to our school to teach Choral Music. She had just graduated from North Texas State Teachers College where she had been a member of Dr. Bain's A Cappella Choir. At P.H.S. there had been very little student participation in the Choral Music program. Ms. Vaughn did a masterful job of recruiting, enlisting football players, cheerleaders and other popular students. Many of us who were not in that category rushed to join to be with the, "elite". This was my first time to sing in a group that the director required musical discipline. To me the music we produced was wonderful and I was, "hooked". She selected me to sing in small ensembles and at church I was asked to sing my first solo. Even the football players and the cheerleaders seemed to take me into their circles, which gave some much needed strokes to my self image. All this was an early turning point in my life.

In 1944, my senior year, I was informed by my choir director that the North Texas State Teachers College Choir was going to present a concert in Plainview. As I sat and listened to the most beautiful music I had ever heard I decided that I was going to North Texas and maybe someday get in that choir. I was also greatly impressed when a young baritone soloist stepped out from the choir and sang, "The Ballad for Americans". It "knocked me out"! That soloist was Charles Nelson. I didn't know it at the time but Charles was still in high school and traveling with the choir. We were the same age.

In January of 1945 I graduated from P.H.S. and enrolled immediately in the Music School at North Texas where Dr. Bain placed me in the baritone section of his A cappella Choir. It was such a valuable experience to have had the opportunity to sing under his direction the last full year of his teaching at North Texas and to be in the choir for his last tour prior to his leaving the school.

Wilfred Bain Remembered **by Rowena (Turney) Taliaferro**

Dr. Wilfred C. Bain was most certainly the dominant figure in my four years as a music education major at the North Texas State Teachers College in Denton, Texas. As a freshman in the fall of 1942 I arrived in time to sing in the Bach Cantatas on the radio on Sunday mornings and to this day, it is easier for me to sight-read Bach than any other composer. We were divided into two choirs and thus had two weeks to prepare a cantata, but it still took all our sight-read skills to perform them for radio.

With this beginning activity, my music education progressed, ala Bain, until graduation with a Bachelor's in the summer of 1946. Whatever Bain advised me to do or take, I did, never occurring to me to question him in any way, but then no one else did either. We all respected him as a musician, as a Dean, and as a man of great ability and energy. That energy transferred to us in A Cappella Choir. The boys had to do push-ups on the floor, and we females had to push-up against the wall. That gave us strength and aided in the breathing of long phrases. We even became capable of standing for 2 hours at a time for rehearsals and performances. From then on I expected my own choral students to be strong in the diaphragm area as well as open their mouths.

Our repertoire always was of the highest standard which again remained with me during my teaching years, even to the point of having my choirs sing such numbers as Deep River and of course, every concert ended with The Lord Bless You and Keep You. I will always love it and my students felt the same way, even the junior high choirs learned it as well as Lamar High School Varangian Choir (I have already requested that it be sung at my memorial!)

The choral sound that originated with the Westminster Choir College, but altered somewhat, stayed with me. Naturally, I could not expect very young voices to completely imitate the more mature sound, but my choirs were encouraged to cover their tone, especially for some repertoire. This also helped the blending of the voices which Dr. Bain always obtained with his choirs. Other than the choral experiences, Dr. Bain insisted upon an all-round good music education. With the faculty he hired: Walter Robert (piano and theory) Dr. Walter Hodgson (theory and composition) Mary McCormic (opera and voice) Myron Taylor (voice) Dr. Ralph Appelman and Dr. George Morey (symphonic literature who later became my husband Lloyd's major professor in composition), were all very instrumental in my

education. I will always appreciate these wonderful faculty members for their knowledge and helpful friendships.

And those choir trips! Singing for military installations and the civilian concerts provided each of us experiences that could not be matched anywhere. What a great idea to work with the U.S. Army so that not only did we do our patriotic duty to perform for the "boys in uniform" but we could advertise North Texas all over Texas and parts of New Mexico, Oklahoma and Louisiana. Many a young high school student decided to major in music at North Texas after hearing us sing in concert. That alone started the movement to further and improve the cause of choral music in Texas.

When Dr. Bain resigned to become Dean of Music at Indiana University, we all thought the end had come, but he left North Texas in good hands and a formidable music program established. We gave a party for him and presented him with a new car and all our well wishes and grateful thanks for a job very well done. With this background it was natural that all my choirs would benefit from my own experience and efforts. I know that any success that came my way was partly due to Dr. Bain's wonderful influence and energy.

Wilfred Bain Remembered by Ira Schantz

Dr. Bain opened to me a new standard of excellence in choral music and its performance that I never dreamed of. Because of Dr. Bain, I was introduced to great choral masterpieces of which I had never heard, especially the Bach Passions and the Mass in B minor, etc., which would later play a big part in my vocal and musical development.

Dr. Bain helped me to build my personal and musical confidence by assigning me a solo in one of the pieces the North Texas State Teachers College A Cappella Choir sang on its autumn tour, 1946, a solo which I would not normally have expected to be given since I was a freshman and it was my first tour with the choir. I appreciated not only Dr. Bain's outstanding ability as a choral conductor but also his equally excellent expertise as an administrator in his capacity as Dean of the North Texas State Teachers College School of Music. His record at North Texas and later at Indiana University, speaks for itself.

Wilfred Bain Remembered **by Ann Everett Everest**

My first and foremost debt to Dr. Bain was the way he took an interest in my performance attitude. I must have been somewhat of a simpering wimp, and he thought, "Something should be done about that." He taught me how to present myself, with poise and assurance when I sat down at the piano. His very manner was so dignified.

I shall never forget the first time I saw him. It was on campus on his daily walk to the music hall. I had never seen a man in a homburg and come to think of it, not one since. Had it been an alien from outer space I couldn't have been in complete and total awe!

I am grateful that he took the time to coach me on my mien. He stressed first, complete control of my material (and I know he gave the same consideration to his voice students) then develop a calm and assured air. To this day I feel his beautiful presence when I perform and it has helped me through a lot of nervous moments before a performance.

In 1943 we sang the Beethoven 9th with the Dallas Symphony and Houston Symphony. When we went to Houston for our performance, I came down with a terrible case of laryngitis. Not wanting to miss the chance of a lifetime, I swore my friends to secrecy and did a super lip-sync job. Dr. Bain, I'm sure, was not fooled for a minute, but, being the kind and gracious person that he was, he let me go on. (An afterthought: what if we had all had laryngitis!)

Wilfred Bain Remembered **by Kay Smith**

Any success my various choirs have experienced is due largely to what I learned from Wilfred C. Bain. Here are some of the things he preached that I tried to practice. Every person in a choir is important. The total sound is a blend of individuals trained to listen and fit themselves into this blend. Learn to manage breath easily and noiselessly. Relax while inhaling to match speed of intake to speed of output and to not take more breath than you need. Over breathing is a common fault. Good diction insures good tone. Learning to sing a foreign language helps us recognize and control our colloquial speech habits which can so easily wreck the choral tone. Good music encourages good singing. Choose from the best of choral literature if you want to best from your choir.

Wilfred Bain Remembered
by Jesse Hensarling
1944-1945

Dr. Wilfred Bain was the reason I attended North Texas State Teachers College in 1944. I had heard the A Cappella Choir and wanted to sing in it. Encouraged by my high school choir director, Euell Porter, I enrolled as a Music Education major and did get accepted into the choir. Through the Choir and Grand Chorus I had opened up to me choral literature and orchestral music that I had never heard or dreamed of. I learned discipline to stand and sing with my hands at my side no matter what happened, the importance of physical condition, and many other valuable lessons. Dr. Bain used me in the bass section but encouraged me to expand my range to baritone in personal studies.

I did not become a professional musician. My vocation turned to accounting and ministry. But Dr. Bain prepared me for a lifetime of enjoyment through singing and gave me an appreciation good choral music. I am grateful and desire to honor him.

Wilfred Bain Remembered by Cecelia (Cunningham) Box

I almost missed the A Cappella Choir. I was a senior music major when Dr. Bain arrived at NTSTC in 1938 and announced a new choir that required actual auditions. Scared to death, I went in to audition for the alto section, but he convinced me to sing soprano. I was ecstatic!

My musical memories began with the sound of my father leading the singing in church. Growing up, music always just seemed where I was going. Now, I realize more and more that music tells the story of where I've been. I can't imagine a life without music. Even the saddest tune soothes the heart and joyful music is irresistible. But joining voices to make beautiful music puts you right next door to heaven.

My teaching career involved positions at St. Jo and Sherman, Texas. The training I received at North Texas gave me the confidence to lead my student choirs to the district championship in 1940. Following World War II my husband, Joe Box, (SMU '40) and I moved to Grapevine, Texas where he was in the Banking business for fifty-two years.

Three of Dr. Bain's Famous Admonitions

1. Keep your eyes on me.
2. Before you faint, sit down.
3. Use mum!

Wilfred Bain Remembered by Wilma (Thiele) Dorsey

During World War II we could only get transportation to travel courtesy of the government by singing concerts in Army camps, as well as in schools and churches. On at least one tour, the bus was a trailer which had long bench seats down either side of the aisle so we faced each other all day. As Bill Sparks would say, "That was so boring!"

Once we were in Amarillo when they had a heavy snowfall. We all had to get off the bus and the male choir members had to push it when we got stuck in the snow. Singing in Dr. Bain's choir enriched my life immeasurably.

I spent four years (1947-1951) teaching at John Tarleton College in Stephenville, Texas. I married Harold Dorsey in 1948. We moved to Waxahachie when Harold became the band director there in 1951. I was an independent piano teacher in Waxahachie for many years. Both our daughter and our son have earned degrees from NTSU.

Wilfred Bain Remembered **by K.C. Newell**

Singing choral music with Wilfred Bain gave me an appreciation for music which, through the years, has not waned. I'm still singing in all male choruses affiliated with Ben Hur Shrine Temple in Austin, Texas. I spent 30 years with the Texas Department of highways, an engineering organization, retiring in 1979 at the age of 53.

I began my brief but memorable experience with the College of Music in 1946 right after being discharged from service following World War II. Although my major began with pre engineering courses, I still found time to take voice lessons under a very capable Thomas Hardy and piano lessons under Ray Haney, a graduate student who was then pursuing a master's degree in music. I also took a course in music appreciation but can no longer remember who taught the course. It was through this exposure that I became interested in singing in the Grand Chorus. This interest was expressed to Dr. Wilfred Bain who was Dean of the School of Music as well as director of the Grand Chorus and I believe the A Cappella Choir as well. Dr. Bain suggested (insisted) that I audition for him and a time was set up for this purpose. At the appointed hour I entered a large practice room in the music building which was void of all furniture except for one very large concert grand piano and Dr. Bain seated on the bench. The good doctor then handed me a sheet of music and told me I was to sight read this as he accompanied me on the piano. I was simply petrified because I never considered myself to be an accomplished sight-reader. Apparently I did well enough as I was told to begin attending rehearsals.

The first performance the Grand Chorus made while I was a member, was with this Houston Symphony Orchestra. We performed Bach's B minor Mass. We were all very excited about this opportunity to sing with such a renowned orchestra led by conductor Ernst Hoffman. We became even more excited when we learned that the famous and wonderful contralto Marian Anderson, diva with the Metropolitan Opera, was in the audience. We performed well and received rave reviews in the Houston papers.

Our next performance was with the Dallas Symphony, then conducted by Antal Dorati. We performed my favorite of all choral works, the Brahms Requiem. Just to be in the chorus singing this exquisite piece of music by such a masterful

composer, was an emotional experience that I will never forget. Following the performance however it seemed that the entire chorus wanted the autograph of conductor and Antal Dorati who willingly obliged, using my pen to sign his name. I still have the pen which serves to bring forth many delightful memories.

Wilfred Bain Remembered **by James R. Nance**

The first time I saw Dr. Bain was the fall of 1943 or spring of 1944, my senior year in high school. Amarillo Air Force Base was one of several military bases included on the itinerary of the North Texas A Cappella Choir tour that year. Fortunately, Dr. Bain arranged for the choir to perform a short concert for Amarillo High School during morning assembly time from the usual thirty minutes to a little over an hour.

I had never heard any musical organization perform as professionally as the North Texas Choir. I had never been so moved. The concert was more than inspiring to me, I was awed and at that time I didn't dream that one day I would be a member of that great choir. I don't remember everything the choir sang but I do remember two selections. The "Ballad for Americans", two years later I learned Charles Nelson was the soloist, and we became friends. The choir closed the concert with "The Lord Bless You and Keep You."

Following high school, like most young men in those World War II days, I spent two years in military service. I volunteered for the navy. Following my discharge, I decided a college degree should be my next challenge. The question was, just what should be my major?

I came from a family who loved music. My parents played the piano and sang. Both my sisters and I started piano lessons at an early age and we sang in church and school choirs. My main interest in music however became the trumpet. I began playing trumpet in the fifth grade, played in our Junior High School Band, High School Band and our local Symphony Orchestra. During my sophomore year in high school I began playing in dance bands six nights a week. I quit the school band in my senior year but was a member of Mrs. Dean's A Cappella Choir. During my last year in the navy, I sang in a Navy Church Choir. My short-term goals were to enroll in North Texas as a music major, and if at all possible, qualify for the choir which meant dropping trumpet and concentrating on voice.

The first time I met Dr. Bain was at my audition for the choir in late August 1946. It was immediately apparent that Dr. Bain was a confident, very well organized man who knew where he wanted to go, what he wanted to do and how to do it. Before saying a word his powerful personality was like an aura surrounding

him and filled the small studio room used for auditions. A young lady was sitting at a table next to him and another was at a piano.

I did not realize it was customary so I had nothing prepared to sing. Dr Bain, in his rich, resonate voice. said “Well, let’s test our range.” After being led by the pianist throughout a series of vocalizations, my sight-reading skills were tested. The next day I was notified to be at Choir practice that afternoon.

The choir tour that year began in Late September or early October, allowing just a few weeks for the new members of the choir to memorize all the music. Many of the choir members were previous members of the choir, and attended summer school and had some of the music memorized before the new members were selected and invited to join the choir. Dr. Bain informed the new choir members that memorization meant knowing the music well enough to be able to write out our parts and that we would be tested as the final qualification to go on tour. I believed him. Initially I doubted I would be able to achieve this feat, but after many hours of daily choir practices, plus additional preparations on my own, I was confident I could meet this requirement. Whether Dr. Bain was satisfied we knew our music, never really intended to test us, or just ran out of time, the test never occurred.

There were many things I learned that single year before Dr. Bain left North Texas to become Dean of Music at Indiana University. I was introduced to music I had never before heard or performed. In addition to the A Cappella Choir, I participated in the Grand Chorus which sang “Verdi’s Requiem” with the Dallas Symphony, and I also sang in the chorus of Gounod’s opera “Faust”, produced by Mary McCormic and directed by Dr. Bain. I met many of the “old Masters” that first year at North Texas on a level I had never before experienced.