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## Charleston Belles Abroad: The Music Collections of Harriet Lowndes, Henrietta Aiken, and Louisa Rebecca McCord

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Conducting interviews in a multistate region she refers to as “Coalton”, the stories she compiles are true, but the identifying details are obscured to provide anonymity for her sources.

Welch praises the social workers who tirelessly advocate for the children caught up in the child welfare system. It is an ongoing struggle finding the right foster family who will accept a child in need, many of whom come from dire circumstances. As a consequence of the substance abuse epidemic, social workers have larger workloads than ever before, with fewer acceptable foster homes available. Foster children themselves recognize they’re on trial with each placement in a home, knowing that the older they get the less chance they have of being adopted. It is telling that some of these youth, after being aged out of the system, later choose to become involved as foster parents themselves to give other children the opportunities they never had.

Adoptive parents often begin as foster parents, hoping to bring one or more children into their permanent family. Regrettably, a child’s age plays a large part in their ease of adoption, with those three and under - still developmentally impressionable - in great demand. Appalachian family relationships sometimes feature into the equation, with birth mothers often choosing kin to raise their children due to a variety of reasons, some enumerated by Welch: drug abuse, debilitating illness, educational pressures, and the refusal of a current boyfriend to rear another man’s offspring. The undeniable truth is that every child in the system wants to be adopted whether they admit or not. The other painful truth is that no matter how badly treated they were by their birth parents, there’s often a strong need to reconnect and seek out a relationship.

Foster parents experience special challenges repeated throughout the stories. The children, frequently having been bounced from family to family, are defensive and sometimes manipulative in order to protect themselves. They often haven’t had the opportunity to learn many basics of family life - such as hygiene and chores - that parents take for granted. The foster families who sign up do it for a variety of reasons; the majority for altruistic motives. Others, unfortunately, do it for the most venal of incentives: state money provided for the upkeep of the children. To critically judge any of the foster families, except the most egregious of those taking advantage of the system is to respond to the challenge: why not you?

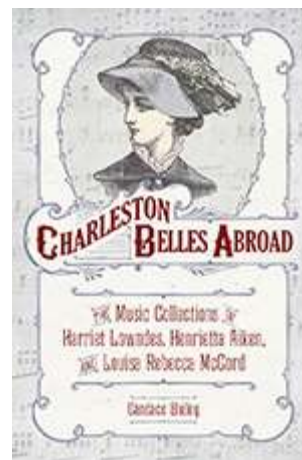
The author concludes by referencing the inherent tensions between the social workers, foster parents and the courts - all of which try to support the children, but often end up at odds, especially when the biological parents are in the mix. Based on interviews and research, she supports coordinated efforts between child welfare entities through better communication, cooperation and information sharing to ensure the best outcome for the children. This subject is not an easy read, but for potential families hoping to foster or adopt and anyone involved in child welfare, public health, or the justice system, Welch provides a much-

needed personal perspective. With chapter notes and a list of additional resources included, *Fall or Fly: The Strangely Hopeful Story of Foster Care and Adoption in Appalachia* is recommended for public and academic libraries.

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**Charleston Belles Abroad: The Music Collections of Harriet Lowndes, Henrietta Aiken, and Louisa Rebecca McCord.** Candace Bailey. Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2019. ISBN 978-1-61117-956-9 (Hard). \$59.99. 280 p.



As a graduate student at the University of South Carolina, I spent many hours walking the stacks, reading titles, sitting on the floor beneath shelving and pulling down books for browsing. Those days discovering a particular gem brought emotional highs. Actually those leads cemented my dissertation topic and led me to focus on women and women’s colleges and presidential leadership.

Candace Bailey, a well-known university professor, tells us “...I planned to spend a few days in the South Carolina Historical Society in Charleston as I began studying women and music in the antebellum South” (p.ix). Bailey says the idea arose of checking out the Charleston Museum and much to her surprise her curiosity helped her to uncover a wealth of letters and sheet music among the historical papers of Harriet Lowndes, Henrietta Aiken, and Louisa Rebecca McCord—all women dedicated to the passion of finding and collecting musical archival materials.

From research and writing, it seems those found materials focused Bailey’s research on the lives of the three women and their families who lived in Charleston during the years before and during the Civil War. All three women had great privilege and social opportunities affording them excellent educations, language and cultural sophistication, along with a passion for world travel. Harriet, Henrietta and Louisa Rebecca were focused on music (opera and classical works) and by traveling abroad to France, Germany and Italy, they searched, found and purchased

musical works of great composers and performers. These works were brought by them to Charleston and today are preserved in various libraries and historical settings in Charleston.

Candace Bailey's three Appendices A, B, C contain manuscript materials, and lists of composers and performers collected by the three women. Additionally there are examples of musical scores and title lists of many of the works that are in the collections. Overall Bailey's book is a treasure which deserves a place in the history of world music, of the city of Charleston and of the antebellum South.

Highly recommended for academic, public and archival libraries—especially music libraries. Of particular significance to women's history professors and students is the Conclusion on pages 209 to 220. Following the three Appendices are the Author's Notes, a Bibliography and an Index.

Highly recommended is a visit to the Aiken-Rhett House museum, on youtube.com.

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