



The Case That Shocked the Country: The unquiet deaths of Vida Robare, and Alexander McClay Williams – the youngest person in Pennsylvania to die in the electric chair – for a crime he did not commit (2017) examines the mysterious details and events surrounding the murder of popular house matron Vida Robare at the Glen Mills School for Boys, and 16 year old school boy Alexander McClay Williams who was wrongly accused, convicted, and executed for the crime.

During my 30 years of researching this historic case, I came across a brief mention of a song Vida Robare (shown at left) had written nine years before her death, entitled, *Memories* (1921) in an archived contemporary 1930 news article published in the *Chester Times*, of Chester, Pennsylvania.

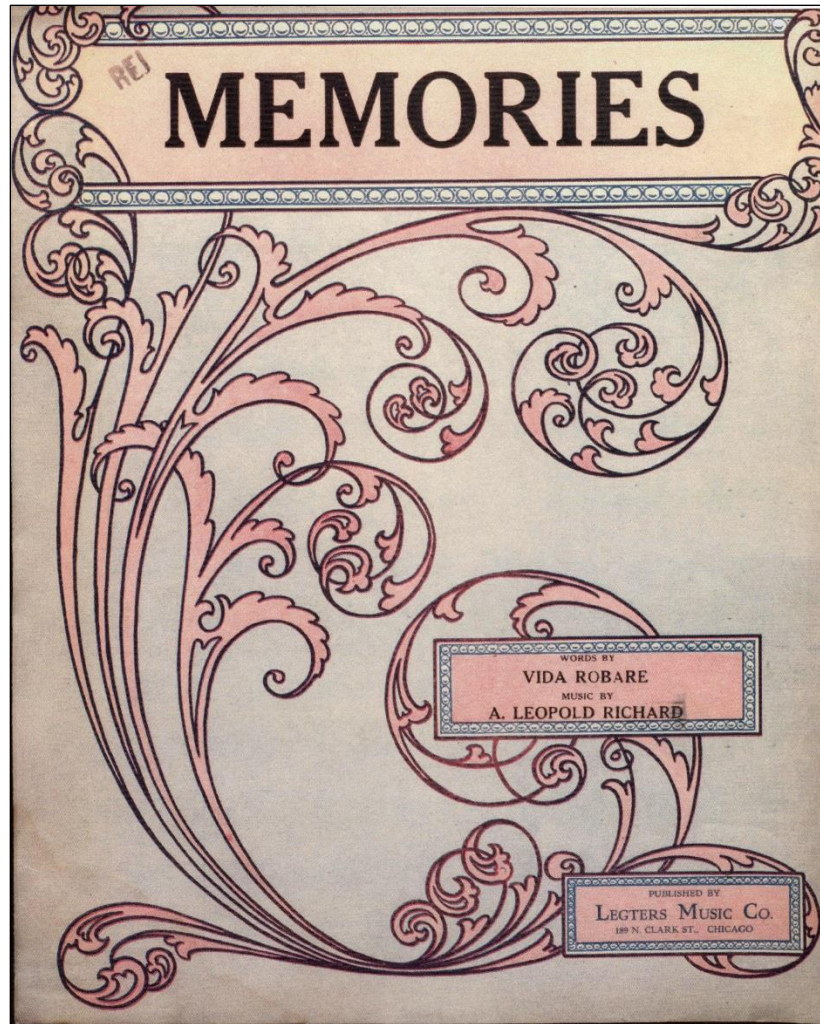
For decades, I had searched in vain to try to find this song, because nowhere in the voluminous court records or accompanying articles about the case, could I find any words Vida had actually spoken herself. And I wanted my authoritatively researched book to present this bright, creative, hard-working woman who came to such a tragic end to be more than merely a silent murder victim. In deference to her, I wanted to present her as a full human being who had had a life and history before gruesome details of her murder had been splashed across newspaper headlines from Pennsylvania to as far away as Texas, California, British Columbia, and numerous places in between.

After years of searching I contacted the Library of Congress and found a sympathetic archivist – Karen Moses PhD., Senior Reference Specialist in the Music Division of the Library of Congress – who tracked down Vida’s song in a matter of a few days, where it had been located off-site at another storage facility. And I am forever grateful to Dr. Moses for her invaluable service.

Vida’s lyrics are a tribute to her late mother, and a longing to see her dear mother again someday. This expression of love and thoughtfulness helps to present a far richer and more complete portrait of a dutiful daughter who would be buried next to her mother in a Michigan cemetery far sooner than she might have imagined. This more touching and complex portrait of a thoroughly decent human being, who undeservedly died a horrific death – almost certainly at the hands of a brutal ex-husband she had secretly divorced – enabled me to demonstrate my respect and admiration of her, far beyond the two-dimensional character described on her somber death certificate, court transcript, and vital records that supplied details of her brief and tragic life.

Hopefully this loving mother and daughter were able to find peace and happiness together in the afterlife, that escaped them here on Earth.

-- Sam Lemon, Ed.D.



Cover page for the song, "Memories," copyrighted in 1921 by Vida Robare (lyrics) and A. Leopold Richard (music). Retrieved April 25, 2017, courtesy of Karen Moses PhD., Senior Reference Specialist, Music Division Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Memories

Words by VIDA ROBARE Music by A. LEOPOLD RICHARD

Moderato

mp

Fill ready *p* There's a pic - ture — I long to see — Its a

pic - ture from mem - or - y — Where a dear old - fash - ioned la - dy's

wait - ing — In an old - fash - ioned out - tage for me — She bade me good -

bye and "God bless you", I'll wait for you pa - tient - ly, — So I'm go - ing

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Page 1 of the song, "Memories" © 1921

back to that lit - tle old shack, Where some-one is wait - ing for me. ———

CHORUS

She is just a lit - tle bit of sun - shine, An old-fash-ioned la-dy, 'tis true, ——— She's my

mp

dear old moth-er and there is no oth - er, Her eyes are deep - est blue, ——— Her

hair is turned to sil - ver, Her form is bent and old, ——— She is

just an old-fash - ioned la - dy, ——— Whose heart's as pure as gold. ———

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Page 2 of the song, “Memories” © 1921

~ Memories ~

Words by Vida Robare

*There's a picture I long to see,
It's a picture from memory
Where a dear old-fashioned lady's waiting
In an old-fashioned cottage for me*

*She bade me good-bye and "God bless you,
I'll wait for you patiently,"
So I'm going back to that little old shack,
Where someone is waiting for me.*

CHORUS

*She is just a little bit of sunshine,
An old-fashioned lady, 'tis true,
She's my dear old mother and there is no other,
Her eyes are deepest of blue,*

*Her hair is turned to silver,
Her form is bent and old,
She is just an old-fashioned lady,
whose heart's as pure as gold.*

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