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Famed composer was part of early Adelphi Band

scioto saga

By BARBARA B. KALFS

(158th in a series)

Circleville, pumpkins and the Adelphi Band are a perennial October triple entertainment treat in the Scioto Valley. The band has been identified with the Circleville Pumpkin Show for years and several generations of the same families are part of this musical tradition.

In days of yore, the band traveled in a multi-seated wagon drawn by horses provided either by Dan Delong's grandfather or Herman Dresbach. The wagon loaded with talented tunesmen would set out from Hallsville and, if the route lay in that direction, often stopped at Hopetown en route home so the boys could engage in a little elbow bending. That wagon came to an unmelodious end, was dismantled and used on the Dresbach farm.

This year when the Pumpkin Show opens, the Adelphi Band will travel by car to give concerts, parade and provide martial music during the baton twirling program, one of its annual duties.

One member of the current band, which was reorganized in 1924, recalls playing for the bean dinners at Gearhart's Grove on the Charleston Pike. The event featured a horse-powered merry-go-round. Attached around the capstan were ropes with wooden seats and as the horse moved slowly in his never-ending circle, the band became the "calliope of the day."

No disastrous event has ever marred the band's frequent appearances in Chillicothe, Amanda, Tarlton, Lancaster, Adelphi-Hallsville, Circleville, Clarksburg, Cadiz, Piketon, Kingston and other Ohio communities.

However, the band once made a misstep, taking a wrong turn during a Geranium Festival parade in Kingston and suddenly realizing the parade had passed on by. Another time, a concert snare drum broke loose during a parade but the unruffled drummer chased his rolling instrument down the street, retrieved it and returned to the band scarcely missing a beat.

The first director of the present aggregation was Fred Powell of Circleville, followed by Frank Hickman and Charles Proxmire, both of Lancaster. Roderick Shaw of Lancaster, who played clarinet with the Cleveland Symphony, was next followed by the present director, R. W. Connett of Piketon.

Several Adelphi bandsmen have made the concert and Scarlet and Gray Bands at The Ohio State University. David Mossbarger of Frankfort was a member of the OSU marching band and now has returned to his home community where he directs the Adena Band. Others play in the Columbus Shrine Club band.

Among the original members of the reorganized outfit are Arthur, Curtis and Herman Hinton, David Pontious and Raymond Hedges. Arthur Hinton is general manager. During the current band's early days, the all-wool uniforms cost about $20 but the ensembles now are about $80, one member ruefully noted.

Composer Huff Played

One of the band's former illustrious members was William L. (Will) Huff, musician, composer and director of note throughout the nation.

Huff was a native Ross Countian born Jan. 16, 1875, in Massieville, the only child of Thomas and Mary Rutherford Huff. Early in life, he showed an aptitude for music and by dint of some lessons and hours of determined self-study, he mastered almost every instrument.

As a young man, he traveled all over the country, performing in different well-known concert bands. He also was exposed at an early age to the musical mastery of the Welsh of Jackson County where his parents resided for a time.

His first published piece was during the Spanish American War, a march appropriately titled "Battleship Maine." He affiliated with the Fillmore Music House of Cincinnati which published his tunes and also sent him to various communities, many of them small mining towns, to organize bands. The Fillmore firm sold instruments and Huff went into the towns, gave lessons on the individual instruments, organized and directed the bands. It was an era of in American history when community bands were all the rage.

His composing abilities were recognized by many, the most notable being, John Philip Sousa, included Huff's "Salute to the Stars and Stripes" on the first gramaphone record the Sousa aggregation ever cut.

During the heyday of vaudeville, Huff played and directed for shows at the Majestic Theater. After World War I, he returned to Chillicothe with his wife (Eleanor Hastings) whom he married Feb. 17, 1895, and their family.

The couple had six children, three of whom are still living: Miss Marjorie Huff and Mrs. Robert Clark, both of 296 Vine St., and William L. Huff Jr., 451 Delano. Miss Huff recalls they all played instruments as that was the normal pattern of life in their father's household. In addition to their father's talents, they had the advantage of a musical mother who was an accomplished performer and teacher of piano and cornet.

Despite his prowess on many different instruments, Huff's favorite was the trumpet and many of the published numbers include passages featuring the trumpet.

During his local years, Huff played in and directed the Adelphi Band and the Odd Fellows Band at Chillicothe. He also organized and directed

"Will Huff"

a band for the Mead Corporation, Miss Huff related.

Many of his compsitions are part of the repertoire of the Adelphi Band from which two books were recently loaned for Saga research. The Will Huff's Band Book is "a Collection of Original Compositions for Band, Written and Arranged by Bill Huff, Published for all band instruments, including saxophones." The price of the

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