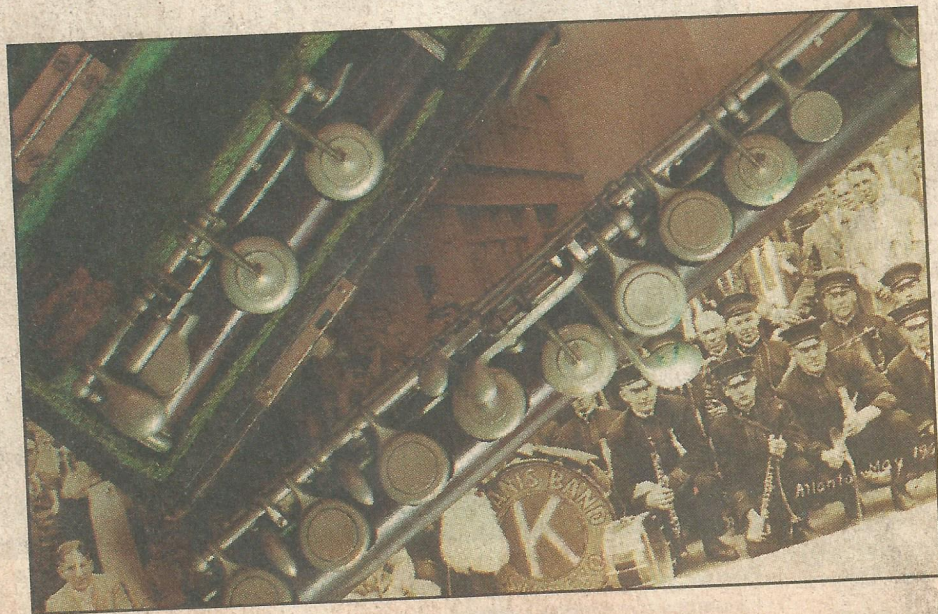


*Columbus musician
has played a lifetime as
prince of the piccolo*

Woodwind wonder



By Lee Stratton
Dispatch Accent Reporter



Franklin Schaefer climbed on the bandwagon in 1989.

ABOVE: Schaefer's

ABOVE:

Schaefer's first flute, made of rosewood, rests against an old photograph of the Sidney Kiwanis Band.

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ranklin Schaefer climbed on the bandwagon in 1923 and is still enjoying the ride.

For three quarters of a century, he has been a sought-after musician in a variety of concert bands around Ohio. He's earned a big reputation with one of the smallest instruments, the piccolo.

At age 12, Schaefer, a native of Sidney, Ohio, began playing his father's secondhand flute. Two years later, in 1923, he was invited to join the Sidney Kiwanis Club

band. He's barely missed a note since, serving in community bands, German bands, Italian bands, stage bands and orchestras.

"This year, I will have played semiprofessionally for 75 years," he said. The North Side resident rarely misses a weekly rehearsal of the Greater Columbus Community Band or the Worthington Civic Band. He also plays regularly at several area retirement centers.

The invitation from the Kiwanis band was testimony to the self-taught musician's talents. This was no ragtag outfit; it was to be a national showpiece to bring attention to the organization. The conductor, W.O. Worrell, was a professional who had conducted and played in the Sells Bros. Circus band. Sidney merchants chipped in to pay Worrell's \$2,000 annual salary.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

The band was a golden opportunity for Schaefer because there was no band at his high school. He took lessons from Worrell, whom he remembers as a taskmaster and a "red-hot Baptist layman. His church was paramount in his life."

Even the adult bandsmen addressed the conductor as "Mr. Worrell" or "Professor."

"I was only a freshman in high school," Schaefer said. "I cut my eyeteeth in that band. They all respected me, I guess because I played so well. I never thought I was anything special, but maybe I was."

His musical colleagues certainly think so.

Please see **PICCOLO** Page 2C

ABOVE: Franklin Schaefer: "I never thought I was anything special, but maybe I was."

RIGHT: Sometimes the bathroom becomes Schaefer's rehearsal room. "I have to be where my wife isn't. She could never put up with my playing."

