

Adelphi band notes century in harmony

By NANCY McVICAR

ADELPHI — This tiny village nestled in a niche where Ross, Pickaway and Hocking counties come together started a community band back in 1880 — not unusual in those days. But 100 years later, the band is still going strong.

As part of the celebration of Ohio's Statehood Day and its centennial, the Adelphi Community Band will perform at 8 p.m. Saturday at Chillicothe High School. Raymond Connett, 89, of Piketon will direct.

Three musicians have been playing with the Adelphi Band for 56 years, starting as teen-agers back in 1924. They are Herman Hinton, 70; his brother, Curtis, 68; and David Pontious, 70.

All three will be playing Saturday night. The program will include marches and overtures.

"Most little villages used to have their own bands," Herman Hinton, deputy director of the Ross County Board of Elections, said. "We're just one of the ones that hung on."

Hinton said he isn't sure the Adelphi band is the oldest in existence, but it could be. He said the Liberty Cornet Band in Adams County has been around for about 80 years, and there could be older ones around the state, but he hasn't heard of them.

Band director Connett, who will be 90 in April, runs a piano shop in Piketon and has been with the band a relatively short time — about 15 years.

He said the band has been invited to Washington in June to perform on the steps of the Capitol in observance of its 100th birthday.

"Quite an honor," he said.

Connett started the Ohio University band and taught music in public schools in Ohio until his retirement in 1970.

Lloyd Savage, one of the organizers of Statehood Day activities, said the Adelphi band "has maintained a tradition in interpreting band music for 100 years, whether a march tempo or special nuances needed in concert."

The first conductor was Mont Long of Circleville. By 1924 the director was Fred Powell, also of



Raymond Connett

Circleville, followed in order by Frank Hickman and Charles Proxmire, both of Lancaster, and a former Cleveland Symphony player, Roderick Shaw, also of Lancaster. Then came the current conductor, Connett.

The band has always performed in parades and concerts in the park, festivals and fairs, but also plays at political rallies, Memorial Day services, Fourth of July celebrations, bean dinners, fish fries and bellings. The band has appeared at the Circleville Pumpkin Show for more than 50 years.

Several presidents have been entertained by the band.

One former director was so proud of the unit he was buried in his uniform, according to Savage.

The band usually practices in Adelphi, but their building isn't heated so they have been practicing in an old one-room school in nearby Hallsville.

There are about 20 to 25 members in the band, some of them driving from Hocking, Fairfield and Pike counties to participate.

Why has the band held together all these years?

"I can't answer that," said Hinton. "It isn't because it's a money-making proposition. I guess it's just because we want to."