

Adelphi town band keeps old era alive

By Robert W. Reiss
Dispatch Staff Reporter

ADELPHI, Ohio — Back before television, radio and automobiles, many American small towns had bands that played concerts in the park in the summer and for holiday and other special events.

Most of those bands are gone, but the 107-year-old Adelphi Community Band continues to play "wherever we're invited," band leader Herman "Bill" Hinton said last week.

The band performed at noon yesterday at the Pickaway County Fair in Circleville and traveled to Hallsville for the sesquicentennial of that Ross County village.

"WE PLAY what we like to play," Hinton said.

That is mostly marches, but the band no longer marches. They ride a wagon in parades because some of the musicians are a bit old, Hinton said.

Hinton, who will be 78 Monday, is the oldest member. He joined the band when he was 14.

Hinton plays the trombone.

His brother, Curtis, who is called "Dave," and two of Hinton's three sons, Herman Jr. and Glenn, are band members.

David Pontius, 77, also joined the band when he was 14. His father, who played with the band until he was 70, was one of the original members.

THE YOUNGEST member to-

day is Billy Myers, a high school sophomore.

Ray Connett, 97, of Piketon, Ohio, directed the band for 17 years before he retired in 1984. He returns occasionally to lead a number or two.

Only one member of the Adelphi Community Band lives in that Ross County village. Pontius said the band really started in Hallsville, 12 miles away, and over the years "drifted back and forth" between the two communities.

The group first was known as the Knights of Pythias Band and was sponsored by that lodge. About 1903, it took on the name Bowsher's Bunch, possibly because so many members were from the Bowsher family. Pontius' mother's maiden name was Bowsher.

ABOUT 25 MEMBERS make up the band, but "we hardly ever get 'em all," Hinton said.

The band practices year-round. Anyone is welcome to join. "All you need to do is bring your instrument," Hinton said.

In winter, the band members wear uniforms. In summer, they wear band caps, white shirts and black ties, slacks and shoes.

Most of the 25 to 30 engagements a year are close to home, but in 1980, on its 100th anniversary, the band played on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.



Herman Hinton leads the Adelphi Community Band at the Pickaway County Fair yesterday

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