

Collection #
P 0631

**MARCHING AND CONCERT BANDS
PHOTOGRAPHS, CA. 1860S–1945**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 half-size box of photographs, 1 OVA box of photographs, 1 OVB box of photographs, 1 half-size OVB box of photographs, 1 Flat File folder
COLLECTION DATES:	Ca. 1860s–1945
PROVENANCE:	Multiple
RESTRICTIONS:	None
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ALTERNATE FORMATS:	
RELATED HOLDINGS:	
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NOTES:	<i>See also:</i> General Picture Collection (P 0411) for more bands and C. G. Conn; Indiana Postcard Collection (P 0408) for more C. G. Conn

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Military bands were the first marching bands. They provided communication and music in the field as troops marched from one locale to another. They typically included woodwind and percussion instruments. They usually marched in a forward direction in straight lines, playing music at a constant tempo to facilitate the steady marching of the entire troop. As musicians became less important in directing the movement of soldiers on the battlefield, the bands were used for more ceremonial roles and different instruments were added.

In 1818 brass instrument valves were patented, so brass was added to marching bands because it provided a bigger "outdoor" sound that could be projected to the crowds. The brass band first became important in America during the Civil War.

Some military traditions survive in the modern marching band, such as marching in formation and the style of uniforms. Traditionally marching bands have played military marches, but other genres of music have been adapted for their specific instrumentation.

Perhaps inspired by traveling musicians who visited the area in the late 1830s, twenty-seven instrumentalists formed the Indianapolis Band in 1840. It was the first significant wind and percussion group and the first regularly performing group with no church affiliation in the city's history. After its dissolution five years later, it was followed by other short-lived bands including the German Military Band, the Sax Horn Band, and the National Guard Band. Many choirs, orchestras, bands, and other ensembles started in the following half century. The Indianapolis City Band, established in 1861, performed for parades, balls, political rallies, and other events well into the twentieth century. Indianapolis's longest-lived music organization is the Maennerchor, begun in 1854 as a German-American male singing society.

In the late nineteenth century, brass bands were a major phenomenon. Most towns of any size had at least one, as did companies, benevolent societies, and other organizations. The bands performed at public gatherings such as sporting events, political rallies, picnics, and fairs. They played music that audiences found fun and familiar—popular songs, marches, and patriotic pieces.

By the 1870s or 1880s, brass instruments with nickel or silver plating and elaborate engraving were available through mail order catalogs and became very popular. Thus, many of the bands became known as silver bands, cornet bands, or silver cornet bands. Surprisingly, they were not often called brass bands.

In Elkhart, Indiana, in 1873, Charles Gerard Conn (1844–1931) invented a brass mouthpiece with a rubber rim for the cornet, which allowed him to play the instrument after an injury to his lip. The same year he began manufacturing the mouthpiece for sale. By 1875 he was manufacturing whole instruments. In 1876 Conn joined with French instrument maker Eugene Dupont to create the four-in-one cornet. The next year they opened a factory. Dupont moved on in 1879, by which time the factory was making a variety of instruments. By the late 1880s Conn employed 300 workers. In 1897 he built another factory to produce stringed instruments. Conn's instruments were endorsed by

several leading band directors, including John Philip Sousa. By 1905 Conn had the world's largest musical instrument factory, producing a full line of wind, string, and percussion instruments. Conn was internationally known for inventing a variety of improvements to musical instruments and received many patents. Because of him, Elkhart became known as the "Band Instrument Capital of the World."

In the second half of the nineteenth century, bands in Indianapolis included the Ladies' Cornet Band, the Union Band, Beissenherz's Band, and Bradshaw's Band. Employees of the When Clothing Store formed the When Band in 1875 and became one of the city's most popular ensembles.

The *Indianapolis News* Newsboys Band existed from 1900 to 1962 and consisted of *News* carriers under the age of 18. Under the direction of its bandmaster, J. B. Vanderworker, it was awarded first prize in the juvenile band contest at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. So many boys wanted to join the band that it became necessary to start a second band for younger boys for the training of recruits. The boys entered the band as early as age seven. They had the opportunity to receive a musical education at no expense to them, which many would not have otherwise been able to afford. They were given theoretical instruction as well as experience playing several instruments. Practically all of the boys attended school regularly, delivered the newspaper after school, and went to band rehearsal three nights a week. In the early 1900s there were fifty boys in the regular band and forty-five boys in the younger band. The band performed for free at educational institutions, public gatherings, and for charities.

As professional touring bands began to disappear in the early twentieth century, American schools filled the void. School bands across the country conducted by both former professional band directors and academically trained teachers participated in nationwide playing and marching contests. Municipal and military bands continued, but colleges and universities clearly had gained the spotlight.

Aside from parades, the modern marching band is most commonly associated with football, specifically with the halftime show. Many American universities had bands before the twentieth century. The earliest known halftime show by a marching band at a football game was by the University of Illinois Marching Illini in 1907 at a game against the University of Chicago.

In 1906, the earliest known high school band in the country was formed in Connersville, Indiana. It was begun by music instructor W. Otto Miessner at Connersville High School. He recruited three boys who had been suspended for bad behavior, promising to get them reinstated if they would play instruments in the new school band he was starting. Word spread throughout the school, and soon Miessner was giving lunchtime and after-school music lessons. Miessner encouraged his budding musicians by promising that they would perform a public concert complete with red and white uniforms.

While some sources list Connersville as having the first public school *marching* band, other sources state that it had the first public school *concert* band, and list Rockford,

Illinois, as the home of the oldest continuous marching band in the United States, formed in the summer of 1907.

Sources:

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SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection gathers together photographs and other images of musical bands throughout Indiana, which were acquired from various sources. Most are likely marching bands, but some may be concert bands that did not march. In a few cases individuals are identified. Also included is a poster for the C. G. Conn band instrument manufactory in Elkhart. The collection is arranged by an alphabetical listing of counties.

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Dekalb County

Band marching in parade -- mounted photo of men in the street led by marching band. A banner above the street reads "Snodgrass Bros. Revival Church of Christ." [There was a church by that name in Auburn, Ind., at the corner of S. Jackson and 14th streets.] (Photo by Schlotterback of Ligonier in Noble County; [possibly Cassius M. Schlotterback, ca. 1920].)

Elkhart County

C. G. Conn, "Largest Band Instrument Manufactory in the United States," Elkhart: lithograph poster includes portrait of Charles Gerard Conn (1844–1931) and a list of his inventions of variations of musical instruments. (Printed by Hughes & Johnson Lith. of Chicago [1885].)

Grant County

Unidentified band -- mounted photograph of twenty-two men and boys posed with their instruments outdoors (photo by Hockett of Fairmount, Ind.; [possibly Sanford A. Hockett, ca. 1890s]).

Madison County

Frankton Cornet Band -- small mounted photo of fourteen men posed outdoors with instruments. Only one man is identified: Frank Walton, seated on drum, third from left in front row. (Photo is faded and has some damage.) [ca. 1890s]

Marion County

Indianapolis News Newsboys' Band -- mounted photograph shows forty-three boys and men with instruments on the State House steps in Indianapolis before their trip to the World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri, 1904.

CONTAINER

OVA Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 1

Flat File: 4-J

OVA Photographs, Box 1,
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Photographs Box 1,
Folder 1

OVB Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 1

Indianapolis News Newsboys' Band -- mounted photograph shows band with their instruments at the World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri, 1904.

OVB Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 2

Indianapolis News Newsboys' Band -- halftone group portrait of the band seated with their instruments in a park. A brief history of the band is printed on the back [sometime after 1904].

Photographs Box 1,
Folder 2

Carl Allen Nickerson, Sr. [20 February 1889–24 April 1957] -- cyanotype postcard portrait of Nickerson playing drums. [He played drums in the *Indianapolis News Newsboys' Band* in the early 1900s.]

Photographs Box 1,
Folder 2

American Military Band, Indianapolis -- mounted photograph of twenty-three band members with instruments standing on steps of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument. One man is identified with an "X" on the photo as Louis K. Ulrich [1881–1954], in front row to the right of the drums. [ca. 1910]

OVA Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 3

American Military Band, Indianapolis -- mounted photograph of twenty-four men in band uniforms posed with their instruments by some trees. It appears that some of the men may be in both this photograph and the one listed immediately above. [ca. 1910]

OVA Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 4

Police and Firemen's Band, Indianapolis -- mounted photograph of twenty-eight men, most in band uniforms holding instruments, standing in front of City Hall [ca. 1920s]. (Photo by [Clem C.] Voorhis.)

OVA Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 5

200th U.S. Army Ground Forces Band -- black-and-white copy photograph of the band playing on Monument Circle in Indianapolis for the world premiere of film about Ernie Pyle, *The Story of G.I. Joe* [July 1945]. Identified are: Chief Warrant Officer Les Taylor (far left), Harvey Helsper (the fourth back in the far right row); drum major was Bob Gussner.

Photographs Box 1,
Folder 3

Posey County

Stewartsville Band -- mounted photo shows twenty-one unidentified men in band uniforms posed with their instruments outdoors [ca. 1910?].

OVB Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 3

Ripley County

Eureka Band of Batesville, Indiana at the Versailles Republican Convention [ca. 1900?] -- mounted photo shows large group of men posed outdoors with instruments.

OVB Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 4

Scott County

Lexington Cornet Band -- mounted photo shows fourteen men with instruments riding plus two men in the driving seat of a horse-drawn wagon [ca. 1905].

OVB Photographs, Box 2,
Folder 1

Steuben County

Brass and wind band with drum: mounted photo shows seventeen unidentified boys with instruments posed with their band leader. (Photo by G. S. Boice of Orland, Ind. [ca. 1920]).

OVA Photographs, Box 1,
Folder 6

Vanderburgh County

Evansville Military-Band School -- mounted photo shows nineteen unidentified men in shirts and ties plus a band leader in a tuxedo [Fred Hupe, director], gathered on a stage with their instruments [ca. 1930]. (Photo by Spaeth's Oak Leaf Studio of Evansville.)

OVB Photographs, Box 2,
Folder 2

Unknown Locations

Band of the 85th Indiana Regiment, Civil War: mounted oval photograph shows eleven men with drums standing with trees and tents in the background [photo is faded; 85th regiment was organized in Terre Haute in 1862].

Photographs Box 1,
Folder 4

Mounted photo of twenty-one men posed in a studio in uniforms and with their instruments [ca. 1880s?]. Band members and leader are identified by first initial and last name, but no location could be determined: T. Murray, R. McLeod, M. McPhee, W. Freeman, H. Edsel, A. Barton, J. Abel, A. McLeod, F. Franks, T. Mowat, F. Broadbridge, G. Stewart (band master), T. Scott, H. Box, S. Watson, J. Anderson, J. Murray, J. Campbell, D. Hewett, Geo. Abel, and W. Brody.

OVB Photographs, Box 2,
Folder 3