



Historic QUAKERTOWN

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April 2022 Newsletter

Greetings Members of the Quakertown Historical Society,

We are now into spring and the flowers are starting to bloom, the trees are beginning to leaf, and finally we are saying good-bye to those winter temperatures.

We continue to do work with the various displays that we have at the Society. Of particular note is the work being done at what is called “The Museum.” This is the area in front of the Upper Bucks Chamber of Commerce in the converted barn building across from the Burgess Foulke House. Soon to be completed is the set-up featuring a miniature circus along with a functioning model train. In addition, the entire area will have new photos and artifacts on display along with explanations of the same. We hope to have all of this completed in the next month.

You will also notice the “new” signs attached to posts formerly holding only the Burgess Foulke House signs on Main Street. The Quakertown Historical Society signs were found in the shed next to the “Barn” and were refinished and hung by Phil Pattison.

By the time you receive this letter, the Titanic Dinner, organized by Christina Landis and Jan Hench, will have taken place. We plan on giving some details in the May Newsletter on how it went and plans for the next one.

We have scheduled a Membership Meeting for May 19, 2022, at 7:00 PM at McCoole’s Arts & Events Place. The featured speaker will be Dick Wilhelm. Dick is a life-long resident of Quakertown. He will be speaking on what it was like to shop in the downtown Quakertown area in the 1950’s. Admission is free. We hope to see many of you there.

Finally, we have attached a history of the Quakertown Band which dates back to 1877. The Band will be celebrating it’s 145th year in existence in 2022. It has been a wonderful part of Quakertown’s history. We hope you enjoy the article.

The Quakertown Band History

Compiled from the Band’s 125th Anniversary Program and from the Band’s website

Ulysses S. Grant was president of the thirty-eight United States on February 22, 1877. He was due to be succeeded eleven days later by our new nineteenth president-elect Rutherford B. Hayes. Later that year, on April 24, 1877, the last vestige of northern control of the South – control in effect ever since the American Civil War had ended in 1865 – was due to cease as federal troops were removed from New Orleans.

The world of 1877 was unfamiliar with a three-year old British lad named Winston Churchill. The second annual Kentucky Derby had already been run. News of General Custer’s defeat the previous year at the Little Big Horn could be spread over Bell’s new telephone. And people were reading Mark Twain’s new 1876 book “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.”

In 1877, Edison's phonograph was just around the corner of 1878. Proctor and Gamble's "99 and 44/100% pure" soap was about to hit the market. The population of these United States was approaching fifty million, and the appearance of Coca-Cola as a refreshing drink was ten years in the future. And there was more to come!

In Quakertown, Pennsylvania, a group of twenty-three men had music – live music – on their minds and in their hearts. These men, as others before them, had played in various bands which ran continuous cycles of organizing and disbanding, of beginning and ending. They were determined to organize a new band that would endure and provide musical enjoyment for the people of the Quakertown area.

The meeting was held in Aaron B. Walp's shoe factory, located at 122 East Broad Street in Quakertown. The factory building was also used as the band's first rehearsal hall. It is interesting to note that seventeen charter members of the band were shoemakers by trade. Among them was Charles H. Walp, a son of the owner of the factory. Another son, Tilghman Walp, was the first member admitted to the band in the following year, 1878. Charles E. Walp, a grandson of charter member Charles H. Walp, was a member of the Quakertown Band from 1928 through the 1970's.

A list of the charter members, by section, reads as follows:

<u>Cornets</u>	<u>Bass</u>	<u>Altos</u>
Hiram Tice	William Bleam, Sr.	Harry B. Scheid
Gideon Harmer	William Bleam, Jr.	Edwin Scheid
Peter Smith	William Scholl	William Ortt
Edwin P. Fretz	Allen Barndt	Henry Hoffman
Daniel Hoffman	<u>Snare Drum</u>	<u>Tenors</u>
William Eichner	John Bleam	Andrew Hoffman
Cymbals	Allen Harmer	Peter Hoillpot
George Bleam	<u>Baritone</u>	Monroe B. Dill
<u>Piccolo</u>	Charles H. Walp	<u>Bass Drum</u>
Elam Baringer		Joseph Harmer

Cornetist Peter Smith was chosen as the first leader, serving in this capacity from 1877 to 1882. At the same time the members deemed it important to bring in new ideas. Consequently, David H. Anders, of Philadelphia, was hired special instructor, at a fee of \$4.00 per session.

Minutes from the secretary's notebook for March 16, 1877, read as follows:

"Resolved that whenever the teacher is giving instructions all members are strictly forbidden to crowd around the teacher or person being instructed. Also, that the members are quired to make as less noise as possible"

The group decided to adopt the name "Citizens Silver Cornet Band" of Quakertown. Their choice was particularly appropriate since a complete set of the famous German silver "Lenhardt" instruments had been purchased for use by the band. These instruments were manufactured at 429 North Ninth Street, Philadelphia, by Henry Lenhards, whose product had won First Prize at the Centennial Exposition of 1876.

With Mr. Smith as director, the band played for various occasions. The secretary's minutes of July 6, 1880, establish a scale of charges:

"On motion it was resolved that we go according to list of prices laid down on table (viz) club meeting, no parade \$5.00, parading one evening in town \$10.00, parading one evening out of town \$15.00, Doylestown \$25.00 and expenses not including expenses of drivers, Quakertown parade day and evening \$25.00, playing at political meeting all day \$25.00 and evening extra. Picnics \$15.00 if no team \$10.00, celebration \$18.00 with no team \$13.00, surprise party in town \$5.00 with team \$10.00."

Quakertown actually had two bands organized in 1877. The Grand Union Cornet Band of the 1st and 2nd wards played on brass instruments, while the Citizens Silver Cornet Band from the 3rd ward used silver. Both bands enjoyed a friendly rivalry, playing new tunes the other had not heard, in each other's territory. Each band had its own specially decorated wagon for parades. The Grand Union Cornet Band eventually died out and its remaining members joined the Citizens Silver Cornet Band.

In 1882, Mr. Smith relinquished his post to the second conductor, Harry S. Schultz. Mr. Schultz was a partner in the Schultz and Shive Music Ware Rooms in Quakertown, and he is also remembered as a piano tuner and piano teacher.

During the early 1880's, it was necessary to consider the purchase of another set of band instruments because of style changes. The instruments selected to equip the band were made of brass, which is the standard to this day. This change made the name "Citizen's Silver" obsolete and thus, in 1883, the name "Germania Band" came into existence. The name "Germania Band" was associated with good music until the United States entry into World War I when it became customary to avoid anything having a German connection. In response to this widespread American feeling, the designation "Quakertown Band" was adopted on May 23, 1917, as the official name of the organization.

But back to the year 1885. Under the combined efforts of Mr. Smith, Mr. Schultz, and Mr. Anders, the band became proficient in the martial music of the day. It was during Mr. Schultz's term, which continued into 1885, that the reed instruments made their appearance in the band.

At this time, the band – no longer satisfied by playing only marches – turned to The Rev. J. F. Ohl, who consented to act as special instructor. Rev. Ohl was pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Quakertown. A thorough musician, he is remembered throughout that denomination even today for the hymns he composed and for his aid in compiling music for their hymnal.

Rev. Ohl's influence on the band is still evident at the present time – not only because he set a high standard of music, but also because, out of respect for his calling, one of the band's cardinal rules is still strictly enforced:

"All members retain membership subject to good behavior."

It was under Rev. Ohl's tutoring that the Germania Band started on its concert career. Rev. Ohl probably also encouraged the following band resolution of October 7, 1891:

"Resolved that each member of the Germania Band after entering the room on practice evenings shall not play on his instrument at any time during the evening except on notice being given by the proper officer, in this manner every member can hear what remarks are made and know when and how to play."

During the Rev. Ohl era there were two leaders. Daniel Hoffman, cornetist, led the band from 1885 until 1890. Daniel and his brothers Henry and Andrew were charter members of the band. Another cornetist, Lewis E. Blead, was the leader of the band from 1890 to 1893. Mr. Blead, who joined the band in 1885, was the son of William Blead, Sr. The father and two other sons were charter members of the band.

The departure of Rev. Ohl, who was called to a distant congregation, was marked with a farewell concert on Saturday afternoon, September 16, 1893, at 3:00 p.m. His successor for a short period of time was Professor Bastian, a music instructor at Girard College, Philadelphia.

In 1893, William Hillegas, a cornetist, was elected leader. He had grown up with the band, having been a member since 1881. Mr. Hillegas was himself a good instrumentalist, fulfilling many engagements as a cornetist with "outside" organizations. He welcomed opportunities to study with a number of name conductors of the day.

An interesting sidelight occurred soon after Mr. Hillegas became leader when Mr. Chauncey Stoneback and Mr. Hillegas purchased a new bass drum for the band in 1894. It was the largest size commercially made at that time and was the same drum that was used by the official band at the World's Columbia Exposition in Chicago in 1893.

The width of the drum was so great that it could not be taken into the passenger coaches of trains. It was always shipped in the baggage coach when the band traveled to distant points. Because of the undesirability of this arrangement, the drum was reduced six inches in width, and the problem was solved.

Mr. Hillegas' contacts and aggressiveness and the growing ability of the band at the turn of the century took the organization all over eastern Pennsylvania and into New Jersey resorts. A fourteen-day engagement played at Asbury Park in 1902 serves as an example of the type of work done by the band at that time. A Captain Brenton of the 4th Brigade Band had selected the Germania Band to fill the spot. The concert series was played very successfully by a twenty-piece

band under the direction of Mr. Hillegas. This long-term engagement served as an introduction to work in the resort areas of New Jersey.

In 1902, another band was formed in Quakertown called the "Citizen's Band." Their first concert, under the direction of Harry Moyer, was on the west lawn of the Red Lion Hotel. The band played many picnics and parades. After a few years Peter Moyer took over the leadership of the band until 1918. Worman Shelly directed the band from 1918 through the 1950's, succeeded by Richard Nace, who was its director until the group disbanded in the late 1960's. Some of the members of the Citizens Band also played in the Quakertown Band. Maynard Cressman, a long-time member of the Quakertown Band, also played with the Citizens Band.

It was late in the year 1907 that Mr. William Mininger and Mr. Francis Rantz collaborated on the idea of a parade that has become an annual local affair. They submitted their plan to the other members of the Germania Band and secured the promise of three local merchants to supply prizes for the contestants. This parade was Quakertown's first Halloween Parade, which was originated expressly for the purpose of permitting the children to show off their costumes to the townsfolk. From November 6, 1908, issue of the Quakertown Free Press comes this account of the celebration:

"Last Thursday evening Quakertown had another parade, that of mummers who issued forth in Halloween Costumes, some splendid, others comic or grotesque. The Germania Band had offered to award prizes to those who participated and as a result there was a large number of all sorts of fantastic folks marching along the street, all intent on gaining the prize.....Rain had fallen during the day and mud lay thick and cozy in the street.....The parade proceeded in excellent order. These gentlemen had no easy task...their work was well done and gave general satisfaction."

This was the beginning of one of Quakertown's fine traditions.

In 1909, Mr. Hillegas, with the aid of the Rev. Schell, then pastor of the First Evangelical and Reformed Church, Quakertown, formulated the idea of the Germania Band Association. By this time the band had quite an alumni group. After thirty-two years of band work, some members had moved to distant communities; some had ceased being active members; and some moved up the ladder to professional music. The members, active and inactive, were welcomed back through the Germania Band Association. They came to look on the band's birthday as a homecoming date to renew old acquaintances and to meet the newly acquired members of the group. While the Germania Band Association is no longer a functioning organization, the spirit of the group survives and each year many former members return once again at anniversary time.

During the year 1913 Lewis Pfaff became the director. Mr. Pfaff had also grown up with the band, having been a member since 1898. An expert cornetist, he was considering a bid to play with the U.S. Marine Corps Band at the same time that he was asked to assume the responsibility of leadership. To be a professional musician, or not to be one, was his question. He chose not to be, and by this choice the band gained a dynamic leader.

Lewis Pfaff came from a family of fine musicians. Three of his brothers were listed as members of the band. Horace, who played alto horn, joined the same year as Lewis, in 1898. Frederick joined the band in 1901 and went on into professional music to become one of the outstanding tuba players in the United States. Milton played flute and piccolo and joined the band in 1905. Milton's daughter Irene was a featured vocalist at the Annual Concert on March 2, 1942.

These were busy days, but of the many engagements played during Mr. Pfaff's leadership, there were two really outstanding performances, both being parades.

The first was a Fireman's Parade at Chester, Pa, in September 1913. It must have been a terrific job because it was, for years and years after, held up to the youngsters of the band as an example of how tough a parade can be. The band was on the march from 1 p.m. until dusk with the mercury hovering at 96 degrees in the shade. It was fortunate that a fifty-piece band was in action that day so that the men could spell each other.

The second parade of note was played on September 8, 1921, under quite different circumstances. This one took the group to Atlantic City to play for the first Beauty Pageant – the pageant which has grown into the "Miss America" Pageant of today. The Quakertown Band was selected through competitive audition by Mr. Charles Frey, music director for the pageant, to lead the parade and to furnish music in the Queen's Court of Honor. Memories recall the wearing of white bathing suits to play the boardwalk parade – meeting and chatting with Alexander Graham Bell, who appeared as King

Neptune in the parade – the band trumpeters playing the fanfare announcing the winner – and, of course, the beautiful Margaret Gorman, of Washington, D.C., winner of that first contest.

Mr. Lewis Pfaff was aggressive and a perfectionist – he literally drove the band, insisting on much regular practice at home in addition to weekly rehearsals. Consequently, the band grew in ability and reputation under his baton until he resigned in 1925.

In 1925 Mr. Howard E. Shive, a professional musician who had joined the band as a clarinetist in 1910, undertook the job of conducting. Mr. Shive was organist at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Quakertown, and was an excellent teacher of piano and woodwind instruments. Under his direction the woodwind section came into its own and has continued to be a feature section. With this unusual asset in a small-town band, the organization climbed to new heights as a concert group.

The lean years of the 1930's didn't affect the band musically. Regular rehearsals with a full complement of musicians were continued even though jobs were not plentiful. The determination of the group to retain its existence was sorely tried; but despite the financial difficulties of the day, the band remained intact. It came out of its trial a stronger organization, ready for work as it gradually increased in the years following.

By this time the band was a young band - young in age but not young in musical experience. However, World War II came along and took twenty-eight of the members into the armed services. Fortunately, not all were called in at the same time, and the band survived yet another serious threat to its existence.

Mr. Shive's patience, his faith in the organization and his untiring work to sustain it are worthy of praise. He composed several good marches which he "never found time" to have published.

In 1948 he begged to be relieved of the leadership because of ill health. His loss was keenly felt, especially by those who had served during the twenty-three years under his baton.

He was succeeded by Mr. Russell Kunkle, who was instructor of instrumental music in the Quakertown schools. Russell and his father, Mr. J.B. Kunkle joined the band in 1940 as clarinetists.

Mr. Russell Kunkle was a very efficient instructor on string, brass, and woodwind instruments. His choice, however, was the woodwinds, giving fine performance on flute, clarinet, and saxophone. He was a graduate of West Chester State Teacher's College, where he majored in music.

It was in 1948, with television entering into the entertainment picture, that the band decided to make some changes. The appearance was changed from the conventional concert band to a more colorful one. The use of orchestra-type music stands gave the audience an opportunity to see the players in action. Three vocalists were also added as a regular part of the concert band. Each of the young ladies was a soloist in her own right and their voices blended nicely for trio and chorus work. A chorus from within the membership of the band was developed. The strict diet of heavy classical music was tempered with a sprinkling of lighter classics, good marches, and current hit parade tunes.

Mr. Kunkle was the logical choice to assist in the development of these innovations – but in August of 1951 he tendered his resignation because his profession took him to another locality.

In 1943, Mr. Leslie Flounders, professional woodwind artist and a special feature soloist for a number of years, presented the Quakertown Band with a loving cup to be engraved annually with the name of the outstanding band member for that year. The cup was to be in the possession of the honored member for one year, then passed on to the honored member for the following year. This custom was discontinued for a few years during World War II, then reinstated, and later allowed to lapse.

When Mr. Kunkle left in August of 1951, Mr. Ralph R. Moyer, a clarinetist with twenty-five years of service already to his credit, was elected to succeed in the line of leadership, a post he retained for 17 years. The band made several LP recordings under Moyer's direction.

In 1954 the band purchased a building on North Hellertown Avenue, the former Pilgrim Holiness Church. This building is currently the home of the band.

In 1959 the Quakertown Band competed in the Meredith Willson Best Band contest. The event was staged by radio station WIP. Some 66 Pennsylvania bands entered the contest, which ended in a tie between Pottstown and Quakertown. Later a band playoff was held in Pottstown, where Quakertown took second honors in the tie breaker.

The 1960's had the Quakertown Band performing for many of its usual concerts, picnics, and festivals. These included various benefit concerts for causes such as muscular dystrophy, student loan funds, and the community band shell. Church concerts or hymn sings were also performed annually. In 1966 the band welcomed Dr. Albertus L. Meyers, director of the Allentown Band, as guest conductor for the 89th anniversary concert.

In 1968 Mr. Moyer retired as director and Mr. Wilbert P. Haas was named bandmaster. Mr. Haas, a cornetist with the band for twenty-five years and a Quakertown resident, directed the band through 1975. During the Haas directorship the band played many concerts at Menlo Park, the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa, and Lake Towhee. One of the highlights of Mr. Haas tenure as director was a special pops concert performance in 1970 at the Moravian Pottery and Tile Works in Doylestown. And, in 1970, women were allowed to become members for the first time.

In 1976 Mr. Joseph W. Blewett became the Quakertown Band's director. Mr. Blewett, a band member since 1955, served as instrumental instructor at Quakertown Community High School from 1955 to 1974, then served in the same capacity at the Milford Junior High School until his retirement. As a band director in the Quakertown School District, he taught many individuals who went on to become Quakertown Band members.

From 1976 through 1994 Mr. Blewett directed the Quakertown Band in various concerts including church fairs, strawberry and peach festivals, Fourth of July celebrations, Concert in the Park series appearances, and its Annual Concert. It was during this time that, in an effort to avoid bad weather problems, the Annual Concert date was moved from a Sunday near the actual anniversary date (February 22) to a Sunday in March. The Quakertown Band also provided entertainment for Quakertown Hospital and Grand View Hospital Lawn Fetes; the band accompanied Phyllis Diller in the opening and closing of her performances at the final Hospital fair.

The 1980's saw the beginning of the band's participation in the annual Christmas in Quakertown community concert.

When Joe Blewett stepped down from the podium in 1994, the band was fortunate to find Frank C. Parker IV, a recent college graduate who was knowledgeable in contemporary music and jazz styles. A product of the Quakertown Community Schools, Parker widened the variety of musical styles and added many contemporary compositions to the band's library.

During this time the band continued to keep its tradition of concerts in the summer while also performing at special events occurring in surrounding communities. One such concert took place in Pennridge in 1995, when the Quakertown Band participated in a celebration marking the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. Due to increased responsibility in the school system and needing to continue his education, Frank resigned in 1999.

Richard Karschner took over as bandmaster at that time. Karschner spent more than thirty years as a high school band director and then worked as a Supervisor of Music from the Upper Dublin Schools until retiring. Richard studied at Susquehanna University, Miami University, and Temple University. Having directed award-winning concert, marching and jazz bands as well as more than twenty-five musicals, he was familiar with a wide variety of musical styles. He resigned as conductor in 2017 to become Director Emeritus.

Joseph J. Santanello was named the 14th conductor in 2017. Mr. Santanello is originally from Vernon, New Jersey. Santanello is currently the Director of Bands at North Penn High School in Lansdale, PA, a position he started in 2019. Prior to that, he spent 10 years as the Director of Bands at Strayer Middle School and Assistant Director of Bands at Quakertown Community High School, both in Quakertown, PA. He earned his Bachelor of Music Education from West Chester University of Pennsylvania in 2009 and his Masters of Conducting from the American Band College of Sam Houston State University in 2014.