

Aschbacker's High School Band



Standing (L-R) Arthur Holdgraf-Bass Horn, George Thierwechter-French Horn, Lester Fought-Slide Trombone, Irvin Ellsworth-Cornet, Arthur Zipfel-Alto, Edgar Kolath-Bass Drum, Prof. George F. Aschbacker- Leader, William Bisch-Alto, Ray Burton-Baritone, Clifton Frye-Clarinet, William Marks-Cornet, Wesley Bredbeck-French Horn, Albert Roose-French Horn

Kneeling(L-R) Harold Ellsworth-Valve Trombone, Leon Beier-Valve Trombone, Donald Thierwechter-Cornet, Grayson Gill-Snare Drum, Leonard Von Thron-Cornet, Harry Foreman-Cornet, Lewis Heller-Piccolo

Aschbacker's High School Band was formed November, 1906 by Prof. George F. Aschbacker (Aschbacher). They held weekly practice on the 3rd floor of the old 1875 School Building. (This building was on the Southwest corner of Walnut and Church Streets – on the same site as the current school building.) The band's first public appearance was in the lobby of the Kuebler Hotel for George Washington's birthday. It gave Saturday night concerts on a covered bandstand on West Water Street, next to Schimansky's Drug Store. (The bandstand was on the site that later had the one story light colored brick Portage Store.)

The photo of the band was taken on May 30, 1907 by George Smith, photographer, in front of the Carl Sperling house at 127 East Water Street. The photographer stenciled the name of the band on the drumhead when he processed the photo. (Note the different size of lettering on the drumhead in the photo.)

The band played for "Oak Harbor Day" on the boat going across from Marblehead to Cedar Point. (Date unknown) In a conversation with Mrs. Francis Roose, she said the band walked out to the Roose homestead (just beyond St. Paul Church on County Road 17, Southeast of Oak Harbor) to play for the wedding of Otto Roose's sister. (Granddaughter of Charles Roose, Sr.)

The band dissolved June 1, 1909. Professor Aschbacker(Aschbacher) moved to Chicago and then to Dayton where he passed away.

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The following paragraphs, about Aschbacker's High School Band are excerpted from pages 41 & 42, A History of The Oak Harbor Public School and the Benton-Carroll-Salem Local School District – George E. Thierwechter – 1980

“The idea of an Oak Harbor High School Band was conceived in the mind of Mr. George F. Aschbacker, Assistant Principal and Music Instructor of the high school in November, 1906. At that time he organized and assumed the responsibility of the band. All band activities, except practice sessions, took place outside the school. Practice sessions were held in the fifth grade room on the third floor of the school each Friday evening starting at seven o'clock. All of the instruments in the band were player owned except the bass drum and the tuba which were borrowed from the old K. of P. Band. All members of the band were self taught except for instruction received from Mr. Aschbacker during the practice session.”

“On the morning of May 30, 1907 the band made its first public appearance in uniform when George D. Smith, local photographer, took a picture of the band in front of the iron fence of the Sperling residence, across the street from the J.H. Kraemer homestead. When the plate was processed he placed in the bass drum head the words 'Aschbacker's High School Band' and that is how the band received the name by which it was known thereafter.”

“Only two public appearances were made for the school and these were in the years 1907 and 1908 when the band marched and provided marching music for the Memorial Day parades from the school to Union Cemetery. It was an outdoor marching and concert band and this, no doubt, was the reason why the band was never requested to participate in the Inter-society programs which were given each winter season in the Town Hall.”

“During the summers of 1907 and 1908 the band each year gave a series of ten concerts of two hours long on Saturday nights from a bandstand which was located in a vacant lot on the south side of West Water Street where the Portage Store is now located. The village council paid the band \$100 each season. Many people will remember that on these Saturday nights the sidewalks of the business section were packed with people. The scene might be described as a Mardi-Gras without the funny suits. These summer appearances of the band assisted in paying for the musical supplies such as sheet music, etc. The band also made two appearances out of town during the summer of 1907, the first at Elmore, Ohio when it participated in the Fourth of July celebration, and the second was in Gibsonburg on August 3rd on which day Croghan's Victory was a celebration in Sandusky County. The band worked from nine o'clock in the morning until nine in the evening, one hour out for dinner and supper. The band received \$30, transportation and meals for each of these two appearances and this helped to make the band self-sustaining.”

“On February 22, 1907 a movement for securing uniforms for the band was started. A short concert was given in the lobby of the Kuebeler Hotel when Superintendent Hoffman started a petition with a gift of five dollars and the members of the band took the petition around to the business men of the village and secured enough money to pay for the uniforms.”

“There was no organization known as the Band Mothers Club in the village in 1907 and 1908. The unorganized mothers of the members of the band washed and ironed the white duck suits many times during this period. They washed with the help and use of an old fashioned wash board and ironed with an old fashioned iron heated to proper heat on a wood burning kitchen stove.”

“Shortly after the time of graduation of the Class of 1909, the band disbanded.”