

LINCOLN MUNICIPAL BAND

Marla McCabe has a long history with the Lincoln Municipal Band. McCabe's father was a Lincoln Municipal Band musician for the very first concerts, and Marla later performed with the ensemble as a soloist. Marla recalls her family's involvement with the Lincoln Municipal Band and how the ensemble has been a part of our community:

"My father, Edward C. Marx, belonged to local union 463 and took part in helping to establish the Lincoln Musicians Association. He was a long time member of the Lincoln Municipal Band.

Since Sousa sparked a love for bands during the 1920's, bands became a popular form of entertainment. Then when autos entered the scene, particularly during the thirties and forties, a Sunday afternoon or early evening outing might end at the band stand for a concert in the park.

The first Lincoln Municipal Band program I found in my father's memorabilia was dated 1928. The City of Lincoln Municipal Band concert featured the Elks Band, Lincoln Lodge No. 80 under the direction of Dr. Arthur E Ward on Sunday evening July 1, 1928 7:30 to 9:30 PM at Antelope Park. Many of the band members were also members of the Lincoln Municipal Band. The second program was a 1941 concert directed by John Shildneck which featured John in a trumpet trio with Yvonne and Duane Harmon.

John continued as director of the LMB until he was called to service during WWII where he was a member of the US Army Band. During his absence Harry H Ziegenbein became conductor until John returned in 1946.

John was a strong supporter of young talent and frequently featured teenagers at the Sunday concerts.

The band practiced every Sunday morning from 9:30 to 11:30 at the Antelope bandstand just off 31st and A Streets and it could be heard many blocks away.

On Thursday evenings on the 2nd floor of the Burlington Depot a number of the LMB personnel joined Burlington band members, also conducted by John Shildneck. They rehearsed some of the numbers that would be performed at the next Sunday evening park concert.

The Sunday band concerts were enjoyed and well-attended. The Lincoln Journal would comment about the program each week and estimate the number in attendance.

Many people listened from their cars and would arrive early to park in the front row. After each number they would honk wildly to show their appreciation.

The seating for the audience was constructed of large wooden planks attached to heavy cement end supports. Some people chose to sit on the grass, others brought large blankets to accommodate their family groups.

A shelter for picnics between the road and the bandstand provided an eating area, however most people came to listen rather than eat. After the concert the Smith's Dairy Drive-In at 33rd and A became a busy place where a double-dip ice cream cone could be purchased for a mere 5 cents.

Lincoln folks were proud of their Lincoln Municipal Band because it served as an enjoyable gathering place for quality music as well as a pleasant spot to socialize.”