

"Alesia Band"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

The community band was once commonplace throughout Carroll County. Local bands provided music for social events including picnics, parades, patriotic observances and other activities. The bands also frequently traveled to other communities and performed at similar events. The County's incorporation records provide the names of 40 local bands organized between 1857 and 1952. The list includes now defunct groups such as The Mount Pleasant Brass Band Society (1857), The Copperville Cornet Band (1873 and 1885) and The Lincoln Brass Band of Westminster (1885).

Today, however, only three of these historical bands survive; the oldest is the Westminster Municipal Band (1893). The other surviving bands are The Alesia Band which celebrates its centennial this year and The William F. Myer's Sons Band incorporated in 1938.

The charter members of the Alesia band were Harry Blocher, W. Danner, George Everhart, G. Frank, Joseph Frank, Charles Frederick, George Hoffacker, Harry Hoffacker, Samuel Hoffacker, Spencer Keller, Levi Laur, Charles Landis, William Landis, E. V. McCullough, William Miller, Ira Painter and Howard Wentz. The list clearly shows that membership in the band was often a family affair, a tradition that endures today. A centennial booklet produced by the band provides some additional information about the history of the band:

"Once upon a time in the village of Alesia, in the year of our Lord, 1898, a group of men organized the Alesia Band. Our findings are based on a roll book dated 1919 and others dated up to 1998.

They met in a hall in down town Alesia, and it still stands today. Rehearsal attendance varied from 12 to 26.

Minutes from the October 1921 meeting read for a vote to continue or to disband. On November 1921 under to newly elected President, E. V. McCullough, the decision was to reorganize with President - E. V. McCullough, Vice President - E. Rohrbaugh, Secretary - Charles Horich, Financial Secretary - George Armstrong, Director - V. Hoffacker, Assistant Director - George Reed. By-Laws to be drawn up and trustees appointed. In June 1922 the band had an engagement at Eburgh's picnic and were paid \$20.00. \$8.00 was paid to the hired help, which left a balance of \$11.50 in the treasury.

On November 19, 1921, after receiving a bill from The Alesia Council #131 for rent, a motion was made to rehearse three nights at Greenmount and one at the Alesia Hall. We do not know if Greenmount was the EUB Church or another place. At the December 16, 1921 meeting rent paid in October 1921 was \$1.25 for Greenmount. Income for 1922 was \$474.47 and expenses was \$169.06.

Some of our present members were playing while E. V. McCullough was still playing, including his son Maurice McCullough and daughter, Beulah Redding."

Carroll's historic bands provide a link to the county's musical heritage and help maintain the unique character of our communities. These bands also introduce traditional music to new generations.

Photo caption: The members of the Alesia Band (seated) posed with the members of the Westminster Fire Department in this c.1910 image. The musicians wore a distinctive uniform and the band's name appeared prominently on the bass drum. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.