



Parkman Historical Society Presents:

History of the Parkman “Buckeye” Band

(Based off of the bands 50th reunion booklet - 1936)



The Parkman “Buckeye” Band had its beginnings in the Fall of 1886 at the suggestion of Guy B. Norton. Melvin H. Norton organized a Parkman High School Band and Guy Norton wanted to involve the rest of the community. Thus the Parkman Town Band evolved from such ambitions. The first meeting of the Parkman Band assembled at the “Factory Hall” (today called the Parkman Community House).

During this meeting a few instruments were found on hand that were from a band called the George Burt Band from the 1860’s. The band disassembled and another band rose which Volney Johnson was a part of. This band did not have a long existence and some of the remaining drums and brass instruments came with Volney. Since there was a need for more equipment, Mr. O. C. Smith lent \$360 with no security to the charter members and Andrew Wilmont was sent to Cleveland to purchase the necessary instruments to start this adventure.

The 17 charter members of the band included:

- Frederick Cook – 1st Eb Bass
- William Henry Cromwell – 2nd Tenor
- James Farley – B Clarinet
- Sabe Hoxter - Piccolo
- Volney Johnson – Solo Alto
- Wilbur Minturn – 2nd Alto
- Emerson Norton – 2nd Baritone
- Guy B. Norton - Baritone
- Ellsworth Owen – 1st Eb Coronet
- Frank Owen – 2nd Eb Coronet
- Fred Owen – 2nd Bb Coronet
- Park Scott – Snare Drum
- Allen Shermin – Bass Drum
- Clayton C. Smith – Solo Bb Coronet
- Andrew Wilmont – 1st Tenor
- Burret Wilmont – 1st Alto
- Allie Wygant – 1st Eb Coronet



The Parkman Band’s first public performance was played on top of the new roof of the Masonic Hall. This was the third floor of the Old Blackmar Block. James Farley, who was in charge of the brick laying of the block, invited the Buckeye Band to play on the evening that the brick work was completed. The Bands first piece was the Telephone Quickstep.

After six months of organizing, the Band ordered new uniforms from the M.C. Lilly Company in Columbus. They were elaborate affairs trimmed with red and gold braid, black helmets with scarlet plumes. The goal of the Band was to have the uniforms for the Parkman Memorial Day Parade to honor the community that supported them. The uniforms did not get to Parkman until June 1st, so they were first worn at the Burton Fair. With the new colors, the Band played a three day engagement at Burton Fair Races (June 21st – 23rd 1887).

On August 10th 1887, the Parkman Bandstand was dedicated. Located in the town center, this gazebo would be a place to allow the community to enjoy outdoor performances. Local residents spent the summer building the bandstand and it was a point of community pride. There was a large crowd for this dedication. The Western Reserve Band from Windham, and the West Farmington Cornet Band were both there to help celebrate the event. People traveled from long distances to enjoy the sounds.



Today, a gazebo still stands at the same location in Parkman Center Park, but the original had to be replaced from deterioration. You can find the brass roof of the original Parkman Bandstand on the gazebo in the Burton Square. It is a part of the Century Village and the Historical Society for Geauga County.

A Drum Major's uniform (including the newly returned Buckeye Baton) was purchased and worn for the first time by Fredrick T. Cook at an event in Garrettsville on October 13th, 1887. Six bands attended this event, but since the Parkman Band was the only band with a Drum Major, they led the procession. After many engagements, the Parkman Buckeye Band became very well known. No matter how many events were on the schedule, the band vowed to always be on hand to donate its service to the Parkman Memorial Day exercises. It became custom for the Band to play in Parkman's Cemeteries while children decorated the graves of soldiers.



In September 1888, the band was invited by the Grand Army of the Republican Posts of Geauga County to attend the National Encampment at Columbus Ohio. In a long line of march, the Ohio companies were placed in the 6th division. Before taking their places, every man was given a buckeye, strung on a silk cord, to hook in the button hole of their uniform. It was that circumstance that the band derived its name. Homer Burroughs suggested that this become the name of the Parkman Band organization, and on that – the longest trip of its career, the name Buckeye Band was found and been retained for over almost 70 years.



In 1898, a new order of uniforms was made to the same company. They were dark blue trimmed with gold and black braid. The name Buckeye was stitched across the front of their caps. In 1909, another order of uniforms was made to the Lilly Company that followed the same design. The uniform design lasted until the fourth order of uniforms where they were changed to brown with gold trimmings.

In later years of the Parkman Buckeye Band, William H. Cromwell took over as Drum Major. His flashy uniform with the fluffy hat was very distinguishing as he led the bands march. One of the most memorial performances was

September 30th 1911 during an event called "All Roads Lead to Parkman" where the band celebrated its 25th anniversary. The event was widely attended to hear the bands traditional melodies.

In 1923, three ladies joined the Parkman Buckeye Band. Charlotte Cromwell, Marian Moore, and Fredrica Jones were the first females to participate. Their ambition was a great addition to the ranks.

Membership in the Parkman Buckeye Band was not an easy commitment. The band rehearsed 40 weeks a year and had engagements all over the NE Ohio area. The tally on their Golden Anniversary in 1936 was over 2000 rehearsals and almost 900 public appearances. They estimated over 1000 miles of total marching. Parkman Buckeye Band's success is largely due to the leadership of Clayton C. Smith, where for over 30 years he unselfishly devoted himself to the interest of the band. His health failed in 1916, and passed away in 1921. Hence forth, Howard Fram assumed the leadership role of the Band. Howard joined the Band at age 13 playing the trombone and, like many of the band members, carried on the tradition of playing for the community after graduation.

Many changes in members occurred throughout the bands history, yet a dedicated group of fellow residents kept the tradition alive and very successful. It held many firsts in Geauga County. William Cromwell was one of only a couple charter members that lasted through the entire history of the band.

The Baton of the Parkman “Buckeye” Band returns home!

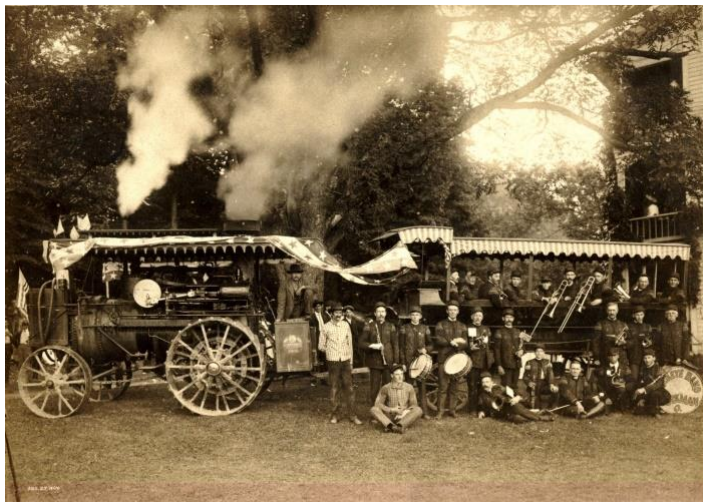
In the Fall of 2007, the Buckeye Band “Drum Major Baton” was returned to the Parkman Community. This Baton, part of the Drum Major uniform for the Parkman Town Band, was last used by William H. Cromwell. He led the band for over 40 years using this glistening time keeper. The Baton was attached to a plaque by Ernie Conover of Conover Workshop in Parkman and will be displayed at the Parkman Historical Society Thompson House – located on Rt. 528 just north of Rt. 422.

William Cromwell Edwards, (a grandson to W.H. Cromwell), and his niece Sherry Barnes, (great granddaughter of W.H.C.), presented the Buckeye Band Baton to the Parkman Historical Society. Jeanne Ebersbach (Parkman Historical Society President), Kurt Updegraff (President of the Geauga Historical Society), and Cory Anderson (VP of the Chamber of Commerce) were present to receive the Buckeye Band Baton on behalf of the Parkman Community.



This presentation was a part of the 2007 Parkman Community day held on October 27th. Many residents were in attendance to be a part of the event. You are welcome to visit recent events on the Parkman Community Website - <http://www.parkmanohio.com> - to view the rest of the story about this ceremony and a full story about the history of the Parkman Buckeye Band including more photos.

The Parkman Community wishes to express gratitude to the Cromwell family for the return of the Buckeye Band Baton and the variety of other historical artifacts donated back to our Historical Society. Having the opportunity to reclaim a part



of Parkman History, learn about the people of this era, and understand the commitment that our community had for the band, were all really interesting parts of this Parkman Buckeye Band project. The Edwards siblings, (William, Charlotte and Susan), along with the Barnes family spent a lot of time gathering much information on Parkman Township. This effort was very much appreciated. Thank you for your generosity. Remember that the collection can be seen at the Parkman Historical Society Museum or special selections will be displayed on the Parkman Community Website.