

## Ladies Cornet Band

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White Lake Area Historical Society



*May 1889 – Back row: Edith “Edie” Kenfield, Adella (ne Ruggles) Van Kuren, Hattie (ne Kenfield) Brooks, Miriam Moog, her son Jud Moog, and Stella DuMass. Front row: Lillian (ne Rogers) Paine, Mary Johnson, Josie LaVille and Cora (ne Hinman) Jackson.*

The Ladies Cornet Band was established in the Spring of 1886 by Prof. Christie. The first members of the band were: Mrs. Della VanKeuren, Mrs. G. J. Moog, Misses Josie LaVille, Mary Johnson, Cora Hinman, Grace Carpenter and Lillie Hanson.

Their first performance was held on Saturday, June 12, 1886, at the Whitehall rink where they furnished selections for skating. The session began at half past seven and closed at half past ten. The proceeds from the performance were to be used for the benefit of the ladies’ band. Admission for the evening was twenty-five cents for gentlemen, and ten cents for ladies, which included the use of skates.

Over time several of the original members left and new members were to be added: Edie Kenfield, Hattie Kenfield, Mrs. George Moog's son Jud, Stella DeMass, Mrs. Bennie Paine, and Mrs. Nielsen of Montague. Mrs. Moog became the director.

On 4 July 1888 the Ladies Band of Whitehall gained distinction for its appearance at Montague on the Fourth and established the fact that it is the best ladies organization of the kind in the State. The ladies stood the fatigue of the occasion like troopers and the last notes from their instruments were as full as the first. The ladies band furnished all the attractive music while the martial band munched peanuts and shot firecrackers in the air.

They were also known to give evening serenades and had quite a repertoire of music.

In April 1889 the Ladies Band contracted to travel with Sisson's Concert Co. for the season. In the end, however, the deal between the Ladies Band and Sisson's was called off. It appeared the company wanted the ladies to play in street parades and they objected. When the ladies parade down the street they want to do so in their own sweet way and without the burden of a brass horn.

In early May 1889, the Ladies Cornet Band had an official group picture taken. At the time, there was no picture published in the paper or any names listed in the article. A copy of the picture did, however, appear in June 1957 with the ladies names listed.

In July the Ladies Band played for the excursion of the Muskegon Maccabees to Reed's Lake.

In early August they played for the Chicago & West Michigan Railway Employees Excursion. Some 500 visitors came on trains and were transported on two lighters lashed together with a tug boat on each side. They were taken to Veal's resort for the day.

At the end of August 1889 the Ladies Band, along with about fifty members of the N. H. Ferry Post GAR and about seventy-five civilians took the steamer M.B. Covell to Milwaukee for an encampment.

In July 1890 it was reported in the local newspaper that the Ladies Band had reorganized and was holding rehearsals. There was no further mention of the Ladies Cornet Band after this announcement.

The only other mention of the Ladies Band was in connection to an undated photo of the Fruitland Township Band, a men's group which was organized round 1892. Names of the male members of the band were listed and it was pointed out that the large drum in the picture was purchased from the Ladies Cornet Band when they disbanded.

With no other information about the band, here is a little history of the original members of the Ladies Cornet Band and those who followed:

Adella M. (ne Ruggles) VanKuren was born on 18 January 1851 in Mount Morris, New York, the daughter of Harlowe E. Ruggles (1812-1909) and Mariah Etta Miller (1816-1890). She graduated from Whitehall High School. She married John VanKuren (1849-1929) on 29 December 1880 in Whitehall. They had no children. She died in Whitehall on 10 December 1928 and is buried in Oakhurst Cemetery.

Miriam E. (ne Streeter) Moog was born in 1848 in Frankfort, Herkimer, New York, the daughter of Herman Streeter and Maria Braman. She married George J. Moog on 22 January 1899 in Whitehall. They had one son Judson. George Moog was a furniture and hardware dealer as well as an undertaker and Coroner. Miriam Moog died in Whitehall on 22 January 1899. She is buried in Oakhurst Cemetery.

Josephine M. "Josie" LaVille was born 17 September 1860 in West Bend, Washington Co., Wisconsin. According to the 1880 census, she was living on Colby Street with her older brother Charle Henry, age 27, and her younger sister Julia, age 16. It appears that she never married, and that she moved to Chicago where she died on 27 August 1933.

Mary Elizabeth (ne Watkins) Johnson was born 12 July 1854 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She was the daughter of Jacob Watkins and Hannah Winter. She married Charles John Johnson on 21 March 1877 in Whitehall. They had 7 children, five of whom were still living when she died from pneumonia on 7 March 1902. She is buried in Oakhurst Cemetery along with a daughter and a son.

Cora (ne Hinman) Jackson was born in Whitehall on 6 March 1871, the daughter of Fred A. Hinman and Mary Brockman. She was the sole graduate from Whitehall High School in 1887. She married Dr. James Gordon Jackson on 27 June 1889 in Whitehall. They had a son Samuel Adam (1890-1945) and two infant daughters Myra Gertrude (1891-1891) and Edith Miriam (1892-1892). Her husband died on 9 January 1912 in North Muskegon. She died there also on 26 May 1952.

Grace R. Carpenter was born on 26 September in Indiana. She was first married to Walter R. Hawley, an actor from New York, on 18 January 1888 in Muskegon. She then married Charles E. Park in August 1889 in Whitehall. They had a daughter Marguerite in February 1891. Grace died on 29 March 1944 at the former Dornbush Convalescent Home in Norton Shores.

Lillie "Lillie" Hanson was born in August 1862 in Claybanks to John D. Hanson and Betsey Austin. She married William M. Peck on 2 March 1877 in Montague. He was the son of William Peck, the Franklin House hotelkeeper. Lillie and William had a son Charlie (1888-1974). Lillie died on 9 May 1944 at the age of 81 years. She is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery.

Edith "Edie" Kenfield was born in 1873 to Henry M. Kenfield and Lucy Canterbury of Massachusetts. According to the local 1893 City Directory her occupation was listed as Dressmaker. She died from Consumption on 15 August 1894 at the age of 21. She is buried in Oakhurst Cemetery.

Harriet A. "Hattie" Kenfield was born in Illinois in March 1867 to Henry M. Kenfield and Lucy Canterbury. She married Quincy Brooks on 16 October 1889 in Whitehall. They had four children. She died on 1 September 1937 and is buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale, California.

Lillian Eliza Rogers was born 18 May 1862 to Samuel Rogers and Betsey Miner. She married Benjamin Paine in Whitehall in October 1881, and they had six children. They moved to Grand Rapids, where Benjamin died on 18 October 1895, at the age of 39, leaving his wife and three children. Lillian died from pneumonia on 22 February 1899, while in Whitehall visiting friends. Earlier in the week, on 19 February 1899, her 13-year-old son Frank had died at the family home in Grand Rapids. They are both buried in Oak Grove Cemetery.

Unfortunately, at this time, no information could be found for Stella DeMass/Dumass or other spelling variations, or for Mrs. Nielson of Montague.

As for Professor Christie who started the Ladies Cornet Band, an article from 17 January 1889 indicated that he spent six years in college in Christiania, the capital of Norway, pursuing all branches of the study of music. It seems the study of violin was his favorite musical instrument. His ability as a composer and writer of violin music had long been recognized. For many years he gave his attention to the local opera house playing and leading the orchestras. He had done more for the advancement of music in Whitehall and Montague and had been the means of bringing into the two towns more musical instruments than anyone else. In many instances he gave his knowledge, time and money free of charge and built-up musicians from mere novices.

The only other bit of information about him was an early local City Directory listing from 1887-1890 for Andrew Christy which indicated that he was a bookkeeper for G. J. Moog. That probably explains how Mrs. Moog became the band director at one point.