

*The Evening Star, June 14, 1890*

## Our Musical Marines

### History of the Band for Three Score Years and Ten Sketches of the Artists

#### When the Band Began to Play—What It Plays, Where It Plays and What It Gets For It How It is Recruited—Compared With National Aggregations.

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One member for every star in Columbia's spangled banner, or four for every stripe in Uncle Sam's summer pants, is exactly the eleventh census size of the U.S. Marine Band. A little while ago the organization numbered only thirty-eight, but along with the admission of the quartet commonwealths of the northwest the sisterhood of states four more tooters were enlisted to toot. And yet in spite of the record there is no connection between the Marine Band membership and the astronomy of the old flag, for in days gone by the membership has been more numerous than now, and Congress will have to throw itself to keep step with the promised growth of the organization. For some time there has been a popular demand to have the membership increased. Secretary Tracy is believed to be in sympathy with the movement, and another year may see the band a body as big and honorable if not so rich as the U.S. Senate—and quite as musical and windy.



**Mr. Sousa, Director**  
(d. 6 Mar 1932  
Range 77 Site 164-S)

It seems to have been soon after the close of "Jim Madison's war" that a few Italian musicians, not more than the original thirteen states, (and by the way why should Americans deem thirteen an unlucky number) came over from their summer land with its E minor climate, and being enlisted in our marine service were located at the Washington barracks and paid a moderate toll for grinding out national airs. The British troops had recently come in over Pennsylvania avenue extended southeastward to pay the President a call, and not finding him in they burned the "bloody town" to show the warmth of their affection. Along with the red coats had come the "God Save the King" and it was to counteract the

chill and malaria of that sort of music that the new band was organized and young America placed under the gentle but invigorating influence, warranted a sure cure and preventive of innocuous desuetude. Later several German members were added to it and its teachings became more stimulating and Teutonic than ever. But while the band under its early leaders—Prof. Carusi, many of whose relatives still reside here; Antonio Pons, who died recently at the age of over eighty years; Prof. Trei, who died in the service, and Francisco Scala, now retired—was doing some excellent work in received no official recognition until 1856 and the musicians were not classified till a few years later. Until recently there were three classes, but at present there are only two, the first receiving \$38 a month and the second \$24. Some of the members have other occupations and all multiply their government salary a few times by giving concerts and providing orchestral music outside of their official duties. Thus do they butter their bread and garner in unsuspecting pie. Tonight, on account of their very limited governmental salary, they are in Pittsburg performing by natural gas light for the benefit of the West Penn Hospital, with incidental revenue to themselves.



**Salvadore Petrola**  
**Assistant Leader**  
(d. 19 Jan 1916  
Range 9 Site 193)

#### *Membership of National Bands*

Gen. Grant was ever a warm friend of the band, and at the close of his administration the membership was 56 pieces, but in 1878 Secretary of the Navy Thompson reduced the number to 40, which, with slight variations during vacancies, was maintained till the recent increase to 42. This number is small in comparison with that of other national bands. In the musical carnival at Paris in 1868 the Prussian band

had 87 pieces, the Russian 71, the Austrian 70, the Spanish 64, the French 62, the Belgian 59 and others about the same number. The German bands of the line have 47 pieces, the British Household Band from 60 to 75, and the Austrian 70 to 90. Our country, about as large as all Europe, has a band less pretentious in numbers than those of some petty kingdoms across the way.



**Walter F. Smith**  
**Cornet Soloist**

Mr. John Philip Sousa, who took charge of the band in 1880, is the seventh leader that organization has had, his predecessors being Carusi, Antonio Pons, Trei, Scala, Freese and Snyder, in the order named. He was born in Washington of a Spanish father and German mother, both of whom were foreign born, but met and married in America. As a youth he showed much taste for music, and while a mere boy held a subordinate position in the band he now leads. Since taking charge of the band he has developed great talent as a musical composer, among his works being the pretty operas: "The Wolf," "Desiree," "Queen of Hearts,"

"Katherine," "The Smugglers," and others equally popular. A wooden-legged man could keep step to the marches he has written that have traversed the globe about as fast as sound can go.

American marches, in spite of the non-military character of our people and institutions, hold first rank today, and the leader in the Marine Band is in the first class of American Composers. But, besides his musical talents and military uniform he has many personal attractions of mind and heart that have endeared him to all his companions in brass and braid.



**Henry Jaeger**  
**Flute Soloist**

The assistant conductor, Salvadore Petrola, of Italian extraction, has been a member of the band for twenty-eight years. He is an ex-member of the orchestra of La Scala and is one of the best arrangers of music in America. Henry Jaeger, the flutist is German, wife Felix Iardella was born in Italy, and enjoyed an excellent reputation as a clarionetist before coming to this country. Henry Stone is a New Yorker, and one of the best trombone players in the



**Henry Stone**  
**Trombone Soloist**

country. Louis Tilleux is a Frenchman and an ex-member of the Grand Opera House Band, Paris, where he was famous as a horn soloist. Frank Stein, the first bassoon, was a member of the crack Prussian band, and is a splendid performer.

Guiseppe San Giorgio, or Joseph St. George, in English, the petite clarionet soloist, is an Italian. F. Pattschy, who plays the first oboe, is a Pole, while

Frederick Walen, who plays the jumbo horn, is a Swede, and, it is said, was made by special act of Providence to perform on that instrument. He is over six feet tall, good natured and a favorite among his comrades. He plays a double-b bass, which is said to be the largest wind instrument in the world.

The cornet soloist, Mr. Walter F. Smith, is a Michigan boy who has made a great mark with his mouth. He was heard of two or three years ago through some one who had known him at Schoolcraft, sent for, tried and approved, and has since been blowing for the greatest country on earth instead of shaking the notes out of his music book with Michigan ague.



**Louis Tilleux**  
**French Horn Soloist**

Franklin Pierce, one of the trombone soloists, is as good a soldier as ever sat a horse or drew a sword. He is of English birth and now turned fifty years.

His father was a soldier, too,  
 And even as a child  
 His heart leaped forth to hear him tell  
 Of struggles fierce and wild.

And so Franklin was brought up in the Royal Military Academy in London. As a boy he enlisted in the



**F. Pattschy**  
**Oboe Soloist**

he became a member of the Marine Band, and ever since has served his adopted country as a trombone artist.

**Requirements**

To become a member of the band the candidate must be over 5 feet 6 inches tall and pass a musical and physical examination. The members are enlisted as marines and entitled to retirement for old age or pensions for disabilities received in the service. Their uniforms consist of scarlet coats, white helmets and blue trousers, always in immaculate condition, with every button as bright as one of Senator



**F. Whalen**  
**Helicon Soloist**

Stewart's new silver dollars. At present there are in the band ten B-flat clarionets, one E-flat clarinet, one flute, two hautboys, two bassoons, and two saxiphones as reed instruments, while the brasses are one cornet solo, one first cornet, one second cornet, two trumpets, four French horns, four trombones, one B-flat alto horn, one euphonium and two

British army during the Crimean war of 1854, but was never sent out of the kingdom. He belonged to Prince Albert's Own Hussars, and as a soldier was present at the funeral of that beloved prince in 1861. In 1865 he left the British service and came to America, where, in 1866, he enlisted in the seventh U.S. cavalry and served under Custer. In 1869

who sends it to the commanding officer of the post, and he in turn issues it to the band master.

The relations of the band with the White House family, Secretary Tracy, Col. McCawley of the marine corps and Col. Haywood of the post are of the most cordial nature. Much appreciated consideration has oft times been shown the band, and they are today in Pittsburg through executive clemency. On Mr. Sousa's cap is a metal badge representing a brass-eagle perched on an anchor and clutching a miniature hemisphere, including the Americas, but this is no sign that our leader wants the earth, for he has had many tempting offers to leave Washington, and is still with us. He is sure of a good income from royalties on his works, while a very handsome fortune from such a source may reasonably be expected as a reward of talent and industry. The Marine Band hardly has a rival in the land—none unless Gilmore's be classed as such—and not only has it become the pride of the capital city, but throughout our tariff-walled republic its members are looked upon as the especially blessed and cherished children of Neptune.



**Giuseppe San Giorgio**  
**Clarinet Soloist**

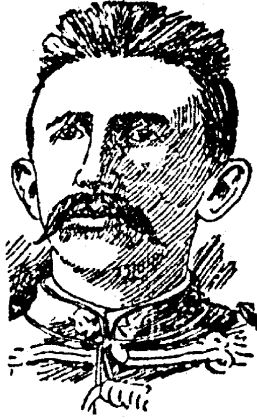
(d. 28 Sep 1894  
 Range 54 Site 309)

The two and forty members are mostly married men and live in homes scattered about the city, but largely in Southeast Washington, to be convenient to their duties at the barracks. Those who have not yet been taken for better or for worse intend to sacrifice themselves as soon as Congress raises their salary another octave; and already they think they have received proposals through admiring and yearful glances on parade, for here as well as in Belgium's capital it can be truly said that

“Eyes look love to eyes that speak again,”

and when the band is playing and the wind blows through their whiskers things are about as merry as a marriage bell. The men are on duty at the barracks every morning from 8:30 till about 12 o'clock, give one concert there each week,, and besides an open air concert on the White House grounds every Saturday afternoon are often summoned to other duties by their

official masters. During the social season they have an unlimited number of official receptions to attend and when Congress is not in session they also give Wednesday evening concerts at the Capitol's oriental front, but now they fear to break a quorum or that



**Frank Stein**  
**First Bassoon**

they would overawe the lawmakers with their uniforms and Gideon fashioned guns. It is said, too, in explanation of the falling of the walls of Jericho by the blowing of a trumpet, that all things material have a key note, the touching of which will cause their immediate collapse, and so it is feared one blast of Walen's bugle, which is "worth a thousand men," would make George Washington's great asphalt toe fall off again. And whatever else Congress may permit or do, one thing is settled—no sculptor shall deplete the surplus putting new toes on the undressed Father of His Country.

The band is kept under splendid discipline almost without an effort, this happy state being largely due to their attachment for their leader and the mutual pride they take in the military character of their organization. They are on time to the click of the clock, and no by-and-by or tomorrow men need ask for a job or hope to hold their places. The room in which they meet to practice sonorous sounds is no bigger than an old-time dining hall, and when they lift up their cornucopious voices there the listener has more harmony jarred into him in a minute than he could lose in the discord of a whole campaign. Although the room is too small it has not been without its advantage, for Mr. Sousa believes in the principle of tempering things to the shorn lamb, and so in this little "pent up Utica" he has taught his band to whisper, or speak in the voice of the mocking bird, which has proved a great advantage in orchestral

efforts. Imagine Jove hurling his thunder bolts and ripping the canopy of earth in shreds or crashing worlds together in a whisper and you can gain some idea of the soft and sibilant sounds of the brass battery when crowded in its closet too close to take a breath. As well, it would seem, might the cyclone whisper in the still small voice its accustomed query, "Where are ye?" or the hurricane send word in telephonic accents it is coming. But this only proves the perfection attained in musical directorship, and as the trip hammer may be used to shape a pin so the thunder of a hundred horns is softened to a baby's lullaby, and the "feast of trumpets" when the spread is laid by Sousa's mariners on the great high C is always the best in the land.



**Felix Iardella**  
**Clarinet**