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30th Band Festival - 1968

William J. Petersen

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The 30th Festival - 1968

Interest in the North Iowa Band Festival did not slacken following the colorful Hollywood extravaganza in 1962. Fully 20,000 had seen the parade in 1967 and an even larger number—22,000—turned out in 1968 for the 30th Festival. There were 81 bands, 27 floats, and 71 queens in 1968, the latter lending beauty and glamour to the occasion. In addition to the 22,000 viewers, there were 5,000 musicians and participants in the North Iowa spectacle. Thirty years had not dimmed the interest.

Two bands drew widespread attention and applause in 1968. One was Davenport Central’s snappy 92-piece high school band that had been invited to be the guest marching band under their director—F. E. Mortiboy. Receiving the warmest applause, however, was the Charles City High School band, which marched in a key position near the head of the parade. Although much of Charles City had been destroyed in the devastating tornado of May 15, the high school had escaped unscathed, and eighty members of the band had voted unanimously to attend the North Iowa Band Festival. The entire band, for reasons readily understood, was not able to come. “Sever-
al of our members have construction jobs, as a result of the tornado, and could not be here," Director Robert Gower declared, adding that "several of the members lost their homes and were beat up somewhat by the storm, but fortunately none was injured seriously."

The presence of Meredith Willson played no small part in the success of the 30th North Iowa Band Festival. Meredith had returned with his wife for the 50th reunion of his old high school class. His brother, Cedric and his wife, had joined him for the reunion. On Saturday, the Willsons had several sessions with their former classmates, visited the new historical museum, and saw an outstanding hometown production of *The Music Man* presented by the Mason City Community Theatre. On Sunday morning Meredith recalled some of his early experiences as he served as guest speaker from the pulpit of the Congregational Church. The following day he spoke to the Rotary and the Executive clubs. On Tuesday he took a leading part in the varied activities that had brought so many young musicians to his fabulous "River City."

W. Earl Hall, retired editor and publisher of the *Mason City Globe Gazette*, has written a warm tribute to his much-admired fellow townsman.

Fresh out of Mason City's high school in 1919, Meredith Willson left his home town headed for New York
### BANDS AND BANDMASTERS — 1968

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<td>Keister</td>
<td>Milhant Glende</td>
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### Massed Band Numbers

- Officer of the Day March (Hall) — directed by Mortiboy
- Days of Glory (Cocavos) — directed by Mortiboy
- 76 Trombones (Willson) — directed by Meredith Willson
- Let Me Call You Sweetheart (Yoder) — directed by Mortiboy
- Accompaniments and incidental music by the Mason City Municipal Band, H. T. Paine, Director.

### IOWA'S FIRST AND ORIGINAL BAND FESTIVAL

**Mason City, Tuesday, June 22, 1948**

**Sponsored by the Mason City Chamber of Commerce**

- 9:30 AM — Band Concerts in Central Park
- 11:00 AM — Parade of bands, floats, candidates for Miss North Iowa is introduced
- 12:30 PM — Luncheon for bandmasters and wives, Hanford Field, Meredith and Mrs. Willson, guests of honor
- 12:45 to 5 PM — Bond Concerts in Central Park
- 1:15 PM — All twirlers, majorettes meet at Central Park School yard and go by bus to Roosevelt Field for rehearsal by Meredith Willson
- 2:00 PM — Special appearance in Central Park of theливеты for Miss North Iowa representing 52 bands and schools
- 2:30 to 5 PM — Continuation of the Central Park Concert
- 6:00 PM — Roosevelt Football Field — Band Field Forms for the Thurmons, Meredith Willson, the twirlers, marching bands, crowning of the Queen, and Grand Finale

**All events free to the public. In case of morning rains parade will be held at 4:00. If it rains in the evening, the finale will be held at Roosevelt Fieldhouse.**

### Concerts — Central Park

- 9:30 AM — Sheffield, F. A. McCoy, director
- 10:00 AM — Northwood, A. J. Witham, director
- 10:30 AM — Osage, Ken Carpenter, director
- 11:00 AM — Parade of band, floats, queen candidates
- 12:45 PM — Buffalo Center, John Dogan, director
- 1:30 PM — Keister, A. C. Huselid, director
- 2:00 PM — Appearance of the candidates for Miss North Iowa
- 2:30 PM — Eagle Grove, Marcus G. Wex
- 3:15 PM — Rockwell City, L. Maurice Feese, director
- 3:45 PM — West Union, Harvey Smith, director
- 4:15 PM — Webster City, Richard C. Baker, director

### Organizing participation in this festival and their directors

- Alexander — Loren Tinkev
- Allison — M. D. Mussel
- Anamosa — Wm. L. Shuck
- Anamosa — Miss Lenee Lese
- BlCISION — Mrs. Hazel Bell
- Bode — Leo F. Lyster
- Britt — Durwood Griffin
- Buffalo Center — John Dogan
- Clear Lake — John Kosewey
- Cry — John Ken
- Dows — Miss Peggy Tabin
- Dumont — Robert Trulcher
- Eagle Grove — Marcus G. Wex
- Fenton — Loren D. Barker
- Fertile — Charles C. Rush
- Forest City — Sigurd J. Panioli
- Garner — Miss Barbara Jean Rankin
- Geneva — G. Lloyd Pressel
- Grafton — Miss Joan Bixler
- Greene — M. D. Mussel
- Hampton — Joe McCoy
- Hamilton — John S. Awe
- Kosswo — Dejgar Johnson
- Rockwell — Joe McCoy
- Rockwell — W. A. Awe
- Rockwell City — L. Maurice
- Rudd — Miss Darrell S. Rudd
- Rockwell — Miss F. E. York
- Rockford — Bob Fish
- S. City — Bob Fish
- Sheffield — St. Agar
- Slidell — Legion Ward
- Thompson — Miss Mildred Ke
- Webster City — Richard C. Rush
- West Union — Harvey
- The Moose Junior Girls Drum and Color Guard

**For over night program and further details of the Festival**
City in quest of fame and fortune. He entered the Damrosch School of Music (later to become the Juilliard) and a career which led him to the heights was under way.

As flutist for John Phillip Sousa and the New York Philharmonic . . . as director of several distinguished orchestras . . . as composer of music ranging from hit tunes to symphonies . . . as radio and television star . . . as head of the armed services radio in World War II . . . as author of such best selling books as And There I Stood With My Piccolo, Eggs I Have Laid, and But He Doesn't Know the Territory . . . and, not least, as playwright, Meredith visited the distant places in our world.

There can be no denying the genius of this young troubadour whose rise to fame was so meteoric. To play in Sousa's band before he had reached 21, to play in the New York Philharmonic before he had ever heard a great symphony orchestra, illustrate the early genius of Meredith Willson. To develop into a distinguished conductor and a creative composer and lyricist, is the story of this great but humble man.

Tim Taylor has written in jocular vein in Cue of Meredith Willson's deep love for Iowa. At the end of his hilarious analysis of Iowa's top press agent he ventured to suggest that The Music Man might receive some rough reviews since none of the Broadway drama critics were Iowans. Their reactions proved to be far from critical.

John Chapman's review in the New York Daily Times declared The Music Man was one of the "few great musical comedies of the last 26 years
THE PALIMPSEST

... Book, lyrics and music are all captivating. It should be either twice as long or performed twice at each performance."

Brooks Atkinson, distinguished critic of the New York Times, declared The Music Man "glows with enjoyment" and was "a warm and genial cartoon" that was as American as "apple pie and a Fourth of July oration." Atkinson concluded it was "a marvelous show, rooted in wholesome and comic tradition."

The other critics were "equally laudatory" and "unanimously enthusiastic." John McClain in the Journal-American declared: "This salute by Meredith Willson to his native Iowa will make even Oklahoma look to its laurels." Frank Aston in the World-Telegram and Sun wrote: "It opens with a band tune suggestive of Western Conference football, runs in high spirit all the way to the pounding march air in the finale. Geographically this mood is fitting, for the show is Meredith Willson's dedication of his book, music, lyric gifts to his adored Iowa. It has more than rip-roaring entertainment; it has strength, a strength drawn from the fertile breast of this continent's Middle West."

From 1968 to eternity the North Iowa Band Festival will echo and re-echo to the lilting tunes of The Music Man.