

# Ethnic Groups, Directors Add Varied Notes To Dover Music

By Kay Williams  
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Both historically and culturally, the development of musical organizations has added greatly to the story of Dover.

To most Doverites today, the 2 names most closely associated with local music are L. H. Alexander, who had a long career in the Dover School system, and Dominic Greco, longtime leader of the Dover Concert Band. They both began their contributions in the same period, Alexander in 1916 and Greco in 1917.

As a strict disciplinarian and perfectionist for musical excellence, Alexander enthusiastically wielded his baton to bring prominence to Dover High in state and national competition. Generations of students were instilled with an appreciation of good music along the way.

The Dover High Marching Band made its first public appearance under his direction on Decoration Day, 1917. An enthusiastic public showed its pleasure by renting a private street

car to take the students to Meyer's Lake for a picnic.

It was the first of many excursions accompanied by Alexander, climaxed by his band's appearance at the National 1st Division Contest in Chicago in 1933.

Alex feels that the material was here, ready for development. "This community had a rich musical heritage, through the various ethnic groups which settled here," he stated. "The Welsh, Italians, Germans, Moravians and English all had great influence."

In the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Dover like most surrounding towns, had boasted its own musical organizations, most of them founded through various nationality groups.

The Welsh had an active singing society, the Germans turned their love of martial music into amateur bands, and the Italian love of music manifested itself into many musical organizations. The Iron City Band,

directed by the late Benny Thomas, and the Reeves Military Band enjoyed great local popularity.

It was one of the town's most active groups, the Dover Italian Band, which brought Greco to Dover from the Pittsburgh area in 1917.

Greco shortly afterward merged this organization with the Reeves Military Band to form the Dover Concert Band, a musical group which was to gain a wide reputation, primarily because of its unique specialty, Italian music.

In the band's early years, Greco often sent to Italy for the sheet music. Several times, they performed at the Ohio State Fair. Later, the band lost some of its Italian influence and played more standard numbers.

Once in the mid '50's, Dr. William D. Revelli, University of Michigan band director, was guest conductor and proclaimed it "the finest small local band I've ever heard."

The active high school music department and organizations

such as the Concert Band and Philharmonic Orchestra worked hand in hand for several decades, with the adult organizations providing an opportunity for former students to keep up their musical training.

The depression years saw some of the highlights of musical interest. The 1933 success of the high school band resulted in increased emphasis on the school music department and inexpensive, second-hand instruments were in great demand. Dover High became one of the most contest-minded schools in the state, winning many first division honors in band, orchestra and choir.

Many of the thousands of Alexander's students went on in his footsteps, pursuing musical careers. Among them are: John Lacey, now associated with the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music; Frank Smith, musical director for CBS in Chicago; Ray Anthony, nationally-known band leader; Jack Rausch, now teaching at the University of Arizona, and Al Vorherr, former Dover High band instructor now with a Miami, Fla., high school.

Among the others who became school or college instructors are Mrs. Arthur (Lydia Pfeiffer) Beiner, Jim Rieker, George Polce, Barbara Haines, LeMoyn Lowmiller, Olin Blickensderfer, Mrs. Judy Miller, Ruth Sproul, George Stucky, Mrs. Al (Helene Lachenmeyer) Morgan, Mrs. Leonard (Nancy Domer) Gaydor, Dick Stoneman and Clair Christy.

The combined efforts of these 2 musicians, Alexander and Greco, had great influence on local enjoyment of music. In addition to the many who learned by their direction, there were countless others whose lives were enriched through appreciation of their performing organizations.

## Dr. Lewis Well Known

Dr. E. C. Lewis was one of Dover's most widely-known residents of the second half of the 19th Century. The owner of a fine livery in downtown Dover, he also took an interest in politics and was president of the Board of Trustees of the Children's Home and of the Agricultural Society for 13 years.

building. All the work in connection with it has been by volunteers without pay. There are endowments and annual membership fees are \$1 a year. Anyone interested, regardless of place of residence can be a member. There are also life memberships at \$100 or more and \$5 special memberships, but all of the memberships carry only one vote at the annual election.

Donations of any size also are accepted from lodges, clubs, business organizations or any other group.

But persons not members can be of help by assisting in identifying many of the museum photographs.

They include pictures of pioneer gatherings at the Fairgrounds in the 1880s and 1890s; of American Sheet & Tin Plate and Reeves mills in the days before automation, of the old furnace and of many other Dover buildings and establishments and of many well-known personages who have vanished from the scene.

One intriguing old photo shows a crowd in front of a building at the southeast corner of Tuscarawas Ave. (then called Factory St.) and W. 2nd St., the site of the present Hotel Dover. It is believed to be a demonstration of the Crusad-

grandfather and his wife, Margaret.

She did not turn over the pictures and map until after the historical society had been incorporated.

Doubtless there are many families in Dover and New Philadelphia who have treasured mementoes of early Tuscarawas county history who would leave them to a county or Dover-New Philadelphia museum if an endowed historical society was established.

In the meantime the Dover Historical Society is doing its best to preserve a collection of relics such as was started by W. W. Scott, although the ideal time to have started would have been in Scott's time, more than 60 years ago.

Then there were more families with vivid recollections of pioneer days as they remembered them or as they were told by their ancestors.

The big problem in education today is to bridge the gap between science and interest in public affairs. The study of history and exhibits in local museums, schools and libraries can do much to narrow this gap and give your minds the proper perspective and direction that the human race needs and seeks.

Museums have always been a repository of history and a stimulant to education. The first uni-

dates back to braces 40 years ago. border wars away river and French, then British. Finally the Stars and Stripes.

The struggle here helped win the Revolution, helped establish the Northwest Territory, which led to the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and paved the way for a coast-to-coast nation on the grandest and most beautiful of all the continents on the globe.

The struggle here gave us historic spots like Schoenbrunn, Gnadenhutzen, Ft. Laurens, Zoar and Zeisberger's grave at Goshen. Its recorded history dates back more than 200 years to Col. Bouquet's march through this county to free more than 200 captive whites held by the Indians at what is now Coshocton in 1764.

It goes back even further to the diary of Christopher Gist, who in 1751 visited Indian villages near the present sites of Bolivar and Newcomerstown as a surveyor for a Virginia land company in which the family of George Washington was interested.

Many books have been written about the Moravians in the Tuscarawas Valley. They are given more than passing notice in Theodore Roosevelt's "The Winning of the West".

Longfellow mentions Gnadenhutzen in Evangeline, William

## Private School Started In 1844

Dover's first private school opened in 1844. A newspaper notice read: "A select school will commence in Canal Dover on Monday, June 3rd under the direction of Annabelle McReynolds."

In order that "strict attention might be paid to each pupil," the number of students was limited to 35, none under 7.

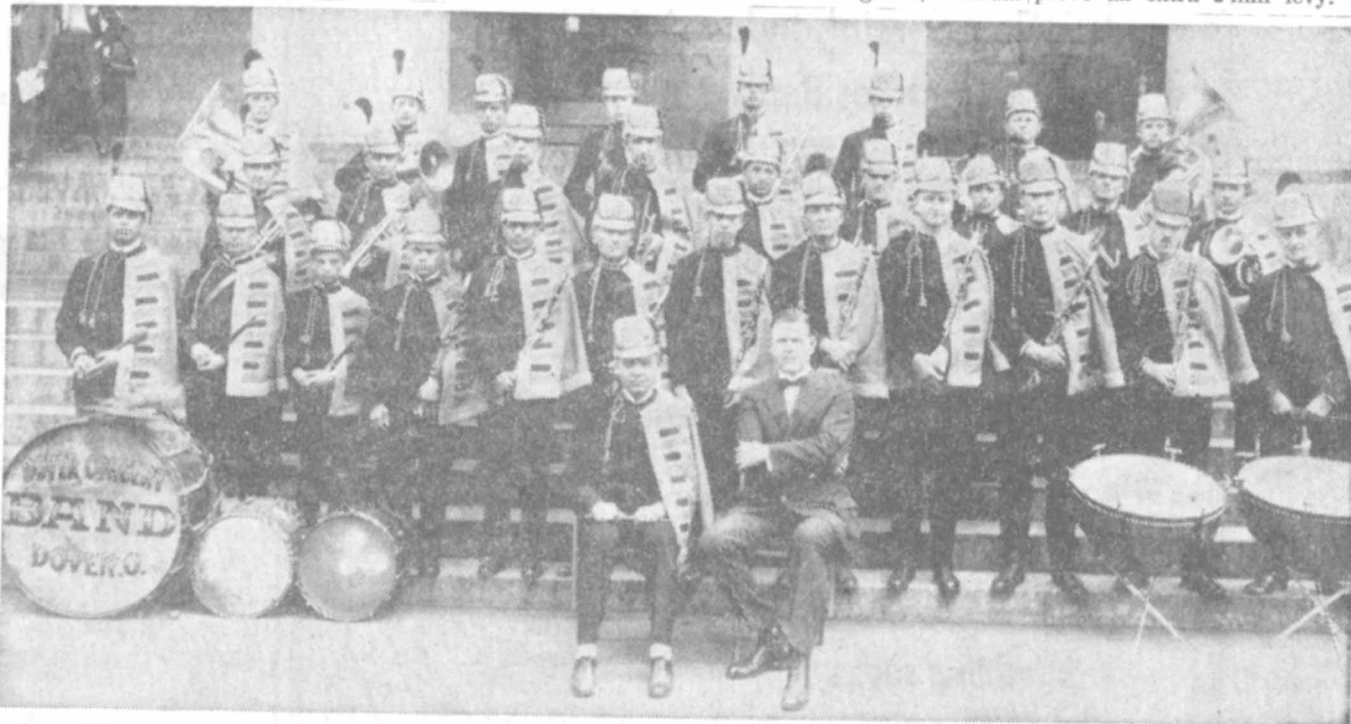
Courses included, in addition to the regular elementary subjects, chemistry, botany, geometry, mental and moral philosophy, French and embroidery. It was announced that only girls would be permitted to take embroidery.

## '34 Was Lean Year

In 1934, if everyone in Dover paid his taxes in full and if beer and liquor licenses yielded the \$10,000 estimated for the year, Dover's city government would still face a \$23,722 deficit the next year under the 10-mill tax limit on real estate. City council asked voters to approve an extra 2-mill levy.



**SUMMER CONCERT.** Dover City Park provided the setting for Sunday night concerts by the Dover Concert Band, here directed by Dominic Greco, in the late 1940's. Just to the left of the large tree in the front is present Dover Mayor LeMoyn Luthy.



**THE GOVERNOR'S OWN!** This name was given the Dover Concert Band when this picture was taken in front of the State Capitol in Columbus, shortly after Gov. Vic Donahey of New Philadelphia took office in 1922. Donahey and Director Dominic Greco are seated in front. Band members were: **ROW 1**—Rocco Contini (left), John Helwig, Charles Greco, Tony Antonelli, Fred Rini, Ed Rex, Walter Zimmerman, Art Lehman, Carl Meese,

Oliver Bair, Roger Stoffer and Charles Knisely. **ROW 2**—Benny Thomas, Casper Contini Jr., Gene Lightell, Elmer Schramm, Frank Lagatta, Leonard Jerone, Louis Ginnetti, Henry Haas, and Jake Stallings. **ROW 3**—Carl Wolfe, Querino Antonini (father of band leader, Ray Anthony), Ralph Greco, George Wills, Clayton Kessler, Jim McBride, Casper Contini Sr., and Joe Contini.

Can you enlarge this one

Enlarge this, too