PAGE 2-C DIAMOND JUBILEE EDITION JUNE '49

Brass Band Followed Sod Plow to Holt

Incidents in County's Cultural Awakening 60 Years Ago

By HOMER O. CAMPBELL, Seattle, Wash.

While virgin soil still was being turned on the prairies, back ut 1884, the three larger towns of Holt county almost simul-ized. My good friend, Denny Hunt, ber claim and the churg the ber claim and the churg the der contest by a man by the name of Perry Dewey. Dewey engaged Mr. Gillespie to surabout 1884, the three larger towns of Holt county almost simultaneously felt the need for associated musical endeavor-certainly evidencing early cultural awakening.

Not only so, but strangely the respective spokesmen of these towns had in mind a kind of community ensemble that could be developed largely from those without previous musical experience-a group, too, whose inherent nature would set the pitch for celebrations of civic festal occasions. Of course, nothing could serve these objectives half so well as a brass band.

Atkinson, O'Neill and Stuart thereupon became centers of brassband enthusiasm, with immediate appointments of committees on membership, leader, instruments, uniforms, etc., followed by rehearsals in remarkably short time.

Lady Luck smiled on Atkinson when the Sturdevant family, including four key bandmen, located there and brought with them be and shall remain the proper- ed and a visit made to Gilles- the night at the Valley house. Arthur Crossman, skillful drummer. Joseph Sturdevant, E flat ty of said plaintiff. The verdict cornet, was the competent leader of a band of some 15 members.

In O'Neill the prime mover was Fred J. Herre, experienced leader and E-flat cornet player, who started practically from scratch with mostly inexperienced personnel. scratch with mostly inexperienced personnel.

At Stuart, 18 or 20 embryo bandsmen were organized under the leadership of a musicianly colored barber whose name I have forgotten. In the group were Editor John Wertz, Banker George Bowring and other leading citizens, including also a number of teen-age boys.

bread.

County's First Band Contest

Indicative of the progress ventional male attire? Anyway, made by these groups, in the Emmet was his hometown, and test," featured at the county fair held in O'Neill.

In this contest the Atkinson band, bearing themselves more woods, and forthwith a parade, like professionals than amateurs, wearing neat blue uniforms and mother hubbard and sunbonfeather-decked helmets, easily net, moved several hundred won first prize.

O'Neill did well enough to be awarded second place. Among the original membership now remembered were Fred Herre, Fred Pfunder, John Smoot, Reese Mays, Charlie Colligan, Sam Schram, Jimmy Riggs, and George Trigg.

At 15 I started my band experience as a drummer. We must have had at least eye ap-peal in our uniforms of gray and scarlet, with long tails, brass buttons, fringed epaulets and plumed caps. My mother treasur-ed my boy-size coat for many pledged through a subscription the plenty to worry about. What if years afterward.

The Stuart band seemingly from 25 cents to \$1 per month. At the time under considera- "oom-tutura thing else?" had too little time in which to

elying on the well-known nine or anybody else to take said horn away from him.

the United States were in jeo-pardy. At its conclusion the jus-

tice of the peace in effect ruled said trombone was, is, ought to notwithstanding, it was more or charge). In the course of losing Newcomer Dickson won a lot of friends. And Denny's loss was merely technical, for he still be-

Band Split on Political Lines

At the windup of the politic-al campaign of 1888 final rallies Fall of 1885 they took part in a there the celebration was held of both parties were held in O'-competition called a "band con- on a Sunday in Summer. Neill on the same night. The democrats, it seems, had engag-About noon the carryall coned the O'Neill band for its demveying the band was parked near a clump of spindly cottononstration. On the afternoon before the rally, however, it developed that politics had divid-ed the band along party lines, and that half of the members had decided to play for the re-publicans. Even more to the embarrassment of the demoyards toward the solitary gen-eral store, thence to the Elkhorn depot, and back again to the carryall, under which in the meantime a keg of beer had cratic bandsmen, the split had left them without a lead, or solo been tapped and iced pop made available, along with baked ham, cornetist.

Now, as a plain fact, the "oom-tuturata" part of a march standing alone isn't particularly mu-sical. It needs to be blended Incident in High Finance The public-spirited citizens of O'Neill initially made generous contributions toward the pur-chase of instruments and unit chase of instruments and uni-forms. Not only so, but in fur-ther support of the band they pledged through a sublist individual contributions of the voters should interpret this "oom-tuturata" to mean some-

Anyway, when the commit-

And thereby hangs a tale. The home of the Gillespie family was out in Saratoga precinct. In that section lived Al Hileman, son-in-law of Orlando Dutcher. He had taken a timber claim and the entry was un-

points in law, at least as an broken and this was found to be Irishman's excuse to get into a fight against odds, bantered and did defy said reorganized band ling of the contest and Hileman

orn away from him. The trial, which lasted through Winter afternoon, could not the work, in the course of his have been conducted with more gravity if the constitution of story is continued by The Fron-

"On the night of the 1st of pie's house with the evident in-tention of doing Mr. Gillespie some bodily injury. Failing to longed to the organization that

> shotgun left in the house by some one was taken down from the wall; one charge failed to off, the other was fired through the door. The result we all know: the death of Stephen Keys.

"There being no other means of defense Gillespie took to the woods by getting out of a window and was followed by some of the mob but was not captured."

It should be noted in this connection that rough frontiersmen would not harm women and children, the remnants of chivalry forbid such a course.

and J. A. Swift were arrested, were charged with participating in the attack, and were disvey the ground that had been charged; again arrested and all discharged except Hileman, who was placed under \$500 bond to appear for trial in district

court.' They were still seeing red out there in the gulches. A harness belonging to Dewey, the cause of the mob movement, was cut to pieces and one belonging to Barney Welton, who acted as constable in the arrests, was stolen from a stable in O'Neill when Welton had come in from November a mob was organiz- Brush creek and had put up for

some bodily injury. Failing to induce Gillespie to come out of doors by representing that they were parties looking for land and meeting with resistance at the door one of the panels of the front door was broken in and and meeting with resistance at the four door one of the panels of the front door was broken in and and meeting with resistance at the door one of the panels of the front door was broken in and and meeting with resistance at the door one of the panels of the front door was broken in and and at the Dutchers charging felonous assault was filed with the justice of the men were taken, not before the County uJdge Maloy, where no several shots fired into the house. "Naturally Mr. Gillespie, his sick wife, and small children were badly frightened. An old

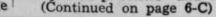
The original mob raid now seems to be dropped by The Frontier scribe and the harness affairs taken up.

"The sheriff arrested a young fellow, Ed Connolly, who was in town with Hileman on the Monday in ques-tion. When arrested Connolly 'squealed' and said that he and Hileman took the harness from the stable and t o l d where they had secreted it in a straw stack West of Barnard F. Kearns'."

Hileman was arrested at Mr. Hargrave's place on the Eagle and brought to O'Neill for pre-liminary examation before Wil-

"Gillespie gave himself up," the story continues, "and upon examination before Justice Doty of Keya Paha was discharged. Shortly afterward Hileman, Or-lando Dutcher, Peter Dutcher, Homer Dutcher, Rene Dutcher and J. A. Swift were arrested. Connolly repudiated what he

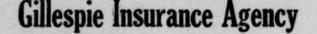
and punish prisoners and wit-



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have admired, was attested It was while acting in this mulwhen, as Bill Nye once remark-ed about a church choir, they undertook their most difficult finance. number.

Bandsmen Had Good Time Up to 1890 the O'Neill band's membership changed almost completely several times. A con-siderable turnover in leaders also took place, those succeeding Fred Herre being Prof. Seeley, Prof. Gill, Ben Locks and my-self. The group pictured else-where, taken in 1887, has none of the original members except

There were a number of out-of-town trips, including a visit to Fremont, where we were guests of the parents of Fred Herre; an autumn celebration at Norfolk, and a Fourth of July engagement at Minneola. Besides, whether in broiling heat or in cold that froze our instruments, we never failed to respond to the call of civic duty.

Daddy Cook's Celebration

its share of "characters," one of an Blackstonian M. F. Harringwhom sought the help of the ton and a dynamic redheaded O'Neill band to celebrate his newcomer to the Holt county 60th birthday. Does anyone of bar named Dickson. The issue this generation remember Daddy joined was whether possession Cook, eccentric homesteader, of the trombone after the band whose outer garment was a had disbanded for a time con-

attain the degree of musical proficiency hoped for and also leader of the band to collect the subscriptions and act as a sort of business agent. For these ser-their courage, which all must have admired was attested. It was while acting in this mul-

fried chicken and loaves of

About noon on a lazy Sum-About noon on a lazy Sum-mer day I was startled by the recollection that a widely-heralded baseball game was to be played that afternoon in Atkinson between the home team and a highly-touted An-telope county outfit.

of the original members except myself. Notwithstanding its ups and downs, membership in the O'-Neill band was lots of fun, rich in lively experiences a n d friendly associations. So mark-ed were these qualities, in fact, that for these bandsmen the Gay Nineties began in the mid-dle of the Sedate Eighties. There were a number of out-of town trips, including a visit

Legal Battle Over Horn

A lawsuit in justice court to Pioneer Rough Stuff determine ownership of "one silver-plated E-flat alto trom-bone" (the identical instrument, by the way, held by Pat Biglin in the picture herewith taken 60 years ago) was the arena as well of a scintillating In those days Holt county had legal battle between the vetermother hubbard instead of con- stituted ownership even though of politics or religion."

tee and the bandsmen came out of a huddle it had been decided to draft-me. I was at the time employed as a printer on the Stuart Ledger. Their telegram reached me only four and a half hours before the parade was scheduled to move.

A team and driver had been ordered from a Stuart livery stable, stated the message, to take me on the first leg of the trip to a point midway between Atkinson and Emmet, where a relay would pick me up for the last 15 miles. Since the distance T h e regular West - bound from Stuart to O'Neill is 30 freight was due within a half miles, over rutted sandy roads hour. Not a minute was to be in those days, it meant lively

speak he handed one a silver dollar. Leading Bettle Orea Ways

in Gillespie Story

The issue of The Frontier of January 13, 1881, introduced a story of pioneer rough stuff by saying:

"B. S. Gillespie is a practic-al surveyor and follows that business for a living. In his line he is called upon by all classes of people and we believe endeavors to do the best he can for all, without thought



O'NEILL'S SECOND BAND ... Author of the "Brass Band" story on this page, Homer Campbell, is seated in the center of the above photograph taken in 1887. Others in the photo are: Standing (left-to-right)-Sumner Adams, Hugh Gallagher, Sanford Parker, Jack Kearney, Harry Hecht, Louie Bannon; center-Jimmy

Trigg, drum major; seated-Denny Hunt, Professor Seeley, Mr. Campbell, Dennis H. Cronin and Pat Biglin. (Editor's note: The Jubilee editor believes that the gentleman Mr. Campbell has identifed as Sanford Parker actually is a Mr. Evans, a relative of the late Mr. Barnett, of the Barnett & Frees Lumber Co.)



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