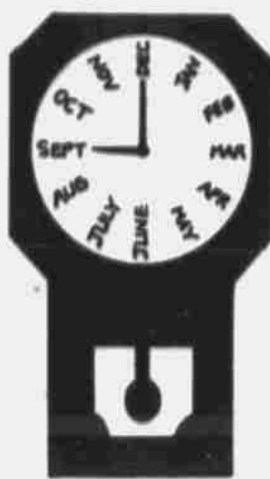


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Photo by Tom Gessner

The history of UNL's Marching Band is soon to be published by band Alumnus Gary Steffan and will include many photographs of past and current scenes.

Book will showcase band's history

By Susan Cowick

In mid-December, Gary Steffan will have his first book on the market about the history of the UNL Marching Band.

Steffan said he was appointed historian by the board of directors of the Band Alumni Association. For the past six years, he said he has gathered information and photographs, with much of the funding coming from his own

pocket.

"The book, which has the history of the band from the late 1800s up to last fall, contains 250 to 300 pages with approximately 400 black and white pictures and 100 colored pictures," he said.

Steffan said he became a member of the band in 1968 and marched in it until 1974. He said he has kept his membership in the band fraternity, Gamma Lambda, to keep in contact.

"For lack of something to do after I quit marching, I started asking Jack Snider (band director) questions about the history of the band," he said. "When he couldn't answer my ques-

tions, I started digging in old yearbooks, looking through the chancellor's files in the archives and at microfilm."

Next, Steffan said he went to the Band Alumni Association to search for band members.

Sent questionnaires

"I sent questionnaires to living band members to dig up memories of band trips and pranks and to discover more history," Steffan said. He said he collected so much information he didn't know what else to do but to write a book.

"History of college bands is a neglected area. The band was founded as a

military band and remained that way until 1954. It was the first college band to have a paid director and be listed as a class with students receiving credit for it," Steffan said.

He said the band played a major role in the beginning of football at the UNL campus.

Steffan said, "Roscoe Pound returned to Lincoln from Harvard and introduced the game of football. He used the band to arouse spirit and spark interest for the game. In 1890 the first game was played and the band was present."

"Every year since 1902, the band has attended an away game with the football team. When the team went to the Rose Bowl in 1941, the band was not going to go. There was so much protest, the band was taken and received more attention than the team."

Loving cup trophy

"In 1927, John Philip Sousa awarded the band with a loving cup trophy for being one of the finest bands in the country. It appears to be the only trophy of its caliber presented to a college band by Sousa. It was hidden for years until I recently found it during my research," Steffan said.

During WWI, he said, the military was increased on campus so the band decreased in size.

"The band had to get permission to recruit student soldiers so they would have enough members to play," Steffan said.

During WWII, women were introduced, he said.

"The band was not able to enlist men, so women were used. After the war, though, it became all male again and stayed that way until 1972," Steffan said.

In 1972, the government began pushing colleges to accept women band members, he said.

"Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, Minnesota and Texas A&M were the last to allow females to join. Snider let women join the band before the government got to him. Texas A&M still has an all-male band," Steffan said.

Today, the band has an equal amount of men and women if the flag squad is also counted, he said.

Steffan said he has plans of writing more history books on the band in the future.

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