

Byesville bands - glimpses of musicians from a small Ohio village

Gavin Holman, 22 February 2022

The village of Byesville dates from 1856, and it was formerly incorporated in 1881. Now with a population of around 2,500, it supported several bands in early years of the 20th century. Unfortunately, there are only few details about the bands their musicians that I have been able to glean, but I hope that access to more local and physical archival resources may unearth more information in the future.

The first of these bands was the Byesville Cornet Band, also known as the Byesville Band or Byesville City Band. Two photographs of the band show the members standing in a group.



This first picture is probably the oldest – based on the assumption that the drum has yet to be fully painted. It shows nine member of the Byesville City Band (in their plain uniforms) together with twelve member of another band (with their highly-braided jackets).

Labor Day, 1st September 1902, was celebrated in Byesville with various events, including a parade. The Byesville Band provided musical entertainment during a ball game; the Cambridge Band, from the nearby town, gave a concert in the afternoon, and the Hartford Band was also in attendance.¹

4th July celebrations in Byesville in 1903 were enlivened by the Byesville Cornet Band, which 'discoursed most excellent music which was greatly enjoyed by the crowd.'²

¹ Cambridge Jeffersonian, 4 September 1902

² Cambridge Jeffersonian, 9 July 1903



West Main Street, Byesville, c. 1910

This next photograph shows the Byesville City Band a little later. They have their name fully blazoned on the drum.



The Band gave a free open-air concert on Tuesday 17 June 1913.³

In August 1931, the annual Homecoming under the auspices of the American Legion and Fire Department, was held, with parades and a street party. The Byesville Band provided music to entertain the people attending.⁴

³ Times Recorder (Zanesville), 17 June 1913

⁴ Times Recorder (Zanesville), 11 August 1931



Byesville Band, 1943

There was also a Byesville Junior Band, though no further details about it are known, other than this photograph.



There was a Slavonic Band, made up by men from Czechoslovakia who came to Ohio to work in the coal mines. The band was active in 1906, and its members included John Patrick, Frank Branchik, Martin Holska, and Joe Adameck.



Some time in the 1910s a Ladies Band was formed in Byesville. Mrs George Stoltz, a member of the band, was run down by an automobile at Hendrysburg during a political parade on Saturday 28 October 1916. She was severely injured, but 'would recover'.⁵ Two of its members are shown below.



Two members of Byesville Ladies' Band, c. 1915

⁵ Times Recorder (Zanesville), 31 October 1916

Finally, we have this photograph of a tuba player - probably a Byesville Band member - with his wife and baby. The photographer was F.H. Wilson, of Byesville.



2nd Street, Byesville, c. 1905