



presented by Bill Richey
To the Huntington Historical Society
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Huntington's Erie Band

1915-2008

Early 20th Century Music



- John Philip Sousa and his band were wildly popular throughout the United States.
- The march was popular dance music
- Many cities, industries, and private entities formed bands and orchestras.



Band Mania

- The Armco Steel Band is a famous example of corporate sponsorship of musical groups.



Band Mania

- The Schaff Bros. Piano Company is an example of a local company that sponsored a band.



Railroads



- Steam engines were very labor intensive.
- Service facilities were located every 100 miles.

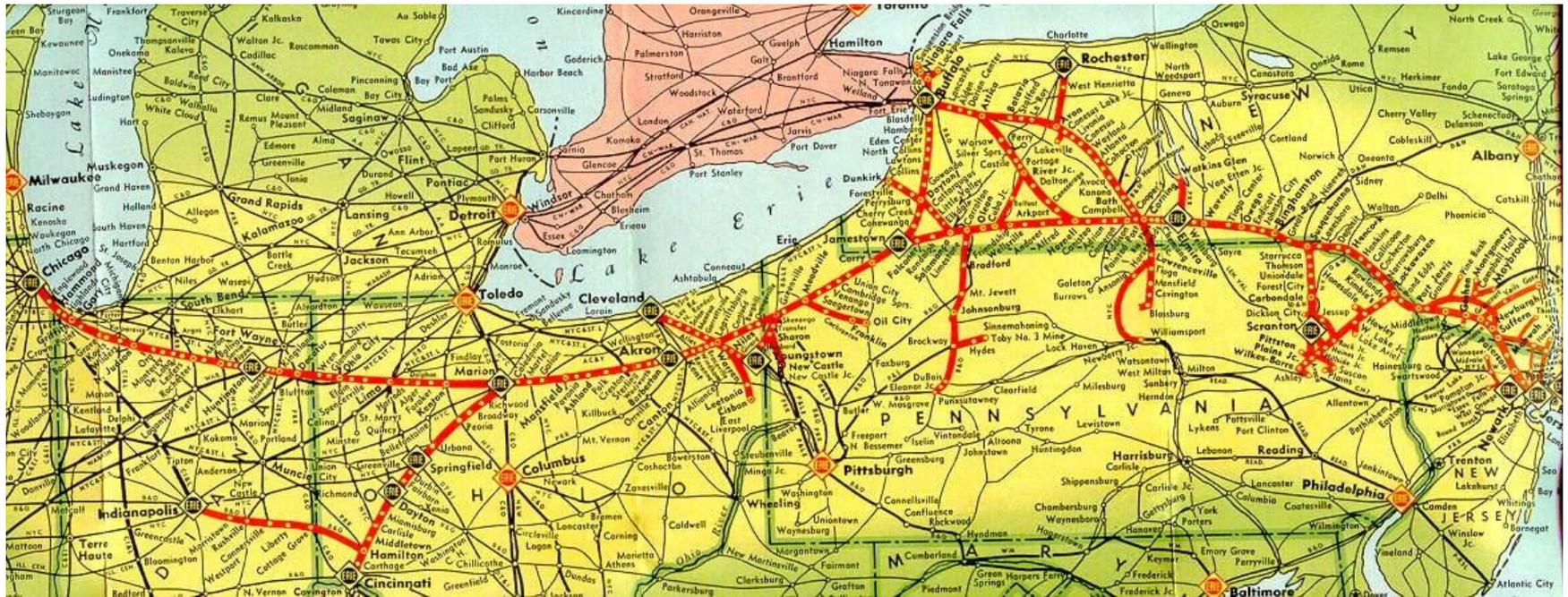


Erie Railroad



- Construction began in 1851
- Built through Huntington in 1882
- Trunk line that ran from New York City [Hoboken, New Jersey] to Chicago [Hammond, Indiana]

Erie System



Erie Railroad



- Construction began in 1851
- Built through Huntington in 1882
- Trunk line that ran from New York City [Hoboken, New Jersey] to Chicago [Hammond, Indiana]
- Merged with the Delaware, Lackawanna, & Western in 1960. Became Erie-Lackawanna
- Included in government created Conrail April 1, 1976 and subsequently abandoned.

Huntington



- Huntington was the headquarters of the Marion Division
- Before 1922 there were about 1,800 employees in Huntington.

1915-The Beginning



- Erie President Frederick Underwood authorizes the formation of bands at shops and on line facilities
- The band was called the “Mackrell Band” after Theodore Mackrell, superintendent of the Marion Division.
- H.C. Weiford and J.C. Otis helped organize the band
- J.L. Swihart, a music teacher at Huntington High School became the band’s first director.

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J. L. Swihart
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1915-The Beginning



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1915-The Beginning



- The railroad supplied instruments for band members.



Other Erie Bands



- Dunmore, Wyoming
- Kent, Ohio
- C.A. Allen Band, Marion, OH
- Meadville, PA
- Susquehanna, PA
- Stroudsburg
- Brier Hill Shop Band, Youngstown, OH
- "Presidents Band" *



Other Erie Bands

- Honesdale, PA
- Buffalo, NY
- Olean, NY General Office Band, NY *
- Hornell
- Port Jervis, NY
- Salamanca, NY
- Underwood Social and Athletic Club Band,
Jersey City

Early Activities



- The Erie Railroad sponsored competitions of various types including band competitions.



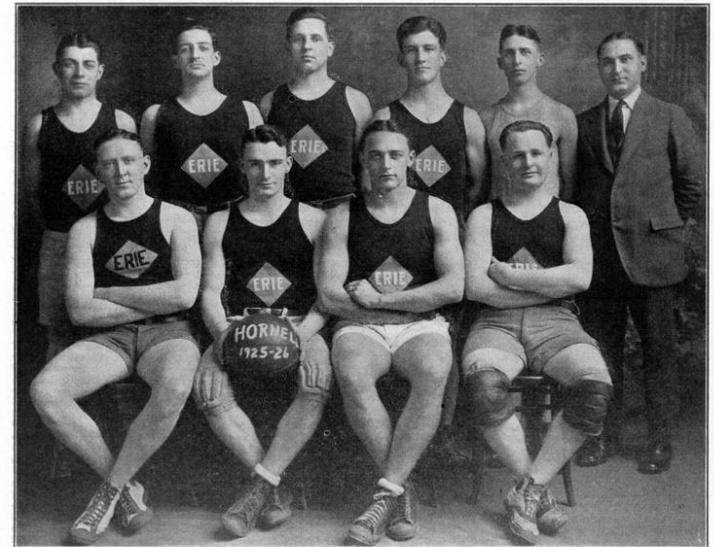
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Hornell Accounting Bureau Basketball Team, 1925-1926

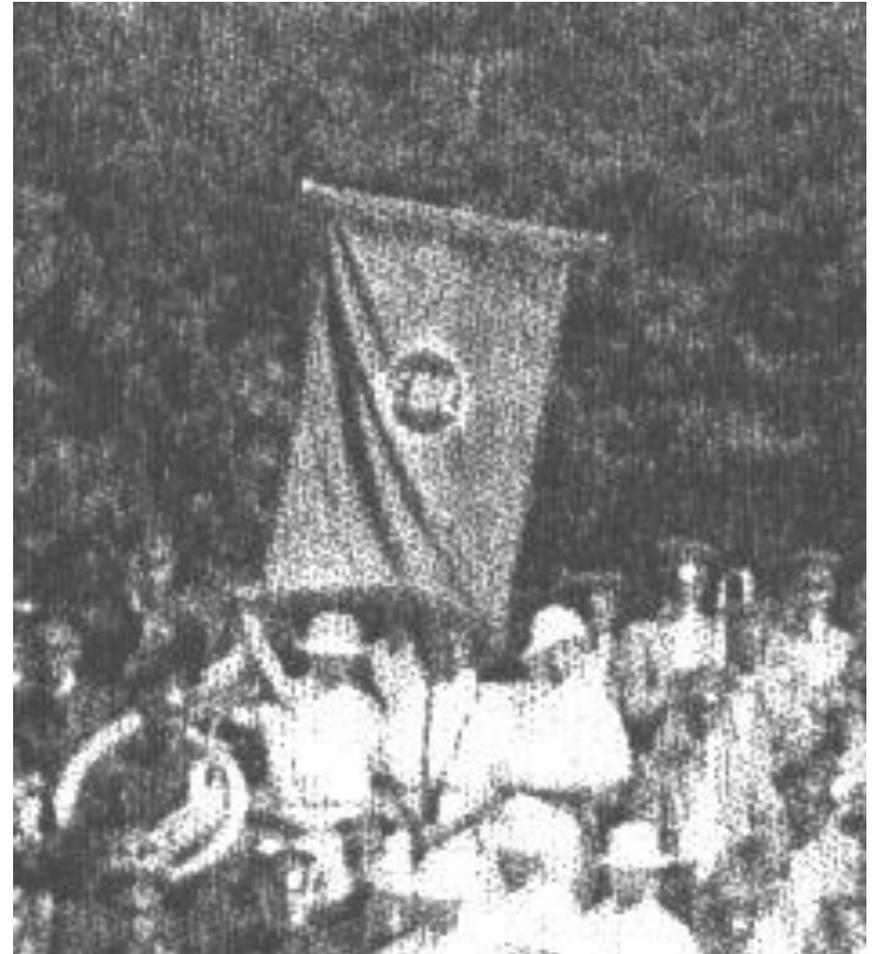


Reading from left to right, those sitting are: Victor Müller, Raymond Geary, Vaughn Buck and Jimmie Hilton. Standing, left to right: George Kraft, Richard Allen, Egbert Elmore, Francis Cons, Robert Kraft and Manager Fred J. Correse.

Early Activities



- Winning bands were awarded a banner.
- Competitions were held in 1915, 1916, 1917, and 1918
- The 1916 competition was held in Huntington



Early Activities



- 1917 – J.L. Swihart leaves Huntington for Northwestern University
- Jud Miller becomes director of the band
- 1922 – Shop workers launch a national strike in protest of wage cuts.
- Bands along the Erie system appear in support of the striking shop workers.
- J.C Otis, the Huntington band's president, refuses to take sides in the strike and doesn't allow the band to participate in strike related activities.

Early Activities - 1922



- Following the strike the Erie's administration dissolved all bands, except Huntington's and shipped company owned instruments to Huntington.
- Elmer Rahn becomes the band's director.
- Repair shop facilities are moved to Marion, Ohio. Many employees transfer out of Huntington.

Early Activities



- 1927-1935 - The band travels by interurban to Indianapolis to perform at the Indy 500.
- 1929 – The band performs at a Veterans of the Erie Railroad reunion held at Crystal Beach, Ontario, Canada.
- 1931 - The band marched in a parade in Chicago sponsored by meat packers and railroads.
- 1949 – The band performed at the Chicago Railroad Fair.

Conneaut Lake Park, PA



- Huntington's band performed for the annual veteran's picnic from 1935-1961





More Recent Activities

- 1960 - Elmer Rahn retires from the railroad after 40 years, but continues to lead the band.
- 1976 – Elmer Rahn passes away.
- Local band directors Norris Huston, Tom McElhaney, and Marvin Hall share leadership of the band.
- 1979 - Bill Richey becomes director.
- 1987 – Chris Whitacre becomes director.
- 1994 – Thaine Campbell takes over the band.

More Recent Activities



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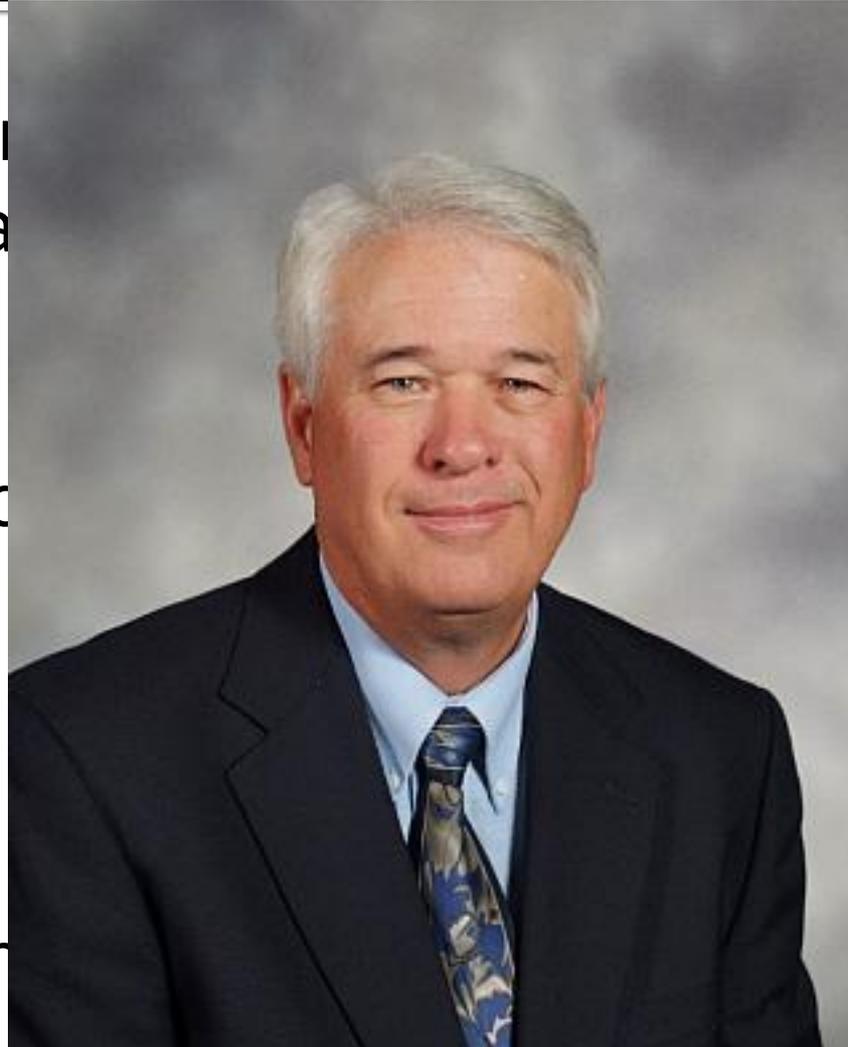


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More Recent Activities



- 1960 - Elmer [unclear] after 40 years in the band.
- 1976 – Elmer [unclear]
- Local band conductor McElhaney, [unclear] of the band.
- 1979 - Bill Ri [unclear]
- 1987 – Chris [unclear]
- 1994 – Thair [unclear]



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A Family Affair

- Elmer Rahn's son Richard played in the band and served as Secretary, Treasurer, and Librarian.
- Elmer's Grandson, Ed, is a long-time member of the band.
- Ed's grandson, David Donaldson is a current member of the band.
- John Hendry's daughter, Nancy was the first female band member.
- Karen Wall, another of John Hendry's daughters plays in the band.
- Karen's son and daughter were band members.
- At one point three generations of the McElhaney family, Don, Tom, and Doug, played in the Erie Band.

Notable People



- Thurman Poe served as secretary/treasurer of the band
- Madonna Hosler is the current secretary/treasurer.
- Eiffel Plasterer was a member of the band.
- Famous behavioral psychologist B.F. Skinner was a member of the Meadville Erie Band.

Local Appearances



- 4H Fair
- Heritage Days Parade.
- Hiers Park
- Memorial Park – Gazebo & Picnic Shelter
- Sunken Gardens
- Norwood Nursing Home
- Warren Methodist Home [Heritage Pointe]
- Heritage of Huntington
- LaFontaine Center
- 4th of July Fireworks at Kriegbaum Field
- Forks of the Wabash 4th of July Celebration
- 100th Anniversary of the Huntington County Courthouse.
- Auburn Band Festival

Bands of Other Railroads



- Southern Pacific



Bands of Other Railroads



- Colorado Midland



Web Sites



- <http://users.erols.com/diesel/clack/erie/eriebandhist.html>
- This page contains a history of Erie Bands.
- <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~sponholz/erie.html> - This page includes links to employee rosters and a searchable database of references to surnames in the Erie Magazine.
- <http://elmags.railfan.net/> - Erie and E-L magazines in PDF format.
- <http://library.syr.edu/information/spcollections/digital/erie/rr/> - This is a link to the collection of historical photos at Syracuse University.

Sources



- Indiana Room at the Huntington Public Library
- Graduate thesis by Jean Christian housed in the Indiana Room at HPL