

HISTORY AND HIGHLIGHTS OF BEAMSVILLE BAND

Early in the year of 1908 the Village of Beamsville and the Township of Clinton decided to have an Old Boys' and Girls' Reunion at the time of the fall fair. After this, a committee headed by J. W. Buck and A. McEnteer was formed to try to revive the Beamsville Band which had been out of existence for a number of years. They first gathered up some old instruments from the previous band, and had them repaired, and also bought \$2000. worth of new ones from the Besson Co. in England. Then the late James Zimmerman, a local talented musician, was engaged as the band leader, and the boys got down to work practising in the little old hall upstairs at the corner of King and Mountain Sts. Some of the members lived in the country and when the roads were too bad to drive the horses and buggies they walked two miles to practise and paid a small sum each month as dues to buy music, etc. After a few months' practice the band was ready for the road and had their first engagement at a garden party at the late Robert Konkle's home on the mountain. From then on, the band had an engagement nearly every week at strawberry socials, excursions by boat from Grimsby Beach, to Toronto, picnics by train to Niagara Falls, team and carryall to Dunnville for 12th of July, and fall fairs at many surrounding towns. By Beamsville Fair time the band was in pretty good shape to play for the old boys and girls, And what a reunion it was!

When the late M. F. Rittenhouse from Vineland was in town and was staying at the Couse House, the band serenaded him with the result that Mr. Rittenhouse had the boys all measured for new uniforms. He paid the bill. In turn, the band played concerts at Victoria Hall where Mr. Rittenhouse had built a bandstand for them. He also gave them a donation each year. These concerts drew large crowds and were very much enjoyed by those present.

In the year 1912 the band was invited to play at the Hamilton Armouries at the request of Colonel Fraser and Bandmaster Arthur Stares. The band became the 2nd Dragoons Regimental Band and went to Petawawa Camp as the only mounted band in Canada. At first the horses didn't like the idea, but soon got used to the music. As war broke out in 1914 a number of the band members enlisted, but through the efforts of a few older members the band was able to carry on until the war was over.