



That Memorable Skipper's Orchestra

Here is an early picture of that well-beloved local institution, Skipper's Orchestra. Taken in the 1940's at a dance in Thedford the five-piece band includes from the left the late Dan Wilson, of Lakeside;

Stanley Skipper, now in California; the late Jack Wilson (son of Dan) at rear; Stan Lemmons, and Gerry Vining, Lakeside, the band's versatile pianist.

BY G. McEWAN

For music lovers, 1977 has been a sad year! With the passing of Elvis, Bing Crosby and Guy Lombardo,

enthusiasts of their special music cults have been deeply affected.

Closer to home, a similar situation has been evolving!

Skipper's Orchestra which included such well-known names as Louis Cappa, George Quinn, Hubert Uren, Bill Bodenham, George

Harris and Clarence Petrie terminated its fine musical career at Kirkton on New year's Eve.

Three ardent enthusiasts

Shake A Slipper

of the Skipper-style, smoothly-unique rhythm, Don Whetstone, Jack Bradley and Alvin Wells, decided the band would not slip into

Memory's Lane without some type of recognition. Lists of the chief patrons of the rhythmic beat were prepared and tickets made available. However, as was foreseen, the plea for tickets was of such dimension that even the Lakeside Pavilion could not accommodate all of those who wished to come.

On Friday, January 6th, the farewell party for the band was held in the Lakeside Pavilion with the "Blenders" supplying the

music. Gordon McEwan, commissioned to prepare a history of the band, stated that he was fortunate to gain much information from one of the original members, Gerry Vining of Lakeside, the band's first piano player. Originating in the early '40's, the band received its name from its band leader, Stan Skipper, who now resides in California.

"Shake a slipper with Stanley Skipper" was the

expressive title which drew young dancers from St. Marys and vicinity to the St. Marys Winter Gardens every Saturday night. When far-off California lured Stan Skipper away from Ontario, a young, 'hot-cat' musician, 'Tabby' Forrester took over due to ill-health, 'Tabby' gave up his position to the present band-leader, Louis Cappa.

Stating that the band's music would be truly missed by those present, the

speaker warned the musicians that if the fans could not get along without their harmony, they would simply:

Tie a yellow ribbon 'round the old oak tree', and if the members saw it, he made the plea,

"Will ye no come back again!"

Louis Cappa and George Quinn spoke for the band members stressing the fact that working hours and family obligations were the reasons for disbanding and that they, too, would miss the nights of entertaining the people.

This part of the evening terminated with a standing ovation for the band members!

Those who attended would like to express their thanks to the men and women who planned this special evening!

For Skipper's Farewell Party