

# Alton Railroad Community Band Collection

Processed by  
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Collection Information  
Brief History  
Scope Note  
Box and Folder Inventory

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1932 - 1934
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives

## Historical Sketch

The Alton Railroad Community Band was established to boost ticket sales during the Great Depression. The Band performed in and around the Bloomington area for roughly two years, from its creation in 1932 to 1934. As band manager, Alton Shop Superintendent Joseph Schneeberger coordinated the transportation and venues for the Band, including performances on WMBD radio in Peoria, and the 1933 Chicago World's Fair.

## Scope and Content

The Alton Railroad Community Band Collection includes documents pertaining to concerts, band members, and travel expenses, 1932-1934. Included are numerous letters to and from the Band's manager, Joe Schneeberger, and newspaper articles and programs for upcoming performances in and around the Bloomington area. Also included is information on the Band's performances on WMBD in Peoria, in St. Louis, and at the World's Fair in Chicago during 1933.

## **Box and Folder Inventory:**

### **Folder 1: History and Performances**

- 1.1 History of the Alton Community Band and Band organization
- 1.2 Brief history of the Alton Band, December 19, 1932
- 1.3 Brief history of the Alton Band, November 18, 1933
- 1.4 Two copies of "History of the Alton Community Band," undated
  
- 1.5 Band music loaned to the Alton Band, January 28, 1932, original and photocopy
- 1.6 Alton Railroad Family Night concert program, February 4, 1932
- 1.7 Letter of confirmation relative to the use of the Association of Commerce hall each Thursday evening for rehearsals of the Alton Band, February 13, 1932
- 1.8 Letter to Band director V. A. Mansky inviting the Alton Band's advertising project in Towanda, April 28, 1932
- 1.9 Letter informing a Mr. House that Charles Kirkpatrick was asking for a call back, June 20, 1931
- 1.10 List of concerts played from June 1932 - June 1933
- 1.11 Letter to M. L. Anders from Band manager concerning travel furnishing for the Band, August 26, 1932
- 1.12 Western Union telegram, September 7, 1932, containing concert time planning
- 1.13 A letter declining a September 17, 1932 concert from Shop Superintendent and Band Manager James Schneeberger
- 1.14 Tickets out to Alton Community Band player for Western Avenue Community Center Street Fair and Cake Walk September 22, 1932
- 1.15 Alton Community Band appearances from May 11 - September 30, 1932
- 1.16 Addresses & telephone numbers of Alton Community Band members as of October 31, 1932
- 1.17 A note concerning requisitioning rehearsal locations for the Band, November 17, 1932
- 1.18 Alton Family Night and Safety Rally concert program at Western Avenue Community Center, December 8, 1932
- 1.19 Membership of Alton Band, March 12, year unknown
- 1.20 Alton Band list of members and addresses, undated
- 1.21 Addresses & telephone numbers of Alton Band members as of April 4, 1933
- 1.22 Alton Community Band program at Bloomington Consistory, May 21, 1933
- 1.23 List of members and instrumentation of the Alton Band, 1933
- 1.24 List of members and instrumentation of Band, June 12, 1934
- 1.25 By Laws of the Alton Band, June 20, 1933
- 1.26 List of regular members of the Alton Band as of June 20, 1933
- 1.27 Alton Railroad Community Band concert at Lexington, Illinois, July 12, 1933
- 1.28 A letter asking The Byerly Brothers Music House for a deferral of payment for a bass horn purchased by one of the Band members, James A. Weir, August 30, 1933
- 1.29 A letter granting Mr. House as honorary member and advisor to the Alton Railroad Community Band, October 5, 1933
- 1.30 A letter to Band board of directors from Mr. House assuring his continued interests in the Band despite his transfer from Bloomington to Chicago, October 10, 1933

- 1.31 "Alton Minstrels" show cast, sponsored by the Alton Band, February 21, 1934
- 1.32 Letter concerning travel planning to Roadhouse on February 21, 1934
- 1.33 Torn sheet with Alton Railroad discount information
- 1.34 Instrumentation list, undated
- 1.35 List of members and addresses for the Alton Band, undated
- 1.36 Business card of A. F. Stephens, Manager Agricultural and Live Stock Development for the Alton Railroad Company in Chicago

**Folder 2: Peoria—May 1932**

- 2.1 Letter from Schneeberger detailing intent to advertise the Alton R.R. on W.M.B.D, April 11, 1932
- 2.2 Letter from Schneeberger to W.M.B.D setting up dates for broadcast performance, April 18, 1932
- 2.3 W.M.B.D response to Schneeberger's April 18 letter, April 20, 1932
- 2.4 W.M.B.D letter to Schneeberger suggesting suitable broadcast dates for the Alton Band, April 25, 1932
- 2.5 Letter to W.M.B.D confirming broadcast dates and planning details, April 27, 1932
- 2.6 Letter to Edgar Bill, president of W.M.D.B of Peoria, Illinois containing a brief history of the Alton Band, from Mansky and Schneeberger, May 1, 1932
- 2.7 Letter concerning planning of a short intermission during broadcast, May 6, 1932
- 2.8 List of people to be placed in cars and those already taken care of, May 11, 1932
- 2.9 "Band Broadcast May Be Changed," newspaper article, May 11, 1932
- 2.10 "Alton Band Will Go on Radio Wednesday," newspaper article, May 11, 1932
- 2.11 "Alton Band To Broadcast," newspaper article, May 11, 1932
- 2.12 "Alton Band Broadcasts," newspaper article, May 11, 1932
- 2.13 The Alton Employees of Peoria message to W.M.B.D praising the Alton Band program, May 11, 1932
- 2.14 Western Union telegram from C.M. House congratulating the Alton Band's performance on W.M.B.D, May 11, 1932
- 2.15 List of cars furnished by locomotive shop supervisors, May 11, 1932
- 2.16 Three Alton Band programs for the W.M.B.D broadcast, May 11, 1932
- 2.17 Letter to Mansky containing broadcast date planning, June 17, 1933
- 2.18 Letter to W.M.B.D noting the unavailability of the Band to play on the suggested dates, June 27, 1933
- 2.19 Alton Band members and instrumentation, undated

**Folder 3: Washburn—September 1932**

- 3.1 "Band to Washburn," *Pantagraph*, September 27, 1932
- 3.2 Two lists of Alton Band players to check in cars for Washburn, September 30, 1932
- 3.3 Two complete program of Washburn concert, September 30, 1932
- 3.4 Concert program, September 30, 1932
- 3.5 Handwritten program of Washburn concert
- 3.6 Two lists of drivers of cars to Washburn, October 1, 1932
- 3.7 "Many Attend Concert," *Pantagraph*, October 2, 1932

- 3.8 Letter to Schneeberger concerning audience reception and passenger or freight revenue figures as a result of the Washburn concert, October 5, 1932
- 3.9 Note to the Alton R.R. company reporting no increase in freight revenues, October 10, 1932
- 3.10 Addresses & telephone numbers of Alton Band members as of October 13, 1932

**Folder 4: McLean County—September, 1933**

- 4.1 "Alton Band to Play," *Pantagraph*, September 19, 1933
- 4.2 Alton Band newspaper advertisement, "Free Band Concert" to be followed by a Big Chicken Supper, September 21, 1933

**Folder 5: Towanda—June 1932**

- 5.1 "Alton Band to Play Concert at Towanda," *Pantagraph*, June 6, 1932
- 5.2 "Alton Band to Play Concert at Towanda," *Pantagraph*, June 14, 1932
- 5.3 Alton Band Towanda concert program for June 15, 1932
- 5.4 "Concert Postponed," *Pantagraph*, June 16, 1932
- 5.5 Letter to A. F. Stephens, Manager of Agricultural and Live Stock Development concerning his presence at the Towanda concert, June 22, 1932
- 5.6 Towanda concert information, June 24, 1932
- 5.7 Letter from Stephens to Schneeberger regarding a meeting at Towanda, June 25, 1932
- 5.8 "Alton's Band to Play at Towanda Wednesday," *Pantagraph*, June 28, 1932
- 5.9 Alton Band list of players and instrumentation, June 28, 1932
- 5.10 Three Alton Band Towanda concert program, June 29, 1932
- 5.11 "Alton Band Draws Crowd," *Pantagraph*, July 1, 1932
- 5.12 Alton Band list of members as of July 6, 1932
- 5.13 Note to Schneeberger regarding the extent of publicity that Alton R.R. received from the Alton Band representation

**Folder 6: Washington**

- 6.1 Letter to Schneeberger inviting the Alton Band to play in Washington during the summer of 1932, dated June 17, 1932
- 6.2 Letter back to Washington declining a concert due to transportation complications, June 30, 1932
- 6.3 Letter from the Washington Kiwanis Club suggesting an arrangement for the Alton Band to play in Washington, August 26, 1932
- 6.4 A letter redirecting the Kiwanis letter to Schneeberger, August 29, 1932

**Folder 7: Chicago Excursion and World's Fair, 1932-1933**

- 7.1 Alton Band list of members, addresses, and telephone numbers as of March 26, 1932
- 7.2 Four *Pantagraph* articles including "Band to Accompany Excursion Crowd," July 12, 1932; "Passes Not Accepted," July 13, 1932; "Concert to Boom Chicago Excursion," July 14, 1932; and "2,000 Expected to Ride Low Rate Excursion Today," July 17, 1932
- 7.3 Alton Band concert program at Union Station and information, July 15, 1932
- 7.4 Call for Alton Band concert at Union Station, July 15, 1932
- 7.5 Letter of appreciation to Schneeberger for the Chicago excursion, August 2, 1932
- 7.6 "New Excursion Planned," *Pantagraph*, August 15, 1932

- 7.7 Chicago concert program
- 7.8 Proposed line-up for two band for Chicago excursion, August 28, 1932
- 7.9 Letter to Schneeberger praising the Band for promoting R.R. business, August 30, 1932
- 7.10 Western Union telegram to Schneeberger, "Chicago locals ok on your band playing here," June 19, 1933
- 7.11 Five *Pantagraph* articles including "Alton Band Boosts for Crowd at Fair," August 2, 1933; "Band to Take Trip," August 12, 1933; "B. & O. March Arrives," August 13, 1933; "Alton band to Play at Chicago's Fair," August 21, 1933; "Band Concert On Saturday," August 22, 1933
- 7.12 Letter concerning Alton Band's travel arrangements and ticket selling from Schneeberger, August 5, 1933
- 7.13 Letter to Schneeberger from House with band arrangements for the Chicago excursion, August 11, 1933
- 7.14 Letter to Schneeberger from House giving transportation information, August 11, 1933
- 7.15 Letter to Schneeberger from the Landis Tool Company, self-promotion information, August 14, 1933
- 7.16 Transportation details for the Chicago excursion, August 15, 1933
- 7.17 Transportation planning for the Chicago excursion, August 16, 1933
- 7.18 Transportation planning, August 19, 1933
- 7.19 Program and information for the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago, August 26, 1933
- 7.20 Excursion details to the Chicago Fair on August 27, 1933
- 7.21 List of Alton Band members going to A Century of Progress Exposition, August 27, 1933
- 7.22 List of 60 Alton Band members visiting A Century of Progress, August 27, 1933
- 7.23 Alton R.R. advertisement for Chicago's Pre-World's Fair Excursion, August 28, 1933
- 7.24 Receipt for train tickets sold at Chicago excursion, August 28, 1933
- 7.25 Letter to Schneeberger containing R.R. revenue, August 31, 1933
- 7.26 Letter to House containing revenue information and general praise for the Alton Band performance, September 2, 1933
- 7.27 Letter detailing the total expenses of the Chicago excursion, September 22, 1933
- 7.28 Mailgram to Schneeberger from House containing revenue figures, September 23, 1933
- 7.29 Draft of a letter of appreciation to House from the Alton Band for the opportunity to play at A Century of Progress, September 23, 1933
- 7.30 Revised letter of appreciation to House from the Alton Band for the opportunity to play at A Century of Progress, September 25, 1933

**Folder 8: Uniforms**

- 8.1 Letter to Schneeberger from D. Klein & Bro., Inc. Tailored Uniforms containing information on product material and expenses, February 14, 1933
- 8.2 Letter to Schneeberger from Craddock Co. containing expenses of uniforms, April 6, 1933
- 8.3 Letter to Craddock Co. from Schneeberger concerning uniform sketches, April 6, 1933
- 8.4 Letter to Craddock Co. from Schneeberger, unsatisfied with uniform designs, April 10, 1933
- 8.5 Letter to Manskey from the Chicago Uniform & Cap Company containing details uniform expenses, April 14, 1933

- 8.6 List of Alton Band members to be uniformed, April 20, 1933
- 8.7 Envelope addressed to A.V. Manskey containing Craddock Co. catalogue
- 8.8 Envelope addressed to Chicago and Alton Railway Co. containing uniform brochure from DeMoulin Bros. & Co.
- 8.9 Envelope addressed to Schneeberger containing order form for D. Klein & Bro., Inc.
- 8.10 Henderson-Ames Company uniform catalogue addressed to Alton Band
- 8.11 The Henderson-Ames Co. uniform catalogue, list no. 432F
- 8.12 D. Klein & Bro., Inc. uniform catalogue, no. 36
- 8.13 Fabric samples enclosed in bag
- 8.14 A. G. Meier & Co. fabric sample card

**Folder 9: Hopedale—August 1932**

- 9.1 Letter concerning travel expenses for the Hopedale trip, July 14, 1932
- 9.2 Initial transportation planning from the Band manager and Hopedale, July 26, 1932
- 9.3 Two letters from the Band manager concerning travel plans to Hopedale, August 1-2, 1932
- 9.4 "Alton Band to Give Concert at Hopedale," *Pantagraph*, August 2, 1932
- 9.5 Three copies of the Alton Band Hopedale concert program, August 5, 1932
- 9.6 "1,000 Hear Alton Band at Hopedale," *Pantagraph*, August 7, 1932
- 9.7 A letter stating the Alton Band could not make the original Hopedale date, August 21, 1932
- 9.8 List of the Alton Band members and instruments played as of August 22, 1932

**Folder 10: St. Louis Excursion—August 1932**

- 10.1 A summary of the operetta "Land of Smiles," to be played by the Alton Band in St. Louis
- 10.2 "Band to Play on Excursion," *Pantagraph*, August 8, 1932, concerning the Alton Band's concert in St. Louis
- 10.3 Photocopy of a brief article on the St. Louis excursion
- 10.4 Letter about travel planning to St. Louis, August 3, 1932

**Folder 11: Carlock—August 1932**

- 11.1 Two copies of the Carlock, Illinois concert, August 24, 1932
- 11.2 List of Band members to be transported to Carlock
- 11.3 List of drivers and number of Band members taken to Carlock
- 11.4 List of drivers, numbers of Band members, and expenses
- 11.5 Letter confirming the Band's intent to play in Carlock with travel expenses
- 11.6 *Pantagraph* announcement of Alton Band playing in Carlock, printed August 16, 1932
- 11.7 Letter concerning travel details to Carlock, August 9, 1932
- 11.8 Letter from Band director concerning travel planning to Carlock
- 11.9 Letter from House thanking the Band for continued interest in the Alton R.R., August 30, 1932

**Folder 12: Chenoa—September 1932**

- 12.1 Torn concert program, undated
- 12.2 The Alton Community Band Chenoa, Illinois program, September 15, 1932
- 12.3 List of Band members for travel planning purposes

- 12.4 Complete program for the Alton Community Band Chenoa concert
- 12.5 List of members with intent to drive to Chenoa
- 12.6 List of drivers of cars who took Band members to Chenoa
- 12.7 Four *Pantagraph* articles concerning the announcement of the Chenoa concert
- 12.8 Chenoa concert planning from agent S. B. Stockum, September 7, 1932
- 12.9 List of Band members, included director, manager, and instruments played
- 12.10 Letter confirming date and expenses to Band agent S. B. Stockum

**Folder 13: Newspaper Articles 1932-1934** (*Pantagraph*, unless noted)

- 13.1 "Alton Band Elects and Plans Concerts," June 5, 1932
- 13.2 "Alton Athletic Body to Hold Street Fair," September 11, 1932
- 13.3 "Band to Practice," September 13, 1932
- 13.4 "Alton Band to Play for Street Fair Dance," September 17, 1932
- 13.5 "Band and guild Make Plans for Street Fair at Center Thursday," September 17, 1932
- 13.6 "Last Rehearsal Held by Alton band Before Street Fair Thursday," September 20, 1932
- 13.7 "Booths Are Erected for Fair Tonight," September 22, 1932
- 13.8 "Large Crowd Attends Pavement Dance, Fair at Community Center," September 23, 1932
- 13.9 "Alton Band Members Facing Busy Season," November 3, 1932
- 13.10 "800 of Unemployed Families Are Guests at Consistory Show," January 14, 1933
- 13.11 "Popular Concert to Be Presented at the Coliseum," May 7, 1933
- 13.12 "Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra to Appear in 'Music Parade' Friday," May 14, 1933
- 13.13 "Band to Play Sunday," May 18, 1933
- 13.14 "400 Central Illinois Residents to Give Music Parade Friday," May 18, 1933
- 13.15 "Alton Community Band to Take Part in Philharmonic Music Parade Tonight," May 19, 1933
- 13.16 "Alton Band to Play Several Numbers at Music Parade Friday," May 19, 1933
- 13.17 "Parade of Musical Organizations Get Popular Reception," May 20, 1933
- 13.18 "Band Changes Practice Day," June 9, 1933
- 13.19 "Alton Band to Play at State Farm Field," July 7, 1933
- 13.20 "Band to Play Aug 8," July 18, 1933
- 13.21 "Band Activity Increases," August 6, 1933
- 13.22 "Alton Band to Play at Boxing Program Tuesday Evening," August 7, 1933
- 13.23 "Townships to Join in Victory Parade: More Bands, More Floats," September 24, 1933
- 13.24 "Band Gives Concert," October 20, 1933
- 13.25 Five clippings, "Band to Rehearse," November 22, 1933; "Alton Band to Play at Heyworth School," December 5, 1933; "Concert at Heyworth," December 7, 1933; "250 Alton Officials and Employes[sic] to Be Guests of Chow Club," December 19, 1933; "Large Registration Made for Chow Club," December 20, 1933;
- 13.26 "Silas Strawn Pessimistic: Assails Roosevelt's Ideas on Recovery in Chow Club Address," December 22, 1933
- 13.27 "Band to Give Show," January 17, 1934
- 13.28 "Toe, Ballet Dancers Compete Feb. 2 at Community Center," January 23, 1934
- 13.29 "Minstrel Group to Dine," February 6, 1934
- 13.30 "Alton Minstrel Show Participants Names for Feb. 28, March 2," February 23, 1934
- 13.31 "Alton Orchestra Will Furnish music for Minstrel," February 26, 1934

- 13.32 "Dress Rehearsal Held for Minstrel," February 28, 1934
- 13.33 "Minstrel Soloist, Miss Helen Zalucha," February 28, 1934
- 13.34 "400 at Minstrel Show for Center, " March 1, 1934
- 13.35 "Cast of Men and Women Who Gave Alton Band Minstrel Show," March 9, 1934