

# Parades Bring Back 50 Years Of Memories

When the "drums go bang and the cymbals clang" at community band concerts and parades this summer, it will bring back a lot of memories for Wilfred Blackney of Hubbard Street, Livonia.

At 87, he finds it too difficult to get out to concerts in person, but he'll be there in spirit and he spends "all day and all night" listening to band concerts on radio and television.

His memories include playing under the baton of Victor Herbert, who died in 1934, and John Philip Sousa, who died in 1932.

Blackney was a bandman for more than 50 years. He started when he was 14.

He was born in Cornwall, England, and was 14 when he joined the British Army.

He started as a band boy and after 12 years of service (1899-1911), he wound up as a band corporal "which was an exalted rank in the British Army."

He learned to play what he calls "a conglomeration of instruments," including the trombone, the euphonium and the string bass.

## amusements

Just before the outbreak of World War I, Blackney left the Army and went to Toronto, Ont., where he lived for five years and met his bride, who had also come from England.

Although he worked delivering coal and ice, he was also in demand for band concerts and parades. He played in the Anglo-Canadian Leather Company Band, "one of the finest in Canada."

He came to Detroit on the invitation of the conductor of the Dodge Brothers Band and played with them for four or five years, and with other bands "for funerals and weddings."

IT WAS while with the Dodge Brothers Band he played under the baton of Victor Herbert. Herbert was hired to conduct the band at several performances in a large New York hotel. The band also played with other noted conductors of the time.

He played several performances with the Great Lakes Sousa Band.



WILFRED BLACKNEY of Livonia was a band corporal in the British Army. This picture was taken in South Africa in 1905.

"Sousa was a great conductor, but I didn't care for the Sousa Band. Some of the musicians weren't that good," he says. "Sousa was a drawing card though, with his pointed whiskers."

According to Blackney, a good conductor "has to know music and how to take charge of musicians. They were an awful bunch, some of them."

IN DETROIT, Blackney worked as a house painter, eventually working for the city, but his band playing was very important not only as a musical outlet, but also as an added income. The Blackneys have six children, most of whom are living in Observerland.

"In those days you'd get pretty good money, at least six or seven dollars for a two-hour parade," says Blackney. For a week-long engagement, \$70 was a good salary. Blackney played with an Elks band which won four different championships and took him to Miami, Fla., and Portland, Ore. He also played with the Shrine Band, and for 14 years with the Detroit Police Band.



AMONG THE GROUP of Farmington natives who "invaded" Mackinac Island over the weekend were Mary Sue Ewing and George Rick. Both are in the cast of the musical "Mackinac!" Paul Ewing is also in the cast, but his horse got stuck in a stampede of mavericks, mustangs, broncos, pintos and stuff and he couldn't make it home in time for the picture. (Evert photo)

## 'Mackinac!' Cast, Crew Call Visit A Success

One of the most unusual weekend trips of the summer has been a terrific success by those taking part. And as a result, the Little Stone Church on Mackinac Island is a little richer.

Between 300 and 400 persons turned out last Sunday evening to see Michigan's original musical "Mackinac!" staged in its entirety in the casino of the Grand Hotel.

ALL THE proceeds went to the church, but the cast and crew and their families had the fun of getting themselves from Farmington to Mackinac Island for the performance and back ... with all their costumes and props.

About 70 persons and 20 cars made the trip, which required months of planning. "Mackinac!" is the production which was written by June Rado of Farmington and Charlene Slaby of North-

ville for the Farmington Musicals. It played to some 1,500 persons in two performances in April, at Harrison High School.

MAYBE IT was all that work. It began right after the cast members had recovered from the successful Farmington performances for which they had had to give up Easter vacations to rehearse.

Five more rehearsals were held to ready the show for the island.

Disaster struck the planning when Ed Savely broke his leg. Savely, husband of cast member Margaret Savely, had promised to supply and drive a van to carry the stage settings and props.

After some quick checking, O'Green Ford in Farmington came up with the required van and Bob Williams drove it.

Other cast members with station wagons helped transport the stage settings ... the whole interior of a log cabin.

All had to be unloaded at Mackinac City, put on board a ferry, unloaded again on the island and transported by horse-drawn dray to the hotel where they were unloaded again.

On Monday morning, the whole process had to be reversed.

ACCOMMODATING 70 people was accomplished with help of Farmington residents Robert Benjamin, Ron Jackson and Clayton Timmons, who have summer homes on the island. Some were in the church rectory. Each person was limited to one suitcase (preferably small) and a sleeping bag.

Those going with their families were on their own and had to find hotel accommodations.

According to Mrs. Prudence Tomchak, the producer, "The cast members made a lovely sight arriving for the play in their early-1800s costumes."

Everyone arrived home safely Monday except for a family who pulled a trailer and were setting out for the West and several more who were hauling boats and such.

Children May Join Parade

DETROIT Boys and girls interested in joining the International Freedom Festival parade may report to the Detroit Historical Museum, 5401 Woodward, at 11 a.m., Tuesday, July 4.

They should wear an American heritage costume or a sandwich board sign relating to an event important in history. There will be flags, balloons and refreshments for all paraders.

## Theater Course To Open

A four-week accelerated program in theater will be offered to adults, teens and undergrads at Will-O-Way Theater, 775 W. Long Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills, this summer.

The first session begins July 5 and runs through July 30. The second session will be Aug. 1 through 30.

Registrations are now being accepted at the theater. Some work scholarships are available to young adults 16 or over with unusual talent in any phase of theater. Students will exchange their help in the upkeep and running of the theater for tuition charges. A registration fee will be charged.

Classes being offered include contemporary scene studies, psychology of performing, classic scene studies, improvisation, theater games, laboratory, theater performance, diction, speech, dialects, play reading, voice and movement, characterization and make-up.

## Pearl To Sing At Pine Knob

The legendary Pearl Bailey will appear at the new Pine Knob Music Theater (175 and Sashabaw Road) for a five-day run Wednesday through Sunday, July 5 through 9. All shows begin at 8:30 p.m. except Sunday evening when the starting time is 7:30.

Tickets are available at all Hudson's stores. Prices are \$7 and \$5 for reserved seats and \$2.50 for unserved lawn seats.

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**9th Day—Return Home**—A beautiful walk through the famous UNIVERSITY, with its many beautiful gardens. We'll see the great MEXICAN MUSEUM, the MEXICAN CITY and the MEXICAN AMERICAN. We'll see the great MEXICAN MUSEUM, the MEXICAN CITY and the MEXICAN AMERICAN.

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### DICK BENSK

A famous recipe for shark's fin describes its preparation as requiring four days: the fin is soaked three days first, then cooked five hours with the water changed every fifteen minutes, cooked again in a broth of scallions and green ginger, cooked again in a broth made with an entire chicken and some lean pork, and finally served with a sauce made from the concentrated bouillon of a second chicken and some ham, flavored with wine and soy sauce. Unusual? Yes, but then the Chinese still speak of the time when at a dinner in Peking, duck was served one hundred different ways, and each dish was said to be entirely different from all the others!

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