

# St George Historical Society Newsletter

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An IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

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## The Bands of St George



St George Band



Tenants Harbor Band



Long Cove Band



## ST. GEORGE BANDS.

### The Town Boasts of Three Live, Progressive Organizations.

The news published in this paper that St. George had three up-to-date band organizations created considerable comment. It is with pleasure we are able in this issue to publish the personnel of each organization.

**The Long Cove Band.** Following is the list of members and their instrumentation: Albion Stein and Emil Ruski, basses; Matt Kokoa, baritone; Albert Morris and Albert Stein, slide trombones, Willie Riley and Robert Wood, altos; Joseph Morris, Emil Salmania, John Kulyon, William Monahan, cornets; George Nairn, bass drum and cymbals; Phillip Slingsby, snare drum. This band was organized last winter under the directorship of Joseph Morris. Although only about a year old this band has made achievements during the past summer by their concerts, and in other ways, and their music has been well appreciated by all who have heard it. This band is equipped with uniforms.

**Tenant's Harbor Band.** The personnel is as follows: Charlie Slingsby, bass; Fred Humphrey, baritone; Herbert Hawkins, trombone; Levi Hawthorn, tenor; James Riley, Jr., A. J. Rawley, George Pease, altos; Joseph Simmons, F. Smalley, clarinets; Link Monahan, H. Mason, C. Rawley, Elmer Allen, cornets; W. L. Allen, tenor drum; Weston Wiley, bass drum and cymbals. This band was organized last July and has several of the old time members who formerly played in Mathews' Band, which was under the leadership of W. H. Mathews, now deceased. This band is also making good advancement and also has a set of uniforms.

This newspaper article is from the November 23, 1907 issue of the Courier-Gazette.

**The Wiley's Corner Band.** This band although a comparatively a new one is composed of young men who are making their first venture in band work, while several of the members, who were formerly in the old St. George band, are retained in their same positions in the new organization. The Wiley's Corner Band was organized Oct. 1, and is having two rehearsals a week under the direction of Fred Smalley. One of the most interesting features in this band is Donald Burns, son of John and Lewey Burns, who is but 8 years old, who performs upon the slide trombone with the skill of an artist and bids fair to become one of the leading musicians in the art of trombone playing. The list of members and the instrumentation are as follows: W. L. Robinson, bass; John Burns, baritone; Donald Burns, Orris Kinney, H. Kalloch, trombones; J. Robinson, A. Johnson, Earl Kinney, altos; E. Smalley (leader), E. Robinson, H. L. Ewell, Alfred Hocking, cornets; Fred Smalley (director), S. W. Fuller, clarinets; J. W. Thomas, snare drum; B. Fuller, bass drum; Wilford Robinson, cymbals. All three of the above bands are located in the town of St. George and we doubt if there is another town in Knox county that can make a like boast.

# **The St George Band – and Charles Seymour Watts**

## **From Bill Colby, grandson of C S Watts**

In the spring and early summer of 1892, a number of musically inclined young men in the Wiley's Corner area, including Charles, got together and formed a "new" version of the St. George Band. The members of the band at this time were Fred Smalley, E flat cornet; Charles Watts, solo B flat cornet, and band leader; Winslow L. Robinson, 1st B flat cornet; T. W. Gilchrest, clarinet; A. Smalley, 2nd B flat cornet; Fred W. Gilchrest, solo E flat alto saxophone; James A. Gilchrest, 2nd E flat alto sax; S. Smalley, 3rd E flat alto sax; George H Kerswell, 1st B flat tenor sax; E. Sherman, 2nd B flat tenor sax; Bert Pierson, baritone sax; S. G. Robinson, B flat bass; D. A. Hathorn, E flat tuba; Hollis Gilchrest, tenor drum; Frank Kerswell, cymbals. Roscoe Ingraham, a noted musician of the time, served as the band's instructor.

The band practiced in Rawley's Hall (*formally Robinson's Hall*), located near the present site of the St. George Grange Hall. They also held ice cream sales at the hall while exhibiting their musical talents at concerts to raise money for sheet music and band uniforms. They were a multifaceted group, as were most small town bands of this era, being a marching band and stage and dance band. Most of their appearances were in the several villages of St. George and South Thomaston.

On Labor Day in 1893 they were invited by the Seal Harbor Band to attend a picnic at Pleasant Beach, South Thomaston. There they performed a combined concert between the two bands, which was a great hit with the large crowd gathered there from Wiley's Corner and the Seal Harbor region together with the many cottage owners of Pleasant Beach.

Earlier that year in late January Charles received a new B flat cornet that he had ordered from the C. G. Conn Co. of Elkhart, Indiana. Over the years, by invitation, he and others in the St. George Band performed with other bands in the area, as on the evening of 1 March 1895 he and Benjamin Fuller played in the South Thomaston Band. Among other musical talents of this "popular band leader" was the ability to play not only the cornet but also the trombone and violin.

Apparently by this time Capt. Edward A. Watts had sensed his son's lack of interest in going to sea and by 1894 or before sent Charles to the Eastman Business College in Poughkeepsie, New York. His total years of attendance and whether or not he graduated is not known at this time, but the education he received there was well used later in his life.

### **Membership Dues**

Membership dues cover the calendar year and are \$10 / individual and \$15 / household.

An application form for a new membership can be found at the end of this newsletter. Please send dues and application form (if new) to:

**St George Historical Society**  
**P O Box 14**  
**Tenants Harbor, Maine 04860**

### **Coming Events**

The Old Library Museum in Tenants Harbor will be open during the winter season by appointment only. Please call 207-372-2231 or send an email to us and leave a message. ....There will be no monthly program during the months of November and December. We will have a Zoom meeting in January.

## News Items about the local bands

September 1, 1891 issue of the Courier-Gazette:

“Lawry’s Cornet Band will furnish music Labor Day at Port Clyde.”

June 30, 1891 issue of the Courier-Gazette:

...“Lawry’s Cornet Band will furnish music at Tenant’s Harbor the Fourth.”

April 25, 1893 issue of the Courier-Gazette:

“Mathews' Cornet Band will re-organize soon with some new members added. W H. Mathews will be the instructor.”

June 13, 1893 issue of the Courier-Gazette:

“Mathew's Band is progressing finely and will give a band concert at their new band stand just erected Friday evening.” “Mathew’s Band will hold a festival in Malvern Hall, Friday evening directly after the open-air concert at the band stand.” *[NOTE: It has been said that the band stand in Tenants Harbor was at the corner of Water Street and Main Street, where the Old Library Museum is now located. Also, Malvern Hall was in the Hart Hotel located on Watts Avenue.]*

May 28, 1895 issue of the Courier-Gazette:

“Mathews Cornet Band will begin its weekly open air concerts at their band stand as soon as the weather gets warmer. They have added several new players and will soon be in fine playing order. W. H. Mathews is still leader and knows how to conduct it in a masterly manner.”

July 30, 1895 issue of the Courier-Gazette:

“Mathews Cornet Band gave a fine concert Monday evening at their band stand.”

December 10, 1895 issue of the Courier-Gazette:

...“Mathew’s Band is practicing some nice new music just received. This organization has given free band concerts during the summer at its stand and has asked for no recompense whatever. The band is under quite an expense with its hall rent, music, repairs on instruments, etc., which soon amount to quite a sum.”