

Did Sousa Play at Chautauqua Auditorium?

There has been much speculation about whether or not John Phillip Sousa and his band ever played in the Waxahachie Chautauqua Auditorium. So far in our Chautauqua research we have not come across any newspaper account or other documentation telling us that he did actually play there. In fact, thus far, indications seem to tell us that he did not. Here are two related items that we have found:

1) Waxahachie native Josephine Ruskin, in her research for the restoration of the Chautauqua Auditorium in the mid-1970s, stated that the U.S. Marine Band appeared in the Auditorium on November 4, 1914. "Most old-timers here remember this event, but many mistakenly believe it was Sousa's Band." She concludes from her research that Sousa never played in Waxahachie. (*Lecture Series on the History of Ellis County, Southwestern Junior College of the Assemblies of God, May 10-14, 1976*)

2) In Rose-Mary Rumbley's book *Dallas, Too* (Eakin Press, Austin, Texas 1998), she describes an itinerary handwritten by Sousa himself which listed his band's touring engagements from September 1925 to March 1926. They played matinee and evening performances, never taking a day off, and visiting almost every state in the union. In December 1925, many Texas cities were on the list, including Waxahachie, which was scheduled for December 28. However, Waxahachie was crossed out and "Korsikana" was written in for that day.

If anyone has other information that can help us answer the question of Sousa's appearance in Waxahachie, please let us know. We are still researching!

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Editors Note: The "Canceled" article above was located 6-29-02!

Waxahachie Daily Light, Sept. 14, 1925

death before he was shot.

SOUSA'S BAND TO PLAY HERE DECEMBER 27

MARINE MUSICAL BODY TO BE PRESENTED IN WAXAHACHIE MATINEE AND NIGHT.

Sousa's Marine Band, world-famous musical organization, directed by John Phillip Sousa, composer and veteran naval director, will be presented in concert at Getzendaner Memorial Park auditorium, December 27. It was announced Monday by John V. Singleton, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce.

The concert is to be sponsored by the commercial club as an entertaining and instructive attraction.

"The band is one of the best known of musical organizations, and we are going to present it in a special matinee program at special prices in order that every school child in Waxahachie may have an opportunity to hear the program," Mr. Singleton said. A night concert also will be played.

The Waxahachie concerts will be included in a Southern tour being made by the band, which will play in Dallas December 3, according to the routing and program received here.

Waxahachie Daily Light, Nov. 19, 1925

SOUSA'S BAND ENGAGEMENT CANCELED HERE

CANCELLATION AGREED ON AFTER SUNDAY FOUND ONLY AVAILABLE DATE

Cancellation of the engagement here on December 28, by Sousa's band was announced Thursday by the Chamber of Commerce, which had arranged for the coming to this city of the musical organization.

The engagement was cancelled by the band organization after failure to make satisfactory booking arrangements for this part of the state, it was said. Waxahachie had been offered an engagement on Sunday, December 27, but not wishing to have the musical organization here on Sunday the band was asked to come one day later, Monday, Dec. 28, a week day. This was impossible, the Sunday date being the only date open the band officials informed the local Chamber of Commerce.

It was for this reason that cancellation of the engagement was agreed upon, as the local body did not wish to bring to the "City of Homes, Schools and Churches" a musical organization of such nature on the Sabbath, because of the fact that admission prices would have been necessary to get the engagement with the band.

