



Pajaro Valley Historical Association

Marriage and rearing families eventually broke up the band.

When the ladies made music

Organized in 1910, the Lady Hussars Concert Band was composed of ladies living in Watsonville. The band was directed by Mr. E.A. Ball of Gilroy, who received \$20 a month plus 10 percent of the proceeds whenever the band performed.

Dues were \$1 a month and the ladies met at the old Gas house on upper Main Street for their practice sessions.

J.W. Meddaugh, a Watsonville photographer, was the manager of the band and

That was Watsonville

lined up engagements in town and also other towns such as Santa Cruz, Hollister, Monterey and Gilroy. Their first performance was in the Watsonville Opera House on Oct. 7, 1910, a few days before the opening of the first Apple Annual.

The ladies' opening number that evening was "America" and their musical selections were interspersed with moving pictures, to give the women a chance to "rest



Betty Lewis

up."

Instruments played by the women in the band included flugelhorn, cornet, trombone, mellophone, clarinet, drums, bass, baritone, bass drum, plus the drum major. In November of 1911, a new director was hired to lead the band. Elmer J. Whipple, who was the popular and efficient pianist at the Watsonville Opera House, took on the new duties.

The band's membership then stood at 15.

In February of 1912, the Lady Hussars performed at the local Opera House and sold 947 tickets at a price of 15 cents each. One half of

the profits went to the ladies and the other half to the Opera House.

According to the scattered records available, the band was still playing into the summer of 1912. Several other bands were founded during this period and some of the ladies became members of those while others elected to concentrate on marriage and children — thus ending the performing of the popular and well received Lady Hussars' Concert Band.

Although hussars were originally troops of flamboyantly uniformed 15th Century Hungarian cavalry, hussars' dress and freebooter behavior was later notable in many European armies. The term, in fact, derives from Old Serbian, Italian and Latin words meaning corsair or pirate.

Somehow we feel sure the Lady Hussars had only handsome uniforms and music making in mind. Maybe their renditions of Christmas Carols still hang in the air above the plaza bandstand where they performed some 80-plus years ago!