

Bands of Allentown—The Civil War Years

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Allentown, Pennsylvania, is known today as “Band City USA” because of its long tradition of ardent support for community bands. Little is known, however, about the history of these important early sources of entertainment and the dedicated people who were key to their evolution. The purpose of this study is to provide a detailed account of Allentown’s band activities during the period leading up to the Civil War and throughout the war years.

Three previous scholarly papers have been prepared on the history of the present-day Allentown Band. The earliest, “History of the Allentown Band” by Charles R. Roberts, appeared in the *Proceedings of Lehigh County Historical Society* in 1936.¹ Forty years later, two other studies were prepared by band members—one by Donald Albright, now Assistant Conductor of the Allentown Band, entitled “The Band Plays On,”² and another by band member Kent Kuder in his “History of the Allentown Band.”³ Because the Civil War period placed great stress on the citizens of Allentown and its bands, more detailed research on the war’s effect on Allentown bands is warranted. All above-mentioned reports broadly covered today’s Allentown Band throughout its history; the intent here is to provide a more detailed focus on all the bands of Allentown during the Civil War period. As we shall see, it is primarily a history of two bands—both prospering at the start of the war—but only one surviving the war period to continue to the present day.

In the mid- to late-nineteenth century, nearly every community in the Lehigh Valley supported a band, no matter how large or small the population. These communities were isolated in ways we cannot imagine, so bands became the focal point of interest and entertainment. This was a time without radio or television. Transportation was limited to a stage line, or perhaps a railroad stop. Even tiny villages like Limeport and Summit Hill had their own band. In Lehigh County there were several Allentown bands, the Millerstown⁴ Band, and the Ringold Band of Emmaus, to name a few. In Northampton County the Easton bands were renowned. Popular at the time were Pomp’s Cornet Band (later to become Coates’ Cornet Band), and the Jaeger Band. During the Civil War, both Easton bands were very busy performing in parades for departing and arriving troops. In Bethlehem, where the Moravians strongly emphasized music, there was the Bethlehem Brass Band and Beckel’s Cornet Band. The towns of South Bethlehem and Nazareth had their own band as well. This strong community band tradition continues in the Lehigh

¹Charles R. Roberts, “History of the Allentown Band,” *Proceedings of Lehigh County Historical Society* (Allentown, Pa.: Lehigh County Historical Society, 1936), 82–85; hereafter cited as Roberts (1936).

²Donald Albright, “The Band Plays On,” *Proceedings of Lehigh County Historical Society* (Allentown, Pa.: Lehigh County Historical Society, 1976), 139–147.

³Kent Kuder, “History of the Allentown Band” (unpublished research report submitted to West Chester [Pa.] State College, 1976).

⁴Millerstown was renamed Macungie in 1875 to avoid being confused with a similarly named town in Perry County, Pennsylvania.

Valley today, where many of the above communities still proudly support a band, and in some cases several bands.

Few details are known about Allentown bands as the town approached the Civil War. Charles Roberts writes that Major Amos Ettinger became leader of the Allentown Band in 1853.⁵ Evidence will show that, in 1853, it was not called the Allentown Band. Roberts also provides a list of twenty-three band members from the 1853 roster.⁶ Unfortunately for us, he failed to document his source. These names are:

John Able	Allen Barber	Henry Breinig	Jonathan Desch
William Ettinger	George Fry	T. H. Good	Abraham Gangewere
Horatio Kramer	Walter Miller	Allen Newhard	James Rees
Edward Ruhe	Henry E. Ruhe	Carlos Samson	James Sieger
Peter Schwentzer	Frank Weiss	Joseph Weiss	Peter S. Wenner
Frederick Wolf	Theodore Yeager	Israel Yingling	

Sometimes, when information on a group is lacking, research into the lives of the individuals within that group provides interesting and possibly pertinent clues. Keeping the 1853 band in mind, it seems a worthwhile venture to construct a picture based on the nature of their professions, their ages, and the neighborhoods where they lived and worked.

Allentown as it approached the Civil War was a country town of roughly eight thousand inhabitants, mostly second- or third-generation descendants of the earlier immigration wave of Germans. Of the men listed in the 1853 roster, all but two were native born; only Peter Schwentzer and Frederick Wolf were recent German immigrants. The average age of the band members in 1853 was about twenty-five years. Most were tradesmen, and all lived within a few blocks of Center Square, Allentown.⁷ Although German language usage was beginning to decline, mid-nineteenth-century band members probably all spoke the Pennsylvania German dialect in their everyday lives. Undoubtedly a closely knit group, they often saw one another in their normal course of activities. More important to us now, however, is the fact that they also met and interacted at a rehearsal each Monday evening,⁸ as the Allentown Band still does to this day.

Studies of local newspapers during the Civil War era show a politically charged atmosphere. The local Democratic party and its English language voice, the *Allentown Democrat*, intensely disliked Abraham Lincoln and “Lincoln’s War.” Democrats were often referred to as “Copperheads” because the price of copper tended to rise when they were in power. Some Democrats labeled the Republicans, that is, the

⁵Roberts (1936), 85.

⁶Ibid.

⁷All but three of the 1853 band members (John Able, Horatio Kramer, and Allen Newhard) were found in either the 1850 U. S. Census, the 1860 U. S. Census, or both.

⁸*Boyd’s Directory of Reading, Easton, Pottsville, Allentown, and Lebanon, 1860* (New York: William H. Boyd, Directory Publisher, 1860), 224; hereafter cited as *Boyd’s Directory (1860)*. Available on microfilm at the Allentown Public Library and the Lehigh County Historical Society Library.

abolitionists, “Niggerheads,” certainly an unacceptable term today.

Local military units were closely entwined with political parties, and band organizations were closely associated with the military. By the 1830s, two military units existed in Allentown: The Harrison Guards and the Van Buren Artillerists, undoubtedly so-named for the two presidents who had visited Allentown. Charles Roberts’ *History of Lehigh County* notes that there was much rivalry between the companies at this time, the Guards being Whigs and the Artillerists Democrats,

. . . and in the campaign of 1840 there was considerable warmth of political feeling, which continued until the companies disbanded. After they disbanded, [Captain] Amos Ettinger organized the Lehigh Fencibles on August 6, 1849 but it had a short existence. Captain Ettinger was soon promoted to major and later became leader of the Allentown Band.⁹

Again, Mr. Roberts was not accurate in his naming of the band. This band was actually called the Allentown Brass Band and it was one of two major bands in Allentown at the start of the Civil War.

Maj. Ettinger served with the Allen Rifles and was probably instrumental in this group’s formation. The Allen Rifles were among the units called the “First Defenders,” because they were the first to defend Washington in the Civil War. The company was organized 10 July 1850, and at that time consisted largely of former members of the Fencibles. Their first captain was Tilghman H. Good, who in 1850 was only twenty years old. A promotion to the rank of colonel made him leader of the most well-known regiment from the Lehigh Valley, the 47th Regiment. His was a three-year-service regiment that sent him to spend much of the war stationed in Key West, Florida. After the war, Col. Good became the second mayor of Allentown, winning three consecutive terms.

Undoubtedly Col. Tilghman H. Good is the same T. H. Good listed in the 1853 band roster. In 1850 T. H. Good was living in the Eagle Hotel, diagonally across the street from the band’s rehearsal hall, along with band member Frederick Wolf.¹⁰ In fact, all the band members lived within a few blocks of the rehearsal hall. Like several others who settled in the area, Good was a shoemaker and tobacconist. Regardless of vocation, however, most of the men named in the band roster shared at least two common interests: music and the military.

Ettinger’s band was known throughout the 1850s as the Allentown Brass Band, a name nearly always used by newspapers, though on rare occasion being referred to as the Allen Brass Band, or the simply the The Brass Band. Roberts claimed that Ettinger became leader in 1853, although he provides no proof for the claim. Ettinger was a flute player, probably joining the band early, and likely took over leadership a year or two after its formation. The band was organized in late 1850 or early 1851, as their first concert was held on 5 April 1851. That first concert was given at Odd Fellows Hall and was directed by a noted

⁹Charles R. Roberts, et al., *History of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania*, 3 vols. (Allentown, Pa.: Lehigh Valley Publishing Company, 1914), 1:348; hereafter cited as Roberts (1914).

¹⁰U. S. Census, 1850, Borough of Allentown, Lehigh County, Pa., p. 319; fortunately, the census taker noted “Eagle Hotel” on the edge of the census form.

trombone player, twenty-six-year-old¹¹ Anton Heinicke.¹² The following week, in a lengthy review of the concert, reviewer Ferdinand Wieser gave the band high marks:

We therefore welcome with utmost delight the establishment of a Brass Band in our town. . . . We are convinced that all in attendance were most satisfied with the result of such a short praxis in the arts. How marvelous was the performance of the Triumph March and what an effect evoked the profound, substantial composition “The Image of the Rose” which was accepted with undivided applause. Indeed, the performance of the band was good and exquisite exceeding all expectations. But we also congratulate the members of the Band to their fortune of having a teacher in the person of Mr. Heinicke, whose talents are splendid and reached general recognition; who is able to build a sense and emotion for what is beautiful in the arts and for genuine classical music. . . .¹³

Their first year was a busy one for Heinicke and his Allentown Brass Band. They performed in another concert at Odd Fellows Hall on May 3,¹⁴ and led the Independence Day parade through town.¹⁵ The American brass band movement had its beginnings in Boston in the late 1840s. Allentown was not far behind due to the efforts of Mr. Heinicke. For woodwind players, this new trend was probably unfortunate. Most music historians agree that they were not invited to play.¹⁶

¹¹U.S. Naturalization Record Indexes, 1791-1992. The naturalization record shows German-born Heinicke applying for citizenship on April 17, 1857. The birth date given was July 27, 1825.

¹²“The First Concert,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, March 27, 1851. All text quoted from the *Allentown Friedens-Bote*, a German language newspaper, has been translated by Manfred Schmidt.

¹³“The Music—The Concert of the Allentown Brass Band,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, April 10, 1851.

¹⁴“Concert,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, May 3, 1851. The entrance fee was \$.25 and the program began at 8:00 p.m. The first part consisted of: (1) March, (2) Singing, (3) “Concertino for the Trombone,” (4) “Potpourri—Opera Airs,” and (5) “Taratina for the Trombone” from the opera “Robert le Diable.” The second part consisted of: (1) Quick Step, (2) Singing, (3) “The Last Rose of Summer with variations,” (4) “Polonaise,” (5) Singing, and (6) Quick Step.

¹⁵“The 4th of July,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, July 3, 1851.

¹⁶In Boston, John Sullivan Dwight wrote in *Dwight’s Journal of Music* (April 16, 1853): 9, “. . . as if the invention of new and deadlier implements of war, which came out about the same time, had hardened mens’ hearts, all the softer companions of the savage science were banished.” See <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwmhtml/cwmhome.html>, Library of Congress, “Band Music from the Civil War Era.”

Some thirty years later, in describing an upcoming concert at the Academy of Music¹⁷ by renowned trombone virtuoso, Frederick N. Innes, the *Allentown Democrat* reminisced about “. . . Prof. Anton Heinicke, who about the year 1850 located here after closing a season with a traveling menagerie as instructor of a newly organized band. He was a great player, leading the circus band and our home organization here with his trombone, and executing solos as if played with a cornet. . .”¹⁸ Heinicke possibly moved on with the circus in a later season and may be the reason leadership was assumed by Maj. Ettinger.

Allentown Brass Band concerts continued, but soon their activities became more closely associated with the military. The 4th of July was usually an important event for the military and bands, along with fireworks, of course—and 1853 was no exception:

The 77th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was celebrated with great liveliness in our town last Monday. The Military with the Allentown Brass band spent the day in a dignified fashion at the well-known Worman’s Spring where the company held a prize-shooting contest with muskets on targets.¹⁹

In the same article, the *Peace Messenger* reported that “The singing school of our local Mr. Meninger [*sic*] celebrated the day in Schnecksville. It held a picnic and enjoyed itself with songs, socializing and entertainment.”²⁰ Mr. Meninger was almost certainly David Minninger,²¹ who brought his family to Allentown sometime between 1850 and 1853.²² Prior to his move to Allentown, David Minninger was the Choir Director at St. Paul’s “Blue Church” in Upper Saucon Township, Lehigh County. He had a son, probably the second son of David and Elizabeth, who was born 10 October 1840 and baptized

¹⁷The Academy of Music was located at the northeast corner of 7th and Linden streets in Allentown (photograph [ca. 1891]), Hellerich, 1:319.

¹⁸“Grand Concert Tomorrow Evening,” *Allentown Democrat*, January 16, 1884.

¹⁹“The 4th of July,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, July 6, 1853.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Variant surname spellings are common for early American immigrants. For example, English language publications in Allentown, such as city directories and the newspaper *Allentown Democrat*, often spelled the name as “Meninger,” “Menninger,” “Mennenger,” or some other variant. German language newspapers nearly always spelled the name as “Minninger.” But more important, cemetery tombstone engravings, as well as church documents, all record the spelling as “Minninger.”

²²The 1850 U. S. Census for Lehigh Twp., Northampton County, Pa., lists: David Minninger, age 41, teacher; Elizabeth, age 39; William, age 9. The 1860 U. S. Census for Allentown, Ward 4, Lehigh County, Pa., lists: David Minninger, age 58, gentleman; Elizabeth, age 50; William, age 19, Cigarmaker. According to Roberts (1914), 1:912, David also had a son Edward. In the 1840 U. S. Census for Upper Saucon Twp., Lehigh County, where the “Blue Church” is located, the David Minninger family records only one child, a male between five and ten years. The child could not have been William, since William was born after the census, so this boy might have been Edward.

William Henry Harrison Minninger on 10 January 1841.²³ As Choir Director, Minninger enjoyed some influence with the church, as might be noted by the fact that the sponsors for this baptism were Pastor Samuel Hess and wife. The child was obviously named after William Henry Harrison, a Whig who had been elected president a year earlier. Imagine David's disappointment when Harrison died only one month after his inaugural speech. Son William, only twelve years old in 1853, was keenly observing band activities in Allentown. This youngster was soon to become a major musical influence in the city.

On 20 November 1855, the Allen Rifles participated in the dedication at Easton of a cemetery monument to George Taylor, signer of the Declaration of Independence.²⁴ The parade was headed by Maj. Gen. David Laury and majors Longnecker and Ettinger, and many local bands participated in the parade, including Pomp's Cornet Band, the Mauch Chunk²⁵ Band, the Bethlehem Brass Band, and Jaeger's Band. The Allen Rifles were preceded by the Bethlehem Band and followed by Jaeger's Band.²⁶ Ettinger did not get to take his own band with him. One reason why the Mauch Chunk Band was chosen to represent Lehigh County may have been that a Mauch Chunk military unit served in the Mexican War.²⁷

Of course, musical activities connected to the military did not usually include paid positions. Ettinger made his living as a coppersmith living and working at 38 West Hamilton Street, located on the south side of Hamilton near Hall Street, next to one of the centers of social activity in Allentown, Odd Fellows Hall. In 1839 Ettinger took over the coppersmith shop from owner Nathan Ladenschlager,²⁸ most likely his brother-in-law. The shop mainly sold stoves. Amos' son William, also a band member in the 1853 roster, was a coppersmith as well, living with his father and mother.²⁹

In 1858 the Allentown Brass Band was still very active in helping to celebrate important holidays that were typically associated with the military. The *Peace Messenger* noted that "The Allentown Brass

²³"Records of St. Paul's Reformed Church (Blue Church) in Upper Saucon Township, Lehigh County, Pennsylvania," as copied by Myron P. Wehr (Allentown, Pa.: Lehigh County Historical Society, 1990), 14. William's grave marker in Union Cemetery, Allentown, is mistakenly engraved with a birth date of 10 October 1841.

²⁴Amos Ettinger (b. 23 March 1817) was obviously a great admirer of George Taylor; he and his wife Susan (Ladenschlager) named one of their sons "George Taylor Ettinger." Young George would later play a prominent part in Allentown educational circles, eventually becoming Dean of Muhlenberg College and first president of the Allentown Public Library.

²⁵Mauch Chunk was renamed Jim Thorpe in 1954 to honor the well-known Olympic athlete.

²⁶"Extra! Dedication of the Taylor Monument," *Easton Express*, November 20, 1855.

²⁷Mahlon H. Hellerich, et al., *Allentown 1762-1987: a 225-Year History*, 2 vols. (Allentown, Pa.: Lehigh County Historical Society, 1987), 1:72; hereafter cited as Hellerich.

²⁸Roberts (1914), 1:441.

²⁹U. S. Census, 1860, Allentown, Ward 3, Lehigh County, Pa., p. 1022.

Band, the German Infantry and the Allen Rifles celebrated Washington's Birthday on Monday with public parades. This made our streets more lively than usual."³⁰

But by 1858 Ettinger's band began to encounter more competition. The young aforementioned William H. H. Minninger, a cornet player now seventeen, could have joined a local band such as the Allentown Brass Band, but he apparently chose not to. William, an innovator with his own special ideas, formed his own band, which he named the Lehigh Brass Band.³¹ In a January 1859 article in the *Peace Messenger*, a "Benefit Ball" was announced to raise funds for the Lehigh Brass Band. The committee chairman was William Minninger. Tickets were sold for one dollar by the members. A dollar in 1859 was a large sum of money; it would buy a year's subscription to the weekly newspaper in which the notice was printed. In the same issue of the newspaper, this announcement also appeared:

The Lehigh Brass band announced its first Benefits Ball in another column of today's newspaper. It will be held in the Odd-Fellows Hall on February 22. In the short time in which it has been organized, the music band has made great progress. Since this is its first ball it will be undoubtedly a splendid event.³²

William Minninger was a tobacconist, a trade learned from his father, and was usually employed as a cigar maker, a common profession in the Borough of Allentown. In 1860 he was still living with his father and mother³³ at the corner of 7th and Chew St.³⁴ Their church, Salem Reformed, was only a half-block east. His father David was the first organist at Salem Reformed.³⁵

Now that there were two bands in town, there was probably quite a rivalry, but it seemed to be a friendly one. On Friday, 10 March 1859, Minninger's Lehigh Brass Band made their first appearance outdoors, being escorted through the streets of the city by the Allentown Brass Band. ". . . The side streets were full of listeners of the exquisite performances of the two Music Bands. . . ."³⁶

While operating in The Allentown Brass Band's shadow, the Lehigh Brass Band must have felt the urge to grow and improve. Their Benefit Ball was necessary because shortly thereafter they bought the Allentown Brass Band's old instruments, available because the Allentown Brass Band was buying new instruments from New York. The *Fridensbote* trumpeted the success of the Allentown Brass Band, the town's first brass band:

³⁰Notice in local news, *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, February 24, 1858.

³¹What was different about the Lehigh Brass Band? The answer may be pure speculation, but maybe Minninger intended his band to be less associated with the military than was Ettinger's Allentown Brass Band. Minninger probably had also heard about Patrick S. Gilmore (an Irish immigrant to Boston, now known as the progenitor of modern concert bands in the United States), and it is possible that he wanted to model his band after Gilmore's famous band, founded in 1857.

³²"Benefits Ball," *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, January 26, 1859.

³³U. S. Census, 1860, Allentown, Ward 4, Lehigh County, Pa., p. 1061.

³⁴*Boyd's Directory (1860)*, 87.

³⁵Roberts (1914), 3:912.

³⁶"Music," *Allentown Friedens-Bote, (Peace Messenger)*, March 16, 1859.

Since their founding, the expenses for instruments, music etc. amount to about [\$]3500. Meanwhile they are now as well organized and skilled as the best music band in the State. Major A. Ettinger, the conductor, deserves plenty of praise, since the citizens of Allentown owe it mainly to his tireless efforts that we have such a good Music-Corps in our midst, as is the Allentown Brass Band.³⁷

In 1860 the Allentown Brass Band was still under Amos Ettinger's direction; they met Monday evenings at "S7th, one door below Hamilton, east side"³⁸ We don't know where Minninger's Lehigh Brass Band was rehearsing in 1860, but by war's end, Minninger would be rehearsing his band in exactly the same place.³⁹ His would be the band that would grow, prosper, and survive the war years intact.

In 1861, with war looming on the horizon, Thomas Yeager was captain of the Allen Infantry.

The company uniform was of gray cloth, and black and gold bullion trimmings, and the men carried flint-lock guns, with bayonets. The drill-room was at 716 Hamilton Street. The company paraded in the new uniform for the first time on Feb. 21, 1861, with the Allen Rifles, Jordan Artillerists, and Menninger's [*sic*] band, in the military parade at Philadelphia, when President-elect Lincoln officiated at the raising of the flag over Independence Hall.⁴⁰

Ettinger's Allentown Brass Band would undoubtedly have marched in this parade had it been possible, since Ettinger was so closely associated with the Allen Rifles.

Ettinger's band did not play for Lincoln, but it was still much involved in public events. In April, after the shock of the attack on Fort Sumter and an emergency telegram to the executive of Pennsylvania, the Allen Rifles, Allen Infantry, and the Jordan Artillerists were given a hurried but appropriate send-off. The Allen Rifles under Tilghman Good and the Jordan Artillerists under Capt. Gausler were treated to a meal at the Allen House.⁴¹ Meanwhile, across the street at the Eagle Hotel,⁴² the Allen Infantry was similarly treated. Afterwards they all assembled for a parade to the railroad station.

³⁷"New Instruments," *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, June 22, 1859.

³⁸*Boyd's Directory (1860)*, 224.

³⁹*Gopsill's Directory of Reading, Allentown, Easton, Pottsville and Bethlehem, 1864-5* (Lancaster: James Gopsill, Publisher, 1864), 178; hereafter cited as *Gopsill's Directory (1864-5)*. Available on microfilm at the Allentown Public Library and the Lehigh County Historical Society Library.

⁴⁰Roberts (1914), 1:349.

⁴¹"Farewell of the Allen Infantry," *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, April 24, 1861. The Allen House was located at the northeast corner of Center Square, at 7th and Hamilton streets in Allentown (photograph [ca. 1872]), Hellerich, 1:274.

⁴²The Eagle Hotel was located at the northwest corner of Center Square, at 7th and Hamilton streets in Allentown (photograph [ca. 1872]), Hellerich, 1:274.

Roberts, in his *History of Lehigh County*, writes:

On 17th April [1861], a band of Volunteers, headed by Capt. Yeager marched down Hamilton Street (lightly covered with snow), to the East Penn Junction and thus to the train to Harrisburg. . . . The following drum corps accompanied them to the railroad station: Major Amos Ettinger, fifer; William Hittle, drummer, Charles Denhard, bass-drummer (Mexican War Veteran).⁴³

The “band of Volunteers” was the Allen Infantry. Only the fife and drum corps headed this unit because the full band was occupied leading the Allen Rifles and Jordan Artillerists.

On 24 April 1861, The *Friedens-Bote* headlined “Farewell of the Allen Rifles”:

This Company departed from us under the command of the very capable and popular Captain Tilghman H. Good to unite with the army of the State in Harrisburg. Since neither the Jordan Artillerists, Capt. Gausler, nor the Allen Rifles could muster a full company of trained men both companies were combined. Before departure they enjoyed a most delicious meal served by some of our citizens at the Allen House. They left for the Depot with an escort of about 3000 people and the Allentown Brass Band. Saying goodbye to wife and child, father and mother, brother and sister was hard, but the dice are cast—the Fatherland calls in need and it shall be in God’s name a fight for freedom.⁴⁴

These troops were among the very early protectors of Washington from an invasion by Lee’s troops. Their passage through Baltimore was met with taunts and near riots by the locals, and they were lucky to pass through the town unscathed, except for some injuries from flying bricks and stones.⁴⁵

The send-off of these early troops, later named the “First Defenders,” stimulated patriotic emotions. Only a few weeks later, in early May, a flag raising ceremony was held in Allentown.

Last Saturday night a mighty, beautiful flag of the United States was raised at the building occupied by the *Friedensbote* and Major Kemmerer, opposite to the Reformed Church. A large crowd had gathered to witness the raising of the Stars and Stripes. Mr. Paulus Wald, speaking in German to the crowd, made a deep impression with his patriotic . . . remarks. The Allentown Brass Band then masterfully played the Star Spangled Banner. Professor Gregory concluded the celebration with a powerful speech in English. Young people were

⁴³Roberts (1914), 1:303.

⁴⁴“Farewell of the Allen Rifles,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, April 24, 1861.

⁴⁵Samuel P. Bates, *History of the Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861–1865, Prepared in Compliance with Acts of the Legislature*, 5 vols. (Harrisburg: B. Singerly, 1869–71), 1:6. The Allen Rifles later became Company G of the 25th Pennsylvania Regiment.

busy shooting off small cannons in the side streets and everybody was pleased to have expressed his patriotic feelings in this modern way.⁴⁶

This article, dated 8 May 1861, is the last known public mention of the exact words “Allentown Brass Band.”

The war was still in its early stages in July of 1861. It had not yet become very bloody, and there was plenty of patriotic enthusiasm in Allentown. Bands did what they always do on the 4th of July:

In Allentown the 4th of July was celebrated by the Lehigh Cornet Band and many citizens with Picnics in the Griesemers Grove. At Wormans’s Spring it was celebrated by students and friends of the Allentown Academy who were joined in the afternoon by the Ellsworths Cadets with the Allentown Band. Firecrackers and the like sounded off in all corners of the town, and in the evening Mr. P. Hauck lit beautiful fireworks on the market [center] square.⁴⁷

On this date—the 4th of July 1861—two new band names appear. Minninger had by then changed the name of his band from “Lehigh Brass Band” to “Lehigh Cornet Band.” Ettinger’s Allentown Brass Band also dropped the “Brass” from its name, becoming simply the “Allentown Band.” As with the rest of the country, the brass band movement was coming to an end in Allentown. More band music that included woodwind parts was being written and performed.

The *History of Allentown* notes that “This optimistic and romantic phase of the war came to a sudden end with the Confederate Victory at First Bull Run on July 21, 1861.”⁴⁸

On 24 July 1861, the people of Allentown welcomed the return of the Allen Rifles.

A procession was formed at the public square. It was lead by the 1st Ward Brass Band and consisted of Capt. Jaeger’s returned Allen Infantry, the Jordan Artillerists who had stayed at home, two companies of young men and boys and a large number of citizens. The procession marched to the Depot and escorted the returning troops through the town to the Allen House.⁴⁹

It is interesting to note that the Allentown Band (formerly the Allentown Brass Band) did not play when the First Defenders returned from the war. However, all bands probably wanted to be involved in what everyone knew were activities of historical importance, so the First Ward Band got its chance to play for the troops. Allentown’s First Ward was the area between the Jordan Creek and the Lehigh River. It was then populated mostly with Irish immigrants who worked at the local iron industries. The First Ward Brass Band’s existence was probably very short. They were not mentioned again in the newspapers.

⁴⁶“A Celebration of the Flag at the Friedensbote,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, May 8, 1861.

⁴⁷“In Allentown the 4th of July,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, July 10, 1861.

⁴⁸Hellerich, 1:99.

⁴⁹“Return of the Union Rifles (formerly Allen Rifles),” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, July 31, 1861.

In August 1862, Lehigh County raised two serious companies of volunteers, one headed by Capt. William Hammersly, the other by Capt. Jacob Dillinger. The tour of duty was to last nine months.⁵⁰ These two companies would become part of the 128th Pennsylvania Regiment. The *Allentown Democrat* reported that “Capt. Hammersly’s company was the first to leave on Friday morning. The second company, Captain Jacob P. Dillinger’s, left on the day following. Each company was escorted to the cars by the Allentown Band, accompanied by immense crowds of people to see them off.”⁵¹ In Capt. Dillinger’s Company D was 1853 band member, Henry A. Breinig.⁵² His company saw action in the battles of Antietam and Chancellorsville.⁵³

This article in the *Allentown Democrat*, dated 13 August 1862, was the last known public mention of the name Allentown Band (formerly Allentown Brass Band). The name “Allentown Band” would not be used again for another twenty-five years, and then by the band founded by rival Minninger in 1858.

During the Civil War, none of the Allentown bands became attached to any military regiment, while nearly every other band in neighboring towns was doing so. One would think that Col. Tilghman H. Good, a former member of the Allentown Brass Band, would be able to convince one of the Allentown bands to join his 47th Pennsylvania Regiment. Apparently he was unable to do so or did not try. Instead, Easton’s well-known Pomp’s Cornet Band, under the able leadership of Thomas Coates, was recruited to become the Regimental Band of the 47th.⁵⁴ The only known members listed in the 1853 Allentown Brass Band roster to join the Regimental Band were John Able and Peter Schwentzer.⁵⁵

At the war’s beginning, according to a bill passed by Congress, each three-year regiment was entitled to two principal musicians and twenty-four musicians for the Regimental Band. Each regiment consisted of ten companies and each company was entitled to two musicians. Thus, possibly forty-six musicians were assigned to a three-year regiment. Each member carried the title of Musician.⁵⁶

On 24 September 1862, the following advertisement appeared in the *Allentown Democrat*:

TO MUSICIANS—Maj. Gaussler [*sic*], of the 47th Penna. Regiment, wants seven musicians to fill up their regimental band. None but such as are competent to play leading instruments need apply.

⁵⁰Bates, 4:166.

⁵¹“Little Lehigh—Again in the Field,” *Allentown Democrat*, August 13, 1862.

⁵²Bates, 4:174.

⁵³Bates, 4:166–168; also, Hellerich, 1:109.

⁵⁴The Easton band reorganized in January 1863 and adapted the name Coates Cornet Band (“Easton Band,” *Allentown Democrat*, January 28, 1863).

⁵⁵Bates, 1:1158.

⁵⁶“How the New Regiments Are to be Formed,” *The Daily Evening Express*, Easton, Pa., August 13, 1861.

Prompting this advertisement was probably the September dismissal of all regimental bands. They were not affordable in a war that was not going to be over quickly. Bands would now consist of musicians taken from the ranks.

After the invasion of Maryland by Lee's troops in 1862, there was a virtual panic in the North over the possibility that Confederate troops would invade Pennsylvania. Governor Curtin ordered that militia companies be quickly formed. The *Allentown Democrat* reported that "Tuesday the 18 of September has been fixed upon for the draft in Lehigh."⁵⁷ The same edition of the newspaper cited militia laws stating that all able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were liable for service. It was to be only a one-month engagement. The city of Allentown had met its quotas with volunteers, so there was no need to draft anyone there. Perhaps many men had volunteered rather than risk being drafted. In any case, several band members joined the 5th Pennsylvania Militia. Younger members of the Allentown Brass Band, as well as Lehigh Cornet Band leader William Minninger, were included in the muster. The men were attached to the 5th Regiment at Harrisburg, commanded by Col. H. C. Longnecker, forwarded to Chambersburg and then ordered to Hagerstown, Maryland.

Only a few weeks later, however, the *Allentown Democrat* reported that "As however all danger of invasion has disappeared, we presume they will return home in a day or two, as soon as transportation can be supplied."⁵⁸ Their military career was very short but also very unpleasant.

They all had hard tales of the treatment they received. They represent that they were scant in food, and were compelled to lay about all night in corn field and potato patches, without tents or any other shelter. What homes to be had the officers took. Finally they were huddled into cars like so many cattle and taken down to Hagerstown, and but for the interference of their officers, would have been ushered into the terrible battle then raging at Sharpsburg, without ever having been drilled an hour—one half of them scarcely knowing how to load a gun. Many were opposed to go over the State Line, and a general scene of confusion and insubordination followed. At Hagerstown our soldiers spent their nights laying in the gutters with the curb stones for their pillows. Their general sentiment is, that there is not much sport in going to war, even if it is only as a militia man to defend the State, while a large army is near at hand to do the fighting.⁵⁹

Clearly, they did not wish to be part of this fight. They were indeed lucky and thankful that their officers interceded. The battle raging at Sharpsburg is what we today call the battle of Antietam. In one tragic day of over twenty-two thousand casualties, it has been estimated that over seven thousand soldiers died, the worst single-day loss of life in American History.⁶⁰

On 1 October 1862, the *Allentown Democrat* reported that the militia men would be returning. Under the muster rolls of Company H were band members 4th Sgt. Henry E. Ruhe, 5th Sgt. William Minninger, and

⁵⁷"Draft," *Allentown Democrat*, September 10, 1862.

⁵⁸"The Militia," *Allentown Democrat*, September 24, 1862.

⁵⁹"Return of the Militia," *Allentown Democrat*, October 1, 1862.

⁶⁰See <http://www.nps.gov/anti/home.htm>. National Park Service, "Antietam National Battlefield." According to this National Park Service Internet Web site, the total killed from both sides was 3,650. Their estimate of 7,640 total deaths takes into account an estimated twenty percent of the wounded dying and thirty percent of the missing killed.

Musician Allen Barber. Under the muster rolls of Company G was band member, 4th Sgt. Allen Newhard. The muster rolls of Company C included 1853 band member Cpl. Israel Yingling and Cpl. Alfred H. Ettinger, son of bandleader Amos Ettinger.

Interestingly, not a single one of these band members held the rank of private, which would suggest that they all had previous military experience. Only one, Allen Barber, had signed up as a musician. All six were members of the 1853 band roster except Lehigh Cornet Band leader William Minninger and Alfred H. Ettinger. Alfred was not included in the 1853 band roster, but he was almost certainly a member of one of the bands in the 1860s. Sometime in the 1850s Alfred was sent to live with Professor Isaac N. Gregory's family. Gregory was Principal of Allentown Academy and Captain of Company C of the 5th Pennsylvania Militia in which Alfred had volunteered. While attending the Academy, Alfred obtained the best education available and no doubt received considerable personal attention from its Principal. By 1860 Alfred was teaching at the Academy.⁶¹ In 1870 he was living with his mother, probably having moved there after his father's death.⁶²

Under what must have been difficult circumstances in difficult times, the only band remaining—Minninger's band—persevered. On Christmas Eve 1862, only two months after the militia's unpleasant visit to Maryland, the *Allentown Democrat* announced that a concert would be

. . . given by the Lehigh Cornet Band, assisted by other eminent musical talent. The proceeds are to be applied towards the liquidation of a debt incurred several years ago in getting up the Band. As a Band in a town of our size is almost indispensable and as they have oft and many a time bestowed their time and talent on public occasions for the gratification of our citizens, without remuneration, it is now the turn of the public to give them a generous lift.⁶³

This newspaper article provides certain evidence that the Lehigh Cornet Band was by then the only band in Allentown. The most likely conclusion to be drawn is that Ettinger's Allentown Brass Band, recently known as the Allentown Band, had ceased to exist by December 1862, its remaining members probably joining Minninger's Lehigh Cornet Band.

Further evidence that Minninger's Lehigh Cornet Band was formed in 1858 is apparent in an article appearing in the *Allentown Democrat* on 13 April 1863:

LEHIGH CORNET BAND—This Band has been laboring for the last five years, almost against hopes, certainly without remuneration; nevertheless has kept up its organization, continued practice, and perfected style, at a cost to the members of many hundred dollars.—The members must meet the expenses—the citizens enjoy the pleasures consequent upon their labor and determination. We are frequently regaled with serenades, and upon all occasions or public demonstration, the gratuitous services of the band is tendered. Do we not owe them something in return? If a desire to simple justice did not move us, it seems

⁶¹U. S. Census, 1860, Allentown, Ward 3, Lehigh County, Pa., p. 1022. Four teachers were listed as living with I. N. Gregory: Jane A. Granger, age 49; Mary E. Kidd, age 22; Oliver E. Nelson, age 21; A. H. Ettinger, age 20.

⁶²U. S. Census, 1870, Allentown, Ward 3, Lehigh County, Pa., p. 75.

⁶³“Concert,” *Allentown Democrat*, December 24, 1862.

to us that pride of our town would enforce upon us the duty of doing something for the band. They now have a debt of over \$300 hanging upon them, and the members want to get rid of it, and to be enabled so to do, propose issuing certificates of honorary membership to those of our citizens who may feel an interest in their welfare, for the sum of two dollars each, payable on or before the first of October next, and certificate to admit the holder, free of charge, to a series of parties or Concerts during the year. The idea is a good one, and one which has been tried, we understand, with complete success, in various localities throughout the State. Let all of us put our shoulders to the wheel and give them a good lift.⁶⁴

Four months passed. Then, on Thursday 14 May 1863, a welcome celebration greeted returning troops of the 128th Regiment. These were the same volunteer troops that Ettinger's Allentown Band, formerly the Allentown Brass Band, had helped send off nine months earlier. In a lengthy article dated 27 May 1863 (Wednesday), the *Allentown Democrat* headlined in large capital letters: "THE RETURN OF OUR VOLUNTEERS—A HEARTY WELCOME HOME."⁶⁵ The article describes how Col. Hammersly's detail marched to the depot.

Thousands of people had assembled there to await the coming of the train. Occasionally the whistle of a locomotive would be heard in the distance, and suddenly a hundred voices would cry out, "here they come!" There then would be a simultaneous rush on all sides. . . . It was an affecting sight to witness with what feelings of animation the wife greeted a husband, the maiden a lover, the sister a brother, etc. After a short delay the companies were formed in line and took their place in procession, the escort moving for town in the following order:

The article then described in detail the procession that formed after the troops disembarked the train.

CHIEF MARSHAL
Co. William W. Hammersly.
AIDS
Jacob S. Dillinger, Thomas D. Metzger.
ASSISTANT MARSHALS
Maj. Amos Ettinger, Capt. Oliver D. Ritter, Adj.
W. H. R. Hangen.
Lehigh Cornet Band.
Medical Staff, mounted.
Soldiers of 1812 in carriages.
County and Municipal Authorities.
Committee of Arrangements.
U.S. Collectors.
Press.
Officers and Soldiers of the present War.
John H. Oliver, Esq., Orator of the Day.
Companies "D" and "G" 128th Regiment, P.V.
Citizens Mounted and in Carriages.

⁶⁴"Lehigh Cornet Band," *Allentown Democrat*, April 13, 1863.

⁶⁵"The Return of Our Volunteers—A Hearty Welcome Home," *Allentown Democrat*, May 27, 1863.

Maj. Amos Ettinger's place as an Assistant Marshall near the head of the parade was related entirely to his role in the military. His other position as bandleader—or former bandleader—is not mentioned. The Lehigh Cornet Band, renamed from the Lehigh Brass Band, was on hand to welcome the troops. The Allentown Band, formerly the Allentown Brass Band, was likely not extant.

The amazing thing about this event was the speed with which such complicated plans could be made and carried out. The town had heard about the return of the troops via telegraph only Thursday morning. By noon the same day, from the moment the men got off the train, Allentown had put together a rousing reception that included parades, speeches, and dinners. Band member Henry A. Breinig was in the returning group.⁶⁶ Henry had re-enlisted in Col. Good's 47th Regiment on 21 February 1865 and was mustered out on 25 December 1865.⁶⁷ Also, returning in Henry's Company D was Ignatz Gresser,⁶⁸ hero of the battle of Antietam, who was later awarded the Medal of Honor by Congress. Today, in Allentown's West Park, a statue representing Gresser and the First Defenders stands opposite the bandshell where all four of Allentown's current bands perform for the public.

Starting 1 July 1863, the terrible three-day battle of Gettysburg shook the country. Only a month later, the following notice appeared in the "Deaths" section of the 19 August *Allentown Democrat*: "On Friday evening last, of Typhoid fever, contacted on a trip to the battle field at Gettysburg, William J. Ettinger, eldest son of Mr. Amos Ettinger, aged 26 years, 2 months and 14 days." William, a member of the Allentown Brass Band's 1853 roster, had successfully avoided the fighting but ironically had contracted a fatal illness while visiting the already historic site. At that time, bodies of the war casualties were still being buried. William was buried in Union Cemetery, Allentown. He left behind a wife, Rebecca, and a son, Amos.

On 9 September 1863, the *Allentown Democrat* placed this notice:

LEHIGH CORNET BAND—This popular Band, under the leadership of Mr. Wm. Menninger [*sic*], will be present at the Democratic County Convention on Saturday next, and we have no doubt the general verdict of our country friends will be that they can not be excelled. Their presence will add largely to the interest of the occasion. The Band Boys know just how to get up something fine in their way, and it may not be out of place to state, that this excellent Band can always be engaged for political meetings or other occasions on the most liberal terms.

The band may have had close political connections to the Democratic Party and probably were leaning away from supporting "Lincoln's War." This political alliance could be the reason why this band never joined as a unit, and were rarely associated with military events.

⁶⁶Bates, 4:174.

⁶⁷Bates, 1:1188.

⁶⁸Bates, 4:174.

On 17 February 1864, the *Allentown Democrat* boldly headlined, “BALL OF THE LEHIGH CORNET BAND.”⁶⁹ A benefit ball, arranged to help pay off the band’s debt, was to be held at Odd Fellow’s Hall on Monday evening (their rehearsal night), and “Coates Celebrated Quadrille Band” was hired for the occasion. Thomas Coates was the new leader of the Easton Band, formerly Pomp’s Cornet Band, that had been the Regimental Band of the 47th Regiment. The Easton boys were discharged in September 1862, so they were available for the job. Fund-raising seemed to be a yearly event for the Lehigh Cornet Band.

According to the 1864 printing of the *Allentown City Directory*, the band was still led by William Minninger and was meeting for rehearsals just as the Allentown Brass Band had done under Ettinger, in exactly the same place as before the war, on “S 7th, one door from Hamilton, east.”⁷⁰ By this time their name had been changed from Lehigh Cornet Band to Allentown Cornet Band, a name that they would use for many years. Later in 1864, William found the time to marry Anna Bernhard on 13 September at the Salem Reformed Church on Chew St. in Allentown.⁷¹ Anna became known later in life as Kitty Ann.

On 9 April 1865, Grant met Lee at a farmhouse in the village of Appomattox Court House, Virginia, and with that meeting the long terrible war had finally come to an end. Within a week of victory, instead of jubilation, there was great sorrow when the news of Lincoln’s assassination on the 14th of April reached the area. As had become the tradition, Allentown put on another very big parade, this time a more somber one.

On April 19 every house was draped in black and red, white and blue. All shops were closed at noon. In beautiful weather the program was carried out, as agreed upon the preceding Saturday. It consisted of a procession and a public service. At noon all bells were tolled and guns were fired minute by minute for an hour. At 1:00 PM, the procession, which had been assembled at Center Square, began its march. At the head of the procession was the chief marshal, George Beisel with his assistants, followed by the Catasauqua Band. The first unit consisted of returned soldiers under the command of Lt. Levi Stuber. Then, in order, came the cadets of the Allentown Collegiate Institute, returned officers headed by Colonel Good and including Col. Horn, Maj. Apple, and Major Gausler, disabled soldiers and veterans of the War of 1812 in carriages, the members of the arrangements committee, county officers, the burgess and town council, the orator of the day, the clergy, and a carriage of 36 young ladies in mourning. The next section was headed by the Bethlehem band, followed by the officers, men and engine of the Good Will Fire Company and the officers, men and engine of the Young America Fire Company. The third section, led by the Zionsville band, consisted of members of local chapters of various fraternal orders—the Masons, Odd Fellows, Red Men, Druids, Sons

⁶⁹“Ball of the Lehigh Cornet Band,” *Allentown Democrat*, February 17, 1864.

⁷⁰*Gopsill’s Directory (1864–5)*, 178.

⁷¹“Salem United Church of Christ Marriages, 1851–1986,” copied by Myron P. Wehr (Allentown, Pa.: Lehigh County Historical Society, 1987), 36.

and Cadets of Temperence. Toward the end came the Allentown Cornet Band, Union League and citizens in their carriages.⁷²

With this event, the Civil War ended for the City of Allentown, except for celebrations for returning troops. On the 4th of July 1865, separate celebrations were arranged by Democrats and Republicans. The *Peace Messenger* reported that “the Union League and jointly those who admire the Party of the Republicans had prepared a magnificent meal in the shade of the great Spring.”⁷³ Also invited were the staff of the 202nd Pennsylvania Regiment, Company E, which consisted mostly of Allentown people. “The Declaration of Independence was read, toasts were made, cannons were fired and good music was played.”⁷⁴ There is no mention of who provided the music.

The *Peace Messenger* was trying very hard to live up to its non-partisan reputation. The same article reported that “a significant number of those who confess to democracy celebrated the big day at the ‘Griesemer’s Busch’ near this town. . . . The music by the Ringgold Brass Band of Reading was excellent and uplifting. . . . The Corps played ‘til midnight at the Center Square in front of a large auditorium admiring their musical skills.”⁷⁵ According to Hellerich’s *History of Allentown*, this event was planned by Tilghman H. Good, the leading Democrat of the day, and as we now know, a former Allentown Brass Band member. The obvious choice of music should have been an Allentown band instead of the Ringgold Band. The Ringgold Band, however, had become attached to a military regiment during the war. The Allentown Cornet Band probably had maintained an anti-war position, and likely refused to become the regimental band of the 47th PVI. These were still contentious times.

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Anton Heinicke, circus bandsman, and founding father of the band movement in Allentown, left the area about 1853 and headed to where the action was —Boston. In 1850's Boston, the brass band movement was in full swing, providing Anton the opportunity to shine, and eventually to compete with the likes of Patrick Gilmore, with whom he would later share many venues, including the well-known Boston Promenade.⁷⁶ At that time, Gilmore was still leading the Salem Brass Band.⁷⁷

⁷²*Allentown Democrat*, April 26, 1865, as quoted in Hellerich, 1:143.

⁷³“The 4th of July in Allentown,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, July 12, 1865.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶Boston Music Hall broadside, *Fifth and Last Week of the Peoples’ Promenade Concerts*, (Boston: Farwells and Forrest, 1857).

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

By 1855 Anton was performing solo trumpet parts in the Orchestral Union.⁷⁸ Interested in more than performing, in 1857 he took over leadership of the Boston Germania Band, which had been formed by G. Schnapp in 1854.⁷⁹ Initially, Heinicke initially called his band the “Germania Military Band,” but later restored its original name, “Boston Germania Band.” The band performed on numerous occasions in the Boston area, including at least one ocean cruise, the Bay State Excursion of 1871. Heinicke then also turned to composing and arranging music for wind band—for which he will always be remembered, some of which is still performed today.

Heinicke served in the Civil War as bandmaster of a the 3rd Brigade, 3rd Div., 2nd Army Corps band.⁸⁰ Brigade bands were formed after all regimental bands were dismissed in 1862 as being too expensive, and diverting too many men from the fight. Unlike state-sponsored regimental bands, brigade bands were organized by the federal government; each brigade band, representing three to five regiments, consisting of only sixteen musicians. Heinicke was mustered in September 3, 1864 and mustered out June 4, 1865.

For the National Peace Jubilee of 1869, organized for performance in Boston by Patrick Gilmore, Heinicke was a member of the trumpet section in the 525-member Grand Orchestra. Audiences at the Peace Jubilee were treated to five days of concerts featuring over one thousand instrumentalists and ten thousand vocalists from around the country. Anton was in good company. Notable members in the twelve-member trumpet section were Matthew Arbuckle, D.W. Reeves, and T. J. Dodworth.⁸¹

Amos Ettinger, second leader of the Allentown Brass Band and military man, lived less than a year after war’s end. He died a age forty-eight on 1 February 1866, and is buried in Union Cemetery, Allentown. His wife, Susan, at age ninety-four, joined him there on 15 March 1913, outliving her husband an astonishing forty-seven years.⁸² Amos was a member of the Town Council. His obituary does not mention that he was a bandleader or military man.⁸³ Their sons were very prominent in the Allentown community. Dr. George T. Ettinger was Dean of Muhlenberg College, a foremost Latin scholar, president of the Lehigh County Historical Society (formed in 1904), and a founding father of the Allentown Public Library, serving as president for thirty-one years. Richard C. Ettinger continued to run the family copper and tinsmith business and had a very active social life in Allentown. Son Alfred Henry became a music

⁷⁸“Better Times,” *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, January 6, 1855: 110. “The fourth Symphony of Beethoven was found lovelier than ever. There was almost an encore of the Adagio. In the arrangement of the popular song of Abt’s: ‘When the swallows homeward fly,’ &c., the admirably clear and singing manner in which the melody was given out, first by the horn of Mr. Hamann, and then by the trumpet of Mr. Heinicke, was worth the warm applause that both elicited.”

⁷⁹“Musical Intelligence,” *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, May 13, 1854: 47.

⁸⁰The Adjutant General, *Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War*, 8 vols. (Norwood, Massachusetts: Norwood Press, 1933), 7:81.

⁸¹Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore, *History of the National Peace Jubilee, and Great Musical Festival, Held in Boston, June, 1869* (Washington: Office of the Librarian of Congress, 1871): 749.

⁸²“Mrs. Susan Ettinger Dies in 95th Year,” *Allentown Morning Call*, March 13, 1913.

⁸³“Deceased,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, February 7, 1866.

teacher and the most widely-known musician in the Lehigh Valley. After the war, Alfred performed at many Allentown Cornet Band events, as a vocal or piano soloist, under the name of A. H. Ettinger. He was also the organist at St. John's Lutheran Church on 5th Street for twenty-one years. Never married, his heart and soul were dedicated to music. Alfred studied under the best teachers in New York and Philadelphia. When Christ Lutheran Church in the western part of the city was established, he became a member, sang in the choir, and served as Vestry member.

Band members of the 1853 Allentown Brass Band roster remained active in community life. Theodore Yeager was not idle during the war. He was apprenticed to a Philadelphia dentist and became a practicing dentist in Allentown, advertising in virtually every issue of the *Allentown Democrat*. According to the *History of Allentown*, Dr. Theodore C. Yeager (1828–1874) became the “third mayor of Allentown; served as assistant regimental surgeon in the Civil War and was a member of the Muhlenberg College faculty.”⁸⁴ He ran for mayor in 1873 and defeated his former bandmate, Tilghman H. Good, by only 45 votes.⁸⁵

Even though his organization was not directly part of the military effort, William Minninger's band persevered throughout the war, providing Allentown with much needed entertainment. They were the only band in Allentown to survive the war years. During that four-year period, they were known by three names—first Lehigh Brass Band, then Lehigh Cornet Band, and finally Allentown Cornet Band. Even though the organization survived, they probably felt the lingering effects of the traumatic conflict, and for a time must have found it very difficult to keep operating. In June 1869 the *Friedensbote* reported:

Music Band—The Allentown Cornet Band, which had recently disbanded, wants to come together again. As reported it will appear in public again for the first time at the occasion of the final exam of Muhlenberg College, which is supposed to take place on June 24. We are looking forward to get a Band once again, and a good Band as such.⁸⁶

Their hiatus was fortunately very short. Only a year before the above report, on 31 May 1868, the Allentown Cornet Band led the parade celebrating the first memorial or decoration day held in Allentown. Services were held at both cemeteries, where graves of deceased soldiers were decorated by women and children.⁸⁷ Weeks later, in another important event on the evening of 1 July 1868, the band performed at the first anniversary of Muhlenberg College.⁸⁸

It is easy to speculate about reasons for the band's 1869 reorganization: One reason may have been recent news of the National Peace Jubilee, to be held June 15 in Boston and organized by celebrated bandmaster Patrick Gilmore. One can imagine the band desperately wishing to attend this major event, not being able to obtain funding for the trip, and thus disbanding in disgust. An incentive for return may have been the imminent formation of a new band in Allentown that would effectively replace the

⁸⁴Hellerich, 1:194.

⁸⁵Hellerich, 1:186.

⁸⁶“Musicband,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, June 9, 1869.

⁸⁷“Hellerich, 1:185.

⁸⁸“The First Anniversary of Muhlenberg College,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote (Peace Messenger)*, July 8, 1868.

Allentown Cornet Band—the City Cornet Band, led by twenty-two-year-old Peter Hanke.⁸⁹ With the return of the Allentown Cornet Band, Allentown would soon again have two bands.

After the band’s rapid rebound, William Minninger, father of the Allentown Cornet Band, moved the rehearsal site to E. Bickel’s Saloon on Hamilton Street some time before 1875,⁹⁰ and remained director until 1878. He and Anna had nine children. Depressed over the loss of his job as a cigar packer for Ruhe Brothers, he ended his own life on 7 January 1899.⁹¹ His newspaper death notice stated that he was the first leader of the Allentown Band and served in that capacity for twenty years. Since his tenure as leader ended in 1878, twenty years as leader would put his beginning at 1858, which further corroborates other evidence that his band was organized that year. William is buried in Union Cemetery, Allentown.

In 1875, while William Minninger was still director, a sixteen-year-old German immigrant by the name of Martin Klingler joined the band as a cornet player. After Minninger resigned in 1878,⁹² the band was led for several years by a well-known musician, Waldemar Grossman, with Klingler serving as manager for all of those years.⁹³ Klingler became conductor by 1883 and would be a member of the band for fifty years, forty-three of them as conductor and manager,⁹⁴ developing the band into a first-rate unit and providing musical guidance through the last quarter of the nineteenth and through the first quarter of the twentieth century. In the late 1880s, after years of the newspapers dropping “Cornet” from their name, the band’s name would change to The Allentown Band,⁹⁵ a name that continues to this day.

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⁸⁹*Weiss and Guth’s Allentown City Directory for 1869-70*, (Allentown, Pa: Harlacher and Weiser), 15. Peter Hanke did not live long after the band was formed. He died 7 November 1869 (“Deceased,” *Allentown Friedens-Bote*, November 10, 1869).

⁹⁰*Webb’s Allentown Directory, 1875–6* (New York: Webb Bros. & Co., n.d.), 167.

⁹¹“Good Citizen Hung Himself,” *Allentown Morning Call*, January 9, 1899; also, “Suicide,” *Allentown Democrat*, January 11, 1899.

⁹²“Conductor,” *Lecha Bote (Lehigh Messenger)*, April 6, 1878.

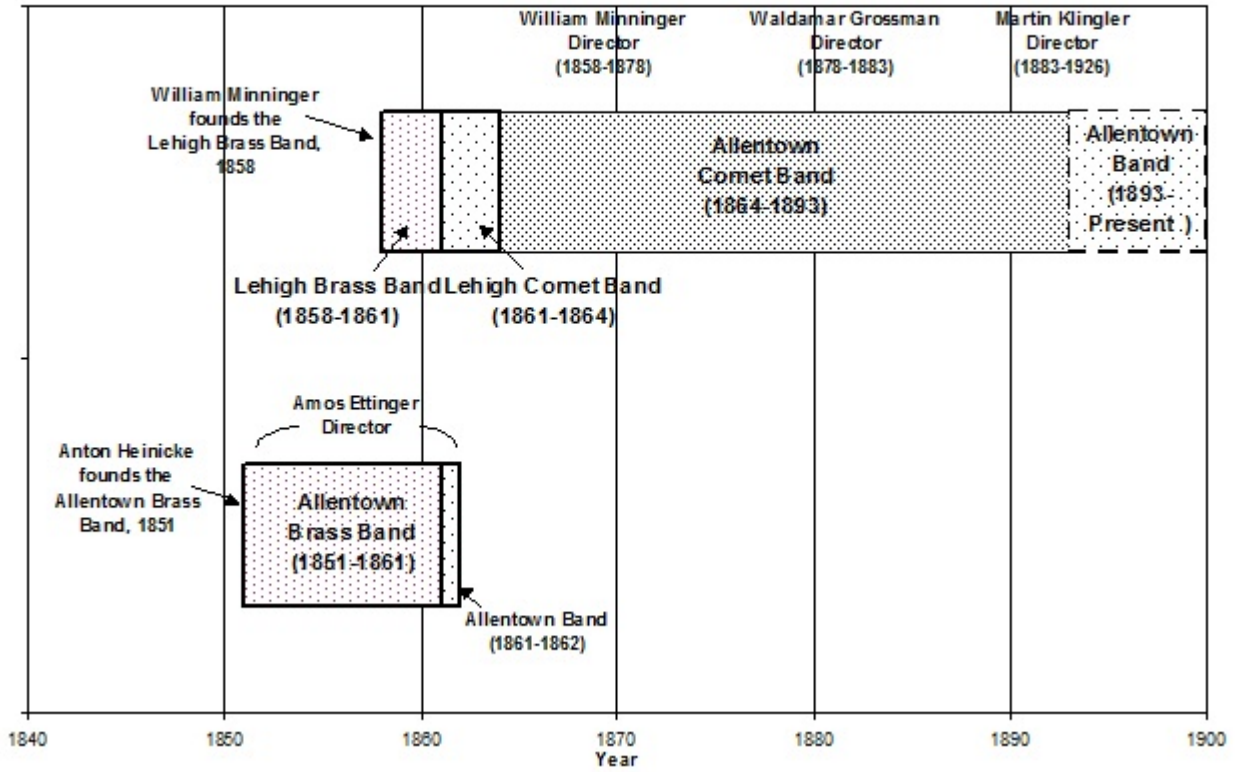
⁹³In early newspaper accounts describing the leadership of the band, Conductor and Leader (“Dirigent” and “Leiter” in the German language newspapers) were separate positions. In 1879 Klingler was identified as “leader.” This position was probably the equivalent of manager, or one who sets the direction of the band. In later years, Leader came to be used synonymously with Conductor.

⁹⁴“Allentown Band Leader Resigns,” *Allentown Morning Call*, February 21, 1926.

⁹⁵In *Williams’ Allentown City Directory for 1893* (Lancaster, Pa.: J. E. Williams, 1893), 28, the band was listed as “Allentown Cornet Band.” In the *Haines & Worman’s Directory of the City of Allentown for 1894* (Allentown, Pa.: Haines & Worman, n.d.), 19, the name had changed to “Allentown Band.”

Bands of Allentown

Nineteenth Century Timeline of Allentown's two Civil-War-era bands (showing name changes)



[Bands of Allentown Home](#)