



J.B. VANDAWORKER

James Bradley Vandaworker was born in Hibbing, MN in 1865. He became a musician and then a conductor, touring with Chautauqua, theatrical and operatic performing companies, until 1894, when he became the bandmaster for the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Home in Knightstown. This was a large orphanage for children of Civil War soldiers. During his six-year tenure the band took several major tours.

In 1900 he accepted a newly created position as Band Director of The Indianapolis News Boys Band, a position he held for 52 years. From an initial band of 35, ages 7-14, the band developed quickly culminating in First Place in the youth band competition at the 1904 World's Fair in St Louis. By 1912 there were two bands of newsboys, one a training group for the advanced ensemble which performed many local and regional performances.

Vandaworker became the first non-student band director at Butler University in 1925. This band too grew in size, discipline, and musical quality. In 1927 the band presented its first marching performances with formations in addition to numerous indoor concerts. By the end of the 1920s, the band numbered sixty members and played engagements at the Indianapolis 500 Festival and over WFBM, a leading local radio station at the time. In 1929 Vandaworker established a chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi band fraternity at the university and in 1932 he was elected as president at the annual convention in Oklahoma City.

Leaving Butler in the late 1930's, Vandaworker continued with the Newsboys Band until 1952. He died in 1954 at the age of 89.

For additional interesting information about Vanderworker, compiled by Dr. Charles P. Conrad, including sample programs, continue reading below:

James Bradley Vandaworker was born in Hibbing, MN in 1865. He became a musician and then a conductor, touring with Chautauqua, theatrical and operatic performing companies until 1894, when he became the bandmaster for the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Home in Knightstown. This was an orphanage founded in 1865 to care for the children of Civil War soldiers. It was a large complex of more than fifty buildings that closed in 2009. One of the provisions of the school was that graduates could attend any Indiana public college at no expense to the student.

At some point during his six-year tenure at the ISSH, a misspelling of his last name as "Vanderworker" happened, and it endured throughout his life and beyond. It was first found in a newspaper story in 1896 and was last printed in 2002. No explanation as to the origin of the misspelling nor the reason it was perpetuated for more than a half century has been uncovered. He was known as "J. B." throughout his career.

Vandaworker would take the ISSH band to St. Paul, MIN in 1896 for the 30th annual Grand Army of the Republic Encampment and in 1898 to Pittsburgh for a Knights Templar National Convention. The band had thirty-two members when it performed in Columbus, IN in 1898 and again in Shelbyville, IN in 1899. His last major tour with the ensemble was to Philadelphia in 1899.

Vandaworker left Knightstown for a position that he would hold for the rest of his professional life in 1900, and in that same year he married Laura Marie Jackson. They were together until her death forty-nine years later. The announcement was made in March that the newspaper the Indianapolis News would create a band made up of boys who delivered the paper, and that Vandaworker was to be the bandmaster and teacher for the members of the ensemble. By August he had selected the thirty-five members from a pool of more than four hundred applicants. The first program that was publicized by the Indianapolis News was from a year later. Vandaworker had arranged from piano sheet music a composition written by Bert Short entitled *Indianapolis News March*. Here is the program from the concert at Military Park in Indianapolis from July 12, 1901:

Caramba March		Laurendeau
The Darktown Jubilee		Beebe
Indianapolis News March		Short
Waltz – The Spanish Beauty		Parmenter
The Blue and the Grey		Chattaway
	Intermission	
King Milan		Ramsdell
Medley		Ripley
The Charlatan March		Sousa
Sparkling Gem Waltzes		Ripley
The Girl in the Barracks		Mann

Only the Sousa march is commonly known today from this program, but it should be mentioned that Vandaworker was current with his repertoire choices, as two of the pieces were published in 1897, one in 1898 and two more in 1900.

By 1902 the band had fifty members, whose age ranged from nine to sixteen. For the majority of the ensemble, this was their first experience playing their instruments. Vandaworker took the ensemble to Fort Wayne to play in a benefit performance for the news boy's union in that city. He also started a band at the Indiana Girls' Industrial School. In 1903 the Newsboys Band travelled to a conference of the Knights of Pythias in Champaign, IL, which served as a prelude to the trip the following year. Vandaworker's and the ensemble's reputation at the national level. In 1904 the World's Fair was in St.

Louis and commemorated the Louisiana Purchase. Vandaworker's boys won first place in a competition in June among youth bands at the event. A program from a May concert at their rehearsal facility in the Franklin Building in Indianapolis showed that the level of sophistication and technical demand in their music had grown rapidly:

Pilgrim's Chorus from Tannhauser	Wagner
Memphis the Majestic March	Alexander
Francesca Polka	Strong
Bennie Jones, baritone vocal soloist	
William Tell Overture	Rossini
Alagazam March	Holzman
Grand Selection from Maritana	Wallace
Saturday Night Medley Overture	De Witt
Illusion Waltzes	Dalbey
Sweet Old Songs Medley	Dalbey
Beau Ideal March	Sousa

A listing of the personnel showed that the instrumentation of the band for the St. Louis trip was 1 piccolo, 1 flute, 1 oboe, 1 Eb clarinet, 1 solo Bb clarinet, 2 1st Bb clarinets, 3 3rd Bb clarinets, 1 bass clarinet, 1 soprano saxophone, 1 alto saxophone, 1 tenor saxophone, 1 baritone saxophone, 4 Eb alto horns, 4 solo Bb cornets, 2 1st Bb cornets, 2 Eb trumpets, 2 Bb trumpets, 5 trombones, 2 euphoniums, 4 tubas, 2 snare drums, bass drum, cymbals, drum major and 2 banner bearers for parades. On their return from the World's Fair the ensemble played a serenade for Indianapolis Mayor Holtzman in the rotunda of the Claypool Hotel.

The band played this concert for the annual festival of the Mutual Service Association in 1907:

The Denver Times March	Knoll
Sun Dance	Friedman
The Lily	Casey
Arban Schey, cornet soloist	
Flowers and Smiles	Missud
Selections from Woodland	Luders
Overture to Martha	Flotow
Sanitol March	Daniels
My Maryland Medley March	Panella
Intermission	
Timbuctoo March	St. Clair
Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground	Masten
Edward Pugh, baritone soloist	
Selections from The Free Lance	Sousa
Popular Airs Medley	
Loin de Bal	Gillet
Ft. Popham March	Hall
Os-ka-loo-sa-loo	Sawyer

As early as 1908 the newspaper began to run stories about the successes of former band members, a number of whom had become professional musicians. These stories continued for another six decades.

In 1910 the ensemble travelled by train with the Indianapolis Trade Association and performed concerts in several Illinois cities. Here is the program from a 1911 concert for the Indianapolis Club:

National Emblem March	Bagley
Selections from The Man Who Owns Broadway	Cohan
Solo for Piccolo	Cox
Ralph Nichols, piccolo soloist	
Selections from Bright Eyes	Hoschna
Sunny South	Lampey
Selections from Il Trovatore	Verdi
Rossiter's Medley Overture	Alford
Grand Fantasia for Saxophone	Tregina
George Joslin, saxophone soloist	
Selections from The Old Town	Luders

By 1912 there were two bands of newsboys, one a training group for the advanced ensemble. Vandaworker was quoted in 1912: "I never set out to break the will of a boy, as I sometimes hear teachers brag that they do, but endeavor to strengthen his will." He also commented on the importance of building the man rather than just training the musician. Vandaworker wrote the I. N. B. March – the Indianapolis Newsboys Band. When the author of this article first found a mildewed set of parts in an old band library stored in a church basement, he thought it stood for "Indiana National Bank" and programmed it for a concert – fortunately the true reason for the march was discovered prior to the performance.

The Newsboys Band became a regular fixture at the Indiana State Fair, playing several concerts each day in the Indianapolis News Rest Tent that also featured seating, fair information and "pure ice-cold drinking water." The ensemble also played in Chautauqua performances in Indiana and Illinois, and by 1913 it had an active alumni organization.

Vandaworker became the first non-student band director at Butler University in 1925. This information is taken from the website History of the Butler Bands: "With J. B. Vandaworker, the band grew in size, discipline and musical quality. In 1927, Butler executed its first marching formations, which spelled out words on the football field. Mr. Vandaworker also led the band in three or four indoor concerts per semester, which increased exposure to the community. He also added numerous engagements outside the university setting. By the end of the 1920s, the band numbered sixty members and played engagements at the Indianapolis 500 Festival and over WFBM, a leading local radio station at the time. It was during this period that the local band fraternity Beta Mu Sigma was formed. In 1929 Beta Mu Sigma petitioned to obtain a charter from the national committee of Kappa Kappa Psi. The petition was granted and on May 31, 1929 the Alpha Beta chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi was installed at Butler University." In 1932, Vandaworker was elected President of Kappa Kappa Psi at the closing of the annual convention in Oklahoma City.

Starting around 1930, Vandaworker utilized soprano soloists with the Newsboys Band. The most frequent soloist was Ruth Otte, who was featured on dozens (perhaps hundreds) of concerts from 1930 until 1945. The final soprano soloist with the ensemble was Hazel Weghorst, who would marry another Hoosier bandmaster, James B. Calvert, in 1952. That was the year that Vandaworker retired and moved to Maryland to live with his daughter and her family. He and Hazel corresponded until Vandaworker's death in December 1954 at the age of 89.