

The Farmer's Union Band

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The Farmer's Union Band, William A. Witt instructor and leader, consisted of young men from western Boomer and eastern Rockford Townships in Pottawattamie County, Iowa and was active in the late 1920s and perhaps early 1930s. The band may have practiced in the Farmer's Union Hall, which was the old Boomer #3 school near the new school in the southwest corner of Section 5.

My thanks to the late Victor and Helen Petersen for providing this photograph and identifying the band members back in 2002. Unfortunately we don't have a date for this photograph.



Identifications are on the following two pages.

Back row, left to right:

- **Sophus Petersen** (bass drum) (1900 - 1990), s/o Peter T. and Karen (Jensen) Petersen.
Married Juanita Hinton from Nebraska.
Sophus Petersen is buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.
- **Henry Petersen** (big bass) (1908 - 1988), s/o H. Carl and Anna (Schroder) Petersen.
Married Irene Peters, d/o Carl and Rose (Peterson) Peters.
Henry and Irene Petersen are buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.
- **Ralph Axtell** (cornet) (1909 - 1986), s/o Spencer and Lena (Reel) Axtell.
Married Irene Schroder, d/o Carl and Abalone "Lona" (Petersen) Schroder. (Someone asked "Could this be Arthur Olsen instead?")
Ralph and Irene Axtell are buried in Cedar Lawn Cemetery in Council Bluffs.
- **Harvey Hatcher** (cornet) (1911 - 1990), s/o Silas Henry and Rachel (Lilwall) Hatcher.
Married Mabel Adella Wilding, d/o Theodore Everett Wilding and Effie May Dailey.
Harvey and Mabel are buried in the Goodland Cemetery in Goodland, Kansas.
- **Gordon Axtell** (piccolo) (1912 - 1994), s/o Spencer and Lena (Reel) Axtell.
Married Mabel Driver, d/o Thomas and Anna (Reese) Driver.
Gordon and Mabel Axtell are buried in Cedar Lawn Cemetery in Council Bluffs.
- **Arthur Hatcher** (bass) (1907 - 1998), s/o Silas Henry "Henry" and Rachel (Lilwall) Hatcher.
Married Strausie Mae Pike, d/o George F. Pike and Anna M. Lawson.
Arthur and Strausie Mae are buried in the Branson Cemetery near Loveland, Iowa.
- **Marvin Peters** (trombone) (1909 - 1987), s/o Lewis and Ida (Axtell) Peters.
Married Marjorie Hough, d/o Harry and Esther (Green) Hough.
Marvin and Marjorie are buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.
- **William A. (Willie) Witt**, the leader, (1891 - 1970), s/o David and Margaretha (Karstens) Witt. Grew up in Boomer Township, Section 18.
Married Carrie Petersen, d/o Niels C. and Marie (Nielsen) Petersen. Moved to Denver, probably in the 1930s.

Middle row, left to right:

- **Harvey Wright** (drum) (1909 - 1954), s/o Frank B. and Rosa (Lowe) Wright.
Married Eleanor Marsaline Wimer, daughter of John Wimer and Vesta Newland.
Died in a plane crash six miles east of Missouri Valley.
Harvey Wright is buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township. Eleanor is buried with a daughter in the Calhoun Cemetery in Harrison County.
- **Harold Larsen** (clarinet) (1909 - 1983), s/o Louis J. and Mary (Nelson) Larsen.
Married Valborg Jensen, d/o John and Nora (Madison) Jensen.
Harold and Valborg are buried in St. Paul's Cemetery in Boomer Township.
- **Leslie Marion Hatcher** (trombone) (1915 - 2005) s/o Silas Henry and Rachel (Lilwall) Hatcher.
Married Gladys Eleanor Simmons d/o Elmer and Bertha (Johnson) Simmons.
Leslie and Gladys Hatcher are buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery in Omaha.
- **Carl Schroder** (cornet) (1903 - 1991), s/o John and Abalone "Lona" (Petersen) Schroder.
Married Pearl Larsen, d/o Louis J. and Mary (Nelson) Larsen.
Carl and Pearl Schroder are buried in Cedar Lawn Cemetery in Council Bluffs.
- **Everett Mackland** (saxophone) (1910 - 1991), s/o William J. and Cora (Parish) Mackland.
Married Dora I. Adams.
Everett and Dora Mackland are buried in Cook-Walden Cemetery in Austin, Texas.
- **Archie Jacobsen** (bass) (1908 - 1965), s/o Jacob and Mary (Larsen) Jacobsen.
Married Clyda Marie _____. Subsequently married Mildred (Smith) Burgstrum.

Front row, left to right:

- **Virgil Witt** (cornet) (1912 - 1988), s/o William A. and Carrie (Petersen) Witt.
Moved to Colorado and married Dora Elizabeth (Lucas) Edwards.
- **Chester Mackland** (cornet) (1912 - 1970), s/o William J. and Cora (Parish) Mackland.
Married _____.
Chester Mackland served in the 359th Infantry Regiment during WW II and is buried in the Fort Leavenworth, Kansas cemetery.
- **Fred Petersen** (trombone) (1913 - 1970), s/o H. Carl and Anna (Schroder) Petersen.
Married Mary Jane Hough, d/o Harry and Esther (Green) Hough.
Fred and Mary Jane are buried in the Grange Cemetery in Boomer Township.
- **Victor T. Petersen** (clarinet) (1912 - 2006), s/o Peter T. and Karen (Jensen) Petersen.
Married Helen Larson, d/o Andrew and Karen Margrethe "Maggie" (Hansen) Larson.
Victor and Helen Petersen are buried in St. Paul's Cemetery in Boomer Township.