

CSUMB History Project

The History of the CSU Marching Band

KATHRYN KENNEDY HONORS THESIS - DECEMBER 2, 2022

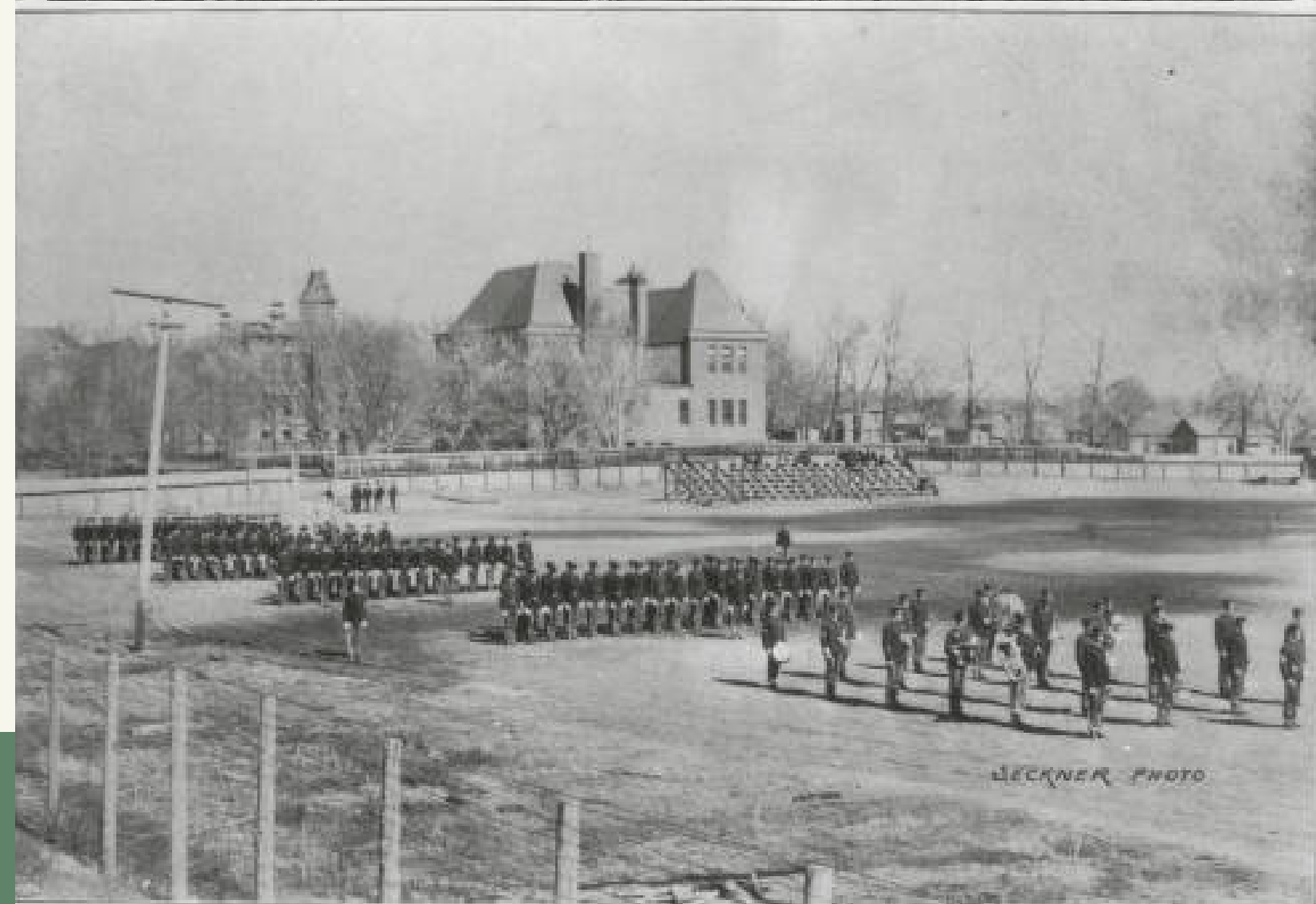
1870

Before the Band

Now known as Colorado State University, **Colorado Agricultural College** was established in 1870 when Territorial Governor Edward McCook signed a bill to designate the school as the land-grant college of Colorado.

As a land-grant institution, CAC was required to offer military training to students.

The cadet battalion included a group of musicians to keep time during drill maneuvers and perform at military events.



1901

The Beginning of the Aggie Band

In 1901, a group of CAC students that played in the Fort Collins city band met to discuss the possibility of forming an Aggie band on campus. **Charles Jones** was sent as a representative of this group to meet with the college faculty and ask permission to form the band. The CAC faculty granted the students permission, under the condition that the group could demonstrate that they were ready to perform for the public within six weeks. The men of the first Aggie band kept their word, and the band has been a fixture on campus ever since.





CADET BAND, 1900-1901.

1900-1901: The Aggie Cadet Band

1907

CAC Conservatory Founded

The State Board of Agriculture contacted Winnifred Cotton Olin, a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, requesting that she establish a music department for the college.

In the fall of 1907, the **Conservatory of Music** was established. Authorized by the State Board of Agriculture, Alexander Emslie was the first director of the conservatory. He held this position for thirty years. The program initially had six students enrolled. By the spring of 1907, there were twenty women and one man studying music at CAC.





1915: Drum Major Clark "Sparks" Alford with the Aggie Band

1918

Aggie Band Begins Annual Spring Tour

Under the direction of William Feldman, the Aggie band began their tradition of taking an annual spring tour to perform in cities throughout the state of Colorado. From 1918 to 1931, the band traveled and **performed concerts at high schools and community centers.** The men traveled in a chartered pullman car, which became their home during the ten to fourteen days spent on the road.



1924

Kappa Kappa Psi Chapter Established

A chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi, an honorary band fraternity, was installed at CAC in May of 1924. The founding members of the chapter were sixteen members of the ROTC band. Formal activities began in the fall of that year when the fraternity held their first official public meeting at the chapel, and Charles Jones awarded the new members with pledge ribbons.

The first Kappa Kappa Psi chapter was formed at Oklahoma A&M College, later Oklahoma State University, in 1919. This was five years before a chapter was started at CAC. **CAC was the Kappa chapter, making it the 10th chapter to ever be established.**



1932

Richard F. Bourne writes the Aggie Fight Song

In 1932, Dr. Bourne composed a new fight song for the school. The "Aggie Fight Song" made its debut at a football game against Utah University on November 19, 1932.

This fight song replaced "Come On Aggies", CAC's first school song, which was sung to the tune of "On Wisconsin". Bourne's Aggie Fight Song meant that **students at Colorado Agriculture College now had a fight song of their very own to sing.**



1937 *Department of Music is Established*

James McCain, Dean of Students at Colorado A&M, met with the State Board of Agriculture in May of 1937 to request that a Department of Music be established at the college. The new Department of Music replaced the conservatory when classes started in the fall of that year.

Gregory Bueche Writes "Aggie Boom" Song

Written by Aggie band director Gregory Bueche, "Aggie Boom" was adopted by students as a new school song in 1937. The lyrics to Bueche's "Aggie Boom" referenced the **cannon** that had been fired during football games at the college since 1920.





1937: Aggie Band performing their halftime show at Colorado Field

1946

Marching Band returns after WWII

“With the return of peacetime, we saw the return of our band,” *Silver Spruce Yearbook, 1946*

October 11, 1946 marked the return of the band to the field following the war. The band played at the game against University of Denver, as well as many of the home games that season. Despite struggles in instrumentation and acquiring rehearsal space, the band was excited to be back on the field.



1949

Women join the A&M Marching Band

Women joined the Colorado A&M marching band for the first time in 1949. Prior to 1949, women at A&M had some limited involvement on the field. The band occasionally had drum majorettes before this point and female sponsors of the ROTC band that would march in parades by the drum major.

“Have you noticed something different about the A&M marching band this year? You haven’t! If you look more closely at the next game you attend, you will notice that girls are marching in the band- for the **first time in the history of the band.**” *Collegian* Oct 13, 1950



1953

"Songs from A&M" Recorded

In 1953, a recording was made of the band and choir performing many of the school songs. "Songs from Colorado A&M College" was available for purchase in the bookstore.

The record included "**Aggie Fight Song,**" "**Aggie Boom,**" "**Alma Mater,**" and "**Come on, Aggies.**" The recording production was sponsored by alumni and all of the profits went towards the band and choir.



1960

CSU Marching Band begins playing at Denver Broncos Games

In the 1960s, the CSU marching band began a tradition of performing at Denver Broncos football games. The Denver Broncos were founded in 1960 as part of the American Football League, so **the CSU band has been part of Bronco history since the team began.** The CSUMB has performed at many Broncos games over the past 60 years.





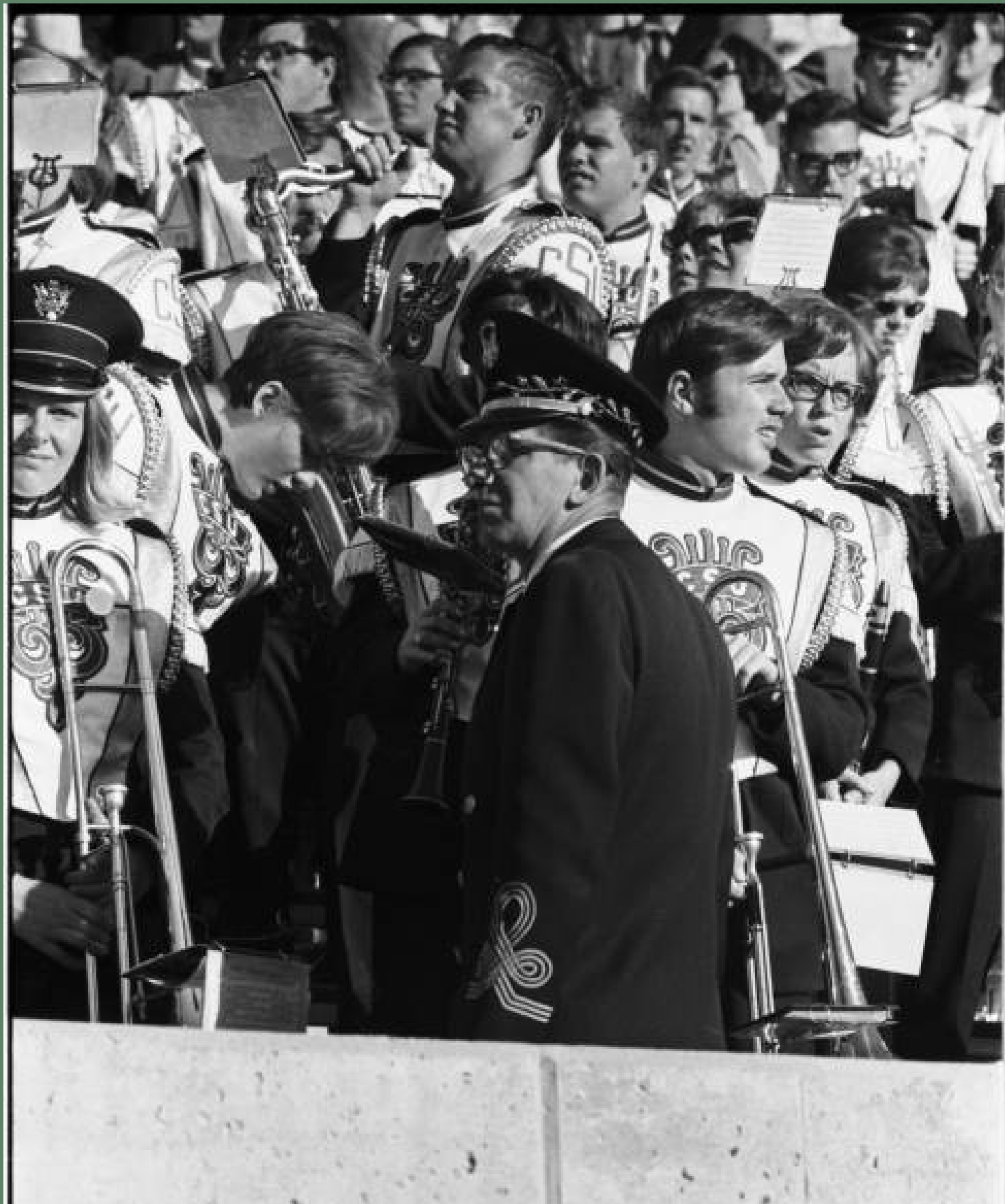
1960: The CSU Marching Band stands on the steps of the Administration Building

1968

Hughes Stadium Opens

Hughes Stadium opened in 1968 to replace Colorado Field, located on College Avenue at what is now the Christiansen Track. The new stadium was named after Harry Hughes, the head coach of the college's football team from 1911 to 1941. The new home of CSU football was located at the base of the "A" near Horsetooth Reservoir and could welcome 30,000 fans.





1968: Otto Werner in the stands at Hughes Stadium



1975: Drum Major struts at the Oval

1990

CSU Marching Band travels to the Freedom Bowl

On December 7, 1990, the CSU Rams played the Oregon Ducks at the Freedom Bowl in Anaheim, California. This was CSU's first bowl game since 1948 and **their first ever bowl win.**

The marching band traveled with the team and cheered them to victory. Ram fans were thrilled at the team's success, which was followed by many more bowl games in the 90's and 2000's.



1997 *Spring Creek Flood*

On July 28, 1997, Spring Creek flooded after 14.5 inches of rain fell in 31 hours.

A large portion of the CSU campus flooded, including the music building.

Instruments, sheet music, and marching band uniforms were destroyed. The band began their season without uniforms and borrowed flags from high schools.



2001

CSUMB Celebrates Centennial

The CSU Marching Band celebrated its 100 year anniversary in 2001. In honor of the occasion, the band produced new recordings of many of the school songs and cadences, as well as many popular stands tunes.



2009

CSUMB begins attending Denver Parade of Lights

In 2009, the band began their annual tradition of attending **the Denver Parade of Lights**. The CSUMB is the only collegiate marching band to have participated in the parade.

The CSUMB kicks off the parade with a holiday tune played in front of the brightly lit capitol building. The band is joined by the Golden Poms and Cam the Ram.



2013

CSUMB Travels to Ireland

The CSUMB travelled to Dublin, Ireland, to march in the 2013 St. Patrick's Day Parade. **This was the first time the band ever performed outside of the United States.**

220 band members marched in the parade. The band played Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. CSUMB members toured the Cliffs of Moher, Kilkenny Castle, and more.





2013: The CSU Marching Band at the Cliffs of Moher

2017 *Canvas Stadium Opens*

With the opening of Canvas Stadium in 2017, CSU football was **back on campus**. The new stadium can seat 36,500 fans.

Canvas Stadium features a seating section just for the CSUMB in the northeast corner, as well as a locker room and storage for band equipment.

Before making their move to Canvas, the CSUMB played a very special final show in Hughes Stadium. As a tribute to what was their home for almost 50 years, the band played music from the late 60s and spelled "Peace," "Love," and "1968" on the field.



2020

COVID Season and the "Green and Gold March"

The COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges to all band programs. In addition to the pandemic, record breaking wildfires throughout Colorado made rehearsals difficult for the CSUMB. While the band did not play at any football games that season, they met throughout the week to make music together.

The "Green and Gold March" was written by interim director Kevin Poelking. Under the title of the new school song is a note that the piece was **"Premiered by the resilient members of the 2020 CSUMB."**





The 2022 CSU Marching Band

Thank you!

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