

History of Art Sohre Orchestra

[This account was kept by band member Milton Bruni of rural Iron Ridge, Wisconsin. It has been copied, with punctuation added occasionally, from a Rexall "Du-O-Ring" notebook kept by Milt that also contained the addresses of WWII friends along with a tally of the band's earnings.]

The orchestra started in the fall of 1942 with Marvin [Bruni], Onie [Owens], Art [Sohre], Rollie [Justman], Delmar, and Milton. We practiced thru the winter of 42-43. Rollie got married and left us. About that time Bill Kerlinski began to drum for us, but he left shortly to drum for Miller. In the fall of 43 we joined the union and shortly thereafter Russell Bowe began to drum for us. He, however, quit in the early part of 44. In January of 44 Glen Wiser began to play with us. Francis Scharpf had joined us shortly after Bill Kerlinski had left us.

In Feb. of 44 we began to play over WIBU. In April we played our first job in Huilsburg. 402 people attended. May 6 we played at Hustisford and May 20 and 27 at Zunkers. Again on May 28 we played at Huilsburg where we broke the all time attendance record by having 431 people.

On June 10 we played for Irvin Blank wedding and Gonring liked us so that we got three more weddings right after that. On June 26 Glen left us for service with the Navy and Sparky Krahn began to drum for us. He having quit playing with Miller sometime before. On July 4th we played in Hustisford and shortly thereafter we got a Sunday job at Gonrings which he had taken away on Miller. We got another in Aug. In the meantime we played at Horicon, at Zunkers, Theresa, and Allenton. The orchestra was growing in popularity and it was drawing crowds wherever we went.

On Aug. 29 Milton left for the Army but in the evening he was back, he had been rejected. There followed a very busy Sept. with about 10 jobs. On Oct. 21 Milton got married and on the 22 Johnny Lavardo played bull fiddle in his place.

On Nov. 24 Art left and on the 25 he was back, also rejected. On the 25, 26, & 29 Albert Lentz played as Franz [Scharpf] was sick. Franz came back from the hospital unable to play and Lentz continued with us. We continued drawing crowds wherever we went. On April 8 we made a new attendance record at Huilsburg with 592 tickets sold. On May 28 Del, Spark, and Onie went for their physicals, and on June 28, Marvin was taken a second time.

On July 4 a guy by the name of Milt Rupbrecht helped out as Albert couldn't play. On Aug. 4 when Del's sister got married Les Marose played. On Aug. 18 Sparky got married and on Aug. 25 Bowe played along as Sparky was on his wedding trip. On Sept. 23 the lites went out in Huilsburg and we finished by lantern light. On Sept. 25 Marvin left. On Oct. 21 Bruni celebrated anniversary and Tony played along. On Nov. 4 Butchy played in Sparky's place. On Dec. 15 Del was sick and Marose played. On Dec. 23 Bruni went to church and Tony played. On Christmas Butchy played in Sparky's place, Tony in Bruni's (who was sick), and Al didn't. On Jan. 26 Al didn't again and on Feb. Del had to have his tonsils removed and Bobby Valeskie played in his place.

On April 21 Marvin came home and left again on May 12. On May 23 we got royally screwed at the union dance. On May 25 Al didn't play. On June 14 Butchy played in Sparky's place and Rupbrecht, Al, and Sparky said they would quit Jan. 1.

On June 29 Bobby played in Del's place. On July 26 Butchy played in Sparky's place, then all missed a few times during the summer. About this time Sohre decided to quit on the first of Jan. On Oct. 19 Marvin was home and played on Oct. 25. We heard he was to be discharged and then we were going to play with 8 guys. On Nov. 9 Drive Benke played with us and Al didn't. On Wed. Nov. 13 Marvin was home for good and we played with 8 men. On Nov. 23 Rupbrecht

didn't play. On Dec. 8 the Schwartz posters appeared announcing the disbanding of the orchestra on Jan. 1. On Dec. 22 Milton didn't play and the orchestra played its last job at the Schwartz. On Dec. 29 the orchestra played its last and final job at the Lighthouse. Del, Sparky, Milt, Ruphect, Al, Art, Ownie, and Marvin.

[Here follows a tally of the band's jobs during their career.]

WIBU	5
Huilsburg	11
Waubeka	1
Fairwater	2
Zunkers	11
Hustisford	6
St. Kilian	1
Gonrings	32
Allenton	11
Theresa	16
Schwartz	8
Kekoskee	11
Beaver Dam	2
Nabob	2
Bert Phillips	30
Horicon	4
Lighthouse	26
Kewaskum	2

On Nov. 10, 1947 the old bunch got together to practice again without Owens. On Nov. 15 Marvin got married and on Nov. 25 we played for P.A. Mueller's opening.

[Thereafter follows a careful listing of dates, money earned, and places played. The take was generally between five and seven dollars per man, excepting WIBU (which paid \$1.50) and a very few special events like "Rollie's Shower" (\$1).