



*Clayton's Band* believed firmly in its non-union status and this may have caused its demise. Union bands refused to march with it, and the Musicians' Union brought pressure to stop some performers. Indeed, a scheduled live radio broadcast in 1949 for WVOS was cancelled at the last minute as the Band was already on "stage" at the **Hunt Memorial Building in Liberty Square** (top right).

The *Band's* last director, Harry Smith, died in 1963 and there was never again a regular leader.

*Clayton's Band* has a romance and a mystique unrivaled in the history of Ellenville organizations. Brothers, sons, nephews, and multiple generations of some families – Wolfs, Booths, Mances, Rauners, Freers, Grays, and others – played in the *Band*.



As years went by, some former members of the band donated their uniforms to the local history collection of the *Library* and the accumulation of programs, pictures – even instruments – grew. While **Terwilliger House Museum** was gradually being restored and opened in the early 1980s, then-*Library* Director Marion Dumond and Museum Clerk Pat Christian began to develop plans to create a permanent *Clayton's Band* exhibit to share the expanding collection with the public.



It seemed logical to form a "Remembering Clayton's" Committee composed of former *Band* members Bruce Gillette, Bob Constant, and Bob Wolf. They met regularly with Director Marion Dumond to plan the reunion events, bringing pictures, memories and many anecdotes.

*Library* staff compiled a master list of *Band* members from pictures, minutes, newspaper articles and reminiscences. The search for former *Band* members expanded and eventually ninety invitations were sent. Thirty-seven alumni ultimately returned.

The *Library's* own Frank O'Connor constructed the "bandstand" at **Terwilliger House**, Gus St. Anthony painted the mural, mannequins were found, and the assembling of the exhibit continued (see photo, previous page, top left).

Who would lead the *Clayton's Memorial Band*? Bruce Belanger, a local resident and music teacher at the *Ellenville Central School*, came to our rescue. He chose music that would be appropriate for musicians who hadn't touched an instrument in twenty years or more, organized a support core of ten student and adult musicians who were willing to assist, and planned a single rehearsal, to be held for two hours on the day of the reunion.

When the great day arrived, rehearsal began at ➔

Below, **Clayton's Military Band**, 1939. Front row: George Reichert, Baxter Constant, Joseph Rauner Jr., Chauncey Rowan, Edward Fitzgerald, George Wolf, William Booth, Harold Booth, Robert Madden, Kenneth Mance, Donald Bradford; middle row: Floyd Howe, Bernard Wenig, Robert Hyatt, Raymond Suckles, Charles Grant, Warren Robinson, Clarence Wood, Robert Constant, Nathan Weiss, Clarence Coniker; back row: Arthur Brown, Robert Wolf, Matthew Wolf, Julius Wolf, Weston Ruth, Donald Sprague, Harry Smith.

