

100 ÉVES AZ ÉSZAK-AMERIKAI MAGYAR BAPTISTA SZÖVETSÉG (5b)

MUSIC IN OUR CHURCHES

By Ethel Petre Kish

(Continued from the previous issue)

On the East Coast also, most of the Hungarian Baptist churches had either a band or an orchestra. *New Brunswick* and *Trenton* both had large bands with good musicians (see photo). They were all men. They played wonderful music.



Hungarian Baptist Band of New Brunswick, NJ. 1935.

New York City had an orchestra because they had many fine violinists. The smaller churches had groups: trios, quartets, and soloists to provide music for their services.

At our Annual Conventions, musicians brought their instruments and Ernie directed that marvelous group of bandmen. That was at a time when there were a large number of them. Their presentations were outstanding.

You may wonder — what happened? Why and when did it all change? World War II. changed church life. Men were called into military service and young women into the work force. Lack of instruments broke up the bands. They did, however, continue with younger members, but they, too, left the area to attend college and the bands were crippled again.

Another contributing factor was the migration to California in the 1940's. Almost every church lost families who moved there. The *Buckeye Road Church* and the *Holton Avenue Church* merged and moved to the *Shaker Square* area on 130th Street. But no more band. The *West Side Church*, too, lost its musicians so there was no more band there either.

When the bands were no longer in existence, small instrumental groups provided the special music, but it was not the same to us who remembered the time before the war.

Piano and organ music played a strong part in a worship service. This is true today as well. My mother told me she played a pump organ on a truck in *New Castle* for the street meetings.

Children were taught to sing in Sunday School, then in Youth Choir,

have always had excellent choirs in our churches, for which we thank God.

The combined choir at the Annual Convention was always a highlight of the program. Years ago, the choirs were much larger. They presented God's message in song which could also reach the heart and soul of the listener. This is true today. The convention choir always presents wonderful music.

We are living through changing times. Music in our churches is different. It is guitars, brass combos, woodwinds and drums, and even a harp in Cleveland. Wonderful! Keep on playing for the Glory of God.

Whatever instrument is used, it is to praise God. While I was reflecting on all these churches, I remember the times I spent there. During my lifetime, I was fortunate enough to have lived in the Mid—West and on the East Coast. All churches worked hard to praise and glorify God through music. These are my precious memories.

Psalm 150

*Praise the Lord!
 Praise God in His sanctuary;
 Praise Him in His mighty expanse.
 Praise Him for His mighty deeds;*



Boy's Band of the First Magyar Baptist Church of Trenton, NJ .

and later in the Senior Choir. The Psalmist encourages us to sing. In Psalm 149, he encourages us to "Sing to the Lord a new song". And I would like to add, "but don't forget the old ones". Whether they sing the new songs or the old ones, our church choirs have always praised God with their voices. Through their singing they have increased our faith, our hope, and have continuously reminded us of God's love and goodness toward us. We

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

Praise Him with trumpet sound;

Praise Him with harp and lyre.

Praise Him with timbrel and dancing;

Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe.

Praise Him with loud cymbals;

Praise Him with resounding cymbals.

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord!