INTERVIEW WITH

MIKE FLIER

Drum Major 1961
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Interviewee: Mike Flier, Drum Major 1961
Interviewer: Dan Cheatham, Drum Major 1957
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Transcriber: Eric Heilmann


Editorial notes are attributed thus:
Norden H. (Dan) Cheatham – NHC; Katherine T. Fleeman – KTF]

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Introduction

Cheatham: This is Dan Cheatham. It's October 31, 1993. I'm with Mike Flier, in the coffee shop at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley. Mike is in town, visiting from the East Coast, to attend the 35th reunion of the Band that went to Brussels combined with the Band that marched in the Rose Bowl on January 1st, 1959.

Give us a brief self-introduction?

Flier: My name is Mike Flier, and I arrived at Berkeley in 1958 in the fall. Right from the start I wanted to join the Band. I lived at Cloyne Court, the Co-Op, and I played clarinet from 1958 through 1962. In 1961 I was Drum Major of the Band, the first Cal Band that ever went to Big Ten territory, in this case to face Iowa. I also marched in the 1959 Rose Bowl parade and game, and went on the trip to Louisville when the basketball team won the national championship in the spring of 1959.

Cheatham: Wow! What a Cal Band career.

Coming to Cal

When did you first become aware that there was such a thing as the Cal Band?

Flier: I first became acquainted with the Cal Band when our band from Clovis Union High School, near Fresno, went to High School Band Day, and was I very impressed with the performance. I just knew that if I were able to get to Berkeley, I would definitely join the Band.

Cheatham: Tell us more about High School Band Day.

Flier: [August 2014: When you're in a high school band, you have an entirely different level of expectations about standards of performance, appearance, musical ability, and talent. Clovis High had a fairly typical band for a valley school. We numbered about 80–90 and played a wide variety of music. Stunts on the field were rehearsed briefly before presentation on Friday nights, mostly stand-and-play formations. Going to High School Band Day gives you an entirely different perspective. First of all, you see so many other high school bands, you have a chance to contrast and compare. It was fairly clear that we were in the middle of the pack. But it was quite thrilling to march onto the field at halftime and be a part of a massive band, playing stirring music. The crowd was always appreciative. The real treat, however, was to be able to see a great college band perform. The Cal Band had just returned from Brussels and thus had loads of experienced bandsmen. The very presentation of the Band was startling: all male, loud, musical beyond belief. And the formations and routines were spectacular. The rooting section added to the overall drama with extraordinary loud yells and]
card stunts. All this made a huge impression on an eighteen-year-old bandsman from Fresno.

Cheatham: How did you get to Cal?

Flier: I corresponded with the Cal Band the summer after I found out that I actually was coming to Berkeley, and of course they sent me lots of information about things they were doing. There was a Fall Training Program, but at that point I ran into my parents' objections. They said, "How can you possibly go to a college and immediately begin to play in a band when you don't know how hard the subjects are going to be? Put it off a year or two and see what happens." So I reluctantly agreed. But as soon as I got to the campus, I headed immediately to Room 5 Eshleman Hall, and saw the Senior Manager, Hugh Barnett. He heard my whole story, shook his head very understandingly, and said, "Yes, I see what you mean. Of course, I understand their concern. But you might just want to go up and watch the Band rehearse, just at least to see what they are doing."

So I went up to the rehearsal field. At that time it was adjacent to Hearst Gymnasium for Women, and as I walked up, the Cal Band was marching down the field playing Big C, and my heart just leapt, and I stopped transfixed, and I said "Oh no, I have to belong to this immediately."

I wrote my parents that day. They of course, were surprised at my decision, but I suppose my enthusiasm carried the day. I assured them that I was going to study very hard and do very well, but that I just had to belong to the Band. That I needed some sort of outlet, and this would be the best one.

Cheatham: Tell us about your audition and those first few days getting your feet wet in becoming a bandsman?

Flier: Well, I do remember on the rehearsal field after it was over, talking to the Student Director, Larry Anderson, and asking him whether he thought it was possible at this late date (because I hadn't gone to the Fall Training Program) to be able to get in. He shook his head and assured me that it ought to be possible, but of course I would have to audition to make sure that I played up to the standards of the Band. So, an appointment was arranged. I can't remember anything about that time; I don't even think I can remember where it took place: I suspect it must have been in Eshleman Hall, but I'm not sure.

At any rate, it was with Mr. Berdahl and, he gave me some sort of music to play. I can't tell you what it was. But first of all, he was very good at making you feel relaxed. It is always a tense situation when you find yourself in an audition.

He took me through the music I was playing, wanted to see whether I could sight-read. He was also, obviously, very interested in the quality of tone, in embouchure... that sort of thing... and that impressed me. This was not just a band
that was worried about marching, the music was very important too. And after the
audition, he turned to me, and smiled, and said "Mike, you're in the Band." And I
was elated.

Cheatham: I suspect that Fall Training Program as you first experienced it in 1958 and FTP
as practiced today are quite different. There were obviously some training
sessions of some sort for incoming bandsmen to learn the rudiments, but it wasn't
until later that it became institutionalized as a highly demanding and formalized
program that it is today. In fact, I suspect that you had influence over its later
format.

First Performance

So now this wide-eyed freshman suddenly discovers he's in the Band. How did it
go after that?

Flier: When talking about events from 35 years ago, it's difficult in some cases to recall
all the details, but I know that Room 5 Eshleman Hall became a place that I
always knew I could come to and relax and talk to other bandsmen. I also knew,
however, that it was a place where some people seemed to hang out all the time,
playing cards or whatever, and I knew that was something I had to watch out for.
If one got hooked on that, then indeed studies could go down the drain. You
might say that the room was a double-edged sword. It was a wonderful,
welcoming place on the one hand, but danger lurked if you didn't watch yourself,
on the other. I do definitely remember, the thing that made the biggest impression
on me was when I was finally issued my uniform. I remember especially the shiny
buckle that went over the cross-belt. And, of course, finding out from everyone
that you had to have that as shiny as possible. And I spent, it must have been an
hour, polishing that thing, to make sure it was absolutely sparkling for the first
performance.

As I recall, the first time when we actually put on the uniforms, it was like a
magic transformation. Really, because up until that time, we were always in street
clothes, practicing on the field, and even the morning of the performance, as I
recall, we just wore our hats to rehearsal, so that we could practice the bows. But
at that moment when we were all in the Eshleman Hall locker room getting
dressed and feeling excited about the performance, and then actually walking out
on to Eshleman Court, the court in front of Stephens Union, to form up; it was as
though you were suddenly transformed into this magic world. It was just different.
Also, something that was extremely important for me was that fact that this band
had such a powerful male image, it really sent chills up your spine when you saw
all these men marching, yelling, playing, and it felt wonderful to be a part of that.

As I recall, we tuned up and then I think we probably played something there
before we set off. Then we walked up the steps [at Eshleman Court] and made our
way to the stadium, singing all the way, of course. I'm trying to recall exactly the
sort of things we did. I know there was some marching, but I know there was also some, not formal marching, not strolling, somehow or other we got up there.1 We got up to Piedmont and then made our way up Stadium Way. We paused to serenade the men of Bowles Hall, who were arrayed over the lawn in front of their dormitory. Then on up the incline.

What was also terribly exciting was when we got to the top of the hill, and suddenly you saw Memorial Stadium. You knew this was it. This was the moment when all the work of the previous week, really a couple of weeks, was going to come to a head. And, we went through the gates, and into that tunnel, and it was dark, but you did see some sort of light at the end of it. There were all kinds of people milling around. It was hard to make any sense of it all, but somehow you got into the right place. And then we were just told to hang loose for a minute, which we tried to do, except that we were all so excited, at least we freshmen. I mean, this was the first time ever. And, all of a sudden, the Drum Major blew his whistle, and we snapped to attention to get ready for our entrance.

Cheatham: The courtyard that Mike was referring is now called the Class of 1925 Court. Anyone who is reading this interview who should happen to walk through that court must remember that in those days, there were no trees planted in it, and there were no benches in it. The brick pavement in the then-Eshleman Court was such that the bandsmen would stand on the intersections of the brick lines, and, looking down on the courtyard, the Band would be exactly in line left and right, front and back. We would play the equivalent of what has now become known as the Sproul Steps Concert. During that concert, we would play the half time music of the day. When that was over, we would rush up the stairs and form up on the street between Stephen's Hall (then called Stephen's Union) and the Campanile. The routine would be to proceed in an easterly direction along that street, which in those days proceeded to what was then called Cowell Hospital which was just torn down a few months ago to make room for the Haas School of Business. At that point street turned south and connected to College Avenue at Bancroft Way.

Instead of going south, would keep going east up the hillside in the direction of Bowles Hall. Once on the street we would form up facing South on Gayley Road and proceed to the North Tunnel on drums, in high step.

What was it like the first time you marched into Memorial Stadium for the first time?

Flier: Well, one of the most vivid impressions that you have as you're in the tunnel is the tremendous noise you hear from outside. You hear these yells back and forth, the stadium crowd laughing, clapping. All kinds of noise going on.2 And what is going on inside (because it's a tunnel, the echoes) actually, in some sense, created

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1 In the military it is called Route-Step March. NHC
2 In those days the opposing rooting sections faced one another across the 50-yard line hyped each other up. NHC
a sense of confusion. But, you knew nonetheless what you had to do, and once the whistle blew you were ready to go.

We then, of course, before we actually charged out of North Tunnel, waited for the signal. All of a sudden we heard Bill Ellsworth's announcement "Ladies and gentlemen, from out of North Tunnel, The University of California Marching Band." And, sometimes before that, and sometimes with that, the Drum Major put his baton down to signal that we start the yell, "Pick up you heels! Turn your corners square! And Drive! Drive! Drive!" Then we went marching... bursting out of North Tunnel, and the next thing that happened... again, we had no experience... at least the freshmen didn't..."The Bomb" went off, which was startling, but nonetheless made the entrance even more spectacular.

Once you emerge from that dark tunnel into the bright sunlight (and in those days the rooting section wore all white, with blue and gold caps to create a big C in the middle of it, just this burst of white), it was absolutely spectacular. And we formed, as I recall, some long lines, three or four long lines across the field, (sideline to sideline) and then played, I think, Golden Bear Fanfare. Yes, Golden Bear Fanfare, after which the Drum Major, Chapman Dix, went strutting through the Band, and then we marched down the field, I think, to Big C. What exactly we did after that I don’t recall. I know that traditionally we saluted the other school. We formed either their name or initials, faced the other school, and played their fight song. Then we turned, and I think usually went into the Script Cal. Following the Script Cal, we went into a Star Spangled Banner formation, the likes of which I can't remember, and then finally went off the field. And after that first time, it was just wonderful, unforgettable. Practically unforgettable.

Cheatham: That was a period when we were trying out differing Pregames in search of one we liked best. See the videotape titled “Cal Band 1955 through 1960.” This tape is a composite of the 16 mm films that were used at the time. By viewing this tape you can see how were experimenting with the tunnel entrance.

The fanfare was the Golden Bear Fanfare. It has not been played for decades now [as of 2003]. See the interviews with Bill Colescott and Jon Elkus for how this fanfare was specially composed to introduces the new uniforms and marching style for the 1954 season.

Today, one of the significant events in the life of an incoming bandsman is participating in what we call The Silent Walk, which is the formal initiation ceremony which the incoming bandsmen undergo on the eve after their very first performance. What are your memories of Silent Walk?

Flier: When I was a freshman, there was no such thing as Silent Walk. And my recollection is that it was introduced somewhere around 1959 or 1960. I can't be exactly sure. Since my memory of its happening is so connected with those later years, I'm not sure that the whole pattern of when it took place was the same in the
beginning as it was later. I can only associate it with the time after the first game of the season. It was done at some other time in the season, I just can't remember.\(^3\)

At any rate, remarkably, it wasn't until this weekend when we, the alumni who had gathered for the 35th reunion of the Brussels Band, reenacted the Silent Walk, that I had actually ever gone through it myself. In those days, the old bandsmen would simply meet at a prescribed time in the evening at Memorial Stadium to be there when the freshmen came through North Tunnel for what is now the absolute end of the ceremony. So, it was actually a real treat for me to get to go through it this time. Of course, going through it as a middle-aged man with all kinds of memories and emotions about the places that we saw and the people that we recalled at the time, I had to have had a much different impression now than I ever would have then.

Now, as I heard some of the words, and I stood in the same places that formed such an important part of my biography back then, I occasionally found my mind drifting to specific events and people that were all an important part of my life at that time. But it was a very moving experience, especially when we got up to the stadium and walked into it through North Tunnel again, seeing that same light just as I had 35 years ago, brought back a lot of memories. Seeing the new Cal Band practicing, hearing the familiar songs, you couldn't help but starting to tap your feet and sing along again. It was great.\(^4\)

**Cheatham:** The reunion committee did go through extra efforts to provide this opportunity for all these older bandsmen who had never gone through it, and give them a chance to pretend as if they were freshmen, if you will. And when we arrived in the late afternoon, the shadows were getting long, and there was a chill in the air. Just by a stroke of pure coincidence, the Cal Band was just starting the last run-through of their Pregame rehearsal. Although we knew the Cal Band was going to be having a rehearsal, it was pure coincidence that they had just started this last run-through. So all these people got to see the full run-through of the next day's performance. I'm sure it must have had an emotional impact on them.

**Flier:** In terms of the impact of the Silent Walk today, you know the freshmen of 1993 I think have many more things to contend with than we did then. Somehow life seemed much simpler. There are so many demands for their attention, even the whole relationship to tradition is different. They have a more difficult time connecting with it than we did. I think that having something like the Silent Walk emphasizes their connection to the past, and makes them a part of it. That connection is solidified at the end, as I recall, in the distribution of Cal Band pins to the freshmen. It must have a very strong and unusual impact on their lives at that time, because it does firmly make them a part of a living institution in the University, almost in a way that no other ceremony would at that time.

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\(^3\) It didn't happen until after we moved out of Room 5 Eshleman Hall. That makes the first one either 1958 or 59. See Bill Colescott's oral history. NHC

\(^4\) It was still afternoon when the Brussels bandsmen arrived. NHC
Getting back to Dan's earlier comment, although the timing was amazing, I wonder if it really was accidental. In one part of yesterday's ceremony, when Dan finished his last words at the Campanile, the bells went off, as though on cue, so he may be overly modest.

Cheatham: What Mike is referring to is that I read the script at the base of the Campanile, and I had reached the last phrases of the speech at 5:00 sharp, when in fact the Campanile started striking the five o'clock hour, and I was accused of having perfect timing on that.

Someone else remarked that as I was reading the line about how Benjamin Ide Wheeler was from New England "where the winters were cold", there was a gust of wind that came up and chilled us a little bit.

You may not believe this, but it was a coincidence that the Band had just started that last run-through as we walked in the stadium gate, rather than something that we had laid on in advance.

Since we're on the subject of Silent Walk, I just want to briefly establish that the reason we have the Silent Walk is because it was during the years that Mike was a student that we left Room 5 and moved to the Band's present quarters, which is in the basement in the lower levels of what is now called the Golden Bear Center. In Mike's day [it] was called the Dining Commons because it had a cafeteria in it. The Silent Walk was put together specifically to help transfer some of the lore and the feelings of Room 5 to these new, sterile quarters.

At first the Silent Walk was done after the last home game of the season. The concept was that you had marched a full season before you "truly" became an "official" bandsman. Given the time competition between studies and Band rehearsals, many students were dropping out of the Band. By switching to the first home game, the new students would become "hooked" and would not use their studies as an excuse for dropping out of the Band.

The Move Out of Room 5 (Old) Eshleman Hall

Since you participated in this change from Room 5 to the new quarters, what can you tell us about the life and the times of the Cal Band that went along with this transfer from the old, warm, friendly Room 5 to the new, sterile, concrete walls of the new quarters?

Flier: In answer to your neutrally-phrased question, the first thing I recall about the move is that it happened in the middle of the season. Seems to me that it was in the 1960 season, and I think we were already two or three games into it. I have that recollection of it, anyway, that it was in the middle of the season. We were all

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5 This building was later changed to the Cesar Chavez Student Center. KTF 2014
terribly excited because we had been watching this edifice going up for a year or so near Dwinelle Hall, across from Sproul Hall, and you have to remember that when I was a freshman and came to Berkeley, Telegraph Avenue ran all the way up to Sather Gate. And there were nothing but empty stores on the other side, that were, of course, being closed down, to be torn down, in order to build the student union. So, for us, this was an exciting, big event, that a major part of the campus was being changed, one that would affect all student life. Although the cafeteria, it was true, was on top, we didn't call it the cafeteria; it was called the Dining Commons. And our room, I think, was Room 53, Student Union. Golden Bear Center, that's a later name.

But there was a very real issue. On the one hand, we were absolutely stuffed into Room 5 Eshleman, and there wasn't enough room. The locker room, everything, was much too crowded. So the idea of getting into something that really had space was very appealing. But then, on the other hand, we did realize that there was a real warmth and vitality to Room 5, because of its compactness, that would be lost, and therefore the trick was to convert somehow all these bare concrete walls into something meaningful.

Well, one of the first things that we thought about doing, and I think was very successful, was to do something with the rehearsal room, because we wanted to make it feel like it was the Cal Band rehearsal room, and not just a large room. So, we had the idea of putting up all the pictures of all the past bands, all across the walls, to make the Band feel that they were part of this whole tradition, that they could see right in front of them.

There were also all sorts of signs that they began to put on the walls, that made it feel as though it were a locker room, rather than just a big corridor. I know the uniform room was right at the corner, just before we turned in to the "lounge".

[2014:

NHC: Why did you put this into quotes?

MF: I suppose because a lounge seems like a word to describe a nicely appointed comfortable room used to read and relax. A lounge for the Band usually meant old, beat-up furniture and all kinds of junk lying around.]

Another important tradition, and this was a very big problem, was that in the small, compact space of Eshleman Court, we had a real beginning to the Saturday afternoon. How were we going to somehow duplicate that?

[2014:

NHC: Mike, can you clarify this a bit?}
MF: Well, as is clear above, a whole routine had been worked out that carried us from rehearsal, to dressing, to concert in Eshleman Court, to the march up, and the stadium activities. We had to figure out how to deal with the differences. For example, we were farther away from the stadium than before. And where would we put on a pre-game concert?]

What we did, at first, was to use the steps that led up from the lower Sproul Plaza to the upper Sproul Plaza as a concert area. We formed up a the top of the steps, and Mr. Berdahl would stand on this platform that goes across, connecting the two buildings, the bridge, and he would lead us from there.6

From there, after we did our pre-game concert, we then formed and marched through Sather Gate, which also, of course, became a new tradition, because we had never had the opportunity to do that before. And then followed the same route up toward the stadium.

As I recall, I think we always used to stop right near Eshleman Court and play something (I can't remember what) in remembrance of the old place where we had played. And then we continued on up to the stadium.

So it was an exciting time to make real changes, and yet to preserve tradition. And I think we did a pretty good job of it.

Cheatham: The stairway the Mike is talking about is that stairway on the lower level, just West of Ludwig's Fountain. It's the stairway that proceeds from Lower Sproul Plaza up to what's called the Upper Sproul Plaza. The Band would stand on those steps, facing West, and Mr. Berdahl would be standing on the breezeway that formerly connected between the Student Union building itself and the building connected to it called the Dining Commons.

The ROTC Band

You were on campus during the waning days of ROTC, the Reserve Officer's Training Command. Tell us about that other band on campus, the ROTC band.

Flier: In those days, in the late '50s when, by the way, the campus was much more peaceful than it later became in the '60s, all the new male students had to enroll in ROTC. That was required. There may have been some deferments but most of us had to go through it.

By enrolling in the ROTC Band, we could avoid the routine marching drills that the other students had to do.

6 That connecting walkway was torn down a few years ago because it was not earthquake-safe. NHC, September 2003
Well, for those of us who were in the Cal Band, that represented a wonderful opportunity to "keep our lips up". As director of the ROTC band, Mr. Berdahl certainly encouraged us to do that. Mr. Berdahl also used the opportunity to recruit ROTC bandsmen not already in the Cal Band.

I remember that we rehearsed in the men's gym, Room 175, and like any gymnasium, the acoustics were absolutely awful: all kinds of echoes. I also recall, we played almost nothing but marches. But since we had to take ROTC, at least this was the most painless way to do it. I'm not sure now whether we had to do that for one year or two (I think it might have been two) but at any rate, it was definitely part of my early experience at Berkeley.  

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**Rose Bowl 1959**

**Cheatham:** Your freshman year was a singular year in the history of the Cal Band. Tell us about it.

**Flier:** Well, what you have to understand, Dan, is that when I came in, I really had none of the legacy of people like Bill Ellsworth, who had seen the great Pappy Waldorf football teams, teams that had gone to three Rose Bowls. Cal football fortunes took a nosedive in the '50s, and so therefore I didn't really know what to expect. I mean, for me, coming to a game, of course we expected to win, and that was it. So I was absolutely crushed when we lost our first game. And we then, the second week, lost our second game. And I said "My God!" I mean, here I come from a high school that I think had tied for the championship of our league, and what was going on here? The great University of California! How could we have such a bad team?

Well, the third game we won. And then we went out of town and we won again. And then I think the turning point was UCLA; we beat UCLA. People like Ellsworth were absolutely ecstatic, because I guess they hadn't beaten them in years. But for me this was the first time and it seemed "normal." And then we won again, and again, and again. And pretty soon it became obvious that we actually were in contention for the championship. Again, it seemed perfectly normal to me, because I had never known anything else. And we finally came to the Big Game, and it was one of those games (I think it was played at Berkeley) and it was terribly exciting...one of those games that went back and forth, and back and forth. And it was that way 'till the end, to the very last play, when we were ahead and Stanford was threatening to score, and the halfback got the ball, and ran around, and just out of nowhere, a Cal tackle got him on the one yard line, and the gun went off, and we won the game 16 to 15, or something like that.

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7 ROTC was required for Freshmen and Junior male students. They rehearsed only marches because, after all, their mission was play for the regimental reviews. NHC
we knew we were going to the Rose Bowl. It was just spectacular. But again, normal for me. "Well, we're going to the Rose Bowl."

What you also have to take into account was that the Band hadn't been to the Rose Bowl since 1951, and we had all those scrapbooks of the Band...looking back to all those awful days when the Band was ridiculed by comparison to the Ohio State Band, and the news reporters said grudgingly that the Band did a little better against Michigan, but boy did they still have a lot to learn, that sort of thing.8

We all knew what had happened in '54, with the introduction of the uniform, new marching fundamentals, the famous film of The Ohio State Band that Pappy Waldorf brought back to the Band (such an act was replicated in the fall of 1961 by Larry Josephson, who arranged through a friend to have a black-and-white silent film made in the press box of the pregame and halftime shows by the Michigan Band and The Ohio State Band at the football game in Ann Arbor). Something else important for the Band in the early 1950s (1950? 1951?) was the publication in Life magazine of a feature article on the anatomy of a marching band, featuring a story about the vaunted Michigan Band (this article is preserved in the old scrapbooks).9

So finally the Band was getting a chance to redeem itself. And all this legacy was on our shoulders. We realized that this wasn't just a game; it wasn't just a post-season game; this was the game that was going to redeem the Cal Band, the game that was going to bring us into the spotlight of great marching bands across the country. So the show had to be absolutely spectacular. And indeed, the stunt people pooled all their resources to draw from the past. I know Larry Strom was heavily involved, Tony Martinez, and Ellsworth also, and they picked things, some of which had been done at Brussels, or were Brussels-like at any rate, such as the “Steam Heat” dance step, and the very clever idea of the blooming rose. That was just spectacular, I've actually never seen anything like it because it was a stunt first of all, that was dynamic, and secondly one that united the entire student body as celebrating the day.

The Band formed a flower pot, and then up grew the stem, the leaves curled out, and the stem went all the way into the student rooting section, and up went this beautiful, red rose in the card stunt section. And it got tremendous applause.10

But, even before that, I'll never forget the excitement of waiting in the tunnels of the Rose Bowl and remembering all those stories that Ellsworth had told us, about the Ohio State Band, and how the old Cal Band had ridiculed them for being so soldier-like, and we just knew that this was going to be our chance to put us back where we belonged.

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8 See the interview with Art Robson.
9 See interviews with Bill Colescott. The Life magazine article about the Michigan Band is in the 1951 scrapbook.
10 See the film/tape.
And the whistle blew, and we yelled our yell, the drums went out, as I recall, earlier and lined up on the goal line, and then started the cadence and we went charging out. Because we didn't have a North Tunnel there (there were two side tunnels) we had to come out in two lines and filed into our regular Golden Bear Fanfare formation. Chapman Dix, as I recall, came out of the tunnel closest to the press box, strutting out, and led us down the field. And it was a great day. Absolutely a wonderful day for the Cal Band.

At halftime...we had practiced a very difficult stunt, this was the famous Times Square sign. Difficult because we didn't know what we would be doing until the actual moment we went on the field at half time...because what we were going to do was to flash the half time score, Times Square style. Now, of course, we thought that we would certainly be ahead, or at least tied, so the very notion that we were behind was appalling. The notion that we were behind twenty to nothing was even worse. The most tragic part of it all was that we could never bring ourselves to practice the number zero for Cal in the rehearsals. It was the only number we didn't practice for Cal. Of course we had a lot of zeros for Iowa, but not for Cal. So here we had to do twenty to zero, and it started out, it was great, SUI (as Iowa was called then, State University of Iowa), 20 went great, the Cal went fine, and all of a sudden the zero kind of piddled out, it was this sort of blob. Later we could interpret it as follows: "Well, the Cal guys just didn't have their heart in it when they were performed that zero" but actually the zero, finally, by the middle of the formation, finally got into shape.

And we then went on, as I recall, to do "You’re a Grand Old Flag" and the ink well spelling out Kerr. The grand finale with "Steam Heat," got a tremendous ovation.11

You have to remember that this was not only against a Big Ten band, but a Big Ten band that had bought brand new uniforms just for that Rose Bowl. The famous Iowa uniforms that we see now, those were the uniforms that they got then. It turned out to be very important, because the Iowa Band also put on a very good performance. There was no question that we were in the league of the Big Ten, that we had arrived. But what was also very crucial for the Band was that we, of course, picked the Iowa performance apart and began to see things that we could utilize, too. We began to see things that we could improve on. That I think has been one of the strengths of the Cal Band, that it has never been willing to stand still on its past, that it has always allowed for the possibility of expanding and trying new things, and of seeing improvements. So, we got back to Berkeley, not very happy about the game, but very, very, very pleased and satisfied with how well we had done. The papers were raving about us. Everything went very well.

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11 My memory is that we understood the concept so well that we actually pulled it off correctly. Oh well, we will have to consult the tape. NHC 2003
[2014: So much so that during basketball season the following winter, the Straw Hat Band actually had a social get-together with the Stanford Band in Palo Alto after the basketball game and to our own surprise, the Cal Band officers decided to show the film of our Rose Bowl performance.]

The Rose Parade was something ever since we were kids, we had watched on TV, and now we were absolutely involved in it.

I might say that before the Rose Parade, the day before, the Cal Band had been on TV. Ralph Edwards had a surprise for a member of the audience of his Truth or Consequence TV, show who was rooter from Iowa. This blonde woman, a young lady, very attractive, was asked some question which, of course, she couldn’t answer, and so part of her consequence was to have to listen to the Cal Band come onto the stage and play Cal fight songs, surrounding her and yelling in favor of Cal while she, from Iowa, had to just sit there and take it. And it was great. It went very well. Ralph Edwards was terrific, and we had a very great time.12

Then I’ll never forget lining up with the Rose Parade, I believe it formed actually on Orange Grove Blvd., because I remember we had this horrendous turn that we had to make onto Colorado Blvd. I also remember that about five minutes before we were ready to take off, I had to go to the bathroom. And there was this bathroom that all the bandsmen used, and of course there were particularly long lines. And so I waited and waited and waited, and finally got in (it seemed like forever) finally finished, and ran out, and the Band was literally ready to come in and get me, and Mr. Berdahl was furious: “Where have you been! Where have you been! Get in line! We’ve got to get going!” So I jumped in line, and there we started down the street.

Now, we had done something special that we had never done before. Because of the fact we were going to be marching five miles, we couldn’t go at the full pace, as was our custom, the whole way. And so the stunt committee had invented a slow cadence that would allow us to have a tempo that we could essentially rest at, marching something like six steps to five yards, rather than our usual 8-for-5 high step we did march marching down the field.

We used the slower tempo during the parade and went into a transition into the faster tempo and roll-off into a fight song. We would then transition back to the slower pace.

So that had all been practiced, and worked very well. It was very successful. Got a tremendous hand going down Colorado Boulevard, TV cameras, crowds, Cal fans, it was a wonderful day. It was a very sunny day, and we were ecstatic.

Cheatham: Tell us about the turn at Colorado Boulevard.

12 Ralph Edwards was Cal Class of 1935 and instrumental in sending the Band to the Brussels World Fair. See his interview. NHC 2003
Flier: The turn was just a right angle turn, but it’s one that’s a little bit awkward because as you’re coming around, you immediately come into the cameras. So you have to be sure that you’re all lined up. And it was one of these things where, actually, it was a military turn. A column turn, where each line goes up, and each line next to it goes up one man farther and farther, until you have a diagonal, and then the diagonal turns, and then it catches up as it’s turning the corner. I know I haven’t described that very well, but I think you understand what I mean.13

Dan has just refreshed my memory, and now that he has jogged it, he’s absolutely right. What the Band did was to essentially line up sideways, so that we marched down Orange Grove a much wider band than long. But then as soon as we got to Colorado Boulevard, we turned, and suddenly, all in musical beat, we were right. In other words, we were narrower than we were longer and then marched down the boulevard. Yes, we made a dramatic turn there.

Cheatham: I marched in that Rose Parade also. I was what we called a "super-senior". I did not march that Fall. I dropped out to study but I was called back to help swell the ranks for the Rose Bowl. The phrase "super senior" referred to someone who had marched a full four years and was marching for a fifth. Although, in my case I only marched in the Rose Bowl because they had a "hole" that needed to be filled.

Let me add my description of that turn onto Colorado Boulevard. I hope the listeners of this know what a flanking turn is, verses a column turn. If you are ex-military and ever marched around with a rifle on your shoulder, you’ll know what I’m talking about.

The parade actually starts on Orange Grove Avenue. This allows the marching units and the floats to form up out of sight, on Orange Grove, and then march north on Orange Grove until they reach the intersection with Colorado Boulevard where, at this point, they do a column movement and face east, and march the full distance of Colorado Boulevard into the TV cameras and the crowd.

We had such clever people involved in the designing of that whole event that they knew they wanted to make a major impact, particularly to the TV cameras, at that moment. Rather than just doing an ordinary column movement, in which the trombones would have been in the front rank, march north until they hit the intersection, and then, in our usual column turn, which is special to Cal Band as Mike described it a little earlier, just sort of turn the corner and march down the street...no, no, no, we wanted to have a major impact. So we marched up sideways, if you will, as Mike described it, with the trombones on the right file and the Sousaphones on the extreme left file.

13 Mike is describing a style of column turn that I have only seen the Cal Band do. I don't know if it is rare or if it is one we developed ourselves. The current Band does not do any formal street marching these days and I think this turn has been lost to present memory. NHC 2003
We did a classic "By the Right Flank, March!" We were probably playing "Big C" as we approached the intersection, with the trombones on the right file. Then on the proper note, POP, the Band was properly formed and marching down Colorado Boulevard with the trombones forming the front rank.

On the Drum Major’s baton command, we did this flanking movement. BANG!...all in one beat, we suddenly turned so now the trombones were the front rank blasting out that beautiful trombone sound right into the face of the TV cameras. We were so proud of ourselves because it was really something that I have never seen any other band do on TV coverage of that corner.

And then one last comment on the subject of the Time Square sign, which was a phenomenal thing, and I hope all of you get a chance to see it on video tape some day. During the rehearsal, the Drum Major on the tower would call out a random score and we would spontaneously form those numbers. And he would yell out another score, and another score, and that’s how the rehearsal was done. That stunt has never been performed since.

Flier: I actually have something to add to your comment on the Rose Bowl rehearsals. This was an extremely important moment for the Band. I mean, we absolutely had to succeed in the Rose Bowl. And, as I recall, the rehearsals were done actually in a slightly different way. And that is I think that we also wanted to make sure that the Drum Major looked as good as possible. So that in actual fact, I think the rehearsals were largely run by former drum major Larry Strom with Drum Major Chapman Dix mostly on the field. And of course, I remember Bill Ellsworth being up on the tower, too, practicing his announcements. As a matter of fact, I have a picture of those two together on the tower.

At any rate, after the Rose Bowl, I suppose we felt that anything could happen. Now you have to understand that I was extremely gung-ho. I mean, I would say that I was, not immodestly, one of the most gung-ho freshmen of all. Ellsworth thought I was just wonderful. I would yell all the time. I was, in high school, one of the people who would memorize all the state capitals, could recite all the states in alphabetical order, all that sort of stuff. So the first thing I had to do was learn the words to every Cal song immediately. Not only did I do that, but I had to learn the words to every other major college song, so that we could sing those. I grew up in a singing family, so the notion that the Band, when they go on all these trips, would sing all the time, I loved it. And all the old songs they sang were exactly the same ones as I sang growing up. The tunes from the ‘20’s and ‘30’s, and all this, so I already knew the songs. And I had a pretty good voice, and I was not modest about singing, and singing loudly, and so I fit right in with the whole Straw Hat Band repertoire. And I think, even in those early days, I became something of a leader, in terms of starting songs and starting yells, and all that. But Ellsworth and I, in the Straw Hat Band, we started a lot of the yells. We just kept it going.
1959 National Basketball Championship

And that was a magnificent year (1959), because that was the year that the basketball team did so well, and went all the way to the national championship.

As the season progressed, and it became obvious that the team was not just a good team, but potentially a great team, it became absolutely necessary that the Band be there.

[2014]

NHC: Where?

MF: Be present not only at home games, but at all the games.]

I suppose that after about five or six games, it became clear that we were very important, and that our constant chanting, and all that, although it used to drive some of the opponents’ audiences nuts, was necessary: it was important that we be there. And Ellsworth was adamant about that, as well. So, we made it a point of trying to travel to every single game. It was one thing to drive down to L.A. for a game, or drive a car across the bay to Palo Alto, but here we had a very important northwest trip coming up. And on that northwest trip, we had to play, as I recall, Oregon, Oregon State, Washington State, and Idaho, I think, and Washington might have been thrown in there as well. It was a tremendous schedule, over about five or six days. We were still playing Idaho in those days. And so we went on this horrendous journey.14

Memorable moments...this was already in November, or something like that, and I saw my first snowfall ever in Oregon, when we were there. We of course won all the games, at least as I recall. The Band was a tremendous success. And we really developed such a bond, such a camaraderie on that long trip, because this was longer than any trip that the Band had taken, other than Brussels. But I mean in terms of a regular trip.

[2014]

NHC: By bus or car?

MF: By bus.]

And I actually have to report that it was on the way back from the northwest (on that long a trip you are singing anything and everything) and we all of a sudden, as we loved to do, began making fun of Ellsworth, and trying to do all kinds of

14 See interview with Coach Pete Newell.
things, and finally we started with this idea that, as long as we are singing all these great songs, let’s incorporate fossil into various songs. You know, like Red Fossils in the Sunset, Rhapsody in Fossil, etc. It went on and on and on, and then suddenly, I don’t remember who, (it might have been me, it might have been someone else) but we came up with the idea, “Well wait a minute, we already know this song, Billboard March. Why not stick Fossil there, they’re both two syllables.” And that’s when the Fossil Song was started, on that trip back from the northwest. [Sung to the trio of Billboard March.] “I love a Fossil and always will, because a Fossil gives me such a thrill. When I was little, and but a child, a circus Fossil drove me wild.”

Ellsworth was, of course, ecstatic and hysterical, and we then began to use that as a segue into the famous Benjamin Ide Wheeler song, which also incorporated Ellsworth, which I think was thought up much earlier, in the ‘50s, (later than ‘59, I thought it was earlier). As a matter of fact, I recently sent this story in to the North Tunnel Echo, so I hope it gets published.15

So then it was a question of, "Gee! We might really have a chance of going to the national championship." And finally came the time when it was true...we were going to go to the national championship. Now, we had gotten the Band to every single performance. How were we going to do this? How were we going to get a Band back to Kentucky? And, as I recall, (remember, I was a freshman, so I don’t have a very clear notion of what all the details were) but there was another kind of fund-raising effort, and I’m not sure if Ralph Edwards was involved with this, I just don’t remember. But somehow they got enough money to send, I think, about 25 or 30 bandsmen back to Louisville. The University must have contributed a hefty amount itself.

Now the question was, "Who, from among the many, was going to go?" That was a very touchy issue, because you had seniors in the Band who had been there for four years, and, of course, they all felt that they should go. But there were others in the Band, like myself, who had been on every single trip, who had yelled their guts out. Who was going to go? And we really didn’t know until the very last minute, and I was passing back and forth between alternate and full status, and I was in and I was out, and I wasn’t sure, and finally I was told that I was in, and I was just ecstatic.

Again, the details of the trip... First of all, you have to remember that as a freshman from Fresno, California, I had never been in an airplane before, so, as I recall, we drove a bus down to Burbank and we were scheduled on this literally "fly-by-night" airline called Great Lakes Airlines, to get us back to the midwest to Louisville for the game.

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15 See Paul Bostwick's interview for the story of the song about Ellsworth meeting Benjamin Ide Wheeler on Campanile Way. NHC 2003
We got to Burbank by bus, I believe, and something was wrong with the engine of the plane. We couldn’t take off. Whenever we were in that position we would say, “Let’s have a rally.” We had five pompon girls with us, and Oski. Everyone was in love with Lou Vienop: she was this ideal of a California beauty, suntanned, long, streaky blonde hair, and great smile, and all that. Everybody was absolutely enamored of Lou Vienop.

So at any rate, we used to have these impromptu rallies. We had a rally in the middle of the Burbank Airport, the pompon girls and Oski jumping around, and then we were told that, yes, the plane was going to be able to go in about two hours. Two hours came and, “Sorry, there is still engine trouble.” And this went on until probably late into the evening, 9 or 10 o’clock. Finally, we got on the damned plane. It was a prop plane, and we flew, and we flew, and we flew, and we flew, and we finally got to Chicago. I don’t remember whether we had to touch down before we got to Chicago, but we did arrive, and we were supposed to stay overnight in Chicago. Because of all the arrangements, it was very difficult to get hotel space, or we had lost the one we originally had because we were so late (I suspect that was the case), because we had to get a cheap hotel, it was such low budget production. They took us to Cicero, Illinois, which I guess was not far from the airport. And it was a flea bag hotel, but we just had to stay there. And all I can tell you about it is the doors were opening and closing all night. I suspect it was not a very reputable hotel.

We had to get up very early the next morning and make our way out of Chicago, through the state of Indiana, to the game in Louisville. Well, again we had trouble with transportation. I think the buses were a problem. We got out late for some reason, at any rate, driving across Indiana, we were at the point where the game was going to start in about an hour, and we were still in Indianapolis. We had only gotten that far. And so somehow, I don’t know how this happened, our leaders were able to get us a police escort. And so here was this bus, roaring down the main highway in Indiana, with a police escort, all the way to the Louisville Pavilion. We were looking at our watches anxiously. We arrived, I think literally, at about five minutes to eight; the game was supposed to start at eight. And we ran into the pavilion, packed with people.

I remember very specifically the people from West Virginia who had brought these wooden spoons, and they were tapping with these wooden spoons on their chairs, making all this racket, sounding very rickety and very Appalachian—the whole thing. And we immediately got seated as a band, and struck up with “Fight for California” or “Big “C”, I don’t remember, but made all sorts of noise, and at that point were very engaged with the game.

All I can say is the game went spectacularly well. It was a very hard-fought game. That first night we played Cincinnati and its star Oscar Robertson, who was an all-American. We prevailed...as of course we knew we would. Still, it was touch-and-go. And we then had to stay overnight at the Louisville Gymnasium. I
remember that. I also remember that there were birds in the rafters. So all night long we seemed to be dodging these bombs from above. I think, as I recall, we had all kinds of rallies around Louisville that day, promoting Cal and getting ready for the final game.

Then, the greatest honor of all, this was absolutely incredible.

In those days, I have to add, it was not like it is today, where they play over a three-day period, they play the semifinals, they have a day of rest, and then play the finals. In those days, you played the semifinals one night and the finals the very next night.

Anyway, there was the University of California basketball team, away from home, there in Louisville...and they were going to have their last dinner before the game, and because of the tremendously strong bond that had formed between the Band and the basketball team, we were invited to have dinner with the team just before their championship game. We had a wonderful time. We sang Cal songs. We got them all revved up for it.\(^{16}\)

At a later time after the championship game, I bought a program, of course, and I sent it in to the team, and they all signed it. I have a completely signed program, which, by the way, I might add as an aside, I have been planning to donate to the Cal Hall of Fame to put in their case in exchange for one promise: that they take down a picture of a drummer of the Cal Band in 1949, who is on the wall, Kelly James. I think is absolutely outrageous that a man who was in the Cal Band and then went down to UCLA and stole "Big C" and converted it to UCLA’s song should not be honored in the Cal Hall of Fame. So I go on record with that. In fact, I have given them the signed program and they have it displayed in their case.

At any rate, we went into the championship game, against Jerry West and the West Virginia Mountaineers. It was a tremendously hard-fought game. Our strength was defense, and often we kept teams down to fifty points or so. This game went all the way down to the wire. And it was up in the sixties for both teams, back and forth and back and forth, and at the very last 12 seconds to go, Jerry West comes running in and makes a lay-up, and West Virginia goes ahead 70-69. I think Cal took a time-out. There was great emotion and excitement: the Mountaineers were beating their wooden spoons on the chairs, and we were playing Cal songs. At that time Mr. Berdahl came up (and of course all that time we had been conducted by the Student Director - I should say two Student Directors, because Larry Anderson was still directing, but we had had elections already, and although Kim Pratt had been elected Student Director, he resigned and Larry Josephson became student director, and he also directed us at Louisville)... and then Mr. Berdahl came up, and we just swelled with pride. This was right at the end, and we played Fight for Cal, I think, and the timeout ended,

\(^{16}\) Coach Pete Newell describes this dinner in his oral history. NHC
and Cal got the ball, Dale Imhoff inbounded the ball, he ran in, and literally with one second left he dropped the ball in and we won the championship by one point, 71-70, and we were absolutely hysterical.17

**Side 3 of 5**

**Cheatham:** This is side one of the second tape of the interview with Mike Flier. At the end of the last tape, Mike, you were telling us how, at the very last second, we won the national basketball championships.

**Flier:** Well, one of the things I should add...now having brought you up to the apex we'll just go back a moment. You have to consider which four teams were playing in the finals. As I say, the first night it was us against Cincinnati and West Virginia against Louisville. So, in other words, here we were playing in Louisville and the hometown team was there. Well, naturally, most of the stadium was in their favor. But nonetheless, of course, we were part of this first night and we beat Cincinnati.

Now, logically, if you think about it, if Louisville lost their game, who were the fans in Louisville going to root for next? Well, it would be Cincinnati, because Cincinnati is just across the river. Or very close, at any rate, to Louisville. Well, when we beat Cincinnati, this meant that we had all those fans there who didn't really have any home town team to root for anymore. So they were going to have to take sides, there were either going to root for West Virginia, which was after all geographically closer, or they were going to root for us. And we decided that we had to do something to get them to come over to our side.

Well, what better way to capture them than with music? And so we dove into our bag of tricks and pulled out every song we could think of that would pull at the heartstrings of people from Louisville. And we finally decided that we might as well play the national anthem of Kentucky to get them on our side. And so, in the very beginning of the West Virginia game, when we started, we struck up with "My Old Kentucky Home" and the whole place just stood up and sang along. And we knew from then on they were ours!18

I should add that before we actually did this, there had been an announcement over the public address system that prepared them for the fact that we were saluting them, and so proud to be there, so happy to be there and wanted to say thanks to these marvelously generous people of Louisville, Kentucky, for making us feel so much at home, and then we struck in to "My Old Kentucky Home." We won them over, I must say, and all those wooden sticks didn't do a thing for West Virginia. We had the crowd.

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17 See interview with Larry Anderson. NHC 2003
18 See the oral history with Larry Anderson and others. NHC 2003
Running for Drum Major

Being as gung-ho in the Band as I was, I think it was clear, at least in my mind, that I wanted to do more than just be a bandsman, that I wanted to actually participate in some sort of leadership capacity. It was clear to me, also, that the older people in the Band, who, after all, were our guiding spirits, had also spotted me early on and thought that I had potential. As a matter of fact, in my sophomore year I actually moved out of the co-op (because I wasn't very happy there) and moved into an apartment with Larry Strom (who, of course, was one of the leading figures in planning stunts) and Bill Ellsworth. So, I was literally together with probably the vital core at that time, the people who were planning the stunts, figuring out where the Band was going to go. Later on, this group would be joined of course by Bill Colescott, who was just returning from the Army. And, really the four of us then became almost inseparable as a team that was thinking about what the Band was going to be and where it was going to go.

They had learned a lot from all those years, beginning all the way back in '54...the Brussels trip, being in the Rose Bowl against Iowa...remember I talked about the fact that we saw those uniforms and saw the little things that Iowa did fundamentally. I have to say we were truly led in this by Bill Colescott. I mean he was the one who gave all of us a framework within which to excel. I think he had a specific vision about the way that an organization must effectively run (and it all depends on organization). And he instilled within all of us that we had to be better organized than we were. It just wasn't enough, for instance, to make out poop sheets [stunt sheets], to draw little circles anywhere. If we expected the Band to perform in an exact way, then the poop sheets had to be exact. Everything had to be worked out ahead of time, no last-minute changes of the sort we were used to. The idea was to get rid of sloppiness, not to leave anything to chance.\(^\text{19}\)

I decided the way I could be most effective was not really managing, but being in front of the Band and leading them, being Drum Major. And so I ran for Drum Major in the spring of 1961, against Sid Chernenkov. And since politics is an important part of anything in the Cal Band, you had to go around and convince people that you were going to do a good job. And so I literally figured out a campaign of the things I was going to sell the Band, talking about a new era for the Band, that we needed to make all these improvements, we needed to really formalize our fundamentals, to make shows that would take advantage of the Band's unique talents in singing and dancing, all those sorts of things. And I went from house to house, I went from dormitory to dormitory, talking to bandsmen, anybody I could grab. And I won the office, thank goodness, and we then had a committee ready to go.

In actual fact, there were two basic groups that were working. On the one hand, there was this group of what you might call elder statesmen, the people who had

\(^{19}\) See the interviews with Bill Colescott. NHC 2003
been involved with the Band for years, who provided the kind of professional distance and perspective that new people, or even people who had been around two or three years just as bandsmen couldn't possibly have. We needed to tap that experience. And we had the group of elected officers, who provided spirit, enthusiasm, and drive that was also important for the whole process. So we really had a large group of people that gathered together to figure out what would be done at all levels of the Band. Each senior person (I'm talking about people like Colescott, Strom, Bob Herman, Elton Butler) had assigned to them a senior officer to work with. It was very important that there was this close contact between alumni and officers.

The unfortunate perception, on some people's part, that the older people were running things, failed to take into account what we were learning and what we were able to do with the information, with the experience that we were gleaning from these older people. And it ultimately showed up in what we did. We couldn't have done what we did in 1961 without the older people. Conversely, they could not have done what we did without us. We needed each other, and that was very important. It was something that, unfortunately, some people never understood.

**Upgrading the Marching Style**

So what it meant was... when I say planning... everything had to be planned. The first thing we had to do was to standardize the marching fundamentals. There was no way to do that with charts alone. We felt that we had to have something pictorial that the Band could look at. Remember that up until this point, the only real exposure to any sort of training in marching fundamentals was early in the season the freshman would arrive, and the rest of the bandsmen were coming back from their summer vacations. We would just go through a little training period, where you just learn a few marching steps and that was it. Here, everything had to be laid out, every step, what beat you turned on, what beat you stopped on, when you raised your instrument, how you raised your instrument, how each instrument should be held (a trumpet is not held the same way as a saxophone). All that had to be planned out, and that's what I did primarily over the course of the spring and summer of that year. So that when the fall came, we had a complete fundamentals manual. We had a manual called "How to Read a Stunt Sheet," and we also reformed the way the stunt sheets were produced. Earlier, they were just basically lines drawn and little circles drawn in. Here we made an exact, to-scale replica of what the field would look like: every dash represented one pace in eight steps per five yards, so that everything was measured precisely. All the stunts were drawn precisely to scale so that no one would have any excuse for not being in the right place at the right time. And it was instilled upon bandsmen in the very beginning that this precision was what would make it all work.

All the music was incorporated into the poop sheet so that any special codas, entrances, would be marked off, and the music marked together with it so that everybody could see exactly what had to be done. This made a tremendous
difference in that every single show (this was a first for the Cal Band) was charted, with the exception of the Stanford show, before the season started. It was all done. I had this Drum Major's committee of about eight to ten people who just were doing nothing but converting it all to a format that the Band would use.

Joe Dickinson, who had been the Student Director the year before, had gone through all the black books and made all the changes. We also knew that we had to have a better entrance. The old entrance of the Golden Bear Fanfare just wasn't powerful enough. We had seen pictures of The Ohio State Band and their entrance.

That was another thing...when we were making arrangements to make a recording of the Band, the head of the recording company (I have forgotten his name) gave us copies of the records (33 1/3 vinyl disks) he had made of the Ohio State Band, the Purdue Band, I think, and some other bands. Well, I must have listened to that Ohio State record until it didn't have anything left. I mean, every single song I listened to carefully to see what it was about their music that was so attention-getting. They had one fanfare that was just incredible. I played it so loudly in our apartment house that almost every other day the manager was coming down and banging on our door to try to get me to stop playing it. And I decided that we needed a new fanfare. And also, we needed a new song to go down the field to. The arrangements we had just weren't punchy enough.

I listened to all the songs very carefully and decided that the one that had the most punch, that was most adaptable to this new kind of drive, was the “California Indian Song,” which up until that time had not played any particularly important role in the Cal Band repertoire. I talked to Larry Austin, and we got him to rearrange it in kind of an Ohio State style, even with the triple punch in the middle (rah, rah, rah) and I said that was the song we were going to march down the field to.

But what about the fanfare? I talked to the then Assistant Director about the kind of fanfare I wanted. One that would have intervals where the Drum Major could be introduced, and all that, but one that would still have punch. I let him listen to The Ohio State Band record, and he got the idea, and he wrote, and then with me listening and correcting, and we changed and altered it, we finally got it to the point where we were satisfied with it. And I think it was called just the California Fanfare, I don't even remember the name we gave it, but it really set off the beginning and made a great entrance for the Drum Major to come through.

I got a huge baton, a different one from the one that had been used before, that we ordered from a company in England, I think. It was technically called a mace, shiny black with a silver bulb at the top, that was used, and went back to the wonderful drum major uniform that had been designed by Chris Verlumis (subsequently killed in Vietnam). Norm Lobdell had been the Drum Major in 1960, the year after Verlumis, and had his own ideas on drum major's uniforms.
which I thought were rather wretched, so I was only too happy to go back to the very striking black and gold uniform that Chris Verlumis had designed, with a black shako.

And then there was one more problem that we thought about. I'm talking about very general things here. The Pregame was absolutely standardized, and we had a whole standardized Pregame poop sheet. The Script Cal was redesigned to make it broader and more massive. Part of drawing up stunts was improved by a board that we purchased, a metallic, magnetic board, where the whole football field was drawn out in exact proportions, little magnetic men were drawn up with exact proportions, and I actually have a few pictures of it lying in my back yard in Fresno and I've taken the pictures from where you would be in the stadium to see what the actual stunts would look like. And all the stunts in 1961 were designed using that board.

Another problem was that the Band did not get off the field quickly enough. There was no way for the Band to really move quickly. Even the fast step was not quick enough. And I'd seen the Iowa Band, and they had a fast step on the field, and I thought why couldn't we incorporate something like that? But we didn't have anything to move to it. So I got together with a drummer, Dave Mandel, and I said "Look, I'm terrible about writing down music, but if I repeated to you a drum beat, would you be able to write it down and reproduce it, and see how it goes?" He said "Sure." So I had in my mind what I wanted, and I literally sat there next to him and I said "All right, I want something like this [Flier sings a cadence]. And he wrote it all down, and he said, "Well, some of this is sort of crazy, it's very syncopated, but all right." At any rate, that's how that fast cadence was born, and we used it in the very first game, and it was a tremendous success. It's been used ever since. Yes, it's the same one.

**New Uniform Design**

Okay, certainly an extremely important component of what we were trying to do was the uniform. The uniform had served the Band very well to get it more into this Big Ten mold. But we learned something from the Iowa Band: the importance of contrast on the field, of a white front and a contrasting back. They had a very orange-yellow back, which they utilized to great effect. And we knew that when we made a new uniform, we had to keep that in mind. Bill Colescott was extremely important here in guiding us away from thinking traditionally.

That was interesting: when we thought of the kind of uniforms we might want, well we were thinking in very traditional terms. It would just be some sort of white front. We knew we wanted cross-belts, maybe we would just leave the cross-belts and get a different colored cape, or something. But he had a very futuristic conception. He wanted the Band first of all to accent its masculinity. This is very important. I appreciate the Band now, but with women in the Band now it doesn't convey the same image. It's a different image. But, in those days, it
was a very masculine image, and so the idea was to create a uniform that emphasized the masculine build. And therefore, what ultimately became the front of the uniform, the vest, was tapered down so that it accented the sort of "V" shape of the male torso. And what was also important (the rest of us assumed the uniform would have a big, flat overlay) was that Bill had in mind a very futuristic notion that the vest ought to stick out, to be forward-looking, to be futuristic. But how would we accomplish this? Finally, we came up with the idea of an insert, of a plastic insert that would hold the vest out, that would actually preserve this effect. The gold cape, of course, would be the contrast. So that it certainly grew out of the old uniform designed in '54, but yet had a very different look and feel to it.

NHC: Didn't you guys make mockup uniforms and view them and take photographs of them from the stands?

MF: Yes, we did. I’m sure I have pictures of some of those uniforms. I can look for them and send them to you.20

The 1961 Season

Flier: Now with the new uniforms in mind, I’ll turn to the beginning of the 1961 season.

We were ready to start this tremendous year and we had a wonderful opportunity. That was that the second game of the year was going to be played in Iowa City against the Iowa Hawkeyes, the very school we had played in the Rose Bowl in 1959.

I mean, how could we top what we were doing other than having an actual Cal Band performance right in the middle of Big Ten territory?21

Would it be possible? In those days, the University had a more flexible budget. Not only were they able to put aside money for brand new uniforms, which must have run $30,000, but they were also willing to fund a trip all the way back to Iowa for the Cal Band. Forrest Tregea was right in the middle of that decision. He was a great Band supporter.22

So we planned a show for Iowa, the second game of the year. Although it was very early in the season, we wanted to do something spectacular. Before

20 See Appendix 3A and Appendix 3B
21 As far as I know, this is the only time the Band has performed at a football game in Big-10 territory. This then makes the game film and the derived videotape very valuable. NHC 2003
22 He later became an Honorary Life Member of the Cal Band. I think he was Executive Director of the ASUC at that time. See his oral history. NHC
embarking on that, we had to produce the first show (Texas). We intended to introduce the new uniforms.\textsuperscript{23}

We planned this magnificent entrance, the first flying wedge as we now know it. We had a great idea for introducing the uniform...one that was going to show off the difference between the white front and the bright gold back.

So comes the day of the game and we're all excited. We march up to the stadium as usual...we come bursting out of North Tunnel...and of course from my drum major's perspective, everything is wonderful, everything's going well.

I believe it was Lloyd Amborn at trombone who was leading the first line out to form the wedge. Well...major, major error on the Band's part: we never practiced in Memorial Stadium, because we had our own rehearsal field, Edward's Track Stadium, that gave us the full football field length. Up until then we'd always practiced on rehearsal fields that were maybe only fifty, sixty yards long, we never had full-length.

Edward's Track Stadium became our rehearsal field that year, and we had it all to ourselves. We could make everything exact, just the way it would be the day of the game. For that reason, we never practiced at Memorial Stadium...we didn't have to.

What Lloyd didn't know...what we didn't realize...was that that year, for some reason, the groundskeepers decided to paint the goal lines in the back of the end zone gold instead of white. So Lloyd was looking for a white line, thinking that the gold was something else, and he marched right by it. It took him ten yards off of where he should have been, so that the whole right side of the wedge was ten yards in advance of the other side. The whole wedge was completely malformed.\textsuperscript{24} And then, of course, the next stunt, which was to show off the new uniform, led from that.

So here you saw this pack of bandsmen, some lines packed all together, others straggling: it was a terribly inauspicious beginning to what was supposed to be a much more precise season. Announcer Bill Ellsworth had this patter going back and forth with the Band (\textit{Sprechstimme}).

\textit{[2014: This is when the announcer actually speaks over the music and develops an interactive “conversation” between the Band and the announcer.]} It was very much a Music Man kind of thing, showing your stuff. \textit{[2014: Think here of the famous patter of Harold Hill singing “You Got Trouble” (right here in River City, with a capital T that rhymes with P that stands for pool).]} Bill would yell a command and the Band would yell back. \textit{[2014: The announcer was telling the Band to march in different directions in order to show off the nice contrasts of the}

\textsuperscript{23} It was the second generation of the 1954 uniform. NHC 2003

\textsuperscript{24} See photo on page 40 of the Cal Band centennial book, \textit{The Pride of California}. NHC
new uniform.] The stunt was OK, but we were just devastated [2014: because of the misalignment. What could have been a great introduction to the uniform turned out to be a muddle.]

We survived that first performance and then had a tremendous show planned for the Iowa game.

**Iowa Game 1961**

We flew back to Iowa, and had a tour of the state. I remember giving concerts in Ames (Iowa State University) and on the Capitol steps in Des Moines with the governor. Then we went on to Iowa City, where we rehearsed in a pavilion off to the side of the stadium.

It was a rather overcast day. The stadium there was packed and the Iowa Band, ever a Big Ten band, put on a very good Pregame performance. The Cal Band entered, and we did our new fanfare, marched down the field (this time the wedge formed correctly) and got a tremendous ovation.

We formed the letters IOWA with huge I and A and smaller o and w and then played what I found out later was their favorite song. You see, in the Rose Bowl against them in 1959 we had focused on the wrong song. They had two major songs: “Roll on Iowa,” which was a later song written by Meredith Wilson, and “On Iowa,” their favorite, older song. That's the one they play after every touchdown.

This time we did it correctly. When we formed the IowA formation, we played “On Iowa” and did the kind of turns the Iowa Band was famous for, as well. The whole stadium stood up applauding, singing along. They were having a great time. We had obviously really wowed them with that Pregame. In fact, Fred Ebbs, the director, said “It's rare that the audience ever reacts to another band that way.”

For halftime we had some special things planned. As I recall, we did “It's Going to be a Great Day” in four fronts going down the field. Then we formed a steamboat that blew steam out the stack and rocked up and down to the tune of “Robert E. Lee.”

[2014:

**NHC:** Is this the photo on page 40 of the history book?

**MF:** I don’t have access to the book right now, but it is probably the one. If it’s a steamboat with round paddlewheels on the side and smokestacks, then it’s the right picture.]
Next, we used the old Iowa train locomotive formation from the Rose Bowl... their choo choo train they did at the Rose Bowl... but we turned it backwards and we did Chattanooga Choo Choo to it. We had our train going with the wheels turning and the whole train chugging along and moving down field.25 We were bringing their stunt back to them and showing them we could do it better, because we had steam coming out of the smokestack and the wheels, and we did a dance step as the train moved, which they hadn’t done. We really brought down the house.

Then we did a very clever musical arrangement, together with a stunt. It was a reenactment of the Civil War. The music was arranged by Larry Austin, with the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” fighting in musical battle against “Dixie.”

For the grand finale, we did "Battle Hymn of the Republic", spreading out over the entire field of Iowa Stadium.2627

I have to tell you, that that stadium absolutely shook. We used a Mormon Tabernacle Choir type of arrangement. The stadium absolutely shook. Ebbs said later that he'd never seen a reaction like that from the Iowa crowd toward any band other than the Michigan Band. So we were, in seventh heaven.

I won't talk about the football game; that was the usual story, but the Band was triumphant. No question. If, for the sake of argument, we tied Iowa in the battle of the Bands in the Rose Bowl in 1959 (no small feat, given what had transpired a decade earlier against the Ohio State and Michigan bands), we certainly beat the Iowa Band on their home territory on that overcast fall day in 1961. It was a great day for the Cal Band.

[2003:

NHC: I believe this show is on tape.

2014:

MF: Yes, it is.]

[See Appendix 2: Excerpt from Forrest Tregea Oral History for more]

Cheatham: Mike, that's an absolutely fascinating story. I was sitting here, and you probably noticed that my face was just glued with attention as I was hearing this. I've heard bits and pieces but this was the most articulate exposition of this story. It is an extremely important contribution to this history effort of ours and I really want to

25 Very difficult to perform. NHC 2003
26 This may have been the first "Full-field Spread". NHC 2003
27 All three of these tunes are on the 33 1/3 RPM "Long Play Micro groove" vinyl record titled "The University of California Cal Marching Band". It was produced by Fidelity Sound Recordings, P.O. Box 802, Redwood City, California. It is the one with the two bass drum players on the cover.
thank you for telling it. This was an extremely significant time in the history of the Cal Band but there's more to come yet.

**Spring Sing/Russian Army Chorus and the Origin of the Cal Band Spring Show**

**Flier:** As I mentioned earlier, all of the shows, with the exception of Stanford, had been planned before the season even started. In addition to everything we had to do to plan the show each week, we had to think about what we were going to do for the Stanford game. We had, as I recall, experience in the previous spring of putting on the Spring Revue. I believe it started in the spring of '61.28

The reason why that was so important was that we felt that there were whole aspects of the talent in the Band that were not being utilized. How to find an outlet for that? How to actually make it work?

As I said, I come from a musical family, and since I had been elected Drum Major, it became possible for me to actually do something important in this regard. The Spring Sing, which was an annual student event at Berkeley, seemed a likely place to do it. We did not want to enter the Cal Band as one of the competitive groups. That is, we wanted to stand apart from the competition, so to speak. The contest should be between the fraternities and sororities, and living groups, and all that. But we wanted, nonetheless, to have our opportunity to perform. And therefore, because of the fact that I was a major in Slavic languages and literatures, and knew Russian... We knew that things Russian very often evoked very strong, masculine images in song and music. Russian music would be an appropriate vehicle to present another side of the Cal Band.

And so our idea was to come on as a surprise...providing a last act while all the judging was being done, before they made the final awards announcements. We would serve as the interlude.

So, what I did was to listen to tapes of the Soviet Army Chorus and found two songs which seemed appropriate: "Soldiers' Chorus," and "Song of Youth." I carefully transcribed all the words.

I immediately ran to my Russian teacher to make sure everything was correct. Once I had confirmed the text, I wrote all the words out phonetically, lined up with the music for the Band. Then we had rehearsals where we had to go over each syllable, step by step, singing (Mr. Berdahl was there, of course) until the Band got the music and all the words together.

Then the next idea was, we weren't just going to have a singing chorus, we were also going to have a number that could feature dancing. And what kind of dancing? Russian dancing! Trepak, with those high kicks and turns, and all that.

28 Mike referring to what later became known as the Cal Band Spring Show. NHC
sort of thing. We had rehearsals that trained small subgroups to do various steps. I remember I was one of the ones that did the very famous kicks where you squat down with your knees out and kick each leg out in turn, back and forth.

Finally the night of the Spring Sing arrived. No one knew in advance what was coming. What will the Cal Band do, just play some music? And the curtain opens, and there we are as a huge Russian chorus. We had made black, billowing pants, white blousy shirts over them, and wore these black hats that looked like fur. We absolutely looked like a Russian chorus (almost) with bright blue and gold sashes around us. We sang this very strong Soldiers' Chorus, and I think the people were absolutely shocked: “Za Dunaem, za Dunaem, za Dunaem za rekoj…” (Beyond the Danube, beyond the Danube, beyond the Danube, beyond the river…. ) This is the Cal Band? They had never seen us like this before. Then when we sang "V’iotics dymka zolotaia pridorozhnaia…” (A golden roadside haze twines upward…) The fast music provides an exciting background for dancers who come out flying. It was a tremendous night. Absolutely brought down the house.

This was not the Greek Theater, this was some stage in Berkeley. It was some auditorium. I can't recall where, where exactly the Spring Sing was held. Anyway, we absolutely brought down the house. Well, what this meant, even more important than that particular performance was that we now had a separate dimension revealed for the Cal Band. Was there some way we could bring this kind of excitement, and this talent to the football field? The vehicle for it was the Stanford show.

Camelot Show for the Big Game 1961

We decided that, since this was the '60s, this was the age of John Kennedy—we would put on Camelot. And I, the Drum Major, would be King Arthur, and we had Sir Lancelot, and of course we had to make the supreme sacrifice for us in those days, (we toyed with the idea and rejected it of having a bandsman dress up like Guinevere) so we had to get a real Guinevere, that is, a real woman. And so one of the bandsmen (Dave Mandel) had a girlfriend named Tina Nooitgedaght, and she became our Guinevere.29

Flier: At any rate, you have to understand what a major undertaking this was. This was not just the Band coming on the field and going into formation, and singing. What we were literally going to do was to put on excerpts from the musical play Camelot. We were going to build Camelot, that is, there were turret, and walls, and drawbridges that had to be built. You can imagine the props problem. We had a carriage that brought Guinevere onto the field, we had knights jousting, wearing horses. I was dressed in this long robe, royal robe with a crown on my head.

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29 See the photo on page 115 of the Cal Band history book, The Pride of California.
Guinevere, of course, had a medieval outfit on. So there was tremendous planning involved.

This was beyond any one person to even conceive of, let alone put together. Therefore, it’s very important at this point that I document once again the unseen, or perhaps unknown role of Bill Colescott in being, as we jested, as we called him, the “coordinator of coordinators.” I told you that we had one elder bandsman for each officer, they were called coordinators. And Bill was called the coordinator of coordinators. He was the one who organized every aspect of the Camelot extravaganza.

Who was going to be in charge of props? I was, of course, going to handle the stunt aspect of it. I drew up all the stunt sheets, figured out where the formations were going to go, and I ran the rehearsals, but the minutest little details were coordinated by Bill.30

Furthermore, another new idea was how were you going to have the Band sing and play at the same time? They obviously can’t do both. Either you have to have half the Band play and half the Band sing, and then you wouldn’t get volume. Or you have to think of something else. We came up with the idea of tape recording the Band singing. So, if I’m not mistaken, for the first time the Band, on tape, sang along with itself while playing on the field.

It was an absolutely fabulous idea for a show; I don’t think I’ve ever seen anything like it. No other band had done it, to our knowledge, and what better place to try it out than the Big Game? The Band had taped all the singing. Rehearsals were finally all done (and there were lots of rehearsals). I started missing classes, which I hadn’t had to do before because everything had been planned in advance. I was beginning to get very tense and nervous. A number of the officers were getting very uptight about how much time they were spending on this. But we finally got to the point where we were close to the Big Game itself.

Well, as luck would have it (or wouldn’t have it) it poured that day. So imagine, we have to schlep all this stuff down to Stanford, driving rain, hoping that it would all stay together. It was a hard enough show to put on in the sunshine, let alone in the rain. We start the Pregame. Now it’s always something of a trauma entering Stanford Stadium. You never know what kind of pranks are going to be pulled, or whatever. But at any rate, we got in safely. Got onto the field, and we began with what Larry Austin had termed a "Green Grabber." Since a freshman, Tom Green, who was on my stunt committee, had charted it, we had begun to call these openers "Green Grabbers." But at any rate, the grabber that day was “Great Day.” And so there was Bill Ellsworth, saying from the press box, rain pouring down, “What a great day for the Big Game!” And the audience just started hooting and hollering. It was just horrendous. And so they’re all sitting there with

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30 This was in the days before the shows were charted by computer. NHC
their umbrellas, the Band is marching down the field to "Great Day." I mean, they
did a good job, but it was just miserable weather. We finally got through the
Pregame, and then waited for the halftime.

All these elaborate props, everything you can imagine going on, and the show
started. Again, driving rain. We’re halfway through, and it’s going okay, the
music is coming across, and I think people are enjoying it somewhat. Larry
Josephson is in charge of the tapes. Each song on the tape was spliced to the next
by paper tape connectors. Who could have predicted that when the rain began to
fall, the paper began to disintegrate? We had had no experience with this kind of
technology earlier and, unfortunately, had to learn the hard way. Suddenly, the
tape just stopped. And there we were, Mr. Berdahl, his arms up: we’re all ready,
and nothing can move, because we can’t move until the song starts. And there’s
Larry Josephson madly trying to get it going, and Bill Colescott absolutely
driving him crazy, “How could you do this? How could you do this? Why didn’t
you think of this?” At any rate, after what seemed like ages (it was actually about
thirty seconds), they finally got the tape started again. And it went on and we
finished.

But the impact of the show was lost; you just couldn’t do it in all that rain. It was
just too difficult. It was a noble experiment, and, of course, it influenced future
performances. We were still proud, but somehow we had the wind taken out of
our sails before we really got to do what we wanted. But this kind of show was
what then became the influence for later productions, like Porgy and Bess, which
combined singing and playing on the field with pre-taped singing. Ironically, the
very beginning of the season (Texas game) and the very end of the season
(Stanford) were marked with major problems, but they couldn’t detract from the
overall success of the year. The innovation, the precision, the musicianship in the
Band all reached new heights that year.

Theory of Stunt Design

I have a little to talk about the arrangement of stunts. It was extremely important
that we could account for every single beat, from the moment the Cal Band
stepped on the field until they left the field. This meant that we had to have a
precise sense of what the music was going to be, how long it would take, what the
movements were going to be that were coordinated with it. What this meant was
several trips up to Davis. I remember driving up there a few times to work with
Larry Austin on the arrangements. I’d say, “Would you look, we’re going to be
doing this and this and this, over this stretch of music. Now what can you do to
make it all work? Can we make it? Can you arrange it so it will do this? Can you
repeat this part so it will fit better what we’re trying to do?”

That was very important. Now as I said, I wasn’t all that great at writing down the
music, but I could hum a lot. And I have a sense of harmony, so that there were
some cases where I already had a harmonic part in my mind that I thought had to
be included somehow in the arrangement. So I would work on the piano, and get it done beforehand, and sort of play it, and he was such a fabulous musician, he could pick it up right away and incorporate it in. So that, for instance, in my head I wrote the tuba part for the new version of California Indian Song, which was then incorporated. I don’t know why, I just had it in my head. But I want to emphasize the importance of the precision that we had in putting together music and stunts. This is something that I think was ultimately influenced by two people: Jim Berdahl, who always insisted that the music had to be good, had to be precise, and Bill Colescott, who had this vision of the overall performance, and how precise and organized everything had to be.

It was unfortunate (and I hadn’t recalled it, actually, until Bill called me and reminded me of it the other day) that he only got to march in one game in 1961. Because at that point, some of the students (again, I think, overreacting or misreading his role in the Band at that time) felt that he could not be excused. There was something that he had to go do, some academic obligation, some class, or perhaps a graduate oral exam, I don’t know. He was not excused to march in the game. And if he left, it meant that he was out of the Band. And he had no choice. He had to fulfill his obligation in his department and therefore couldn’t make a certain rehearsal. So he had to leave the Band.

So at that point, he was connected with the Band in an unofficial way, but still helping behind the scenes everywhere. Without him, Camelot would never have happened. But it is because of the fact that Bill Colescott played the alto sax that the point of the wedge is an alto sax, and has always been. And he was the one who established the marching style of the point of the wedge, that over-exaggerated high-step, the saxophone up in the air, is now a tradition and a trademark, but he’s the one who originated it.

In terms of the actual rehearsals, again everything was planned. I met with my stunt coordinators early on. You always went over the entire show, every single step of the way, so that any questions that had to be answered could be answered. In other words, it was important for the Drum Major to train the trainers how to teach. And I guess, since I had always planned on being a teacher, I have that instinct in me.

**Cal Band Scrapbooks**

**Cheatham:** Your influence on the Band extended even beyond the football field. As you know, we’ve just completed a book on the hundred-year history of the Cal Band, which required an awful lot of research and accumulation of material, and so forth. In the process we ransacked the archives of the University, the archives of the Band, and so forth. In the course of this research, we came across three scrapbooks on the earliest most parts of the Cal Band’s history. Had it not been

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31 There have since been tenor saxophone players who have taken this spot, and it is seen as a competition between the two sections every year. It does, however, more often go to an alto saxophone player. KTF 2014
for your efforts in this area, those scrapbooks may not have been there for us to use.

Flier:

One of the legacies of Room 5 Eshleman was the wonderful collection of scrapbooks that existed. You could go in, if you had any spare time between classes, and look over the past years of the Band and get a sense of what had happened. It turned out that there was one very old scrapbook that had everything in it up until 1953. With the major overhaul in 1954, they started having yearly scrapbooks from then on. The old scrapbook was simply falling apart, and we were just afraid of things getting lost. This was after I had been Drum Major. It was probably 1963, 1964, 1965, something like that, I don’t remember the exact year. But I finally decided that it would be important to put all that in order so that it could be preserved. And not only that, but I was afraid the way a couple of the scrapbooks had been, well pilfered is too strong a word, but I mean there were things missing from some of them already, and I think a number of us were worried that they were going to continue to deteriorate if we didn’t do something about it. So the idea was to put everything in order, and then put the scrapbooks into the Bancroft Library so that they would be protected.

I’ll never forget, it was a large scrapbook, in terms of length and width, with a heavy cover. It was made out of heavy, black construction paper, in some cases with very heavy glue. The items glued into it would not peel right off. I have vivid memories of taking the old scrapbook home, filling my bathtub up with hot water, and just laying each page in, one at a time, and having all the articles float up, and then putting them all out on towels, that were spread all over the bathroom and into the hall, to dry. I assumed that the new scrapbook would not last forever either, and therefore, rather than affixing the articles directly to the page, I put them on some construction paper backing, and affixed that to the page. Therefore, if necessary in the future, one could easily lift up the old construction paper and put it into another scrapbook.

But then, as I began to conceive of how this new scrapbook might look, I began to see that it could not remain a single book. It would turn out to be three, I think, because there was all sorts of information that wasn’t available in the original scrapbook, that would be useful to add in order to help any reader really understand what was going on. The old scrapbook itself had not been really complete. I wanted to do some research (I guess this sort of comes with the animal—I’m sort of a born researcher).

So I went to the University Archives, and I began digging through all the old Daily Cal’s, going all the way back to the beginning, and also the old annuals, the Blue and Gold, and was able to piece together a better conception of the way the Band started. I thought it would be useful for the Band to know what games the Band, in those days, had attended, so I tried to make out the football schedules for every year, and I started each year with that. And then got it all the way up to the
late ‘40s, early ‘50s, and there I really decided to go all out, because the Rose Bowls were so important.

You know, I probably haven’t looked at those books for close to thirty years, so I would probably be surprised to see what’s in there by now. But I do remember getting different color construction paper to match the colors of the opposing teams, Northwestern and Ohio State, I remember I got carmine and gray, and Michigan’s maize and blue, and put together the whole story of those Rose Bowls. And especially the Ohio State game and all those awful articles about the Band, because they had meant so much to us. I then brought the narrative all the way up to 1953.

It was truly a labor of love. And I can only say that the current history group that has produced this magnificent book on the Cal Band has far surpassed anything that I have done. It’s a real achievement, a real accomplishment, and presents the history in a way that anyone, whether they know anything about the Band or not, whether they participated in it or not, can appreciate and value. It’s a magnificent job, and I want to commend them for their efforts.

I was able to present the three scrapbooks to the Band at the annual banquet, I think it was in 1965 or ’66, something like this. No, it was later, you know, I think it actually 1967 or 68. Unbeknownst to me, they had made a long scroll which thanked me for all the work that I had done in preparing them, I still have that to this day, commending me for producing them. But as I say, for me it was a labor of love.

Cheatham: Well, on behalf of my fellow history committee members, I want to express our joint thanks and appreciation for all the work that you did, because it saved us so much work, and it became such an important part of the book, and I would say to anybody reading this transcription that the early portion, about one quarter of the book, comes almost entirely from the work that you did. And so, my personal and our joint thanks to you, Mike.

Let’s get back for a moment to some of the special people that the Cal Band has known.

Prominent Band Personalities

Flier: As I mentioned, when I came in as a freshman and became so gung-ho right away, I did attract the attention of the older people in the Band, who saw in me a potential officer, and among them were Bill Ellsworth, and Tony Martinez, who by that time was already a high school Spanish teacher, but still spent a lot of time

32 He is referring to the book The Pride of California: A Cal Band Centennial Celebration. NHC
33 Ed. the scrapbooks say 1968, I think. NHC
around the Band. He had been a drum major and still played an active role in stunts.  

In my sophomore year, as I say, I moved to an apartment, and my roommates were Larry Strom and Bill Ellsworth. Larry and I had the bedroom, and Bill was out in a folding bed in the living room.

For someone so filled with spirit and energy and drive for the University, Bill was in actual fact a loner. We didn’t see him very much. First of all, he used to work in Stephens Union, in the bookstore. And he had this hated boss, Clyde Evans. Bill used to just rant and rave about Clyde Evans. He didn’t understand Ellsworth’s infatuation with the spirit of the Band, and all that. Ellsworth used to go on and on and on about this. And someone in the Band... I don’t know what it was, I don’t know who it was...but someone in the Band... because Ellsworth complained about Evans all the time...somebody from the Band sneaked in and poured India ink into one of Clyde Evans rubber tree plants, and all of a sudden over the course of a week or so, the rubber plants began to develop these black veins and finally died. And Ellsworth was ecstatic. Absolutely ecstatic.

But as I say, he wasn’t really around the apartment much. He spent time either working or walking around. He hardly ever ate dinner with us. He became rather notorious for not taking his shirts to the laundry. His solution for dirty shirts was to throw them into a closet and buy a new shirt. And so, over the course of time, there was this tremendous mound of laundry that was building up in his closet. And I think finally, one day, it was later, some time when I was Drum Major, a whole group of us bandsmen just invaded the apartment, gathered all the dirty shirts, and took them down to a laundry. I can’t even imagine what the bill was. Bill was somewhat embarrassed, but he appreciated the gesture.

I have never, ever met anyone so devoted to an ideal of quality and youth and spirit and love as Bill. Bill was absolutely enamored of the University of California. I mean, in a certain sense, the University was his life, was his partner, his soul-mate. And I think that he always felt himself as its son, and actually became a mascot of the University. He just became a fixture, as well-known around campus as the Campanile and Sather Gate. And there are so many ways that he affected the spirit of the University. Not only in terms of sitting in the middle of the Band and screaming and yelling, all the while puffing on a cigarette. Whenever the Band played a song, he would take his hat off in this very kind of jerky way, and wave it rhythmically back and forth, keeping time with the music, going bonkers when Cal scored.

Because he had lived through all those Pappy Waldorf years, he knew what a great football team was, and he was always very excited. No matter how bleak

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34 Tony was Drum Major in 1951. He marched in all three of the Pappy Waldorf Rose Bowls and was instrumental in introducing the new marching style to the Cal Band. NHC
35 See the interview with Forrest Tregeara. NHC
anything looked, when everybody else was willing to give up, when people wanted to walk out of the stadium, or whatever, Bill would never, ever do that. He considered it absolute sacrilege. You had to stay till the bitter end, you had to support the University always, in good times or bad. He was somebody who always kept us on that track. He always made us remember when we were sometimes getting so involved with the details, so involved in all the little things that we sometimes lost track of the overall reason why we were there. He absolutely loved the Band, and its spirit, and the professionalism that it was trying to achieve, always within the context of a student organization. He was absolutely adamant about that. The idea of ever bringing in a professional staff to ensure that kind of continuity, that other bands had, he would have been absolutely opposed to.

That’s why he thought it so important to have this core of older bandsmen who worked together with the new ones, that it was people who had been through it, bringing others into it, and then they, in turn, would pass it on. So the Band was then always within the student tradition. Now some students didn’t understand it, and they thought that these old guys were just trying to run things and didn’t take them into account at all. In fact there’s a very funny song that was developed in 1961, when a number of things had happened, and they finally got rid of some of the older people who they decided were interfering. Actually, at that point, the performance of the Band began to slip. It went something like this, to the tune of "Great Day":

“Raise you’re hands and shout,  
we kicked Bill Colescott out,  
it’s gonna be a great day.  
Now that we’re unhexed,  
Josephson will be next,  
it’s gonna be a great day.  
Maybe we’ll go higher,  
get rid of Flier, and Larry Strom we’ll fire,  
California Band’s back in the students’ hands,  
it’s gonna be a great day.  
(Marty Parker too!”)

Marty Parker was a protégé of Strom’s at that time.

Well, actually it all happened, I mean, Bill Colescott left, Larry Josephson left, Larry Strom was fired, Marty Parker, of course, graduated and went on, but ultimately those very people got back involved with the Band after this interval. It was precisely in those years, when Lloyd Amborn became Drum Major, that he brought all of those older bandsmen back into it, because he realized (Lloyd Amborn worked under me) the value of the collective experience. And we all, many of us, became part of the camera crew. Bill Colescott and I were on the
camera crew, along with other like Alden Spafford, he’s another one. So it was very important that the continuity be kept.\textsuperscript{36}

I’m very pleased, Dan, as a matter of fact, that at last night’s reunion (and I’ve been thinking about this, by the way, back in Cambridge) that I hoped somebody was going to say something about the people who aren’t there now, who would have surely been with us at the thirty-fifth reunion, and of course, first and foremost, Bill Ellsworth. I really enjoyed the Bill Ellsworth eulogy, because it brought back so many good memories of the songs and his personality, the tap dancing, the saxophone playing. Bill was a corny, vaudevillian from the word go, and he loved that kind of stuff. All of the shrugging and reluctance aside, he loved to be out there tap dancing, so that I was glad that you brought all that in. And I was also, as always, very moved by, I believe it was, the eulogy Forrest Tregea wrote about Bill, when he passed away. And he was absolutely right, that if there were any chance that anything would be organized in heaven, Bill would be involved in it, and he would begin to be immortalized there as he had been here.

The reunion last night was... first of all... it was the first for me... because I was not in the Brussels Band. I was in the Rose Bowl Band. We heard all about Brussels, but, of course, we were never invited to the previous reunions. So I was very happy finally that the bandsmen who came in later, but who participated vicariously in Brussels, and then went to the Rose Bowl and Louisville, got a chance to participate. It was wonderful, it was wonderful seeing these faces, some of which I hadn’t seen in 35 years. It brought back a flood of memories of happy times, of voices, band trips, rowdiness. The same guys who made all the wisecracks were still there, with great ones, and I just roared with laughter.

And in terms of the presentations, I think all of you did a good job of recapturing the sense of those times by reading excerpts from actual letters that had been written, statements that had been made, excerpts from television programs that the Band had been on, etc. Some of the personages who had written the letters were there to reread them, like Ralph Edwards and Jim Berdahl, and by doing that, it really made the whole event come alive for all of us again. We were just as excited sitting around the table, waiting for the buses to pull around the corner of Wheeler Hall as the bandsmen who were standing there being taped. It was a wonderful, wonderful experience.

And when I saw the video of the Rose Bowl again (and I think it had been about thirty years since I had seen it) I was so proud of what we had achieved that day. Just to go against a Big Ten band, in the Rose Bowl, in front of all those thousands of people, in front of a national TV audience, and perform the way we did, with that brilliant show, it really choked me up. It was wonderful.

One of the other important elder statesmen of the Band was Tony Martinez. He was, as I said, a former Drum Major. He was mostly important as somebody who

\textsuperscript{36} See interview with Lloyd Amborn. NHC
would sit around and talk about ideas for stunts. And he generated lots of ideas, some good, some bad. In other words, he was a good person to play ideas off of, and have still some of his own. He just represented a kind of experience that was rare. Ellsworth was also this way. So that Tony was very supportive. Tony understood the problems that Drum Majors have, especially with Senior Managers, and was very supportive about the Drum Major being able to maintain his position and his authority, when it came time to doing things on the field. And I really do miss him. I mean whenever I used to come to the Bay Area, I always used to get a chance to see him. I’m so sorry that he’s not with us, as is the case with Ellsworth. But these are two people whom I’ll never forget, ever.

Side 5 of 5

Miscellaneous Anecdotes

Cheatham: At the very beginning of this interview you explained to us an interaction you had with your parents, relative to your participation with the Band. In light of subsequent events, take a few moments to share with us the outcome.

Flier: Dan, this was inextricably involved with my parent’s desire, like those of any good Jewish boy, that I become either a doctor, a dentist, or a lawyer. And therefore, I would have to say that over the course of four years my major probably changed at least eight times. When I got back to Berkeley, it would be in some field of humanities, like Slavic languages and literatures. Then I would go home and they would try to talk me back into pre-dental, pre-med, and all that. And so I would start on the science track, and then I would not do well, or be unhappy and then go back into Slavic.

In actual fact, it was not until my senior year that I actually, officially, and finally majored in Slavic Language and Literatures. Over their protest, by the way. I don’t want to be too mean to them (they had my best interest at heart, these are people who grew up in the Depression and wanted only the best for me) but they always, somehow, thought that if I was not doing well in science, it was because I was spending too much time with the Band. And so they were still not really happy that I was in the Band. But finally, when I was elected Drum Major, I guess that made a difference.

And then there was that summer...now this actually got me into some problems, because in the summer of 1961, I spent the entire time at home in Fresno. Every day I got up at 7:00 in the morning, and I worked until 6:00 in the evening, when I had to go down and help with the cooking and soda-jerking at my father’s drive-in restaurant. I would come home afterwards and what else, I worked on stunts. And my parents became very unhappy about this. I was spending all my time at that desk working on stunts. When I got home from work, it could sometimes be 12:00 at night, and I would go back and keep on working on the stunts until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, and they were not real thrilled about it. But they let me alone.
I returned to campus in my senior year and my mother came up from Fresno for a
game, for the first time. It actually turned out to be a somewhat unfortunate
situation, because just before I made my usual entrance, Oski (unbeknownst to
me) decided that he was going to be a drum major that day. Right before my own
entrance, Oski went running through the Band as if he were the drum major. And
I’m yelling “Get out of my way! Get out of my way!” I’m trying to run through
the Band and Oski’s in the way. Finally I got through and stopped in front of the
Band, and did my thing with the mace, and I leaned back and strutted down the
field. Well, when you’re strutting down the field, you don’t look in front of you;
you just assume it’s a clear field. Likewise, when you’re in an Oski outfit, you
can’t see clearly either. So I was going off at an angle, ready to turn and go back
across the field. Oski, as luck would have it, was also going off-angle and we
were both coming toward each other, and neither of us realized what was
happening. And Oski crashed right into me. Just knocked me off balance for a
while. I got up and continued, but the one time my mother saw me perform, I got
derailed. My father also came up for a game. They were both very proud that I
had done what I had done. And so ultimately I think they had to agree that it was
a good thing that I had been so persistent.

My brother, whom I always called Scooter, who now goes by the name of Rick,
and was then Rick, followed in my footsteps in a way. Because I was a Drum
Major at Berkeley, he became a drum major of his high school band, and when he
came to Berkeley, of course, had to join the Cal Band. And some five years after
me, he became the Drum Major of the Cal Band. And it was under his regime that
the slightly revised version of the fundamentals manual was done. They felt that
only another Flier could redo the manual, mostly involving the replacement of the
earlier pictures (based on the older Brussels uniforms) with up-to-date
counterparts, based on the “new” 1961 uniforms. When we made the
fundamentals manual originally, the new uniforms hadn’t yet arrived. So all the
original pictures were done in the older, Brussels uniform. We had maybe one
picture of the new uniform (a mockup sample), but everything else was done
ahead of time in the Spring and we didn’t even have the new uniform then. What
Rick did was to retake all the pictures using the new uniform. A few new pictures
were added, including the flash turns. I don’t think much more was done. That
was pretty much it. Just bringing the manual up-to-date.

It is definitely the case that my parents were not thrilled initially about me playing
in the Band; they just felt that at this particular moment in my life, I should be
totally focused on becoming a dentist or a doctor, and not on things they probably
considered frivolous in one way or another. What they didn’t realize was what a
powerful impact the Band experience would have on me as a person. My
character was being molded through my work in the Band. I learned how to
organize myself and my life. But when they began to see how happy I was doing
this, that realization overrode any feeling of hesitance that they had. By the time
my senior year came around and they saw me perform, they were happy with their son, the Drum Major.

[2014:

NHC: Say a few words about Rick is doing now.

MF: Rick went on to Hastings Law School and practiced law for a while. He then ran for office as a judge and won. Later he became a Superior Court judge for Contra Costa County. He retired about 2009, but continues to work as an arbitrator. He resides in Lafayette with his wife Pat. They have four children.]

Concluding Remarks

Cheatham: Mike, it’s been a long morning and being that you’re a traveler visiting only briefly, it’s time that we consider bringing this interview to a close. Give us a synopsis of your career subsequent to your graduation?

Flier: I graduated in the Summer of 1962, and although considering briefly going elsewhere to do graduate work, I finally decided to stay in Berkeley. And went on in the department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, and got an M.A. in 1964, and traveled to Moscow, in part to write a dissertation, in 1966-67, and came back and finished it, and got my Ph.D. in 1968. My first job ever, apart from being a T.A. in Berkeley, was to serve as visiting acting assistant professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Berkeley. That is, I taught in the summer school in 1968. Why visiting? Because I had accepted a position at UCLA, effective July 1, 1968. Therefore I was technically visiting from UCLA officially to teach at Berkeley, but Berkeley was my first job. “Acting” because I finished my Ph.D. officially only at the end of the summer, in September.

I went to UCLA and spent 22 productive years there. I carved a niche for myself in Slavic studies, primarily in Slavic Linguistics, but towards the end of my career there became much more interested in medieval, East Slavic culture, art, architecture, ritual, and history. I came to feel that 22 years in one place was long enough, and began to look around at other possibilities. I was offered a visiting position at Columbia University in the fall of 1988, had a fabulous time in New York, and the following year I accepted a visiting position at Harvard, and taught there in the fall of 1989. Finally, in 1990, Harvard advertised a position in the field of Ukrainian philology, which is one of my specialties, and I applied for the position. They held the usual competition for the position at Harvard. My case came up before an Ad Hoc committee before specialists in my field and various administrators and non-Slavic colleagues at Harvard. The ultimate decision on hiring is made by the president of the university, and he said “yes.” And I was telephoned in December of 1990 and told that I had been offered an endowed chair as Oleksandr Potebnja Professor of Ukrainian Philology at Harvard. And I moved to Cambridge in July of 1991, with my partner, Pat Wright. We’ve been
together almost 8 years now, and have just loved every minute of it. I think that the East Coast is terrific. I even like the change of seasons. And I’m enjoying Harvard and Widener Library very much. I have to say that Cambridge is about the only other city in the United States that reminds me of Berkeley, and that’s probably one of the reasons why I enjoy it so much. The Berkeley that I knew, that is, not the Berkeley of today.

[2014: This interview is from 1993. Pat and I were able to marry officially in Massachusetts in September 2004. We honeymooned in Paris in November. In December, we got the shocking news that Pat had cancer, ultimately proven to be incurable. He passed away in May 2005. In January 2007 I met David Trueblood, the Director of Public Relations for the Boston Foundation. We bonded instantly and after a year living together, we were married in August 2008. We live in Cambridge with our two cocker spaniels, Stan and Ollie. We spend the weekends at our place on Lake Sunapee in New Hampshire. I count my blessings every day.]

And now that we’re ready to end this particular interview, I think that there is one important matter that at least needs to be put on the record. I think that I don’t really have enough time to go into it in the detail that it deserves, and certain feelings and a sense of privacy to have to be honored, which I will not violate, but I think that it needs to be said, that when the Cal Band was an all-male organization, a number of the leaders over the years, and I’m talking about going back to the ‘50s all the way through the early ‘70s, were gay. This is not to claim that the Cal Band was a gay organization, that the Cal Band was involved in nothing but gay orgies or gay activism all the time, not at all.

What I mean is that some of the leading spirits of the Band, the ones that thought up the ideas, and implemented them, that made the thing go, that had a vision, probably not accidentally, operated with a conception of this mighty, virile, masculine band, and they happened to be gay. You obviously didn’t have to be gay to have a good idea in this context, but quite a few—more than a few—played a major role in bringing the Band to the position that it has occupied. And since gay history too often tends to be invisible, unspoken history, I thought it appropriate that the gay contribution to the success of the Cal Band be acknowledged.

I reached a point in my life, at the ripe old age of 41, at which I had to recognize that I was gay, and get on with my life in a new perspective. And I have to say, in looking back on it all, that the experience that I had in the Cal Band gave me the insight to see inside myself, to make that kind of statement. The Cal Band taught me about being true to myself, holding to ideals, caring about friends, caring about a larger institution, whether it was the Band or the University. It taught me about loyalty, and it taught me about faith in oneself. If you believe in your heart that something is right and should be done, then it probably is. I mean, you should
follow through on it and not be misled by people who have other agendas or other ideas about who or what you should be.

Perhaps one of the reasons why there were as many gay people in the Band as there were (and probably still are), is because the Band was always was a safe haven for people who might not be understood elsewhere. People who have their own special ideas about what life is, what music ought to be, what camaraderie ought to be. I think it just naturally attracted people who had felt those kinds of experiences, who felt in some sense removed from the larger society for one reason or another. And in the Band, we had a place where differences were accommodated. The important thing was we were all working for one goal. I don’t think it’s accidental if you really look carefully at the rituals that were developed over the years—pantsing [pulling down someone’s pants], saying hello to the bus driver in falsetto voices, singing dirty songs with lots of double entendre and sexual ambiguity expressed—there was a kind of homosexual streak running through the interaction, or perhaps more accurately, a male-bonding streak, that has to react to the homosexual impulses in all of us. This topic requires more serious discussion and thoughtful commentary, but I think it’s one that simply can’t be denied and shouldn’t be overlooked in the evolution of the Cal Band.37

I want to mention again that this is not in any way to say that the Band, as an organization, was promoting homosexuality plus or minus, I don’t think it was ever an issue, it didn’t come up. I think many people coming into the Band probably never realized that there were gay people in it. It was at a time in our lives (the fifties and sixties) when it was something that was never talked about. We are much more open about such issues now.

In sum, I have to say that it was the experiences in the Band that allowed me to reach my potential, I think, in everything that I tried to do. I might not have had the courage to go into other areas of Slavic studies—culture, art, architecture, ritual, literature—had I not had a basic faith in myself and my abilities. I attribute that confidence and faith to my experiences in the Band, when I became Drum Major and learned that I could organize myself, move groups, get people excited about things, organize committees, carry out a multitude of tasks, and enjoy real success. The Cal Band has played a fundamental role in my life; it has been absolutely vital. I don’t know how I could have ever done without it. And one of the most important people for me in this journey of evolution was my “coordinator,” really mentor and dear friend, Bill Colescott. Bill has remained among my most loyal and true friends over all these years and is easily one of the most intelligent people I have ever encountered.

Cheatham: Mike, that was a very moving closing statement, and some very personal thoughts on many subjects. And I want to thank you for expressing them as articulately as

37 “Pantsing” was usually done in the context of embarrassing someone who was goofing off during rehearsal or otherwise goofing off in a manner that was interfering with forward progress of the moment. NHC
you have. It’s a good statement on the role that the Band plays in the growing up experiences of all of us. And each of us, in our own way, finding our potentials through our experiences in the Band and at the University of California.

In due time, we’ll have this tape transcribed. You’ll have an opportunity to look it over and correct grammar and factual errors, and some day, given the fact that we’re operating as volunteers, and no budgets, a final copy will be made available to you for your own use, including your family and your parents. Maybe, with this interview, you’ll have an additional opportunity to help them understand your role in the Cal Band.
Appendix 1: 
Referenced Readings

**Books:**


**Oral Histories:**

All completed oral histories are available at the Bancroft Library[^1] and on the Cal Band Alumni Association website.[^2]

[^1]: Cal Band oral history project, 1992-[ongoing]. CU-203.4. [http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b16224948~S1](http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b16224948~S1)

Many oral histories referenced in the footnotes are currently under review. Inquiries about unfinished oral histories should be directed to calbandalumni@gmail.com.

**Scrapbooks:**

The scrapbooks mentioned in this oral history are housed in the University Archives at the Bancroft Library.[^1] Additional scrapbooks can be found in the Robert O. Briggs papers, also available through the Bancroft Library.[^2]

[^2]: Robert O. Briggs papers, BANC MSS 2013/189, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. [http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b20755898~S1](http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b20755898~S1)
Appendix 2: 
Excerpt from Forest Tregea Oral History

The full text of this interview can be accessed via Bancroft Library[1] or on the Cal Band Alumni website.[2]

CU-203.4, Box 3, no. 23. http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b16224948~S1
http://calbandalumni.berkeley.edu/history/interviews/tregea/tregea_v2.7.1.pdf

TREGEA: Generally speaking, had the Band not been a "squeaky wheel" and without an eventual crisis recognition that it was the depository of the "California Spirit", it would gradually have found itself unfunded and would have faded away.

The saving grace was strong support from well-placed, influential campus officials, Tregea and Arleigh Williams, who were Cal grads and who intuitively understood the role of the "undergraduate experience" and that of the Band. Couple this with a succession of capable student officers who succeeded in creating Cal Band performances that were truly high quality.

During that period I believe the Cal Band could truly claim the title of "The Pacesetter of College Marching Bands" and it felt that it was at a place were it might be able to favorably "compete" with Big Ten bands which had been the traditional pacesetters as the home of the origins of the American college marching band.

It was not a case of low regard for the Band, it was more a case that no one wanted to fund it out of their own meager funds. The ASUC was having its own identity/funding crisis having to do with the transition of the Athletic Department to University control and, the University had never before funded the the Band or the other spirit groups. It had no idea what to do with them. [See interviews with Bill Colescott, Pete Newell, Glen Seaborg, Jim Berdahl, et al. for additional insight.]

The 1961 football schedule included a game with the University of Iowa at its home campus. A proposal was made by Cal Band Ex Comm that they go to this game and put on a halftime show to demonstrate to a Midwest audience that the Cal Band could stand toe-to-toe with with Big Ten bands.

[Historical Note: Remember that the Cal Band made a poor showing in the three Pappy Waldorf Rose Bowls resulting in a change of Cal Band Directors (Cushing to Berdahl) and adoption by the Band of the Big Ten marching style and uniform style. (These were the uniforms that Tregea helped to buy when he was campus business manager.) The Band redeemed itself in the 1959 Rose Bowl, marching against this same band, by putting on a show that included among other things, a waving American flag moving down the field, a fountain pen that dipped into an ink well and then spelled out KERR in honor of our then-new UC President, and the famous Times Square sign that spelled out the halftime score of the game. The gimmick was that we had to spontaneously form that score because we could not
predict it during rehearsal. To our chagrin we never practiced a score of Cal - 0 and had to
improvise that score on the field, but we all knew the design concept so well that we pulled it
off flawlessly.

The show also included a pregame stunt where the Band formed a flower pot and "grew" the
stem of a plant that entered the bottom of the rooting section whereupon the card stunt section
made a rose bloom at the end of the stem.

That performance was spectacular removing all doubt that the Band had recovered from its
lack luster days of the earlier Rose Bowl performances.

Now, here was chance to show that same skill in the heart of Big Ten country. The Band was
highly motivated to do so and it was Tregea who searched out the necessary funds. Drawing
from the film of the 1959 Rose Bowl, the Band took Iowa’s own show and perfected parts of
it and then performed it on their own home field. The audience reacted with wild enthusiasm.
See the excerpts from Mike Flier’s oral history in the appendix to this document. The was the
first and only time that the Band has appeared in the Midwest. NHC]

Cost of this particular trip was between $30-40,000 and this seemed very difficult to obtain
from the ASUC. I was able to persuade the ASUC Ex Comm that this was a sound
investment in terms of long range future for the Band and in terms of the ASUC having a
showcase, or focal point, beyond and different from athletics that they lost control over to the
campus administration.

The Band took the trip that included a stop and performance at Coe College which was the
alma mater of Cal’s then-football coach Marv Levy, a performance on the steps of state
capital at Ames, reception by the governor who presented the Band with a key. They also
participated in a parade and performed at game itself. The negative thing was that it was
snowing and the performance was put on with some difficulty. The performance was
successful in spite of the weather and a long-standing ovation from the full stadium including
Iowa bandmen. The University and ASUC officials that were along saw the evidence that
the trip itself had been the right thing to do and with the dollars expended.
Appendix 3: Color Prints from 1961

*These images came from Michael Flier’s personal collection.*

Appendix 3A

Larry Strom modeling the new uniform in Memorial Stadium. The idea was to see how well the front of the uniform contrasted with the back. (Summer 1961)
Appendix 3B
Mike Flier modeling mock-ups of other band uniforms made by Demoulin. The one with the gold and white cape with a black C in the back is being modeled by Bill Colescott. (Spring 1961)
Appendix 3C
Bill Colescott (Sr. Mgr. 1954), Mike Flier (DM 1961), Joe Dickinson (Sr. Mgr. 1961) and two others (unidentified) listen to a conversation with Demoulin that clinched the contract and guaranteed that we'd have the new uniforms for the fall season 1961. (Spring 1961)
Appendix 3D
Spring: Lynn Irwin modeling the new uniform in color for inclusion in the Marching Fundamentals manual which was otherwise in black and white.
Appendix 4: Black and White Prints from 1961

These images are from Michael Flier’s personal collection.

Appendix 4A
Lynn Irwin posing for the Marching Fundamentals Manual in black and white. (Spring 1961)
Appendix 4B

James Berdahl, Director of Bands, posing with different baton positions for the Marching Fundamentals Manual. (Spring 1961)
Appendix 4C
The magnetic board Flier used to plot stunts in 1961. Especially interesting is the plotting of the old Script Cal and the new one, which was more expansive. (Summer 1961)