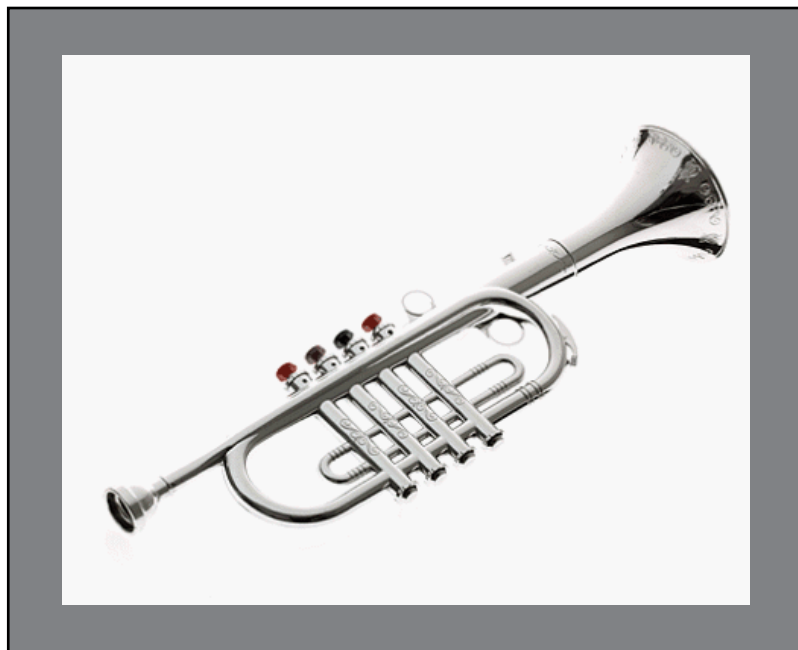


XIX

RIDOTT'S MUSIC MAN



Professor Lucias M. Hiatt trained various high school and city bands, orchestras, and church choirs in nearby cities and communities.



PROFESSOR LUCIUS M. HIATT 1866-1924

Professor Hiatt was born on January 23, 1866. He was gifted musically and began his career as an instructor when he was fourteen years old. He earned his degrees from Wheaton College in 1893. On May 23, 1899, he was married to Miss Carrie E. McCracken, of Ridott. Following their marriage, the Hiatts made their home in Bloomington, Indiana where Professor Hiatt was the director of instrumental music at Indiana University for eleven years. Later, they returned to Illinois, residing in Freeport and Ridott.

In June 1910, Hiatt organized the Ridott Band. He resided with his relatives, the McCrackens at 305 Adams Street. The band consisted of twenty-six brass instruments. They furnished music on all occasions where they were asked to play.

Hiatt came to Freeport after school once a week on the Interurban and brought his two sons, Hal and Lucius Jr., who coached the beginners. They helped coach the band when it began

in 1912. Hiatt was formally hired by the board as Freeport's first band director to teach both high school band and orchestra.

Being successful with both programs, Hiatt's salary earned him \$28 per month in 1915, \$38 in 1916, and \$100 in 1922.

In 1922, Professor Hiatt wrote the school song that starts out "On Freeport!"

Lucius Jr. and Hal played with nationally known dance bands in the 1920's.

Hiatt retired in 1924.

On July 16, 1924 the great band master passed away at his home in Ridott unexpectedly at age 58. Although Prof. Hiatt had been in failing health for some time, he appeared to be unusually well during that day and had just returned home in the evening from Freeport with his family. He left his wife, Carrie (born 1878—died 1953) with 5 children—Lucius Jr., Hal, Willard, Linn, and Mary (In 1920, his son, Grant, preceded his father in death).

Bernice (Weiler) Nelson writes in her booklet, "Memories of a Childhood in Ridott, Illinois":

Lucius Hiatt used to have musical evenings in their home on summer evenings. We all listened with enjoyment. Seven members of the family played an instrument — cornet, clarinet, trombone, and piano. Linn played snare drum, and little Mary played the brass drum.

ON FREEPORT!

by Professor L. M. Hiatt

On Freeport! On Freeport!
Crash right through that line,
Take the ball around,
Roll them on the ground,
You are going fine,
On, Freeport! On, Freeport!
Take our victory through;
On, Oh Freeport! On, Oh Freeport!
We are all with you.

Repeat Verse 1 for the entire song.