

Nov. 23, 1954

Grand Old Man of Music Dies at Nashville at 88

(Special to The State Journal)
NASHVILLE, Nov. 23 — Hiram W. Walrath, 88, Nashville's pioneer band director and music teacher, died Monday at the home here at 403 Phillips st., where he had lived for the past 53 years.

Mr. Walrath, a Nashville resident for 74 years, was born in Hastings, moving to Nashville with his parents at the age of 14 and started playing in the band in 1884. Only a few years later, he

became band director and for the next nine years directed bands in neighboring towns.

In 1893, he reorganized the local band.

Even in the 90s, a band director's salary was rather thin, Walrath receiving a mere \$12 a week for his efforts. To supplement his income, he opened a newsstand where he handled tobacco and novelties.

Later, he opened a shoe repair shop, which he continued to operate until failing eyesight forced him into retirement in 1945.

Almost blind, Mr. Walrath stepped temporarily out of retirement in August, 1953, to direct the Nashville band during this community's harvest festival. During the festival, the townspeople honored him, designating one night as "Hi Walrath Night".

That evening, the then 87-year-old bandsman looked back on 50 years of music and led a lively interpretation of his favorite number, Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever".

Afterwards, members of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce presented a gift as a long overdue tribute to Nashville's "grand old man of music".

He specialized in the teaching of wind and stringed instruments, and many of Nashville's residents remember him as their tutor.

Surviving are the widow, Emma, and a daughter, Mrs. Leah Partridge of Nashville, four grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held from the Otto funeral home Wednesday at 2 p. m., Rev. Corwin Biebighauser, pastor of the Evangelical United Brethren church, officiating. Burial will be in Lakeview cemetery.

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H. W. Walrath, 88, Dies at Nashville

Nashville—Hiram W. Walrath, 88, local musician, band director and operator of a Nashville shoe repair shop until 1945, died Monday at his home here.

A native of Hastings, Mrs. Walrath came here at 14 with his parents. He became a musician and taught instrumental playing and directed bands in nearby areas until 1893, when he returned here to organize and direct a local band. After associating with several band groups here, he opened a shoe repair shop in 1896, continuing to give private music lessons.

Surviving are his wife, Emma; a daughter, Mrs. Leah Partridge of Nashville, four grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Services will be held at 2 Wednesday at the Otto funeral home. Burial in Lakeview cemetery.

Funeral services were held Monday at 2 p. m. at the Baptist church in Bellevue with President Raymond B. Blakney of Olivet college officiating. Interment was in Riverside cemetery. The casket bearers were: E. A. Mahoney, Ralph Keith, Gilbert Leaser, A. B. Smith, William Brown and Forest Bradley.