

Arthur Wellesley Hughes-Circus Musician, Bandmaster and Composer



The 76th Canadian Battalion band -bandmaster AW Hughes is seen in the centre front rank

Arthur Wellesley Hughes

Contributed by Jack Kopstein

Arthur Wellesley Hughes (1870–1950) was a Canadian musician and composer. Born in Kingston, Ontario, he separated from his family at a young age, spending many years in the United States as an itinerant circus musician. He was a performer on piano, calliope, and alto horn. He joined the Canadian Army Expeditionary Force and was appointed the bandmaster of the 76th Battalion band in Camp Borden Ontario . He was noted in this capacity for his excellent work ethics. His circus associations on record include:

Mighty Haag Circus, Downie & Wheeler Circus (1912); Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus (1922); Sells-Floto Circus (1923); and Ringling Bros & Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows (1924-26). He was with Robbins Bros. Circus (1928–29) whence his Robbins Bros. Triumphal March arose, and Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show, and Walter L. Main Circus (1930–31). Hughes worked as composer and arranger for the Waterloo Music Company of Waterloo, Ontario, from 1932-1935. At other times, Hughes worked as arranger in the Whaley, Royce and Cundy-Bettoney publishing houses. According to his own account, Hughes wrote band music in the USA for much of his life, under various pen names, including Arthur Wellesley and H W Arthur.

In his 70s, Hughes returned to Kansas, which he considered his home. It is reported that he died in an indigent ward in a New York City hospital in 1950.

Compositions.

A short list of his most popular compositions include:

Canada, Land of Liberty Medley

Canadian Patriots Medley (Waterloo 1930)

Carry On March (Cundy Bettoney 1940)

Circus Echoes Galop (C L Barnhouse 1928)

Comrades All March (Cundy Bettoney 1921)

Fond du Lac March (Cundy-Bettoney 1913)

Fort Garry March (Whaley, Royce 1911)

In Old Quebec March (Whaley, Royce 1908)

Little Bugler (Karl King 1930)

Mediterranean March (H C Miller 1925)

Our Commonwealth March (Cundy-Bettoney 1940)

Our Pilot March (Cundy-Bettoney 1940)

The Proclamation March (Cundy-Bettoney 1918)

Red Deer March (Whaley,Royce 1911)

St Julien March (Cundy-Bettoney 1918)

Sources: Major Jim Underwood, Norman Smith- March Music Notes, The Canadian Encyclopaedia of Music, The Encyclopaedia of Band Music (William H Rehrig, Paul E Bierley)