



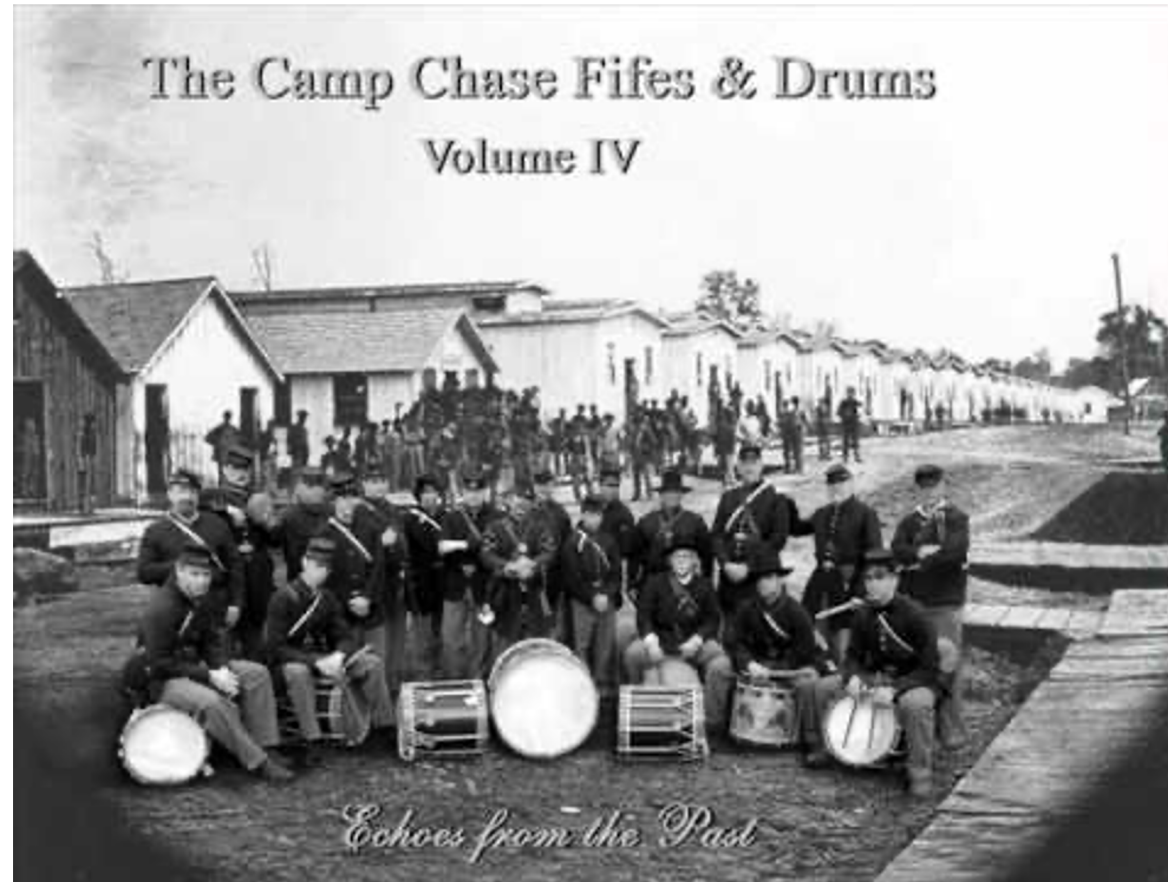
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PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

The Role of Military Music & Musicians in the American Civil War

The American Battlefield Trust Traveling Trunk Program
Lesson #3

“Hell on the Wabash” - Camp Chase Fife & Drums



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“Garryowen” - California Consolidated Drum Band



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Military Fife & Drum Corps - 30th Pennsylvania Infantry Drum Corps



(Courtesy of the LOC)



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What was the role of a Civil War Fife & Drum Corps in the army?

- Every daily activity of the infantry soldier was controlled by the drums and fifes.
- They played some fifty short pieces of music everyday.
- Each piece of music had a specific purpose, such as starting or ending a military activity, or playing during a military activity.
- For example, the fife and drums played pieces of music alerting soldiers to go to sleep, wakeup, charged the enemy, or retreated from the battlefield.
- Moving soldiers across the battlefield and into battle was also done by specific pieces of music played by the fife and drum corps.
- Because of the responsibility that the fife and drum corps had, their musical training was far harder than those in brass bands.
- Most field musicians in the fife and drums corps were young boys between ages 12 to 16.
- The fife and drum corps consisted of snare drums, bass drums, cymbals, and fifes.



(Courtesy of the LOC)



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