



MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

“The President’s Own” U.S. Marine Band

The Marine Band was founded sometime when Marine Corps Headquarters was in Philadelphia from 1798 to 1800. There, Marine field musicians started performing for entertainment and civic events at the behest of Commandant William Ward Burrows. The band moved with Burrows to



Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division

Washington, DC, and was based at 8th and I, where it remains to this day. In the capital, the band found favor with President Thomas Jefferson, who frequently used the musicians for social and official events. Thereafter, the band’s stature rose, becoming a mainstay in major civic ceremonies and earning the moniker “The President’s Own” U.S. Marine Band. Since at least 1809, the band has performed at every presidential inauguration and has been present at major historic events, such as President Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address during the dedication of the battlefield cemetery in 1863.

Under the leadership of John Philip Sousa from 1880 to 1892, the Marine Band became nationally famous. Tours and Sousa’s own compositions, including the Corps’ official march, “Semper Fidelis,” brought the Corps widespread recognition. The Marine Band remains the preeminent U.S. military band, performing at White House state events and at military ceremonies, including funerals at Arlington National Cemetery. Both a Marine and cultural institution, the band supports musical education and provides free recordings and performances for the American public.

Collect

Preserve

Promote

Support

For History Division publications, click [here](#)
To learn more about History Division, click [here](#)

