

An Assiniboine
and his Sousaphone

**THE LIFE
AND
LEGACY
OF JOHN
KUHN**

**+ THE STANDARD
REPERTOIRE FOR
SOLO TUBA**

**+ 2023 FALCONE
FESTIVAL**

WINTER 2024

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John Kuhn, NBC Radio Orchestra, c. 1950. Courtesy of Everett Mitchell Papers (SC-014), Box 5, Folder 87. Library Special Collections, Wheaton College, Wheaton (Illinois).

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**AN ASSINIBOINE AND
HIS SOUSAPHONE:**

**THE LIFE &
LEGACY OF**

JOHN KUHN

BY DOUGLAS YEO

◀ John Kuhn, 1919

All photos courtesy of the Kuhn Family
Collection unless specified otherwise.

The history of the tuba in the United States is replete with influential players from the past whose stories continue to inspire us today. We remember August Helleberg (1861–1936) for his time with John Philip Sousa’s Band, as a founding member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the tuba player at the premiere of George Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, and the Conn Helleberg mouthpiece that bears his name. Cora Youngblood Corson (1886–1943) was a spectacularly successful entertainer who thrilled audiences with her solo playing and all-female sextet. William “Bill” Bell (1902–1971) had a personality that was larger than life, and he had notable tenures with Sousa, the NBC Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, and Indiana University. Arnold Jacobs (1915–1998) was arguably the most influential brass pedagogue in history who played in the Chicago Symphony for over four decades. Howard Johnson (1941–2021) founded the first tuba jazz ensemble, Substructure. Harvey Philips (1929–2010) was a founding member of the New York Brass Quintet, was renowned as a teacher and soloist, and gave us TubaChristmas. The list goes on and on and is added to every day. But there is one tubist who has rightly fascinated us for over 125 years, a man with a remarkable origin story, a diverse and truly outstanding career in music, but whose life narrative is also laden with legends and questions.

Here is the story of John Kuhn, an Assiniboine who, in his time, was regarded as “the best tuba player in the world.”¹

THE EARLY YEARS (1882–1904)

The three tributaries of the Poplar River—West, Middle, and East Fork—meander south nearly 200 miles from Saskatchewan, Canada until they merge and meet the mighty Missouri River near Poplar, Montana, United States. Along its way through Montana, the Poplar River crosses through the Fort Peck Indian Reservation where, following the European exploration and settlement of the Americas that wreaked havoc on Indigenous life, Native Peoples including Assiniboine—whose ancestral home had stretched from southern Alberta across Saskatchewan and Manitoba to Ontario, and also included large parts of present day Montana and North Dakota—and



Last Bison on Fort Peck Indian Reservation, 1870–1880. Courtesy of Fort Peck Tribal Archives.

Sioux—who had lived in the Dakotas, Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska—were displaced and relocated in the nineteenth century.² In the pre-history period, ancestors of Assiniboine and Sioux shared the same Nakoda language family but by the mid-15th century, they separated from each other, formed their own dialects, and became distinct Siouan Peoples. In 1640, French Jesuits made first contact with Sioux and Assiniboine and within thirty years, trade between Natives and Europeans began.³ Contact between these Native People and European explorers and traders was initially harmonious. But trade with white Americans brought epidemics of smallpox (which killed half of the southern Assiniboine population in 1781–1782, and another major outbreak in 1837–1838 from which the Tribe did not fully recover), measles, and whooping cough, diseases for which the Native populations had no immunities. The white traders also depleted game and other resources on which the Assiniboine and Sioux relied.

Westward expansion of the United States put extreme pressure on the Assiniboine and Sioux for the land they had traditionally occupied and the rivers they used including the Missouri. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Jeffersonian view of Native Americans as a noble people had given way to a racist, Darwinian outlook that framed them as biologically inferior to whites. In this view, as Alfred Russel Wallace said (1864),

It is the same great law of “the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life,” which leads to the inevitable extinction of all those low and mentally undeveloped populations in which

Europeans come in contact. The red Indian in North America. . . [will] die out, not from any one special cause, but from the inevitable effects of an unequal mental and physical struggle. The intellectual and moral, as well as the physical qualities of the European are superior. . .⁴

In light of this way of thinking, and an insatiable hunger for natural resources that were found on Native lands, a policy of treaties was undertaken in the nineteenth century that ceded vast tracts of land to the United States and Canadian governments and rapidly deprived the Native populations of their ancestral territories. While some of these treaties formed the basis for the sovereignty of Tribal Nations today, many early treaties were not explained to or clearly understood by the Native Peoples who signed them. Nearly all of these treaties were broken—they always favored Federal policies—resulting in the taking of additional land from the Native populations and the migration and displacement of Native Americans from their ancestral lands to reservations. In the Dakota Territory (which became part of Montana Territory in 1864), the Fort Peck agency (formerly the Poplar River Agency) managed what became the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Reservation. Many Native Peoples resisted the move to reservations. The taking of Native lands and the ongoing breaking of treaties resulted in the Indian Wars, during which many Native Americans were killed.⁵ The subjugation and relocation of the Native populations to reservations was aided by killing of another kind.



Men standing with pile of bison skulls, Michigan Carbon Works, Rogueville, Michigan, 1892. Courtesy of Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, DPA4901.

During the last third of the nineteenth century, slaughter of millions of bison (commonly and erroneously referred to as “buffalo”) in the United States and Canada was integral to what Federal officials believed was the civilizing of Native Peoples. Eliminate the culture of hunting from the Native Americans of the plains and take away one of their primary sources of food, and they would have no choice but to assent to relocation to reservations. This policy worked hand in hand with the rapacious appetite that white North Americans had for bison hides. After they were stripped of their skins, bison carcasses were often left to rot until their bones were bleached, collected, shipped East, crushed, and used in fertilizer.⁶ These commercial and Federal goals colluded to make the near extinction of bison inevitable.

In a chilling debate in the U.S. House of Representatives (1874), congressman Greenbury Fort (R-Illinois) argued how control—even the elimination—of Native Americans was intertwined with the killing of bison,

Shoot the buffalo, starve the Indian to death, and thereby civilize him! I would suggest that a shorter and more humane way would be to go out and shoot the Indians themselves—put an end to their existence at once, instead of starving them to death in this manner.⁷

The Federal conversation continued as the killing of bison was carried out. Congressman James Throckmorton (D-Texas) said (1876),

There is no question that, so long as there are millions of buffaloes in the West, the Indians cannot be controlled, even by the strong arm of the government. I believe it would be a great step forward in the civilization of the Indians and the preservation of peace on the border if there was not a buffalo in existence.⁸

It did not take long. By 1879, the southern herd of Great Plains bison was essentially eliminated; the same was true of the northern herd that a few years later was reduced to about 100.⁹ The last Sioux bison hunt occurred in 1882 and by 1884, there simply were not enough bison to make hunting them profitable.¹⁰ Bison were no longer just around the bend, or over the next hill. “The buffalo,” said hide hunter Frank H. Mayer, “was gone.”¹¹ The near eradication of the bison made it impossible for the Native Peoples of the Plains to continue the rhythm of their lives they had enjoyed for centuries.¹² The bison slaughter left the Assiniboine and Sioux populations no choice but to live on reservations, a new life that was full of challenges of epic proportions, including starvation conditions on the Fort Peck

Reservation in 1878.¹³ “Reservation life,” in the words of one author, “was difficult and degrading for all Indians.”¹⁴ Contentious relations between many Native Americans and the United States and Canadian governments continue today.

It was into this world that John Kuhn was born on the Fort Peck Reservation on July 4, 1882, seven years before Montana achieved statehood. The spelling of the family’s surname was Kuhn, but that spelling was fluid, probably due to transcribing errors by individuals who phonetically wrote down what they heard. On United States Indian Census Rolls from the late nineteenth century into the 1930s, the family’s name was often spelled Koon and sometimes Coon.¹⁵ Records from the Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School when John Kuhn was a student there (1892–1902) spell his name both Koon and Kuhn, and the marriage license (1907) for his sister Mabel spells her name Koon.¹⁶ At some point, John Kuhn gave himself the middle initial M.—no middle name, just the initial—because, as his granddaughter, Katherine Kuhn Rose said, “He thought it made his name more distinguished.”¹⁷

Confusion over names has been a staple of the Kuhn family for generations. Most extant records state that John Kuhn’s father’s name was John Kuhn (1850–1896?).¹⁸ But on John M. Kuhn’s death certificate (1962), his wife, Alice, stated that her husband’s father’s name was George.¹⁹ Which was it? Probably both. Kuhn family members remember that John Kuhn’s father’s name was George, but he went by John.²⁰ In later generations, this habit of calling someone by other than their given name was common in the Kuhn family. John Kuhn’s daughter, Alice, was known as Sissie (and, on the Reservation, she was called Prunes). Louis Winn, son of John Kuhn’s sister, Winona, was called Mike. William Kuhn’s daughter was born Alice Mary Kuhn, baptized Mary Alice Kuhn, and called Beebee. Her brother, John, went by Hank.²¹ As we shall see, our subject, John Kuhn, gave himself a new name that scrubbed his given name from history for several years. This predilection for multiple names—given and informal—adds challenges to untangling Kuhn history.

Today, the Kuhn family recalls conversations that remembered that George/John Kuhn was from Germany, or of German heritage (in the 1920 United States Census, John Kuhn stated his

father was born in Germany),²² and even that he may have fought in the United States Civil War although if he was born in 1850, that seems unlikely. It is also possible he came west of the Mississippi River under the Homestead Act of 1862 by way of Chicago.²³ But concrete information about George/John Kuhn including his family of origin, his occupation (he may have been a blacksmith or a butcher), and the year of his death (he may have died in an accident when a horse kicked and killed him) has proven to be illusive. Everything we know about him has been

passed down orally through the Kuhn family.²⁴ George/John Kuhn remains something of a mystery.

George/John Kuhn married Iya (1849–1911?), a full-blooded Assiniboine (Nakoda, or Hohe) who was born in Nebraska Territory, what is today eastern Montana or western North Dakota.²⁵ Her name has been passed down through the family and she was sometimes referred to as Iya Storm (the “a” in her name would have been nasalized with an “n” sound). Her full name may have been Iya Osi Ceca Wi Ya, which means “Hail Storm Woman”

in the Nakoda language (“Wi Ya” means “woman”).²⁶ How and where Iya Osi Ceca met George/John Kuhn is unknown. For at least a time, the Kuhn family lived near Fort Buford, North Dakota, but they eventually relocated to the Fort Peck Reservation.²⁷ Iya took (or was given) the Western name Mary Peraan (or Persan), and after the death of George/John Kuhn, she married Nelson No Eyes (his Dakota name was Istawanica) of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate.²⁸ At that time, she took the name Mary No Eyes.



▲ George/John Kuhn and his wife, Iya (Mary), with their children, Fort Peck Reservation, ca. 1886.
Left to right: George, Winona, Louise, Lucy, George/John (father), Mabel Clare, John, Iya Osi Ceca (mother).

George/John and Iya Kuhn had eight children between 1870 and 1888: Winona (1870–1922), Margaret (1871–1871), George (1873–1898?), Louise (1874–1972), Lucy (1880–?), John (1882–1962), Mabel Clare (1885–1960), and Annie (1888–1898). All of the Kuhn children were half-blood Assiniboine, and, as such, had full tribal rights with the Assiniboine Nation and on the Fort Peck Reservation. When, in 1908, the Dawes Act provided for reservations to be divided up so individual tribal members could own private property, John M. Kuhn was allotted 370 acres on the Fort Peck Reservation.²⁹ The land is still held by the Kuhn family.

▶ John Kuhn (in his Sousa Band uniform) with his sisters, Mabel, Winona, Louise, Lucy, ca. 1919.



FORT SHAW AND HASKELL INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS

At the age of 10, John Kuhn entered the newly opened Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School at Simms, Montana, about 400 miles west of his home on the Fort Peck Reservation. Established in 1892 on the site of the Fort Shaw military post after the fort was abandoned, the school was closed in 1910, but not until the school's women's basketball team received acclaim as basketball champions at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, popularly known as the St. Louis World's Fair.³⁰ The Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School was one of a network of residential schools set up by the United States government to both educate and assimilate Native Americans. Separated from their parents and their native communities, the schools sought to remove the Native identity of students and forbade them to speak their language, required them to wear uniforms, cut their hair, and punished them for practicing their native religion or traditions. The Fort Shaw Indian School sought to teach both basic western educational subjects and trade skills—hence the name “Industrial School”—but there was a more insidious goal of the schools. Richard Pratt, founder and first superintendent of the first of these schools, Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania (founded in 1879), infamously said,

A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.³¹

“Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.” While the United States Government liked to point to the schools' altruistic educational mission, the primary goal of the residential Indian Schools was the systematic and deliberate destruction of Native American culture in their students in favor of a white, Christian, Western worldview, what some scholars consider nothing less than cultural genocide.³²

John Kuhn arrived at Fort Shaw during its first year of operation on December 27, 1892; he was listed as 4' 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ " tall and 75

pounds.³³ It is at Fort Shaw that we find the first references to his playing a musical instrument. Kuhn was a frequent baritone horn soloist with the school band and his playing was often praised. In 1901, the *Great Falls Tribune* reported, “The baritone solo was by John Koon, and if the judgment of musicians who heard him last night is good, he has a future before him.”³⁴ Later that year, he was singled out for praise for a poetry reading and baritone horn solo, “John Koon did himself proud in his recitation, ‘When Rufus Played the Piano,’ and his baritone solo would be received in any opera house with loud applause.”³⁵ He also played tackle and guard on the school's football team and, in 1900, had responsibility for two colts that had the brand “K” on their left shoulder.³⁶

Who introduced John Kuhn to the baritone horn? An article from 1938 mentioned, “At the old Fort Shaw Indian School, [Kuhn] began his ‘tootin’ career under the tutelage of Louis H. Goings, music instructor and himself an Indian,” and that he was one of Goings' prize pupils.³⁷ While Louis Goings did work at the Fort Shaw School beginning in 1895, he was listed as a shoe and harness maker, not a music teacher, although that does not necessarily mean he did not teach music as well.³⁸ On the other hand, a report from 1926 said “Charles S. Harris, composer, attracted by [Kuhn's] musical talent, gave him his first lessons which were the beginning of a musical career.”³⁹ Yet another mystery.

In an age before antibiotics and widespread immunization from diseases, illness was a way of life in the Indian schools. A look at the Fort Shaw Indian School's Sanitary Report—a daily account of students who were ill—shows frequent and widespread outbreaks of pharyngitis, conjunctivitis, chicken pox, tuberculosis, influenza, and measles. John Kuhn appears three times in the 1894–1899 Sanitary Report. He had an infection on his face (cellulitis) and a dislocation, which was perhaps a football injury. He was also caught up in a major outbreak of measles in October and November 1898—194 students were affected. When John came down with measles on November 12, his younger sister, Annie—sometimes spelled Anna or Anne—was in the infirmary with a case of rheumatic fever. Annie had enrolled at Fort Shaw Indian School on October 8, took ill on November

4, and died on November 25, two days after her brother was discharged from his bout of measles. She was 9-years old. She is buried in the Fort Shaw Military Cemetery, Montana, far from home.



▲ Iya Osi Ceca with a child, possibly her daughter, Annie Kuhn, ca. 1890.

John Kuhn left Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School on June 30, 1902, a week shy of his 20th birthday. On January 13, 1903, he enrolled at Haskell Indian Industrial School in Haskell, Kansas where he continued both his football and musical pursuits. While at Haskell, he played tackle and guard for the 1903 season (he began the season as a substitute player and subsequently worked his way into the starting lineup) where he blocked for fullback Peter Hauser who left Haskell in 1905 to enroll at Carlisle Indian Industrial School.⁴¹ Kuhn also played euphonium in the Haskell band (whether this is a different type of instrument than the baritone horn he played at Fort Shaw or just a change in nomenclature is not known). He and Robert Bruce—who arrived at Fort Shaw Indian School from Fort Peck, Montana, in June 1900, played alongside John Kuhn, and subsequently later enrolled at Haskell where he once again played with Kuhn—made up the band's euphonium section and they were featured soloists on concerts by the Haskell Band.⁴² There may have been some competition between Bruce and Kuhn. A concert by the Haskell Band in February 1903 included three euphonium solos: two by Kuhn (*Troubadour* by Liebert, and solos in an arrangement of themes from Richard Wagner's opera, *Tannhauser*) and one by Bruce (obligato

solos in an arrangement of Giacomo Rossini's *Stabat Mater*). A review of the concert praised the soloists, "The solos by Messrs. Kuhn, Bartholomew [cornet], Bruce, Howard [clarinet], and Guyon [saxophone] at the band concert were especially fine."⁴³ Two months later, a list of Haskell band personnel noted an important change: Robert Bruce was the band's only euphonium player and John Kuhn was the ensemble's only Sousaphone player.⁴⁴ John Kuhn had switched instruments, a monumental decision that was to change his life.

While many records of the Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School have been preserved, precious little about students at the Haskell Indian Industrial School has survived. John Kuhn's time at Haskell is officially recorded on a single sheet of paper that contains his name, age, Tribe (erroneously listed as Sioux), his guardian, George K. Winn (the husband of John's sister, Winona), and the important fact that he was on a band trip on May 28, 1904.⁴⁵

standard requirement such as balance, purity of tone, promptness of attack, exactness of rhythm, dynamic variety, and flexible obedience to the baton, the band could take high rank with the artistic organizations of white men.⁴⁶

Conducted by Dennison Wheelock (1871–1927)—a member of the Oneida Nation who had led the band at Carlisle Indian School from 1892–1900—the Haskell School band toured regularly and gave its most important and memorable performances at the St. Louis World's Fair.⁴⁷ While at the Fair from June 13 to June 25, 1904, the Haskell band played two concerts a day. In a serendipitous connection, the Fort Shaw women's basketball team was at the Fair at the same time (June 14 to September 3, 1904), and it is possible that John reunited with several members of the team who were Assiniboine from the Fort Peck Reservation, including Nettie Wirth (whose father, Jacob Wirth, was,

planned tour of Europe failed to materialize.⁴⁹ John Kuhn left Haskell on September 30, 1904, after the school's first football game of the season (he had been demoted from the starting lineup to the bench as a substitute player).⁵⁰ His formal school education was over. Or was it?

THE MYSTERY YEARS (1904–1909)

The historical record is silent after John Kuhn left the Haskell Indian Industrial School in 1904 until 1909. Silent except for two things that he claimed to do, media often reported that he did, but for which there is absolutely no concrete evidence whatsoever.

In August 1909, John Kuhn made an explosive claim. The headline in the *Muscatine News-Tribune* (Muscatine, Iowa) screamed:

FOOTBALL MAN WAS PAID \$400

The article quoted Kuhn saying, "I was paid \$400 a year for playing football at Carlisle, received three suits of clothes a year, and was given my room and board." It went on to say that he played tackle on the team and in his last year, he was on the famous team that defeated all of its opponents except Princeton. The article continued, "He did not say whether the other players received anything or how much," and also that "Red Cloud stated that since his graduation, a reform wave had struck the Indian school and that for the last two years, they had run things on a different basis."⁵¹

Eleven years later, *The Etude*, a monthly music magazine, devoted its October 1920 issue to "Music of the American Indian." Among the many articles about Native American music and musicians was an article by John Kuhn in which he spoke about his early life and career. There, he repeated his claim that he played football at Carlisle:

When I was a little boy, I was sent to Fort Shaw to be educated, then I went to the Haskell Institute where I studied modern music, later I went to Carlisle where I was the so-called star fullback on the famous Carlisle football team for three years. Meanwhile I had always been interested in music and as my instrument was the tuba, I played it whenever I had a chance.⁵²



▲ Haskell Indian Industrial School Band, 1903. John Kuhn is in the front row, far right, with a helicon. *The Jeffersonian Gazette*, Lawrence, Kansas, August 26, 1903.

The Haskell Band was renowned. Reviews enthusiastically reported on the quality of the band's playing. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported, with characteristic racist overtones of the time,

A few days ago, I was asked to hear a red band, in which all the musicians are Indians, the director included. I expected something crude, noisy, and semibarbaric, but a more overwhelming surprise I have never known. . . In all the

like John Kuhn's father, a German immigrant), Genie Butch, Katie Snell, and Sarah Mitchell. In 1903, the *Jeffersonian Gazette* (Lawrence, Kansas) featured a long article about the band, Wheelock, and the students, and it included the first known photograph of John Kuhn with a musical instrument in his hands, a helicon.⁴⁸ Following their World's Fair performances, the Haskell band toured through Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and West Virginia, but a

It was the 1907 Carlisle team that was undefeated except for a loss to Princeton. If John Kuhn played at Carlisle for three years, he would have been there in 1905, 1906, and 1907.

What do we make of this?

John Kuhn's claim that he was paid to play football at Carlisle sounds plausible on its face, if not its fundamental detail. On November 24, 1907, the *Chicago Tribune* published an article by Carlos Montezuma in which he accused the Carlisle Indian School football team and its coach, Glenn "Pop" Warner, of fielding professional players—who were "students" at Carlisle only in name—who were paid in violation of amateur eligibility rules.⁵³ The charges were confirmed by a former instructor at Carlisle and 22 accusations—which named players who had been paid, including several who had formerly been members of the Haskell Indian School team—were made in a blockbuster article in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* a few days later.⁵⁴ Kuhn told the *Muscatine News-Tribune* that a "reform wave struck" Carlisle after he left in 1907. In fact, changes were made after an investigation of the alleged eligibility violations.⁵⁵ But for all of the accusations, claims, and counter claims, one thing stands out: John Kuhn was never at Carlisle Indian School.

An examination of hundreds of articles about the Carlisle football team between 1905 and 1907 (and several years before and after) failed to find the name of John Kuhn or John Koon. If John Kuhn played football at Carlisle for three years, his name certainly would have appeared in the newspapers, which frequently listed the team's complete roster and a play-by-play of games. One researcher has proposed a novel theory that Kuhn was on the Carlisle School staff and may have played football under an assumed name, "Little Boy," that he shared with another player, Scott Porter, although that theory is not supportable.⁵⁶ The archives of the Carlisle Indian School—which, unlike the records for Haskell, are comprehensive—does not have a single reference to John Kuhn as a student, member of the football team, or member of the band.⁵⁷ John Kuhn is absent from all known photographs of the Carlisle School football team and band between 1905 and 1907. Neither does John Kuhn appear on any list of Carlisle School



▲ Carlisle Indian Industrial School football team, 1907. In the second row from the bottom, Jim Thorpe is second from left, Little Boy (Scott Porter) is third from right, and Peter Hauser is second from right. John Kuhn is not pictured. Courtesy of Cumberland County Historical Society, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, FB06A-06.

employees, either full time or "irregular" staff.⁵⁸ Finally, John Kuhn's name does not appear in John Steckbeck's seminal book about Carlisle's football teams—a book that includes the complete roster and a photograph for each of the school's football teams between 1894 and 1917.⁵⁹ The only sources for the story that John Kuhn attended or worked at Carlisle are John Kuhn himself and the countless media reports that repeated his claim without citing any evidence. Nobody has surfaced who confirmed that they were at Carlisle along with him. When the *Enid* (Oklahoma) *Daily Eagle* reported (in 1919), that, "Football enthusiasts do not have to go further back than 1907 when they find the name of John Kuhn, fullback on the Carlisle team, that at that time was a dread opponent of all the big eastern schools," did anyone think to ask, "Where exactly do I find John Kuhn's name at Carlisle?"⁶⁰

Connecting and conflating a few dots gives us an idea. Jim Thorpe played football at Haskell Institute from 1890 to 1900, as well as at Carlisle in 1907, 1908, 1911, and 1912. John Kuhn played football with Peter Hauser at Haskell in 1903 and for one game in 1904. Hauser (and several other members of the Haskell football

team) then went on to play football at Carlisle from 1905 to 1910 (where they played with Thorpe; many of the former Haskell players were caught up in the recruiting violations accusations and investigation). It must have stung Kuhn when he was demoted from the Haskell starting lineup at the beginning of the 1904 season while several of his friends on the team were recruited by "Pop" Warner to play at Carlisle. Football, Jim Thorpe, Peter Hauser, John Kuhn, Haskell, Carlisle. Mix them all together and a porridge of mythology might not be far behind. Who would not want to say that they played football with the great Jim Thorpe at Carlisle? In an era before the internet and fact checking, who would—or could—or would bother to—or want to—dispute the claim? It was too good not to be true.

If John Kuhn stretched the truth—and he did, and he did not correct others when they stretched it, either—he was not alone. Jim Thorpe did it. So did George Herman "Babe" Ruth. And George Washington. And you and me. As Reuben Snake famously said, to be an Indian is "having every third person you meet tell you about his great-grandmother who was a

real Cherokee princess.”⁶¹ Don’t confuse me with the facts. If I tell you I played football at Carlisle, I played football at Carlisle. Wink. Smile. Case closed.

John Kuhn made another eyebrow raising claim in his 1920 article in *The Etude*. He wrote,

At that time [when Kuhn was at Carlisle] Buffalo Bill (Col. Wm. F. Cody), who understood Indians and treated them right, engaged me as a Broncho-Buster with his great show. I toured with this show through Europe, giving the crowned heads and the citizens an idea of Indian strength and endurance in what is really a very dangerous business even when one is supposed to “know how.”⁶²

If this happened, it would have occurred between 1902 and 1906 when Cody took four tours of Europe. The claim that Kuhn was a bronco buster with William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody was repeated over and over in media reports throughout Kuhn’s lifetime. But just like his claim that he played football at Carlisle, the silence of the historical record tells a different story. There are no newspaper accounts of Cody’s shows that mention John Kuhn’s name, and the William F. Cody Archive at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West (Cody, Wyoming) has no records or photos of Kuhn ever being hired by or performing with Cody. A search of passenger lists of ships that traveled from the United States to Europe between 1902 and 1906 failed to turn up Kuhn’s name.⁶³ The argument from silence is not the strongest argument because new information could always appear. But it is an argument. However, there is this: A photo of William Cody signed to John Kuhn hung in the Kuhn family’s apartment for many years (it is now lost).⁶⁴ Why? Did Kuhn actually ride bucking broncos for Buffalo Bill? It’s such a good story, and we would love for it to be true. Despite the absence of any evidence that John put down his Sousaphone and rode horses around Europe, there is that autographed photo from Cody. And that means *something*. Exactly what, we don’t know.

As we will see, the mythology that surrounds John Kuhn did not contribute to his success; that he earned on his merits. Nobody hired him to play Sousaphone because he said he played football at Carlisle. Unlike Cora Youngblood Corson—a white person who pretended to be Cherokee (with the assumed names Princess Youngblood and Wildflower), then used her appropriation of Native American ancestry to obtain a position with the United States Indian Reservation Band—John Kuhn was not an impostor.⁶⁵ His myths make us wonder but they do not take away from his actual accomplishments.

Like so many stories that were told about John Kuhn for which we have no evidence—he was a member of the Canadian Northwest Mounted Police “and his gun bears eight notches to show the music he played in those days.”⁶⁶ —he was a weatherman⁶⁷ —he fought a German soldier with his bare hands during World War I⁶⁸ —he played with Bill Bell and Harvey Philips in the rodeo band in New York City when Kuhn was 85 years old (he died in 1962 at the age of 79)⁶⁹ —we shake our heads and wonder how they came to be. For now, it seems that John’s stories about playing football with Jim Thorpe at Carlisle and traveling throughout Europe with Buffalo Bill are just tall tales. Maybe.

Thus, the question remains: where was John Kuhn during his “mystery years”? A look at Indian Census rolls at the Fort Peck Reservation give us a clue. They show John Koon living on the reservation from 1905 through 1910, and periodically after that time. He is listed living with his mother, Mary, and sister, Mabel until Mabel got married in 1907. Then, John is listed at home with his mother until she got remarried to Nelson No Eyes in 1910 at which point John Kuhn is listed as living by himself.⁷⁰ These census rolls give no indication of an individual’s occupation, but since John Kuhn is not found in any records associated with Carlisle Indian Industrial School and William F. Cody, and Kuhn’s name is not found in any newspapers during this time, the best assumption—and it is an assumption, but a fair one—is that he was back home on the reservation in Montana. But that would change.

“RED CLOUD” MAKES HIS MARK (1909–1915)

John Kuhn surfaced from his mystery years with media reports that he was traveling with Lincoln J. Carter’s play, *The Flaming Arrow*. The show—it opened on Broadway in 1900 and was made into a motion picture in 1913—followed old tropes of a Native American who falls in love with a white woman and all of the predictable action that inevitably follows. A review of the film version of the show in *Moving Picture World* quipped, “As might have been expected, it is melodramatic in the extreme. . . [and] in plot and treatment it does not seem much of an advance over the ordinary Western offering.”⁷¹ While the traveling show featured “the world’s greatest Genuine Indian Brass Band” that included Charles Corson, a Piegan Blackfeet who played cornet and was, at the time, married to Cora Youngblood Corson, newspapers mentioned that John Kuhn played the role of a Blackfeet chief in the production.⁷²

In April 1909, John Kuhn reported that *The Flaming Arrow* had closed for the season, and he had been engaged to play in the band led by Frederick Innes. The next month, Kuhn was, indeed, playing with a band, but not with Innes; he was playing with Bohumir Kryl’s band. Kryl (1875–1961) was a celebrated cornetist who had played with Sousa between 1894 and 1898 but was fired for copying some of the Sousa band’s music. Kryl started his own band in 1906 and Kuhn played Sousaphone with him in 1909, 1910, and 1912.⁷³

Well, not John Kuhn. But “Red Cloud, a celebrated Indian Chieftain.” As the *Indian Leader* reported,

John Kuhn is now with Kryl’s band. . . He goes by the name of Red Cloud there. His solos are very popular. The *Cincinnati Post* speaks of “Red Cloud, a celebrated Indian Chieftain, said to be one of the greatest living tuba soloists.” A clipping from an Elgin, Illinois, paper says: “Red Cloud, full-blood Sioux Indian, and the finest tuba player in the country, played to the great delight of the audience.”⁷⁴



▲ Bohumir Kryl's Band, August 7 or 8, 1909. McNaughton Park, Elkhart, Indiana (St. Joseph Valley Chautauqua Association). Photo by John Inbody; courtesy of Elkhart County Historical Museum, Bristol, Indiana.



▲ Detail: Bohumir Kryl's Band showing John Kuhn, Sousaphone.



MR. JOHN M. KUHN,

the famous Sousaphone Bass player, formerly of the Carlisle Indian Band, is now a member of the famous Kryl Band. He is also a very popular soloist of this organization and has met with wonderful success as such in the concerts of the past season.

He plays a Conn Sousaphone with about the same ease as a Cornetist plays a Cornet.

▲ John Kuhn (in his Kryl Band uniform) Conn endorsement, 1912. *Conn's Musical Truth*, Vol. 9, No. 11 (1912). Courtesy of National Music Museum, University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

Never mind that this glowing review had several errors of fact: Red Cloud was not John Kuhn's birth name—it was a stage name that he gave to himself—he was never a Chieftain; he was an Assiniboine, not a Sioux, a distinction Kuhn was always careful to make himself; and he was half-blooded, not a full-blooded Indian.⁷⁵ These erroneous “facts” would be repeated over and over again throughout Kuhn's life. While attempting to confirm his membership in Kryl's band, John Kuhn's name could not be found. Was this just another tall tale? But looking in a different direction, it turned out that reports about the exploits of a certain Red Cloud who played tuba were legion. Red Cloud—that is, John Kuhn—was a frequent soloist with Kryl's band (playing *Annie Laurie* by Hartman, *Old Black Joe*, and *Rocked In the Cradle of the Deep* by Hartman).⁷⁶ Kuhn was referred to as “a genius on the instrument,”⁷⁷ and “the greatest living tubaist.”⁷⁸ “The organ tones he blew from his great instrument were wonderful and he was by far the greatest performer on the tuba that they had ever heard,”⁷⁹ and he “was deserving of the hearty applause he received.”⁸⁰ When he performed as soloist with the

University of Wisconsin Band in 1910, John Kuhn was billed as, “Red Cloud, Sioux Indian. World's Greatest Tuba Player.”⁸¹ The praise of Kuhn's playing had no limits: “The tuba solo by the Indian, Red Cloud, was one of the finest things ever on a band program.”⁸² John Kuhn, as they say, wrecked the house.

At this time, *Conn's Musical Truth* carried its first endorsement of its Sousaphones by John Kuhn.⁸³ He would endorse Conn instruments exclusively and very prominently—with one notable exception—for the rest of his life. Playing in Kryl's band had catapulted John to fame, and that fame was just beginning.

SOUSA CALLS (1915–1920)

Nobody seems to know or remember how John Philip Sousa (1854–1932)—the celebrated band leader of the United States Marine Band and then his own band—heard of John Kuhn's playing. It may be that trombonist Jaroslav "Jerry" Cimera (1887–1972), who had played with Kuhn in Kryl's band in 1909 and then played with Sousa on his 1913 tour, recommended John to Sousa. Kuhn joined Sousa's band at a most auspicious moment, for concerts at the Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. While in residence at the Exposition between May 22 and July 23, 1915, the band gave up to four concerts a day. With the arrival of John Kuhn, the band's Sousaphone section had two players for the first time. Sousa's band added its first Sousaphone in 1895. That instrument, the world's first Sousaphone, was made by J.W. Pepper and was played by Herman Conrad.⁸⁴ In 1898, Conrad began playing a Sousaphone made by C. G. Conn, and when Conrad left Sousa in 1903, Jack Richardson played the same 4-valve Conn Sousaphone that Conrad had played. That instrument later became known as the New Wonder BB-flat Monster Sousaphone, 36K, 4-valve, weighing 27 pounds (although references to the instrument Conrad played say it was 33 pounds).⁸⁵ When Kuhn joined Sousa in San Francisco—we do not know if he joined the band before or stayed with the band after the Exhibition; there is not any evidence he did either but it would have been unusual for him to join the band on Sousa's 1915 tour only for this high profile event—he joined Richardson as the band's second Sousaphone player on an instrument later called the Conn New

Wonder BB-flat Monster Sousaphone, 34K, 3-valve, weighing 25½ pounds, alongside four tuba players: Oscar Peterson, Oscar Cott, Arthur Storch, and Emil Weber. This was the first time that the Sousa Band had six bass.

Sousa's band combined with the bands led by Patrick Conway and Charles Cassasa for a concert on July 1, 1915, at which President Woodrow Wilson was in attendance. The extraordinary photo of the concert shows John Kuhn in the band's back row behind Jack Richardson, although in this hand-tinted image it is impossible to determine if brass instruments were silver plate (Sousa's preference) or lacquered brass.



▲ John Kuhn (in his Sousa Band uniform) with his son, William, and wife, Alice, 1919.

By 1911, John Kuhn had settled in Chicago, living at 210 W. Goethe Street, 175 W. Washington Street and, by 1925, at 1446 North Wells Street where he lived for the rest of his life. He and Alice Nall (1882–1964)—she was a Mohawk (part of the Iroquois/Haudenosaunee Confederacy) whose mother, Ida Monroe Nall (1865–1934), was born into the Mohawk Turtle Clan in Canada on the Six Nations Reserve—were married in Chicago on September 11, 1916, and they had two children, William Walter (1915–1951), and Alice Jane (1921–2013).

In between various gigs in Chicago, John Kuhn played Sousa's 1919–1920 tour of the United States and Canada, and the band's 1920 tour. Jack Richardson had left Sousa for a few years between 1917 and 1923, so, for the 1919–1920 tour, Kuhn moved up to play the 4-valve Sousaphone that Richardson had played, and Henry "Hank" Stern played second Sousaphone.

The 1919–1920 Sousa Band tour was grueling: 352 concerts in 211 days (June 14, 1919–January 10, 1920) in 158 U.S. cities, 35 states, and various parts of Canada. Even so, the Sousa Band regularly fielded a baseball team—Sousa was known as an avid baseball fan and John Kuhn was a member of the team—that played teams of local players in tour cities.

▼ Detail: Jack Richardson and John Kuhn



▼ Sousa, Conway, and Cassasa Bands, Panama Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, July 1, 1915. Courtesy of Mark Chalabala Collection.





▲ Sousa Band at Willow Grove Park, Pennsylvania, August 17–September 14, 1919.
Tubas (center): Jess Russ, Emelio Bianco. Sousaphones (right): Henry “Hank” Stern, John Kuhn.



▲ Detail: Henry “Hank” Stern and John Kuhn



▲ Sousa Band, Calgary, Canada, June 29, 1919. Bass section, left to right:
John Kuhn, Emelio Bianco, Jess Russ, Henry “Hank” Stern.

▼ Members of the Sousa Band baseball team, Edmonton, Canada, 1919. Left to right: John Kuhn (Sousaphone), Fred G. Brandt (B-flat clarinet), Lorenzo A. Engberg (B-flat clarinet), Carl H. Hudson (B-flat clarinet), Oscar Matthes (e-flat clarinet), Joseph Lomas (B-flat clarinet), Jess Russ (tuba), Henry “Hank” Stern (Sousaphone). Courtesy of Arnold Lamont Chick Sousa Band Photographs and Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



▲ John Kuhn and H. Benne Henton (saxophone), Sousa Band 1919–1920 tour. “The largest man and the smallest man in the band” (caption when this photo appeared in *Musical Courier*, February 5, 1920). Courtesy of Arnold Lamont Chick Sousa Band Photographs and Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

John Kuhn's playing with Sousa was often singled out for particular praise, and the fact that he was a Native American added to the attention he received. Still, media continued to push the frequently repeated myths about Kuhn:

The playing of John Kuhn calls for special mention, both because of the beauty and solidity of tone he evoked and also because he is a full blooded Sioux Indian—a genuine American by birth and by education at the Carlisle (Pa.) Indian School.⁸⁶

That John Kuhn was “a genuine American” is a theme that both media and John himself would come back to over and over again. The popular view that Native Americans needed to be civilized was, as mentioned earlier, at the heart of the reservation and residential Indian School projects. But once assimilated into American society—their tipis, feathers, and ceremonies forcibly removed—and the “uncivilized Indian” was no longer a threat, who could argue that they were not “genuine Americans”? Don Foster, a popular columnist for the *Chicago Daily Times*, related a story about John that spoke to this while taking a shot at high society braggarts,

Corridor conversations: A couple of radioites got to yarning about their forbears the other day. “Mine came over in the Mayflower,” allowed one. “Mine were a couple of years later,” said the other. “Mine were here,” yawned John Kuhn, tuba player with the NBC Contented program orchestra. John’s a Sioux Indian.⁸⁷

Indeed. John and Alice Kuhn's children were similarly described: “John (Red Cloud) Kuhn, who plays the tuba with Morgan L. Eastman, is a Sioux who married an Iroquois maiden. That makes their two youngsters full blooded Americans.”⁸⁸ Pride in their heritage and their foundational part in the history of the Americas was one of the few things that the Federal government could not take away from Native Americans. When Chief Joseph (1840–1904)—the great Chief of the Nez Perce—visited Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1904, he made this clear to the students. David Maraniss related the event in his biography of Jim Thorpe, *Path Lit By Lightning*,

As two students later remembered the scene, when the old chief entered the crowded gymnasium, he walked slowly among the students and gently patted them one by one on the head, blessing them with a whisper. “You are the original red, white, and blue.”⁸⁹

In 1936, John Kuhn carefully typed out his application for a social security number. The last question on the form was, “If you have previously filled out a card like this, state.” John’s answer was pithy: “Yes, but returned by someone who does not have the color of the only Americans left.” The answer was too much for government administrators, who crossed out Kuhn’s words and wrote, “No.”⁹⁰



▲ Signed photograph of John Philip Sousa for Mr. & Mrs. John Kuhn, 1919.

John Kuhn felt that Sousa respected him and his heritage. While Sousa (and his wife) sometimes expressed stereotypical and racist views of African Americans, Sousa seems to have held no such antipathy for Native Americans.⁹¹ John Kuhn was the only person of color to play in any of Sousa's bands; Sousa never hired an African American.⁹² In 1910, just before his 1910–1911 world tour, Sousa composed a suite, *Dwellers of the Western World* (often referred to as *Dwellers in the Western World*). Its three movements—“The Red Man,” “The White Man,” and “The Black Man”—are musical portraits of three races that inhabited the Americas.⁹³ It is easy for us to dismiss the pentatonic melody Sousa composed to imitate Native American music as a

stereotypical trope, but Kuhn was not offended by it, nor by Sousa's use of the now-pejorative “Red Man” in the title.⁹⁴ On the contrary, John's affection for Sousa and his music was on full display in the article John wrote for *The Etude* (1920):

Mr. Sousa must have an inborn feeling for the Indian because in his famous suite *Dwellers in the Western World*, he has an Indian section which, although composed of themes which are entirely original with him, have all the characteristics of Indian music quite as though some departed Indian spirit had inspired him.⁹⁵

Sousa signed a photo of himself to John and Alice Kuhn, and he inscribed a few measures of the oboe's “Indian” theme from *Dwellers*. The photograph hung in the Kuhn home for many years.

After Sousa's July through November 1920 tour of the United States, John Kuhn stepped away from Sousa's Band. Media reports announced that Kuhn would play Sousa's 1921 tour (July through September), but he did not. John Kuhn was replaced by William J. “Bill” Bell for Sousa's 1921 tour, the first time all of the band's bass players used Sousaphones. Kuhn played one concert with Sousa in 1921 (where he may have met Bill Bell for the first time), one in 1922, and he rejoined the band for a special concert in Chicago for the dedication of the Clarence F. Buckingham Memorial Fountain in 1927.⁹⁶ Kuhn never attended any meetings of the Sousa Fraternal Society, a group founded by members of Sousa's band 12 years after the conductor's death.⁹⁷ His time with Sousa had increased John Kuhn's fame once again and he was ready to capitalize on it in a new genre of music.

ISHAM JONES (1920–1925)

At the turn of the twentieth century, Chicago was a hotbed of dance bands. Saxophonist Isham Edgar Jones (1894–1956) was born in Coalton, Ohio, and after forming his first band in Michigan, he moved to Chicago in 1915 where he and his bands were based until he moved to New York City in 1932.⁹⁸ Jones' bands were not what we think of today as “jazz bands.” Improvisation was not part of this style of dance music which entertained audiences in ballrooms around the country and found an enthusiastic market in radio



▲ The first known photograph of John Kuhn with the Isham Jones Rainbo Orchestra, *Talking Machine World*, June 1920. Left to right: John Kuhn, Carroll Martin, Leo Murphy, Alfred Aldridge, Charles McNeill, Isham Jones, Joe Frank. Courtesy of David Giovannoni Collection via Archeophone Records.

listeners and purchasers of 78 rpm records.⁹⁹ The records that Jones and his band—the Isham Jones Rainbo Orchestra, then renamed the Isham Jones Orchestra—made for Brunswick records starting in June 1920 were wildly popular.¹⁰⁰

John Kuhn joined Isham Jones in time for the band's June 1920 Brunswick sessions. Just how he juggled recording for Jones and playing concerts with Sousa—Kuhn would have had conflicts between Jones' recording sessions in New York City and Sousa's concerts in October 1920 (when Sousa was touring in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, Kentucky, Illinois, and Wisconsin)—is not known. For these first Rainbo Orchestra recordings and on a few other occasions, Kuhn played a Conn top-action, 3-valve, bell front tuba, but for most of his tenure with Jones, he played his 3-valve Conn Sousaphone. It's possible this was the same Sousaphone John used with Kryl's band in 1909 and then continued to use for the rest of his life. With the exception of his concerts with Sousa, John Kuhn always tilted the bell of his upright "raincatcher" model Sousaphone forward, a technique that may have helped pick up his sound better at recording sessions.

It is also noteworthy that Jones' trombonist, Carroll Martin (1887–1939), joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1920—the same year John Kuhn joined Jones—and played in both groups for a season. Martin, who studied trombone with Gardell Simons and Arthur Pryor, was known for his exceptional technique, and he was a rare individual who found success at the highest levels in both the classical and popular music worlds. Martin left the Chicago Symphony after one year and continued to play with

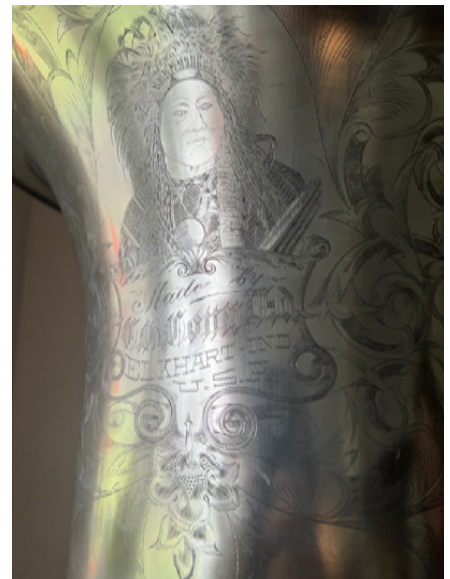
Jones and other groups in Chicago until his untimely death in an automobile accident in 1939, but not before, as we will see, playing with Kuhn in other musical ensembles.¹⁰¹

While a bell-front tuba and 3-valve Sousaphone were John Kuhn's instruments of choice with Isham Jones, John played a 4-valve Conn Sousaphone for a short time in 1922. This instrument had lavish engraving of the great Húnjkpaphá Chief, Running Antelope (Tháthóka Ínyanke, 1821–1896). This exceptional Sousaphone was owned by Taylor Music in Aberdeen, South Dakota, for several decades; it is now owned by Don Harry.¹⁰² The engraving—it appears to have been modeled after the controversial United States series 1899 \$5 Silver Certificate that shows Running Antelope wearing a Pawnee headdress, something he never did in real life—was probably done by Conn's master engravers, Charles or Julius Stenberg.¹⁰³

▼ Isham Jones and His Orchestra, Chicago, 1922. Photograph by Mabel Sykes; courtesy of Library of Congress, item 92509363.



▲ Isham Jones and John Kuhn, New York City, July 28, 1922. Courtesy of Bettmann/Bettmann Archives via Getty Images.



▲ Detail of Conn Sousaphone with Chief Running Antelope Engraving. Courtesy of Don Harry and Lon Gormley.

Playing with Isham Jones further heightened John Kuhn's reputation. He was regularly featured in Conn catalogs and advertising, and issues of *Conn's Musical Truth*. All of the members of Isham Jones' orchestra played Conn instruments and in 1922, Kuhn and the others in the group were presented with beautifully engraved, gold plated medals to celebrate their collaboration with Conn. Each medal was specially engraved with each player's instrument, and John Kuhn's upright Conn Sousaphone seems to hold the jewel (not a ruby, but glass) that is at the center of the award.¹⁰⁴ *Conn's Musical Truth* also spotlighted the band's three brass players, Louis Panico (trumpet), Carroll Martin (trombone), and John Kuhn.¹⁰⁵

The Isham Jones Orchestra travelled regularly to New York City to make recordings in the Brunswick Records studio at 779 Seventh Avenue. A photo from the Kuhn Family Collection shows John Kuhn on the left, horsing around on the rooftop of the Brunswick Records building in New York City with Isham Jones and other well-known Brunswick artists. Bandleader Joseph Smith is mugging with a bell-up, front-action tuba. We don't know if this instrument was being used by Kuhn at the time or if it is just a prop like the other instruments in the photo. What's notable about this photograph is that it is indicative of how Kuhn managed to be in the middle of things on so many occasions. Of all of the members of the Jones Orchestra who were in New York City for recording sessions at the time of this photo, it was John Kuhn who was present for this publicity photo, pretending to bang on his boss's head. Somehow, Kuhn was often the center of attention, usually by playing the straight man with a deadpan look on his face even at moments where everyone else is smiling.¹⁰⁶

From October to December 1925, the Isham Jones Orchestra played concerts at London's Kit-Kat Club; they were the last concerts that John Kuhn played with Jones. When John returned to New York City aboard the S.S. Mauretania on December 14, 1925, his international traveling days were over.¹⁰⁷ He may have returned home but his pace didn't let up.

MORE ACTIVITIES (1920–1930)

At the same time he was performing, recording, and touring with Isham Jones, John Kuhn was engaged in a host of other activities. In October 1923, the Conn School of Music (62 East Van Buren Street, Chicago) announced that John was its Sousaphone-Bass Instructor.¹⁰⁸ Jaroslav "Jerry" Cimera was the school's trombone instructor and the ongoing collaboration between these two friends would bear more fruit down the road. After he left Jones, John continued to play with other bands, including the Benson Orchestra in Chicago (directed by Mel Stitzel; the band played regularly at Chicago's Morrison Hotel) where he played once again alongside his friend, trombonist Carroll Martin.¹⁰⁹ He also made many recordings with other bands,

- ▶ **Rooftop of the Brunswick Records Studio Building, 779 Seventh Avenue, New York City, January 1923.** Left to right: John Kuhn, Isham Jones, Joseph C. Smith (with tuba), Bennie Krueger, Arnold Johnson, Walter "Gus" Haenschen.



▶ Conn presentation medal for John Kuhn, 1922.



▶ Isham Jones Brass Trio (Carroll Martin, Louis Panico, John Kuhn), 1923. *Conn's Musical Truth*, Vol. 11, No. 32 (1923). Courtesy of National Music Museum, University of South Dakota, Vermillion.



including an outstanding performance of Charlie Davis' classic, "Copenhagen," with Elmer Schoebel and his Friar's Society Orchestra, recorded on Brunswick Records in Chicago in 1929. In this recording, John's superb, prominent, and light bass line is full of personality.

As mentioned earlier, when John Kuhn was a student at Haskell Indian Industrial School, the band's conductor was Dennison Wheelock, a member of the Oneida Nation. John was reunited with his former band director for a concert in August 1921 at the Oneida Indian Centennial in De Pere, Wisconsin. While the concert's program does not mention the solo he played (other soloists on the program included the peripatetic Robert Bruce on cornet—he evidently changed to cornet from euphonium which he played when he was a student at Haskell with John Kuhn—and J. Standing Deer, trombone), it does make a remarkable claim,

Red Cloud [John Kuhn], the great sousaphone player of Sousa's Band, has also been engaged. John Philip Sousa, the great band master, regards this Indian as one of the greatest among the many bass horn players which this country has produced. He has been offered a position in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and in case he accepts, it will be the first time that an instrument of this character is used in a symphony orchestra.¹¹¹

Of all of the many stories that swirl around John Kuhn and his career, this one takes the cake. If John was going to join the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, it would have come as a great surprise to George Hamburg—who was tubist with the CSO from 1920 to 1944 (he was succeeded by Arnold Jacobs)—that a Sousaphone player had been offered his job. It's another one of the tall tales that surround John Kuhn's life, but wouldn't you have loved to have seen the look on music director Frederick Stock's face when he mounted the podium and saw John Kuhn sitting there in the back row of Chicago's Orchestra Hall with his Sousaphone? The story is, once again, too good not to be true but, alas, the Chicago Symphony has no record of John Kuhn auditioning for or being offered a position in the orchestra.¹¹²

Another of the stories we often read about John Kuhn is that he played with Patrick Conway's band. Countless articles about Kuhn repeat the line, "He was engaged to play with Kryl. Then he was



▲ Patrick Conway and his band, ca. 1922-1926.



▲ Detail: John Kuhn with Patrick Conway's Band, c. 1922-1926.

with Pat Conway and finally with John Philip Sousa." Kryl, then Conway, then Sousa.¹¹³ But establishing a date for Kuhn's participation in Conway's band has proven difficult, and John's name does not appear in any announcements for concerts, reviews, or newspapers articles about Conway band concerts. Just as the idea of John Kuhn playing with Conway seemed like it was just another unproven story, an undated photograph of Conway's band surfaced in the Kuhn Family Collection. And there he is, John Kuhn, standing in the back row of the band with a tuba—not a Sousaphone. Given what we know about Conway's activities after the end of World War I (including the establishment of his Band School in Ithaca, New York),

and when various players seen in the photo joined the band, it seems likely that this photo of Kuhn with Conway was taken some time between 1922 and 1926, although it's certainly possible John played with Conway earlier as well.¹¹⁴



John Kuhn's endorsement of Conn instruments went to new heights when he was featured on the cover of Conn's 1923–1924 bass catalog. Never mind that he was pictured playing an instrument he never used in performance—a bell front Sousaphone. Conn waxed eloquently about John's playing, calling him "a Sousaphone virtuoso whose performance has never been equaled in pianissimo song renditions. His technique is marvelously faultless and the power of his tone, always full and rich, is such as to awe most bass performers of the day." It is in this catalog that we find the first mention of the Conn "Chief" tuba mouthpiece, a large, funnel-shaped mouthpiece developed for Kuhn with CHIEF stamped on the outside of the cup.¹¹⁵

In 1926, John Kuhn toured and gave solo performances on an extraordinary Sousaphone. The instrument, manufactured by C. G. Conn in 1924 to commemorate the company's 50th anniversary, was (and remains) the world's largest playable Sousaphone. It has a 36 3/4" diameter bell, four valves, a .773" bore through the valve section, and weighs 50 pounds. Part of the Greenleaf Collection at Interlochen Center for the Arts (Interlochen, Michigan), it is now on display at the Musical Instrument



▲ Alice Kuhn in the C. G. Conn 50th Anniversary Sousaphone, ca. 1925.

◀ Cover, 1923–1924 C. G. Conn Bass Catalog. Courtesy National Music Museum, University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

◀ C. G. Conn "Chief" tuba mouthpiece.

Top: 1923–1924 C. G. Conn Bass Catalog. Courtesy of National Music Museum, Vermillion.

Bottom: John Kuhn's C. G. Conn "Chief" mouthpiece.

Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.¹¹⁶ The instrument was lavishly engraved by Conn's master engravers, Charles and Julius Stenberg, with images of the Conn factory in Elkhart, Indiana, and various patriotic themes. While it isn't done any more, John and Alice Kuhn's daughter, Alice, sat inside the bell of the instrument when she was about four years old to give a sense of the scale of this monster Sousaphone.

Jack Dempsey, the famous pugilist, won the heavyweight boxing championship of the world in a bout with Jess Willard on July 4, 1919, and lost it when he fought Gene Tunney on September 23, 1926. Wanting a rematch with Tunney, Dempsey retreated to his training camp at Soper's Ranch in Ojai, California, to prepare for a warm-up fight against Jack Sharkey.



▲ Jack Dempsey with John Kuhn and unidentified band members, Soper's Ranch, Ojai, California, 1927. Courtesy of Chicago Sun-Times/Chicago Daily News Collection, Chicago History Museum SDN-067023.



▲ Jack Dempsey with John Kuhn and unidentified band members, Soper's Ranch, Ojai, California, 1927.

Dempsey's camp invited the public to watch him train with his sparring partners—and be entertained by bands.¹¹⁷ John Kuhn was there, too, and he was the center of attention when he gave Dempsey a Sousaphone lesson. While a published photo of Dempsey and Kuhn tells some of what happened, the sequence of three snapshots of the encounter between two greats of their professions that is found in the Kuhn Family Collection tells even more of the story, with John teaching with his signature mock seriousness and a quizzical Dempsey finally giving up, doubled over in laughter.

Throughout the decade of the Roaring Twenties, John Kuhn lived the life of a high level gigging musician. He traveled widely, playing with some of the best popular dance bands in the country. He was arguably the most famous tuba player in the world, his name known to musicians and the general public from coast to coast, and as "Chief Red Cloud," the Assiniboine from Montana added the spice of being a Native American to his performances. But in 1930, at the age of 48, John Kuhn stopped. With a wife and two children at home, the traveling life finally took its toll. It was time to do something else. And, in the process, he became the most frequently heard tuba player in the world.

NBC RADIO ORCHESTRA, CHICAGO (1930–1955)

Chicago's Merchandise Mart, bordered by the Chicago River on its west and south sides, West Kinzie Street on the north, and North Wells Street on the east, was the largest building in the world when it opened in 1930, with over four million square feet of space. Among its early tenants was the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) that had five recording studios and numerous offices on the twentieth floor.¹⁰⁸ Radio was king, and NBC was a king of radio. It would be a few years before NBC in New York City would launch its famous NBC Symphony conducted by Arturo Toscanini (that orchestra was active from 1937 to 1954), but Chicago was home to many radio shows that were broadcast across the United States on the NBC radio network. These shows, including *The Contented Hour*, *Curtain Time*, *Design for Living*, *Yeast Foamers*, *Tom Mix Ralston Straightshooters*, *Roy Shield and Company*, and the flagship program, the *National Farm and Home Hour*, were essential listening for a public in the era before television and the internet. It was no surprise that when NBC was building its Chicago studio orchestra, it called John Kuhn.

The attraction of settling down to steady work was irresistible to John. "The Great Depression" began in September 1929 and steady work—despite the economic crash, radio continued to flourish—meant steady income to support his family. He could live at home—no more traveling around the country, living out of a suitcase in hotel rooms—play his Sousaphone every day with a top notch orchestra that regularly reconfigured itself into a dance band, and be home for supper every night. Once he turned right out the front door of his apartment, it was just 1.5 miles—a 30



NBC Radio Orchestra, Merchandise Mart Studio D, Chicago, ca. 1935.

minute walk—straight down North Wells Street to get to work at NBC. The situation was ideal.

And working at NBC meant reconnecting with old friends. While the history of NBC radio in Chicago is still waiting to be told in detail, photos in the Kuhn Family Collection show John in NBC Studios A and D, playing in a dance band and in a full symphony orchestra. In a photo of Studio A taken around 1935, John's friend Carroll Martin is seen playing first trombone. A photo of studio D taken around 1945 shows Jaroslav "Jerry" Cimerá playing first trombone. These photographs—which have not appeared in print previously—show an interesting aspect of radio show recordings. We note the dancers surrounding the dance band, and the orchestra playing in what looks like academic regalia. Why have dancers and costumes when a radio program is being recorded? The answer: Because many radio shows were recorded in front of a live audience, and the entertainment aspect for the audience created a sense of palpable energy in the broadcast.

Just because John Kuhn settled down to steady work didn't mean he was any less in the public eye. Local newspapers in Chicago frequently carried stories about John and his exploits with the NBC Radio Orchestra. Most of the time they were humorous, like the time when John welcomed members of the Chicago Cubs baseball team to the NBC studios in 1932,

When Rogers Hornsby, Gabby Hartnett, Guy Bush, and Charley Root of the Cubs visited the *National Farm and Home Hour* at NBC the other noontime, they were given the Homesteaders' initiation by Chief Red Cloud (John Kuhn). John is the biggest and huskiest member of the Homesteaders' orchestra. The initiation is one brisk slap of John's hand—enough to floor a bull. The horseplay ended and Gabby decided John should get the Cubs' initiations. So to a private room. . . John emerged, went back to his tuba, and said, "Now that's an initiation as is an initiation." But he refused to tell us what it was.¹¹⁹



NBC Radio Orchestra, Merchandise Mart Studio A, Chicago, ca. 1945.

The fact that John Kuhn was a Native American often came up in stories that were told about him in the Chicago press. History remembers the Navajo "Code Talkers" of World War II, who helped the United States military send and receive messages in their unique language that the Axis powers could not translate. But there were also Assiniboine and Sioux Code Talkers from the Fort Peck Reservation,¹²⁰ and the uniqueness of their language made it into the *Chicago Daily News*,

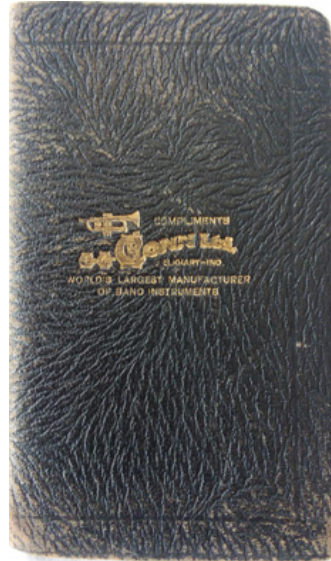
There are fourteen nationalities represented in Walter Blaufuss' NBC orchestra and Walter can

Speak to each of his musicians in the man's native tongue with one exception. Exception is John Kuhn, Indian tuba player.¹²¹

In truth, John was not the only Native American to work in the NBC studios. A photo in the *Chicago Sun* (1942) showed five Native Americans who were associated with various radio programs wearing Native headdresses and passing around a ceremonial pipe: Louise, Curt, and Allen Massey (of Reveille Round-Up and Plantation Party) were Cherokee, Everett Mitchell (host of National Farm and Home Hour) was Penobscott, and John was identified, as usual, as Sioux.¹²² But it was not all fun and games for John when it came to his heritage. He was instrumental in bringing a group of 15 Sioux from Fort Peck to Chicago to take part in an American Indian Day Celebration in Chicago.¹²³ When, in 1937, John arranged for a group of Sioux from the reservation at Fort Yates, North Dakota, to visit the NBC studios during a Pageant of Indiana Life at the Art Institute of Chicago, it made the papers, although the *Chicago Daily News*, in an all-too-common and failed effort to be humorous, reinforced stereotypes of the Sioux by noting that they "dropped around to NBC's studios to whoop it up," and they were John's "fellow redskins."¹²⁴ The old tropes of the "uncivilized Indian" as a cultural curiosity persisted.

John Kuhn's Mohawk wife, Alice, and her mother, Ida Nall, were among the nine founding members of First Daughters of America. Established in Chicago in 1930, the group aimed to "discourage the unfair portrayal of the American Indian by wild west shows, the state, or motion picture, and eliminate from text books all matters tending to race prejudice; to preserve and perpetuate the primitive arts, crafts, and music of the American Indian, and to emulate the supreme qualities of American Indian womanhood."¹²⁵ The ongoing fascination with Native Americans as objects of curiosity—yes, objects—and members of a primitive race that needed to be civilized, perpetuated the popular but scientifically unsupportable assertion that they were somehow biologically and intellectually inferior to whites.¹²⁶ This, as discussed earlier, was at the heart of the "Kill the Indian in him, and save the man" philosophy that drove Indian residential school programs. An important part of First Daughters of America and other similar organizations was for Native Americans

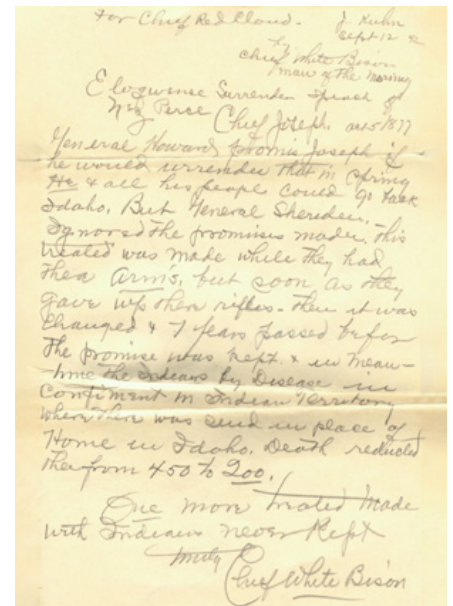
to gain white allies in their drive to eliminate stereotyping.



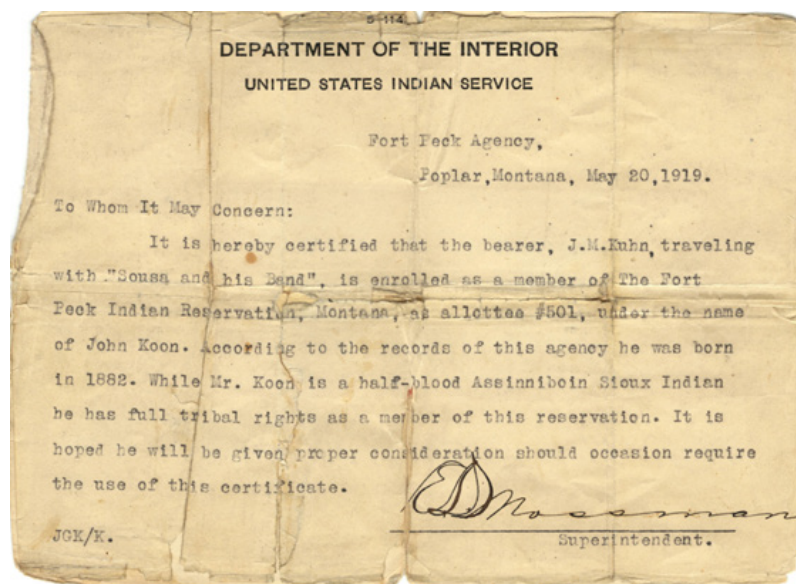
▲ Billfold presented to John Kuhn by C. G. Conn, 1940s.

Sometime in the 1940s, C. G. Conn gave John Kuhn a leather wallet, embossed in gold with the company's logo. An examination of its contents is revealing. There are a few newspaper and magazine articles that mention John, a hand written shopping list ("6 dozen hot dogs, relish/quart, coffee, sauerkraut, dry gin"—that must have been quite a party), and a signed prayer written by Jack Holdrew, star of one of the NBC radio shows for which John played, The Tom Mix Ralston Straightshooters Program, given on Thanksgiving Day, 1938. But most of the items related to John's heritage as a Native American.

A four-page brochure of Indian pictorial symbols by Allen Brown, a Chicago-based dealer in Native American artifacts is well-worn. There is a page with a typewritten "Indian Prayer" with sage advice for anyone taking an audition: "Help me to win, if win I may, but—and this especially, O Great Spirit—if it not be ordained that I may win, make me at least a good loser." An official document from the United States Department of the Interior (Indian Service) dated May 20, 1919, certifies that John had full tribal rights as an Assiniboine, a kind of passport—before most Native Americans were granted U.S. citizenship with passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924—that was issued when he was heading to Canada for concerts with Sousa.



▲ Letter from Chief White Bison to John Kuhn, September 12, 1942.



▲ John Kuhn, certificate of Fort Peck Indian Reservation Enrollment, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1919.

Of great interest are three handwritten pages written "For Chief Red Cloud, J. Kuhn," on September 12, 1942, by John's friend, Chief White Bison, Man of the Morning. Kuhn family members recall that John owned a deerskin on which Chief White Bison—nobody today can recall his connection to John Kuhn—had painted some Native symbols. White Bison summarized his thoughts about Chief Joseph (1840–1904), Chief of the Nez Perce, when he surrendered to United States government forces in 1877 near the end of the Indian wars, and then White Bison wrote out Chief Joseph's surrender speech. The speech is excruciatingly poignant (even if its authorship and words continue to be disputed), and the fact that John Kuhn kept this in his billfold speaks silently about the importance of his Native heritage:

Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have it in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our Chiefs are killed; Looking Glass is dead, Ta Hool Hool Shute is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led on the young men is dead. It is cold, and we have no blankets; the little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are - perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my Chiefs! I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever.¹²⁷

Chief White Bison closed his handwritten letter to Chief Red Cloud with the words, "One more treaty made with Indians never kept."¹²⁸

While John Kuhn played and endorsed Conn instruments for most of his life, a clipping he kept in his billfold speaks about something not widely known: John's work with Holton. An article from the Cedar Falls, Iowa, *Daily Record* (November 6, 1933) contains a number of fascinating tidbits about Sousaphone history. It begins,

The 35-year-old Sousaphone—historic huge bass horn that is a cherished possession of the Cedar

Falls Band, Inc.—is to be rebuilt under the personal supervision of John Kuhn, world's greatest bass horn artist, as a result of Kuhn's weekend visit here as a guest of the band. The big horn is to be shipped to the Frank Holton Co., Elkhorn, Wisconsin, which built "Big Chief" Kuhn a bass horn designed by himself and is soon to begin production of the Kuhn horn which is to be known as the "Big Chief" in honor of its inventor.¹²⁹

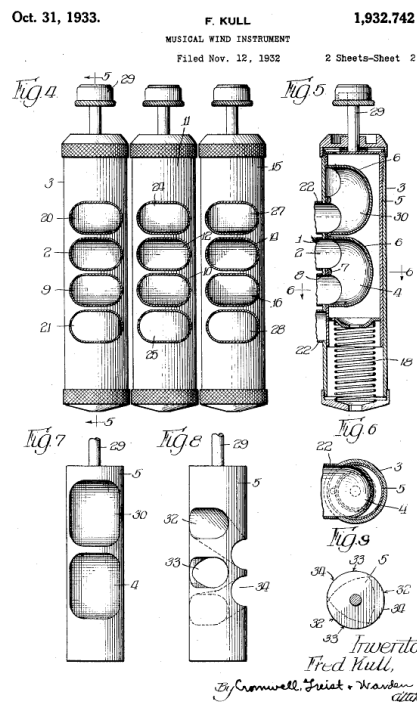
Dave Detwiler—the world's leading expert on Sousaphone history whose work is well-known in the pages of the *ITEA Journal*—says that the "historic huge bass horn" in possession of the Cedar Falls Band must be a reference to the earliest extant Conn Sousaphone, made in 1899.¹³⁰ That instrument is still owned by the Cedar Falls Band. What is striking about the news report is that this historic Conn Sousaphone was going to be shipped to the Holton Company for restoration. Why the instrument was going to Holton and not to Conn is curious to say the least. Did it happen? We don't know. We also don't know if Holton followed through with production of their "Big Chief" Sousaphone (or Holtonphone, as Holton called their Sousaphones for several years). At least one of these instruments was made with an engraving of a Native American Chief; it is now owned by Don Harry.

The article also says that "Kuhn's [Holton] instrument has special valves about 30 percent shorter than ordinary bass horn valves and build oval in shape according to his design." This gives John too much credit. The Holton short action valve was invented and patented by Fred Kull (the patent was filed November 12, 1932, and granted on October 31, 1933).¹³¹ Kull, who worked for Holton and purchased the company from Frank Holton in 1939, devised a valve that had a shorter action due to its oval (rather than round) valve ports. Holton used these valves on its model 106 and 107 Revelation basses, model 108 and 109 recording basses, as well as Sousaphone model 131, presumably the model they made for Kuhn. Conn also marketed short-action valves and they are still available on the Conn 20K Sousaphone.

In 1941, John Kuhn collaborated with his friend, trombonist Jaroslav "Jerry" Cimera, and wrote the *Kuhn-Cimera Method for Tuba (BB-flat and E-flat)*.¹³² Published by Belwin, the method is a useful but not especially remarkable method for beginning players. It is, in the main, nearly identical to the *Cimera-Hovey Method for Trombone and Baritone* that was published a year earlier (on which Cimera collaborated with Nilo W. Hovey, a clarinetist who authored dozens of methods for woodwind and brass instruments).¹³³ Still, the *Kuhn-Cimera Method* has had influence and lasting power; it is still in print today.

LATER YEARS (1955–1962)

By 1955, John Kuhn was 73 years old and mostly retired from his work as a full time performing musician. His days with a Sousaphone wrapped around his body mostly behind him, he spent more time with his family. He continued his association with the Masons, a group he was affiliated with for much of his life. John's work with the Masons was anything but casual. He was a member of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (John Philip Sousa was also a Mason and a member of the Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine; he wrote his famous march, *Nobles of the Mystic Shrine*, in 1923),¹³⁴ and the Medinah Shriners Legion of Merit. John was also master of Blaney Parkway Lodge No. 271 (the Lodge has been reorganized several times and is now North West Lodge No. 271), and Past Watchman of the Shepherds, the



▲ Fred Kull, Short-Action Valve Patent, November 12, 1932.

top post in the Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem (the Chicago branch of the White Shrine of Jerusalem is Bethlehem Shrine No. 1).¹³⁵ John's family remembers him playing Sousaphone in Chicago's annual Shriner Parade.

John Kuhn died on January 11, 1962, a few months before his 80th birthday. His obituary in the *Chicago Tribune* mentioned his family and his Masonic activities in great detail. But of the man who had made such important contributions to music for over seven decades, that part of his life was represented by a single reference: "Musician's Union Local No. 10."¹³⁶ He was buried in Chicago's Acacia Park Cemetery with a Masonic emblem engraved on his grave stone, and DAD above his name. His wife, Alice, was buried at his side when she died two years later; her gravestone remembers her as MOM.



◀ Alice Kuhn (seated, "Sissie," daughter of John and Alice Kuhn), John Kuhn, Alice Kuhn, Katherine Kuhn Rose, Louis ("Mike") Winn, Wing Hill Park, Illinois, ca. 1957.



▲ John Kuhn's Medinah Shriner Legion of Merit cap.



▲ John Kuhn (left, undated; center, with Alice Kuhn, ca. 1958; right, undated).

JOHN KUHN'S LEGACY

As we look back at John Kuhn's life and evaluate his legacy, we see an extraordinary man who grew up on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, attended two Indian Schools, played with three of the most famous concert bands in the world, performed and recorded widely with one of the most popular dance bands of the 1920s, played and endorsed Conn Sousaphones for most of his life, and worked as a steady musician for the famous NBC Radio Orchestra in Chicago for 25 years. While some of what people today know about John Kuhn falls into the category of aspirational stories and myths—this article

is an effort to both correct the historical narrative that has grown up around Kuhn and bring much more to what we know about his story—we rightly remember John Kuhn as a superb player, an innovator who designed the "Chief" mouthpiece with Conn, and a pedagogue who wrote a method for young players. As a sign of how John Kuhn was held in esteem by the tuba community, Bill Bell wrote a solo for tuba and piano in 1963 in tribute to his friend—*Chief John*.¹³⁷ John Kuhn's love of people, his sense of humor, his commitment to musical excellence, and his devotion to his Native American heritage are remembered by all who knew him.

John Kuhn was an integral part of some of the very best and highest level of American music making—concert band, popular music, and radio orchestra. It is not an exaggeration to say that we can look at him today as one of the most accomplished and influential American musicians on any musical instrument at any time. John Kuhn stands tall as an American original, and his birth on the Fourth of July 1882—at a time before most Native Americans were even allowed to be citizens of the United States—puts an exclamation point on his American roots. After all, who could be a more American musician than John Kuhn, a proud member of the Assiniboine Nation? His people were here first.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in John Kuhn began many years ago as I was researching an entry about him for my *An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Tuba, and Euphonium Player* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2021). In the course of that research, I realized both that much of what I read about John Kuhn was not true and that there was so much more about him that had not been told. My study of John Kuhn took an important turn when I met two of his descendants: his granddaughter, Katherine Kuhn Rose, and his great-grandson, Kevin Leahy (and Kevin's wife, Karen). These family members were enthusiastic about my work and were extraordinarily generous in sharing family stories, photographs, and ephemera about their famous relative. This article—and the presentation I gave about John Kuhn at the 2023 International Tuba Euphonium Conference—would not have come together without their considerable help and I am deeply grateful for their kindness and support. Kathryn W. Shanley—the great-granddaughter of John Kuhn's sister, Winona Kuhn Winn—was also very helpful as I worked to untangle the history of the Kuhn family in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Likewise, Dave Detwiler—"the tuba pastor"—was a tremendous help who provided me with copious information and confirmation of many Sousaphone facts. His knowledge of the Sousaphone, its history, and its historical players, is comprehensive, and his blog, *Strictly Oompah* (tubapastor.blogspot.com) is essential reading for anyone who wants to learn about the Sousaphone.

Others were also helpful in ways both large and small as I tracked down primary sources, collected photographs, and learned more about John Kuhn's life, work, and world. My thanks to them also knows no bounds:

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Douglas Yeo (yeodoug.com and TheLastTrombone.com), a graduate of Wheaton College (Illinois) and New York University, is the author of five books (including *An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Tuba, and Euphonium Player*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2021; and *Serpents, Bass Horns, and Ophicleides at the Bate Collection*, University of Oxford Press, 2019), and a contributor to many publications including the *Historic Brass Society Journal*, the *Galpin Society Journal*, the *International Trombone Association Journal*, and the *ITEA Journal*. From 1985 to 2012, Yeo was bass trombonist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (he began playing serpent and ophicleide in 1994) where he also taught at New England Conservatory of Music. Since then, he has served as a faculty member at Arizona State University, Wheaton College, and University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He was recipient of the ITEA's 2010 Clifford Bevan Award for Excellence in Research and, in 2014, the International Trombone Association's highest honor, the ITA Award.

Endnotes:

1. "Poplar Musician Best Tuba Player in World, KYW," *Daniels County Leader* (Scobey, Montana), August 7, 1930.
2. A word about words: Throughout this article, the terms Native American, Native Peoples, Indigenous People, and Indian are used when quoting primary source material and interchangeably within various historical contexts. Fiercely proud of his heritage as an Assiniboine, John Kuhn referred to himself as an Indian. Disparaging terms used to describe Native People are only used in direct quotations and are framed as being unacceptable in general usage today. Herein, Tribal names are used when grammatically and contextually possible, and other broader, descriptive terms are used only when necessary and with the utmost respect for the people they describe.
3. This brief summary of Assiniboine and Sioux life up to the establishment of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation is greatly informed by, Čeǵá K'inna Nakóda Oyáde with Jim Tanner, Tracey Tanner, David R Miller, and Peggy Martin, *Owóknage: The Story of Carry the Kettle, Nakoda First Nation* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2022), especially chapters 1–8. Also, David Miller, Dennis Smith, Joseph McGeshick, James Shanley, and Caleb Shields, *The History of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation: 1600–2012* (Poplar, Montana: Fort Peck Community College, 2012), especially chapters 1–5.
4. Alfred Russel Wallace, "The Origin of Human Races and the Antiquity of Man deduced from the theory of 'Natural Selection,'" *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London*, Vol. II (March 1, 1864), 164–165.
5. In his 1878 report to the General of the Army, General Philip Sheridan summed up the state of Federal and Native American affairs succinctly, "The Government made treaties, gave presents, made promises, none of which were honestly fulfilled, and like all original treaties with Indians in this country, they were the first steps in the process of developing hostilities." "General Sheridan's Annual Report," *New York Times*, November 1, 1878.
6. LeRoy Barnett, "Ghastly Harvest: Montana's Trade in Buffalo Bones," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Summer 1975), 2–13.
7. Greenbury L. Fort, *Congressional Record*, 43rd Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives, March 10, 1874, 2109.
8. James W. Throckmorton, *Congressional Record*, 44th Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives, February 23, 1876, 1239. For a full discussion of the slaughter of bison herds in the United States, see, Andrew C. Isenberg, "Toward a Policy of Destruction: Buffaloes, Law, and the Market, 1803–83," *Great Plains Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Fall 1992), 227–241. Also, Kurt Repanshek, *Re-Bisoning The West: Restoring an American Icon to the Landscape* (Salt Lake City: Torrey House Press, 2019). Also, Michael Punke, *Last Stand: George Bird Grinnell, The Battle to Save the Buffalo, and the Birth of the New West* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2007, 2020).
9. M. Scott Taylor, "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 101, No. 7 (December 2011), 3163.
10. Michael Punke, *Last Stand: George Bird Grinnell, The Battle to Save the Buffalo, and the Birth of the New West*, 135.
11. Frank H. Mayer and Charles B. Roth, *The Buffalo Harvest* (Denver: Sage Books, 1958), 89.
12. Donn. L. Feir, Rob Gillezeau, and Maggie E.C. Jones, "The Slaughter of the Bison and Reversal of Fortunes at the Great Plains," *National Bureau of Economic Research* (NBER Working Paper Series), Working Paper 30368 (August 2022), 7–8.
13. David R. Miller, Dennis Smith, Joseph McGeshick, James Shanley, and Caleb Shields, *The History of the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation: 1600–2012*, 113–114.
14. Michael P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*, revised edition (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 143.
15. *United States Indian Census Roll, Fort Peck, Montana*, April 1, 1933. The census lists John Koon, his wife, Alice Koon, and their children William W. and Alice J. Koon, all living in Chicago at the time.
16. Marriage License No. 299, Peter Dupree and Mabel Clare Koon. State of Montana, County of Valley, No. 299, August 12, 1907.
17. Interview by Douglas Yeo of Katherine Kuhn Rose and Kevin Leahy, January 14, 2023.
18. John Kuhn, Coroner's Certificate of Death. Cook County, Illinois, January 12, 1962. For John Kuhn's father's name as John, see Marriage License for Peter Dupree and Mabel Clare Koon (1907).
19. John Kuhn, Coroner's Certificate of Death. Cook County, Illinois, January 12, 1962.
20. Email from Kathryn W. Shanley to Douglas Yeo, August 25, 2023.
21. Email from Kevin Leahy to Douglas Yeo, August 15, 2023.
22. Fourteenth Census of the United States, Cook County, Illinois, Enumeration District No. 1145, Sheet 9, January 9 and 10, 1920.
23. Email from Kathryn W. Shanley to Douglas Yeo, July 25, 2023.
24. Email from Kevin Leahy to Douglas Yeo, August 6, 2023.
25. The westward expansion of the United States resulted in naming and renaming of many parts of North America. The unorganized northernmost part of the Louisiana Purchase (1803) that included most of present day Montana was called the Territory of Nebraska (1854–1867), the Territory of Dakota (1861–1889), the Territory of Idaho (1863–1890), and the Territory of Montana (1864–1889). Montana achieved statehood on November 8, 1889. For a fuller discussion of Montana's history, see, Michal P. Malone, Richard B. Roeder, and William L. Lang, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries*.
26. Email from Kathryn W. Shanley to Douglas Yeo, August 17, 2023. In his application for a Social Security account number, John Kuhn stated that his mother's name was Wah-Ya-Ki-De-Wi-Ya. John M. Kuhn, Application for Account Number, U.S. Social Security Act. Form SS-5, Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service, January 4, 1936.
27. The marriage license for George K. Winn and Manonie [*sic* Winona] Koon (August 14, 1891), states that Winona Koon was born at Fort Buford, North Dakota. The marriage licenses for her sisters Lucy and Mabel Clare (1907) state that they were born on the Fort Peck Reservation in Poplar, Montana.
28. Mabel Clare Koon's marriage license (endnote 16) gives her mother's name as Mary Persan. Lucy Koon Ricker's marriage license (State of Montana, County of Valley, No. 276, March 22, 1907) gives her mother's name as Mary Peraan.
29. John Kuhn's allotment, parcel 501, was for 370 acres, the northwest corner of which was assigned to his mother, "Mary Noeyes." See, U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records. John Koon, Indian Allotment Nr. 501, glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=372371&docClass=SER&sid=fpmptjvv.ocy. Also, National Archives, Record Group 75, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, NAID 301425962, Fort Peck Indian Reservation T. 28 N., R 52 E, P.M.M. catalog.archives.gov/id/301425962.
30. John T. Greer, *A Brief History of Indian Education at the Fort Shaw Industrial School*. Master of Education paper, Montana State University, 1958. For an account of the 1904 Fort Shaw women's basketball team, see Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith, *Full-Court Quest: The Girls from Fort Shaw Indian School, Basketball Champions of the World* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008).

31. R[ichard] H[enry] Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians With Whites." *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction, June 23–29, 1893* (Boston: George H. Ellis, 1892), 46. Pratt's reference to "a great general" is to General Philip Sheridan who reportedly said (in 1869), "The only good Indians I ever saw were dead." The origin of the quotation, which became the oft quoted genocidal phrase, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," is disputed. Sheridan biographers have not traced the words to Sheridan. The phrase may have originated with Congressman James Michael Cavanaugh who said, speaking to an Indian Appropriation Bill at the Second Session of the 40th United States Congress on May 28, 1868, "I have never in my life seen a good Indian (and I have seen thousands) except when I have seen a dead Indian." *The Congressional Globe, Fortieth Congress, second session* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Congressional Globe, 1868), May 28, 1868, 2638. For a full discussion of this often repeated quotation, see, Wolfgang Mieder, "'The Only Good Indian Is a Dead Indian': History and Meaning of a Proverbial Stereotype." *Journal of American Folklore* 106, No. 419 (Winter, 1993), 38–60.
32. The genocide perpetrated against Native Americans in the United States and Canada—which included transmission of disease, massacre, taking of land and property, forceful relocation to reservations, and the establishment of the residential Indian School system—has been well documented. Among many resources, see, Benjamin Madley, "Reexamining the American Genocide Debate: Meaning, Historiography, and New Methods." *American Historical Review* 120, No. 1 (February 2015), 98–139. Also, David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875–1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020). Also, Ward Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004). Churchill's work is considered controversial due to accusations of plagiarism and research misconduct that led to his dismissal from his position as professor of Indian Studies at University of Colorado, Boulder, but his sourcing is helpful in tracing the history of Indian Schools in the United States. For a recent commentary on the effect the residential Indian school system had on Native American children, see, Zach Levitt, Yuliya Parshina-Kottas, Simon Romero, and Tim Wallace, "The War Against Children," *New York Times*, August 30, 2023.
33. *Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School Register of Students (Descriptive Record of Students as Admitted)*, 1892–1908. National Archives at Denver, NAID 2585217, 13.
34. *Great Falls Tribune* (Montana), June 19, 1901.
35. "Indians Take a Holiday," *Great Falls Tribune*, September 15, 1901.
36. "Indian and White on the Gridiron," *Great Falls Tribune*, November 29, 1900. Also, "Indians Make a Good Start," *Great Falls Tribune*, October 21, 1901. Miscellaneous Supply Books, 1863–1920, Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School. National Archives at Denver, BNS-075-97-147, box 1, 1900, 156. The only entry on the page reads: "John Koon. 1900. 2 colts. K on left shoulder."
37. "Former Fort Shaw Indian Toots Own Horn up Ladder to Success," *Great Falls Tribune* (Montana), March 4, 1938.
38. *Record of Employees, Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School*. National Archives at Denver NAID 2585292, 5.
39. "Sioux Indian Gives Sausaphone [sic] Concert," *Tampa Times*, April 2, 1926.
40. *Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School Sanitary Report, Dr. W.H. Winslow, Superintendent*, October 2, 1894–June 20, 1899. National Archives at Denver, NAID 2585288, 42, 45, 49. The entry for Annie Kuhn's illness reads, "Rheumatic fever, acute muscular articular; death due to infection extending to brain and [spinal] cord." For Annie Kuhn's grave, see, "Anna Koon," Fort Shaw Military Cemetery (Fort Shaw, Montana), findagrave.com/memorial/91683273/anna-koon.
41. "Maroons Given a Scare by Indians." *Inter Ocean* (Chicago), November 8, 1903. For John Kuhn as a substitute player at Haskell, see "Haskell Looks Bad," *Kansas City Times*, October 3, 1903.
42. "The Best Year in the School's Life," *Great Falls Tribune* (Montana), June 27, 1900.
43. "The Band Concert," *Indian Leader* (Lawrence, Kansas), February 27, 1903.
44. "Indian Musicians: Haskell Band One of the Great Musical Organizations of the West," *Lawrence Daily Journal* (Lawrence, Kansas), April 16, 1903.
45. *Student record of John Kuhn, Haskell Indian Industrial School*. National Archives at Kansas City, Record group 75, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Haskell Indian Junior College, Student case files (1884–1980), National Archives identifier 592971.
46. "In Music's Domain." *Cincinnati Enquirer*, August 21, 1904.
47. Laurence M. Hauptman, "From Carlisle to Carnegie Hall: the Musical Career of Dennison Wheelock," in *The Oneida Indians in the Age of Allotment, 1860–1920*, ed. Laurence M. Hauptman and L. Gordon McLester III (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 112–138.
48. "The Most Famous Band in the U. S.—They Really Make Music," *Jeffersonian Gazette*, August 26, 1903. John Kuhn is listed as playing "sausaphone" in the band.
49. J. Kent McAnally, "The Haskell (Institute) Indian Band in 1904: The World's Fair and Beyond." *Journal of Band Research* 31, No. 2 (Spring 1996), 10–17.
50. John Kuhn played one game as a substitute lineman for the Haskell football game in the 1904 football season (September 23) before leaving Haskell on September 30. "Haskell Plays To-morrow," *Topeka Daily Herald*, September 22, 1904.
51. "Football Man Was Paid \$400: Red Cloud, Member of Kryl's Band, Tells How the Carlisle Indians Rewarded Him—One of the Best Ball Players in the Country." *Muscatine News-Tribune* (Muscatine, Iowa), August 17, 1909.
52. John Kuhn, "Indian Musicians in the Modern World: 'Red Cloud,' Famous Indian Performer on the Sousaphone, Tells of One of the Most Remarkable Careers in All Musical History." *The Etude*, Vol. 38, No. 10 (October 1920), 665.
53. Carlos Montezuma, "Carlisle's Athletic Policy Criticized by Dr. Montezuma." *Chicago Tribune*, November 24, 1907.
54. "Direct Charges of Professionalism Made Against Carlisle." *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis), December 1, 1907.
55. "Carlisle Indians Reform Eligibility Code," *The North American* (Philadelphia), December 18, 1907.
56. Irina G. Popov (unpublished manuscript c. 2011, "Frontiers of a Tuba Player (Indian Trot for a Tuba Solo): A Biographical Sketch of John M. Kuhn"), advanced the theory that John Kuhn was an employee of the Carlisle Indian School and shared the name "Little Boy" with another football player at Carlisle, Scott J. Porter. But this theory cannot be supported. Porter/Little Boy was the star center for the Carlisle football team. Kuhn variously reported that he played guard and tackle for the Haskell football team, and tackle and fullback for Carlisle. Peter Hauser was Carlisle's fullback. Many articles report the roster of the Carlisle football team for individual games. Little Boy/Porter is always listed as the team's center; John Kuhn is never mentioned. Several newspaper articles have photographs of individual members of the Carlisle team; photographs of Little Boy with the football team correspond to other known photos of Scott Porter. See "Tigers Humble Indians and Win by 16 To 0," *New York Times*, November 3, 1907. Also, see a photograph of Little Boy/Scott Porter held by the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center, carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/images/little-boy-c1910. Popov also asserts that John Kuhn performed as a member of the Carlisle Indian School Band at the inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt on March 4, 1905, but this, also, cannot be supported. Not only is there no evidence that John Kuhn played with the Carlisle Band at any time, the only known photograph of the Carlisle band at Roosevelt's inauguration parade shows the Carlisle

- band with one helicon player and it is clear he is not John Kuhn. Kuhn also does not appear in any other known photographs of the Carlisle Band. For the Roosevelt inaugural parade photograph, see, "Indian chiefs headed by Geronimo, passing in review before President Roosevelt, Inauguration Day, 1905, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.," [loc.gov/resource/cph.3b03887](https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b03887).
57. Email from James Gerencser, Archivist, Carlisle Indian School Project, to Douglas Yeo, October 6, 2020.
 58. The Carlisle Indian School Project has comprehensive records for all employees. See for instance, *Semiannual Efficiency Report of Employees of Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, PA*, April 24, 1906; *Report of Irregular Employees at Indian Industrial School, Carlisle, PA*, May 31, 1905. John Kuhn's name does not appear in any Carlisle School employee records. All records of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School are available at carlisleindian.dickinson.edu.
 59. John S. Steckbeck, *Fabulous Redmen: the Carlisle Indians and Their Famous Football Teams* (Harrisburg: J. Horace McFarland Co., 1951).
 60. "Indian Football Player Member of Sousa's Band." *Enid Daily Eagle* (Enid, Oklahoma), December 18, 1919.
 61. William T. Hagan, "Archival Captive—The American Indian." *American Archivist* 41, No. 2 (April 1978), 135.
 62. John Kuhn, "Indian Musicians in the Modern World." *The Etude*, Vol. 38, No. 10 (October 1920), 665.
 63. The only documented times when John Kuhn stepped foot out of the United States were for concerts in Canada when he played with John Philip Sousa's Band on Sousa's 1919–1920 tour, and when Kuhn traveled with the Isham Jones Orchestra to London for concerts in November and December 1925. See *List of United States Citizens, S.S. Mauretania*, sailing from Southampton December 8, 1925, arriving at Port of New York, December 14, 1925.
 64. Interview of Katherine Kuhn Rose and Kevin Leahy by Douglas Yeo, January 14, 2023.
 65. James P. Gregory Jr., "The Story of Cora Youngblood Corson." *International Tuba Euphonium Association Journal* 48, No. 4 (Summer 2021), 71–72.
 66. "Full Blooded Indian is Best Tuba Player," *The Tribune* (Coshocton, Ohio), August 2, 1922.
 67. "Spring to be Tardy if Tuba Playing Weatherman is Right." *Winnipeg Tribune*, March 20, 1937.
 68. "Sousa Captivates Music Lovers at Concerts Monday," *Daily Times Journal* (Fort William, Ontario), August 5, 1919. John Kuhn is quoted, "I was out one day on stretcher duty, and you know stretcher-bearers are unarmed. I was helping to carry in a wounded officer, and a big Fritzle appeared suddenly ready to stick me with his bayonet. I had nothing but my two fists, but I handed him one, and he fell like a clubbed ox." While John Kuhn registered for the draft during World War II (Registration Card, No. 4226, April 27, 1942)—he was 59 years old and did not serve—there is no record of him serving in the U.S. Military during World War I.
 69. Harvey Phillips with Mary Campbell (amanuensis), *Mr. Tuba: Harvey Phillips* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 464.
 70. See "Census of the Yankton Sioux Indians of Fort Peck Agency, Montana," June 30, 1905; July 1, 1906; June 30, 1907; June 30, 1908.
 71. "Comments on the Films: The Flaming Arrow," *Moving Picture World*, Vol. 15, No. 12, March 22, 1913, 1121.
 72. Advertisement for "The Flaming Arrow" at the Orpheum Theatre, *Larimer County Independent* (Fort Collins, Colorado), January 13, 1909. Also, "Items of Interest," *Indian Leader* (Lawrence, Kansas), February 12, 1909. Also, "Lawrence News Notes," *Lawrence Daily World*, February 9, 1909.
 73. Glenn Bridges, *Pioneers in Brass* (Detroit: Sherwood Publications, 1965), 54–56.
 74. "John Kuhn is now with Kryl's band," *Indian Leader* (Lawrence, Kansas), September 17, 1909.
 75. To be clear, Red Cloud (Maŋpiya Lúta, 1822–1909) was the celebrated leader of the Oglala Lakota from 1868 to 1909. He died on December 10, 1909, just a few months after John Kuhn adopted his name. John Kuhn never explained how he came to use the title "Chief." Russell Moore (1912–1983), an Akimel O'odham (Pima) from Arizona who played trombone with Louis Armstrong and other jazz groups, told a story of why people called him "Big Chief," an explanation that might shed some light on how "Chief" came to be associated with John Kuhn: "Well, most Indians that attain a certain amount of fame, things like that, they always called them 'Chief.' They don't know your name but they know you're into—'Hey Chief,' you know, that's how—'Big Chief,' that's how I was always known." Douglas Yeo, "Take it Big Chief! An Appreciation of Russell Moore," *International Trombone Association Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (July 2017), 18–33.
 76. "Chautauqua to Close Tonight: Bohumir Kryl and His Famous Band Will Be the Attraction," *Springfield (Missouri) Leader and Press*, July 18, 1910. Also, "The Season-End at Electric," *Kansas City (Missouri) Star*, September 4, 1910. Also, "Seats Are In Demand," *Sioux City Journal*, July 7, 1909.
 77. "What Cincinnati Thought of Chautauqua Attraction," *Coffeyville (Kansas) Weekly Journal*, June 25, 1909.
 78. "Kryl and His Band at Chautauqua Yesterday," *The Gazette* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa), July 5, 1910.
 79. "Kryl's Band the Best," *Macomb (Illinois) Journal*, August 12, 1909.
 80. "Kryl Band Makes a Great Hit," *Parsons (Kansas) Daily Eclipse*, July 26, 1909.
 81. Advertisement for "Gala Concert, University Regimental Band," *Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison), January 24, 1910.
 82. "The Chautauqua Closes," *Twice-a-Week Plain Dealer* (Cresco, Iowa), July 15, 1910.
 83. *Conn's Musical Truth*, Vol. 9, No. 11 (1912).
 84. Dave Detwiler, "Marching Through the Early History of the Sousaphone," *International Tuba Euphonium Association Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Spring 2015), 27–39. Also, Dave Detwiler, "Sousaphone Milestones in Sousa's Incredible Band," *International Tuba Euphonium Association Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Fall 2023), 34–46.
 85. Email from Dave Detwiler to Douglas Yeo, July 22, 2023.
 86. "From Coast to Coast With Sousa," *Musical Courier*, Vol. 80, No. 6, February 5, 1920, 50.
 87. Don Foster, "Listening In," *Daily Times* (Chicago), May 17, 1940.
 88. Larry Wolters, "Earl Burnett's Band Appeals to Dance Lovers," *Chicago Tribune*, January 28, 1934. The reference to Native American women as "maiden" is, today, considered offensive.
 89. David Maraniss, *Path Lit By Lightning: The Life of Jim Thorpe* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 2022), 46.
 90. John M. Kuhn, Application for Account Number, U.S. Social Security Act. Form SS-5, Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service, January 4, 1936.
 91. Patrick Warfield, "The Essence of Uncle Sam: John Philip Sousa's 1911 World Tour" in *Kongressbericht Oberwölz/Steiermark 2004*. Alta Musica 25, ed. Bernhard Habla, (Tutzing, Ger.: Schneider, 2006), 370–372.
 92. Japanese soprano Tamaka Miura was soloist with Sousa on two occasions in 1915 and 1916, but John Kuhn was the only person of color to serve as an instrumental member of Sousa's Bands. See, Paul Edmund Bierley, *The Incredible Band of John Philip Sousa* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 227. From time to time, media reported the assertion that Robert Bruce—a baritone horn player (Chippewa) who attended Fort Shaw Indian Industrial School

- and subsequently switched to cornet—was a member of Sousa's band. But a check of all rosters of the Sousa Band has not turned up Bruce's name. For the unsubstantiated assertion that Bruce played with Sousa, see, John Greer, "Brief history of Indian education at the Fort Shaw Industrial School." Master of Education thesis, Montana State University, 1958, 50–51. Also, "Robert Bruce," in Dakota Datebook Archive (reprinted from *Cavalier County Republican*, December 9, 1926), Prairie Public Newsroom, December 2, 2012, news.prairiepublic.org/show/dakota-datebook-archive/2022-05-29/robert-bruce. Scott Schwartz, Archivist for Music and Fine Arts and Director Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, confirmed that Bruce's name does not appear in any Sousa Band rosters or pressbooks. Email from Scott Schwartz to Douglas Yeo, April 23, 2023.
93. Paul E. Bierley, *The Works of John Philip Sousa* (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 100.
 94. For a discussion of *Dwellers of the Western World*, see, Patrick Warfield, "The Essence of Uncle Sam: John Philip Sousa's 1911 World Tour," 372–377.
 95. John Kuhn, "Indian Musicians in the Modern World: 'Red Cloud,' Famous Indian Performer on the Sousaphone, Tells of One of the Most Remarkable Careers in All Musical History." *The Etude* Vol. 38, No. 10, 665.
 96. Kuhn family members recall hearing that John Kuhn's children played on the stage set up for the band before the concert at the Buckingham Fountain dedication. Interview of Katherine Kuhn Rose and Kevin Leahy by Douglas Yeo, January 14, 2023.
 97. Paul E. Bierley, *Sousa Band Fraternal Society News Index* (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1998).
 98. Isham Jones moved to New York City in March 1925, returned to Chicago in the summer of 1929, and then moved back to New York City in the late spring of 1932. Email from Mark Berresford to Douglas Yeo, September 29, 2023.
 99. For a discussion of dance bands in Chicago, see Charles A. Sengstock Jr., *That Toddlin' Town: Chicago's White Dance Bands and Orchestras, 1900–1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).
 100. An important collection of the 1920 Rainbo Orchestra recordings for Brunswick is *Isham Jones Rainbo Orchestra: HAPPY* (Archeophone 6008). This compact disc release has a superb, informative booklet that is marred only by some incorrect information about John Kuhn. The 1920 Brunswick sessions with Jones were recorded in New York City, probably in June, October, and December.
 101. Douglas Yeo, "Carroll F. Martin," *An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Tuba, and Euphonium Player* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 85.
 102. Email from Mary Newman McKinney (Taylor Music), to Douglas Yeo, January 24, 2023. Email from Don Harry to Douglas Yeo, August 2, 2023.
 103. *5 Dollars, Silver Certificate, United States, 1899*, americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1346450.
 104. "Medals for Isham Jones," *Conn's Musical Truth*, Vol. 9, No. 30 (1922), 14.
 105. "Isham Jones Brass Trio," *Conn's Musical Truth*, Vol. 11, No. 32 (1923), 8.
 106. A photo from the same photo shoot with the Brunswick artists in a different pose was printed in *Talking Machine World*, "Caught in Characteristic Poses: Gathered in a Single Photograph, Five Brunswick Artists Show the Way in Which they Record Their Dance Melodies," *Talking Machine World*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (February 15, 1923), 35.
 107. *List of United States Citizens*, S. S. *Mauratania*, sailing from Southampton, December 8, 1925, arriving at Port of New York, December 14, 1925, 53.
 108. Advertisement for Conn School of Music. Undated clipping, Sousa Band Press Book 60, part 1, 1923–1924.
 109. "Where to Dine," advertisement for The Benson Orchestra, *Chicago Daily News*, January 12, 1929.
 110. Charlie Davis, "Copenhagen." Brunswick 78rpm A8100. Elmer Schoebel and his Friar's Society Orchestra, Chicago, October 18, 1929, youtu.be/CJJPKvonz84.
 111. Souvenir Program, Oneida Indian Centennial, August 5, 6, and 7, 1921, De Pere, Wisconsin.
 112. Email from Frank Vilella (Archivist, Chicago Symphony Orchestra) to Douglas Yeo, July 11, 2023.
 113. "Full-Blooded Indian is Best Tuba Player," *The Tribune* (Coshocton, Ohio), August 2, 1922.
 114. Email from Mark Fonder to Douglas Yeo, January 30 and 31, 2023. For a comprehensive account of Conway and his band, see, Mark Fonder, *Patrick Conway and His Famous Band* (Galesville, Maryland: Meredith Music, 2012).
 115. *Bass Catalog*, C. G. Conn, Ltd., 1923–1924. The Conn "Chief mouthpiece" is featured on page 19; Kuhn's Conn endorsement is on page 22.
 116. Douglas Yeo, "Sousaphone," *An Illustrated Dictionary for the Modern Trombone, Tuba, and Euphonium Player* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), 138–139.
 117. For an account of Jack Dempsey training at Clarence "Pop" Soper's Ranch, see, Mark Lewis, *Going the Distance*. Ojaihub.com, December 27, 2018, ojaihub.com/going-the-distance.
 118. Rich Samuels, "Tour Guide," *Broadcasting in Chicago: 1921–1989 (and thereafter)*, *With Special Emphasis on the NBC Studios in the Merchandise Mart*. richsamuels.com/nbcmm/trguide.html.
 119. Charles J. Gilcrest, "It's Parlez This and That when Irene Gordon Sings with Rudy Vallee Tonight," *Chicago Daily Times*, April 21, 1932.
 120. "Code Talkers," *Minot Daily News*, June 13, 2014. In 2008, the United States Mint issued a commemorative medal honoring the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes Code talkers, usmint.gov/coins/coin-medal-programs/medals/native-american-code-talkers/fort-peck-assiniboine-and-sioux-tribes.
 121. Charles J. Gilcrest, "Fred Waring May Hold Off on Radio Contracts Unless He Gets Right Amount of \$\$," *Chicago Daily News*, March 6, 1937.
 122. "Have a Drag, Chiefie!," *Chicago Sun*, May 19, 1942.
 123. Rosalyn R. Lapier and David R. M. Beck, *City Indian: Native American Activism in Chicago, 1893–1934* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 91–92.
 124. "A Group of Sioux Indians," *Chicago Daily News*, May 27, 1937.
 125. "Women of Indian Descent to Campaign to Change Views," *Chicago Tribune*, March 11, 1930. For a discussion of First Daughters of America, see, Rosalyn R. Lapier and David R. M. Beck, *City Indian: Native American Activism in Chicago, 1893–1934* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 106–113.
 126. Andrew C. Isenberg, "Toward a Policy of Destruction: Buffaloes, Law, and the Market, 1803–83," *Great Plains Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Fall 1992), 233–234.
 127. Chief White Bison's handwritten account of Chief Joseph's speech has the look of having been written from memory; several words differ from the recorded account of the speech. The original speech as traditionally rendered is reprinted in this article. For an account of how Chief Joseph's speech was recorded and passed down—and the ongoing dispute behind its authorship—see, George Venn, "Chief Joseph's Surrender Speech As a Literary Text," revised from *Oregon English Journal* Vol. 20 (1998), 69–73, ochcom.org/pdf/Wood-Venn.pdf. Also, George Venn, "C.E.S. Wood's 1877 Diary of Alaska and the Nez Perce Conflict," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 106, No. 1 (Spring 2005), 34–75.
 128. Letter from Chief White Bison, Man of the Morning, to Chief Red Cloud, J. Kuhn, September 12, 1942. Kuhn Family Collection.

129. "Famous Indian Bandman Plays Superb Music," *Daily Record* (Cedar Falls, Iowa), November 6, 1933.
130. See Dave Detwiler's blog articles about the Cedar Falls Conn Sousaphone: "By April 1900, ten Sousaphones," *Strictly Oompah*, October 26, 2012, tubapastor.blogspot.com/2012/10/by-april-1900-ten-sousaphones.html; "The Cedar Falls, Iowa, horn today," *Strictly Oompah*, October 27, 2012, tubapastor.blogspot.com/2012/10/the-cedar-falls-iowa-horn-today_27.html; "More on an early Conn Sousaphone," *Strictly Oompah*, January 10, 2019, tubapastor.blogspot.com/2019/01/more-on-early-conn-sousaphone.html.
131. Frank Kull, Elkhorn, Wisconsin, Application for Patent, Musical Wind Instrument, United States Patent Office No. 1,932,742, filed November 12, 1932; granted October 31, 1933. patentimages.storage.googleapis.com/30/0d/31/ca6f1910cd979d/US1932742.pdf.
132. John M. Kuhn and Jaroslav Cimera, *Kuhn-Cimera Method for Tuba, BB-flat and E-flat* (Rockville Center: Belwin, Inc, 1941).
133. Jaroslav Cimera and Nilo W. Hovey, *Cimera-Hovey Method for Trombone and Baritone (Bass Clef), Book One* (Rockville Centre: Belwin, 1940).
134. Paul E. Bierley, *The Works of John Philip Sousa* (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 74-75.
135. Email from Potentate Jay Alfirevic (Medinah Shriners), to Douglas Yeo, July 13, 2023.
136. Obituary of John Kuhn, *Chicago Tribune*, January 12, 1962. Local 10 of the American Federation of Musicians is the musician's union for Chicago.
137. Bill Bell, *Chief John*, in *Tuba Solos with Piano Accompaniment* (Belwin Mills, 1963/1984). The dedication of the composition reads, "Dedicated to the late John Kuhn, famous Indian Tuba player."

▶ John Kuhn (center) with members of an unidentified band, 1920s.



▶ Left: John Kuhn (detail) with the Sousa Band, Willow Grove Park, Pennsylvania, 1920. Courtesy of Paul Bierley Collection, Sousa Archives and Center for American Music, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



▶ Right: John Kuhn with his son, William, Lincoln Park, Chicago, ca. 1921.

