

125th Anniversary of the Stars & Stripes Forever

John Philip Sousa began his career in the United States Marine Band at the age of 13, serving as an apprentice "boy" who had enlisted to receive instruction "in the trade or mystery of a musician." Prior to his being appointed Leader of the Marine Band, he directed various theatrical and operatic companies.

The Marine records show he enlisted in 1868 and served many years, ending in 1892.

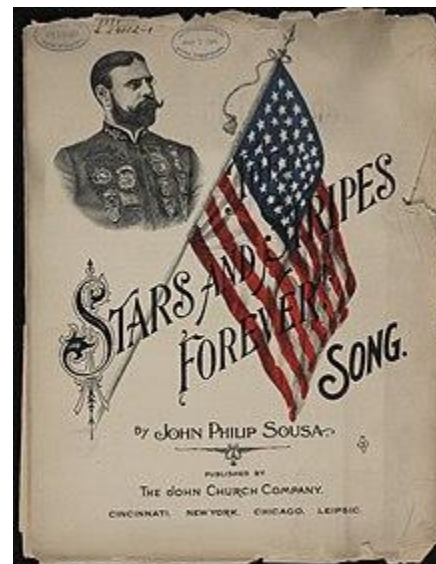
Sousa became leader of the Marine Band on October 1, 1880. The Band made its first concert tour of the United States, visiting the eastern and middle states in 1891, and the Pacific coast in 1892. These tours gave the people of the United States an excellent opportunity to know Sousa, and to hear the United States Marine Band.

During the twelve years Sousa served as Leader, the Marine Band played at open air concerts at the White House Grounds, at the Capitol Plaza, state dinners, receptions at the White House, diplomatic and other public affairs.

In November 1889, the Marine Band, under Sousa, furnished the music on the occasion of the "Centennial Celebration of the Ratification of the Constitution of the United States by North Carolina" at Fayetteville, North Carolina.

His last appearance before the Marine Band was in 1932 at Washington, D.C. The Marine Band furnished the music for the big event. Sousa, as a distinguished guest, arose from the speaker's table, took the leader's place on the podium, and conducted the Marine Band in the stirring strains of "The Stars and Stripes Forever." It is said that no band ever played with so much spirit.

Source: Marine Corp University website
<https://www.usmcu.edu/>



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Commemorative Events 2022-2024