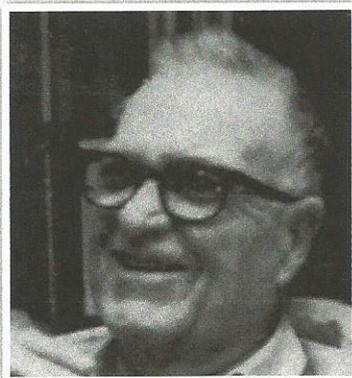


A Tribute to Bob Hoe (1922-1983)

by John A. Johnson, former WJU #2007



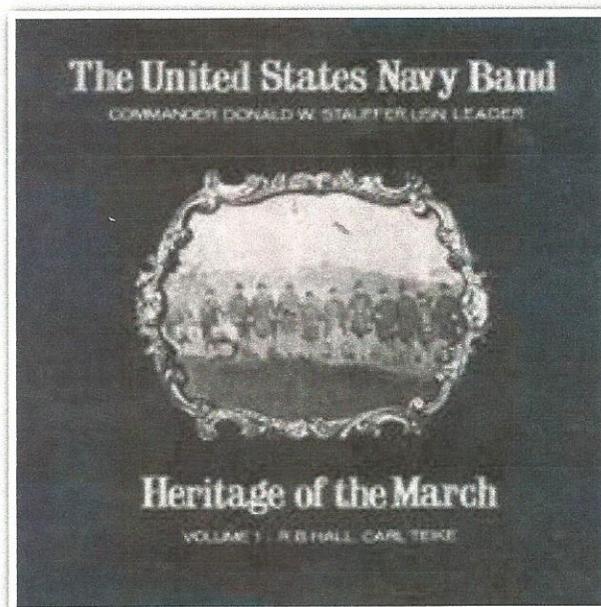
Bob Hoe was truly a unique individual. He was an “alpha male”, a take charge person. He was born into old money -- he was actually Robert Hoe V -- but no one would ever suspect that unless they knew him well. His house was in Hyde Park, NY, but he always

said he lived in Poughkeepsie. He disdained any “airs” and dressed casually. When he was a teenager, he once came to the dinner table wearing his scuffed baseball uniform. The rest of the family was dressed for dinner and his Father told him if he ever came to dinner like that again, he would have to go down and eat with the servants. Bob got up from the table and went to eat with the servants.

Robert Hoe “the First” was born in 1784 and studied carpentry before immigrating to the United States in 1803 from England. With a partner, he formed a company specializing in the manufacture of wooden hand presses. In 1822, upon the partner’s death, the business name changed to R. Hoe & Company. After his death in 1833, sons Richard and Robert II took over daily operation of the company, making improvements that established its printing press products as competitively superior. They truly revolutionized small town newspaper printing. When Richard and Robert II both died in 1886, Robert Hoe III assumed control of the company. He lived on East 36th Street in New York City. He was also an extensive collector of rare books and manuscripts as well as other art objects. Upon his death in 1909, his estate was valued at \$8.4 million. His son, Robert Hoe IV, assumed control of the company and ran it until 1924 when it was incorporated as a public company and new leadership came in.

Robert Hoe “the Fifth”, was born January 15, 1922. Bob had always loved music as long as it was being played by a band. He played the euphonium and loved playing along with his records. He traveled the country and Europe collecting complete sets of music. He would make friends with bandmasters and would copy music from their libraries. He came to realize there was a lot of excellent music which was not recorded. He also got fed up with buying records which had the same music on them as other records he owned, and decided to expand the repertoire.

His solution to the problem was to start making his own records. He was friendly with Commander Donald W. Stauffer, the United States Navy Band conductor (and WJU member #1552). After going through a lot of red tape, he and Stauffer would make records, which Bob would pay to produce. They were technically registered as “recruiting material.” Each record would have marches by a European composer on one side and an American composer on the other side. None of the marches were previously recorded. In 1973, the Navy Band released the first of its fifteen LPs in the *Heritage of the March* series, and, thanks to Bob, these went to libraries, music schools and lovers of band music.



Bob now had the record making bug. He eventually made records with many other service bands and College and high school bands. The deal was the band got 200 copies of the record as payment for their participation. Ultimately, there were nine series of records, several with just a small number of LP's each, but totaling 263 LPs overall. It's estimated he gave away over 250,000 individual records to those who would appreciate them. And if they didn't seem to be appreciative, they came off Bob's list! The project was funded by donations and his own estate, made as the owner of one of the largest millwork businesses in the country, his chain of bowling alleys in upper New York state, and, of course, inheritances. Bob was thrifty, but if he believed in something, he would pay for it. He did have to be pressured into recording in stereo, however, as he was deaf in one ear and couldn't appreciate the difference it made.

The first in the series is collectively entitled *The Heritage of the March*. It is comprised of 185 vinyl records of marches and galops and was released from 1973 to 1988. It features nearly 3,000 different marches and is the largest series in history. These are numbered 1 to 90, and include recordings by specific composers (one per side) and are mostly performed by service bands. Additional recordings of marches are lettered A through QQQQ. (Note: there were some labeling irregularities. Volume 89 was omitted, but Volumes 54 and 84 were two-record sets. Also 0000 was omitted and QQQQ was erroneously labeled as the previously released PPPP. So, there were 91 numbered and 94 lettered albums in the *Heritage of the March* series.)

The Coast Guard Band, United States Military Academy Band, and the Armed Forces Bicentennial Band were included in recording volumes 16 through 30. For volumes 31 - 90, the series was opened to various bands, including bands outside the U.S. The lettered portion of the series included additional music by composers already featured in the "numbered" albums.

Overall, a large variety of composers were featured on the recordings. Some of the most recorded ones include names familiar to Windjammer members, such as Fred Jewell, Karl L. King, Russell Alexander, C.L. Barnhouse, and W.P. Chambers.

The second series of 21 are band transcriptions by The United States Marine Band. The third series contains six recordings made by the Allentown Band, with which Bob had a close relationship. Series four to eight are miscellaneous sets. The ninth series contains the eighteen-LP, nine-volume set of The United States Marine Band playing *The Heritage of John Philip Sousa*.

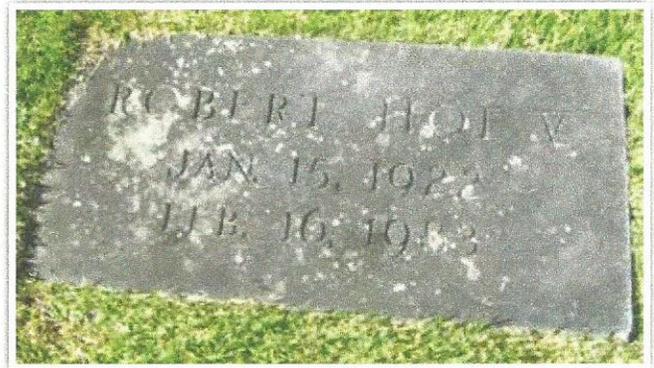
Bob had help in his endeavors. An employee of the telephone company would call people with the same last name of the composer and living in the area where the music was published to get biographic information. He had two arrangers making band arrangements from piano and small orchestra publications. Several men were writing the program notes. Some fellow enthusiasts in the Washington, D.C. area combed the Library of Congress stacks looking for music. For my part, as a recording engineer, I took on the job of making the records sound as good as possible, starting with #34. At commercial rates, I figure Bob saved \$250,000 from my volunteer support of his project.

Beginning in 2010, digital copies of selected volumes were made available for purchase and download on Amazon and iTunes. Altissimo Recordings, in collaboration with the Robert Hoe Foundation, have begun releasing selected *Heritage of John Philip Sousa* and *Heritage of the March*

volumes on compact discs. Art Himmelberger (WJU #2989) has current control of the Hoe music library and archives and has relocated it to Marist College, where he is director of bands.

Bob Hoe was an Associate Member of the American Bandmasters Association. Bob was inducted into the Windjammer Hall of Fame in January, 1975, our fourth such inductee.

Robert Hoe V died February 16, 1983 and is buried at Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Westchester County, New York with an understated marker. His wife, Marilyn (Cannon) Hoe, WJU #1199, died March 6, 2000. They had two children, Robert Hoe VI and Diane.



In 1984, The United States Coast Guard Band produced a tribute album, titled: *Robert Hoe V: In Memoriam*. The lead tune on Side Two of this LP is *Hagenbeck-Wallace Grand Entry* by Charles W. Storm. As Bob Hoe would say, the picture fits!

