



Baca's Brass Band, ca 1932 at the Fayetteville Precinct Courthouse Square Band Stage

Edward "Eddie" Baca, Frank A. Baca, Jr., Ludwig B. Baca, John R. Baca (Director), Raymond "Ray" Baca Sr., V. Kulhanek, Anton Kulhanek, Frank Gerik, Rudolph A. Baca, Frank Kulhanek, Lad Baca, Leonard Baca

Bands, Records, Celebrations, Orchestras

In 1912 the Baca Band and Orchestra was honored by the grandson of the famous Czech Composer Antonin Dvorak. While visiting Texas, he stopped in Fayetteville and played with the band under the leadership of Joe Baca.

When WWI soldiers returned home to Fayetteville, they were treated with the respect they well deserved. Uniformed soldiers were led by the Baca Band as they marched around the town of Fayetteville and to the SPIST Hall.

In 1920, Joe O. Baca died at the early age of 37. Everyone thought that would surely be the end of the band but thankfully, it was not. John R. Baca stepped up to the plate and became the bands new leader.

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The Band played for the first time for Houston's KPRC Radio Station in 1926 and 1927. With the recordings of the John R. Baca Orchestra made for the OKEH Phonograph, in 1931 for Columbia and 1935 for the Brunswick Corporation, he became known as the "Polka King of Texas."

The John R. Baca Band celebrated their 40th Anniversary in the summer of 1932 in Fayetteville Included with the twelve members of that day, three were members of the original Baca Band . They were: Joseph Janak of West, John Kovar of Fayetteville and Frank J. Morave of Robstown. A large parade was held with four other bands attending. The Baca Band led the way to the SPJST Hall where all parades concluded. The Baca Band also played at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church service that day. A feast of around 2,000 pounds of barbecue and tons of stew were served. Baseball games were played in the evening and music was played all day.

In 1932 the Fayetteville Courthouse Square Bandstand was built. The Baca Band gave Sunday concerts there for many years to the delight of townspeople and visitors.

The John R. Baca Band participated in the 1936 Centennial Celebration. The youngest member was John's son Clarence who was playing the drums at age sixteen. In later years, Clarence and two others organized the SPJST Lodge #88 Concert Band. In 1962 he organized the Clarence Baca Band and played until 1998. They played at places like the Rice Hotel, Shamrock Hotel, Bill Mraz Dance Hall, SPJST Lodge #88, all in Houston, and the Buccaneer Hotel in Galveston while they were making records.

In around 1933, Raymond "Ray" Baca, Leonard Baca, Frank A. Baca, Jr., and Frank Kulhanek organized a band of their own with Ray as the leader. They named it "Baca's New Deal Orchestra". That year, the band won first place for their arrangement of "Rancho Grande" at the Yoakum's Tom Tom Festival.

In 1937, John R.'s brother Ludwig "L.B." Baca left John R. Baca's band. He moved to Rowena and took charge of the Ripple Orchestra and renamed it the Baca-Ripple Orchestra. In 1938 he changed the name to the L.B. Baca Orchestra.

Ladislav "Lad" Baca was the son of Joe O. Baca and Louisa Krenek Baca. He was taught to play the drums at the age of nine by his father. He soon learned to play seven instruments and had the ability to play any new instrument within five minutes of picking it up. At the request of Elo Rohde, the Fayetteville High School Superintendent, he taught the first Fayetteville High School Band. A deal was made with the school that his parents, not the school, would pay him.

The divided orchestras now consisted of John R. Baca's Orchestra, Ray Baca's New Deal Orchestra (later changed to Ray Baca's Orchestra), and the L.B. Baca Orchestra. They all had that famous and very popular "Baca Beat."