



## Music Helps Ohio City Face First Christmas of WWII

DEC 21 Posted by [mruthmyers](#)

Imagine how hard it must have been for American families and communities to maintain any semblance of Christmas spirit in 1941. The Dec. 6 attack on Pearl Harbor had just thrust the previously divided country into World War II. Yet in Dayton, Ohio, two civic events lifted spirits as the city push determinedly on in that devastating holiday season.



Members of the 1941 Inland Children's Chorus in their spring concert earlier that year. Used with permission of [InlandChorus.com](http://InlandChorus.com)

### Inland Children's Chorus

Just two weeks after Pearl Harbor members of the Inland Children's Chorus gave its annual Christmas concert. Chorus members were children ages 8-16 whose parents worked at the Inland Manufacturing Division of General Motors Corporation.

The group was still fairly new. Inland hatched the idea and started sponsoring the chorus in 1936. According to [www.inlandchorus.com](http://www.inlandchorus.com) which preserves the history of the chorus, the goal was to give children of employees "a musical education and training which they otherwise might not be able to obtain and to make a contribution to the cultural life of Inland employees and the community." To that end, they presented two concerts each year, one in spring and one at Christmas. A Broadway theatrical designer was brought in to stage the performances.

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Want to touch the past? You can listen to those young chorus members actually singing one of the selections on that program, [Silent Night](#). Recordings were usually made of each program, but because of the reasons cited by Prof. Alred, none was made of the 1941 Christmas concert. You'll be hearing the one from the previous year. Most of the voices singing are those of children who also sang in 1941, since members of the chorus usually remained in it until they aged out.

## Deeds Carillon

On Christmas Eve of 1941, Dayton residents got an unexpected gift of Christmas cheer. For the first time they heard music ring from the bells of a soaring new carillon built just south of downtown. The gift of Colonel and Mrs. Edward Deeds, the carillon and its 151-foot tower wouldn't be completed until 1942. (The first official concert there took place on Easter Sunday of 1942.)

But on Dec. 24, 1941, when families knew sons and husbands and other loved ones would soon be leaving to fight on foreign shores, those bells of the new carillon lent what sweetness they could. The impromptu concert was even broadcast on one of the local radio stations, WHIO.

When originally built, the carillon had 23 bells, each inscribed with the name of a Deeds family member, living or dead. Today it has 57 bells and is the centerpiece of [Carillon Historical Park](#), a large and constantly growing enterprise whose displays, buildings and vehicles showcase the entire sweep of Dayton history.

Readers of [Maximum Moxie](#), the latest Maggie Sullivan mystery, can now imagine some of the sounds that cheered Maggie and the other residents of Mrs. Z's after the story ended.

Thanks to the Inland Chorus alumni for permission to use photographs and music from their [website](#). You'll enjoy a visit there.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays to all!



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Courtesy M. Ruth Myers ~ <https://ruthnew.com/2016/12/music-helps-ohio-city-face-first-christmas-of-wwii>