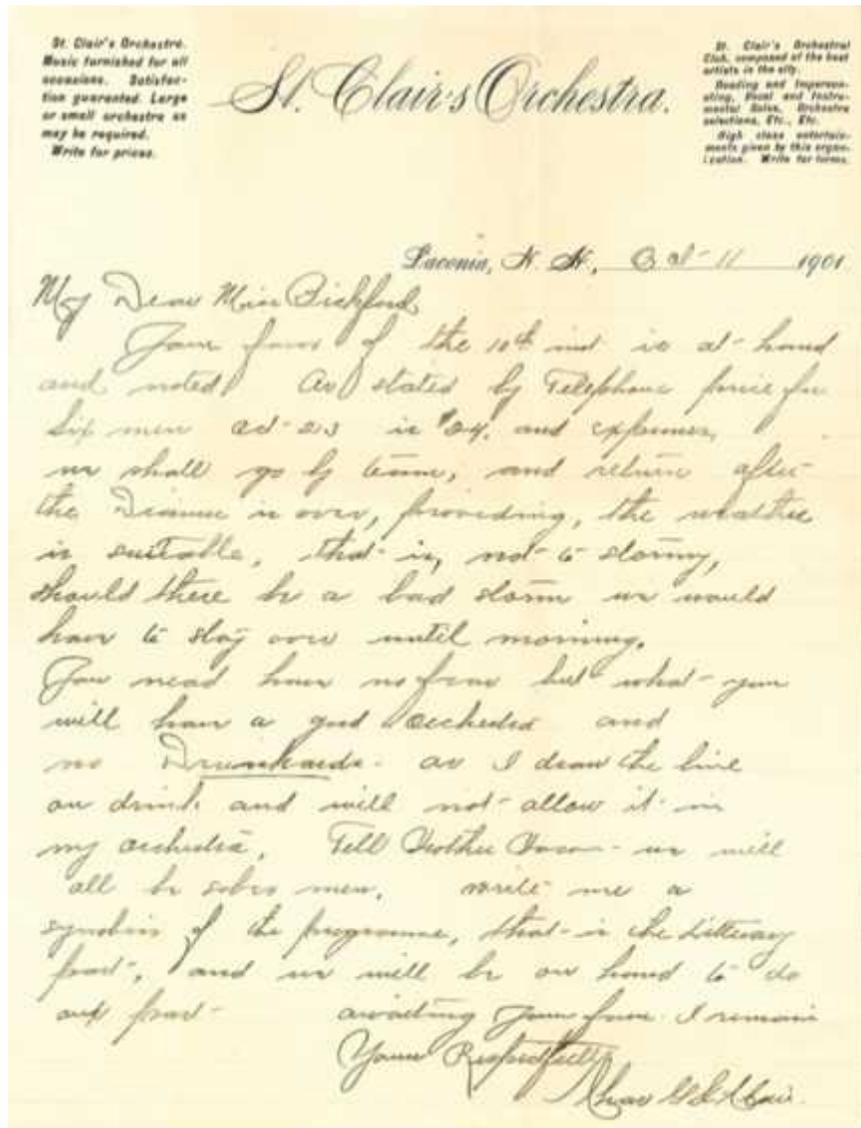


The History Corner

When St Clair's Orchestra Comes to Town, There Will Be No Drunkards!

In October of 1901, Ina Bickford reached out to Charles St. Clair, the director of Laconia's St. Clair Orchestra, to arrange a performance for a New Hampton School Literary event. The orchestra provide musical programs, dramatic readings, and other entertainment for a variety of venues in the Lakes Region. Ina (NHS Class of 1898) was not only assisting her father, Rev. Lewis Bickford, in operating the newly opened Gordon-Nash Library, but also teaching stenography and typing at New Hampton School.

In his response to Ina, Mr. St. Clair indicated that the cost for a six-person orchestra would be \$24 – and as they were coming “by team” (horse and wagon), they would also have to be accommodated for the night should the weather turn bad. Finally, Director St. Clair assured Ina that he would provide “a good orchestra and no Drunkards” as “I draw the line on drink and will not allow it in my orchestra. Tell Brother Baron we will be sober men!”



Laconia, N.H. Oct 11 1901

My Dear Miss Bickford

Your favor of the 10th inst. is at hand and noted. As stated by Telephone price for Six men Oct 23 is \$24 and expenses. We shall go by team, and return after the Dinner is over, providing the weather is suitable; that is, not too stormy. Should there be a bad storm we would have to stay over until morning.

You need have no fear but what you will have a good orchestra and no Drunkards, as I draw the line on drink and will not allow it in my orchestra. Tell Brother Baron we will be sober men.

Write me a synobsis [synopsis] of the program, that is the Literary part; and we will be on hand to do our part.

Awaiting your favor I remain

Yours Respectfully

Charles St. Clair

For more information on the history of the town, please visit the New Hampton Historical Society website at <https://www.newhamptonhistory.org/>

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