

Black Cat Luck?

13 Was Hoodoo To the Hoo Hoo Angelina Band

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Lufkin — Was it voodoo that put a hoodoo on the Hoo Hoo? This question may still perplex a few old-timers as another Friday 13 approaches this month.

For it was on that supposedly unlucky day in 1902 that members of the famed Hoo Hoo Band saw superstition crash hand on with coincidence.

Some of the bandsmen were shaken. Some grinned. But all came away with a story which has been passed down from father to son.

Harry Kerr, former Lufkin fire chief and the only surviving member of the band still living in Lufkin, said the incident happened before his time.

"But my father was a member of the original band and he told me the story," said Kerr, 77.

The band was known as the group that played the best music this side of the Angelina River.

Through the early 1900s they carried the Hoo Hoo name to practically every major city in the United States, as well as Mexico and Canada. The band was named after a lumbermen's association.

In 1904, it was a prominent feature of the World's Fair in St. Louis.

The members were a hardy bunch from the piney woods and it was said there wasn't a superstitious bone in their bodies.

The group had so much brass that they adopted the number 13 and displayed a black cat symbol on the bass drum.

Some may have had second thoughts, however, after an incident near Milwaukee.

The band had been playing in the Wisconsin city for a national convention of the Hoo Hoo lumber organization. Some of the members decided to return home by train.

The fact that they were boarding the train on Friday 13 didn't bother them, although one of them noticed they were 13 in number.

It may have been that the 13 had 13 on their minds when they counted the number of coaches on the train. There were 13.

The 13 cars were pulled by engine No. 913.

The train left right on schedule—at 11:13 a.m.

Some felt like grabbing for a horseshoe when the train wrecked, 13 miles from Milwaukee.

No one was hurt and they boarded a train to return to Milwaukee. Because of the wreck, the train detoured over the Great Northern and Chicago.

That is, until the train wrecked again, 13 miles from the station.

The bandsmen survived and the full band went on to make music throughout the nation.

Some of the musicians admitted they were never too fond of the black cat on the drum.