

September 15, 1982

Mr. Robert Benton  
Long Lane RD #2  
Doylestown, PA 18901

Dear Bob:

Yes, I am a collector of vintage drums. The drum illustrated, is as you deduced...quite old, but lacking a date I cannot be certain of its age or era. It certainly was a marching drum, which would classify it as a military-type, and it very well may go back in age to the nineteenth century.

I know that Joseph Rogers, Jr. made a great deal of drum heads throughout a good part of the twentieth century, and nineteenth century as well for that matter, and I do know that Civil War books such as Conaught's "The Blue And The Grey" in two volumes mentions that there were 64,000 field drums constructed for the Union forces in the Civil War, but they were all emblazoned with the American Eagle highlighted with the sunburst of victory, and the regimental ribbon flowing through the eagle's beak. There were stars sprinkled throughout representing the constellation, with the number of stars matching the number of states in the Union at that time, as per the enclosed illustration in the lower left of the photo. The drum to the right is a replica with missing "ears" made by "Ludwig & Ludwig" in 1927, part of a dozen or so built for the Continental Bank Fife and Drum Corps, which was later disbanded.

The drum I am holding with the color guard leader of the Phantom Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps is a Revolutionary War drum made by Porter Blanchard of Concord, New Hampshire in 1778. This drum together with the Eagle Drum are truly vintage drum, and very valuable. You will note I have kept them in excellent condition...in which I restored them by replacing hemp cord, heads, and leather "ears". This takes considerable work, and also, materials must be readily available.

Continued.....

Mr. Robert Benton  
Doylestown, PA

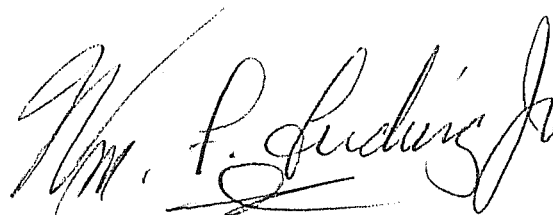
-2-

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One important clue apparent to me in the pictures is the close-up of the malleable iron hooks which were first used on rope tension drums by J. W. Pepper Company of Philadelphia in 1888, and later by Lyon & Healy in 1892 as in their Columbian Exposition models of that decade. As you can see, the Eagle drum in the illustration, along with the Porter Blanchard drum of 1778, and the "Ludwig & Ludwig" replica, all pass the hemp rope through holes in the hoop...so probably the drum in your possession was post-Civil War era, but pre-Pepper era of 1888.

I am returning the photographs you sent, and hope my answer helps you in identifying the period in which this drum was constructed.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "W. F. Ludwig, Jr.", with a horizontal line underneath the name.

William F. Ludwig, Jr.,  
President

WFL:kh