

Francis Maria Scala

(1819 – 18 Apr 1903)

The Evening Star, May 5, 1862

Dress Parade of the Marines

The first parade of the marines since receiving their new uniform took place at the Garrison this morning, in the presence of a large number of ladies and gentlemen, who were highly pleased with the appearance and discipline of the battalion. The line was formed at 10 o'clock, the band and drum corps, under Prof. Scala and Drum Major Roche, taking the right, and the four companies, numbering nearly 400 men, marching into their places; after which they were reviewed by Brig. General Harris, commandant of the corps. The battalion was then marched around the ground several times, and were drawn up in line, where they went through the manual of arms in a style which they are celebrated for; the movements being done on the instant, and the men moving as if they were part of a complicated machine. The new uniform--consisting of dark-blue coats with heavy yellow epaulettes and orange trimmings, light-blue pants, and regulation caps with a large brass frontispiece and a pompon of the smallest size--had the effect of setting off the corps to a better advantage than with the old uniform. The officers appeared in their old uniform, having been disappointed in receiving their new ones.

Scala. On Saturday, April 18, 1903, at 8:20 p.m., Francis M. Scala beloved husband of Olivia M. Scala. Funeral services at St. Peter's Church, 2d and C sts. northeast on Wednesday April 22 at 9 a.m.

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Francis Scala Dead

Was for Many Years Leader of Marine Band

Francis Scala, who is known throughout the country as the man under whom Sousa served in the Marine Band, died at his residence, 918 South Carolina avenue southeast, Saturday night shortly after 8 o'clock, after an illness of about two weeks. Mr. Scala was eighty-four years of age, and up to two weeks ago had enjoyed vigorous health. Funeral services will be held tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock at St. Peter's Church, corner of 2d and C streets southeast. Rev. Father O'Brien will celebrate solemn requiem mass and Rev. Father Krug of St. Paul's Church will preach the sermon. The interment will take place at Congressional cemetery.

Francis Scala was born in Naples, Italy, in 1819. He was about twenty years of age when he went aboard the old Brandywine of the Mediterranean fleet, in 1841, and enlisted as a third-class musician. The vessel was in the Bay of Naples at the time. Mr. Scala's family had not been musical, but the son had much talent, and had been trained at the Musical College at Naples. When he went aboard the American man-of-war he could speak no English. The executive officer of the boat could speak Italian, however, and Scala was soon playing a clarinet in the band. After serving but one month on the Brandywine Scala was placed in charge of the band. Toward the end of the year the Brandywine returned home, and Scala secured his discharge at Norfolk, the trip across the ocean having been such a terrible experience that he did not desire to have any more sailing in this life. From Norfolk the musician went to Baltimore, and finally came to this city. He soon secured a place in the Marine Band. The band at that time was only a small organization, consisting of ten or twelve members enlisted as fifiers or drummers. In 1842 Scala was made leader of the band, and found it in a terrible condition. It represented almost every civilized country on the globe, and it was not in a very high state of efficiency.

Scala, managed to do well with the little material allotted him, however, and soon built up a magnificent organization. He introduced the custom of giving open-air concerts at the Capitol and White House. He played with his band at the inaugurations of all the Presidents after Tyler. The great event of the band's history was during the visit of the Prince of Wales to this country, when the band played for the nation's guests every day. Scala was twice married and leaves eleven children. He retired from the Marine Band in 1871, after having served thirty years. During the time he was connected with the band Scala wrote many musical compositions, and attained some prominence as a composer. It was during the time he conducted the band that John Philip Sousa was enlisted as one of the musicians. Sousa was taught to play the drum and almost everything he learned about band music. Will A. Haley, leader of Haley's Band, was also a pupil of Scala's, and served with him in the Marine Band.

[Note: Leader of the US Marine Band from 1855 - 1871. Accompanied Lincoln to Gettysburg.]