

## Half-Century Piano Agencies

There are a goodly number of half-century piano men, individuals and firms who have been selling pianos for fifty years and longer, but who and where are the half-century ones that have not only been in the piano business this length of time but are today selling any make of piano they sold forty, fifty or more years ago?

A remark by Edmund Gram, who is priding himself and celebrating this year as a representative of the Steinway piano at Milwaukee for many years, suggests this "half-century" piano inquiry.

Here are several other fifty years and more Steinway houses named in alphabetical order by Steinway & Sons: Cluett & Sons, Troy, N. Y.; Denton, Cottier & Daniels, Inc., Buffalo, N. Y.; E. F. Droop & Sons, Washington, D. C.; W. J. Dyer & Bro., St. Paul; L. Gruenwald Co., Inc., New Orleans; Lyon & Healy, Inc., Chicago; M. Steinert & Sons Co., Inc., Boston; Watkins Brothers, Inc. (formerly William Wander & Sons), Hartford, Conn.

Presto-Times would like to publish the names of anyone, individual or dealer, who has been selling one certain piano which instrument he now represents, as long as half a century.

Other individuals and firms and other pianos now manufactured besides the Steinway, which is primarily referred to here because of Mr. Gram's news item concerning his record selling the Steinway, can be named in this category of long service piano selling. Among such manufacturers are Boardman & Gray, Jacob Bros., The Cable Company (now Schiller-Cable Piano Mfg. Co.), Mathushek, Sohmer & Co., Weser Bros., Kranich & Bach, Ivers & Pond, Krakauer Bros., Hardman, Peck & Co., W. W. Kimball Co., Vose & Sons, Steff, Starr, The Aeolian American controlled Chickering, Mason & Hamlin, Knabe, Haines Bros., J. & C. Fischer Steck, made at the West Rochester, N. Y., Aeolian American factory, are in part included in this category and there are still other pianos established 50 years and more that continue to be made, but the owners of which have either discontinued to manufacture or have turned their manufacture over to other factories for production and, in part at least, for marketing. These names are not included in this record.

As for Kranich & Bach, records show that Herzberg & Son, Philadelphia; Keller's, Inc., Easton, Pa.; Otto Grau's, Inc., Cincinnati; Shattinger, St. Louis; Birkel, Los Angeles; Dyer, St. Paul; Wood Bros., Pittsfield, Mass.; Gressett Music House, Meridian, Miss.; L. E. Lines Music House, Springfield, Mo.; Julius Music House, York, Pa., are among the ones who were Kranich & Bach dealers fifty years or more ago as they are today.

And of Ivers & Pond Piano Company, Bailey's Music House, Burlington, Vt., was the first Ivers & Pond dealer fifty years ago, immediately followed by Dyer, St. Paul, and Chandler Piano Co., Brooklyn. Incidentally, it is said that Bailey's Music House bought the first Ivers & Pond piano that went to a dealer.

The Jenkins Music House, Kansas City, carry now just one piano that they handled fifty years ago, the Vose & Sons, which they have been selling continually since 1886. They have been selling the Steinway in like manner since 1898. Other fifty-year Vose dealers and still dealing in them are J. J. F. Griffen-Harmon Piano Co., Bar Harbor, Me.; Wilson Music Co., Oshkosh, Wis.; Grinnell Bros., Detroit.

Although the Weaver Piano Co., York, Pa., do not quite line up to the fifty year period of piano manufacture, yet they started manufacturing reed organs in 1870 and turned out over 60,000 instruments. Their piano manufacturing business was started in 1903 and they have made over 40,000 instruments besides jobbing about an equal number purchased from other manufacturers.

It just so happens, say Pearson Company, Inc.; Indianapolis, that they have not carried any one individual piano agency for a period of quite fifty years, yet they have been in business sixty-four years, "a record of which we are truly proud," says Charles H. Meredith, sales manager of piano department and Hammond organs.

There are several houses "among the first" Steinway piano dealers, in which classification the house of E. F. Droop & Sons, Washington, D. C., is prominent. Mr. E. F. Droop, the founder of the business came to America in the spring of 1857, the year, by the way, in which the firm of Steinway & Sons was established.

with W. G. Metzertott & Company, at that time regarded as the leading music dealers of Washington. Being musical he occasionally sold a piano on the floor and it was not long until he became a regular piano salesman and Mr. Metzertott's chief salesman and confident.

The first Steinway piano shipped to Washington went to the Metzertott Music House, in April, 1860. This piano was number 2,986. Mr. Droop immediately "fell" for that instrument and at his suggestion more Steinways were ordered. This was the beginning of Steinway in Washington and the starting of Droop with Steinway, for from that time on the name Droop was constantly associated in the sale of Steinway pianos in Washington and in the District of Columbia, a tie that has been uninterrupted all these years.

A little later on Mr. Droop became the partner of Mr. Metzertott and, upon the latter's death, owner of the business, and the name of the Metzertott Music House was changed to Edward F. Droop and then to E. F. Droop & Sons. When this change in the affairs of Metzertott took place William Steinway "decreed," as Eddie H. Droop now says, "that the Steinway piano agency is to remain exclusively with my friend, Edward F. Droop." It should be borne in mind that in the first few years of Steinway growth most of their sales were in New York City and nearby points and that their dealer trade was entirely limited. Dealer trade and agencies soon started to grow rapidly.

At the meeting of Steinway dealers at the Steinway factory January 6th last year, Mr. Theodore Steinway, president of Steinway & Sons, introduced E. H. Droop as the dean of Steinway dealers, for since the autumn of 1884, when he started with Otto Sutro, Baltimore Steinway dealer, he has been "hitched" with the Steinway wagon, a circumstance which gives him personally a record of 53 years continuously with Steinway. "I doubt," says Eddie, "if any Steinway dealer in this country has ever seen longer service as a Steinway adherent and booster than myself."

### The Straube Sale and Start Over Again

After the receiver's sale of the late Straube Piano Company at Hammond, Ind., last March it was said that the purchasers might cause the business to be started up again at some other locality than at Hammond, possibly at Whiting, Ind., or thereabouts. However, the business still remains at the location in Hammond where it was carried on before the failure and with Mr. Lem Kline still continuing as manager, as he had been before the change. No indications of dividends to creditors in this last failure have yet been announced. The first Straube failure paid about one and one-half per cent. The receiver's sale of the effects of the Straube Piano Company last March

realized \$4,655 from the sale of the assets, which consisted of, beside the name and good will of the business, unfinished pianos, about twenty in process of construction, thirty piano cases unassembled, and various supplies of finished and unfinished materials and parts used in the construction of pianos, along with piano strings and wire and other parts for piano manufacturing.

Mr. Kline's experiences in his manifold piano selling operations have comprised manufacturing, managerial and all-around piano selling operations. Some of these, the King Piano Company enterprise, the Rex Piano Company business and numerous of other associations have tended to make his name widely known by buyers, makers and others of the trade.

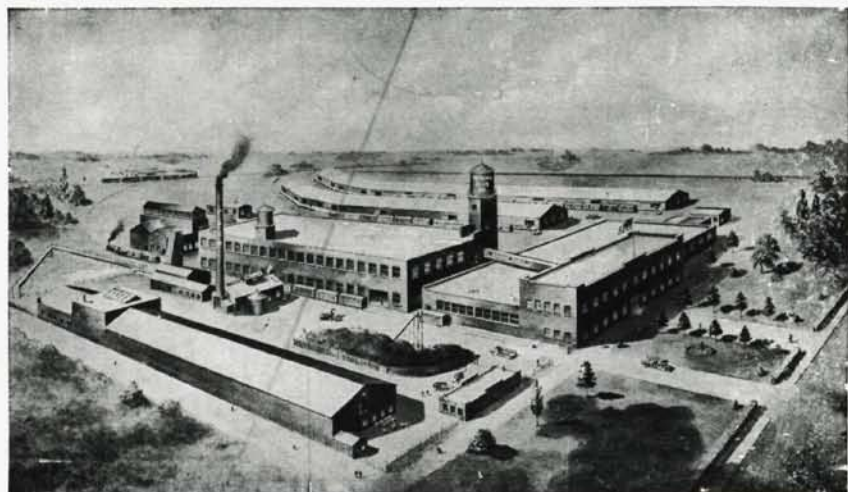
### NOT JESSE FRENCH CORP. BUSINESS

An item has been running through some of the trade papers to the effect that the Jesse French Company had leased premises in Atlanta, Ga., to open a branch store in that city.

This is a branch of the Jesse French III business of Mobile, Ala., who is establishing a branch store in Atlanta. Jesse French III deals mainly in the Kimball line and not in the Jesse French Corporation pianos of New Castle, Ind.

Mr. H. E. French, Jr., of French's, Inc., Montgomery, Ala., and who by the way has recently opened quite an elaborate store at Atlanta, Ga., is very much elated over the success of the piano trailer as a means of presenting pianos to the rural district, and, in fact, as he says, "up to the front door of any home anywhere." Mr. French was one of the first to put on the piano trailer of the piano display sort and he intends to continue trailer selling. "We find that we can work the rural territory just as easily and more economically with a trailer as with a truck, and when the trailer is left standing in a town it is like a billboard for the dealer." Mr. French further says that business is steadily improving and to keep in the swim it takes every new idea that is good and available in order to get one share of this new business. "The general public seems to be piano conscious again," he says, "and are in a buying mood. We expect 1937 to be far ahead of last year in number of sales and amount per capita. Our main leaders," he says again, "are the flat-tops and the new Jesse French verticals."

The new piano display trailer recently started out through Indiana by the Wilking Music Company of Indianapolis has been attracting a lot of attention. One dealer Presto-Times has just heard from remarked, as the Wilking trailer passed his store, "Well, boys, we've got to get a trailer." The rapid change in piano selling methods has brought about a necessity for new methods in showing and distributing instruments. The Wilking trailer has been in charge of Ray Coverdill on its Indiana circuits and tours.



## PERKINS GLUE COMPANY

Originators and Manufacturers of Vegetable and Coldide Glues.

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LANSDALE, PENNA., U. S. A.

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