



Smithsonian

*National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center*

## Guide Sohmer & Co. Records

NMAH.AC.0349

Charles Edwin Rand

1989



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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
<b>Title:</b>	Sohmer & Co. Records
<b>Date:</b>	1872-1989
<b>Identifier:</b>	NMAH.AC.0349
<b>Creator:</b>	Falcone Custom Grand Pianos (Author) Pratt, Read and Company (Donor) Sohmer & Company (Creator)
<b>Source:</b>	National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Musical Instruments (Collector)
<b>Extent:</b>	43 Cubic feet (82 boxes and 11 map-folders)
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Digital Content:</b>	<a href="#">Image(s): Sohmer &amp; Co. Records</a>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Pratt Read Corporation, August 11, 1989.

### Provenance

The records of Sohmer & Co. remained in the custody of the Pratt Read Corporation of Ivoryton, Connecticut, following the company's resale to the Sohmer Holding Co. in 1983. They were stored in Pratt Read's building and owned by Pratt Read. After a review of these records by the Sohmer family, during which an unknown number of records were removed for retention by the family, Pratt Read donated them to the Archives Center on August 11, 1989.

### Materials in the Archives Center, National Museum of American History

#### Materials in the Archives Center

Pratt Read Corp. Records (NMAH.AC.0320)

Chickering & Sons Records (NMAH.AC.0264)

Steinway Piano Co. Collection (NMAH.AC.0178)

### Processing Information

Collection processed by Charles Edwin Rand, 1989

### Preferred Citation

Sohmer & Co. Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

## Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

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## Conditions Governing Use

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## Accruals

In February 1990, Harry J. Sohmer, Jr., donated an additional group of records to the Archives Center. Although some of these materials probably came from the Pratt Read factory in Ivoryton, most seem to have been stored in Mr. Sohmer's house for a number of years. This addendum of approximately 7 cubic feet was incorporated into the main collection in the summer of 1990.

In June 1992, the Pratt Read Corporation donated three additional volumes: two stock certificate books and a general ledger from 1982-1983.

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## Historical

When Sohmer & Co. was founded in 1872 by Hugo Sohmer and his partner Joseph Kuder, it became one of 171 piano manufacturers in New York City. Over the next 110 years, Sohmer & Co. was one of the few active and successful family-owned and operated piano-making ventures in the United States. Nationally known for tonal quality and fine craftsmanship, the firm's product, in the music trade, came to be referred to as "The Piano-Maker's Piano."

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## Biographical

Born to an eminent physician in Dunningen, Wurtemberg, Germany on November 11, 1846, Hugo Sohmer enjoyed a first class education. Riding the last major wave of German immigration, which had brought piano makers such as Albert Weber, George Steck, John and Charles Fischer, and Henry E. Steinway to America, Hugo arrived in New York City in 1862. He became an apprentice in the piano making house of Schuetze & Ludolf. To learn more about European piano making, Hugo returned to Germany in 1868 and travelled extensively throughout Europe. In 1870 he returned to New York and by 1872 the 26 year old Sohmer and his partner, Josef Kuder, began manufacturing pianos in the 149 East 14th Street factory previously utilized by J.H. Boernhoeft and most recently by Marschall & Mittauer.

Josef Kuder, originally from Bohemia, Austria Hungary, learned piano making in Vienna between 1847 and 1854. Kuder arrived in New York in 1854 and became a pianomaker with Steinway & Sons which had been founded in 1853. In 1861 he returned to Vienna; he worked there until returning to New York in 1864, where he worked for Marschall & Mittauer until joining Sohmer.

Concentrating on tonal quality and response, Sohmer & Co. began producing pianos which were recognized in 1876 by an award from the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. In the waning years of the nineteenth century Sohmer & Co. received other awards including a diploma from the Exposition Provinciale in Montreal, Quebec in 1881, the gold medal at the Great New England Fair in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1889, and an award from the World's Columbian Commission in 1893 in Chicago.

By 1883 additional factory space, located on East 23rd Street and formerly used by Carhart & Needham, was occupied to accommodate increased production. In three years this space proved inadequate and forced the renting of an extension to the original factory. The main office and salesrooms were located at 31 West 57th Street in New

York City. Meanwhile, in 1884 Sohmer invented the first five foot "baby" grand piano which was applauded for its musical brilliance and depth of tone. In the early 1900's Sohmer produced grand pianos in four sizes: Concert, Parlor, Baby & Cupid.

Limited space and increased production soon became issues again, and in 1887 the company moved its factory and special machinery to Astoria, Long Island. This factory, located at 31st Avenue and Vernon Boulevard, remained in continuous operation until 1982, when the Adirondack Chair Co. bought the building and Pratt Read acquired the company.

During the 1880s a number of letters patent were granted to Sohmer for such piano improvements as the agraffe bar for tone augmentation, and the aliquot string, which were auxiliary strings "arranged in conjunction with the regular strings for the purpose of giving forth reverberatory or sympathetic waves of sound, thus augmenting the general tone results of each unison." (Spillane, History, 256.)

In 1894 Hugo Sohmer took competitor Sebastian Sommer to court for stenciling the name "Sommer" on the fallboard of his pianos. Sohmer declared that "Sohmer" was a trademark used as an emblem to distinguish the piano from others, especially the Sommer piano which he considered inferior. The court in this equity case dismissed the case on the grounds that Sohmer had not proven damages accruing from the advertising and sale of the Sommer piano.

By 1907 Sohmer & Co. was producing 2,000 pianos per year. Additionally, with Farrand & Co. of Detroit, Sohmer was making the Sohmer Cecilian player piano. On June 8, 1913 Hugo Sohmer died in Scarsdale, N.Y.; 20 days later, Josef Kuder died as well. Hugo was survived by his wife, Elizabeth; a daughter, Adelaide S. Weber; and a son, Harry J. Sohmer, born in 1886. Company leadership was assumed by Harry J. Sohmer after Hugo's death.

During the 1920s Sohmer began a special department in its plant for the manufacture of period pianos. According to Harry Sohmer, the 1930s were difficult. He recalled that, once only one piano in 29 days was shipped. The number of American piano manufacturers dropped from 140 to 22 during this time. It was during this time that Harry's cousins, Frank and Paul Sohmer joined the company as consultants. However, through its pioneering efforts in the introduction of a console vertical piano known as a "Spinnet," Sohmer revitalized the industry. (Taylor, "Piano Family.") This console vertical piano has been called "The Musicians' Console."

Primarily because of its concentration on the console vertical pianos Sohmer & Co. never cultivated famous performers in the way that Steinway and Baldwin did. While publicly acknowledging that it never entered into the competition for artistic endorsement (an acknowledgement which perhaps worked to its favor), Sohmer & Co. relied upon a most comprehensive and innovative advertising strategy stressing integrity, quality and craftsmanship in the pursuit of the ideal tone and touch.

In 1940 Harry incorporated the company as Sohmer & Co. and led it, with his sons Harry J. Sohmer, Jr., (born 1917) as production manager and Robert H. Sohmer (born 1920), as process engineer. By 1969 Harry Jr. was vice president in charge of production and Robert was production engineer/ treasurer. In 1971 Harry Sr. died and Harry Jr. became president.

In 1982 Pratt Read Corporation, a long established manufacturer of piano keyboards, acquired Sohmer & Co. for an undisclosed amount, and moved the operations to its Ivoryton, Connecticut factory, while retaining the Sohmer name. The Sohmer brothers retained their positions in the company. At the time of its purchase Sohmer & Co. employed 120 people, produced 2500 pianos yearly, and grossed \$5 million in sales. Harry J. Sohmer, Jr., grandson of the founder, in expressing his feelings about the move and the Sohmer piano, compared his piano to old New York beers saying that "they were strictly New York products and in a way so were we." He concluded by saying, "We were always identified with this city. Sohmer was a New York piano." (Priol, "Sohmer Piano.")

By July 1983 under Pratt Read's management Sohmer was producing 6 pianos per day, only 50% of the expected capacity according to H.B. Comstock, president of Pratt Read. In 1986 the Ivoryton factory was sold to a group of investors organized as Sohmer Holding Co., who continued to make pianos there until a lack of skilled workers and financial losses forced its closing in December 1988. In an effort to fill the backlog of orders, Sohmer president Tom Bradshaw opened a new facility in Elysburg, Pennsylvania. A retail showroom was maintained in Ivoryton. In 1989, the Sohmer company was sold to the Falcone Custom Grand Piano Company of Haverhill, Massachusetts.

## **References**

Cox, Erin. "Labor Woes a Main Factor in Sohmer Closing," *The Pictorial Gazette West*, 3 (December 8, 1988), 1, 22.

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Loesser, Arthur. *Men, Women and Pianos: A Social History*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1954.

Musical Merchandise Review. "Sohmer Pianos Underway at Conn. Pratt Read," July 1983, 91.

The Music Trades. "Pratt, Read Acquires Sohmer & Co. Piano Maker," August 1982, 18.

Piano and Organ Purchaser's Guide, 1907, 1930. Prial, Frank J. "Sohmer Piano, and 110 Years of Craft, will leave Astoria," *New York Times*, August 13, 1982, B1, B4.

Purchaser's Guide to the Music Industries. 1956, New York: The Music Trades, 1956, 58 60.

Spillane, Daniel. *History of the American Pianoforte: Its Technical Development, and the Trade*. 1890; rpt. New York: Da Capo Press, 1969.

Taylor, Carol. "Piano Family Stays in Tune," *New York World Telegram & Sun*, August 15, 1958.

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## Scope and Contents

The records of Sohmer & Co., date from 1872 through 1989. They fall into fourteen series based primarily on function. Legal, financial, inventory & appraisal, manufacturing, marketing, advertising, and sales are the major series. Photographs, awards, family papers, publications about Sohmer, general publications, "miscellaneous" and correspondence are the remaining series. The records are especially strong in the areas of advertising, finances, and marketing. The collection does not contain corporate records, articles of incorporation, executive records, minutes, annual reports, or personnel records such as payrolls or job descriptions.

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## Arrangement

The collection is divided into 14 series.

Series 1: Stock and Legal Records, 1882-1985

Series 2: Financial Records, 1887-1962

Series 3: Inventory & Appraisal Records, 1891-1980

Series 4: Manufacturing Records, 1872-1967

Series 5: Marketing, 1901-1989

Series 6: Advertising Records, 1880-1983

Series 7: Sales Records, 1923-1982

Series 8: Photographs, circa 1920-1964

Series 9: Awards, 1876-1976

Series 10: Sohmer Family Papers, 1945-1970

Series 11: Publications about Sohmer, 1883-1986

Series 12: General Publications, 1912-1985

Series 13: Miscellaneous Records, 1894-1983

Series 14: Correspondence, 1892-1987

## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

- Keyboard instruments
- Musical instrument manufacturing
- Piano
- Piano makers
- advertising
- advertising -- History

### Types of Materials:

- Advertisements
- Clippings
- Journals (accounts)
- Ledgers (account books)
- Photographic prints
- Photographs -- 1850-1900
- Photographs -- 20th century
- Sales catalogs
- Scrapbooks

### Names:

- Kuder, Joseph
- National Museum of American History (U.S.). Division of Musical Instruments
- Sohmer & Company
- Sohmer, Harry J.
- Sohmer, Harry J., Jr.
- Sohmer, Hugo
- Sohmer, William

### Places:

- Ivoryton (Conn.)
- New York (N.Y.) -- Musical instruments industry

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Stock and Legal Records, 1882 - 1985

**Scope and Contents:** Stock Records for Sohmer & Co. consist of two stock certificate books, dating from 1940 to 1955. The Legal Records, dating from 1882 to 1985 are arranged chronologically. Included are the letters patent for inventions in the piano industry. The legal records also include a 1936 license agreement with Pratt, Read & Co., as well as a series of agreements between Harry Sohmer and his cousin Frank in regard to salaries for the years 1932-1934. Perhaps the most colorful event in Sohmer's history was the complaint filed by Hugo Sohmer and Josef Kuder against the Sebastian Sommer Piano Company in 1894. Additional information about this complaint is found in the publications about Sohmer (Series 11) which include the stenographic transcript of the hearings as reported by the Musical Courier. The series also includes records of the litigation Kahn vs. Sohmer, and correspondence between the Sohmer Company and its lawyers, Briesen and Schrenk, from 1930 to 1936, as well as a copy of Hugo Sohmer's will of 1911.

**Names:** Sohmer, Frank  
Sommer, Sebastian

**Topic:** Piano makers -- Litigation  
Piano makers  
Piano makers -- Salaries  
Licenses  
Contracts

**Genre/Form:** Agreements  
Letters patent  
Correspondence -- 1930-1950  
Legal documents

Box 25                      Stock Certificate Books, 1940 - 1955 (2 vols.)

Box 1, Folder 1              Agraffe Bar #268562, December 5, 1882

Box 1, Folder 1              Piano Actions #268563, December 5, 1882

Box 1, Folder 1              Design for Piano Cases #15250, August 12, 1884

Box 1, Folder 1              Pianissimo Pedals #357436, February 8, 1887

Box 1, Folder 2              Aliquot String #358946, March 8, 1887

Box 1, Folder 2              Agraffe Bridge #483393, October 14, 1890

Box 1, Folder 2              Grand Piano Action #548813, October 29, 1895

Box 1, Folder 2              Music Chart #675345, May 28, 1901

Box 1, Folder 2              Music Charts #73606, October 29, 1901



Box 1, Folder 3	Agraffe Attachment #729232, May 26, 1903
Box 1, Folder 3	Capo Tasto Bar #872487, December 3, 1907
Box 1, Folder 3	Topstick #962605, June 28, 1910
Box 1, Folder 3	Grand Player Action #1097696, May 14, 1914
Box 1, Folder 4	Upright Piano Action #112134, January 15, 1915
Box 1, Folder 4	Butterfly Valve for Player #1169896, February 1, 1916
Box 1, Folder 4	Grand Action Reproducing #1526786, February 17, 1925
Box 1, Folder 4	Upright Action #2061154, November 17, 1936
Box 1, Folder 5	Complaint Sebastian Sommer, February 2, 1894
Box 54, Folder 1	Litigation Sohmer vs. Sommer. Stenographic Report of Proceedings, [1894]
Box 1, Folder 6	Lease Improved Property Holding Co. of NY, February 1, 1910
Box 1, Folder 7	Will Hugo Sohmer, 1911
Box 1, Folder 9	Agreements F.J. Sohmer, 1932 - 1934
Box 1, Folder 10	License Agreement Pratt Read and Co., July 7, 1936
Box 1, Folder 11	Application by Louis Heitzman for a Patent, 1936
Box 1, Folder 12	Application for a Trademark Registration, 1936
Box 1, Folder 13	Copyright Three Advertisements, 1949
Box 1, Folder 14	Litigation Kahn vs. Sohmer, 1979 -1985
Box 1, Folder 15	Limited Warranty Certificates, undated

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## Series 2: Financial Records, 1887 -1962

**Scope and Contents:** The Financial Records consist primarily of journals and ledgers dating between 1887 and 1962. Because they are the most basic and inclusive accounting record of original entry, the Journals covering the years between 1915 and 1959, with the exceptions of 1931-1936 and 1951-1955, appear first and are arranged chronologically. Typical journal entries for a month are petty cash, cash, accounts receivable retail, executive salary, cost of retail sale, rental piano expense, and insurance expense. The new piano inventory entry includes estimated and actual costs of piano models. By 1918 monetary values for the above entries are made under five categories: private ledger, retail ledger, wholesale ledger, notes receivable, and interest. They are then referenced to corresponding page numbers in the private ledgers of the same year. General Ledgers, the principal accounting record of final entry, appear next and are arranged chronologically between the years 1901 and 1913, followed by one volume dated 1960 to 1962. Early general ledger entries included advertising, bills receivable and payable, dealer's sale account, interest, insurance, loan, purchase, postage and stable accounts, ferriage and fare, fuel, and pianos bought.

Until Hugo Sohmer's death in 1913, the general ledger was used strictly for business accounting. Around 1915 the company adopted a hybridized private ledger as the principal accounting record of final entry. This "private ledger" continued to include family business with the company until 1939. However, the name of the accounting tool remained "private ledger" until 1960 when it became simply "ledger." Typical ledger entries for 1960 to 1962 at the end of each month for a year fall under four basic categories: Assets, Liabilities, Costs and Expenses, and Income. Entries under assets include petty cash, cash, investments stocks, machinery and equipment, and various inventories including new pianos, exchanges, stools and benches. Entries under liabilities include accounts payable for New York and factory, debentures, various taxes, notes, and H.J. Sohmer personal. Entries under costs and expenses include cost of retail and wholesale sales, salaries and wages, executive salaries, commission, advertising, and various taxes including social security and real estate. Entries under income include retail and wholesale sales, service, interest, and rental piano incomes.

The private ledgers, including bound ledger sheets for 1895-1911, are arranged chronologically by volumes between 1901-1945, excepting the years 1945-1946. The only purely private ledger covers the years 1901 to 1914; it includes predominantly family member accounts with the company. Salaries for management and accounts in which quarterly issued checks are paid out (perhaps returns on investments) are typical. George Reichmann, retail department head, and Charles Fahr, financial and business manager of the firm, are names on account. Several censuses of manufacturers, dated between 1909 and 1914, were in the private ledger of 1901 to 1914; they have been transferred to series III, the inventory and appraisal records.

As already noted, the Sohmer private ledger became a hybrid of the general and private ledger format around 1915. Early typical entries in private ledgers include petty cash, accounts receivable, bank accounts, personal and drawing accounts, and retail advertising. By 1939 the accounts were set up within four categories: Assets, Liabilities, Costs and Expenses, and Income with entries similar to the 1960 1962 general ledger previously discussed.

**Names:** Sohmer, Hugo  
Reichmann, George  
Fahr, Charles

**Topic:** Assets  
Retail  
Rental

**Place:** New York, New York

**Genre/Form:** Financial records

Ledgers (account books)  
Journals (accounts)

Box 1, Folder 16	Miscellaneous Financial Records, 1887 -1915, undated
Box 37	Journal, 1915 -1918
Box 38, Folder 1- 2	Journals Nos. 2 and 3, 1918 - 1925
Box 39, Folder 1	Journal No. 4, 1926 -1930
Box 39, Folder 2	Journal No. 6, 1937 - 1944
Box 1, Folder 17	Journal, 1945 - 1950
Box 2, Folder 1	Journal, 1956 - 1959
Box 43, Folder 1	General Ledger, 1901 -1906
Box 2	Miscellaneous Payment Sheets 1906 (from back pocket of General Ledger 1901 -1906)
Box 44, Folder 1	General Ledger, 1907-1910
Box 44, Folder 2	Miscellaneous Financial Accounts Sheets and Notes 1909 1910 (from front pocket of General Ledger 1907 -1910)
Box 44, Folder 3	Miscellaneous "not exact" financial statements 1909 (from back pocket of General Ledger 1907 -1910)
Box 45, Folder 1	General Ledger, 1910-1913
Box 2, Folder 2	General Ledger, 1960-1962
Box 25	General Ledger, 1982 -1983
Box 46, Folder 1	Private Ledger, 1901-1914
Box 22, Folder 1	Private Ledger, 1944-1946
Box 46, Folder 2	Miscellaneous Accounting Notes 1913-1914 (from back pocket of Private Ledger 1901 -1914)
Box 47, Folder 1	Private Ledger, 1915 -1918
Box 47, Folder 2	Miscellaneous Accounting Sheets 1917 (from front pocket of Private Ledger 1915-1918)

Box 47, Folder 3	Bound Ledger Sheets, 1895-1904*
Box 47, Folder 3	Bound Ledger Sheets, 1904-1911*
Box 47, Folder 3	Miscellaneous Profit and Loss Statements 1913-1914* (*all from back pocket of Private Ledger 1915 -1918)
Box 48, Folder 1	Private Ledger No. 2 with separate index, 1918 -1921
Box 49, Folder 1	Private Ledgers Nos. 3, 1922 -1928
Box 50, Folder 2	Private Ledgers Nos. 4, 1922 -1928
Box 51, Folder 1	Private Ledgers Nos. 5, 1929 -1938
Box 52, Folder 1	Private Ledgers Nos. 6, 1929 -1938
Box 2, Folder 3- 4	Private Ledger, 1939 -1944
Box 2, Folder 5	Private Ledger, 1947 -1949
Box 55, Folder 1	Financial Statements, 1907 -1916
Box 78, Folder 1	Comparative Balance Sheets, 1920 -1938
Box 79, Folder 2	Comparative Balance Sheets, 1920 - 1938
Box 55, Folder 2	Analysis Book: General Ledger Accounts, 1947- 1955
Box 53, Folder 1	Thirty year Debentures (12 items), 1940 - 1970
Box 21, Folder 1	Federal payroll taxes, 1936-1940
Box 21, Folder 2	Federal payroll taxes, 1941
Box 21, Folder 3	Federal payroll taxes, 1942-1943
Box 21, Folder 4	Federal payroll taxes, 1944-1945
Box 21, Folder 5	New York State payroll taxes, 1936
Box 21, Folder 6	New York State payroll taxes, 1937
Box 21, Folder 7	New York State payroll taxes, 1938
Box 21, Folder 8	New York State payroll taxes, 1939

Box 21, Folder 9	New York State payroll taxes, 1940
Box 21, Folder 10	New York State payroll taxes, 1941
Box 21, Folder 11	New York State payroll taxes, 1942
Box 21, Folder 12	New York State payroll taxes, 1943
Box 21, Folder 13	New York State payroll taxes, 1944
Box 22, Folder 2	New York City sales taxes, 1934-1936
Box 22, Folder 3	New York City sales taxes, 1937-1939
Box 22, Folder 4	New York City sales taxes, 1940-1942

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## Series 3: Inventory and Appraisal Records, 1891 -1980

**Scope and Contents:** The Inventory and Appraisal Records, dating between 1891 and 1980, have many gaps. The inventory book, dated 1891 1895, contains entries such as lumber in drying room or basement, prepared material, and stock in veneering room. The inventory was done the first of January of every year except 1893 when an additional one was done on July 1st. Appraisals of plant and equipment were done for the years 1929, 1939, 1977, and 1980. Within the appraisal book of 1929, written by the Standard Appraisal Company, were the miscellaneous inventory and appraisal sheets, 1911 1915, concerning the Astoria plant.

The Censuses of Manufactures, dating between 1909 and 1947, are forms from the United States Census Bureau designed to gather information about manufacturers. Categories of information include character of industry (i.e., piano making), number of supervisors and wage earners, time in operation during the year, the products and their value, the costs of materials, mill supplies, fuel, the nature of mechanical employed (i.e., steam engines), and what sort of fuel consumed (i.e., coal or gas).

**Names:** United States Census Bureau  
Standard Appraisal Company

**Topic:** Census of Manufacturers  
Appraisals  
Inventory

**Genre/Form:** Inventory book  
Inventories

Box 3, Folder 1                      Inventory, 1891 - 1895

Box 3, Folder 2                      Miscellaneous Inventory and Appraisal Sheets, 1911 - 1915

Box 3, Folder 3                      Vault Appraisals: Factory, February 25, 1929

Box 3, Folder 4                      Vault Appraisals: Factory (Copy), February 25, 1929

Box 3, Folder 5                      Vault Appraisals: Factory, May 3, 1939

Box 3, Folder 6                      Appraisal Book of manufacturing plant, January 11, 1977

Box 4, Folder 1                      Appraisal Books of plant and equipment, February 4 and 14, 1980

Box 4                                      Census of Manufactures, 1909 -1947

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## Series 4: Manufacturing Records, 1872 -1967

Scope and Contents:	The Manufacturing Records date between ca. 1910 and 1967. Included in this series are piano templates, design drawings, and sketches for the construction of a variety of piano styles, as well as several diagrams, such as the patented Capo D'Astro Bar. The 1957 manuscript on the "Construction of the Sohmer Piano" was originally written by Harry J. Sohmer to assist Dr. Karl Wecker in the preparation of a series of lectures. It details the history, methodology, and philosophy behind the construction of the Sohmer piano. Consultant reports, prepared by management engineers of the Management Service Company, make recommendations to increase the effectiveness or efficiency of the construction process. For example, in the machine department, a report recommends "you should use a flat joint instead of a Linderman joint on core stock, in order to improve the quality of the joint and to save lumber."
Names:	Wecker, Karl Management Service Company
Topic:	Piano templates Piano design Design sketches Capo d'Astro bar
Genre/Form:	Drawings Manufacturing Records Sketches Diagrams Piano registers Lectures Design drawings

Box 80, Folder 1	Style Cupid Spanish Renaissance Welte, undated
Box 54, Folder 5	Original drawings of Grand Pianos period models, undated
Box 80, Folder 2	Style Cupid Louis XVI(4'10)(5'7), undated
Box 80, Folder 3	Style #9 B Louis XIV, 1929
Box 80, Folder 4	Style Cupid Queen Anne, 1928
Box 80, Folder 5	Style Cupid Louis XVI, undated
Box 4, Folder 3	Manuscript "Construction of Sohmer Piano", 1957
Box 4, Folder 6	Consultant Reports by Management Service Company Nos. 1 19, 1923-1924
Map-folder 1	Chippendale Style B, undated
Map-folder 2	Louis XVI No.12A, undated
Map-folder 3	Louis XVI No.3 Style B, undated

Map-folder 4	Colonial No.1 A, undated
Map-folder 5	Colonial Piano, undated
Box 77, Folder 5	Design Drawings and Sketches Louis XV Vertical Piano, 1967
Box 77, Folder 5	Design Layout: Louis XV, 1933
Box 77, Folder 6	Model 100 Action, undated
Box 77, Folder 6	Thayer Grand Action, undated
Box 77, Folder 6	Sohmer Console Spinett Action, undated
Box 77, Folder 6	Capo D'Astro Bar, undated
Box 77, Folder 6	Grand Action, undated
Box 77, Folder 5	Sohmer Upright Action Condensed Standard Type, 1936
Box 53, Folder 2	Piano Model Sketches Scrapbooks 4 items, undated
Box 80, Folder 6	Plat maps First Ward Borough of Queens 3 items, November 2, 1914

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## Series 5: Marketing Records, 1901- 1989

Scope and Contents:	The Marketing Records, mainly date from 1901 to 1960, with some material from perhaps as late as 1983. They consist of the catalogs, brochures, fliers, and postcards published by Sohmer to present and market their pianos. The records include various editions of "The Story Behind the Sohmer," a widely published booklet which promotes the idea of family tradition and continuity in the production of quality pianos.
Genre/Form:	Sales catalogs -- 1900-1960 Brochures Marketing literature
Topic:	Postcards

Box 5, Folder 1 -6	<a href="#">Catalogs, circa 1870s-1916</a>
Box 6, Folder 1- 6	Catalogs, circa 1917-1935
Box 7, Folder 1	Catalogs, undated (circa 1910s-1930s)
Box 7, Folder 2 -6	Catalogs, 1950s-1970s
Box 8, Folder 1- 2	Catalogs, 1970s -1988
Box 9, Folder 1	Brochures "The Story Behind the Sohmer Piano", undated
Box 9, Folder 2	Sohmer Fliers and Postcards, undated
Box 9, Folder 3	Samplebook Sohmer Period Models, undated
Box 54, Folder 2	Drawings of Settings of Sohmer Pianos, undated

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## Series 6: Advertising Records, 1880-1985

### Scope and Contents:

The Advertising, dating from 1880 to 1989, are by far the most comprehensive records of the collection. They are reflective of Sohmer & Co.'s heavy dependence on advertising to get its product before the people. The company advertisements represented range from the colorful cartoon advertisements featured in the magazine Puck in 1888 1890, to an undeveloped sketch by Harry Sohmer entitled: "New York Oddities, New York Certainties." [Series 7: Boxes OS 16 and OS 55 respectively.] Generally, all the ingredients for an advertising campaign from start to finish are present in these records. From the Art Work (i.e., photographs and sketches), to the Mechanicals (represented by the assemblage of art work, text, captions, layouts, and overlays), the concepts behind a campaign can be seen in the process of design development. Proof Sheets show the finished advertisement before publication, while Trade Paper and Newspaper Reprints and clippings show the advertisement as it appeared in print.

The Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisements include advertisements clipped from newspapers (primarily New York) and trade papers from 1883 through 1983. There are none for the years 1942 1945. Occasionally included within these scrapbooks are also the latest Sohmer catalog or booklet and clippings of editorial comments about the company's latest advertisements.

The scrapbooks of the years 1883 to 1903 primarily contain newsclippings relating to New York City politics and the 1897 nomination of Hugo Sohmer's brother William as mayoral candidate of the German faction of Tammany Hall. Other clippings relate to New York municipal elections, William Sohmer's political activities, and his appointment as city clerk in 1898. Interspersed with these articles, many of which are from German language publications such as the New York Plattduettsche Post, are clippings of Sohmer piano advertisements. Although all the scrapbooks are in very brittle condition and require careful handling, the earliest scrapbooks should be handled with particular caution due to their extremely critical condition.

The scrapbooks of the early 1900's continue to include news clippings about Sohmer & Co., e.g. regarding the move of their salesrooms in 1909, along with advertisement clippings. After c. 1922 scrapbooks primarily contain wholesale and retail advertisements, and fewer or no news clippings.

One undated scrapbook contains information for dealers about the Sohmer Piano Company. Sohmer also followed the advertisement campaigns of its competitors, as scrapbooks of competitor advertisements [OS FLDR 6 8] and a scrapbook with competitor ads and news clippings [OS 48] demonstrate.

The Scrapbooks covering the years 1953 through 1966 include schedules for advertisements, which are organized by the name of the newspaper in which the advertisement is to run, when it is to run, how many lines, and the cost per line; there are total costs and agency fees for each newspaper. The scrapbooks also include coupon advertising statistics and analyses, which are organized by media (i.e., newspaper or magazine), and in the following categories: number of inquiries, number of units sold, sale cost in dollars, advertising dollars spent, and advertising cost per sale.

Statistics on the pianos used as prizes on television game shows, such as "The Price is Right" and "Say When," can be found in the scrapbooks from 1959 through the 1960s. They include the date of broadcast, whether it was an evening or daytime show, the piano model, and whether it was purchased or contributed to the show.

The Scrapbook of Sohmer Advertising Mail Follow ups of 1935 include typed letters of thanks, testimonials, and marketing booklets. The trade paper reprints of advertisements are arranged numerically by piano model number, then alphabetically by name of campaign. Newspaper Reprints are arranged alphabetically by name of campaign. The Proof Sheets for dealer use, arranged numerically by their assigned numbers, were utilized by dealers to promote their store as well as

Sohmer pianos. On these proofs was a request for copies of the advertisements as they appeared in print. A sampling of these is found in the Dealer Advertisements of 1948 1954.

The promotional campaign organized between Sohmer and pianist Edward J. McGinley in 1955 represents advertising in a microcosm. Included are letters to McGinley setting up a public demonstration entitled "Piano Playing Made Easy," preliminary design sketches of the advertisement, clippings of the advertisement, and a "Book of Official Record of Inquiries" about the demonstration.

The series also includes several items of miscellaneous advertisements such as a recording of a Sohmer commercial, a map of New York City, and gift wrapping paper with Sohmer advertisements.

Names: Sohmer, Hugo  
Sohmer, William  
Lake Placid Club

Topic: Television  
Municipal Election, New York City  
Game shows  
Sound -- Recording and reproducing

Genre/Form: Scrapbooks  
Clippings -- 1880-1910  
Proof sheets  
Sheet music  
Reprints  
Advertisements -- 20th century  
Advertisements

Box 40, Folder 18	<a href="#">New York Times and Puck Advertisements, 1886 -1890</a>
Box 26	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings
Box 26	<a href="#">Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1883- 1898</a>
Box 27	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1897- 1899
Box 56	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1901- 1904, [c. 1917 1922]
Box 57	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1904 -1912
Box 58	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1915 -1916
Box 59	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1917
Box 60	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1918
Box 61	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1920- 1922
Box 62	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1921 -1923
Box 63	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1923 -1924

Box 64	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1925 -1926
Box 65	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1927- 1928
Box 66, Folder 1 -2	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1929- 1930
Box 67, Folder 1 -2	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1931- 1932
Box 68, Folder 1- 2	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1933 -1934
Box 69, Folder 1- 2	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1935 -1936
Box 70, Folder 1 -2	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1937-1942
Box 71	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1945 -1948
Box 72	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings, 1945- 1951
Box 73	Scrapbooks of Sohmer Advertisement Clippings and old catalogs, 1926-1928
Box 28, Folder 1	[Retail Advertisements arranged by dealers], 1948 -1949
Box 29, Folder 1- 2	[Retail Advertisements arranged by dealers], 1949 -1951
Box 30, Folder 1 -2	[Retail Advertisements arranged by dealers], 1951-1953
Box 31, Folder 1- 2	[Retail Advertisements arranged by dealers], 1953 -1955
Box 32, Folder 1 -3	[Retail Advertisements arranged by dealers], 1956- 1958
Box 33, Folder 1 -3	[Retail Advertisements arranged by dealers], 1959 -1961
Box 34, Folder 1 -3	[Retail Advertisements arranged by dealers], 1962- 1964
Box 35, Folder 1 -3	[Retail Advertisements arranged by dealers], 1965 -1967
Box 36, Folder 1 -2	[Retail Advertisements arranged by dealers], 1968
Box 81, Folder 1	[Retail Advertisements arranged by dealers], 1970 1983
Box 36, Folder 3	Scrapbook of Sohmer advertising mail follow ups, 1935
Box 74	Scrapbook with Information for Dealers, post 1939
Map-folder 6	Scrapbooks of Competitors' Advertisements, 1934, 1940-1941
Map-folder 7	Scrapbooks of Competitors' Advertisements

Map-folder 8	Scrapbooks of Competitors' Advertisements
Box 75	Scrapbook of Competitors' Advertisements and Newsclippings, 1923- 1930
Box 40, Folder 1	Trade Paper Reprints: 32 LS Louis XV, undated
Box 40, Folder 2	Trade Paper Reprints: 34B 34FP 34M 34K, undated
Box 40, Folder 3	Trade Paper Reprints: 34E 34FP 34IF, undated
Box 40, Folder 4	Trade Paper Reprints: 34KG 34LS 34R, undated
Box 40, Folder 5	Trade Paper Reprints: 38 39, 1941
Box 40, Folder 6	Trade Paper Reprints: 50FP French Provincial, undated
Box 40, Folder 7	Trade Paper Reprints: 50 Louis XV Grand, undated
Box 40, Folder 8	Trade Paper Reprints: 57 (New Scale), 1972
Box 40, Folder 9	Trade Paper Reprints: "First Five Foot Grand", undated
Box 40, Folder 10	Trade and Newspaper Reprints:"69000 New Yorkers", undated
Box 40, Folder 11	Who is Behind this Name?, undated
Box 9, Folder 4	The Purchaser's Guide to Music Industries, undated
Box 40, Folder 12	Newspaper Reprints: "Beethoven Entertaining", undated
Box 40, Folder 13	Newspaper Reprints: "Bust of Beethoven", undated
Box 40, Folder 14	Newspaper Reprints: "Fingers that Fumble", 1964
Box 40, Folder 15	Newspaper Reprints: "Statement of Faith Principles and Purposes", October 9, 1930
Box 40, Folder 16	Newspaper Reprints: Miscellaneous, 1949
Box 40, Folder 17	Newspaper Reprints: Miscellaneous, circa 1976
Box 40, Folder 19	Dealer Advertisements, 1948- 1954
Box 9, Folder 5	Proof Sheets Miscellaneous, undated
Map-folder 9	Proof Sheets: Mats for Dealer Use Nos. 4 14, undated

Box 9, Folder 6	Promotional Campaign Edward J. McGinley, 1955
Box 9, Folder 7	Stereotype Mats: French Provincial 34 Italian Provincial
Box 9, Folder 8	Publicity Release "First Grand Ever Made Turns Up in New York...", undated
Box 9, Folder 9	Programs and Playbills 1881 1893, undated
Box 41, Folder 1	Art Work Piano Photos:Style No. 3, undated
Box 41, Folder 2	Art Work Piano Photos: Model No. 12, 1914
Box 41, Folder 3	Art Work Piano Photos: Model No. 35, undated
Box 41, Folder 4	Art Work Piano Photos: Model No. 38, 1930s
Box 41, Folder 5	Art Work Piano Photos: Model No. 39, undated
Box 41, Folder 6	Art Work Piano Photos: Model No. 40, 1940s
Box 41, Folder 7	Art Work Piano Photos: Model No. 41, 1930s
Box 42, Folder 1	Art Work Piano Photos: Model No. 42, undated
Box 42, Folder 2	Art Work Piano Photos: Model No. 45, undated
Box 42, Folder 3	Art Work Piano Photos: Model No. 50, 1930s
Box 42, Folder 4	Art Work Piano Photos: Models A through V, undated
Box 42, Folder 5	Art Work Piano Photos: Miscellaneous Models, 1940s
Box 77, Folder 1 -2	Art Work: Photos and Sketches, undated
Box 77, Folder 2A	Art Work: Sohmer Building Fascade, undated
Box 77, Folder 3	Mechanicals for Catalogs: Primrose and "Pianos are our Business...", undated
Map-folder 10	Mechanicals for Catalogs: "The Story Behind the Sohmer Piano" and Model 45S
Box 10, Folder 1 2	Mechanicals for Catalogs: "Behind the Scenes with Sohmer" pp. 1 19, undated
Box 77, Folder 4	Mechanicals for Catalogs: Multiplex Process: Proofs and Negatives, 1955
Box 82, Folder 1	Mechanicals for Catalogs: Miscellaneous Advertisements, 1880 -1985
Box 9, Folder 10	Mechanicals for Catalogs: New York City Map, undated

Box 9, Folder 11	Mechanicals for Catalogs: Sohmer Gift Wrapping Paper, undated
Box 9, Folder 12	Mechanicals for Catalogs: "Some Wise Sayings: Their Application to the Sohmer Piano", undated
Box 9, Folder 13	Mechanicals for Catalogs: "The Test Sohmer", [circa 1930]
Box 9, Folder 14	Mechanicals for Catalogs: Sohmer Advertising Program, 1969
Box 54, Folder 3	Phonograph Recording of Sohmer Commercial, undated
Box 54, Folder 4	Sheetmusic "In Sohmerland Melody for the Piano", 1891
Box 9 A, Folder 1 4	Printing Plates for Advertisements, undated
Box 24, Folder 1	Sohmer & Co. building, Astoria, Long Island, undated
Box 24, Folder 2	Sohmer & Co. advertisements, 1887 Notes: Some advertisements included in <i>Puck Magazine</i> .
Box 24, Folder 3	Sohmer & Co. advertisements, 1888,1890 Notes: Some advertisements included in <i>Puck Magazine</i> .

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## Series 7: Sales Records, 1923 - 1982

**Scope and Contents:** Sales Records, dating from 1923 to 1982, include sales reports, sales records related to dealers, a dealer list and a salesman's informational packet. Monthly sales reports are available for the years 1933 1939 and 1951 1961. Yearly sales reports are available for the years 1923 1926 and 1929 1933.

On the back of the sheets which comprise the sales reports are salesmen's cost sheets which lay out in tabular form the salesman's name, his salary, and commission for the years 1925 1933. Additionally, on the back of these sheets are advertising expense and results reports for 1930 1937.

What has been characterized as a salesman's information packet includes informational or fact sheets, sales presentation aids which could also be used as handouts, motivational literature, and a sales territory map of northern New Jersey probably belonging to a salesman named Robinson.

**Topic:** Sales Records

**Genre/Form:** Sales Reports

Box 82, Folder 2	Sales Reports:Yearly Sales Analysis Sheets, 1923 -1926
Box 82, Folder 2	Sales Reports:Salesmen's Cost Sheets, 1925 -1933
Box 82, Folder 2	Sales Reports:Yearly Retail Sales, 1929- 1933
Box 82, Folder 2	Sales Reports:Advertising Expense and Results, 1930 -1937
Box 82, Folder 2	Sales Reports:Monthly Retail/Wholesale Sales, 1933 -1939
Box 22, Folder 5	Sales Reports, 1940-1950
Box 82, Folder 2	Sales Reports:Retail Sales Graph, 1946 -1950
Box 82, Folder 3	Monthly Sales Analysis Reports, 1951 -1961
Box 10, Folder 3 -4	Sales Records:Dealers A thru N, 1941 - 1959
Box 11, Folder 1	Sales Records:Dealers O thru Z, 1941 - 1959
Box 11, Folder 2	Sales Records:Dealer List organized by State, 1969
Box 11, Folder 3	Sales Records:Salesman's Informational Packet, citrca 1972 1982
Box 11, Folder 4	Sales Records:Pattern of Overall Dimensions of Model 57 Grand Piano undated probably used for/in home demonstrations.

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## Series 8: Photographs, circa 1920-1964

Scope and Contents:	Photographs, whose functions are unknown and separate from those used in the art work for advertising, cover a range of subjects. The photo prints primarily depict views of pianos, but there are interior views of the factory and showrooms as well as of piano actions and construction. Also included are photographs of Harry J. Sohmer sr. and his sons Harry J. Jr. and Robert, as well as picture of their employees. Photographs of hotels, the Washington Irving High School in New York, and the Lake Placid Club in Lake Placid, NY, all customers of Sohmer & Co., were probably kept for marketing purposes, such as the inclusion in brochures. A large number of photographs depict celebrities, such as Guy Lombardo, Vincent Lopez, and Irving Berlin seated at Sohmer Pianos. The series also includes photographs with scene from the motion picture "White Christmas." The known dates of these photographs range between 1934 and 1961, but some may have been taken in the 1920s. The photographs are arranged by subject and are identified by a number consisting of the collection number, the box number, the folder number, and the number of the individual photograph.
Names:	Lopez, Vincent, 1894-1975 Lake Placid Club Berlin, Irving, 1888-1989
Topic:	Piano White Christmas Washington Irving High School Sohmer Park Celebrities
Place:	New York, New York Long Island (N. Y.) Lake Placid, NY
Genre/Form:	Photographs -- 20th century Photolithographs Photolithography

Box 11, Folder 6	Mounted and Laminated Photo Prints:Models 34A and 57, undated
Box 12, Folder 1 -2	Mounted and Laminated Photo Prints:Interior Factory Views, undated
Box 12, Folder 3	Photo Prints and Proofs: Piano Actions and Construction, circa 1946
Box 12, Folder 4	Photo Prints and Proofs: 92nd St. Ferry Astoria Long Island, undated
Box 12, Folder 5	Photo Prints and Proofs: Outside View of Sohmer Factory and Factory Property at 31st and Vernon Boulevard Long Island City, undated
Box 12, Folder 6	Signing the Union Contract, 1961
Box 12, Folder 7	Sohmer Employees; Group Pictures, undated
Box 12, Folder 8	Unidentified Buildings, undated
Box 12, Folder 9	Portion Of Lake Placid Club Lake Front Lakae Placid NY, undated
Box 12, Folder 10	Perfume Advertisement, undated

Box 12, Folder 11	The First 5 Foot Grand Piano [Model 50], undated
Box 12, Folder 12	Painted Portrait of Hugo Sohmer, undated
Box 12, Folder 13	Interior View of Showroom, undated
Box 12, Folder 14	Robert Sohmer, 1964, undated
Box 12, Folder 15	Sohmer Park, undated
Box 12, Folder 16	Piano Construction 1957 1961 and undated
Box 13, Folder 1	Top View of Sohmer Grand Piano, undated
Box 13, Folder 2	Pianos, undated
Box 13, Folder 3	Lake Placid Club Exterior Views, undated
Box 13, Folder 4	Lake Placid Club Interior Views, undated
Box 13, Folder 5	Exterior View of Washington Irving High School NY, undated
Box 13, Folder 6	Exterior Views of Hotels which Feature Sohmer Pianos, undated
Box 13, Folder 7	Celebrities, undated
Box 13, Folder 8	Harry J. Sohmer Sr., undated
Box 13, Folder 9	Interior Views of Sohmer Piano Settings, undated
Box 11, Folder 5	Notebook of Photo Prints of pianos, 1934-1955
Box 76, Folder 1	Interior Views of Sohmer Showrooms, undated
Box 82, Folder 4	Portraits of Hugo Sohmer Harry J. Sohmer Sr. and Frank J. Sohmer, undated
Box 76, Folder 7	Exterior View of Sohmer Factory undated
Box 76, Folder 8	Exterior View of Sohmer Showrooms, undated
	map case Photolithograph: Sohmer Factory Astoria N.Y., 1920s?
Box 23, Folder 1	Sohmer Piano Manufacturing Company building, 1872
Box 23, Folder 1	Early Sohmer publicity, 1888
Box 23, Folder 1	Sohmer workmen (working twenty or more years at the company), undated

Box 23, Folder 1	Sohmer warerooms, New York, undated
Box 23, Folder 1	Sohmer & Co. guarantee, 1880
Box 23, Folder 2	Unidentified man using drill while building piano, undated
Box 23, Folder 3	Unidentified man working on piano keys, undated
Box 23, Folder 4	Unidentified man working at table saw, undated

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## Series 9: Awards, 1876 -1976

**Scope and Contents:** The awards that Sohmer & Co. received take several forms, including certificates, diplomas, and plaques; they date between 1876 and 1976. The International Exhibition certificate awarded in Philadelphia in 1876 also includes two bronze medals commemorating the award. The series also includes a one hundreth anniversary plaque awarded by Sohmer & Co. to dealers for outstanding representation of the Sohmer piano.

Map-folder 11	Certificates of Award:
Map-folder 11	International Exhibition Philadelphia, 1876
Map-folder 11	International Exhibition with 2 Bronze Medals Philadelphia, 1876
Map-folder 11	World's Columbian Commission Chicago, 1893
Map-folder 11	Mechanics' Institute, undated
Box 14, Folder 1	World's Columbian Fair Chicago, February 17, 1894
Map-folder 11	Exposition Provinciale Montreal Quebec, 1881
Map-folder 11	California Mid Winter International Exposition, undated
Box 76, Folder 2	Walnut Classics Award for Model 341P, 1971
Box 14, Folder 2	Piano Tuners' Guild Chapters for Service to Industry, 1976
Box 14, Folder 3	100th Anniversary Plaque Presented to Dealers for Outstanding Representation of Sohmer Pianos, 1972

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## Series Series 10: Sohmer Family Papers, 1945 -1970

**Scope and Contents:** Among the Sohmer Family Papers is a citation to Harry Sohmer for his services in the financing program of World War II in the 7th War Loan. Three calling cards of Harry J. Sohmer, Jr., as well as four Sohmer Family Christmas cards for the years 1967 1970 are included in this series.

**Topic:** World War, 1939-1945  
War Loans

**Genre/Form:** Family papers  
Christmas cards

Box 14, Folder 4

1 Citation and three business cards, and four Christmas Cards, 1945 -1970

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## Series 11: Publications about Sohmer, 1883-1986

**Scope and Contents:** Publications About Sohmer, dating from 1883 1986, include trade paper reprints, newspaper clippings, and copies of magazine articles. They provide contemporary and historical accounts of the company and the family. While the stenographic account from the 1894 Musical Courier about the Sohmer v. Sommer case is colorful and informative, testimony regarding advertising costs and costs of building and selling a piano is also revealing. While Sohmer & Co. never entered into the competition for artistic endorsements, Hugo testified that he had spent \$500,000 in advertising costs between 1872 and 1894. This declaration mirrors the importance which Sohmer & Co. attached to advertising.

Publications of the 1980's relate to the sale of the Sohmer Piano Company to the Pratt Read Company, and to Pratt Read.

**Names:** Pratt, Read and Company  
Sohmer, Hugo

**Genre/Form:** Clippings  
Reprints

**Place:** New York

Box 76, Folder 3

Trade Paper Reprints Newspaper Clippings Magazine Articles, 1883 -1983.

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## Series 12: General Publications, 1912 -1985

**Scope and Contents:** General Publications, dating between 1912 and 1985, include competitor publications, literature on organs, research studies and government documents related to the piano industry, and publications related to developing the area of the borough of Queens, New York, where the Sohmer factory was located. The bulk of this series consists of competitor publications with a fairly comprehensive collection of Steinway & Sons literature. The two Forest Products Laboratory notebooks contain technical notes, lectures and bulletins dating between 1919 and 1926. Topics include lumber and kiln drying, comparisons of glues, and suggestions on storing timber to prevent decay.

**Names:** Forest Products Laboratory (U.S.)

Steinway & Sons

**Genre/Form:** Trade catalogs

Government records

**Place:** Queens (New York, N.Y.)

**Topic:** Lumber -- Storage

Kiln Drying

Box 82, Folder 6	Amphion Piano Player Auto Pneumatic Action 1912 -1926 (with blueprint drawings of player piano action)
Box 15, Folder 1	Competitors' Publications: Acronsonic Baldwin to Bechstein, undated
Box 15, Folder 2	Competitors' Publications: Cable to Connsonata, 1955; 1963
Box 16, Folder 1	Kimball, undated
Box 16, Folder 2	Kohler & Campbell, undated
Box 16, Folder 3	Krakauer, undated
Box 16, Folder 4	Kranich & Bach, undated
Box 16, Folder 5	Lester, undated
Box 16, Folder 6	Lowrey, undated
Box 16, Folder 7	Mathusek to Sterling, undated
Box 16, Folder 8	Steck, undated
Box 16, Folder 9- 10	Steinway, 1921 1985
Box 17, Folder 1	Steinway, undated
Box 17, Folder 2	Story & Clark, undated
Box 17, Folder 3	Weaver to Wood & Brooks, undated

Box 17, Folder 4	Winter, undated
Box 17, Folder 5	Wurlitzer, undated
Box 17, Folder 6	Yamaha, undated
Box 17, Folder 7	Foreign, primarily Germany and England, undated
Box 17, Folder 8	Literature on Organs, undated
Box 17, Folder 9	Piano Selection & Care Literature, 1946- 1957
Box 18, Folder 1	Four Basic Research Studies of the Piano Industry and its Markets, March 1948
Box 18, Folder 2- 3	Forest Products Laboratory Notebooks, 1919- 1926

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## Series 13: Miscellaneous, 1894- 1983

**Scope and Contents:** The Miscellaneous series includes a variety of materials dated between 1894 and 1983. Consumers' Research contains bulletins produced by this organization between 1948 and 1963. These bulletins with other enclosures or attachments are relevant to the topics discussed in the letters and correspondence between representatives of Sohmer, Consumers' Research, and Consumers Union during the years 1941-1963.

The Correspondence between Harry J. Sohmer, Sr. and F.J. Schlink of Consumers' Research between August 13, 1941 and February 24, 1942 reveals that Baldwin Piano Company illegally used Consumers' Research in their advertising and drew misleading comparisons among pianos. Ironically, the correspondence of May 7 and May 9, 1963 between Robert L. Smith of Consumers Union and Harry J. Sohmer, Sr. reveals the unsubstantiated accusation that Sohmer was using the 1941 Consumers' Research reports to promote sales. Harry Sohmer denied this by insisting he did not possess a copy of this report and closed by asking for one.

The brochures of the Lake Placid Club in New York were probably collected for advertising purposes. The Club was a customer of Sohmer & Co. and the company often included the Club's name in its brochures for the promotion of Sohmer pianos.

The Piano Examinations of 1961 1962 are appraisal reports of pianos of various brand names. The report describes the piano, defines or diagnoses the main problem with it, and indicates a price for repairing it. Information about School Pianos includes letters with construction and sound quality specifications and a handbook entitled "Wood Colors and Kinds."

**Names:** Sohmer, Harry J., Jr.  
Schlink, F. J.  
Smith, Robert L.  
Baldwin Piano Company  
Consumers' Research, Inc.  
Consumers Union  
Lake Placid Club

**Topic:** Piano Examinations  
Posters  
Prints

**Genre/Form:** Advertising  
Brochures  
Correspondence -- 1930-1950  
Bulletins  
Reports

**Place:** New York  
Lake Placid, NY

Poster of Representative Members of the Music Trade, 1894

Box 19, Folder 5-6 Letters, Correspondence and Attachments, 1935; 1941-1963

Box 19, Folder 7 Personal file (Harry J. Sohmer, Jr.?), [1983]

Box 19, Folder 8 Piano Examinations, 1961 1962

Box 19, Folder 9 Information on School Pianos, 1958 & 1964

Box 19, Folder 10	Miscellany: Songsheet, Program, List of Catholic Institutions using Sohmer pianos, and 1983 Calender, and Sohmer
Box 19, Folder 11	"Some of the Most Recent Prominent Patrons of the Sohmer Piano", undated
Box 19, Folder 12	Veterans of the Sohmer Service. Newsclipping of Group Picture, undated
Box 20, Folder 1	Lake Placid Club: Brochures and Draft Report, undated
Box 20, Folder 2	Report for Classroom Assignment, New York City Community College, 1978
Box 82, Folder 5	Watercolor of home interior with piano, undated
Box 82, Folder 5	Photo Print of Loescharts, "My Slogan: Quality Pianos," 1911
Box 82, Folder 5	Photo Print of Music Industry Banquet, 1965

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## Series 14: Correspondence, 1892 -1987

Scope and Contents: The correspondence series contains miscellaneous correspondence from 1929 to 1982, and testimonials of satisfied Sohmer customers among them Irving Berlin from 1892 to 1987.

Names: Berlin, Irving, 1888-1989

Topic: Piano Customers  
Endorsements in advertising

Genre/Form: Correspondence -- 1930-1950

Box 20, Folder 2	Correspondence, 1929-1982
Box 20, Folder 4	Testimonials, 1892-1939
Box 20, Folder 5	Testimonials, 1940-1987

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