



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to Janssen Piano Company Scrapbook Collection

NMAH.AC.0512

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Janssen Piano Company Records
Date:	1901-1929
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0512
Creator:	Janssen Piano Company.
Extent:	1 Cubic foot
Language:	English .
Summary:	The collection is composed of six scrapbooks assembled by the Janssen Piano Company of New York. These contain clippings on manufacturing, piano models, and marketing techniques, as well as company-sponsored outings and picnics. Also includes brochures--listing names of Janssen Piano owners in various geographic areas--used as a marketing device.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Collection donated by Charles P. Huether, June 13, 1994.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Robert Ageton, July 1997.

Preferred Citation

Janssen Piano Company Records, 1901-1929, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

The collection is open for research. Each volume is in very poor condition and must be very carefully handled as the paper has turned brittle and brown in color and breaks easily making it nearly impossible to look over the material in the collection. Pages are not numbered

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Biographical / Historical

Benjamin H. Janssen started his career in the piano line with Stephen Brambach in whose employ he remained for two years, then to the Estey house for two years. Mathushek & Sons later became his employer for ten years as

secretary. Later he moved to the management of the retail department for George Steck where he made a reputation as a catalogue maker and advertising litterateur. From the Courier October 5, 1901 is the following: A ... Benjamin H. Janssen has resigned the position he has held for the past year with George Steck & Co. and entered the ranks of piano makers. He has bought the business of the Alexander C. Kittel Piano Co. and will continue that business under his own name. He was for a time associated with the Mathusek concern, and later was with the Brambach Piano Company, Dolgeville, N.Y. Reportedly he was a musician, poet, composer, knew a great deal about pianos and was an accomplished salesman. He was quoted as saying AAfter twenty years of hustling for others I have decided to do a little for myself.

Scope and Contents

The collection consists of 6 volumes of scrapbooks and a folder containing 12 small brochures documenting the background of Benjamin H. Janssen and the growth of the Janssen Piano Company from 1901 to 1928. Pasted on the pages of these scrapbooks are catalogues, pamphlets, brochures, and newspaper and magazine clippings from the music trades and inserts taken from newspapers of various cities, mostly from the northeast and the midwest. In addition, there are copies of advertising letters in foreign language with English translation adjacent to the posting. Most of the foreign language letters are in Spanish. Several poems by Janssen are displayed along with reference to his music compositions.

Arrangement

Collection is dovided into one series.

Series 1: Scrapbooks, 1909-1928

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Musical instrument makers -- 1900-1930
- Piano -- Construction -- 1900-1930
- Piano makers -- 1900-1930 -- New York
- Picnicking -- 1900-1930

Types of Materials:

- Clippings -- 1900-1950
- Pamphlets -- 1900-1930
- Scrapbooks -- 1900-1950

Container Listing

Box 1	Scrapbook Volume 1, undated
Box 2	Scrapbook Volume 2, 1909-1914
Box 3	Scrapbook Volume 3, 1912-1915
Box 4	Scrapbook Volume 4, 1916-1919
Box 5	Scrapbook Volume 5, 1920-1926
Box 6	Scrapbook Volume 6, 1921-1928