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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: John R. Anderson Piano Trade Literature and Ephemera Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.1257
Date: circa 1700-2011, undated
Extent: 6 Cubic feet (14 boxes, 1 map folder)
Source: Anderson, John R.
Language: English

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
The collection was donated by John R. Anderson in 2011.

Related Materials
Materials in the Archives Center
Pratt, Read Corporation Records (NMAH.AC.0320)
Sohmer and Company Records (NMAH.AC.0349)
Steinway & Sons Records and Family Papers (NMAH.AC.0178)
Wurlitzer Company Records (NMAH.AC.0469)

South Carolina Historical Society
Siegling Music House Records, 1820-1972

Processing Information
Collection processed by Sarah Gediman, intern; Julia Gibson, intern; Savannah Hildre, intern; Lauren Janik, intern; supervised by Vanessa Broussard-Simmons, archivist, 2019.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
Collection is open for research.
Biographical / Historical

A retired government employee, Anderson is a piano enthusiast and collector. He conducted extensive research on early piano makers.

Content Description

The addendum consists of trade literature and ephemera on the subject of pianos.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into three series.

Series 1: Piano Trade Literature and Ephemera, 1850-1990, undated
Series 2: Photographs, undated
Series 3: Research Notes, 1700-2011, undated

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
- Harpsichord
- Harpsichord makers
- Musical instruments
- Organ (Musical instrument)
- Piano -- History
- Piano makers
- Postcards
- Research

Types of Materials:
- Advertisements
- Advertising cards
- Brochures
- Ephemera
- Ledgers (account books)
Manuals
Notes
Pamphlets
Photographs -- 20th century
Price lists
Trade cards
Trade catalogs

Names:
Anderson, John R.
John Broadwood and Sons Limited
Mason & Hamlin
Sohmer & Company
Steinway & Sons
Weber Piano Company
Wm. Knabe & Co.

Occupations:
Musical instrument makers
Container Listing

Series 1: Piano Trade Literature and Ephemera, 1850-1990, undated

Consists of printed advertisements, catalogs, trade literature, advertising cards, postcards, guides, price lists, sales brochures, manuals, and blueprints primarily from manufacturers and distributors of pianos. There is some material from manufacturers and distributors of organs and harpsichords. Most of the companies are from the United States, however, there is a small amount of material from European and Asian businesses. The materials were maintained in the subjects that were created by Anderson and then arranged in chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 1  Piano advertisements, 1850-1880
Box 1, Folder 2  Piano advertisements, 1850-1880
Box 1, Folder 3  Turner's Guide, 1852
Box 1, Folder 4  Mason and Hamlin Piano Company, trade literature, 1854
Box 1, Folder 5  Piano advertisements, 1854-1897
Box 1, Folder 6  Sohmer & Company, trade literature, 1872
Box 12, Folder 1  Trade literature, 1872-1895
Box 1, Folder 7  Fletcher and Newman Ltd., piano parts catalog , 1876
Box 7, Folder 20  Piano advertising cards and postcards, 1876-1991
Box 1, Folder 8-9  Piano sales brochures and catalogs, 1880-1925
Box 2, Folder 1-4  Piano sales brochures and catalogs, 1880-1925
Box 3, Folder 1-2  Piano sales brochures and catalogs, 1880-1925
Box 3, Folder 3  Piano advertisements, 1900
Box 12, Folder 2  Printed material, 1901-1923
Box 8, Folder 1  Piano advertising cards and postcards from unbound album, 1905-1970
Box 12, Folder 3  Trade literature, 1907-1936
Box 3, Folder 4  
Printed materials, 1912-1969

Box 3, Folder 5  
Piano sales brochures created by American, French, and German manufacturers, 1912-1926

Box 3, Folder 6  
Piano and organ manufacturers supply catalogs, 1914

Box 3, Folder 7  
The Turner's Magazine, 1914-1915

Box 4, Folder 1  
Piano sales brochures created by American, French, and German manufacturers, 1916-1920

Box 4, Folder 2  
Piano advertisements purchased by Anderson, 1925

Box 4, Folder 3  
Weber Piano Company, trade literature, 1927

Box 4, Folder 4  
Steinway & Sons, price lists, 1932-1950

Box 4, Folder 5  
Purchaser's Guide to the Music Industry, 1934-1940

Box 4, Folder 6  
W.W. Kimball and Company, trade literature, 1937

Box 4, Folder 7  
Philadelphia Orchestra, program, 1937

Map-folder 1  
Trade literature and blueprints, 1940-1955, undated

Box 4, Folder 8  
Piano sales brochures from Asian and American piano manufacturers, 1962-1964

Box 5, Folder 1  
Schaff Piano Supply Company, piano and organ supply catalog, 1963

Box 5, Folder 2  
Piano sales brochures created by Asian and American piano manufacturers, 1967

Box 5, Folder 3  
Piano sales brochures created by European manufacturers, 1970-1976

Box 5, Folder 4  
Piano sales brochures created by European manufacturers, 1970-1976

Box 5, Folder 5  
Harpsichord printed advertisements, 1970-1979

Box 5, Folder 6  
Yamaha Corporation, trade literature, 1974

Box 5, Folder 7  
Box 6, Folder 1  Piano sales brochures, 1980-1990
Box 6, Folder 2  Piano sales brochures, 1980-1990
Box 6, Folder 3  Piano Primer, undated
Box 6, Folder 4  John M. Smyth Company, piano and organ catalog, Chicago, Illinois, undated
Box 6, Folder 5  Piano advertising cards, undated
Box 12, Folder 4  Trade literature, undated

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Series 2: Photographs, 1887-2005, undated

Includes an unbound scrapbook of photographs of primarily pianos and also printed advertisements from manufacturers and distributors of these instruments. There are also photographs of the descendants of William Knabe who managed the William Knabe & Company located in Baltimore, Maryland.

Box 6, Folder 6  Scrapbook of photographs and clippings, 1887-2005, undated

Box 6, Folder 7  Ernest Knabe, William Knabe II, and William Knabe III, William Knabe & Company, Baltimore, Maryland, undated
Series 3: Research Notes, 1700-2011, undated

Consists primarily of notes and some correspondence relating to Anderson's research on the history of piano manufacturing in New York City from 1775-1900. Other materials include copies of the Purchaser's Guide to the Music Industries dating from the 1950s; maps of New York City; a copy of the Blue Book of American Musical Instruments: Presto Buyer's Guide to Pianos, Player-Pianos and Reproducing Pianos; articles, an account and daybook for a music store located in Buffalo, New York, dating from 1876-1880, and newsletters. While Anderson seems to be mostly interested in manufacturers and distributors there are some files on piano associations and organizations, teachers, and performers. In addition, the card index to Anderson's research can also be found among these materials. The materials are arranged in chronological order.

Box 6, Folder 9  Copies of piano advertisements, 1700-1800
Box 6, Folder 11  Maps of New York City, 1729-1965
Box 6, Folder 12  Correspondence and notes relating to New York City newspapers and journals with piano manufacturers' advertisements, 1770-1989
Box 7, Folder 1  James Rivington, music dealer, 1773-1789
Box 7, Folder 2  Correspondence and notes relating to New York City newspapers and journals with piano manufacturers' advertisements, 1775-1799
Box 6, Folder 8  List of New York City newspapers and journals with articles relating to piano manufacturers, 1785-1900
Box 7, Folder 3  Joseph Adam Fleming, piano manufacturer, 1785-1792
Box 7, Folder 4  Article on Young Chang who evolved from a modest piano distributor to a worldwide manufacturer, 1785-1799, undated
Box 7, Folder 5  John Jacob Astor, piano dealer, 1787-1799
Box 7, Folder 6  George Gilfert, piano dealer, 1788-1799
Box 7, Folder 7  Charles Watts, piano manufacturer, 1789-1797
Box 7, Folder 8  Van Hagen, teacher and performer, 1790-1793
Box 7, Folder 9  Archibald Whaites and George Charters, piano manufacturers, 1792-1888
Box 7, Folder 10  James Hewitt, music teacher, 1793-1800
Box 7, Folder 11  Thomas Western, piano manufacturer, 1793-1998
<p>| Box 7, Folder 12 | James Harrison, piano dealer, 1794-1795 |
| Box 7, Folder 13 | Benjamin Carr, piano dealer, 1795-1796 |
| Box 7, Folder 14 | Geib and Company, 1798-1968 |
| Box 7, Folder 15 | New York City piano manufacturers, 1786-1903 |
| Box 7, Folder 16 | Piano printed advertisements, New York City, 1849-1900 |
| Box 7, Folder 17 | Piano bills of sale, 1851-1900 |
| Box 12, Folder 5 | Printed material from <em>Scientific American Magazine</em>, 1860-1900 |
| Box 7, Folder 18 | Piano ephemera, 1863-1921 |
| Box 7, Folder 19 | Account and daybook for music store located in Buffalo, New York, 1876-1880 |
| Box 7, Folder 21 | Pamphlets, 1877-1892 |
| Box 7, Folder 22 | Piano tuning manual, 1881-1943, undated |
| Box 7, Folder 23 | Steinway &amp; Sons, factory papers, 1883 |
| Box 14, Folder 1 | Sohmer &amp; Company, research notes, 1890-2006 |
| Box 11, Folder 1 | Book of Complete Information about Pianos, 1903 |
| Box 11, Folder 2 | Book of Complete Information about Pianos, 1911 |
| Box 8, Folder 2 | William Knabe &amp; Company, 1923 |
| Box 8, Folder 3 | Portraits of musical celebrities, 1926 |
| Box 8, Folder 4 | The Blue Book of American Musical Instruments: Presto Buyer's Guide to Pianos, Player-Pianos and Reproducing Pianos, 1926 |
| Box 8, Folder 5 | Piano scale making, 1927-1986 |
| Box 8, Folder 6 | Research and printed materials on organs, 1935-1978 |
| Box 8, Folder 7 | Research and printed materials on organs, 1935-1978 |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Box, Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 8</td>
<td>The Purchaser's Guide to the Music Industries, 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 8, Folder 9</td>
<td>The Purchaser's Guide to the Music Industries, 1951</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 9, Folder 1</td>
<td>The Purchaser's Guide to the Music Industries, 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 9, Folder 2</td>
<td>Research and printed materials on organs, 1952-1962</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 9, Folder 3</td>
<td>Steinway &amp; Sons, research, 1964-1965, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 13</td>
<td>Card index to research, 1964-1981, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 9, Folder 4</td>
<td>Steinway &amp; Sons, Aeolian, 1968-1971, undated</td>
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<td>Box 9, Folder 5</td>
<td>Steinway &amp; Sons, research literature, 1970-1990</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 9, Folder 6</td>
<td>John Broadwood &amp; Sons Piano Company, 1972</td>
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<td>Box 9, Folder 7</td>
<td>Pratt, Read and Company, press, 1972-1980</td>
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<td>Box 9, Folder 8</td>
<td>Associations and Organizations, 1973-1979</td>
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<td>Box 10, Folder 1</td>
<td>Piano history, 1974</td>
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<td>Box 10, Folder 2</td>
<td>Siegling Music House, Charleston, South Carolina, 1976</td>
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<td>Box 10, Folder 3</td>
<td>Alfred Dolge, notes, 1976-1983</td>
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<td>Box 10, Folder 4</td>
<td>Pianos and other instruments, 1979</td>
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<td>Box 6, Folder 10</td>
<td>New York Historical Society and General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, 1980, undated</td>
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<td>Box 10, Folder 5</td>
<td>American Liszt Society, newsletters, 1984-1993</td>
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<td>Box 10, Folder 6</td>
<td>Pratt, Read and Company, 1994-2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 12, Folder 6</td>
<td>Printed material, undated</td>
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