

Inventory of the

Wurlitzer Company
DeKalb, Illinois

Records

In the

Regional History Center

RC 169

INTRODUCTION

The Wurlitzer Company donated its records to the Northern Illinois Regional History Center on March 12, 1984. Addenda were added to the collection at various dates.

Property rights in the collection are held by the Regional History Center; literary rights are dedicated to the public. There are no restrictions on access to the collection.

Linear feet of shelf space: 10.75
Number of containers: 17 + 2 volumes
Northern Illinois Regional History Center
Collection 169

SCOPE AND CONTENT

A portion of the Wurlitzer Company records was microfilmed by the Regional History Center and the original collection was donated to the Smithsonian Institution (Museum of American History) on November 11, 1992. The microfilm was retained by the Center along with folders containing histories, photographs, and the Wurlitzer Centennial Edition of the DeKalb Chronicle. The six volumes contained in Box 2 and 4 folders in Box 3, and a CD of theater organ music, were donated after the transfer of the collection to the Smithsonian.

Addendum II consists of five series: Papers, Audio and Video Recordings, Photographs, Artifacts, and Oversize. Items within series are arranged loosely by type of record and date. Series I is comprised of business records, correspondence, and family history materials from 1846 to 2012. Series II contains audio and video recordings from 1979 and 1982. Series III mostly contains slides and film negatives of organs and theaters. Organs constructed between the years of 1977 and 1978 are well documented in this series. Some photos are unidentified.

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Wurlitzer Company began in 1856 when Rudolph Wurlitzer, a Cincinnati bank clerk, sold \$700 worth of musical instruments he had bought from family and friends in Germany. The business was incorporated in Ohio in 1890 under the name "The Rudolph Wurlitzer Company." For the first fifty years, Wurlitzer was primarily a retail instrument business operating out of its Cincinnati Store headquarters. Although fire destroyed the company's headquarters in 1904, a new building was completed in time to celebrate Wurlitzer's fiftieth anniversary in 1906.

In 1908, the Wurlitzer Company bought the DeKleist Musical Instrument Manufacturing Company in North Tonawanda, New York. The Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company continued production of automatic musical instruments: player pianos, military bands and pianorchestras. In 1910, the Wurlitzer Company bought the Hope-Jones Organ Company and began to manufacture unit-orchestra pipe organs at their North Tonawanda plant. These were

pipe organs equipped with bells, gongs, horns and sirens. They became known as Mighty Wurlitzers and provided the musical background in silent movie houses all over the world and were also built for churches and private homes. In 1919, Wurlitzer bought the Melville-Clark Piano Company of DeKalb, Illinois. Wurlitzer pianos were then manufactured at the DeKalb facilities under a variety of names: the Apollo Piano Company, the DeKalb Piano Company and the Wurlitzer Grand Piano Company. Each name designated a different quality, price range and style.

With the decline of sales during the 1920's and 1930's, production of automatic musical instruments ceased until the manufacture of the first juke box in 1934. For a brief time, radios and refrigerators were made by the Wurlitzer controlled All-American Mohawk Corporation. It was not a successful venture and ended in the mid-1930's. Many of the Wurlitzer retail stores were, at that time, in bad locations and needed repairs. The solutions to these problems came about with a reorganization of the company in 1935. With the reorganization, many retail stores were sold, piano manufacturing was consolidated in DeKalb and many subsidiaries were dissolved or absorbed completely into the Wurlitzer Company.

During World War II, Wurlitzer halted production of musical instruments. The company's defense production efforts were recognized in 1943 and 1944 when its North Tonawanda and DeKalb plants received the Army-Navy "E" Award. In 1946, peacetime production resumed and the Wurlitzer Company introduced two new instruments: the electric organ (1947) and the electric piano (1954).

In 1956, the Wurlitzer Company celebrated its centennial. That same year a new plant at Corinth, Mississippi, was completed. Later, plants were opened in Holly Springs, Mississippi (1961), Logan, Utah (1970) and Hullhorst, West Germany (1960). The new facilities replaced those at North Tonawanda and DeKalb. The North Tonawanda plant ceased production of juke boxes in 1974, becoming the company's engineering and research center. In 1973, the DeKalb plant ended production of pianos maintaining only marketing and administrative offices. In 1977, the Wurlitzer Company's corporate headquarters moved to DeKalb, including the engineering and research center from North Tonawanda.

Leadership of the company, after Rudolph's death in 1914, was assumed by his three sons. Each son acted as president and, then chairman of the board, successively. IN 1934, R.C. Roling was hired as vice-president and general manager. It was his reorganization that helped the company through the Depression years. Roling succeeded the last of the founder's sons in 1941 as president of the company and in 1966 as chairman of the board. Farny Wurlitzer, Rudolph's youngest son, died in 1972. Roling died in 1974 and was succeeded by A.D. Arsem as chairman of the board. George B. Howell succeeded W. N. Herleman as president of the company.

SUBJECT TRACINGS

Industries- Illinois- DeKalb

Jukeboxes

Musical Instruments

Organs

Piano

World War II

Wurlitzer Company

COLLECTION INVENTORY

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
1	1	Histories; Photographs, Wurlitzer Company and WWII Products (5)
	2	Photographs, WWII Production (8 proofsheets) WWI Savings Bond Rally (1)
	3	Private Wurlitzer Theatre Organ Concert, "An Evening at the Home of Cecil B. DeMille," [CD]
		Microfilm of Wurlitzer Records, 9 rolls
	Roll 1	Historical publications, informational pamphlets, company descriptive (1939), certificates of incorporation and by-laws (1980's) company annual reports [1936-1986], minutes of meetings (1890-1899, 1916-1926)
	Roll 2	Minutes of meetings continued, DeKalb Piano Company minutes (1926-1927), Apollo Piano Company (1919-1921), Wurlitzer President's Reports (1921-1926), Dayton Photo Products Company minutes (1920-1923), Milner Music Company articles of incorporation (1908-1937) and minutes of meetings (1907-1937), Robert L. Loud Music Company minutes of meetings (1918-1936), Youngstown Music Company minutes and correspondence (1926-1932), Caldwell Piano Company minutes (1908-1921), Lyric Piano Company minutes (1909-1937) and dissolution papers (1937), Wunderlich Piano Company minutes and correspondence (1918-1928), Eagle Radio Company minutes and reports [1922-1927], All-American Mohawk Corporation minutes (1928-1934), Western Industries Corporation minutes (1928-1934) and dissolution papers (1936)
	Roll 3-6	Company publications: <u>Wurlitzer Booster</u> (1913-1914, 1916), <u>Lyre</u> (1937-1938), <u>Wurlitzer World</u> volume one, <u>Wurlitzer Bulletin</u> (1939-1953), <u>Field and Factory</u> (1954-1973), <u>Keynote</u> (1973-1981), <u>Keyboard Notes</u> (1975-1976), <u>Noteworthy</u> (1977)
	Roll 7	Product catalog, 17 th edition (1877); history of mechanical music (1969), military band catalogs [1901-1929], automatic musical instruments catalogs [1912-1927]; motion picture orchestra catalogs (1921, 1924), player piano and violin piano catalogs (n.d.), music rolls and records catalog (1917), military band price list (1933), instruction and care manuals for automatic musical instruments (1923, 1925), placards and posters and testimonials [1904-1919]

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
1	Roll 8	Piano histories, catalogs, price lists, instruction and care manuals [1948-1960], testimonials (1926-1928); organ histories, catalogs, price lists, testimonials, dedications [1910-1984]; Mightiest Wurlitzer and Wurlitzer Hall (1976-1978)
	Roll 9	Violin catalogs and testimonials [1925-1938], harp catalog (1924) and history (1986), accordion catalog (1936), general musical instruments catalogs (1919-1932), juke box catalogs [1940's-1960's]; "House of Wurlitzer;" nine frames of retakes from rolls 1-8: covers of annual reports (1975, 1984), <u>Bulletin</u> covers (May 1945), <u>Field and Factory</u> covers (April 1961, October 1963, November 1971), violin catalog cover and pages (n.d.), promotional posters
2	1 volume 2 volumes 1 volume 1 volume 1 volume	Record of Investments, 1902-1931 Cash Book, Pension Fund, 1927-1936 Private Journal, 1929-1935 General Ledger, 1916-1917 Cookbook Correspondence, 1956
3	1 2-3 4	Wurlitzer Company Records "Noteworthy" October 1967-November 1972 "DeKalb Goes to War: A Study of World War Two Industrial Production in an Illinois Town" by Keith P. Lowman, 1993
Oversize	2 volumes	DeKalb Chronicle, Wurlitzer Centennial Edition, 1956
Oversize Drawer 19	5	Plant Layout, April 1, 1965 Fire Insurance Maps: Creamery Package Mfg. Co.– DeKalb, Oct. 29, 1931 Wurlitzer Co., 1963, 1967 Sewer System Maps: Wurlitzer Co., State St.: Storm Drains, Plate 1-24 Sanitary Sewers, Plate 2-24 Water Mains, Plate 3-24 Sewer System Maps–State St. and Dietz Ave.: Storm Drains, Plate 1-25 Sanitary Sewers, Plate 2-25 Water Mains, Plate 3-25
	6	Blueprints: Wurlitzer Co.–Machine Shop, Oct. 29, 1931

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
		Wurlitzer Co.–Sewers and Sprinklers, 1955 revised 1959 Wurlitzer Co., Aug. 15, 1966 Wurlitzer Co.–Building #24 Floor Plan, 1975-1976 Apollo Piano Co., Sept. 1, 1923 St. Regis Paper Co.–DeKalb, Aug. 30, 1961 Certificates and Plats of Surveys: Creamery Package Mfg. Co.–DeKalb, Feb. 18, 1964 Sections 23 and 24–DeKalb (4), June 22-25, 1970
		<u>ADDENDUM</u>
4	1 volume	Wurlitzer Bulletins, 1939-1945
	1 volume	Wurlitzer Bulletins, 1946-1949
	1 volume	Wurlitzer Bulletins, 1950-1954
		Wurlitzer Letters and News
	1 volume	1946-1948
	1 volume	1949
	1 volume	1950
	1 volume	1951
5	1 volume	1952
	1 volume	1953
	1 volume	1954
	1 volume	1955
	1 volume	Musical Merchandise Catalog, No. 70, 1910
6	1	Historical Materials (History of Wurlitzer), n.d.
	2	History of Wurlitzer Pianos and Organs, 1942
	3	Historical Material- Wurlitzer Pianos, n.d.
	4	“A Trip Through the Wurlitzer Factory,” ca. 1940s
	5	Correspondence, Fay J. Frisch, 1954
	6	<u>Cosgrove’s Magazine</u> , 1947
	7	<u>Music Trades</u> , January 21, 1899
	8	Wurlitzer Catalog, ca. 1900s.
	9	Wurlitzer Music Foundation Campaign Book, December 1929
	10	<u>The Wurlitzer Piano Field & Factory</u> , 1954-1957
	11	Retail Price Lists, n.d.
	12-13	Wurlitzer Piano Models and Descriptions, ca. 1950
	14	Wurlitzer Factory Photographs (12), n.d.
	15	Wurlitzer Centennial 1856-1956 Report of Preliminary Planning Committee, September 30, 1954

ADDENDUM II

Series I: Papers

7	1	Wurlitzer Family History, 1846-1954
	2	Wurlitzer Family History, 1848-1972
	3	Wurlitzer Family History, 1859-1953
	4	Wurlitzer Family History, 1873-1923
	5	Wurlitzer Family History, 1920-1948
	6	Wurlitzer Family History, 1928-1956
	7	Wurlitzer History, 1935-1978, circa 2012
	8	Wurlitzer Story, 1709, 1859, 1954
	9	<i>Wurlitzer Centennial Cook Book, 1856-1956</i>
	10	List of Donated Items to NIU RHC
8	1	Robert Hope-Jones and Wurlitzer Co. 1910-1912
	2	Robert Hope-Jones Personal File and Correspondence, 1912-1913
	3	Robert Hope-Jones Personal File and Correspondence, 1912-1913
	4	Robert Hope-Jones Personal File, Death Information, and Legal Proceedings, 1914, 1978
9	1	Robert Hope-Jones Private Files, 1913
	2	Robert Hope-Jones Correspondence to Fanny Wurlitzer, 1914
	3	Henry Farny, 1872-1898
	4	Public Museum of Grand Rapids - Pipe Organ Installation Proposal, 1935
	5	Pipe Organ Installation Proposal, 1935
	6	Paramount Theatre Organ (New York), 1964-1968
	7	Facilities: Concert Organ Letters, 1981
	8	Concert Organ Letters, 1982
	9	<i>Theatre Organ</i> , 1972, 2012
10	1	Wurlitzer Sales Training Note Books, 1975
	2	Wurlitzer Retail Sales Training
	3	Sales Manual
	4	Business of Communication Manual and Marketing Plan Seminar Manual
	5	Transactional Analysis - Training Testing
10A	1	Retail Sales Training Seminar I (1 of 2)
	2	Retail Sales Training Seminar I (2 of 2)
	3	Retail Sales Training Seminar II

Sereis II: Audio and Video Recordings

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
	4	"Disney Demo" audio recording, July 15, 1982
	5	"The Mighty Wurlitzer" video recording, August 28, 1979
Series III: Photographs		
11	1	History: Farny Wurlitzer and Rudolph Wurlitzer, 1972-1977
	2	Wurlitzer History, 1977
	3	DeKalb, 1977
	4	Church Construction and Organ Assembly, 1977
	5	Organ, 1977
	6	Pipe Organ Project: Pleasant Street, 1977
	7	Pipe Organ Project: Rebuilding Hall, 1977
	8	Pipe Organ Project: Swell Shapes, 1977
12	1	Unidentified, 1977
	2	Unidentified, circa 1977
	3	Pipe Organ, 1977-1978
	4	Pipe Organ, 1978
	5	Pipe Organ Project, 1978
	6	Pipe Organ Project: Air Line and Reservoirs, 1978
	7	Pipe Organ Project: Collection of Parts, 1978
13	1	Pipe Organ Project: Console, 1978
	2	Pipe Organ Project: Maine Chests, 1978
	3	Pipe Organ Project: Toy Counter, 1978
	4	32' Going Up, 1978
	5	Paramount Theatre, 1978 (1 of 2)
	6	Paramount Theatre, 1978 (2 of 2)
	7	Concerts, 1978-1979
	8	Unidentified, 1978 (1 of 3)
	9	Unidentified, 1978 (2 of 3)
14	1	Unidentified, 1978 (3 of 3)
	2	Unidentified, circa 1978
	3	DeKalb, circa 1978
	4	Movie of Hall Project
	5	Pipe Organ Project: Pipe Washing
	6	Wurlitzer Plant and Old Pipe Organs
	7	Unidentified
	8	Historical Stock Shots
15	1	Mighty Wurlitzer Story Illustrations
	2	Borrowed Items, Photos, and Wurlitzer Booklets, 1982

<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
	3	Photos Borrowed By David L. Junchen, 1982
Series IV: Artifacts		
16	1	Organ Hardware (3 pieces)
Series V: Oversize		
Drawer 19	7	1952 Calendar
Note: Folder Missing 12/10/15		Newspaper Articles (3), 1941, 1952, 1938
		Wiring Diagram Pizzigato, 1949
		A.G.O. Consoloe Measurements, 1958
		Console for Paramount Theatre New York, 1927
		Suction Electric Pneumatic, Swell Shutter Mechanism, Wind Spring Device for Operating Stops, Reversible Device, Tracker, Automatic Switching Device, Wiring Diagram, 1923
		Company Headquarters Remodel Blue Prints, DeKalb IL (5), 1977
		Mickey Mouse Music Hall Plans (5), 1970