

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

A Guide to the Boardman & Gray's Piano Manufactory Collection

Collection Summary

Collection Title: Boardman & Gray's Piano Manufactory Collection

Call Number: MG 203

Creator: Gray Family

Inclusive Dates: 1848-2007

Bulk Dates: 1848-1900

Abstract: The collection contains photographs, song books, sheet music, news clippings, certificates, letters of thanks, trade-mark certificate, and a scrapbook that contains news clippings and letters from various customers and proprietors. Collection also includes items in Curatorial: a piano with bench and an engraved name plate.

Quantity: 3 boxes, one is Oversize

Administrative Information

Custodial History: The records were donated by Edward and Patricia Trudeau, family of Margaret Gray Trudeau.

Preferred Citation: Boardman & Gray's Piano Manufactory Collection, MG 203.
Albany Institute of History & Art Library, New York.

Acquisition Information:

Accession #: LIB.2006.199

Accession Date: April 23, 2007

Processing Information:

Processed by Robbilee Luedtke; completed on 7/7/2010.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access: None

Restrictions on Use: Permission to publish material must be obtained in writing prior to publication from the Chief Librarian & Archivist, Albany Institute of History & Art, 125 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210.

Index Term

Persons

Boardman, William G.
Currier, William H.
Gray, James A.
Gray, James S.
Gray, William J.
Hampton, H. J. P.
Hayes, Catherine
Lefur, A. N.
Lemaski, B. R.
Lind, Jenny (Johanna Maria)
Paleuer, Rufus A.
Ramroth, John
Shaw, Oliver J.
Whitney, Williard W.

Organizations

Newspaper Company - The Knickerbocker Press
Boardman & Gray Piano Manufacturing Company

Subjects

Company – Piano - Manufacturing

Places

New York State – Albany
New York State – Loudonville
London, England
United States – States

Document Types

Newspapers – Clippings
Newspapers – Articles
Photographs
Certificates
Letters – Business
Trade-Mark Certificate
Song Books - Sheet Music
Community Newsletters
Book

Titles

None

Biography/History of

The Boardman & Gray Piano Manufacturing company of Albany, NY was founded in 1837 by James A. Gray. His business partner, William G. Boardman provided the business expertise and financial support. The original site of the factory was at Elm Tree Corner (N. Pearl and State Streets), whereas the most well-known and largest factory was at 239 N. Pearl Street.

The Boardman & Gray Piano Manufacturing company patented their own design for the Dolce Campana attachment for the Piano Forte, which produced sounds like “sweet bells” (around 1847). The Dolce Campana attachment was patented in 1849. They were also one of the only companies to use a steel frame design for their piano construction. The company was well known, with pianos of their craftsmanship going all the way to London, England. The invention received the first premium at the great State Fair at Buffalo, September 1848; the gold medal at the State Fair of Syracuse in 1849; first premium at New York 1849; and the same at Maryland. The Company received the highest award and medal at the World’s Columbian Exposition held at Chicago in 1893.

The famous Swedish singing, Jenny Lind (Johanna Maria Lind) was very fond of the Boardman & Gray Pianos, and they even made a model after her, known as the Jenny Lind Piano Forte. The Jenny Lind Piano Forte was made exclusively for her personal use while she was touring in the United States. They also made a piano exclusively for the Irish born Opera Diva Catherine Hayes (known as the “Swan of Erin”). The company received personal letters of praise from both Jenny Lind and Catherine Hayes. The pianos of Boardman & Gray as well as the Dolce Campana attachment were widely praised by composers, pianists, singers, and music teachers.

Scope and Contents of the Records/Papers/Collection

The majority of records within are newspaper clippings, photographs, song books, sheet music, community newsletters, books, letters from customers and proprietors. There is also one scrapbook which contains newspaper clippings, letters from customers and proprietors, as well as letters from famous singers and composers.

Organization of the Records/Papers/Collection**Related Material**

2006.045.1 - In curatorial.

Piano: Grand Piano, Boardman & Gray, Albany, New York, 1900-1910, L: 7'
W: 5' D: 3'7" with bench

2006.045.2 – In curatorial.

Engraved name plate: James A Gray, Maker, New York

Separated Materials

Box 3 in series is Oversize

Other Finding Aids

Detailed Description of the Records/Papers/Collection
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The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series # [#] . Series Title [title]

Box #	Folder #	Item #. Title / Description
1	1	Godey's Lady's Book: Extracts from the Numbers of Jan and Feb on Piano Porte Making (Boardman & Gray)
1	1	Golden Opinions of the Boardman & Gray Pianos (booklet)
1	1	Testimonial Book: Boardman & Gray Pianos
1	1	Boardman & Gray Pianos Catalog (grey)
1	1	Boardman & Gray Pianos Catalog (brown)
1	2	One letter and 4 telegrams of satisfied customers in reference to Boardman & Gray Pianos
1	3	Trade-Mark certificate dated Nov 23, 1909 for Boardman & Gray Pianos
1	4	Book: Loudonville Traveling the Loudon Plank Road (1997)–Featuring Friendship House owned by Gray family
1	5	Winter 2004 Edition of The Greater Loudonville Association newsletter featuring article on Boardman & Gray Pianos
1	5	Clipping with photograph of James A. Gray Square Piano No. 9012
1	5	Copy of newspaper clipping advertisement of Boardman & Gray Pianos
1	5	Photocopy of History of the County of Albany: Piano Manufacturing featuring James A. Gray
1	5	Photocopy of newspaper clipping of photograph of Boardman & Gray factory and music warehouse
1	5	Photocopy of June 2003 Piano Technicians Journal publication:

		A Tour Through a Pre-Civil War Piano Factory: featuring Boardman & Gray
1	5	Photocopy of photography of a Boardman & Gray Piano
1	5	Newspaper clipping: State St. at Pearl, 100 Years Ago 1841, Piano Makers Brought Albany Fame
1	6	Albany Pioneer Certificate awarded to Boardman & Gray Feb 10 th , 1941
1	6	Certificate of outstanding contribution to the advancement of good music, certified as a selected dealer for The Capehart the Panamuse
1	7	Drawing Book of Butterflies compliments of Boardman & Gray Piano Manufacturers
1	7	4 Christmas Carol Books compliments of Boardman & Gray Piano Manufacturers
1	7	Dolce Campana (Sweet Bells) Waltz, sheet music composed for the Piano Forte with especial reference to the Dolce Campana Attachment (1848)
1	8	Photograph: Exhibit of Boardman & Gray Pianos, Chicago, Ill USA 1893
1	8	2 Photographs: Mrs. Quackenbush at the State St. Store of Boardman & Gray Pianos
1	8	Photograph: Boardman & Gray Albany Factory
2		Scrapbook
3	9	Newspaper: Albany Times Union, Aug 6, 1950, article about Boardman & Gray Pianos (Oversize)
3	9	Newspaper: The Knickerbocker Press, March 2, 1930, For Sixty-Five Years John Ramroth Has Made Pianos in Albany Factory. (Oversize)
3	9	Newspaper: Albany Evening Journal, Feb 7, 1910 with advertisement of Boardman & Gray Pianos (Oversize)