

Starr Phonographs

And Gennett Records

The Starr Piano Company

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Starr Phonographs and Starr and Gennett Records

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INTRODUCTION

The history of the Starr Piano Company and Gennett records is fully presented in the book, *Jelly Roll, Bix, and Hoagy* by noted author, Richard L. Kennedy. Initial publication of the book was in 1994; a revised and expanded edition was published by the University of Indiana Press in 2013. The book describes the Starr Piano Company and the special and historic recordings produced by the company in the years 1915 to 1934. The book also describes the Gennett recording studio in Richmond, Indiana, and the recording sessions for King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Hoagy Carmichael, Duke Ellington, Jelly Roll Morton, and other early recording artists of note who helped create the uniquely American genres of jazz, blues, country, gospel and popular music.

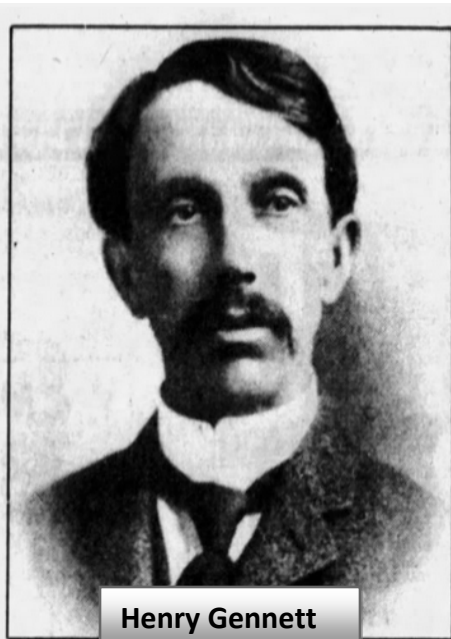
The Starr Piano Company's large factory complex in Richmond, Indiana, featured rows of multi-story brick buildings with an enormous lumber yard. The factory was secluded in a large glacial gorge along the Whitewater River, which provided needed water power. For most of its history, the Starr Piano Company was a family-owned business. In 2016, Charlie B. Dahan and Linda Gennett Irmscher published the book, *Gennett Records and Starr Piano*; nearly every page contains one or two photographs that feature members of the Starr and Gennett families, the Starr factory over the decades, the Richmond recording studio, or the many famous Starr and Gennett recording artists. Page 54 includes a photograph of United States Court Judge, Learned Hand, who played a prominent role in the Victor versus Starr patent lawsuit in 1920-21. The book was published by Arcadia Publishing in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Starr Piano Company

In its one hundred years of existence, The Starr Piano Company thrived as an industrial hub employing thousands of workers. The Starr Company was at the center of the community in Richmond, Indiana. A variety of industries thrived in Richmond due to the confluence of national highways, convenient rail connections, and the Whitewater Canal. Richmond is located close to the Ohio border; the Whitewater Canal along the Whitewater River linked Richmond with the Ohio River Valley.⁽³⁸⁾ In addition to the piano factory, Richmond had a machine works, a boiler and engine plant, a farm implements factory, and several carriage manufacturers. Richmond became the county seat for Wayne County.

In 1849, George M. Trayser, from Alsace in France, settled in Indianapolis, Indiana, to develop piano manufacturing. He soon moved to Ripley, Ohio, where, together with piano craftsman, Milo J. Chase and a number of experienced piano builders from Germany, formed the Trayser Piano Forte Company. In 1871, the company moved to Hamilton, Ohio, and a year later Charles Starr brought Trayser to Richmond, Indiana, where together with James M. Starr and Richard Jackson, the company was incorporated in Indiana. The initial piano factory was a single story building near the old National Bridge with a water wheel for power; it was reputed to be the first piano factory west of the Alleghany Mountains.(148) Two pianos per week were produced. When George Trayser retired, Milo Chase became manager of the company.(336)

Charles W. Starr, patriarch of the Starr family, had purchased 240 acres in the center of Richmond in 1826 for \$6,000. He helped build his fortune by selling \$100 lots. Many of the residences and nearly all the manufacturing establishments were built on this land. By 1878, Charles Starr's sons, James and Benjamin, together with Milo Chase, incorporated the piano works as the Chase Piano Company; James Starr was company president. Twenty-three acres of land were purchased on First Street along the bottom of a large gorge and flood plain formed by the Whitewater River. As the company grew from one building to a large complex, the Whitewater gorge came to be known in Richmond as Starr



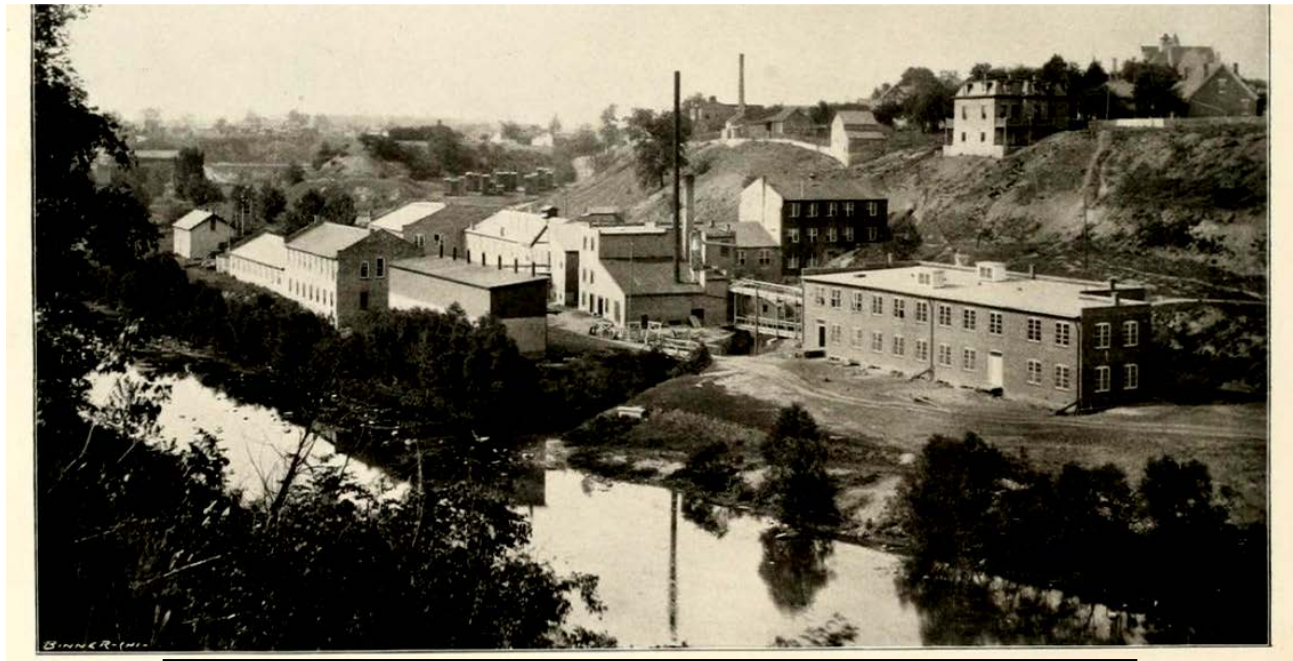
Henry Gennett

Valley.(61) From the steep ridge overlooking Starr Valley, the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad trains frequently thundered by toward downtown.

In the mid-1880s, Milo Chase and his sons left Richmond to start a separate piano enterprise in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1884, James Starr acquired control of the Richmond facility; the Starr brothers then formed the James Starr & Company.(62)

In the 1890s, a major retailer for Starr pianos was the Jesse French Piano and Organ Company in St. Louis, Missouri; this company had stores

throughout the South and was well-known. Henry Gennett was vice president of the French Company; he was the son of a prominent Italian family in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1893, Henry Gennett and his father-in-law, John M. Lumsden, visited the Richmond piano factory and before leaving accepted a proposition to purchase a half interest in the factory. The Starr Piano Company was formed in 1893; Henry Gennett and John Lumsden acquired fifty percent ownership of the new company and joined the board of directors.(65) Henry Gennett infused new energy and capital into the factory; John Lumsden was president of the company with Henry Gennett as vice-president.



Early View of the Starr Piano Factory, Richmond, Indiana

In the first week of January, 1894, a disastrous fire occurred at the factory; nearly the entire manufacturing complex was destroyed. Piano production was halted for several months. Henry Gennett moved to Richmond to supervise rebuilding of the factory. Manufacturing was just resuming when the Whitewater River flooded in August, 1895 and again stopped production. Henry Gennett sold his interests in the Jesse French Company in St. Louis and moved his family to Richmond. After John Lumsden died in 1898, Henry Gennett assumed the presidency of the Star Piano Company.(65) Henry's eldest son, Harry, became vice-president. Gradually, Henry's sons, Clarence and Fred, earned executive

positions in the company.(66) The Gennett family acquired all the common stock of the company.(277)

OCTOBER, 1908 COUNTRY LIFE IN AMERICA 597

The Starr Piano

PRE-EMINENTLY THE PIANO OF AMERICA



THAT the Starr Minum Grand satisfies the requirements of professional musicians is evidenced by the widespread use of this instrument in their studios. They have been quick to appreciate the fact that in this compact and beautiful little piano they obtain in full measure the musical qualities of the best concert grand types.

Price, \$700, in Mahogany or Ebony
(Freight and handling additional)

The Starr Piano Company
Factory and Executive Offices RICHMOND, INDIANA

©2017

Henry Gennett was known as a dynamic, hard-driving leader and a bold decision maker, but he was more of a merchandiser than a craftsman.(67) The highest grade Starr pianos won gold medals at several exhibitions, including the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904, and the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. In 1906, the Starr Piano Company began to manufacture player pianos, which utilized Q-R-S paper piano rolls. The company also produced a variety of lower-cost pianos, usually sold under different brand names.(68) Some piano models were highly ornate.(60) Before the advent of the phonograph and radio, the piano was often a feature in the parlors of middle class Americans.(63) The Starr Company developed an extensive distribution network; retail outlets were opened in many towns and cities, including as far as Los Angeles and San Diego.



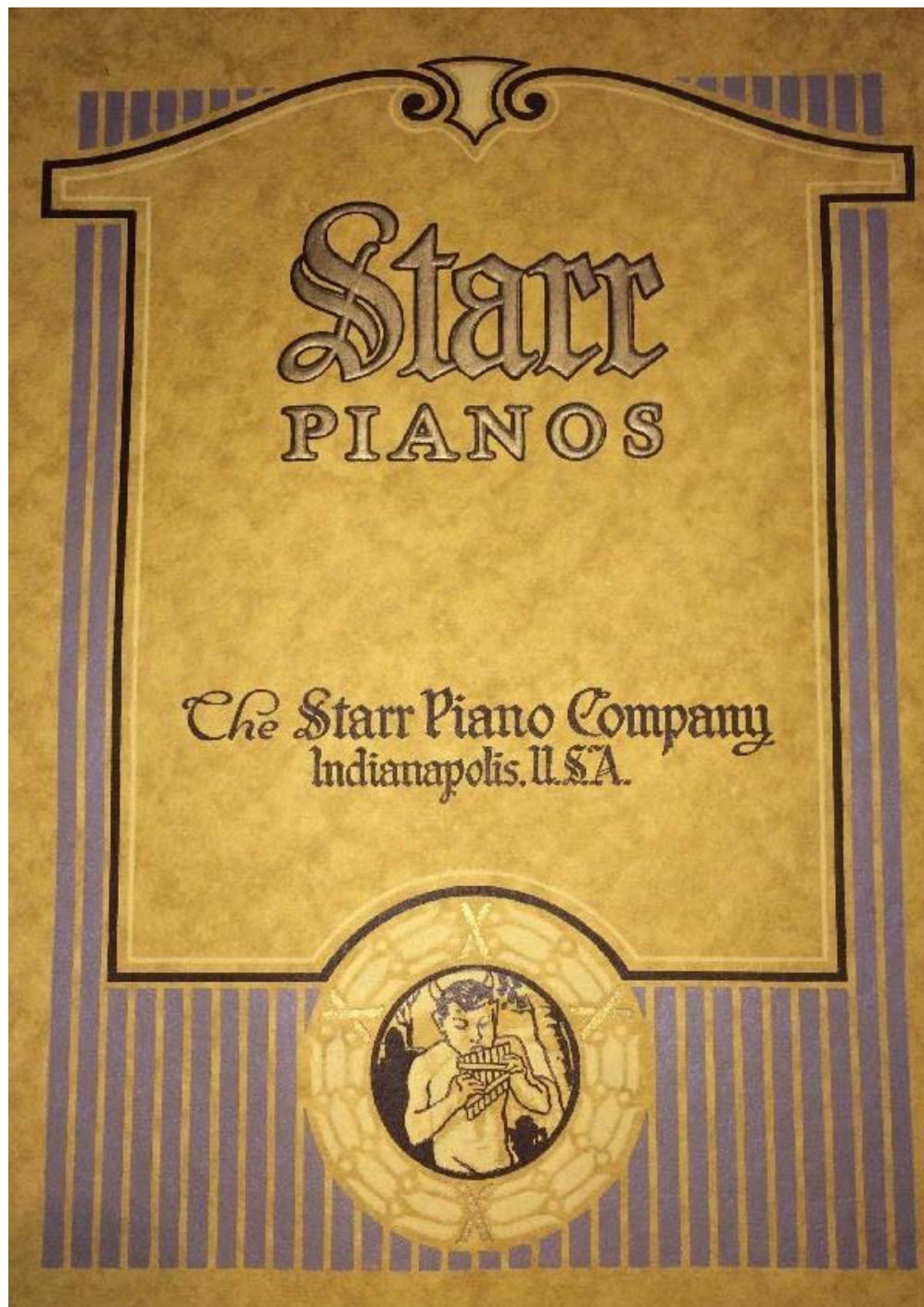
In 1907, the Starr Piano Company, Pacific Division, was established in Los Angeles to sponsor piano distribution in the West. The Starr Company had the reputation of building quality and durable pianos.(69). The Gennett family helped establish the Starr piano nationally as a leading piano brand.(71)

During World War I, the factory manufactured wooden propellers and a valve for barrage balloons. Starr pianos remained the main product and moneymaker for the company. In 1916, a six-story building for the manufacture of phonographs and records was erected. With the introduction of the Starr phonographs and records, the Starr Piano Company became a broad-based musical empire located on South First Street in Richmond.(282)

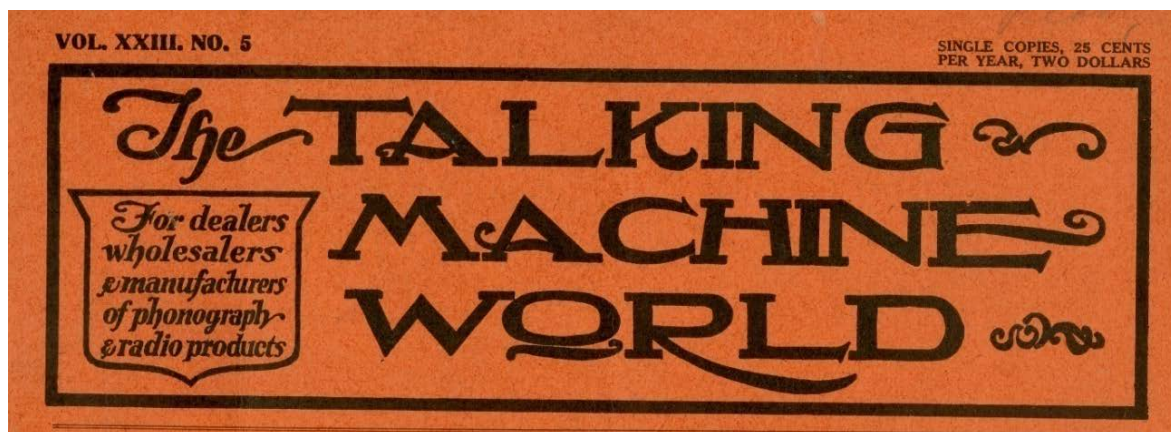
Of all the activities of the Gennett brothers, none was as noteworthy or important as the music recorded at Starr's Richmond recording studio, which was located at the southern end of the factory complex. The building was a one-story wood structure with a tar paper roof, alongside a railroad spur leading to the dispatch warehouse. Regularly, boxcars filled with pianos, phonographs, and refrigerators would rumble by, causing recording activity to cease. Over a period of thirteen years, from 1921 to 1934, the Richmond studio made thousands of acoustic and electric recordings, featuring blues, classical, ethnic, jazz, old-time, and popular music with occasional spoken items.(282) Starr's record pressing plant was at the South First & "A" Street factory in Richmond. For many years, Starr's Richmond studio was the only permanent recording studio in the center of the United States. The main office of the Starr Piano Company was at 500 South Fourth Street in Richmond.

Mr. Fred Wiggins was in charge of the Richmond studio during its heyday and played an important role in the history of Gennett records. The combination of Wiggins' musical judgment and the Gennetts' entrepreneurial skills brought numerous musicians before the public for the first time. Gennett record catalogs were very diverse; Gennett recorded much material that might otherwise have been lost.(80, 87) With liberal lease arrangements, Starr's recordings appeared on a variety of labels and were sold through chain stores nationwide as well as in Starr piano stores. Gennett also leased record masters to foreign record companies.

Gennett was among the first record labels to cater to both black and white markets. Hundreds of rare Gennett recordings preserved regional country (called "old-time"), sacred, and blues music, thus preserving songs and music styles from Appalachia to the deep South. Gene Autry, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Bill Broonzy, Fiddlin' Doc Roberts, William Harris, Lonnie Johnson, Charlie Patton, and Uncle Dave Macon were among the founders of country music. The Victor, Columbia, Brunswick, Okeh, and Paramount labels were no more prolific in recording early blues and country music than the Starr Company's Gennett records.



The recording industry was decimated by the Great Depression. Gennett and numerous other small labels went out of business in the early 1930s. The Starr factory continued to manufacture pianos and press records for other concerns, but recording slowed to a trickle. Decca Records bought the rights to Starr's Champion label. Harry Gennett Jr. and his uncle, Fred Gennett, kept their hand in the business by producing sound effects records to be sold to radio stations; Starr had developed a mobile recording studio. Harry Gennett Jr. and his crew recorded such sounds as trains in Richmond, fog horns in San Francisco, Hopi Indian chants in Arizona, and numerous groups across the country. The last piano was built at the Starr factory in 1949; the Gennett family sold the factory complex a few years later. The six-story record pressing plant continued in operation, first under Decca Records, then Mercury Records and several smaller companies. In early 1977, an auction was held in Richmond to sell the old Starr factory and the twenty-one acres of riverfront property. Ultimately, the property was sold to a local businessman, Frank Robinson, for \$84,000. Robinson had most of the buildings demolished for salvage.(282)



A major source of information on the Starr Piano Company's phonographs, records, and early recording artists is the journal, *Talking Machine World*. In 1905, Edward Lyman Bill, publisher of several New York trade publications, founded a trade magazine for the talking machine industry, the *Talking Machine World*. The monthly issues were large, measuring nearly 11 by 15 inches; the paper high quality. The subscription was low (\$1.00 per year before World War I; \$2.00 after) because advertisements paid for the issues. Advertisements cost \$5.50 per inch; a full page cost \$150, with discounts for yearly contracts. Since the monthly issues were quickly out of date, most dealers and agents did not keep them; thus, today, this is a rare and valuable journal and a special reference

source. It is rare when an issue appears on eBay and bids can exceed \$200 for a single monthly issue. Numerous full-page advertisements appeared in the journal, most by the larger phonograph and record companies. Each issue contained articles on trade developments in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, as well as the comings and goings of noted recording artists and company executives. At the back of each issue, two pages described and illustrated new patents related to machines, records, and recording devices. Also at the back were several pages of "Advance Record Bulletins," which listed new records being issued by major and most minor record companies, making this a special reference for phonograph records.

The Year 1915

By 1915, the Starr Piano Company's complex in Richmond was self-sufficient and produced practically all the components of a piano. A huge lumber yard of hardwoods was maintained.⁽⁴⁷⁾ 15,000 pianos were being produced annually. The factory complex extended over thirty-five acres along the Whitewater gorge. Two rows of factory buildings were divided by a railroad spur for delivering materials and removing finished products. The factory had its own electric generating plant. About 750 people worked in the factory. Richmond became an industrial boomtown and the Starr Company became the industrial cornerstone in Richmond, although the company was not known for paying high wages even to skilled workers. Many of the woodworkers at the factory had learned their skills from piano manufacturers in Germany. Still, most employees were loyal to the company and spent their careers as Starr employees.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Few labor disputes occurred at the Starr Company as most of the craftsmen considered themselves to be employed for life; the Starr Company rarely fired anyone. Richmond was predominately a Quaker community and was often referred to as "Quaker City."

By 1915, the basic phonograph patents held by Columbia, Edison, and Victor were expiring. The stage was set for new competitors. Throughout the 1910s, the demand for phonographs and records exceeded the supply; it was logical to enter this lucrative market. Formation of the Starr Piano Company's record division probably began in 1914; Starr phonographs and the Remington and Starr records were introduced in 1915. Starr showrooms in Richmond were on North Eighth Street. Initially, the records were likely pressed by the Scranton Button Works in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Starr's initial recording, record plating, and processing

equipment were probably purchased from the bankrupt Talking Machine Company which had produced vertically-cut Phono-Cut records in Boston, Massachusetts. Although unconfirmed, both Harry and Fred Gennett admitted this initial equipment purchase.(11) When all arrangements were completed, the Starr Company expected to press six thousand records a day by mid-September. (308)

The first records produced by the Starr Piano Company were probably sapphire-ball vertical-cut discs with the Remington label, named after the Remington piano brand manufactured by the Starr Company. These rare discs were listed at fifty cents.(32)



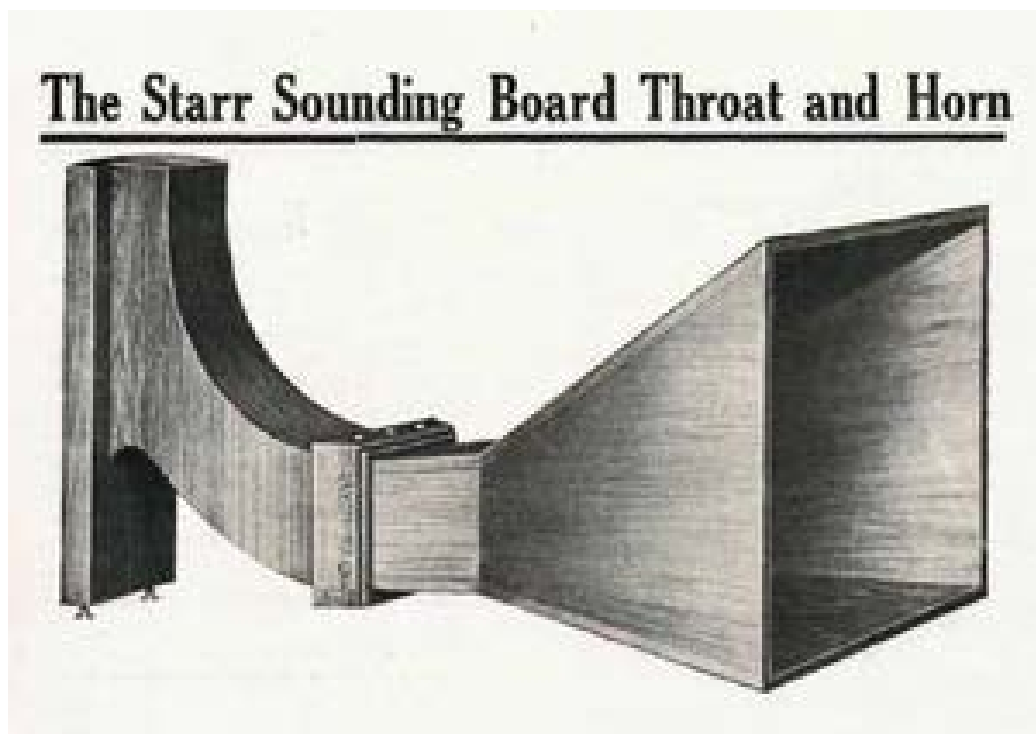
In the August 15 issue of the *Talking Machine World*, a small article announced the Starr phonograph to the industry. The Starr Piano Company issued a brochure to advertise the new phonograph. The brochure, in blue and gold, illustrated the Style II Starr phonograph, which was to retail for \$125 and was designed to play all types of disc records. Page 15 of the October 15 issue of the *Detroit Free Press* announced the new Starr phonograph.(309) A small article in

the November 15 *Talking Machine World* announced the Emil O. Schmidt Piano Company at 310 Grand Avenue in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as a dealer for the new Starr phonograph.

The September 15, issue of the *Talking Machine World* reported that for two days Starr Company agents and managers from Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Indianapolis had toured the Starr factory in Richmond to inspect and hear the new Starr phonographs. Clarence and Harry Gennett took charge of the tour and demonstrations. The visitors were impressed with the new Starr product, "...a distinct accomplishment in the musical development of the talking machine." Harry Gennett, factory manager, said to his visitors, "We are now content that

you should offer the Starr phonograph to the public, confident that we have developed an instrument which surpasses all efforts yet in the light of our past experiments. I can promise you that you may expect even greater and better results than those you hear today.”(159)

Starr Company advertisements for the “Singing Throat” internal horn used in the Starr phonographs claimed, *“The Sounding Board Horn of the Starr phonograph hangs free with an unrestricted vibration from the small end of the graduated neck to the widest flare of the horn. There is not a joint or metal connection which will retard the magnificent tone.”(309)*



The Starr Company advertised the “Singing Throat” internal horns to be made of Silver Spruce from the “Pine-Clad” Adirondack Mountains. Spruce wood has a fine even grain, making it ideal for musical instruments.

Visit Our Phonograph Department and Hear the Wonderful Starr Tone

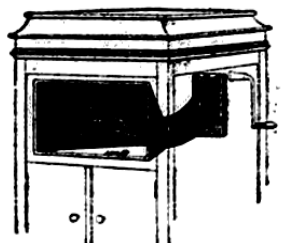
WE are offering to the music lovers of this city the latest and most wonderful development among talking machines. Because it is fundamentally right in construction, the tone of the Starr is free from any features which you may have thought objectionable

in earlier instruments. The difference is in the tone. There are many distinctive features—for instance, it is the first phonograph primarily designed to **play every style** of disc record. A phonograph cannot be described. It must be demonstrated. Won't you come in to see the Starr?

The Starr Solves the Record Question

CHOOSE your records whenever and wherever you will; so long as they are discs, the changeable tone arm and stylus of the **Starr** will play them and, more than that, will reveal the hidden beauty of tone, which can be brought out only by the **Starr**. There is no extra charge for this feature, which puts the world's library of records at your command.

Starr Styles—\$50, \$75, \$100, \$150, \$175, \$200



**The Sounding Board Horn
"Just Like a Violin"**

THE Sounding Board Horn of the **Starr** is made of Adirondack Silver-grain Spruce, the same wood of which all fine violins are made. There is not a joint or metal connection which will retard the magnificent tone. The Violin Wood Sounding Board is the reason for the silvery pureness of the **Starr** tone.

The "Why" of the "Singing Throat"

A NEWER application of tone principles in the throat and sounding board horn of the **Starr** has entirely eliminated that characteristic "phonograph tone" long existing in reproduced music. Your most critical inspection is invited, and we will play your favorite music when you call. You will be interested.

Starr Styles—\$50, \$75, \$100, \$150, \$175, \$200

The Starr Sound Box



The Starr Tone Arm



The Starr sound box featured a clear mica diaphragm

The Year 1916

With an army of skilled wood craftsmen and a chain of piano stores, the Starr Piano Company was a natural for the phonograph business. The Richmond factories were prepared to manufacture quality phonograph cabinets as well as the mechanical hardware. By 1916, the Starr Company employed one thousand men in the factory with four hundred involved with sales.(307) Retail outlets were selling Starr brand phonographs that played both vertical and lateral-cut discs by changing the stylus and position of the sound box. The Starr Company recorded disc records using the vertical-cut technology; early Starr records had blue or

green labels with the Starr name in old English script outlined in gold and white surmounting two gold lyres.



The new Starr phonograph building in Richmond was 225 feet long, 50 feet wide, and 6 stories tall; it was described as, *"...modern in every detail."*

Punch presses for the spring motors were located on the first floor; large double-action presses were used to form spring barrels. The largest press was used to form turntables with a pressure of four hundred tons!

Special dies and drill jigs were designed. The second floor was devoted to finishing Starr records. On the third floor, spring motors were assembled; the new Starr motors met the requirements of rugged construction, noiseless operation, and uniform speed. Inspectors made sure each phase of the production and the parts used were to specification. Two spring motor models were in production. Motor No. 16 was the smaller model; motor No. 26 was larger with two springs and featured nickel finish. Other models were to be added shortly. Every effort was made to make the quality of the motors first class.(335) The fourth floor was for assembling cabinets; the fifth floor for installing motors and horns into cabinets. On the sixth floor phonograph cabinets

were stained and varnished. Each phonograph was tested before being sent to the shipping department.(334) When new, the Starr phonograph building was considered to be the largest factory building in Indiana.





AN HONOR TO THE STARR PHONOGRAPH

Within a few months after the Starr Phonograph was offered to the public, the Committee of Awards at the San Diego Exposition honored it with the gold medal, the highest award given a talking machine at this exposition. It also participated in the Grand Prize awarded for Pianos, Playerpianos and Phonographs.

This is of far greater importance than the mere acknowledgement of merit in the machines exhibited there. It is an honor to Starr resources, Starr principles, Starr facilities and Starr standards of construction.

The Starr Phonograph has been built upon the principles of sound production which have made the Starr Piano "Pre-eminently the Piano of America." The tone, which should be your standard of comparison, is different because the Starr Phonograph is fundamentally right in construction.

SINCE THE FIRST NATIONAL EXPOSITION HELD AT CINCINNATI IN 1880, THE PRODUCTS OF THE STARR PIANO COMPANY HAVE RECEIVED THE HIGHEST HONORS AT EVERY SIMILAR EVENT.

THE STARR PIANO CO.

EVANSVILLE,
208 Main St.

TERRE HAUTE,
30-32 N. Sixth.

Factory Stores
INDIANAPOLIS
138-140 N. Pennsylvania St.

ANDERSON,
1216 Meridian St.

MUNCIE,
220 East Main St.

Starr PHONOGRAPHS AND RECORDS



STYLE I.
Price, \$100.00
Oak or Mahogany



STYLE VII.
Price, \$250.00
Oak or Walnut

THE PUBLIC



STYLE II.
Price, \$125.00
Oak or Mahogany



STYLE VIII.
Price, \$300.00
Mahogany

is learning to investigate and discriminate in choosing phonograph values and the wise dealer will do likewise before taking on a line of

instruments with which he will link his name. The name of the Starr Piano Company as manufacturers of STARR PHONOGRAPHS and STARR RECORDS is of itself a guarantee of quality and satisfaction and you can sell Starr Phonographs and Starr Records, for they possess the qualities for which the public has long been clamoring. The Starr Phonograph is different from the talking machines you know of and if you will remember that principles of tone-building do not vary as applied to different musical instruments you will understand why the Starr had to be different.

Here Are Some Starr Features:

A Sounding Board Horn and Throat of Silver Grain Spruce insuring perfect tone-quality

A changeable tone-arm for playing all disc records

A scientific tone-modifier

Ample filing space for records

Beautiful designs

An exquisite piano finish

And many other features and refinements which enhance its value



Starr records were sold with phonographs in Starr piano retail outlets. Starr recorded a selection of popular and classical records with prices ranging from 65¢ to \$1.00.(73) The fine-groove vertical-cut shellac records

were meant to be played with a steel needle. A recording studio was established at the Starr Company's new office at 9-11 East Thirty-Seventh Street in New York City.

In the May 15, issue of the *Talking Machine World*, the Starr Phonograph Sales Company of New York was announced; it was located on the 14th floor of the building at 56 West Forty-Fifth Street. The new company would be distributor for Starr phonographs and records in the New York, New Jersey, and New England territories. Henry Gennett was listed as president of the new distributor with F. W. Abendschein as vice-president and manager and F. Elliott Wood as secretary and traveling representative. The new Starr records were announced on page 14 of the May 26 issue of Richmond's *Palladium-Item* newspaper. Starr records were advertised as having 150 grooves per inch with playing time up to four and three-fourths minutes; the Starr records were advertised to be, ... "thicker, heavier, and harder."

The October 15, *Talking Machine World* announced that a new building at 10-12 North Eighth Street in Richmond was being built as sales and display rooms for the Starr Piano Company; the need for more display space was felt.(162) By October, eleven Starr phonograph styles were available with prices ranging from \$50 to \$300.(163)



Starr RECORDS

65c — 75c — \$1

**Bring you the best music
by great artists**

STARR Records are the outgrowth of a half-century devoted to the study of tone reproduction. Under such direction great vocal artists, great musicians, great orchestras, have recorded a notable repertoire of the world's best classical and standard music, as well as the newest popular "hits."

Starr Records do not scratch. They play longer—nearly 5 minutes on each side. They are moderately priced, 65c and up, and will play on all phonographs.

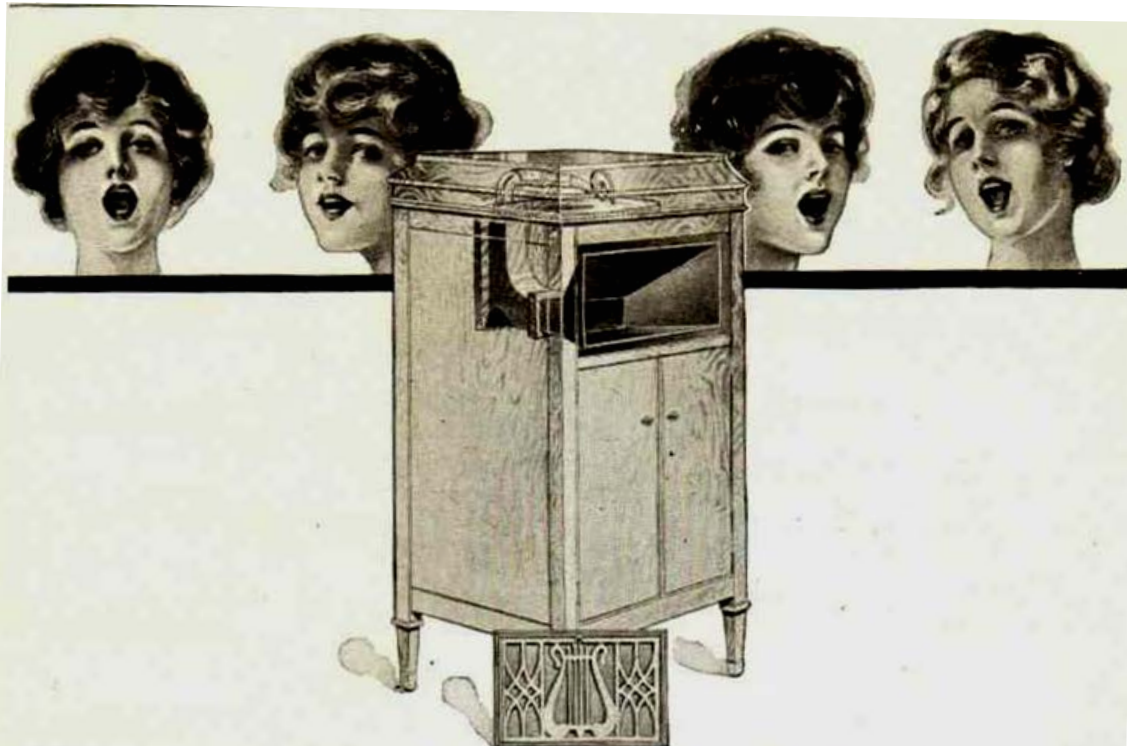
We invite you to hear your favorite selections on Starr Records. Especially do we wish you to hear Starr Records played on Starr Phonographs.

**"You get better value when
you buy Starr Records"**

Call at any hour. There is no obligation.

The Starr Piano Co.

138-140 North Pennsylvania Street



All human throats in one in the Starr Made Phonograph

THE secret of the unerringly true expression of the human tone in any disc record when played on a Starr Made Phonograph lies largely in the Starr Sounding Board Horn. You must see it and when you see it you will realize and appreciate that it is really a *throat*. As the instrument is played you will forget that a phonograph is producing the melody—it will *be* the voices themselves.

Made of long leaf Adirondack spruce—the same wonderful wood which is used for the sounding board of a grand piano—this *throat* sends forth the sound of the human voice in speech or song, or of the single

instrument or great orchestra or band, *just as it was originally produced.*

The Starr Made Phonograph will play any disc record better than it can be played by the phonograph for which it was made, which your own sense of hearing can verify. Listen to a Starr Record played on a Starr Made Phonograph (or indeed any record, for it is primarily designed to play all discs) and allow the unequalled beauty and value and volume of tone to convince you.

There is a Starr dealer near you who will be glad to demonstrate the Starr Phonograph and play any music you desire. If you do not know where he is, we can tell you and at the same time send you some very interesting literature.

New Starr Records on sale the 15th of each month



The sign of a Starr Store where Starr Service is guaranteed

The Starr Piano Company, 500 S. 2nd Street, Richmond, Ind.
STARR, RICHMOND, TRAYSER, REMINGTON
GRAND, UPRIGHT AND PLAYER PIANOS
THE STARR PHONOGRAPH
The Starr Libraries of Phonograph Records

A new phonograph was often a major purchase and considered a family treasure; it was usually given a place of honor in the living room or parlor. During the 1910s and early 1920s, it was a way of life in many American homes for the young folks to roll back the parlor rug on Saturday evenings and keep the phonograph spinning records as they danced to the latest popular tunes. Then, Sunday, after an early dinner, the family would gather in the parlor to spend a quiet afternoon listening to ballads, quartets, and semi-classical records. By the mid-1920s, radio was beginning to replace the phonograph as the family's main source of entertainment.



Early Starr Sound Box -- Stylus Bar is Pivot Mounted

Also in October, the Starr Phonograph Sales Company was relocated to 62 West Forty-Fifth Street in New York City. New retail outlets in the territory included H. Bersin, 21 Second Avenue, New York; Sturz Brothers, 142 Lincoln Avenue, New York; Morris Sandler, 1805 Pitkin Avenue, Brooklyn; F. L. Matthews, 446 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn; and the Albert Music Company, White Plains, New York. All were piano houses.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Retail stores selling the new Starr records featured the logo of a parrot standing on top of a Starr record.

An article in the October 15, *Talking Machine World* reported: “*Richmond, Indiana. October 4. Although the Starr records issued by the Starr Piano Co. to go with their phonographs have been on the market only practically a short time the cordial reception the records have met has been very gratifying to the officers of the company. In contracting for recording artists, the company has drawn largely on prominent musicians in the Middle West, although distinguished artists from the East also made some records. The new record pressing plant at the local factory is now completed and working steadily. The plant is equipped with new machinery and is thoroughly modern in every respect, with a capacity of over 6,000 records daily. The Starr records are the hill and dale type and are made harder and heavier than some records to insure durability. The new records are placed in the hands of dealers on the 15th of each month.*”

“*Among the Starr offerings for November are four numbers by the Starr Military Band, two songs by John W. Dodd, noted oratorio baritone of Cincinnati, and also two songs by John Phillips, baritone of repute; several old negro melodies by the celebrated Fisk University Jubilee Quartet; songs by Frankel and Parks, baritone and piano, well-known Indiana artists; trio recordings; novelty records and others of great variety.*”⁽¹⁶¹⁾

NEW STARR HOME ALMOST FINISHED

New Quarters at 27 Fourth Avenue West, in Cincinnati, Attractively Arranged

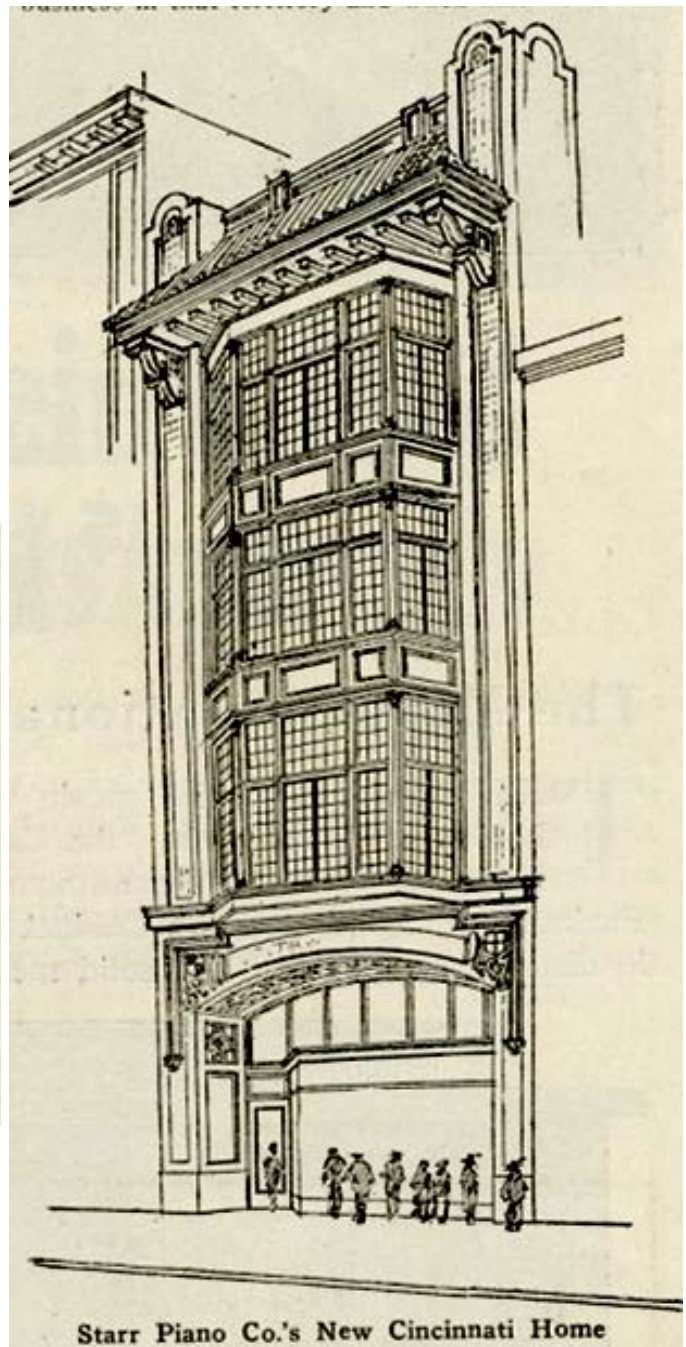
CINCINNATI, O., October 7.—Work is rapidly going ahead on the quarters of the Starr Piano Co. in this city. The new building was begun some time ago to meet the company's increased business in that territory and when finished will be thoroughly up to date and modern in every respect. It has a frontage of twenty-six feet, a depth of 150 feet and is four stories in height.

The first floor is being arranged as a phonograph demonstration room and recital hall and the second, third and fourth floors will be used as the display and salesrooms for the pianos and player-pianos. The office is on a mezzanine floor between the first and second stories. Workmen began to pour the roof slab October 8 and are expected to finish by January 1.

The new quarters will be beautifully decorated and handsomely finished. The full Starr line of pianos and phonographs will be shown.

Talking Machine
World

October 15,
1916



Starr Piano Co.'s New Cincinnati Home

STARR CO. ANNOUNCE NEW MODELS

Art Styles Have Been Added to the Starr Line
of Phonographs—Output Almost Doubled

RICHMOND, IND., October 5.—Four new models
have been added to the line of phonographs



Style VI
"William and Mary"



Style VII
"Jacobean"

Talking Machine
World

October 15, 1916

manufactured by the Starr Piano Co. These are of classic design following the styles of the old English masters and are beautiful exponents of the school to which each belongs. Style VI. is of "William and Mary" design; Style VII.,



Style VIII
"Adam"



Style IX
"Sheraton"

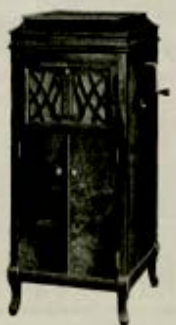
of the "Jacobean;" Style VIII., of the "Adam," and Style IX., of the "Sheraton." They are priced from \$250 to \$300.



STYLE I
\$100.00
Oak or Mahogany



STYLE II
\$175.00
Oak or Mahogany



STYLE III
\$150.00
Walnut, Oak or Mahogany

The
Sign
of the
Starr
Store



Where
Starr
Service
Is
Guaranteed

STARR

Phonographs and Records

exemplify the attainments of a half century's experience in building the world's best pianos, player-pianos and musical accessories.

The greatest difference between the Starr Phonograph and other phonographs is a difference in Tone because there is a difference in construction. The Starr Sounding Board Throat and Horn are of Silver Grain Spruce which insures perfect tone-quality. A changeable tone arm permits, in addition to Starr Records, the playing of every disc record and there are other features and qualities which give every Starr incomparable distinctiveness among phonographs.

Our systematic, thorough plan of co-operation has made Starr Service to dealers complete. Starr factory and distributing facilities insure immediate, efficient and satisfactory attention to every order.

Starr \$50.00 and \$75.00 Models will be offered December 1st.

Starr Phonographs and Records will be on display at the Grand Rapids Furniture Exhibition in January, seventh floor Temple Building.

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY
RICHMOND INDIANA

Jobbers and Representatives Everywhere



STYLE V
\$200.00
Walnut, Oak or Mahogany



STYLE VI
"William and Mary"
\$220.00
Oak or Walnut



STYLE VII
"Jacobean"
\$250.00
Oak or Walnut

The December 15 issue of the *Talking Machine World* featured a double-page advertisement for the new Starr phonographs. Ten styles were presented as small drawings; all were upright floor models:

- Style 3/4; in oak or mahogany. \$75
- Style I; in oak or mahogany. \$100
- Style II; in oak or mahogany. \$125
- Style III; in oak or mahogany. \$150
- Style IV; in oak or mahogany. \$175
- Style V; in oak or mahogany. \$200
- Style VI; William and Mary Style; in oak or walnut. \$250
- Style VII: Jacobean Style; in oak or walnut. \$250
- Style VIII: Adam Style; in mahogany. \$300
- Style IX: Sheraton Style; in mahogany. \$300

The Starr Piano Company was not listed in annual issues of *Moody's Industrial*. The Starr Company was expanding and advertised on page 2 of the November 2 *Richmond Item*, "*Agents wanted in unoccupied territory.*"

Metropolitan Opera soprano, Inez Barbour, contralto Elsa Lyon, and soprano Elizabeth Schiller, recorded for Starr in 1916. Tenors Schubel Cook and Irving Kaufman recorded popular tunes, as did popular duos Campbell & Burr, Collins & Harlan, and Golden & Marlow. Pianist Roy Parks, accordionist Peppino, and whistler Sibyl Sanderson Fagin, recorded solos. Harry Maxwell, tenor and evangelist singer, recorded for Starr as did the Fisk Jubilee Quartet and the Starr Instrumental Quartet. The Starr Military Band, conducted by John C. Weber, recorded marches; the Montana Trio featured violin, flute, and harp. Louise and Ferrera provided Hawaiian tunes. Strickland Gillian, considered America's foremost humorist, poet, and writer, recorded recitations, including "*Off Again, On Again, Gone Again, Flinnigin*" (#12500).⁽³⁰⁵⁾ Starr introduced new records on the 15th of each month and advertised, "*Let us send you our monthly supplement free.*"⁽²⁸³⁾



**Finnigin to Flannigan, "Off Agin, On Agin, Gone Agin, Finnigin,"
Starr Record No. 12500, Recorded by the Composer,
Strickland Gillilan, Himself.**

America's foremost entertainer—humorist, poet, and writer—Strickland Gillilan delights thousands yearly from platform and through the press. He is on the staff of "Judge," "The Ladies' Home Journal," and many other magazines and newspapers, and has now been induced to carry his work further still by recording for the Starr Phonograph his famous humorous selections. His readings, clear-cut, distinct, infused with the charm of his personality, with all his wit, drollery, and individuality fairly overflowing, are now at the command of millions everywhere and at any time. He records exclusively for the Starr. Look for his new Starr records and come in and hear them.

The Year 1917

In Canada, at 261 Dundas Street in London, Ontario, John A. Croden and Wilfred D. Stevenson operated Starr Canada, featuring Starr pianos. In 1917, they founded the Canadian Phonograph Supply Company to import Starr phonographs and records from the Richmond factory.

The vertically-cut Starr discs had 150 grooves per inch; thus enabling the records to play up to five minutes. Initially, the listed price per record formed the first two or three digits of the record series. Thus, vocal and dance records in the 6500 series cost 65 cents; the 7500 series 75 cents, and the 8500 series 85 cents. The 10000 classical series sold for one dollar. During World War I, however, shortages caused the prices of raw materials to rise; record prices had to be raised and Starr record serial numbering became confused.(16)

Vertically-cut Starr records were first listed in the *Talking Machine World* in the January 15, 1917 issue; eighteen of the newly-released Starr records were listed. Although no new Starr records were included in the September and December, 1917 issues, for most of the year approximately sixteen newly-released Starr records were listed each month. Most popular selections were included in the 7500 record series; the 10000 series included bands and some classical selections. The 12500 series included one opera selection.

In February, Starr recording facilities were opened at 50 West Forty-Fifth Street in New York City. The location was selected for the convenience of recording artists in the New York area. The new studio was placed in charge of R. C. Mayer; record pressing continued to be done at the Richmond, Indiana, plant.(164)

In March, the Starr Company sponsored a bargain sale of used pianos. Also in March, Clarence Gennett offered the Richmond Board of Works free use of the Starr Company's vacant lot at Second and South "B" Streets to be used for a municipal playground for an indefinite length of time.(333)

In May, it was reported that the Starr phonograph models were proving very popular with the public. The Starr factory was hard-pressed to fill orders for new phonographs. Starr continued to add new features including a semi-automatic motor stop, a tone regulator (volume control), and a new spring motor.

NEW MODEL STARR PHONOGRAPH

**Style Three-quarters, a Small Cabinet Machine
Priced at \$75—Ten Styles Now in Starr Line**

CINCINNATI, O., January 5.—The Starr Piano Co. has added another model to its line of phonographs, Style $\frac{3}{4}$. Owing to its inability to



fill the orders for this model it was not announced until after Christmas, but several hundred were distributed a week or two previous to Christmas.

The new style was added to comply with the great demand for the smaller instrument and is a beautiful little cabinet phonograph finished in oak or mahogany. The dimensions are: height, $42\frac{1}{2}$ inches; width, $19\frac{1}{4}$ inches; depth, $22\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Starr Style $\frac{3}{4}$

It sells for \$75. Starr distributors have contracted for large orders of these instruments in the belief that the demand will be very great.

With the addition of this model the Starr Piano Co. is now making ten styles, including the four art styles: Style $\frac{3}{4}$, \$75; Style I, \$100; Style II, \$125; Style III, \$150; Style IV, \$175; Style V, \$200; Style VI, "William and Mary," \$250; Style VII, "Jacobean," \$250; Style VIII, "Adam," \$300, and Style IX, "Sheraton," \$300.

A yet smaller model, Style $\frac{1}{2}$, is being completed, and will be offered within a short time.



Starr Phonograph Style 3/4

STARR FACTORY VERY BUSY

**Some Departments Operating Nights to Keep
Up With Orders From Distributors**

CINCINNATI, O., January 5.—Despite the fact that the holidays are over the phonograph factories

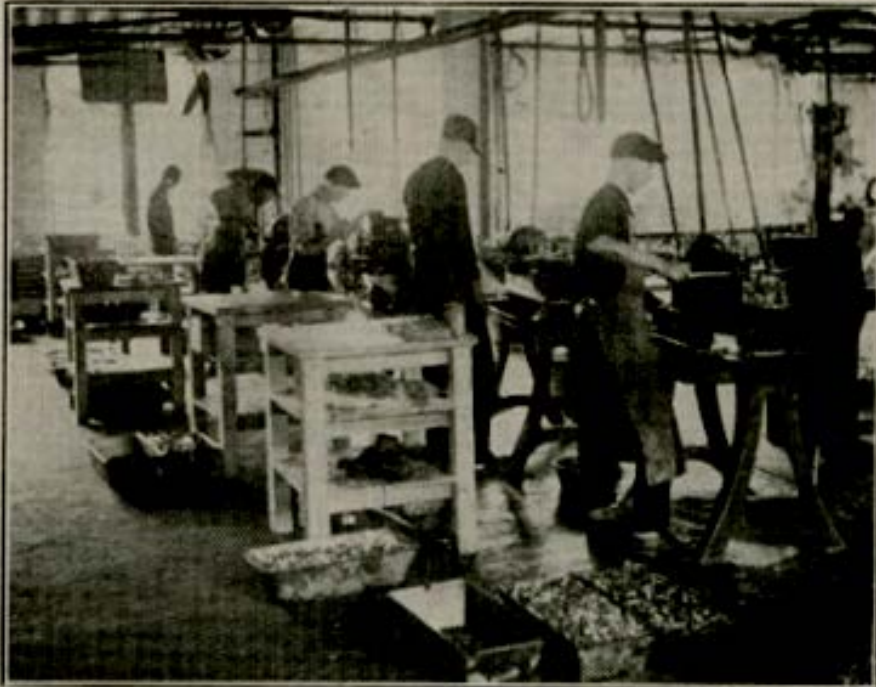


A Section of the Cabinet Department of the Starr Piano Co. continue to operate at top speed to meet demands, and some of the departments are forced to work nights in order to fill orders from Starr phonograph distributors in all sections.

**Talking Machine
World**

January 15, 1917

The new six-story phonograph factory build-



A View of One of the Machine Rooms

ing was completed before schedule time which has enabled the company to catch up with the demand in fine shape. The call for the new style $\frac{3}{4}$ Starr phonograph introduced only recently has done much to keep things booming.

WINDOW DISPLAY CARDS

Drawn by one of America's most clever artists.

Printed in three colors on heavy stock.

The two tall cards, 13½ inches wide x 21½ inches high, are for the left and right of a window.

The lower card, 21½ inches wide x 13½ inches high, is to go in the middle of the window.

Thus the three cards work together and form a very attractive basis for a window display.

A set is free to any Starr dealer who orders same.



Also in May, the *Talking Machine World* reported a marked increase in the price of shellac. For most record companies, the shellac component represented five-eighths of the material used in shellac records. Other components included ground rock (often rottenstone), cotton flock (to serve as a binder), and carbon black.

Although it made records less durable, some bargain brands added to the shellac matrix fillers such as china clay, kaolin, Fuller's earth, or talc, which are not hard minerals. Before World War I, the price for shellac hovered around twenty cents per pound; by May of 1917 it had reached seventy-four cents per pound. Despite this increase of some 275 percent, most record

companies did not markedly increase the asking price for most shellac records.



Starr Records

**Wear Longer and Are
"Hard to Break"**

No "Gr-r-r-r's" greet your ears even after many playings of Starr Records. Their greater hardness and superior needle-resisting composition prevent scratching.

Being thicker, Starr Records rarely break—even when accidentally dropped. They are double-faced and play as long as 4¾ minutes on a side.

Three generations of success in sound reproducing stand sponsor for the excellence of Starr Records. *Great Artists* have recorded on them a wide variety of the choicest musical selections.

Prices are unusually interesting (65c and up) for records of such extraordinary merit.

We invite, for a change, that you select your next records from the Starr List. Let us play your favorites. There is no obligation incurred and we shall welcome this opportunity to have you learn that—"You get better value when you buy Starr Records."

The sign of a Starr Store which invites you to hear Starr Records and Starr Phonographs.

Starr Piano Company
108 Dexter Ave. Phone 632

STARR RECORDS YOU GET BETTER VALUE WHEN YOU BUY STARR RECORDS

Also, most of the materials used for manufacturing phonographs increased in price; the leading talking machine companies made no dramatic increases in the wholesale prices of their products. Perhaps this indicated that the talking machine industry and record manufacturing were on an efficiency basis.(165)

By June, the number of Starr retail outlets in the Eastern territory was increasing at a fast pace; nearly twenty new retail outlets were established in the New York-New England area. The Starr Phonograph Sales Company found it necessary to find even larger facilities. The Sales Company moved to 9-11 East Thirty-Seventh Street where they occupied the entire twelfth floor of the building. Main sales rooms were

located at the front of the building. There was also space for executive offices, a recording studio, laboratory, wax room, and stock rooms.(167)

Canadian distribution of the Starr phonographs and records was assigned to the Phonograph Supply Company of London, Canada.(36)

In 1917, the Starr Company sponsored The Starr Christmas Club, *“Join now, begin your payments and have a beautiful toned Starr phonograph delivered Christmas Eve.”*(294)



Starr Phonograph “Straight-Tube” Tone Arm



Why Dealers Prize the Representation of the Starr

YOU will find dealers selling Starr Phonographs to be extremely enthusiastic and optimistic over their dealerships. For they **believe** in the Starr. They recommend it with that confidence which is born only of **honest conviction**.

—They like the variety of the line—eleven beautiful models in over a score of finishes—a range of prices covering the gamut of the greatest market.

—They like the graceful, refined designs. They like the splendid finishes which the half-century's experience of the Starr organization puts upon every case.

—They like it because every part of every Starr Phonograph is built in the Starr workshops, assuring uniformity of quality and definite responsibility.

—They like the quiet-running, powerful, steady Starr-built motor with its ready accessibility for oiling and inspection.

—They like to inform their customers concerning the musical ancestry of Starr Phonographs—how their creators have for five decades been experts on producing tone—how over 150,000 famously-toned instruments are world-wide heralds of the Starr reputation.

The Singing Throat of the Starr Phonograph

—The Starr "Singing Throat" of silver grain spruce, they find, is convincing proof to all ears that Starr genius has produced a phonograph which is a superior musical instrument.

—They appreciate the Starr national advertising which is reaching their most desirable prospects through the highest class magazines and leading newspapers.

—They appreciate the regular monthly assistance given to their local advertising efforts.

—And the sale of Starr Records, which is open to Starr Phonograph dealers, enables them to push records without advertising a competitive phonograph.

Those same factors would make you prize a Starr dealership. If you are interested we invite correspondence.

THE STARR PIANO CO.
Richmond, Indiana



The United States entered World War I in April. The first Starr Company employee to be conscripted was 27 year-old Jesse Ralph Brown, a machinist. Mr. Brown considered himself to be lucky and commented, "*I'm ready to go any time the country needs me.*"(337) The Starr Company made an unusual offer to Wayne County farmers in 1917. One of the factory's large drying kilns was offered to farmers for drying fruits and vegetables—to prevent their going to waste during the war—if there was enough interest by local farmers.(289)

In August, as more female workers were employed at the Starr complex, the company urged female employees to wear bloomers as they were considered to provide more freedom and protection from accidents.(338) The Starr Company received notice that after November 1, a 3% war tax would be levied on Starr records and player pianos.(310)



The Starr Company placed numerous advertisements in local and Indiana newspapers advertising for workers, both skilled and unskilled, and including "women helpers." The Starr Company especially needed experienced cabinet workers, carvers, and machinists. One advertisement stated, "*WANTED: Men in the Electroplating Department; See Mr. Egly.*"

In December, the Starr Piano Company announced contracts with the United States Government to manufacture airplane parts for the airplane assembling plant at Dayton, Ohio; the Richmond factory was close to the Wright Brothers airplane factory in Dayton.(74) Manufacturing had already started; it was expected this work would represent a substantial portion of the company's business in 1918. Airplane propellers, flaps, rudders, and wooden supports for aircraft wings as well as accessory items for hot-air balloons were produced. Propellers could be as long as eight feet; they were made of hard woods—cherry, mahogany, and walnut. In announcing the new contract, the Starr Company stated, "*We do not anticipate that this addition of Government work will affect our regular phonograph, piano and player-piano trade, owing to the fact that*

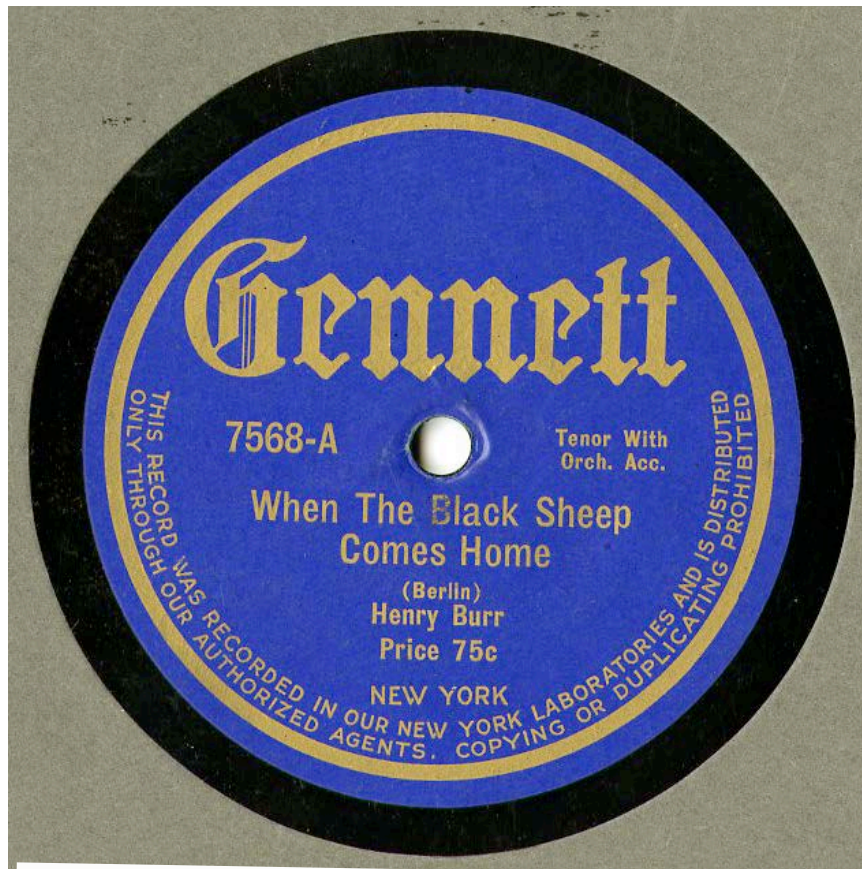
during 1916 we largely increased our factory and had just occupied the same the later portion of that year, giving us substantial floor space, which we can devote to this department without interference with our regular business. The work for the Government we are doing most willingly. We are very much in favor of the Government policies, and intend to cooperate to our outmost ability in production work; in fact, we believe that material aid can be extended by the musical instrument industry in connection with the aeroplane program of the Government and that, with the completion of the drawings and plans which have recently been approved, many factories interested will be able to obtain contracts, if they so desire.”(168)

Problems with the vertically-cut Starr records were evident by 1917 and the lack of sufficient compliance in the diaphragm-stylus assembly of Starr sound boxes was a problem.(46) Also, Starr records were sold only with Starr phonographs in Starr piano stores. Many dealers hesitated to sell records closely associated with the Starr phonographs. Vertically-cut Starr records could not be played on Victor’s Victrolas or Columbia’s Grafonolas. At the urging of young Fred Gennett,

in 1917, the Gennett label record was designed to replace the Starr label, thereby minimizing the association with the piano company and widening the label’s distribution. Independent distributors could more easily sell the new brand.



Gennett fine-groove vertical-cut records were introduced in October, 1917. The new Gennett label was derived from Starr executives Clarence, Fred, and Harry Gennett.(26) The initial label featured a plain design with the Gennett name in old English script across the top half. Soon, this was changed to the decorative design of a gold hexagon with an outer ring; the segments were filled with



heraldic leaf-like shapes.(17) The initial design featured a bright blue background with gold print. In 1922, the background was changed to a darker blue. Gennett records continued to use this label for the next seven years.(10)

The new Gennett label records were mentioned on page 1 of the November 10 issue of the Kansas newspaper, *The Beliot Daily Call*. They were also mentioned on page 6 of the December 1 issue of the *Richmond Item*.

Artists to record for Starr in 1917 included sopranos Inez Barbour, Agnes Hanick, and Elizabeth Schiller. Violin selections were by Louis Rich and Yakore Spivakowski. Trios included the Bailhe Trio, the Starr Trio, and the Sterling Trio. Quartet music was provided by the Croxton Mixed Quartet and the Manhattan Quartet.



Vernon Dalhart

Popular artists included Stanley Arthur, George Bairde, Rolland Ball, Henry Burr, Charles Clark, Shubel Cooke, Royal Dadmun, Vernon Dalhart, Harry Dunne, Adolph Hahl, Arthur Hall, Byron Harlan, Kathryn Irving, Ada Jones, Frederick Martin, William McEwan, Frank Perry, Manuel Romain, William Schefer and Albert Wiederhold. Orchestral music was by Pietro Florida's Orchestra and the Starr Orchestra. Band music was by the Jones Brothers Saxophone Band, the Kismet Temple Band, Smith's Band, the Starr Military Band,

Weber's Prize Band, and Yerkes Jazzarimba Orchestra. Irish tunes were by Larry O'Tool; Hawaiian guitar music was by Louise & Ferrera. Unusual records included Joe Belmont (whistling), Golden & Heins (comic), Strickland Gillilan (speaking), Golden & Marlowe (speaking) and the Van Eps Trio (banjo).



"Keep the Home Fires Burning"

Play at home each day the inspiring military music to which "your boys" are marching. Be with America's blue-clad and khaki-clad heroes in spirit through the melody of Starr Records.

At 65c, 75c and \$1 we offer double-sided

Starr Records

in a variety of selections which are prime favorites with the Sammies these days.

A few suggestions.

It's Time for Every Boy to Be a Soldier	With Flag and Fleet
'Til the Clouds Roll By	National Defense
Zehle's Wellington March	March Patriotic
Sousa's Thunderer March	National Emblem

Starr Records play nearly 5 minutes on each side. We will gladly play any desired selections without obligation.

Liberty Bonds are accepted as cash in purchasing Pianos and Phonographs.

A black and white photograph of a vintage Gennett record. The label features the Gennett logo, the number 17108, and the text "The Best of America (Instrumental)", "Blowing Away Band", and "Made in U.S.A." The record is shown from a top-down perspective, with its grooves visible.

They advertise no competitor's phonograph

Service !

This is the kind of service the dealer must have with which to build a big, profitable and permanent record business.

"Gennett Records" have the backing of a great and long established company with a world-wide musical reputation.

Our "Special Assortment Proposition" requires a very moderate investment and lays the foundation for building a permanent, profitable, unrestricted record trade. Write.

"Gennett Records"

are Hill and Dale type; 150 lines to the inch; double-sided, each side playing up to 5 minutes. Can be played on all universal phonographs.

Many recordings by new and distinctive voices have leaped to immediate popularity in "Gennett Records."

A splendid assortment of fast-selling selections. We furthermore assume responsibility and assure protection which permits keeping your stock fresh and up-to-date.

"Gennett Records" impose no restrictions concerning the make of phonograph you handle.

"GENNETT RECORDS"

9 to 11 East 37th Street

New York City

(Division of The Starr Piano Company)



Ever there
and over here
"your boys"
want a pho-
nograph for
their own tents
—or barracks.
Music rests, enter-
tains, inspires courage and
cures homesickness. General
Bell says: "Singing soldiers
are fighting soldiers." Send a

**Starr
French
PHONO-GRAPH Kit**

Its Starr Phonograph plays
Gennett or ANY disc records
that folks contribute. The
tone is loud, real and melo-
dious, the result of our half-
century's musical experience.

The light, sturdy, compact
little trunk braves roughest
handling. Has compart-
ments for records, all disas-
sembled parts, etc.,—an ex-
clusive feature. \$75 complete.

All-record playing Starr
Phonographs—in 8 home
models—\$55 up. Write
for "The Difference is in
the Tone—and Why,"
and Starr dealer's location.

The Starr Piano Co.
Musical Instrument Makers Since 1872
Richmond, Indiana

*The Canadian
Phonograph
Supply Co.,
Limited
261 Dundas St.,
London, Ont.*

*Plays
ALL
Records*



The Year 1918

In early 1918, the Canadian Phonograph Supply Company changed its name to the Starr Company of Canada. The company was able to report good sales of both the Starr phonographs and Starr/Gennett records.(36)



Starr Phonograph With the Sound Box Positioned To Play Vertical-Cut Disc Records

With major contracts with the United States Government, during 1918, the Starr Company's Richmond factory was occupied manufacturing military equipment. Although the Starr Company continued to advertise piano models and to place occasional Starr phonograph advertisements in newspapers, no advertisements for the Starr phonographs appeared in the 1918 *Talking Machine World* issues. New Starr records were listed in the January, February, March, April, and December *Talking Machine* issues; an average of fifteen new records was listed for each of the five months. Special Starr Art Tone records in the 10000 or 12500 record series featured violinist Helen Ware and bass Frederick Martin. Thomas Griselle was musical director for the New York recording laboratory.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The Starr Company continued to advertise for workers.⁽³¹¹⁾

In September, the Starr Company announced that the Victor Aircraft Corporation of Long Island, New York, was due to relocate to the Starr plant in Richmond; the

Starr Company was able to provide the needed space for the Victor Company to design engine parts for “aeroplanes.”(312)

In 1918, there were attempts by Starr Company employees to form a labor union. By November, several employees alleged the Starr Company had blacklisted and discharged them due to their affiliation with labor unions. They complained to the Federal War Labor Board.(339)

New artists to record for the Starr Company included Frida Bennèche, Henry Burr (as Harry McClaskey), Harry Ellis, Tonika Frese, James Harrod, Charles Hart, Jack Kimbal, Nadina Legal, and Frank Perry. Bands included the Brass Quartet, Codey’s Band, Conklin’s Novelty Orchestra, Dante’s Concert Band, the Gennett Dance Orchestra, the Original Hungarian Gypsy Band, Harry Junior’s Jazz Orchestra, and Vess Ossman’s Banjo Orchestra. Other records were by Pietro Copodiferro (cornet), Paul Henneberg (flute), Chester Smith (cornet) and George Thompson (comic monolog).

The Year 1919

In the January 15, *Talking Machine World*, a small article stated that the War Industries Board had exercised strong control of industries, including the talking machine industry. Domestic production was curtailed and trade demands often, “...went by the board.” The demand for talking machines and records grew to amazing proportions. Orders accumulated in such numbers that it would take months before they could be filled. The United States government urged the public to develop, “...the savings spirit.”(169) The American Steel and Wire Company estimated that the demand for piano wires was at least fifty percent in excess of available supplies.(170)

In April, the Starr Piano Company announced the first lateral-cut Gennett records; the first lateral-cut release was #4500 in February. This announcement brought legal action by the Victor Talking Machine Company charging infringement of the Eldridge Johnson lateral recording in wax patent, U.S. Patent #896,059.(36)

Also in April, the Carpenter Paper Company in Omaha, Nebraska, was named wholesale distributor for the Starr phonographs and Gennett records in the states of Iowa, Nebraska, and Colorado; the Carpenter Company expected business to

be limited only by the amount of stock that could be secured from the Starr factory in Richmond.(171)

Also in April, the Starr Company announced plans to move the major Starr Indianapolis retail and jobbing facility to the large building at 49-55 Monument Circle, north of the Circle Theater. The four-story brick building had a frontage of thirty feet. T. H. Bracken was manager. The Starr Company had a ninety-nine year lease.(295)

In June, the annual piano convention was held in Chicago, Illinois, at the Hotel Stratford. The Starr Piano Company's exhibit included a display of Starr phonographs and Gennett records; William C. Klumpp and Harry Berlin were in charge of the exhibit and extended a cordial welcome to visitors, who inspected the Starr phonograph models and listened to the latest records.(172)

Also in June, R. C. Mayer, head of the Starr recording studio in New York, traveled to Richmond to attend a meeting of the company staff. Members attending the meeting were impressed with the tremendous increase in the production of Gennett records during recent months; this was coupled with an influx of orders from Gennett dealers. Harry Gennett, president of the company, disclosed plans for expanded production.(173)

Record series were developed for the new Gennett lateral-cut records:

- 1200 – Educational Series
- 2500 – Green Label 12-inch; \$1.50
- 2600 – Classical 12-inch
- 2700 – Classical
- 2800 – Classical
- 4500 – Popular; Blue Label; 85¢
- 9000 – Standard Selections
- 10000 – Classical; Green Label; \$1.00
- 14000 – Art Tone Series

UNDERLYING the design and construction of all musical instruments lie certain fundamental laws, mastery of which is achieved solely with maturity of experience. To seek the evolution of any musical instrument with but limited knowledge of these laws and their devious applications is but to toss from wave to wave upon the sea of Experiment.

Before the Starr Phonograph came into being, nearly five decades of evolving the world's highest quality pianos had ripened the understanding of basic music laws in the vast Starr workshops.

That is the reason the Starr's "Singing Throat" and Sounding Board Horn, the tone chambers, are made of well-seasoned Silver Grain Spruce. Hence the "Difference in the Tone." From scientifically constructed Sound Box to a beautiful piano finish the Starr has been created a masterpiece and has attained distinction of leadership with which the maturity of Starr musical knowledge could not help but endow.

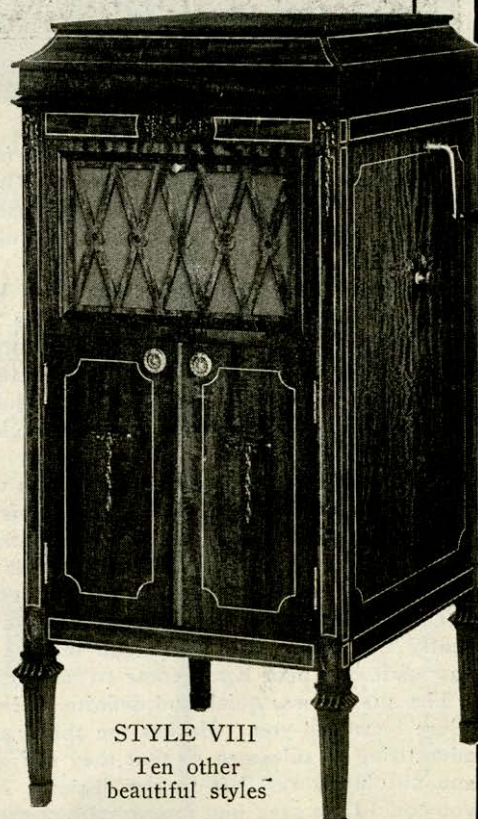
The Starr Piano Co.

Established 1872

RICHMOND,

INDIANA

Branches, distributors and dealers almost everywhere



STYLE VIII
Ten other
beautiful styles

The August 9 *Richmond Item* newspaper reported that the Central Labor Council of the City of Richmond decided to place the Starr Piano Company of Richmond on the, “We Don’t Patronize List.” This action, the labor officials declared, was taken because the Starr officials refused to consider petitions presented by the workers’ union. These petitions embodied the following points:

1. Recognition of shop committees
2. The right of collective bargaining
3. The eight-hour day
4. Better working conditions
5. Women doing equal work with men receiving equal pay

There was no mention of the low wages paid by the Starr Company. The Labor Council stated that all central trades bodies and local unions associated with the American Federation of Labor would support the, “We Don’t Patronize List.” However, the Starr Piano Company management continued to refuse any petitions.(313)



STARR PHONOGRAPH CROSSES RHINE

Plays "Stars and Stripes" on Top of Famous Ehrenbreitstein Fort—W. H. Caldwell and H. N. Barringer Present at a Notable Event

SHELBYVILLE, Ky., June 4.—The W. H. Caldwell Co., of this city, distributors of Starr pho-



W. H. Caldwell and the Starr Phonograph on top of the Ehrenbreitstein Fort at Coblenz, Germany. Mr. Caldwell is now doing Y. M. C. A. work in France.

nographs and Gennett records, have received a letter from W. H. Caldwell, who has been doing Y. M. C. A. work in France and Germany for the last year, including several pictures taken upon the top of the Ehrenbreitstein Fort, the Gibraltar of the Rhine.

One of the pictures shows a Style ½ Starr phonograph photographed on top of the fort,

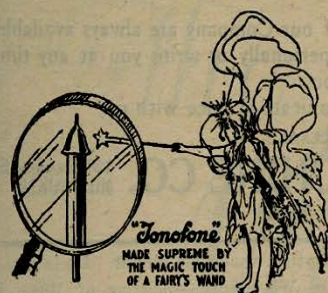
which Mr. Caldwell says is "the first American phonograph owned by the American Expeditionary Forces to cross the Rhine, and the only American phonograph ever on top of the fort."

Mr. Caldwell adds that the picture was taken just after the phonograph had finished playing the "Stars and Stripes" with the American flag flying just above where formerly the German flag waved.

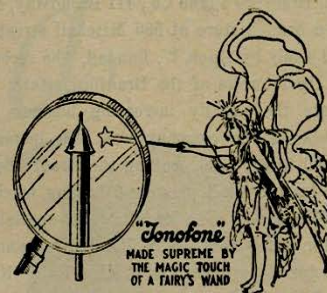
One of the other pictures shows Mr. Caldwell with five of his associates, including Howard N. Barringer, of Shelbyville, who before entering the army, was connected with W. H. Caldwell as traveling salesman, but who has recently been with Mr. Caldwell in the entertainment department at Coblenz.

Mr. Caldwell, who is a booking secretary for the Y. M. C. A. in the Third Army of the entertainment department, says that the Ehrenbreitstein Fort, part of which is shown in the above picture, was built in 1620 and stands 400 feet above the Rhine. The fort has accommodation for 150,000 men and was occupied by the Germans until just recently.

Talking Machine World
June 15, 1919.



THE TRUTH WRONGS NO
MAN AND NO PHONOGRAPH
IS RIGHT IF THE NEEDLE
ISN'T RIGHT



"Tonofone"

Is the Universal Talking Machine Needle Supreme!

It plays all Machines and Records, regardless of name, kind or cost. It is recognized, THE WORLD OVER, as the NEEDLE OF QUALITY. It is THE MASTER NEEDLE.—If you doubt it, INVESTIGATE.

ITS TONES ARE MARVELOUSLY PURE! ITS ARTICULATION IS AMAZINGLY CLEAR! The finest Machines ever made and the most wonderful Records are better when played with a Tonofone Needle. It has set a new Standard in "Phonography"

By December, the Starr Company was handling the Tonofone brand needle, manufactured by the R. C. Wade Company.(174) The Tonofone needle was two-piece; the point was made from a resilient flexible metal, with many, "...striking characteristics." The shank of the needle was made of brass.(192)

The Starr Piano Company advertised that the Starr phonographs and the new Gennett records were, "*The Talk of the Trade.*"

Immediately after the end of World War I, in Canada, Emile Berliner's son, Herbert, established the Compo Company in Lachine, Quebec. Compo became one of the most important record labels in the Canadian market. The enterprise was an immediate success; the Compo Company also pressed records for Phonola and Gennett. Compo took over pressing the Starr-Gennett records for the Canadian market, using record masters from Richmond.(36). Early Compo pressings bore the Gennett of Canada label.(2)



Records pressed for the Canadian market retained the Starr label.(21).

In 1919, the Canadian government placed a high tariff on imported manufactured goods; Fred and Harry Gennett collaborated with John Croden and Wilfred Stevenson to develop plans for manufacturing phonographs and records in Canada.



HERE'S a big idea back of Gennett Lateral Records—and it is this idea that makes Gennett Records *sell*. The idea is simply this—to make *the very best phonograph record in the market*. And the result is that every person who hears a Gennett Record acknowledges its remarkable beauty of tone.

Gennett Records are made in New York, the birthplace of all the latest musical hits. If you could watch the care with which they are fashioned in our recording studios there, you would realize why Gennett Records are so wonderful.

Gennett Records may be played on any make of phonograph, and they *improve the tone* of any phonograph.

Dealers who handle Gennett Records are sending us re-orders faster than our factories can fill them. That is why we are now enlarging our plant. Come along with us.

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY

Established 1872

Richmond, Indiana



Of the nine new Starr records listed in the January, 1919 issue of the *Talking Machine World*, only one featured new artists--the Italian Dance Orchestra. Of the nine new records listed for February, eight were vertically-cut Starr issues. However, the last listed record was the new lateral-cut record #4500, by Dante's Band (*Blue Danube Waltz* and *Dolores Waltz*). Starting in March, 1919, the *Talking Machine World* listings for each of the monthly record

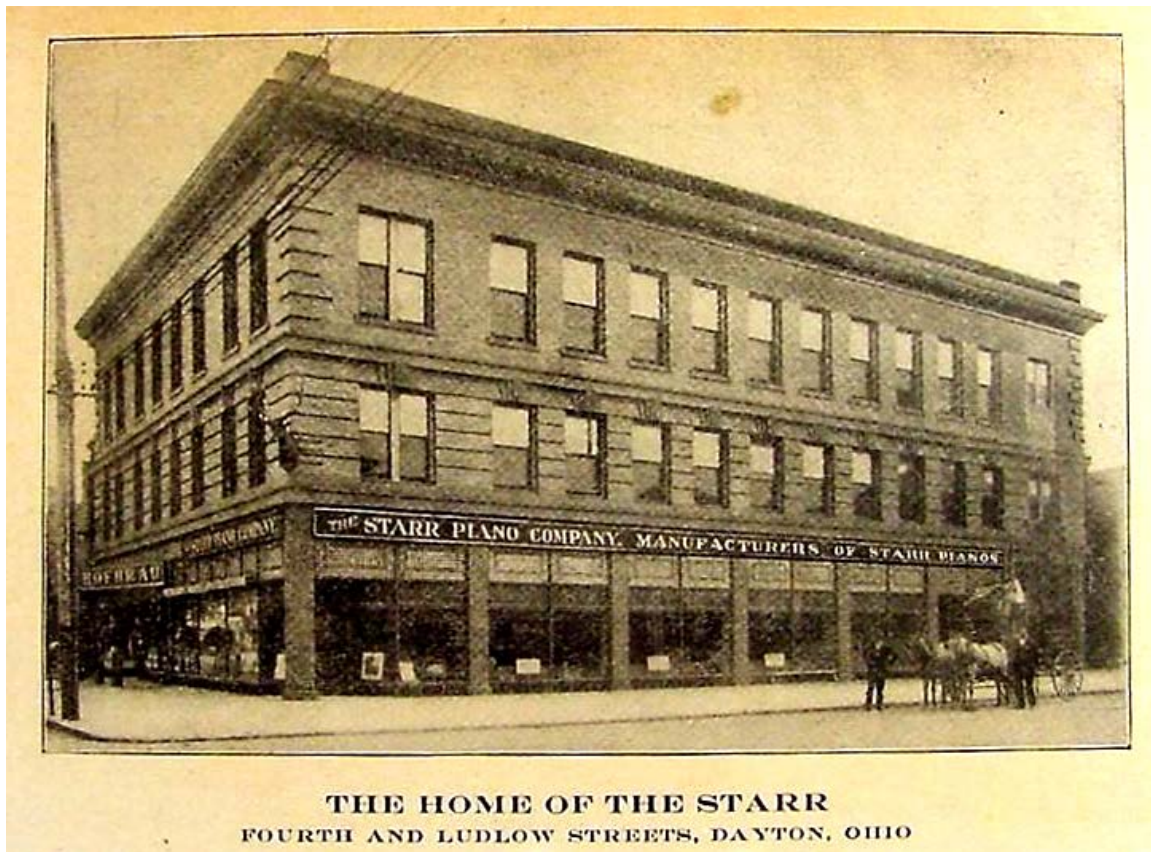
releases by the Starr Piano Company were lateral-cut and with the Gennett label. The few Art Tone records were by violinist Helen Ware. New artists on the Gennett label included Andrea Arensen, Samuel Ash, Bell & Sharpe, Al Bernard, Flo Bert, John Connell, Billy De Rex, Charles Gallagher, Fred Hillebrand, Harvey Hindermeyer, Lewis James, Irving Kaufman, Jack Kaufman, Stanley Miles, Ace Smith, and Earle White. Trios were by the Orpheus Trio and the Sterling Trio; quartets were by the Criterion Quartet and the Premier American Quartet.

Bands and orchestras to record included the Coney Island Jazz Orchestra, Conklin's Society Orchestra, John Corde's Orchestra, Croden's Concert Band, Dowry's Special Orchestra, the Gennett Society Orchestra, Green Brothers Xylophone Orchestra, Grogan's Little Symphony, Johnson's Orchestra, the Kansas Jazz Band, the Milano Orchestra, the Original New Orleans Jazz Band (directed by pianist, Jimmy Durante), Riley's Cabaret Orchestra, Reisenweber's Orchestra, the Rose Garden Orchestra and Vincent's Band. Most less-well-known bands usually recorded only one, two, or three selections at each recording session; the Starr Company was selective regarding which recordings were processed to produce commercial records and many were rejected.



Unusual records included the Hawaiian Troupe, Harry Frankel (whistling), Harry Humphrey (monolog), the Instrumental Choral, and Duane Sawyer (saxophone).

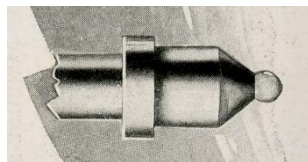
Jack and Irving Kaufman



THE HOME OF THE STARR
FOURTH AND LUDLOW STREETS, DAYTON, OHIO



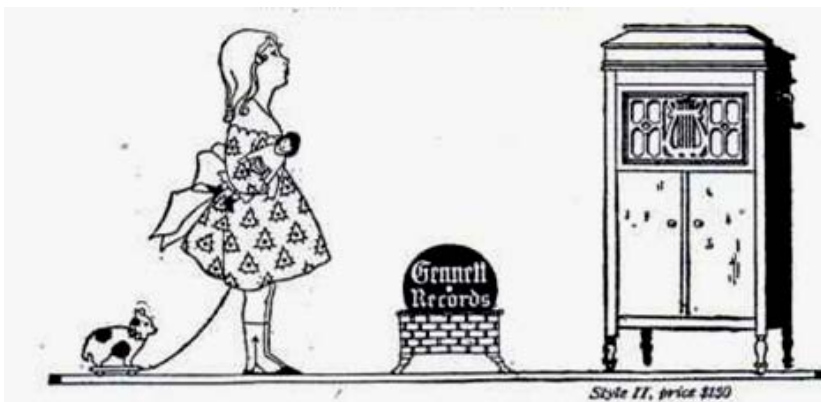
Starr phonograph with straight-tube tone arm. The sound box can change position to play:
vertical-cut shellac discs: fine-groove brands with a steel needle; wide-groove brands (Pathé, Rex) with a ball-shaped sapphire stylus mounted at the tip of a metal shank



or

lateral-cut shellac discs: with changeable steel, thorn, or bamboo needles.





**As pure as the voice of a child is the
tone of the**

STARR Phonograph

The Starr has a throat made of Silver Grain Spruce, the *only* wood that produces a true "singing throat" for either vocal or instrumental compositions.

And in every other feature as well, the STARR carries out the maxim of its makers, observed for fifty years continuously, to make "Nothing But the Best."

This is why those who have heard the STARR regard it as the *unequalled* phonograph.

GENNETT Records have won the favor of those who have heard them, for the same reason—the exquisite workmanship that goes into them.

Gennett Records are recorded in New York, from the latest dance selections and song hits born on Broadway. Come in and hear the new GENNETT Records. They are played on any make of phonograph and *improve the tone* of any phonograph.

Get acquainted with the STARR Phonograph and GENNETT Records!

Many different brands of steel needles were available for playing lateral-cut 78 rpm shellac records; they came in an array of sizes and shapes. Depending on the brand, the hardness and quality of the steel was also variable; some were even silver or gold plated. Most steel needles came in packets or small tins of one hundred or more needles. Loud volume steel needles are thick with an abrupt taper at the point while soft volume needles are thin with a gradual taper at the point. Although not always available, the medium volume steel needle with a gradual taper from the shank to the point is probably the most uniform

transmitter of vibrations of all sound frequencies.(45) Concerned with preserving their records, many serious collector/listeners today prefer to change the needle after playing only one or two record sides.

The Year 1920

At the January semi-annual furniture show in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Starr Piano Company exhibited eight Starr phonograph models, including two new styles, one with a cabinet of mahogany inlaid with maple, and one of plain mahogany. Both models featured a new drawer filing system; each drawer contained a record album. The Miller Furniture Company in Grand Rapids was the local Starr dealer.(145)

In February, the Starr Piano Company opened a wholesale branch at 240 Fifth Avenue North in Nashville, Tennessee; Hugh M. Light was appointed district manager. Starr pianos, phonographs, and Gennett records would be distributed. (177)

Also in February, the Starr Company of Canada opened wholesale facilities in the Ackerman Building in Regina, Saskatchewan. The new office would distribute for the western provinces; L. L. Merrill was general manager.(179) Fred Gennett visited Wilfred Stevenson in London to establish three plants to manufacture phonographs for the Canadian market.

In April, a new wholesale and retail outlet for the Starr Company was planned to open at 423 South Wabash Avenue in Chicago. Located in Chicago's famous Loop, the central location would enable the Starr Company to have strong representation in Chicago's busiest section. C. O. Miller was appointed wholesale manager and Henry Rousseau in charge of the retail department.(178) In June, the new Chicago outlet was announced as the Cole and Dunas Music Company. In their Bargain Bulletin for July, Cole and Dunas featured Starr phonograph Styles #I and #III, as these models were particularly profitable.(181)

The Connorized Music Company in St. Louis, Missouri, was the Starr distributor for the Missouri territory. Managed by E. F. Fay, the company was very successful. In May, Mr. Fay ordered four thousand dollars worth of Starr phonographs and Gennett records from the Richmond factory.(180)

The Starr Piano Company placed an advertisement in the August 5th *Richmond Item* newspaper, "*Expert Piano and Player Piano Tuning Done. We are equipped to repair and refinish musical instruments.*"(314)

Records for
the Canadian
market.
From *The
Ottawa
Journal*. May
22, 1920
Page 8



MAYTIME brings its choruses of feathered songsters to make all outdoors joyously musical. It brings as well a varied offering of new Starr-Gennett records, gleeful and fascinating, as rich in melody as the bird songs—with just the note of gladness that calls the charm of springtime to the home.

STARR-GENNETT RECORDS FOR MAY

9024A Price \$1.00	WHO WANTS A BABY —Composed by Yellen and Olman. Played by Benny Krueger's Melody Syncopaters.	500B Price \$1.00	I KNOW WHY —Composed by Davis-Morgan. Played by Sullivan's Orchestra.
9024B Price \$1.00	O-OH-O-OH-O-OH —Composed by Gay and Johnson. Played by Green Bros. Xylophone Orchestra.	500A Price \$1.00	OH! DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING —Sung by Arthur Collins, Orch. Acc.
4624A Price \$1.00	ALL THAT I WANT IS YOU —Composed by Monazo-Goodwin. Sung by Fred. Whitehouse, Tenor, Orchestra Acc.	500B Price \$1.00	ROSE OF VIRGINIA —Sung by Joseph Phillips, Orchestra Accompaniment
4624B Price \$1.00	OH HOW I LAUGH (When I Think How I Cried About You)—Composed by White. Sung by Billy Jones, Tenor, Orchestra Accompaniment.	4667A Price \$1.00	BUSTER BROWN —Schottische—Accordeon Solo, Fanny Dick.
9029A Price \$1.00	HE WENT IN LIKE A LION —Composed by Harry Von Tilser. Sung by Billy Murray, Tenor, Orchestra Acc.	4667B Price \$1.00	FOUR LITTLE BLACKBERRIES —Schottische—Accordeon Solo, Fanny Dick.
9029B Price \$1.00	SO LONG GO LONG —Composed by Calmore-Ruby. Sung by Fred. Hillebrand, Tenor, Solo, Orchestra Acc.	4668A Price \$1.00	SNOWDROPS —Fred Russell, Bell Solo.
9030A	AFGHANISTAN —Composed by Wilander and Danell.	4668B Price \$1.00	KEEP ON MARCH —Fred Russell, Xylophone Solo.
		4651A Price \$1.00	SHIPMATES O'MINE —Composed by Booney & Co., Sung by Archie Nicholson, Baritone Solo.

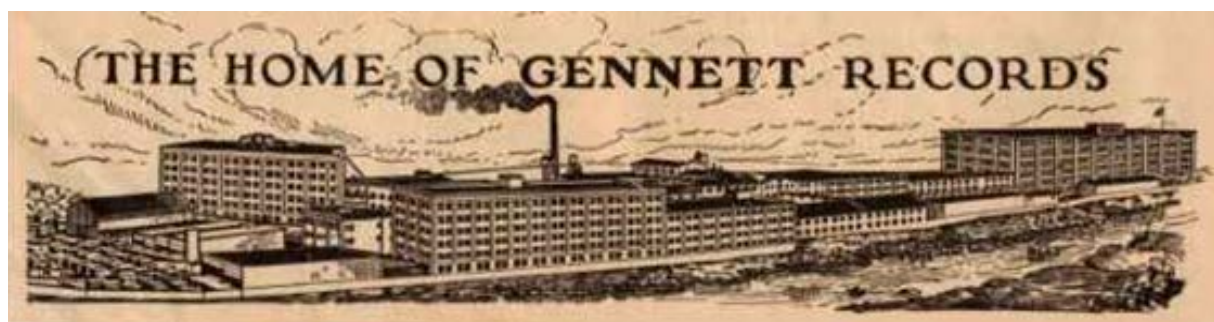
FEATURING STARR PHONOGRAPHS AND GENNETT RECORDS

The picture shows the interior of the W. H. Caldwell Store, Shelbyville, Kentucky, jobbers of Starr phonographs and Gennett records. On C. A. work in France. Mr. Caldwell, who is enjoying a short visit here, will return to that country in January and Mrs. Lyons will again

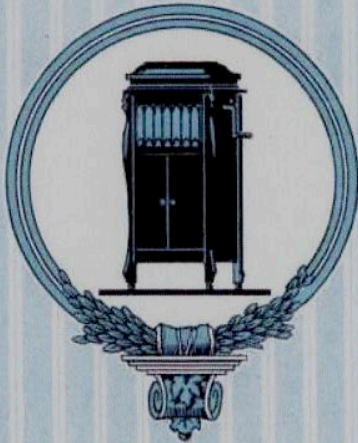


Interior of W. H. Caldwell Store, Shelbyville, Ky.

the right is Mrs. J. P. Lyons, who managed the business for the last two years in the absence of Mr. Caldwell, who has been engaged in Y. M. be in charge. Mrs. Lyons reported an excellent Christmas business and says further the outlook for the coming year is very bright.



Richmond Phonographs



One of the piano brands manufactured by the Starr Piano Company bore the name, Richmond. For a time, Richmond brand phonographs were also produced. The Starr Company advertised the Richmond phonograph as, *"...a strictly high grade phonograph that can be sold at a price within the reach of the most modest income."* The Richmond models (see pages 250 to 253) were equipped with the "universal" tone arm and sound box that could be turned and positioned to play all types on disc records on the market. The internal horns were made of three-ply elm wood, bent into shape, *"...to conform to the lines of the human throat..."*

IN presenting the RICHMOND phonograph the manufacturers believe they have solved the problem of producing a strictly high grade phonograph that can be sold at a price within the reach of the most modest income.

There are three important factors in phonograph construction that must be observed in order to produce permanently satisfactory results, namely, reliable motor or power plant, scientifically constructed reproducer or sound-box, and cabinet of well seasoned materials, carefully assembled and finished. If any one of these factors is slighted, the value both intrinsic and musical is impaired and an instrument of doubtful quality and value is the result.

In designing the RICHMOND the manufacturers have devoted all their skill, based on over fifty years' experience in the manufacture of musical instruments, with the single purpose of producing a phonograph that will satisfy the most exacting musical ear, appeal to the refined taste in case design and finish, and establish a price standard that will come within the limits of the careful and thrifty buyer. That this ideal has been reached is proven by the general excellence attained in the various models of the RICHMOND.

The RICHMOND is manufactured by THE STARR PIANO COMPANY, makers of STARR and RICHMOND pianos for over fifty years. Their TRADE MARK on a musical instrument is accepted everywhere as a guarantee of musical excellence and high-class workmanship, which is fully sustained in the RICHMOND phonograph.

In October, a new branch of the Starr Company of Canada was established in St. John, New Brunswick. Managed by W. A. Dietrich, the firm was temporarily located at 4 St. James Street. A full stock of all Starr products, including Starr phonographs, Gennett Records, needles, and accessories was being carried.(182)

In November, a new branch of the Starr Piano Company for the Florida territory was announced. A. W. Holdgate was appointed district manager. The new three-story Starr Piano Company building was located at 808 Main Street, one of the best business locations in Jacksonville. The new building was one of the most

modern of its kind in the South; it was to serve as distributing center for Starr agencies in all sections of Florida as well as south Georgia.(183)



The more expensive Art Tone records were continued on the Gennett label and were used for concert and operatic selections. On August 3, the Starr Piano Company filed a belated trademark application for the Gennett brand. The Company claimed use of the brand since January, 1917.(26)

In the December 3rd *Indianapolis Star*, the local Starr retailer advertised: *"Special Sale of Phonograph Records. In order to dispose of Hill and Dale type of Gennett records, we will place on sale, Saturday, December 4, our entire stock of these records, at a special price of fifty cents, regardless of original price."* (290)



Popular artists to record for Starr in 1920 included George Wilton Ballard, Robert Carr, Ernest Davis, Harold Elliot, Robert Hudson, Clyde Leynor, Hugo Manself, Harry Mann, the McClure Brothers, Reed Miller, Elliot Shaw, Aileen Stanley, Ethel Toms, Fred Whitehouse and Mary Williams. Trios were provided by the Mozart Trio; quartets were by The Harmonizers. Orchestras and bands included Carlo's Mexican String Orchestra, the Cumberland Lane Orchestra, Diarilof's Orchestra, Jimmy Durante's Jazz Band, His Majesty's Scots Guards Band, Saxi Holtsworth's Harmony Hounds, Joseph Kecht's Waldorf-Astoria Dance Orchestra, Bennie Krueger's Melody Syncopators, Ray Miller's Black and White Melody Boys, the

Paradise Novelty Orchestra, Harry Raderman's Orchestra, and Vincent's Band of London.



Unusual records were recorded by Frank Camplain (yodling), Pietro Capodifero (cornet), Hector Gordon (Scottish comedian), Charles Penrose (laughing monologue), Monroe Silver (comic monologue), W. G. Walker (piccolo), and Fred White (xylophone).



Ray Miller and His Black and White Melody Boys

Starr Company advertisements did not always include illustrations of the Starr phonographs and records; instead, advertisements often featured “artistic” photographs which featured dancing young ladies on grassy sand dunes. The photographs were by noted photographer, J. W. Pandeluck. The Starr Company discontinued the use of the parrot logo.

Gennett

RECORDS

"The difference is in the tone"



Music

throbbing with the very life and soul of the artist, is the contribution the new Gennett Records offer to music lovers. To hear these records on any phonograph is to realize that a new standard of record perfection has been attained. Hear these Gennett Records. Hearing is believing.

THE NEW AUGUST LIST

9028—*La Veeda* (Alden) (Fox Trot) Saxophone solo with orchestra accompaniment.
 9029—*The Crossed Life* (Morgan-Skell) (Fox Trot) Joanne Krueger's Mellow Syncopators—\$1.00
 9030—*Railroad Blues* (Roberts) (One Step) Bachman's Novelty Orchestra
 9042—*How-Wow* (Wadsworth) (One Step) Sam Holmworth's Harmony House—\$1.00
 9043—*Oriental Stars* (Morgan) (One Step) Rose Garden's Orchestra—A. Uhlmann, conducting

Left All Alone Blues from "The Night Boat" (Kern) (Fox Trot) Conlon Orchestra—\$1.00
 9036—*Who'll Take the Place of Mary* (Cunningham-Vaupine) (Sax) (Crybaby Trio, Orchestra Accompaniment)
 One Loving Careen (Wenrich) Tenor and Baritone duet with Orchestra Accompaniment. Hart and Shaw—\$1.00
 9044—*All the Boys Love Mary* (Van Scherck-Stirling) Tenor solo with orchestra accompaniment. Billy De Rex
 One Little Girl (Kirkman-Frost) Tenor solo with Orchestra Acc. Arthur Hall—\$1.00

Gennett Records better all Phonographs, but are best when played on a Starr Phonograph. Your Starr dealer will gladly give you a hearing.

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY, Richmond, Indiana

NEW YORK CHICAGO LOS ANGELES BIRMINGHAM DETROIT CINCINNATI
 CLEVELAND INDIANAPOLIS LONDON, CANADA



Victor Versus Starr

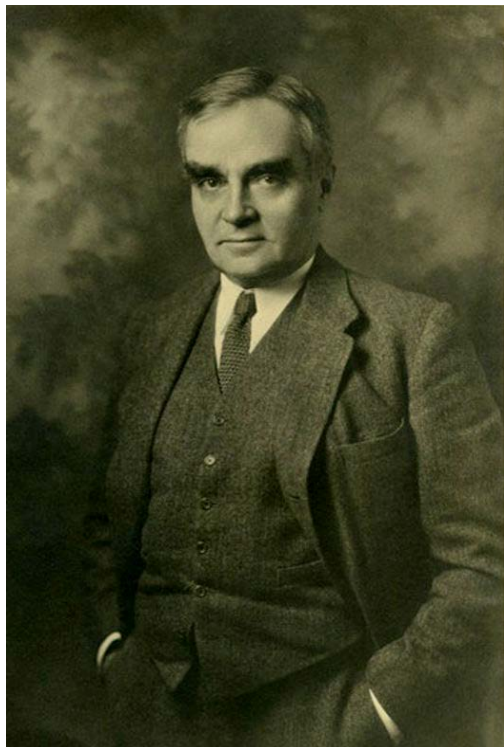
The Starr Piano Company's announcement in the March 15, 1919 *Talking Machine World* that it was producing lateral-cut disc records initiated a lawsuit by the Victor Talking Machine Company of Camden, New Jersey: Victor Talking Machine Company versus Starr Piano Company. Victor claimed that the Starr Company had infringed the Eldridge Johnson lateral-cut recording patent, #896,059, which was dated August 11, 1908. Victor requested the court for a preliminary injunction to prevent the Starr Company from continuing to produce lateral-cut records. On October 14, 1919, Judge Mayer of the United States District court rejected the request. The Victor Company appealed the decision.(42)

In early 1920, the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, before judges Ward, Hough, and Manton, in New York, affirmed the denial of preliminary injunction in Victor Talking Machine Company versus Starr Piano Company on the Johnson cut-record patent. The question involved was whether the defendant should be under injunction while the case was being tried. The defendant argued for the dismissal of the bill of complaint, but this was refused by the court and all questions involving the merits left for trial. The Victor Talking Machine Company, in a letter to the *Talking Machine World* stated, "*The case will be pushed to a final determination and all who manufacture or sell infringing laterally undulating cut records do so at their peril and will be held to full accountability under the law.*"(43, 176)

With unlimited financial resources, the Victor Company had a long and impressive record in winning patent infringement suits. Victor's president, Eldridge Johnson, had successfully defended his 1908 United States patent for the lateral-cut recording process in several cases. However, the courts often rendered decisions inconsistent with previous rulings. While Gennett Records was a small player in a business dominated by Victor, the Starr Piano Company had the financial resources for protracted litigation. Also, Starr was not alone in the suit; Starr was joined by the Aeolian Company, the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, the General Phonograph Corporation (Okeh records), and the Compo Company in Canada. The Starr Piano Company hired noted patent lawyer, Drury W. Cooper, to defend the case--a case that could end the Victor-Columbia lock on the lateral-cut recording industry. Starr's attorneys attacked the validity of Johnson's patent in view of the earlier 1901 Joseph Jones "cutting" or engraving wax patent, U.S.

Patent #688,739. At the time, a patent was valid for seventeen years. Starr continued to record and press lateral-cut records, knowing that the final settlement of Victor's patent infringement suit could be delayed in court for months, possibly years.

The prominent United States District Court Judge, Learned Hand, presided over the 1920 lawsuit: Victor Talking Machine Company versus Starr Piano Company; the trial was held in the Woolworth Building in New York City. Testimony in the case was taken during and following the 1920 Holiday season and attracted wide attention. The courtroom was crowded with talking machine men anxious to hear



U.S. Judge Learned Hand

the arguments. During the testimony, Starr's attorneys brought motion picture equipment into the courtroom for close observation of the Gennett recording stylus and the grooves it cut into the wax master discs. Starr's original defense, which had stopped Victor's temporary injunction, proved convincing to judge Hand. In a decree issued on February 11, 1921, Judge Hand concluded that Victor's attorneys could not prove that Johnson had invented the concept of lateral-cut recording. Judge Hand acknowledged that certain tools and methods relating to lateral-cut recording had been developed and patented by Victor, but the general concept, he concluded, existed years before Johnson's patent. Judge Hand also ruled that Victor had "abandoned" Johnson's patent, because the lateral-cut recording

process had been used by the Victor Company several years before the patent was submitted. Arguments for the plaintiff were presented by Richard Eyre of Kenyon & Kenyon and for the defendant by Drury. W. Cooper of Kerr, Paige, Cooper, and Hayward. Again, the Victor Company appealed the decision.(184)

The final decision to the lawsuit was handed down on April 4, 1922, in the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, in New York, before Circuit Judge Rogers and District Judges Hand and Knox. Augustus Hand (a cousin of Learned Hand) announced the decision of the court affirming the decree of the United

States District court of February 11, 1921, dismissing the bill of complaint filed by the Victor Talking Machine Company against the Starr Piano Company for alleged infringement of U.S. Patent #896,059. The opinion was written by Judge Hand and represented an exhaustive survey of the patent itself, as well as of the development of the art of record manufacturing and the various patents that held a prominent place in that development. The decision of the Court ended the once-intimidating Johnson patent. Judge Hand agreed that Johnson's keeping his patent secret for several years constituted abandonment. He also ruled that Johnson's patent was directly foreshadowed by the Joseph Jones patent, #688,739. Hand wrote, *"Nothing was achieved worthy of a patent in producing the Johnson matrix. It seems evident that Johnson invented nothing new in the way of a matrix laterally cut out of wax, and that he did not think that he had done so. He had, at most, by more experienced workmanship, produced better results through methods that were undoubtedly older than had formerly been secured."* Arguments for the appellant were presented by William Kenyon and Richard Eyre of New York and John Meyers and George Bean of Camden, New Jersey; they were assisted by counsel Edgar Baumgartner of New York. Appellee was represented by Parker Page, Drury Cooper, and Thomas Byrne, all of New York.(44, 184, 198)

On October 16, 1922, the United States Supreme Court upheld the lower court decision (Victor Talking Machine Company, petitioner, versus the Starr Piano Company).(36, 151)

The Starr Piano Company had helped set dramatic changes in the competitive nature of the recording business. With lateral-cut recording technology in the public domain, smaller record labels switched to this more standard process. The heightened competition between labels in the 1920s promoted improvement in recording processes, reduced record prices, and generated more recording activity.(75)

The Richmond Item of April 6, 1922, printed a statement by Fred Gennett, secretary of the Starr Piano Company, *"The history of this case extends over almost three years of continued and intensive litigation, and embraced in its scope the entire art of record making from its first inception to the point whereby this decision restricting patents was broken and the manufacture of records became public property. During 1919 and 1920, this case on motion for preliminary*

injunction was twice before the court and in each case the Starr Piano Company obtained a favorable decision. In December, 1920, the case was tried before Judge Learned Hand in the Southern District of New York, continuing for several weeks. At the trial witnesses appeared who had been brought from Europe for the purpose and practically all the experts in the art contributed their information for the consideration of the judge. A sweeping decision in favor of the Starr Piano Company followed in the early part of 1921. Appeal was taken by the Victor Company from the decision of the lower court, and it is a decision of the Appellate court today which finally closes the controversy of almost three years' standing."

"During the period that has passed while the controversy has been going on, the Starr Piano Company has extended their plant, greatly increased their facilities, and a substantial part of their business has been in the manufactures of these records. Other companies have likewise entered the field, imbued with the success of the Starr Piano Company in defending its position—the Brunswick record, the Vocalion record made by the Aeolian Company, the Okeh record made by the General Phonograph Company, and many others of lesser fame have been dependent upon the success of this litigation equally with the Starr Piano Company for their continuance in business. The attorneys in charge of the case for the Starr Piano Company were Messrs. Kerr, Page, Cooper & Hayward of New York and Guido Gores of Cincinnati, Ohio. The attorneys for the Victor Company were Messrs. Kenyon and Kenyon of New York City and the Victor Company's own executive legal department."



Starr Phonograph Style XV -- Gold Plated Hardware

The Year 1921

By January, 1921, the Starr factory complex in Richmond included 21 modern buildings and covered 35 acres. 1,500 men and women were employed. Annually, 5,000 pianos, 45,000 phonographs, and 2,000,000 records were produced. General sales manager for the Starr Company was J. E. Lawrence.(315)

In April, Fred D. Wiggins, manager of the Star Piano Company store in Chicago, was reported to be “highly elated” over the reception that Chicago was giving to the new console Starr phonograph, Style XV. Wiggins stated that it was not possible to keep nearly enough of this large console floor model on hand. The Style XV featured the adjustable tone arm for playing all disc records, the silent, Starr-made spring motor, 12-inch turntable, speed control, semi-automatic brake, tone regulator, gold plated hardware, and the Starr filing system. The Style XV cabinet could also serve as a writing desk and library table; the Style XV retailed at \$350.(186)

In May, Herbert Berliner launched the Sun record label in Canada and a few months later the Apex label. Berliner established his own recording studio in July. His labels frequently drew from Okeh and Gennett masters through previous connections. Berliner also established a connection with the Plaza firm in the United States.(2, 48)

The Starr Piano Company’s Richmond recording studio opened on August 20, 1921; it was under the direction of Ezra C. A. Wickemeyer. The Richmond studio often recorded Midwestern artists and bands that were overlooked by the larger record companies. Having a recording studio in Richmond was convenient for Chicago-based musicians as it was convenient to motor or take the train to Richmond. Gennett also provided many private and special-label recordings. The Gennett laboratory was receptive to almost anyone eager to make a record. The Starr Company frequently recorded and pressed records with sales only in three figures, including many rare jazz, blues, and country records; during the 1920s, hit records sold by the thousands, not by the millions. Records were not promoted on the radio for another decade. Gennett artists made little money from the sales of their records.(15)

The new recording studio was located at the southern end of the Starr complex; it measured approximately 125 feet by 30 feet. The interior was a plain, board paneled room. "Gennett Records" in old English script was painted on one wall; below the sign two recording horns were suspended. The room was crowded, poorly ventilated, and kept too warm; a potbelly stove kept the room warm. Sawdust between the interior and exterior walls was an attempt for soundproofing. The studio walls were "deadened" by monk's cloth draperies suspended from ceiling to floor. On one wall a large Mohawk rug was hung. As a result, the studio resonance was "dead" and people standing twenty feet apart practically had to yell at each other to be heard. In some cases, the recording technicians tried to improve the room's resonance by simply pulling back the drapes. The recording equipment frequently broke down or was out of adjustment.(38)

The single-story, rectangular studio was situated along a row of factory and warehouse buildings on a concrete floodwall against the Whitewater River. The building had previously been a kiln for cutting wood used for manufacturing pianos. Next to the studio was the factory's flood pump house. In the spring, the small river's waters moved swiftly past the back of the studio. About three feet from the studio's front door, a secondary railroad spur ran along the building for slow-moving cars hauling freight through the Starr factory. The trains generated enough noise to interrupt recording sessions. In later years, a red light outside the studio alerted the factory that recording sessions were under way. Over the years, musicians reported that train noises ruined some recordings. The main railroad line, situated about fifty yards above the studio, also produced noise and vibrations at unpredictable times.

Gennett recording engineers experimented with horns of various sizes, depending upon the instruments or voices to be recorded. The horns protruded from a small opening in the wall. Just behind and under the horns, through the opening in the wall, was the large recording machine, also called the recording lathe, which held the blank wax master disc. To help avoid extraneous sounds, a curtain at the opening of the wall enclosed the horns. Initially, the recording turntable operated by a cable and pulley system, similar to a grandfather clock. The center pin on the turntable was attached to one end of a cable, which had a large weight on the other end. When the weight was lowered, the turntable spun. If the studio had been cold overnight, the grease on the turntable's gears could turn gummy by

morning and recording would have to wait until the room was heated. The pulley system occasionally gave the turntable an inconsistent rotating speed. Gennett artists often recorded under less than ideal conditions. (39)

The wax recording blank contained mostly carnauba wax. The blank disc, approximately thirteen inches in diameter and one and a half inches thick, was first polished to a mirror finish on two large machines called the “shaver” and the “polisher.” Preparing a wax disc for recording could be tedious; impurities in the wax could damage the sapphire shaver. The recording stylus was made of glass, diamond, or, most often, sapphire. Gennett engineers relied on powdered graphite brushed into the grooves to facilitate the cutting line of the stylus. This somewhat crude method could occasionally cause rough spots.

The studio’s location in the bottom of the humid river gorge made recording during the summer months unpleasant. In order to keep the wax recording disc soft during recording, the unventilated studio had to be kept uncomfortably hot throughout the year. The Richmond studio did not have warming cabinets used by other companies to keep the wax discs at a constant temperature and soft for the recording stylus.(39) In wintertime, the studio was kept at a very warm 80 to 85 degrees. Small fans installed on either side of the recording horns offered little relief for the musicians, who recalled the difficult and unpleasant recording sessions at the Richmond studio as unforgettable events.(78)

Before actual recording, Wickemeyer established sound balance by placing the performers at various distances from the horns. The correct balance of sound often took place only after numerous wax test records of the performers were made and played back through the horns. Typically, banjo players sat on high stools in front of the horns; brass players were positioned at the back.(78) Despite these efforts, Gennett records from the acoustic era were often unbalanced with the banjo overwhelming the ensemble.(89) As was standard for most record companies, three masters of each selection were recorded. Each was given a master number, which was inscribed in the inner circle of the wax disc. The first take was designated with a number, then the second would have the same number with a letter “A” suffix; the third was given the number with a “B” suffix.

After a recording session, the fragile wax masters were carefully packed into cloth-lined boxes and sent to the plating department in a different building. Copper-plated master discs were formed; record grooves were carefully examined in a strong light under a microscope. Rough spots could be removed with the aid of engraver's tools or dental chisels. Master discs from the New York studio were sent by railroad to Richmond. Typically, the metal stampers used to press shellac records could press some five hundred discs before wearing out.(79)

No recording artist ever became rich from the sale of his or her Gennett records. Most musicians were paid a basic fee of thirty-five to fifty dollars per recording session. Some popular musicians signed a royalty contract for quarterly payments of one penny for each copy of each side sold. At times, Starr presented the recording artist(s) with a stack of his, her, or their records to use for promotional purposes. Most musicians considered their records merely as a means for promoting their live shows. Talent was paid by the piece, which most musicians preferred. Musicians traveled to the Starr recording studio at their own expense.

Far from major cities and recording studios, the Richmond studio frequently recorded obscure musicians passing through rural Indiana by train and car,



including vaudeville singers, hotel orchestras, brass bands, sacred choirs, country blues singers, and backwoods fiddlers. With large and efficient production facilities, the Starr Company was able to produce millions of records in the early 1920s.(80) Gennett Records adopted the slogan, *"The Difference Is In The Tone."*

Gennett

RECORDS

"The difference is in the tone"



for a Happy New Year and new record delights, hear the new
GENNETT RECORDS

4630—Dinah (Fungo Fox Trot). Ruderman's Orchestra.
Fair One (Fox Trot). Currier's Orchestra. \$.85
9096—My Home Town is a One Horse Town. The "Har-
monizers." Vocal Quartette—Orchestra Accompaniment.
Palosana. Lilly Jouts, Tenor, with Orch. acc. \$1.00
9090—It's Nice to Get Up in the Morning. (Lander).
The Portobello Lassie. Hector Gordon, Scotch Comedian.
—Orchestra Accompaniment \$1.00
9097—What Will You Do With Jesus? Ethel Toms and Rob-
ert Carr. Contraltos and Baritone Duo—Orchestra Acc.
Hold Those My Hands. Robert Carr, Baritone—Orchestra
Accompaniment \$1.00
4648—The Hula Blues (Fox Trot).
Annie My Own (Novelty Fox Trot). Ruderman's Or-
chestra \$.85

4649—Broadway Rose. Sam Ash, Tenor—Orchestra Acc.
Rose of My Heart. Ernest Davis, Tenor—Orch. Acc. \$.85
2508—One Day Nearer Home. Ethel Toms and John Perry.
Contraltos and Tenor Duo—Orchestra Accompaniment.
The Ninety and Nine. Robert Carr, Baritone—Orchestra
Accompaniment \$1.25
2509—Grande Overture "1812"—Part I. (Tschairowsky).
Grande Overture "1812"—Part II. (Tschairowsky).
His Majesty's Scots Guards Band. \$1.25
2510—Selections From Faust—Part I. (Gounod).
Selections From Faust—Part II. (Gounod). \$1.25
His Majesty's Scots Guards Band.
4647—Feather Your Nest (Fox Trot). Joseph Knecht's Wal-
dorf Astoria Dance Orchestra.
I Love the Land of Old Black Joe Medley (One-Step).
Intro. My Little Bambi. Verkes Jazzminia Orch. \$.85

Hear these, and other new Gennetts on the January list, at any Starr dealer

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY, Richmond, Indiana

NEW YORK - CHICAGO - LOS ANGELES - BIRMINGHAM - DETROIT - CINCINNATI
CLEVELAND - INDIANAPOLIS - JACKSONVILLE - LONDON, CANADA

Life Vibrant

The greater joy Gennett Records give to music lovers is the joy of hearing the buoyant, warm, colorful tones expressed by the artists at their best. The life that is in the artist is in the record. That's why Gennett Records are better for dancing—better for hearing.

FOR NEW RECORD DELIGHTS HEAR THESE NEW GENNETTS:

- | | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------|--|
| 4746
.85 | { IN THE SWEET BYE AND BYE (Bennett-Webster).
THE CHURCH IN THE WILDWOOD (Pitts).
Criterion Quartette. Vocal Quartette Unaccompanied | 4750
.85 | { OH ME! OH MY! (Intro.: "Dolly" Medley (Youmans)
From "Two Little Girls in Blue")
DAISY DAYS (Kahn-Blaufuss-Cooke)—Fox-trot,
Arthur Fields Singing the Chorus—
Harry Raderman's Orch. |
| 4747
.85 | { LAUGHING RAG (Skinner-Moore).
Sam Moore—Octo-Chorda Solo. Piano Acc., Frank Banta
MOTHER MACHREE (Ball).
Sam Moore—Saw Solo. Piano Acc., Frank Banta | 4751
.85 | { BEALE STREET BLUES.....Bennie Krueger's Orch.
THE ST. LOUIS BLUES (Handy).
Al Bernard Singing the Chorus—
Bennie Krueger's Orch. |
| 4749
.85 | { DROWSY HEAD (Berlin-DeLeath)—Waltz.
IN MY TIPPY CANOE (Fisher)—Waltz.
Gennett Dance Orchestra | 10044
1.00 | { COMING THROUGH THE RYE
MY LADDIE (Thayer)—Soprano with Orch. Acc.,
Miss Gaile |
| 4748
.85 | { JULIENNE (Turk-Robinson)—A Franco-American Fox-
trot
SWEETHEART (Davis-Johnson)—Fox-trot,
Bennie Krueger's Orchestra | | |

Gennetts better all phonographs. Hearing is believing

GENNETT RECORDS

Manufactured by

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY, Richmond, Indiana

NEW YORK CHICAGO LOS ANGELES BIRMINGHAM DETROIT CINCINNATI
CLEVELAND INDIANAPOLIS BOSTON JACKSONVILLE LONDON, CANADA

New Gennett Record Delights for October

- | | | | |
|-------------|---|-------------|--|
| 4756
.85 | { ONE KISS (Fox-trot).....The Lanin Orch.
TI-O-SAN (Fox-trot) (Traveller-Case).
Green Bros.' Novelty Band | 4761
.85 | { SUNFLOWER DANCE (MacClymont).
Miss McKee, Whistler
LOIN DU BAL (Gillet).....Green Bros.' Novelty Orch. |
| 4757
.85 | { OH JOY! (Schroeder).....Falcone's Metronome Orch.
LISTENING (Fox-trot) (Bell-Solman).
Falcone's Metronome Orch. | 4762
.85 | { AUNT HAGER'S CHILDREN'S BLUES (Handy).
Ladd's Black Aces
SHAKE IT AND BREAK IT (Chiha-Clark).
Ladd's Black Aces |
| 4758
.85 | { WANA (WHEN I WANA—YOU NO WANNA)
(Friend)Arthur Fields, Tenor
BE YOURSELF (Mitchell-Gumble-Paley).
Billy Jones, Tenor | 4763
.85 | { SATURDAY—Intro.: Daisy Days (Mitchell-Brooks).
The Lanin Orch.
WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN (Bloom).
Green Bros.' Novelty Band |
| 4759
.85 | { OH! BROTHER, WHAT A FEELIN'! (Cook).
Ernest Hare, Baritone
I MAKES MINE MYSELF (DeWitt-Bowers).
Ernest Hare, Baritone | 4764
.85 | { THE RAGGEDY MAN (The Bumble Bee) (James
Whitcomb Riley).....Harry Humphrey, Recitation
OUT TO OLD AUNT MARY'S (James Whitcomb
Riley).....Harry Humphrey, Recitation |
| 4760
.85 | { LAUTHERBACH.....George P. Watson, Yodler
HI LE, HI LO.....George P. Watson, Yodler | | { MY DADDY (Norworth-Swanstrom-Morgan).
Elliott Shaw, Baritone
DOWN YONDER (Gilbert).....The Harmonizers, Orch. Acc. |

GENNETT RECORDS

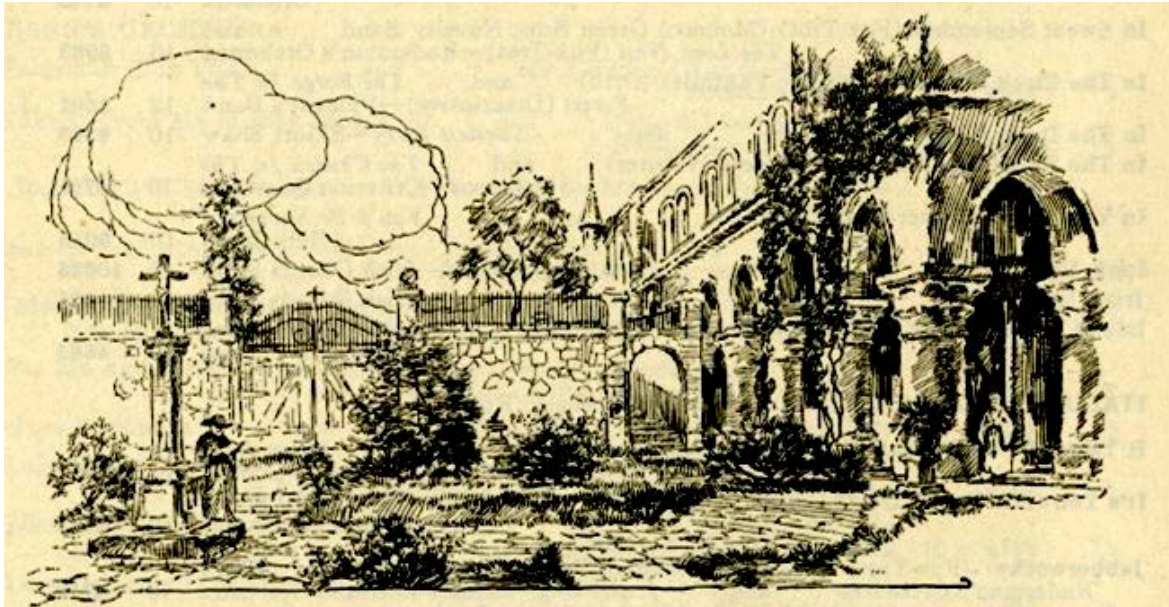


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For Gennett's classical releases, the New York studio organized the Gennett Symphony Orchestra from musicians from the New York area; it was conducted by Pietro Florida. The Richmond studio recorded classical musical ensembles



"In a Monastery Garden"

THE GENNETT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA under the leadership of PIETRO FLORIDIA has indeed given us a tone-picture in "In a Monastery Garden" and "Intermezzo" from "Cavalleria Rusticana," through their pure inspiration and fine perception of two such charming compositions. This is a recording whose exquisite melodies have been woven into an interpenetrating tone-harmony and is a brilliant and masterful interpretation. This is indeed one of the most beautiful if not the most beautiful Gennett Record yet released and becomes a glowing example of the artistry of the Gennett Symphony Orchestra. We cordially invite you to hear it.



Pietro Florida
Conductor of the
Gennett Symphony
Orchestra

from members of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. The Starr Company did not require artists to sign long-term or exclusive recording contracts.(81).

New Gennett records were shipped from the Richmond factory to dealers via railroad or truck. Starr piano stores usually featured a large display of the new Gennett records; dealers could purchase new Gennett records wholesale directly from the Starr plant, at fifty-five percent off the retail price. Department and variety stores could purchase new Gennett records from independent jobbers who purchased large quantities of records at a discount. Gennett records were mostly sold in Starr piano stores, music stores, department stores, and through mail order catalogs. Gennett records were priced from 50¢ to \$1.25.(83)

In September, an article in the *Los Angeles Times* announced plans by the Starr Piano Company to build a twelve-story fire-proof building in Los Angeles. The Starr Company had a ninety-nine year lease on the property at 626-628 South Hill Street; Starr planned to occupy the first six floors of the building. The cost of the site and the new building would represent an investment of almost two million dollars by the Starr Piano Company. The building would include a large two-story high auditorium for recitals and musical entertainments.(316)

In October, it was reported that the Breuer Brothers Company of Brooklyn, New York, had moved their music store to 775 Woodward Avenue on the corner of Madison Street. In addition to musical instruments, Breuer Brothers carried the complete stock of Starr phonographs and Gennett records and were one of three exclusive Starr retailers in Brooklyn.(186)

Also in October, nineteen Starr piano, Starr phonograph, and Gennett record dealers from Pennsylvania and West Virginia spent a day touring the Starr factories in Richmond. The dealers were impressed with the modern equipment and facilities and the fact that every single part entering into Starr-made pianos, phonographs, and Gennett records were made in the Starr factories. A special luncheon was provided for the visitors in Building No. 19 in the phonograph department.(187)

In November, at the State Fair in Richmond, Virginia, the Starr Piano Company sponsored a display of Starr pianos and phonographs. H. Wallace Carner, a representative from the Starr Company, sponsored the exhibit, which included

special signs, window cards, and placards. The “Singing Throat” spruce horn of the Starr phonographs was emphasized. The new Style XV Starr phonograph was included in the presentation and occasioned a great deal of comment.(188)

Also in November, R. C. Mayer, manager of the New York recording studio, announced a general reduction in the price of Gennett records and advertised, “*Pre-War Prices on Gennett Records.*” Popular and dance records, priced at 85 cents, were reduced to 75 cents; standard records were reduced from one dollar to 90 cents; classical records were reduced from \$1.25 to \$1.15.(189, 284)



In December, the New England branch of the Starr Piano Company in Boston, Massachusetts, reported that the demand for the new Starr phonographs and Gennett records had been far beyond expectations. Many new dealers were added to the number of agencies who featured Starr phonographs and Gennett records.(190) Also in December, the Witlin Musical Instrument Company at 807 Chestnut Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the local distributor for Gennett records, prepared an

attractive December list of Gennett records, now listed at 75 cents.(191) The Starr Company in Dayton, Ohio, was located at 27 South Ludlow Street.

Gennett pressed a 20000 series of “personal” or special records for private individuals and groups; some labels credited Gennett, while others appeared under various labels.

In 1921, the record business in the United States reached peak sales of \$106.5 million. The entertainment industry’s newspaper, *Variety*, published a monthly chart listing best-selling records. A single disc cost twenty cents to make; the sale

of five thousand records effectively covered production costs; additional sales were mostly profit.(12)

Artists to record for Gennett in 1921 included operatic selections by George Bairde (tenor), Edith Gaile, Madam Jomello (soprano), and Angelo Roselli (tenor). Violin solos were recorded by Rex Taylor and Victor Williams; piano solos were by Frank Banta. Symphonic selections were by the Gennett Symphony Orchestra. Trios were provided by the Knickerbocker Trio, the Sterling Trio, and the Vernon Trio; quartets were recorded by the Hammond Mixed Quartet, the Merry Melody Men, the Peerless Quartet, the Strand Theatre Quartet, the Weber Quartet, and The Quartet (tenor, soprano, contralto, and bass). Popular artists included George Ballard, Jean Brola, Wilfred Clayton, Royal Dadmun, Charles Harrison, F. J. Hawtry, Robert Hudson, Billy Murray, Elliot Shaw, Ethel Toms, and Billy Williams.

Orchestras and bands included Bailey's Lucky Seven, the Black Hawk Inn Orchestra, the Blue Bohemian Orchestra, the Broadway "Blue Moon" Orchestra, the California Brass Marimba Orchestra, Joe Coleman's President Orchestra, Falcon's Metronome Orchestra, Ladd's Black Aces, Elisa Christmas Lee and Her Jazz Band, Max Fells' Vanderbilt Orchestra, the Kismet Temple Band, Lanin's Roseland Orchestra, Daisy Martin & Her Five Jazz Bell Hops, Hazay Natzy and His Biltmore Orchestra, the Rose Garden Orchestra, J. H. Squire's "Karsino" Orchestra, and the Waldorf Astoria Dance Orchestra. Military band music was provided by Foden's Prize Brass Band, the Honorable Artillery Company Band, the Knights of Columbus Band, the First Infantry Regiment Band of Belgium, the Starr Concert Band, and the Tower Military Band.

Italian music was recorded by G. Iasilli's Band, St. Hilda's Colliery Band, V. Di Maio (accompanied by Dell Orchestra Napoletana), the Orchestra degli Arditi, and the Orchestra Sicilana. Irish tunes were provided by Dennis O'Brien, Terrence O'Connor, Tom Sullivan, and the Irish Guards Band. Hawaiian music was recorded by the Honolulu Trio. Scottish tunes were provided by Archie Anderson, Major Forsythe (bagpipe), and the Royal Military Band (with bagpipes). In May, the Starr Company released nine records of Welsh songs by the Welsh Quartet and John Roberts & Quartet. Sacred songs were by Robert Carr and John Perry. Comic records were recorded by Olly Oakley & Victor Opfermal (banjo & violin), Porter and Kennedy (comic dialogue), Charales Penrose (comedian), and George Thompson (comedian). Unusual records were recorded by Peter Conlin



(accordion), A. Bucca Fetez (commedia Siciliano), Pamby Dick (accordion), Sam Moore (saw and steel octo-chorda), Alexander Prince (concertina), R. Murchie (piccolo), Fred White (xylophone), and Billy Whitlock (bells, xylophone).

During the early 1920's, the Starr Company recorded and pressed occasional records for the Q-R-S label. The Q-R-S Company of Chicago manufactured piano rolls. Most of the Q-R-S records were from standard Gennett masters.(30)

Starr Piano Company employees in Richmond formed their own baseball team and joined the local Saturday Afternoon League.

By 1921, the Starr Company's kilns developed the capacity to dry and season more than five hundred thousand feet of lumber.

Few indeed are those who have ever had the pleasure of listening to the "Octo-Chorda," a new instrument invented by Harry Skinner of Chicago. The Octo-Chorda is tuned as to make it possible to play the melody and accompaniment on the one instrument. The most difficult harmony is possible on the eight strings employing progression and inversion which is altogether impossible on any other guitar played with a steel. Sam Moore plays "Laughing Rag" on this interesting instrument and "Mother Machree" for the reverse side of the record. "Mother Machree" he has played on an ordinary Atkins Silver Steel No. 64 Hand Saw. The tones are produced by vibrating the saw blade on the back with a violin bow, the tones being made to vary by bending and flexing the steel after the vibrations are started by the violin bow. As a novelty this is unsurpassed and will prove a delight to all.

MOORE, AM—Octo-Chorda Laughing Rag	and	<i>Mother Machree</i> —Sam Moore, Saw Solo, Piano Acc. Frank Banta	10	4747	.75
MOORE, SAM—Saw Solo Mother Machree	and	<i>Laughing Rag</i> —Sam Moore—Octo-Chorda Solo	10	4747	.75



Sam Moore Playing The Hand Saw

GENNETT RECORDS



NEW YORK
9-11 East 37th Street

Gennett Records are recorded in our New York Laboratories and are distributed only through our authorized agents. They are of the "Hill and Dale" type and contain from three to five minutes of music.

Gennett Records are made of a special composition warranted to reduce the surface noise to a minimum. They should be played with a steel needle.

Style III Starr Phonograph

The author's collection includes one Starr phonograph, a Style III in an oak cabinet. This Starr probably dates from 1923 or later as the sound box is designed to play lateral-cut 78 rpm shellac records only. (The Pathé Company in the United States discontinued vertically-cut records in December, 1922.) The clear mica diaphragm sound box is very similar in design and size to the Victrola No. 2 sound box, including the rubber flange for installing onto the tone arm and the spring tension-mounted stylus bar. The tone arm is also tapered. (The tapered tone arm patent, held by the Victor Talking Machine Company, was due to expire in 1923.)(341) The sound box and tone arm are in good condition; exposed hardware is nickel plated. The 12-inch turntable has a green felt cover; there is no brake mechanism under the turntable. The high quality construction of the cabinet is evident and measures 47 inches high; 20 ½ inches wide, and 22 ½ inches deep. On the underside of the lid at the center of the back panel above the lid hinge is a large decal with "**Starr**" and "**RICHMOND INDIANA**" in gold letters.



The light-stained spruce wood internal horn is very well constructed and beautiful to view, although it is hidden behind the grille covering the open end of the horn. The open end of the horn is rectangular and measures 14 inches wide by 7 ¾ inches high. The grille is sturdy and well-made; it is easily removed by a knob at the top of the grille frame. The frame is held in place at the bottom by two small wood dowels that fit into holes in the cabinet; the top is held in place by two spring-loaded bullet catches. The horn on an acoustic external or internal horn phonograph is not an amplifier; it concentrates and directs the sound waves as they emerge from the vibrating diaphragm in the sound box. Although a horn is never free from resonances, no matter how carefully designed, the horn does not add



Starr Sound Box With Mica Diaphragm

energy to the sound waves. A well-designed horn provides the passage and expansion of the sound waves.

The Starr Company claimed the spruce wood used for the Starr phonograph horns came from the "*pine-clad*" hills of the Adirondack Mountains.

The "volume control" knob is located on the right side (facing) of the cabinet near the crank escutcheon. The knob connects to a rod that swivels open or closed a thick white felt pad in the small end of the horn; the pad is held in place by two thin metal plates.



Grille For Style III Starr Phonograph – Covers The Open End Of The Horn



Volume Control Knob

The record storage space behind the two lower doors in the cabinet features eight flat drawers. Each drawer has a matching oak front with a metal knob for pulling the drawer; each drawer is tagged with a letter, "A" through "H" at the left side of the knob. Each drawer is approximately one and one-half inches deep.

For storing 10 or 12-inch records, each drawer contains eight thick paper dividers tagged "1" through "8."

Near the motor board, the cabinet frame holds two of the traditional small metal cups for holding new needles plus one cup with a hole in the center of the lid for dropping used needles (to prevent their accidentally being used again). The front center of the motor board features a small metal finger well for lifting the motor



board; the motor board lacks a locking arm to hold the board partially open for examining the spring motor. The two-spring Starr-made motor is well-made and runs quietly, smoothly. The motor is suspended by strong bolts beneath the motor board. Sound reproduction of the Style III is not outstanding, but very adequate, even when using soft-volume steel needles.

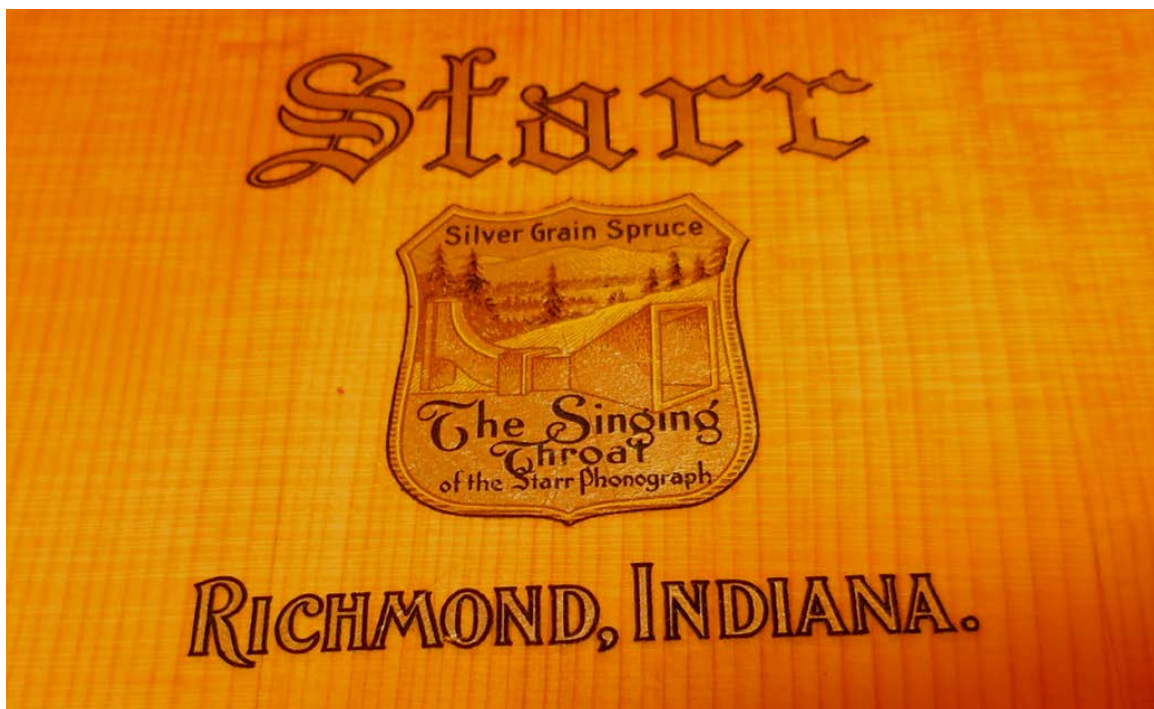


Style III Starr Phonograph

The author admits to have seen only two of the oak upright Starr phonographs. Both featured cabinets with gloss finish, which was unusual for most phonograph cabinets at the time. The final finish layer may have been a gloss varnish; early varnish was made by boiling linseed oil with shellac (now often termed heirloom varnish). Heirloom varnish is waterproof while shellac alone is not.

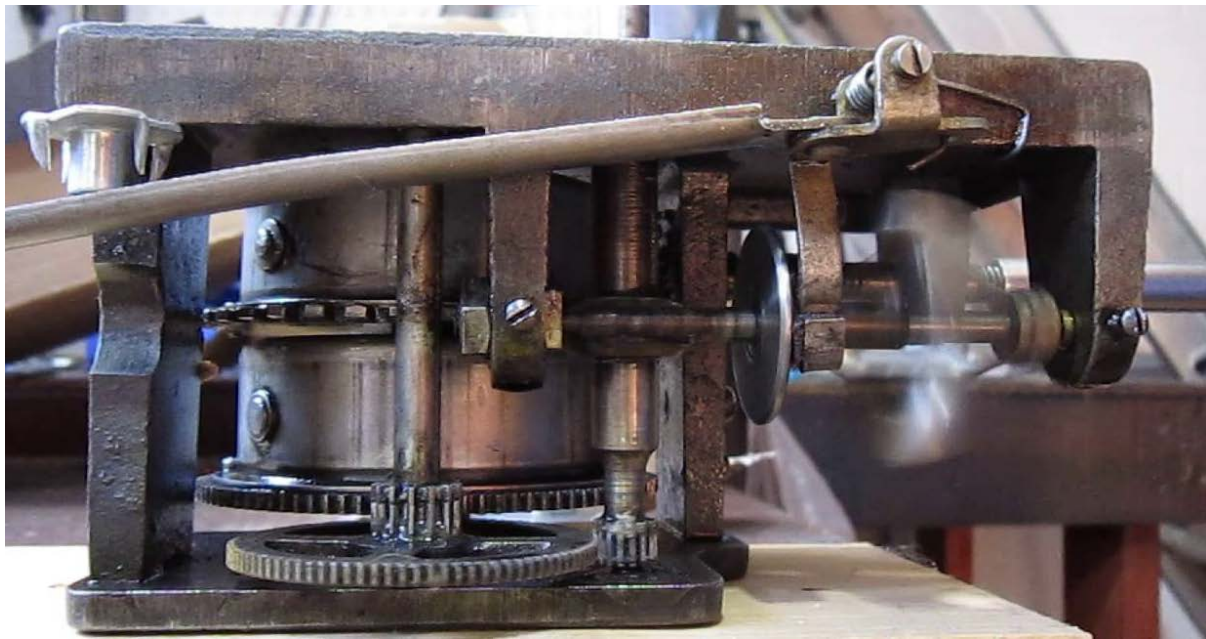
The sound box and tone arm of this model are in marked contrast to earlier Starr phonographs which featured a semi-automatic record stop, a straight-tube tone

arm, and a sound box that could be turned and positioned to play vertical or lateral shellac records (see page 59).





Instead of pull-out drawers, many Starr phonograph cabinets feature shelves for holding records in albums or paper sleeves.



**Starr Phonograph Two-Spring Motor
With Spinning Governor Balls For Speed Control**

The Starr phonograph tone arms and sound boxes we have seen appear to be good quality. However, Starr tone arms and sound box shells have been reported to be of die cast pot metal; it is not unusual to find the tone arm and sound box shell cracked or broken. With time, pot metal can tend to swell, exhibit cracks, become brittle, and break easily.

Starr III—Walnut—\$150



STYLE III.

Height 47 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., width 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ in., depth, 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. Also furnished in oak and mahogany—same price.

We know of no other first-grade phonograph in a beautiful rich walnut case at a similar retail price.

Needless to state, a phonograph of such extraordinary beauty and good taste, at this most popular price, furnishes the Starr dealer with an excellent leader.

With automatic stop, tone-regulator (NOT a tone muffler), oxidized finish hardware adjustable tone arm which in 5 seconds can be changed from "hill and dale" position to "lateral out" position, one sapphire needle, and 200 steel needles—with a double-spring, steady, quiet Starr-made motor—this model, in finish and equipment alone, excels \$200 phonographs which others offer. **For tone it is unequalled at any price.** The Starr "Singing Throat" of genuine Silver Grain Spruce makes it so.

All Starr models—retailing at \$50, \$75, \$100, \$125, \$175, \$200, \$250 and \$300—offer the **most in tone and finish** at their respective prices. For example, the \$100 and \$125 models out-distance \$150 and \$175 instruments by wide margins. Visit Starr dealers in neighboring cities and verify this with your own eyes and ears.

Starr Phonograph dealers also secure a franchise, daily growing in value, in Starr Records.

We urge your investigation. Use the coupon as a reminder—or for inquiry.

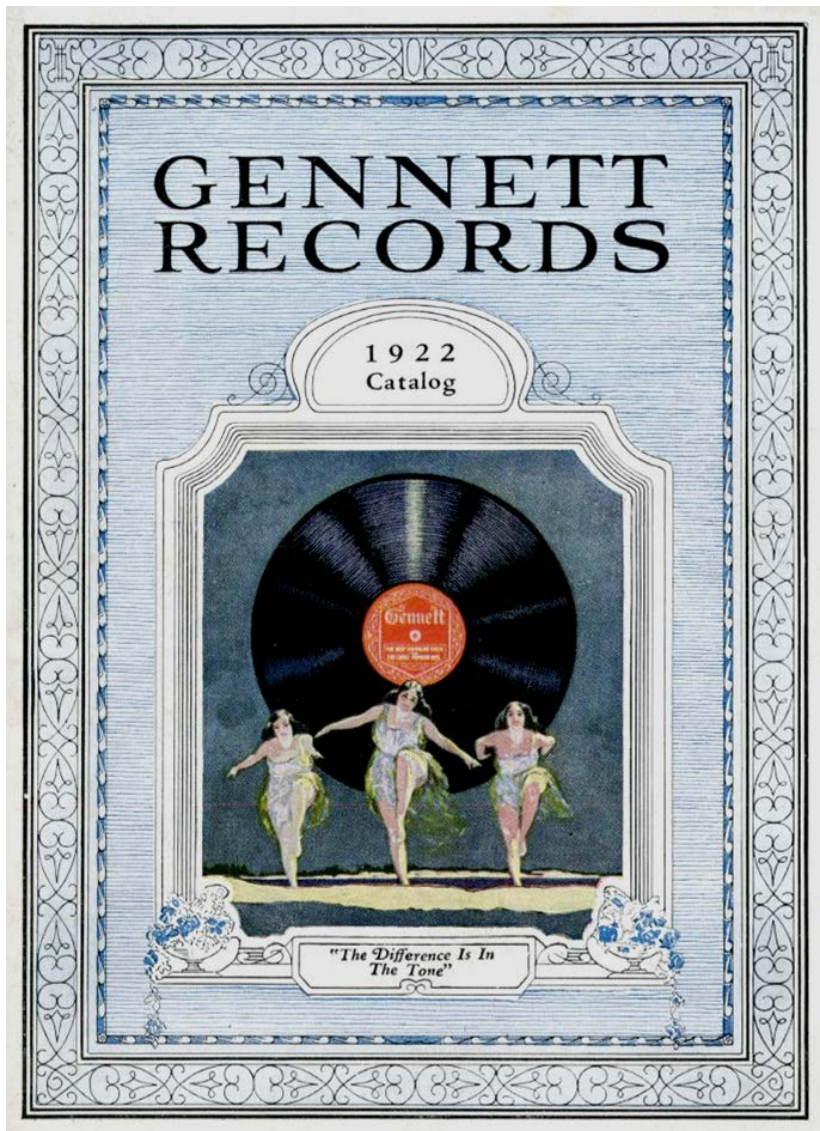
The Starr Piano Co.

THE STARR

TEAR THIS

The Year 1922

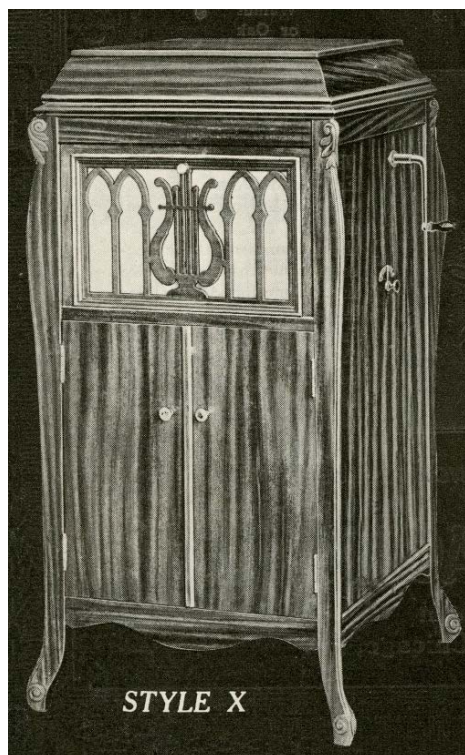
The cover of the 1922 Gennett Records Catalog featured three dancing ladies in front of a Gennett record; the figures were meant to represent "*The spirit of Music.*" The catalog contained sixty-four pages and measured five inches by six



and three-fourths inches; all Gennett records issued to January 1, 1922, were listed. The catalog was organized to simplify the finding of any recorded selection. The catalog included small images of prominent Gennett recording artists. One section of the catalog was devoted to French, Italian, and Welsh records. The only Art Tone records listed were by violinist, Helen Ware.

An article in the February 15, *Talking Machine World*, announced, "GENNETT ARTIST IN VAUDEVILLE One of the features of big-time vaudeville at the present time is Flo Bert, well-known vaudeville star

and Gennett record artist, who as a member of the new vaudeville act of Brendel and Bert, wins great applause by singing with one of her own Gennett records played on the Starr phonograph. In order to be sure of having a Starr phonograph on the stage in every city where she appeared, so that she might use it in her act, Miss Bert purchased a Style X phonograph through the Starr Piano Co. branch in



Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and in writing to the district manger H. C. Niles, regarding the purchase she said: 'In giving you my order for a Style X Starr phonograph for use in my present vaudeville act, may I at the same time express to you my appreciation of the truly wonderful tone quality this phonograph gives forth? That I believe this tone quality is necessary for the exact requirements of my use is well shown by the fact that I have gone to the expense of purchasing this machine and

will be compelled to ship this rather than run the risk of not finding a Starr available at every city where we will appear. 'Harmonizing' with myself is quite easy when I have my Gennett record and Starr phonograph to play it.'" (193)

Also in February, the Walter Duning Company, distributor of Starr phonographs and Gennett records in Des Moines, Iowa, announced its territory had been enlarged to include practically all of Iowa and Nebraska. Among new dealers who had recently taken on Starr products were the Germain Music House, Webster, City, Iowa, and the Nelson Electric Company, of Ames, Iowa.(194)

In March, C. O. Miller, head of the Chicago division of the Starr Piano Company, celebrated his second year in Chicago. Sales revealed that the business of the Chicago branch was on a very satisfactory basis. Miller sent a number of men out in the city to sell Starr pianos, phonographs, and Gennett records; reports for the first week were exceedingly good.(195)

Also in March, E. E. Fay, of the Connorized Music Company in St. Louis, Missouri, reported that a special window display of Starr phonographs and Gennett records had been placed in the windows of the Union House Furnishings Company in St. Louis. The display was attracting a great deal of attention as the display included a large Gennett record replica six feet in height. The record was made of beaver



board painted black with a blue label and gold lettering. The display attracted not only pedestrians, but persons riding in street cars and automobiles.(196)

Although the Starr Piano Company was known not to offer exclusive recording contracts, the April 15, issue of the *Talking Machine World* announced: "*The Gennett record division of the Starr Piano Co., has just announced that it will soon*

have new records of songs by Henry Moeller, the well-known concert artist, now exclusively Gennett. His "At Dawning" (#10053) which was released in March, received a great response among Gennett record lovers. His songs will appear under the Gennett green label and the Starr Piano Co. feels it has made quite an addition to the Gennett list in securing him. Henry Moeller, whose voice is of unusual sweetness and quality, has filled engagements with the New York Symphony Orchestra and oratorio societies. His next songs are being looked forward to with very much interest. Two of these, "A Dream" and "The Rosary," (#10058) will be released on ten-inch records and "Good-by" and "When My Ships Come Drifting Home" (#2600) will be the twelve-inch size."(197)

Gospel singer, Homer Rodeheaver, was the most prolific recorder of sacred songs in the acoustic era; he recorded for several record companies. In late 1920, Rodeheaver founded his own record company at 440 South Dearborn Street in Chicago. In January, 1921, the Rodeheaver Record Company's first Rainbow label records were released. Recording studios were located in Winona Lake, Indiana.(280) Profits from the sale of Rainbow records were for the school for evangelists at Winona Lake. On August 30, 1921, Rodeheaver made what may



Homer Rodeheaver
Baritone





Silver Grain Spruce, "The Music Wood of Centuries"

STARR PHONOGRAPHS

"The Difference Is in the Tone"

Silver Grain Spruce, "the music wood of centuries," forms the path for perfect tone reproductions through the "Singing Throat" of the Starr Phonograph. Yet this is not the only feature. Starr genius has perfected the Starr Phonograph in many other ways and there is an embodiment of all that is useful and convenient.

You will be interested in the new Starr Style XVIII, a beautiful instrument of exceptional merit replete with the refinements and possessing that quality which has made Starr-Made Instruments famous for half a century. Send for catalog of this and other Starr Styles.



STYLE XVIII

Oak, Walnut or Mahogany

Height 32 inches; width 42 inches; depth 24 inches; adjustable tone-arm for playing all disc records; high grade, silent, Starr-made motor; twelve-inch turn-table; speed control; automatic motor stop; tone regulator; nickel-plated hardware; one package steel needles; Starr improved filing system.

have been the first Gennett recordings in the new Richmond studio (matrices #11000 through #11004). However, the recordings were not released. Starting in April, 1922, Rodeheaver began to record frequently for Gennett in the company's New York studio. Gennett released many of his songs, including on the Champion and Herwin labels.

On April 28, a disastrous fire occurred at the London, Ontario, warehouse of the Starr Company of Canada.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Starr had designed and offered a dozen phonograph (gramophone) styles which were exclusive to the Canadian market. The Compo Company gradually took over Gennett operations in Canada. From 1925 through 1936, Compo launched the first of many subsidiary labels.⁽²⁾

Early battery-operated direct current radio made its first appearance in the April 15 *Talking Machine World* with an advertisement by the Lyradion Sales and Engineering Company of Mishawaka, Indiana. This was followed in May by full-page advertisements for the Air-O-Phone (the "*Perfected Radio Concert Receiving Instrument*") and the Zenith Radio Home Concert Receivers. Soon radio-phonograph combination models were offered with prices ranging from \$275 to \$850; phonograph companies developed models with a direct current radio installed in the space which was formerly used for records. Customers were eager to hear the new radio-phonographs. For console models, the phonograph equipment was installed on one side of the cabinet and the radio receiving set on the other. Sounds from either phonograph or radio passed through the same tone arm and internal horn; the only change for either being made at the small end of the tone arm where the sound box was slipped on for phonograph reproduction or the radio driver for the radio. The change was simple and could be made in a few seconds. Direct current radios required "A", "B", and "C" batteries that were usually held in a special battery compartment in the cabinet. Some early models featured a five vacuum tube Radio Corporation of America (RCA) receiver.

On May 2 at the Lyric Theater in New Orleans, Louisiana, Black Swan recording artists Ethel Waters and the Black Swan Troubadours were the featured attractions at the theater. The reception accorded the artists attracted much attention; the *New Orleans Daily Item*, one of the leading newspapers of the South, engaged the company to sing and play their famous jazz number, "*Down*



The Lyradion Console combination
Radio and Phonograph complete
with compartments for dry and
storage batteries.

Price complete \$485.00.

Other models from \$275 up to \$850.
Theatre models, \$1075 to \$2150.

**Here is the new Lyradion Combination—
radio and phonograph**

Home Blues" and other songs, over the radio through the New Orleans broadcasting station. The Black Swan Troubadours was composed of singers and musicians under the direction of F. R. Henderson, Jr. It was said that Miss Waters was the first colored artist to sing over the radio.(19)

In the June 15 issue of the *Talking Machine World*, a long article presented a special event which occurred in Richmond, Indiana: *"The evening of Thursday, May 18, was "Starr Night" at the big tabernacle here where Billy Sunday, the noted evangelist, was holding one of his successful meetings and over 1,000 employees of the Starr Piano Company marched to the meeting in a body wearing appropriate ribbons with the Starr trade mark thereon and carrying banners bearing inscriptions such as: "The Starr Piano Co.," "Starr Pianos," "Starr Phonographs," and "Gennett Records."*

"The main event of the evening was the presentation of a Style X Starr phonograph to Billy Sunday by the factory, the phonograph making its own presentation speech. A special Gennett record was made by Homer Rodeheaver, the Sunday choir leader, at the Starr recording laboratories at Richmond for the occasion and caused a great deal of surprise and comment. A special spruce horn four feet long was built and connected to the regular horn of the phonograph, so that the words of the presentation speech could be heard in the most remote corner of the great building. The instrument was played by Clarence Gennett, treasurer, and Fred Mayer, superintendent of the Starr factory."

"The obverse side of the record bore a talk calling attention to the fact that it was the first time a phonograph had ever presented itself to an individual. The reverse side reviewed in well-chosen words the development of the phonograph, how it had the magical power of invoking happiness and joy or sorry and sadness. Its value in spreading the Gospel was also dwelt upon. The reproduction of the special record aroused tremendous and prolonged applause and Mr. Sunday had difficulty in finding words to express his appreciation of the gift. Gennett records of the tabernacle songs recently recorded at the Starr factory by Homer Rodeheaver, were then played and enjoyed by the crowd. The stage was decorated with several large baskets of Irises presented to Mr. Sunday by the women of the Starr Piano Co."(200)

Henry Gennett turned sixty-nine in 1922. He had turned over the daily operation of Starr Piano to his sons Harry, Clarence, and Fred. That spring, Henry Gennett had been in California where he was expanding his business interests by forming the Gennett Realty Company of California. Returning to Richmond in late April, he was taken ill and went to the Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton, Ohio, where he died on June 2. Harry Gennett became the company's president. In 1922, the

Starr Piano Company was estimated to be worth seven million dollars; the Starr Company was at its zenith. Capital stock of the Starr Piano Company rose from \$200,000 to \$2,500,000; of this sum, \$1,000,000 was common stock and \$1,500,000 was seven percent preferred stock. A stock dividend of 300 percent was declared payable to the stockholders of the new common stock. The balance of the common stock and the preferred stock remained with the company to be used for extensions of the Richmond plant and the Gennett recording studio in New York. Fred Gennett supervised the Starr Piano sales accounts and the Gennett Records division. At his home, Fred and his family auditioned test pressings of new Gennett releases.(82, 201)

The Starr Company provided occasional tours of the Richmond factories.





Starr Phonographs Gennett Records

The difference is in the tone

The Tri-State Music Company

H. A. COPELAND, PRESIDENT

DISTRIBUTORS STARR

PIANOS - PLAYER PIANOS - PHONOGRAPHS

Conneaut, Ohio

May 4, 1922.

Mr. M. Hayes,
Andover, Ohio.

Dear Mr. Hayes:

Relative to your letter of the 29th, we are sorry at this time that we have to advise you that it will be impossible for us to take up your stock, owing to the conditions of business, however it may be possible that we transfer same to a party whom we are figuring on coming into this company. If such arrangements can be made we will advise you.

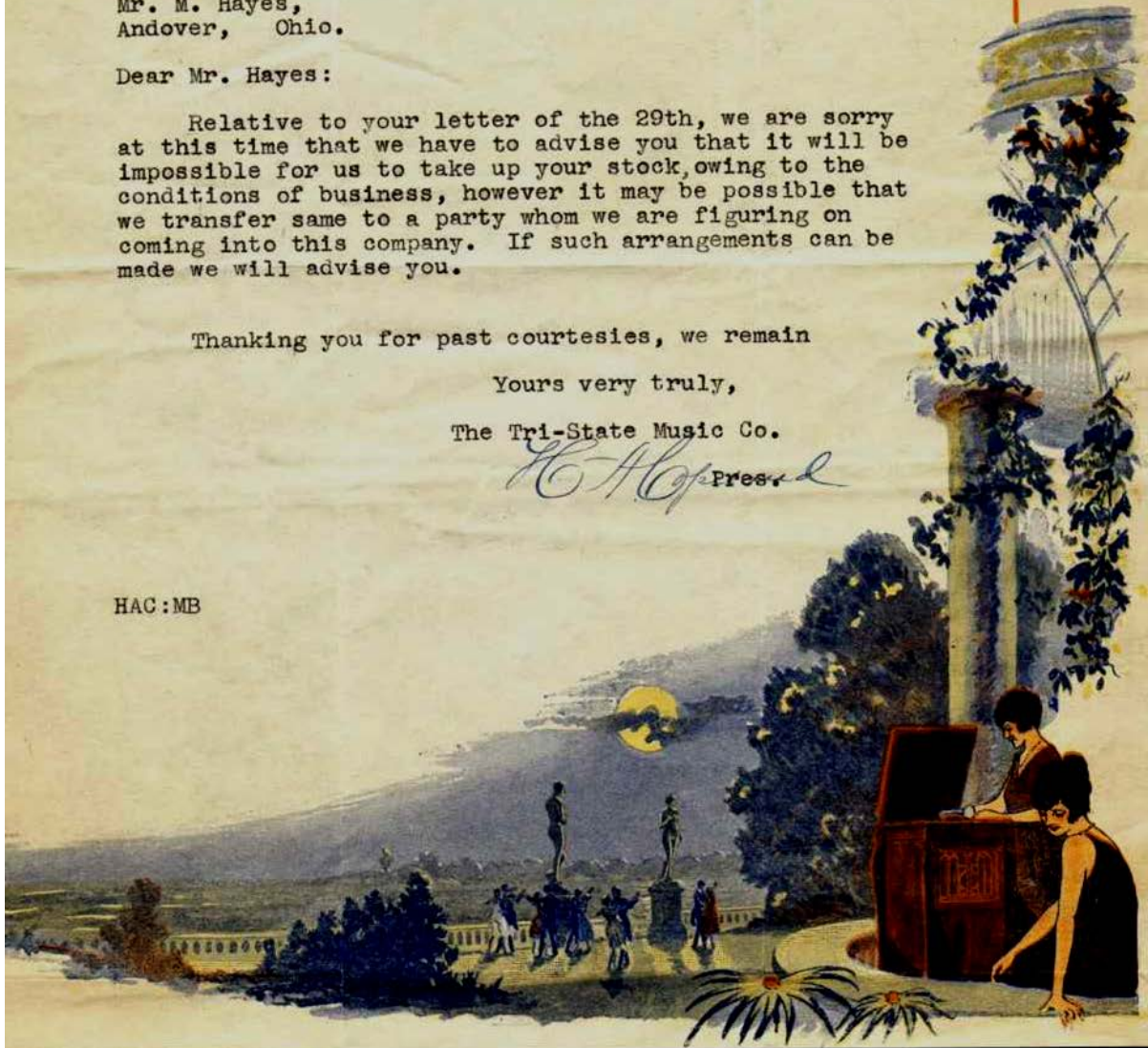
Thanking you for past courtesies, we remain

Yours very truly,

The Tri-State Music Co.

H. A. Copeland Pres.

HAC:MB





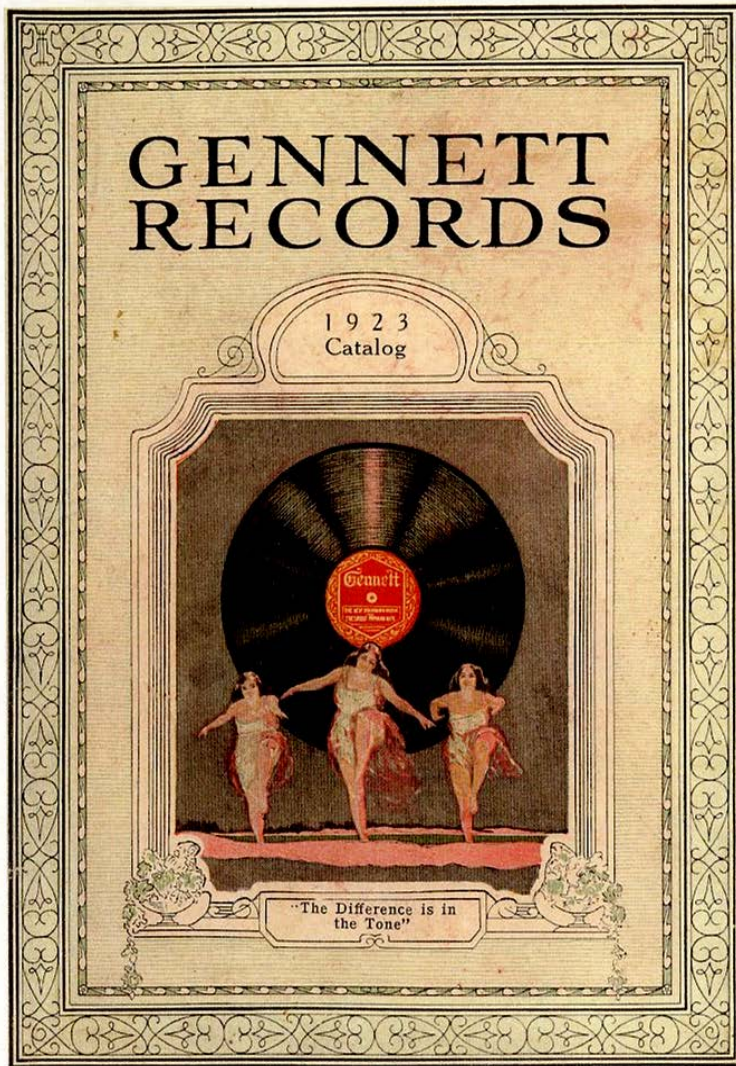
In August, the Starr Company made a special offer for a few days only; the popular Styles II and XIV phonographs were offered for one dollar down with one dollar per week.(296)

Also in August, the new console Style XIX Starr phonograph was introduced. A. G. Kunde, Wisconsin distributor for Gennett records, declared records sold to summer vacationers were moving in endless quantities. Also, seasonal visitors occupying

their summer homes purchased large numbers of the latest releases.(202, 203)

In September, the Starr Piano Company announced plans to double the production of Gennett records in order to meet the increasing demand. New record presses were expected to be in operation by September 15. With all new presses operating at capacity, the output of records would be about 30,000 records per day. Despite the increased production, the Starr Company expected difficulty in meeting the demand for the coming fall and winter months inasmuch as the record business of the company had increased almost three hundred percent over that of 1921, with an even larger percentage increase for Starr phonographs.(204)

In November, the Starr Company distributed a new folder to Starr phonograph dealers; the folder illustrated and described the entire line of Starr phonographs. The forward of the folder stressed the high quality of the Starr phonographs and pointed out the care with which materials for their construction were selected. (205)



In December, the ninety-six page 1923 Gennett Records catalog was issued, listing all Gennett records up to January 1, 1923. The special Art Tone records had been discontinued; instead, special classical selections were listed as "*Gennett Green-Label Records.*" Center pages of the catalog listed the green label records by George Wilton Ballard, Philip Carson, Helen Clark, Edith Gaile, the Gennett Symphony Orchestra, Scipione Guidi, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Hart, Joseph Holmann, The Knickerbocker Trio (male vocal), Henry Moeller, and the Mozart Trio (violin, flute, and harp). A special section also listed records by well-known dance

orchestras. Back pages of the catalog listed Gennett records in French, German, Italian, Jewish, Spanish, and Welsh.(26, 206)

Also in December, T. H. Bracken, manager of the Starr Piano Company store in Indianapolis, Indiana, reported that a special window display at the store had attracted a great deal of attention; it featured the materials that were used to manufacture Gennett records and the appearance of the records at various stages of production. He also reported that November proved to be the biggest month for record sales that the Indianapolis district, including central Indiana, had





experienced. Mr. Bracken also admitted his store lacked adequate numbers of Starr phonographs and that it would be difficult to meet the demand.(207)

In 1922, Gennett pressed records with the Rich-Tone label for the Phonograph Record Exchange Company of America, a Chicago record dealer.(4) From 1922 to 1924 Gennett pressed records on the Golden label, which was a Los Angeles-based company; the

Golden Record Company had its own recording studio, but no record pressing facilities.(8). For a few months, Gennett pressed records for the Cardinal label.(9) Then, starting in mid-1922, Gennett provided record masters for the Cardinal Phonograph Company, a short-lived phonograph manufacturer based in New York. Records with the Cardinal label were discontinued in 1924.(8, 24)



The Starr Piano Company also recorded and pressed records for the Ku Klux Klan. During the 1920s, Indiana was the center for Ku Klux Klan activity in the United States; the Klan controlled much of the politics and commerce in Indiana. Both Starr's New York and Richmond studios produced Klan records under several semi-private labels; record labels did not usually state the Gennett origin. Klan records were widely circulated; many were sold by mail order. Most Klan records



featured red labels with “KKK” in gold lettering; recording artists were anonymous or listed under pseudonyms.(29)

By 1922, the Richmond studio was recording at a pace comparable to the company’s New York studio.(76) Starr was offering more than three styles of the “suitcase” portable phonographs.

Sopranos to record for Starr in 1922 included Estelle Carey and Jane Williams. Tenors to record included Philip Carson, Henry

Moeller, and Jack Young. Quartets were provided by the Criterion Quartet, the Excelsior Quartet, and the Strand Theatre Quartet. Trios were recorded by the

Orpheus Trio, the Sterling Trio, and the Taylor Trio. Choir music was recorded by the Westminster Choir. Violin solos were recorded by Scipioni Guidi and Victor Willis; cello solos were by Joseph Hollman. Popular vocal music was recorded by Vaughn De Leath, Billy De Rex, Arthur Fields, Harry Frankel (“Singin’ Sam”), Arthur Hall, Charles Hart, Robert Hudson, Billy Jones, Harry Mann, Reed Miller, John Perry, and Louise Terall.





CLIFF EDWARDS

Military band music was provided by the Gennett Military Band and His Majesty's Scots Guards Band. Homer Roedheaver and baritone Fred Carr recorded sacred selections.

Orchestra and band music was recorded by Lloyd Barber's Green Mill Orchestra, Capodiferro's Band (for waltzes), Max Fells Vanderbilt Orchestra, Friar Society Orchestra (the New Orleans Rhythm Kings), Al Gentile's Dance Orchestra, Nathan Glantz and His Orchestra, the Green Brothers Orchestra (and Novelty Band), the Hudson Pavilion Orchestra

(Joseph Samuels), Lanin's Famous Players, the Mardi Gras Sextet, Lieutenant Matt's Orchestra, the Merry Melody Men, McMurrays California Thumpers (Phil Napoleon), the Milano Orchestra, Husk O'Hare's Super-Orchestra of Chicago,

Riley's Cabaret Orchestra, Joe Samuels and His Master Players, The Specialty Orchestra, and The Syncopating Six.



Rudy Wiedoeft

German records were recorded by Bruder Joseffy, the Heidelberg Quartet, and Morris Goldstein. Hawaiian music was provided by Frank Ferrera's Trio and the Hawaiian Quartet. Irish music was recorded by tenor Felix O'Day and McConnell's Irish Band. Italian music records were made by Di Benedette (tenor), G. Iasilli's Band, and the Banda Siciliano.



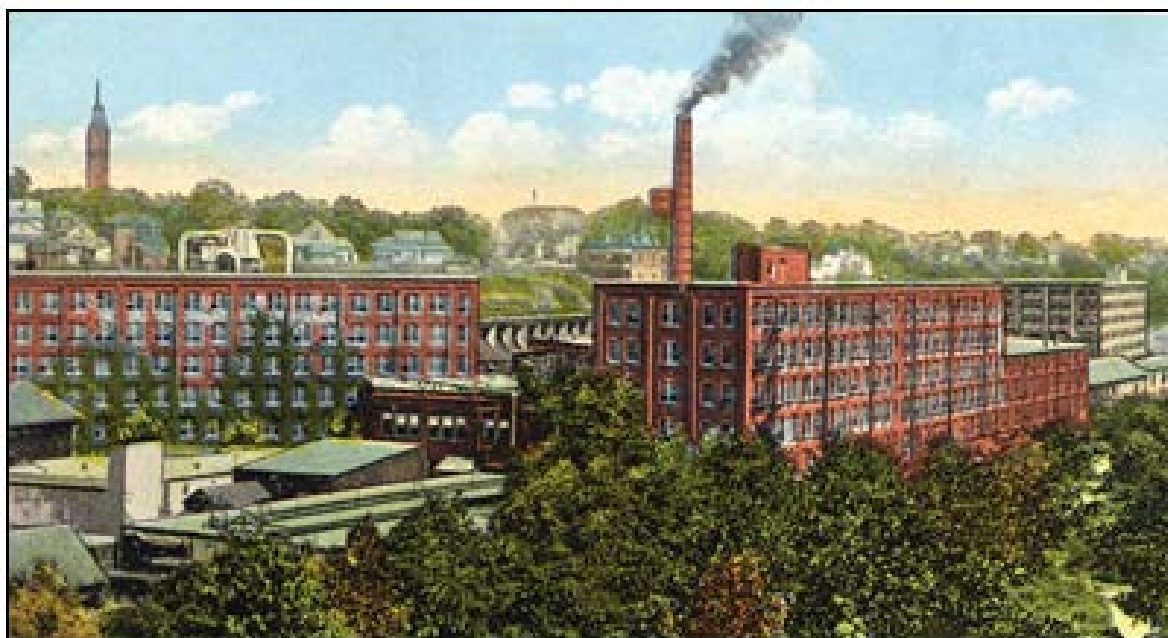
Specialty records were recorded by Vincent Buono (cornet), Cliff Edwards ("Ukulele Ike," accompanied by Ladd's Black Aces), William B. Houchen (old-time fiddle), Dick Pamby (accordion), Charles Penrose (comedian), The Reiser Trio (piano, banjo, and saxophone), Robert R. Schultz (zither), W. G. Walker (piccolo), George P. Watson (yodeler), and Rudy Wiedoeft (saxophone). Al H. Weston and Irene Young recorded the *Gennett Laughing Record* (#4994) which featured a

group of people laughing hysterically at a series of muffled violin solos. Under the direction of Charles A. Nichols, the *Gennett Physical Culture* exercise packet

included a three record set of twelve exercises set to a small orchestra accompaniment (#5031 - #5033).



In 1922, the Starr Company produced a Gennett demonstration record for Gennett dealers. The record contained sales talks for dealers to play for prospective customers.(155)



The Starr Piano Co. in Richmond, Ind., is pictured in this vintage postcard. The Gennett Records label was based here.

New Gennetts Out Every Week!

The charm of the Gennett Record is its truthfulness. It is not an imitation—not an approximation—it is the artist. The tones, full-rounded, pure, the subtleties of expression, the individuality, the personal magnetism of the artist are in the Gennett.

4943 .75	{ OOGIE OOGIE WA WA (WON'T YOU BE MY LITTLE ESKIMO)—Fox-trot. Gottler BLUE (Clarke-Leslie-Handman)—Fox-trot McMurray's California Thumpers	4939 .75	{ LOUISIAN'—Fox-trot.. Meskeil-Daly-Spencer COAL BLACK MAMMY—Fox-trot (St. Helier).....Hazay Natzy and His Orch.
4944 .75	{ CALL ME BACK, PAL O'MINE (Perri- cone-Dixon)Sam Ash—Tenor I WISH THERE WAS A WIRELESS TO HEAVEN (Manuel - White - White) Lewis James—Tenor	4946 .75	{ WHILE THE YEARS ROLL BY (Lewis- Young-Austin) FOR THE SAKE OF AULD LANG SYNE (Graft-Burns-Ball) Hart and Bates—Tenor and Soprano
4945 .75	{ THREE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING (Terriss-Robledo).....Billy Jones—Tenor COAL BLACK MAMMY (Cliff-St. Helier) Ernest Hare—Baritone	10065 .90	{ COME WHERE MY LOVE LIES DREAMING (Foster) Henry Moeller and Male Chorus THE SUNSHINE OF YOUR SMILE (Cooke-Ray).....Henry Moeller—Tenor

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY, Richmond, Indiana

New York—Chicago—Los Angeles—Birmingham—Detroit—Cincinnati—Cleveland—Indianapolis
London, Canada



The Year 1923

In January, E. I. Pauling of the Starr Piano Company in Cincinnati, Ohio, reported, *"Our December business was the best in the history of this store. Excellent business is in sight for January."*(203)

From 1923 to 1926, Gennett pressed a few records with the Buddy label for two aluminum companies and a manufacturing company in the South. These now-rare records were given away with the purchase of a portable Buddy phonograph, which was sponsored by the aluminum companies.(14, 97, 99)



By 1923, the Richmond studio's recording equipment was using an electric motor to control the speed of the recording blanks.(77)

In 1923, the effects of radio were felt in many areas. The sales of radios continued to expand rapidly as the sales of records, sheet music, and even musical instruments declined. Theater producers claimed radio was causing poor attendance at live performances. Radio was

being blamed for nearly every ill in the community. Record companies began to recognize the power that radio was exerting on the sales of records. Whenever a radio artist played or sang a song that was no longer in demand on records, the record sales again surged.

One method to respond to radio competition was to pursue previously neglected record markets, such as black and rural customers. Gennett records were among the first to record jazz, blues, and country music. Fred Wiggins, manager of the Starr Piano store in Chicago, was scouting for new talent for the Richmond studio. Wiggins noticed the special sounds of an eight-member jazz band playing at the



Friars Inn in Chicago. Together with Fred Gennett, Wiggins persuaded the New Orleans Rhythm Kings to record several sides for Gennett, including "*Tiger Rag*" and "*Panama*" (#4968). The first seven record sides listed the band as the Friars Society Orchestra. Thus began the Richmond studio's remarkable era of recording early jazz. Over the next few years, Gennett Records introduced America to Chicago-based jazz from New Orleans. By mid-1924, the Richmond

studio had recorded more than seventy-five sides of Chicago jazz.(84)



Fred Wiggins also noticed a band playing at the Lincoln Gardens in Chicago. On April 6, (Joe) King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band recorded nine selections at the Richmond studio; several are considered historic: "*Weather Bird Rag*" (#5132), "*Just Gone*" and "*Canal Street Blues*" (#5133), "*Mandy Lee Blues*" (# 5134), and "*Froggie Moore*" (#5135). These records are considered by many to be the first masterpieces in jazz recording. Oliver's Gennett recording session included



the first solos by
cornetist, Louis
Armstrong.(57)

At the same time,
Gennett's New York
studio recorded dance
tunes with a jazz feel.
Ladd's Black Aces (the
Original Memphis Five)
and Bailey's Lucky Seven
(a studio band of
revolving musicians
organized by band
leader, Sam Lanin)
recorded more than one
hundred sides for
Gennett. Records by
the two groups were

very popular and must have had high sales considering the number of their discs that can be found in record collections.(86) In the early 1920s, the New York studio recorded a wide range of music genres. Popular, symphonic, military band, and foreign language records were recorded and sold in large numbers.

In April, the Steele High School Band from Dayton, Ohio, traveled to Richmond to record two sides on Gennett's personal label records.(286)

In May, Gennett released six Italian records, fifteen German records, and eleven Polish records.



Gennett also began to record so-called “race” records. The term “race” was the preferred term in black culture in the 1920s. Race records included gospel, spirituals, and the new “blues” made popular by Mamie Smith’s blues recordings on the Okeh label in 1920-21. Gennett began to record female blues vocalists Viola McCoy, Mandy Lee, and Edna Hicks. Gennett issued the *Gennett Colored Artists Records* catalog. Many of the blues vocalists

were backed by jazz musicians.(85) In November, the first Gennett records by blues vocalist, Josie Miles, were due to be released. From Summerville, South Carolina, Josie Miles had recorded several sides for the Black Swan label; it was reported her voice was particularly well adapted for recording. Accompanied by pianist, Stanley Miller, her first Gennett releases were “*Baby’s Got The Blues*” and “*Kansas City Man Blues*”(5261).(212)

The Starr Piano Company frequently exchanged record pressing masters with several record companies in the United Kingdom. Gennett recordings were found on many United Kingdom labels, including ACO, Citizen, Coliseum, Curry, Guardsman, Homochord, Ludgatge, Meloto, Scala, Tower, Velvet Face, and Winner. Artist credits were usually replaced by using different pseudonyms for each label. Meloto records featured labels with the hexagonal cartouche design similar to the Gennett label but had deep violet background with gold print; even the print was a similar font to that used on standard Gennett labels.(152)

On June 7, the convention of the Allied Music Trades was held at the Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. The Starr Piano Company exhibited in Room 640, with a full line of Starr phonographs of both upright and console floor models and a large

display of Gennett records. The Starr exhibit was in charge of H. Martin, assisted by George Bradford, William Dunning, Ray Strahn, and C. Sweatlan.(209) .

In July, Ferdinand (Jelly Roll) Morton, noted composer and jazz pianist, recorded solo piano selections in Richmond, including, "*Grandpa's Spells*" and "*Kansas City Stomp*"(#5218). Morton also played piano with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings for some recording sessions. On July 17 and 18, Jelly Roll Morton and His Orchestra recorded seven sides for Gennett, including "*King Porter Stomp*" (#5289).(55)

The July 15 issue of the *Talking Machine World* announced an unusual publicity stunt by the Starr Piano Company, "*Probably the most popular and best-known dance orchestra in Cincinnati is Justin Huber's Orchestra, which has gained fame dispensing dance music at the Hotel Gibson and has been featured at the more important of the private dances in this city. Lloyd Kidwell, pianist and composer, who is also the assistant director of the Justin Huber's Orchestra, composed a popular number, entitled, 'Japanese Lullaby.'* The Starr Piano Co. engaged Huber's Orchestra several weeks ago and had it play in the window of its store featuring 'Japanese Lullaby.' First the orchestra would play the piece and then the Gennett record of 'Japanese Lullaby' (#5131) would be played. To make the comparison of the two better the orchestra would play part of the song and then the Gennett record would finish playing it, the change from the orchestra to the record bringing no change in sound that was noticeable to the audience. The crowds which gathered in front of the Starr Piano Co. were so large the traffic was blocked. The feature proved so good an advertising venue that large sales of 'Japanese Lullaby' resulted and the Starr Piano Co. and Gennett records gained some highly valuable publicity in addition."(210)

In August, the *Talking Machine World* reported that William Jennings Bryan was due to record four selections for the Starr Piano Company. Bryan, frequently referred to as "The Great Commoner," had been a former Secretary of State and was considered one of the greatest orators of the day. Three of the records would be religious and one patriotic. One record was to be his well-known speech, "*The Ideal Republic*," and backed by the "*National Emblem March*" played by the Gennett Military Band (#5224). Another record, "*The Lord's Prayer*," with



W. J. Bryan Making Gennett Records

musical accompaniment, was backed by "*Nearer My God to Thee*, sung by the Westminster Quartet (#5225). Another record was the recital of the "*Twenty-Third Psalm*," with the rendition of "*Lead Kindly Light*" on the reverse side (#5226). The accompanying photograph shows Mr. Bryan making one of his records at the Richmond studio.(211) Mr. Bryan spent two days making records in Richmond, listening to them, going over them, and remaking them until he was satisfied that they were just right. His whole heart was in his words and he spoke with all the fire and vigor that had earned for him the sobriquet of "The Boy Orator of the Platte."

In December, the Starr Company donated a Starr phonograph and a large assortment of Gennett records to Richmond's Fire Department Station No. 2.(332)

After several months of careful planning, C. R. Moore, of the Starr Piano Company, arranged to have several prominent men and women in the political and entertainment world record the *Gennett Christmas Greetings Records* for 1923. A series of ten 10-inch double-sided records containing Christmas greetings from prominent personages were recorded; an extensive distribution and advertising campaign was prepared. The selections included, "*My Christmas Wish*," by Mitzi Hajos (#5242); "*Christmas And Father*," by "Abe Martin," the well-known cartoon character conceived by Kin Hubbard (#5240); "*Christmas Greetings*," by Bebe Daniels, famous movie star (#5236); "*Christmas In*



Hollywood," by Shirley Mason, another well-known movie star (#5237); "*The Lord's Prayer*," by William Jennings Bryan (#5225), and "*The Twenty-Third Psalm*," also by Mr. Bryan (#5226); "*Always Christmas*," recitation by William D. Nesbit (#5228), and "*God Bless Us All*," another recitation by Mr. Nesbit (#5229); "*Andy Gump's Holiday Greeting*," by Andy Himself (Sidney Smith) (#5267); and "*The Dream of*

The World," by Merideth Nicholson, novelist (#5268).

The reverse side of each record contained an appropriate Christmas selection. Special containers, in green, gold, and red, with the words, "Christmas Greetings" on the cover, together with holly decorations were prepared. On the back of the cover page of some containers appeared photographs of the artists who made the records while others contained the texts of the greetings; some of the records were autographed by the artists. The special pre-holiday advertising campaign was probably the most extensive ever undertaken by the Starr Company for such a brief period. Newspapers throughout the country announced the records

A CIRCLE OF HAPPINESS

*A Christmas greeting and song of cheer
For mother and Dad, and children too,
A Circle of Happiness throughout the year
Comes on this record of love to you.*



Ten Gifts that Actually Speak Your Christmas Greetings

"Merry Christmas to all the Children"

Little Brother and Sister will be happy with the newest and most unique of all Christmas greetings—one or more of the ten special Gennett Christmas Greeting Records—a Christmas gift and spoken greeting combined in one.

From MITZI HAJOS

the little star in "Minnie and Me" comes a beautiful Christmas greeting especially for the youngsters, expressing the spirit and joy of the day in a way they'll understand. Little Miss Mitzi has made this children's record exclusively for Gennett—only she could produce such a record.

Make your selection from the ten Special Christmas Records by world famed authors, actors and speakers. Give the favorite—or send all. The unusual and unique way of giving voice to your Christmas wishes to friend or family. Each record enclosed in a special Christmas holder reflecting the holiday spirit. Choose your records early.

Gennett

CHRISTMAS GREETING RECORDS



1. "My Christmas Wish" *by Mitzi Hajos*
2. "God Bless Us All" *by Wilbur D. Nesbit*
3. "Always Christmas" *by Wilbur D. Nesbit*
4. "The Lord's Prayer" *by William Jennings Bryan*
5. "The 23rd Psalm" *by William Jennings Bryan*
6. "Christmas and Father" *by Abe Martin (Kin Hubbard)*
7. "Andy Gump's Holiday Greeting" *by Andy Gump (Sid Smith)*
8. "The Dream of the World" *by Meredith Nicholson*
9. "Christmas in Hollywood" *by Shirley Mason*
10. "Christmas Greetings" *by Bebe Daniels*

If your dealer cannot supply you, write us immediately. Price One Dollar per Record.

Mitzi Hajos

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY
931-935 Main Street Richmond

OPEN
EVENINGS
TO XMAS



directly to the public; special folders and dealer advertisements were available to retailers. Window display materials, including hangers, special record supplements, large photographs of the artists, etc. were prepared.(213)

In December, the *Gennett Records Catalog* for 1924 listed all Gennett records issued to January 1, 1924; the catalog had expanded to 144 pages. The *Gennett Colored Artists Records* section (pages 15 to 19) included small photographs of Richard Jones, Sammie Lewis,

A CIRCLE OF HAPPINESS

*A Christmas greeting and song of cheer
For Mother and Dad and children, too,
A Circle of Happiness throughout the year
Comes on this record of love to you.*



Ten Gifts that Actually Speak Your Christmas Greetings

"Oh, Min! Merry Christmas!"

Here is the newest and most unique way of sending your Christmas greetings this year—the ten special Gennett Christmas Greeting Records—a Christmas gift and spoken greeting combined in one.

Ask the HON. ANDREW GUMP

to extend your Christmas greetings to friend or family this year. The most noted cartoon character of the day "Andy Gump," by direction of Sid Smith, will voice a humorous and happy Christmas wish for you on the special Gennett record, "Andy Gump's Holiday Greeting."

Make your selection from the ten special Christmas records by world famed authors, actors and speakers. Give the favorite—or send all. The unusual and unique way of giving voice to your Christmas wishes to friend or family.

Each record enclosed in a special Christmas holder reflecting the holiday spirit. Choose your records early.



Gennett

CHRISTMAS GREETING RECORDS

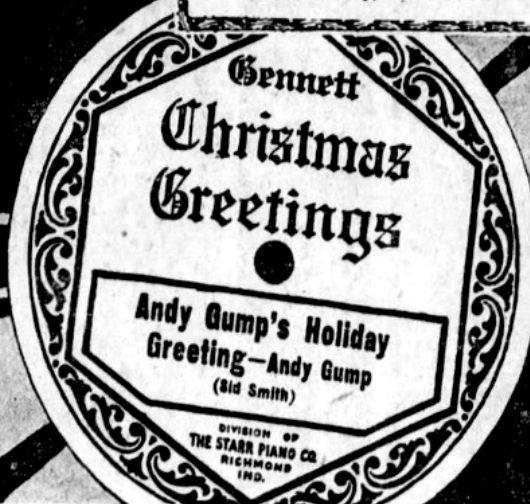
1. "Andy Gump's Holiday Greeting" *by Andy Gump (Sid Smith)*
2. "God Bless Us All!" *by Wilbur D. Nesbit*
3. "Always Christmas" *by Wilbur D. Nesbit*
4. "The Lord's Prayer" *by William Jennings Bryan*
5. "The 23rd Psalm" *by William Jennings Bryan*
6. "Christmas and Father" *by Abe Martin (Kin Hubbard)*
7. "The Dream of the World" *by Meredith Nicholson*
8. "Christmas in Hollywood" *by Shirley Mason*
9. "Christmas Greetings" *by Babe Daniels*
10. "My Christmas Wish" *by Mitzie Hais*

Hon. Andrew Gump On Sale by All Gennett Dealers and

THE STARR PIANO CO.

1500 Broadway, Cor. John R.

Phones Main 1654-5



Viola McCoy, Helen McDonald, King Oliver's Jazz Band, and Callie Vassar. The listing of dance records occupied pages 21 through 30. The seven pages of *Gennett Records of Educational Interest* included eight records by William Jennings Bryan. The *Green Label Gennett Records* section occupied pages 50 through 57; regarding the Green Label records, the catalog claimed, "*Gennett records released under the Green Label represent the highest attainment in the art of sound recording.*" The seventeen sides recorded by His Majesty's Scots Guards Band appeared on page 61. Old-time fiddler, William B. Houchens, had three Gennett records listed. Thirteen sides were listed for Harry Raderman's Orchestra. The *Sacred Gennett Records* section occupied pages 102 to 106; baritone Homer Rodeheaver had recorded no less than thirty-three sides for Gennett—as solo vocalist, in duets, or with a quartet. The foreign language records section at the back of the catalog included Gennett records in Czechoslovak, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Jewish, Polish, Spanish, Swedish, and Welsh.

New artists to record for Starr in 1923 included tenor Fausto Cavallini. Violin solos were recorded by Joe Engleman and Thomas Griselle. Piano solos were by Richard M. Jones. Quartets were provided by the Culp String Quartet. Popular artists included Ernest Hare, Charles Harrison, Julia Jones and Louise Terrall. Military music was recorded by The Armco Band.

Dance and jazz music was recorded by Bailey's Lucky Seven, Benjamin's Manhattan Orchestra, the Biltmore Hotel Orchestra (Hazay Natzy), the Carolina Cotton Pickers (Abe Small), Ted Claire's Snappy Bits Band, Jack Crawford and His Orchestra, the Black Dominoes (Ladd's Black Aces), Eddie Elkins' Orchestra, the Gennett Novelty Players, Curtis Hitch's Happy Harmonists, Justin Huber's Orchestra (the Hotel Gibson Dance Orchestra), Albert Katz's Hotel Sinton Dance Orchestra, Joseph Knecht's Waldorf-Astoria Dance Orchestra, Ladd's Black Aces, Art Landry and His Call of the North Orchestra, the Howard Lanin Arcadia Orchestra, Harold Leonard and His Red Jackets, Maloof and His Oriental Orchestra, Mantucci and His Orchestra, Morgan's Court Orchestra, the National Orchestra of America, the New Orleans Rhythm Kings (Friar's Society Orchestra), King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, the Original Memphis Melody Boys, Vernon Owens' Hotel Winton Orchestra of Cleveland, Art Payne and His Orchestra, the Specialty Orchestra, Smilin' Sam's Dixie Strutters (Nathan Glantz and His Orchestra), Carl Smith's American Orchestra, The Sunshine Orchestra, The

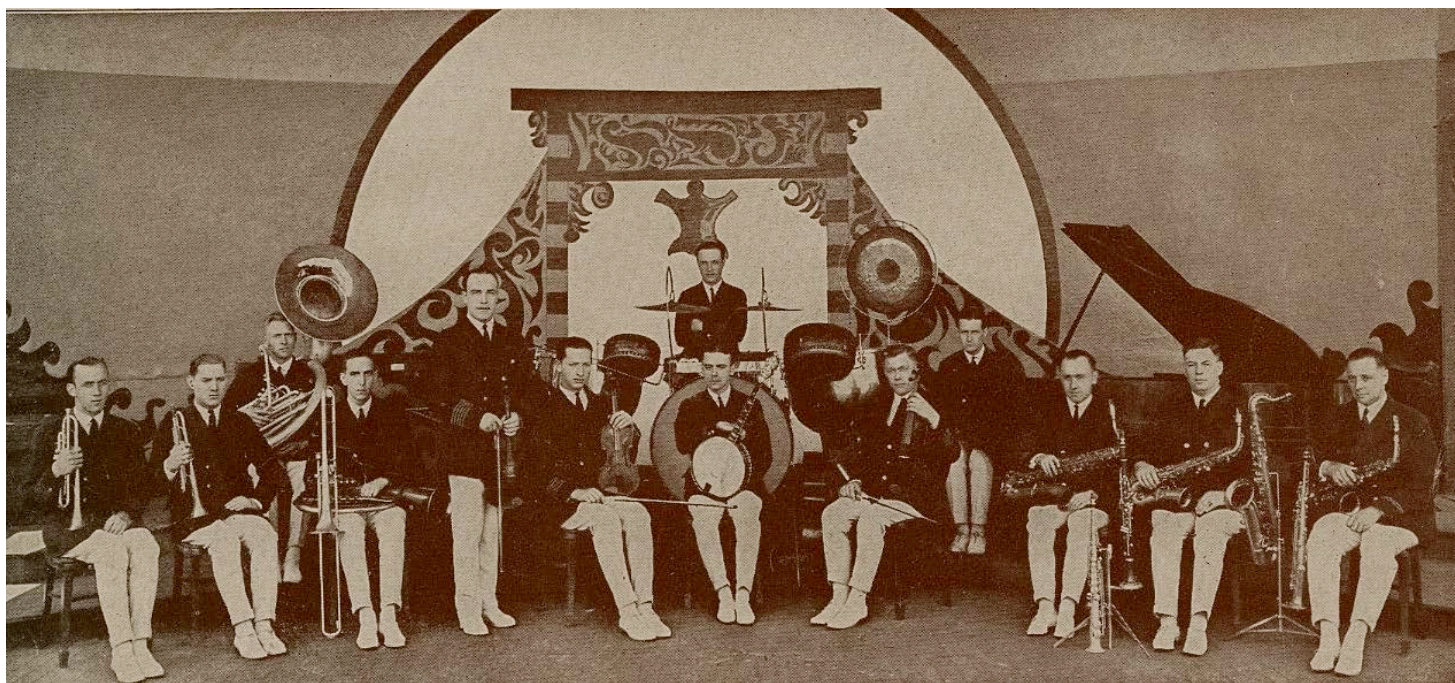
Vagabonds (California Ramblers), the Woodland Inn Orchestra, and Woods "Bijou" Orchestra.

Viola McCoy (accompanied by pianist Percy Grainger or Bob Rickettes' Band) recorded blues. Other blues vocalists to record included Edna Hicks, Mandy Lee (accompanied by Ladd's Black Aces), Sammy Lewis, Daisy Martin (accompanied by her Five Jazz Bell Hops), Helen McDonald, and Josie Miles. Mexican music was provided by the Gonzalez Mexican Band and the Orquesta Texans; Spanish music was recorded by the Harmony Valley Orchestra and the Orquesta "Villa Hermosa." German music was recorded by the Schwabische Bauern Kapelle. Hawaiian music was provided by Bessie Keaunui (steel guitar), the Hawaiian Entertainers, Prince Lei Lani, and Palakiko Pala's Hawaiian Serenaders. Soprano Louise Fernald recorded Hungarian tunes. Irish music was recorded by Tom Ennis & John Carridy (bagpipe and violin), the Flanagan Brothers, and tenor Emmet O'Toole. Jozef Kalman recorded both Czechoslovak and German folks songs.

Unusual records included Harvey Brownfield (accordion), Harry A. James (comic



monologue), Frank Kamplain (yodler), Frank Kennedy (monologue), the Moguel Brothers (marimba), William and Vivian Place (mandolin and harp), Frank Quinn (accordion), Van & Bell (bird imitations), and Fritz Zimmermann-Marcella Grandville (yodlers). The Four Minstrels recorded old-time tunes. Children's stories were recorded by Charles Gordon.



Art Landry and His Call of the North Orchestra



The Year 1924

In January, the Starr Piano Company reported that 1923 had been a good sales year for the company. The medium-priced Starr phonographs were especially popular with customers.(215) The special “Christmas Greetings” records proved to be sales boosters; William Jennings Bryan’s record of “*The Virgin Birth*,” had many calls. The Fay-Buchanan Company of Saint Louis, Missouri, reported the sales of a large number of the special “*Christmas Greeting*” records during December.(214) Charles Soule, district manager of the Starr Piano Company in Portland, Oregon, reported a complete “cleaning out” of phonographs and Gennett record stocks in December; the volume of his factory orders had been twice as large as 1922, and with heavy orders still coming in, it was necessary for his staff to work day and night.(216) T. H. Bracken, manager of the Starr Piano Company in Indianapolis, Indiana, reported Gennett record sales had been helped by the current hits, “*Git*” and “*Lovey Come Back*,” by the American Harmonists, a band which played regularly at the Colonial Theater in Indianapolis. The American Harmonists were popular in the area and the band featured these numbers in their weekly programs at the theater, which gave the record a wonderful boost. Author Brian Rust, in *The American Dance Band Discography, 1917 – 1942*, lists the American Harmonists to have recorded the two selections for Gennett in



Richmond on January 24 as personal pressings (#20036) and were not released as commercial records.(221)

In February, pianist Oliver Naylor’s popular New Orleans-style band from Birmingham, Alabama, Naylor’s Seven Aces, visited the Gennett recording studio in New York to record several sides for Gennett. They recorded a representative number of selections, including “*Twilight Rose*”(#5432), “*You*”(#5375), “*Hugo*” (#5375),

New **GENNETT** Records

Hear Them Today—You'll Own Them By Night.

VOCAL	COOK'S	DREAMLAND	OR- CHESTRA
O Promise Me.....10087			
Ben Bolt\$1.00	Moanful Man (Fox Trot)...5373		
Viola Ellis (Contralto)	(Gillespie-Baker-Cook)		
	Lonely Little Wall Flower		
	(Fox Trot) (Kahn-Sim-		
	mons) Cook's Dreamland		
	Orchestra75		
NAYLOR'S SEVEN ACES			
Hugo (Fox Trot) (William-			
son-Gould-Silver)5375			
You (Fox Trot) (Wohlman			
and Cooper)75			
Naylor's Seven Aces.			
	FOREIGN		
	Soledad (Fox Trot) (Paco		
	Alvarado)S-5321		
	As Rojo (Fox Trot) (A. Vega		
	Matus)75		
	Velez y su Orquesta.		
	L'Addio (L. Bovio-Valente) I-5370		
	Ah! Beneditte 'E Bagne		
	(Mario Nicolo)75		
	Marinella (Soprano)		
	Das Begrabnis Der Schwieg-		
	ermutter (Comic)2539		
	Der Billige Jacob (Comic)..\$1.15		
	Hans Lustig, mit Bremer Stadt		
	Musikanten.		
BAILEY'S LUCKY SEVEN			
Mindin' My Business (Fox			
Trot) (Kahn and Don-			
aldson)5364			
If You'll Come Back (Fox			
Trot) (Ehrlich and Lay-			
top)75			
Bailey's Lucky Seven.			

The Starr Piano Co.

931-935 Main Street.

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and others.(217)

On February 7, the Starr Piano Company announced the first issue of a new company newspaper, *Gennett Record Gazette*. The four-page newspaper was devoted to Gennett records and recording artists; newly-released Gennett records were listed. The first issue called particular attention to "The Virgin Birth" record made by William

Jennings Bryan. Viola Ellis, well-known dramatic contralto, was reported to have recorded for Gennett. Robert Poretz, a Polish violinist and famous abroad, had also recorded his first Gennett records. Articles on other Gennett recording artists were included in the issue. The newspaper was expected to be used to advantage by Gennett dealers.(218)

In March, the Witlin Musical Instrument Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, reported record-setting sales by two of the latest releases on Gennett records, "Nine O'Clock Sal,"(#5366) by Ladd's Black Aces and "It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo',"(#5271) composed, sung, and accompanied on the banjo by Wendell Hall, the well-known radio entertainer.(219) Also in March, The United States Navy

gave the Starr Piano Company a surprise order for fifty Starr phonographs for the Navy Yard in New York. A Starr piano was also ordered for one of the Navy ships. At the same time, the State of Virginia ordered a number of Starr phonographs. (220)

The March 15 issue of the *Talking Machine World* reported that Thomas Griselle had taken a year's leave-of-absence, but by March was, "...again in charge of the Gennett record-making activities of the Starr Piano Co. in the New York laboratories."

The April 15 issue of the *Talking Machine World* reported, "*The Starr Piano Co., West Fourth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio, recently put over a tie-up with the Crosley Radio Corp.'s broadcasting station WLW that resulted in much beneficial publicity for Gennett records. The officials of the company made arrangements to give away a Gennett record for every postcard received on a program that was broadcast recently. On the appointed evening announcement was made three times that a Gennett record would be sent to the sender of every postcard regardless of what part of the world the card came from. The only provision made was that the card should not be mailed later than March 5. Since that date the Starr Piano Co. has distributed some 10,000 records to homes throughout America.*"(222)

The Witlin Musical Instrument Company in Philadelphia reported "...a big run in Irish jigs." A number of the Gennett Irish records had a strong appeal among the local Irish communities.(223) In May, the Starr Piano Company in Chicago, located at 423 South Wabash Avenue, changed its name to the Starr Piano Company Sales Corporation and all Starr branch stores were also to use the new name. The change was made to distinguish the wholesale branch of the business from that of the manufacturing, the Starr Piano Company, with factories in Richmond, Indiana.(224)

Radio continued to prosper; many commercial radio stations appeared, offering the American public news and varied entertainment programs. Radio technology continued to improve; the sound reproduction of radio receivers was often superior to that of records. With broadcast music, it was no longer necessary to change a record every three or four minutes. As radio prospered, record sales declined over the next few years. To help save the costs of shellac, in the early

1920's, Gennett records were pressed with less-expensive fillers, causing records to lose hardness. To many record buyers, it was obvious the Gennett records were wearing faster than the Victor, Columbia, and Brunswick records. In 1924, Fred Gennett assigned J. O. Prescott, consultant for the Gennett New York recording studio, to evaluate and improve the record production methods at the Richmond factory. Prescott changed the electroplating process for creating metal master discs and he improved the mix of components used to form Gennett records.(93) Until late 1924, Gennett records had the matrix number inscribed in the blank shellac of the run-out area between the inner grooves and the label. After 1924, the matrix number was usually printed on the label of Gennett issues, but not on other labels pressed by Gennett.(7)

In 1924, Sears, Roebuck & Company sponsored radio station WLS (for the "World's Largest Store"); broadcasts originated from the Hotel Sherman in Chicago. WLS became one of the most popular radio stations in the Midwest; programs were often directed to farming communities and broadcasts included weather, crop, and livestock reports. WLS broadcast a very popular program Saturday evenings, the National Barn Dance, which featured mostly old-time and country music.(111)





In June, “Daddy Stove Pipe” (Isis Williams) from Mobile, Alabama, was brought to the Richmond studio where he recorded two blues of his own composition, “*Stove Pipe Blues*” and “*Sun Down Blues*” (#5459) “Daddy Stove Pipe” performed on the mouth organ, played a guitar, and sang at the same time, a difficult feat; “Stovepipe” had a style of playing all his own.(225) “Stovepipe,” prior to his entrance into the recording field, played for a quack doctor to draw the crowds while the “doctor” sold his medicine. In an issue of the *Gennett Record Gazette*, announcement was made of the recordings by Harry Frankel, a well-known comedian and minstrel, who made Gennett records of his own songs, combining catchy tunes with ukulele accompaniment. One of his records featured, “*The Old Black Crow In The Hickory Tree*” and “*Weepin’ Blues*,” his own compositions (#5426).(226)

"Stovepipe" Now Playing Blues for Gennett Records

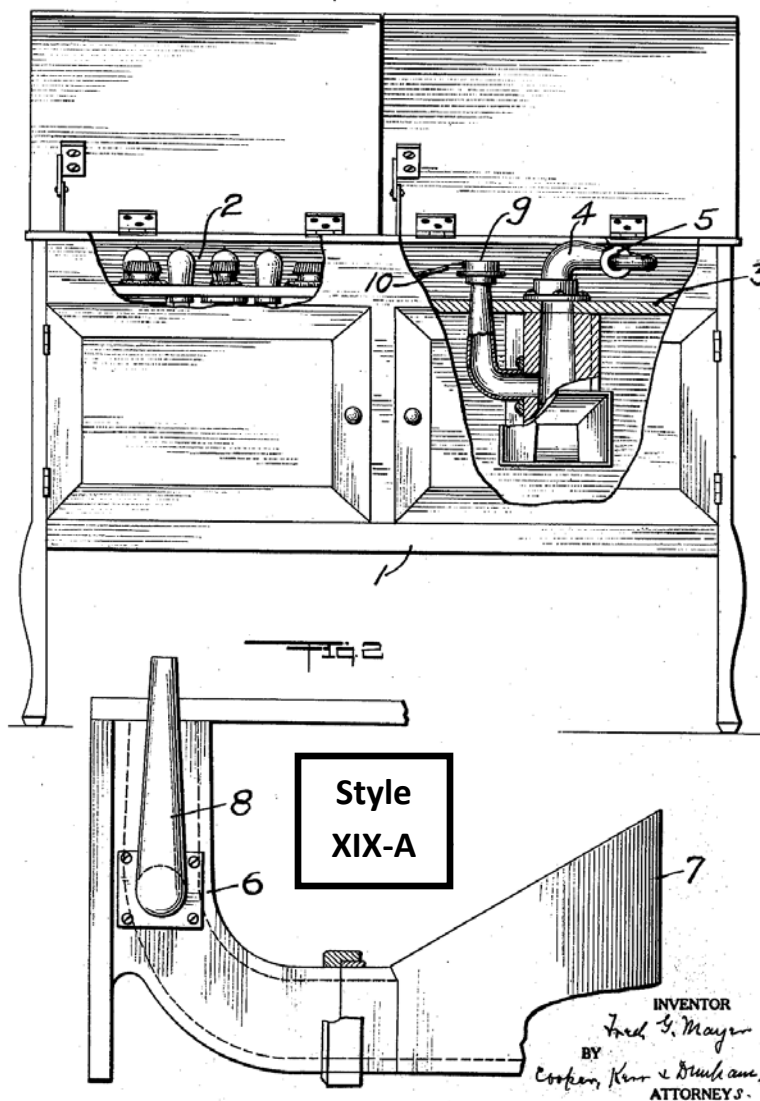
SHELBYVILLE, KY., August 5.—The photograph is a likeness of "Stovepipe," a new addition to the list of Gennett artists, whose first recording, "Sun Down Blues" and "Stovepipe Blues," has just been released by the Gennett Laboratories of the Starr Piano Co., on record No. 5459. "Stovepipe" was discovered by Mrs. Lyons, of the Caldwell-Lyons Phonograph Co., which in addition to being a Starr distributor also oper-



"Stovepipe," New Gennett Artist

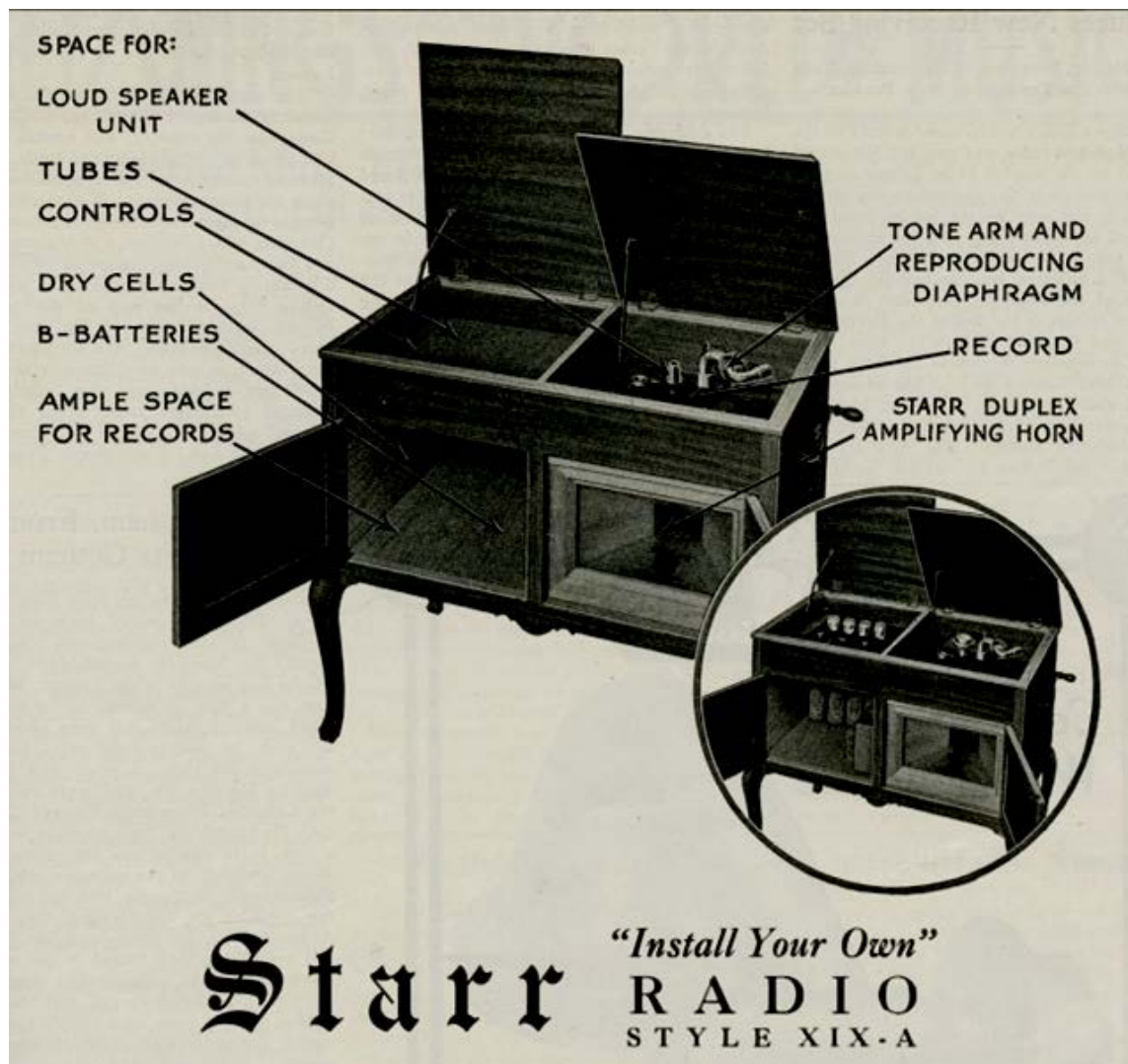
ates a retail business. "Stovepipe" came into the store one day carrying a guitar and asked for a harp, stating that he played both instruments together, and after a demonstration arrangements were made with the Gennett Laboratories to have him make a record.

Also in June, the console Style XIX-A Starr radio-phonograph was introduced with the standard Starr phonograph on the right side (facing) of the cabinet and space for a direct current radio on the left side. The cabinet was constructed to permit any brand of radio to be installed. A sales campaign for the new radio-phonograph was started with the slogan, "Install Your Own Radio, Style XIX-A." When the lid at the top of the left side of the cabinet was raised, a space was revealed in which almost any size radio could be installed. The edges of the radio panel could overlap the frame of the open space in the cabinet to form a complete finish. Underneath the radio was the space ordinarily intended for record filing, but any quantity up to a dozen of ordinary "A" dry cell batteries and up to three "B" batteries could be installed. There was still room for record filing, even if the maximum number of batteries was used.

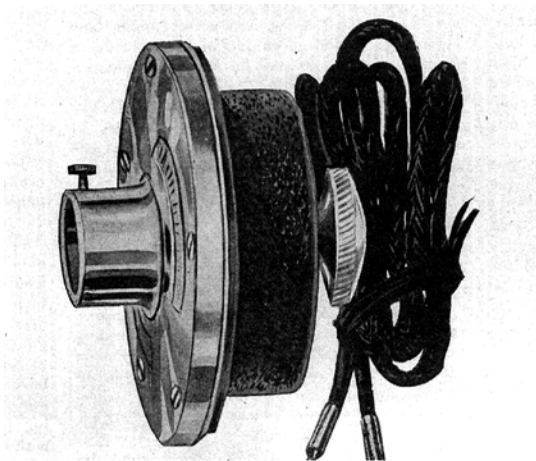


The internal horn of the Style XIX-A featured the special Starr duplex horn, a double-throated horn, each throat being independent and requiring no adjustments from one to the other. The radio throat ended in a tube that connected to the radio driver. The holes for the wires connecting the radio driver to the radio set were bored at an appropriate place. However, no input wires were provided, as the location was determined by the radio brand and model. The Crosley Radio Corporation of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Carloyd Electric & Radio Company of New York, manufactured panels and radios specifically designed to use in the Style

XIX-A model. The Style XIX-A was exhibited at music conventions; it attracted wide attention from Starr dealers throughout the country who then placed orders for immediate delivery.(227) The Style XIX-A was priced at \$140.



In 1924, the Starr Company could provide various finishes for the Starr phonograph cabinets. Mahogany cabinets were available with polished or satin finish. The styles 1/2 and XI mahogany cabinets were available only with medium-dark flat finish. Golden oak cabinets were available with standard varnish, polished or satin. Two-tone finishes were ten dollars extra. Special finishes were available on order.



Direct Current Radio Driver

Termed a compression speaker, a radio driver is similar to a telephone receiver. Although designs varied, output wires from a radio receiver (with vacuum tube amplification) are connected to the terminals leading to the coils surrounding the pole pieces of a permanent magnet. A thin iron or iron alloy diaphragm is placed in close proximity to the magnet. The electric currents generated by the radio correspond to the musical and vocal sound waves coming from the broadcasting station. The electric currents cause a

strengthening or weakening of the magnetic pull on the diaphragm which vibrates and generates the sound. Early direct current radios required "A," "B," and "C" batteries and small UX-199 vacuum tubes for radio wave amplification. Early radio reception was often unsteady with station "drift" and "blast" by more powerful stations; this required the listener to frequently turn the large dial knobs to tune the desired station. A long wire antenna was also needed; the antenna could be wound around a frame. Radio-phonograph models were designed with compartments in the cabinet to hold the "A" and "B" batteries. Soon, plug-into-the-wall AC battery eliminators and battery chargers were developed and advertised as accessory items.

In July, the Starr Piano Company announced that Fred. D. Wiggins, who had been manager of the company's branch in Chicago, had been transferred to the Richmond factory, where he would have charge of Gennett record sales. Mr. Wiggins had been associated with the Starr Piano Company for twenty-five years; he was considered ideally qualified for the new position. C. R. Hunt, formerly associated with the Starr Piano Company's branch at Kansas City, Missouri, succeeded Mr. Wiggins as manager of the Chicago branch. He also had been identified with the Starr Company for a number of years and was a competent sales executive.(228)

Fred Wiggins continued to secure talent for the Richmond recording studio by searching for new and unique talent and enabling Gennett to attract undiscovered musicians. Wiggins often decided which master discs from both the Richmond and New York studios would be pressed into commercial records. By

Starr Products Popular in Buffalo Territory

BUFFALO, N. Y., August 8.—The H. B. Marsh Co. of this city, distributor of Starr phonographs, pianos and Gennett records, made by



Truck of the H. B. Marsh Co.

the Starr Piano Co., Richmond, Ind., is meeting with gratifying success in building up distribution for these popular products throughout this territory. H. B. Marsh, head of the company, is one of the most aggressive Starr wholesalers, and under his direction the sale of Starr products and Gennett records has steadily increased. The company has a group of delivery wagons which are used to give dealers in this territory efficient service, and the accompanying photograph shows one of these wagons with Mr. Marsh at the right-hand side.

1924, he noted that the jazz format had been accepted and embraced by the record-buying public and many new dance bands were modeled after the New Orleans style. One of the more popular local bands to record for Gennett was the Marion

McKay Orchestra in Ohio. Both Fred Gennett and Fred Wiggins had the goal of recording and distributing records quickly with the least expense.(92)

Young Davenport Musician Making Gennett Records

A youthful Davenport musician, Leon B. (Bix) Beiderbecke, son of Mr and Mrs B. H. Beiderbecke, 1934 Grand avenue, has signed a contract to make phonograph records for the Gennett company of Richmond, Ind., according to word received here today.

Young Beiderbecke is playing with the Wolverine orchestra of Chicago. He plays a cornet. The orchestra is now at Richmond where it will devote its time exclusively to making Gennett records.

Beiderbecke attended the Davenport high school and is well known here. He is an accomplished and talented musician, playing the piano with precision and skill, in addition to the cornet.

The Daily Times, Davenport, Iowa.

May 8, 1924. Page 2.

The Wolverines (with cornetist Bix Beiderbecke) made their first (and historic) records for Gennett on February 18, 1924 at the Richmond studio with record #5408, "*Fidgety Feet*" and "*Jazz Me Blues*." On May 6, the Wolverines returned to record "*Oh Baby*" and "*Copenhagen*" (#5453). Learning new tunes could be difficult for the Wolverines since the band members could not read music. New tunes were learned by Beiderbecke playing a few bars for the band, repeating it often until the band members had the tune in mind. Several of the tunes the Wolverines recorded were not processed into commercial records. Their "*Tiger Rag*," recorded on June 20, existed only as a few test pressings. It was also the Starr Company's practice to limit distribution of records by many of the lesser-known bands to Midwest stores. This probably happened to a few of the rarely-found Gennett records by the Wolverines; records with limited distribution were not usually included in the listing of recently-released records in issues of

the *Talking Machine World*. The last three recording sessions for the Wolverines took place in Gennett's New York recording studio on East 37th Street. The Wolverines recorded a total of fifteen titles for Gennett in 1924; thirteen with Bix Beiderbecke. Their last recording was on December 12, 1924, "*Prince of Wails*" (#5620).(41)

Bix Beiderbecke's close friend and companion was Indiana native, Hoagy Carmichael. Famous for having composed the timeless tune, "*Stardust*,"

Carmichael became one of the most prolific composers of popular songs during the 1930s.(90) In 1924, Carmichael was a student at Indiana University in Bloomington. He listened to jazz bands in Indianapolis and Chicago as well as in Indiana summer resorts. He played piano with considerable talent and organized his own college band to play for dances in central Indiana. He became a fan of Beiderbecke's Wolverines and helped promote bookings for the band.

A new sales and exchange plan for popular Gennett records went into effect on June 1. The plan, as announced by the Starr Company, was enthusiastically received by the large number of Gennett record dealers throughout the country. *"All popular numbers, both instrumental and vocal, will bear the date of release on label. On records so dated there will be a 20 percent exchange allowed of purchases, provided such exchange is made before the close of the third month after release. For example, all releases of May, 1924, will be marked "524" and must be exchanged before the last day of August, 1924, regardless of date of purchase. There will be absolutely no exchange on any standard, foreign, or undated popular records (undated popular records means popular records previously released). Exchange to be on a record for record basis, perfect records only being accepted. Records for exchange, with replacement order, must be in the hands of your jobber before the expiration of the time limit. Records for exchange will be accepted only at the point of purchase and when transportation charges have been prepaid. Scratched and damaged records will not be exchanged but will be returned to dealer with replacement order. The list price of all twelve-inch records of the twenty-five hundred series and including record 3000 will be changed to \$1.25 from June 1, 1924."*(229)

On June 9, Jelly Roll Morton returned to the Richmond studio to record ten sides for Gennett, including, *"Jelly Roll Blues"*(#5552).(56)

In July, the new Style XXIII Starr phonograph was introduced. In Henry VIII Tudor period style, the new model was finished in two-tone as well as other finishes, including walnut wood. A special catalog was being prepared for this model.(230)

In August, the Starr Piano Company issued separate booklets listing Irish, Italian, or Spanish records. Each booklet contained a complete listing of the records which had been released up to August, 1924. The Starr Company considered the Gennett foreign record library to be most complete; Gennett dealers reported the Italian and Irish records as especially good sellers.(231)

IN the magnificent, new STARR PHONOGRAPH Style XXIII, Henry VIII model is a faithful reproduction of the vogue in furniture of a period that has come down through the years, loved for its marvelous beauty of design and carving. The Starr Style XXIII is indeed an artistic and splendid piece of furniture, a surpassing and incomparable instrument.



Style XXIII -- Henry VIII Tudor -- \$200

Also in August, T. H. Bracken, district manager of the Starr Piano Company with offices at Monument Circle in Indianapolis, Indiana, resigned; he was replaced by H. H. Hawk.(291)

In September, a new mid-season catalog of Gennett records was issued. The catalog contained small photographs of several well-known Gennett artists. An alphabetical list of all Gennett records released since the 1924 catalog was included along with listings of popular records, dance hits, and tunes of old Ireland, "*...records that should be in every home.*"(232) Also that month, Gennett recorded several sides by Whistler's Jug Band, one of the first African-American jug bands to record.(49) The band was led by guitarist Buford "Whistler" Threlkeld.



M. J. Murphy Music Co.'s Display Which Won the First Prize

That summer, the Starr Piano Company sponsored a national window display contest for Gennett record dealers. Dealers in all parts of the country competed. Prizes were to be awarded to the dealers who submitted pictures of window displays which best featured Gennett records. Dealers were permitted to submit any number of different displays; small as well as large displays were given consideration. Of the hundreds of pictures submitted, the first prize was awarded to the Murphy Music Company of Mulberry, Kansas. This display stood out in a most attention-compelling way and attracted attention from hundreds of passers-by. M. J. Murphy, of the Murphy Company, said, *"The idea of using regular records to spell out the name Gennett records was novelty in the community. We used 228 records to make up the whole display. We had a rambler of roses running over the top and down the sides of the background and this, together with the ferns and flowers, produced a most artistic effect, we thought. Many came in to congratulate us, and school children would stand and spell out the letters. Of course it is impossible to tell how many Gennett record we sold from the special interest created by our window, but we know it has done our business a world of good."* Second prize was awarded to the Neft Melody Shop of Los Angeles, California, and the third prize went to Grunden's in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.(233)

Gennett began location recording in 1924. Location recording was sporadic but eventually included Birmingham, Cincinnati, Chicago, Minneapolis-St. Paul, and the El Tovar Hotel at the Grand Canyon.(27) The Artophone Company in St. Louis, Missouri, sold budget Herwin brand records through the mail, mostly in rural Midwest and the South. From 1924 to 1930, Gennett pressed many jazz, blues, and old-time records for the Herwin label.(9)

In December, the Starr Company reported that the Gennett Irish records had been among the most consistent sellers throughout the year, and, of these the outstanding hit was *"Green Grow The Rushes,"* sung and played by Frank Quinn (#5396). Even though this record had been released for some months, the New York office of the Starr Company was still filling orders for it at the rate of a thousand a week. It was expected that the new release of Mr. Quinn's *"Pop Goes The Weasel"* would be similarly successful (#5567).(234)

New artists to record for Starr in 1924 included contralto Viola Ellis, tenor Ambrose Wyrick, and baritone Frederick Baer. Violin solos were recorded by Robert Perutz; piano solos were by Sid Reinherz and Charles Tweedy. Popular

vocals were recorded by Vernon Dalhart (accompanied by The Stellar Trio), James Egan, Maureen Englin, The Harmony Girls, and Walter R. Jenkins.

Dance and jazz bands to record included the Birmingham Blue Buglers (with Vernon Dalhart), the Broadway Players, the Bucktown Five, "Doc" Cook's Dreamland Orchestra, Willie Creager's Orchestra, Bernie Cummins and His Orchestra, Myron Dunlap and His Orchestra, The Kentucky Blowers (formerly The Dixie Hod Carriers), the Lange-McCay Orchestra, Howard Lanin and His Arcadia Orchestra, Pete Lawson's Orchestra, Joie Lichter's Strand Symphonists, Naylor's Seven Aces, the Red Onion Jazz Babies, Harry Reser's Orchestra, the Roseland Ball



Dance Orchestra, Paul Sanderson and His Orchestra (The Vagabonds), the Sioux City Six (with Bix Beiderbecke, Miff Mole, and Frankie Trumbauer), Wilbur Sweatman and His Acme Syncopators, Sol Wagner and His Orchestra, the Westchester Biltmore Country Club Orchestra, the Windy City Jazzers (Ed Small), and Duke Yellman and His Irene Castle Orchestra.

During a Midwest tour, Guy Lombardo and His Royal

Canadians stopped in Richmond to record their first records on March 10. The band recorded five sides for Gennett; two were pressed into records: "*So This Is Venice*" (#5416) and "*Cotton Pickers' Ball*" (#5417).(11)





The Red Onion Jazz Babies, a New York based band, featured cornetist Louis Armstrong (recently arrived from Chicago), clarinetist Sidney Bechet, pianist Lil Hardin Armstrong, and vocalists Alberta Hunter, Eva Taylor, and Clarence Todd. The group recorded seven sides for Gennett in November and December. (88) Blues vocals were sung by Josephine Beatty (Alberta Hunter), Baby Bonnie, and Edna Johnson.

German songs were provided by the Original Frankische Bauern Kapelle and by Hans Lustig. Irish tunes were provided by Michael Gallagher (hornpipe and Irish pipes), the Fifth Avenue Bus Man, John Griffin (flute), George Halpin (fiddle), Dean Mack (tenor), McNamara's Emerald Orchestra, Jimmy McLaughlin (Irish pipes), Tom J. Morrison (flute), Shaun O'Farrell, and John Shaughnessy (tenor). Italian music was recorded by the De Bernardia-Napolitana De Luxe Dance Orchestra. The Polish Orchestra provided Polish tunes. Spanish selections were recorded by the Cantado por Trina Varela, M. Magana (soprano), La Orquesta de Nava, Orquesta Costens, Velez y su Orquesta, and Louis Zanindio (baritone). Welsh songs were recorded by David Brazell, Iver Foster, Ted & May Hopkins, and Sophia Rolands.

Old-time music was provided by Charles and Harry Tweedy (piano and fiddle) and by blind singer David Miller.(107) Unusual records included James Morrison (fiddle), the New York Fire Department Band, the Original Central American Marimba Band, the Royal Marimba Band, Schepp-Schuckert (concertina duet), and Wood's String Sextette. James M. Curley recorded a special record, *"Address of Welcome to the Order of The Elks in Boston—July 7, 1924."* Children's records were recorded by Lewis James.





"THE DIFFERENCE IS IN THE TONE"

The Starr Piano Company

STARR PIANOS for over half a century have represented highest ideals of craftsmanship. Each Starr Made Grand, Playerpiano and Upright represents a value known the world over.

STARR PHONOGRAPHS from the smallest table style to the elaborate console model possess musical worth which is the result of a careful coordination of each part into a perfect symmetry.

GENNETT RECORDS represent the highest attainment in the art of sound recording. Their variety, perfect reproduction and real musicianship of the artists have made them musical gems of rarest charm. Released every week.

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY

Established 1872

Factories: Richmond, Indiana

NEW YORK, CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES, SAN FRANCISCO, PORTLAND, KANSAS CITY, BIRMINGHAM, NASHVILLE, DETROIT, CINCINNATI, BOSTON, CLEVELAND, INDIANAPOLIS.

Starr Piano Company Retail Outlets in 1924

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

HARRY GENNETT, President

CLARENCE GENNETT, Treasurer

FRED GENNETT, Secretary

**A. L. GENNETT, Chairman Board of
Directors**

SALES

A. E. NOLDER - Vice-President, Wholesale Dept.

E. I. PAULING - Vice-President, Cincinnati Div.

BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

**The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
1820 Third Ave.**

**Also Montgomery, Ala.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.**

BOSTON, MASS.

**The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
221 Columbus Ave.**

Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

BUFFALO, N. Y.

**H. B. Marsh Co., 13½ E. Swan St.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.**

CHICAGO, ILL.

**The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
423 S. Wabash Ave.**

Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

CINCINNATI, OHIO

**The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
27 W. Fourth St.**

**Also Springfield, Ohio.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.**

CLEVELAND, OHIO

**The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
1220-24 Huron Road.**

Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

COLUMBUS, OHIO

Snyder Phonograph Co., 338 N. High St.
Records.

DALLAS, TEXAS

G. H. Jackson, 708 Slaughter Bldg.
Phonographs and Pianos.
George W. Stolte Co., 601 Elm St.
Records.

DAYTON, OHIO

The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
116 N. Main St.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

DENVER, COLORADO

Carl Florine, Room 514 Charles Bldg.,
15th and Curtis Streets.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

DES MOINES, IOWA

Ray Strahan,
632 6th St., Valley Junction.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

DETROIT, MICH.

The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
1500-04 Broadway.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

Lyons Piano & Phonograph Shop, 235 S.
Division Ave.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

HONOLULU, HAWAII

Thayer Piano Co.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

HUGO, OKLA.

J. W. Sturges,
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
49-53 Monument Circle.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

KANSAS CITY, MO.

The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
1025 Grand Ave.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

KNOXVILLE, TENN.
Henry G. Trent Furniture Co.,
Phonographs and Records.

LONDON, ONT., CANADA
Starr Company of Canada, Ltd.
265 Dundas St.—Head Office.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.
The Starr Piano Co., Pacific Division,
630 S. Hill St.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

MEXICO CITY, MEXICO
Hnos. De los Rios, Apartado 2536.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

MILWAUKEE, WIS.
A. F. Kiefer, 140 W. Water Street.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.
M. L. McGinnis & Co., 34 S. Eighth St.
Phonographs and Records

MONTERREY, N. L. MEXICO
Rodolfo Canales, Ave. Madero 52-B.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

MONTREAL, QUE., CANADA
Starr Phonograph Co. of Quebec.
1600 St. Lawrence Blvd.
Phonographs and Records.

NASHVILLE, TENN.
The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
240-42 Fifth Ave. N.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.
Albert T. Thompson, 506-7 Godchaux Bldg.
P. O. Box 296.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

NEW YORK, N. Y.
The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
9-11 E. 37th St.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.
Witlin Musical Instrument Co., 904 Walnut
Street.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

PITTSBURGH, PA.

The Starr Phonograph Co.,
3256 Pinehurst Ave.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

PORTLAND, ORE.

The Starr Piano Co., 22 N. Tenth St.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

RICHMOND, IND.

The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation,
931-35 Main St.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

RICHMOND, VA.

H. Wallace Carner, 2 S. Eighth St.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

Fay-Buchanan Music Co., 1234 Olive St.
Phonographs and Records.
O. S. Boyd, 336 Arcade Bldg.,
8th and Olive Streets.
Pianos.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

The Starr Piano Co., Pacific Division,
180 New Montgomery St.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

SHELBYVILLE, KY.

Caldwell-Lyons Phonograph Co.
Phonographs, Records and Pianos.

UTICA, N. Y.

S. & S. Music Co., 209 Columbia St.
Phonographs and Records.

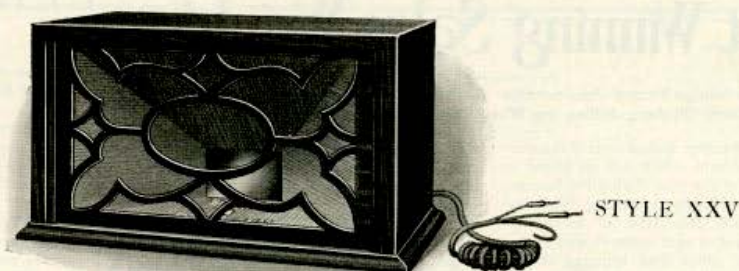
The Year 1925

Despite the brisk sales of records around the nation, the 1924 holiday sales season proved to be very disappointing for most phonograph companies; many dealers were burdened with inventories of unsold phonographs. Even the Victor Talking Machine Company had to cut its three million dollar advertising budget. In contrast, the combination radio-phonograph models had had good sales.

Despite the disappointing holiday sales, in January, the New York office of the Starr Piano Company reported that December had been an excellent month with the demand for Starr phonographs and Gennett records exceeding expectations. Rush orders from dealers for both Starr phonographs and Gennett records were the order of the day, and immediately preceding Christmas, Manager Keats and his staff had all they could do to cope with the demand. The standard Christmas Gennett records were in particular demand. Although large numbers of these records were in stock before the holiday season started, they were soon distributed and daily telegrams to the factory were sent to rush shipments of additional orders.(238) The New York office announced it had made alterations to provide larger and better display rooms for the Starr phonographs and pianos; the new arrangement provided separate rooms for the phonographs and pianos.(236)

Also in January, the Starr Piano Company introduced a new loud speaker, Style XXV. The small table cabinet featured walnut wood while the internal horn was fashioned from silver spruce. The radio driver was imported from Germany. In a circular announcing the new loud speaker, the company said, *"The Starr loud speaker horn is carved to scientific proportions, hanging free and is suspended to perfect balance so that the tone is not only full and clear but is delivered in all of the faithfulness of the original."*(235) Later Style XXV units had the internal horn made of yellow spruce.

On January 26, Bix Beiderbecke returned to the Richmond studio to record with Bix and His Rhythm Jugglers band. Four sides were recorded; Gennett released two, *"Davenport Blues"* and *"Toddlin' Blues"* (#5654). The band included the young trombonist, Tommy Dorsey.(51)



Starr Loud Speaker

OUTSTANDING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STARR LOUD SPEAKER OF INTEREST TO ALL RADIO FANS!

TONE CHAMBER Amplifying Horn of exact proportioned, extra sensitive Silver Grain Spruce the same as used in all Starr Pianos and Phonographs.

HORN IS SUSPENDED Horn is suspended to allow tone vibrations to be delivered unimpeded by any metal part or connection. Responds to widest range of tones.

TONE VOLUME Volume of tone great enough for any home. Melody and speech clear and pure as original.

FINISH Artistically finished in Mahogany, Walnut or Oak. It is compact, unobtrusive and presents a neat, attractive appearance. This beautiful, graceful, little cabinet blends harmoniously with other radio units and home furnishings.

GRILL Grill of pleasing carved lines and removable in an instant.

WORKMANSHIP Of perfect workmanship throughout. Nothing to break or to get out of order. Guaranteed to give lasting satisfaction in every respect.

ADJUSTMENT Loud speaker unit adjusted for average radio set.

DIMENSIONS Height 9½ inches; Width 17 inches; Depth 9¾ inches.

A Loud Speaker of Genuine Merit Built to Meet the Approval of All Who Want The Very Best in Radio Equipment.

THE STARR LOUD SPEAKER is an embodiment of scientific principles of proper tone amplifying which have been incorporated in all Starr musical instruments. It brings out the melodies and voices of the air to your home with perfect fidelity. The horn is fashioned from Silver Grain Spruce famous by music masters of all time. Carved to scientific proportions the Starr Loud Speaker Horn hangs free, suspended to perfect balance so the tone is full and clear, unretarded and unmarred as it is developed from the initial impulses originated by the artist through the loud speaker unit. Thus every tone is delivered in all purity and faithfulness of the original.

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY

Established 1872

Factories: Richmond, Indiana

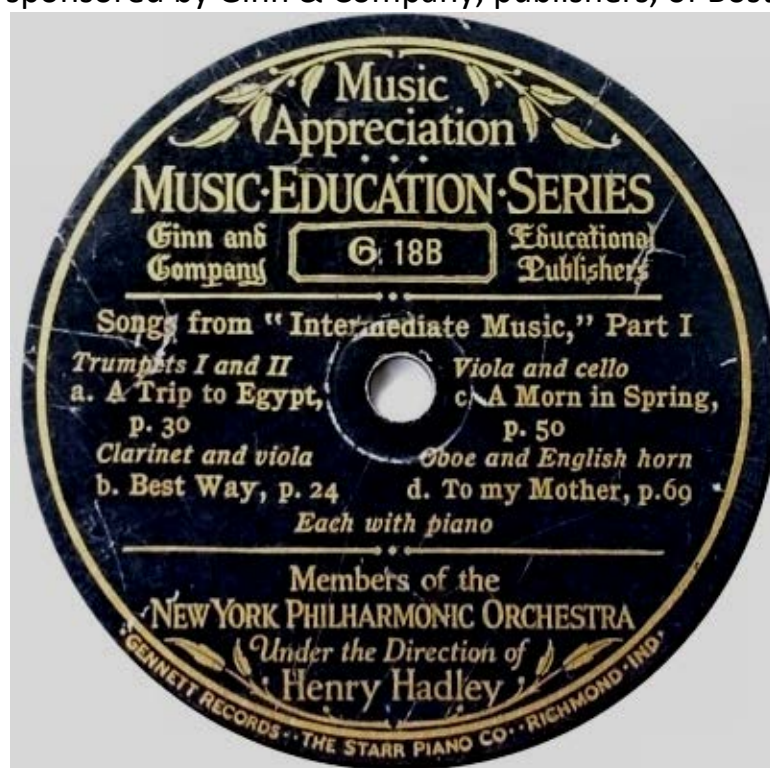
NEW YORK, CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES, SAN FRANCISCO, PORTLAND, KANSAS CITY, BIRMINGHAM, NASHVILLE, DETROIT, CINCINNATI, BOSTON, CLEVELAND, INDIANAPOLIS

The Starr Company prepared a series of colored display cards for dealers to use in window displays to advertise Starr phonographs and Gennett records. The cards measured twenty-one inches high and fourteen inches wide; each was designed



in several colors to enable an attractive display in any surroundings. Two of the cards featured the Starr XXIII console phonograph, designed as the Tudor model, and the upright Style XVI Starr phonograph. R. C. Ball, advertising manager of the Starr Piano Company, was responsible for the preparation and issuance of the series of cards.(237)

for the *Music Appreciation Series* for use in elementary schools; the series was sponsored by Ginn & Company, publishers, of Boston, Massachusetts. Henry



Hadley, a conductor of the New York Philharmonic, conducted members of the orchestra for the recordings with Theo Carle, Frederic Baer, and Inez Barbour as soloists.(50, 239) Also in February, Art Payne's Gennett Recording Orchestra was appearing in Canton, Ohio, at the Moonlight Ballroom, one of the finest dance pavilions in the Midwest. Local Gennett record dealers were pushing the sale of Payne's records.(240) Starting on

February 16, Gennett recording engineers spent a week at the new Cincinnati

Gennett recording studio to record local talent as well as visiting musicians. Local Gennett dealers expressed considerable interest in the recording process.(241)

Gennett record, #5519, "*A Welsh Courtship*," a humorous dialog, was not a popular selling record, except in the mining district of Pennsylvania, the home of many former natives of Wales. Local Gennett dealers heavily advertised this record with the result that more than a thousand were sold in the course of two or three weeks. The demand on one dealer was so great that he phoned the New York office from Scranton ordering fifty records. As the stock at this office was low, a wire was sent to the headquarters at Richmond to ship direct. Before the shipment could be made, the dealer telephoned to Richmond and increased the order to 250.(242)

In March, the Starr Piano Company announced that the Chicago office of the Company, which had been at 423 South Wabash Avenue, would be moved about May 1 to the fourth floor of the Davis Company department store, State Street and Jackson Boulevard. The Starr retail business was due to be placed under the direction of Davis Company officials. The new arrangement was made because of the rapid expansion of both the piano and phonograph departments. The Davis Company planned increased business with the Starr pianos, phonographs, radio-phonographs, and Gennett records.(243)

Also in March, announcement was made at the annual banquet of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce that the Starr Piano Company planned to erect a factory on the Pacific Coast. Fred Gennett, secretary of the Starr Piano Company and president of the Starr Piano Company of California, was in Los Angeles and actively arranging for a suitable site for the new factory.(244)

In April, The Starr Piano Company in New York reported that March of this year compared most favorably with the same period of last year and that it was infinitely better than the preceding month. While records were selling consistently and the sales volume reached in March was no surprise, the number of orders for Starr phonographs exceeded expectations. The majority of orders for machines came from outlying areas.(245)

During the final week of April, at the Ben Franklin Hotel in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, an exhibition of the Starr phonographs and the Gennett records

and other musical instruments was held. The exhibition was under the direction of the local Starr distributor, the Witlin Musical Instrument Company, of which Ben Witlin was president. During the week, concerts with the Starr phonographs, Gennett records, and Starr pianos were accompanied by vocalists and instrumentalists. Dealers were invited to attend the demonstrations and to view the new Starr "School" style phonograph which had been added to the Starr line. Other Starr instruments included in the exhibit were the loud speaker and radio-phonograph.(248)

In May, plans were announced to move the San Francisco office of the Starr Piano Company from the Furniture Exchange building to 680 Howard Street. The new location would afford more space for the activities of the branch. J. W. Steinkamp was the local representative of the Starr Company; he had been a very active traveler in this section of the state for his company.(246) Also in May, artists who recently recorded for Gennett included the Ritz Male Quartet, vaudeville headliners, who recorded old-time tunes, and Razaf, the Melody Man, who recorded novelty songs, accompanying himself on the ukulele.(247)

To help stimulate record sales, Fred Gennett initiated a series of popular, dance, country, and race



releases on special red label records. The red label Gennett 3000 series started in May and used the same design of the blue label records. The red records were listed at fifty cents. Gennett aggressively marketed the red label records through 1926.

Gennett continued to record and press records for the Italian, Spanish, and German export markets.(27, 250)



In June, Gennett records were being handled in Zurich, Switzerland; E. A. Berther was distributor. Gennett records were reported to be steadily increasing in popularity abroad.(249, 250)

The week of June 11 at the Drake Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, was the scene of the National Music Industries Convention covering four full days and embracing the

annual sessions of the Musical Industries Chamber of Commerce, with which a number of phonograph and radio concerns were affiliated, as well as the annual meetings of the various member associations making up the Chamber. The full line of Starr phonographs, Gennett records, Starr pianos, and player-pianos comprised the display of the Starr Piano Company. Harry Gennett, president of the Starr Company, was in charge of the display; he was assisted by A. L. Jewett of Boston; Ray Strahan, Iowa and Nebraska representative; W. C. Klump, New York representative; and A. M. Sweetland, of South Bend, Indiana.(251)

In late June, the Starr Company announced, *"To introduce our new 50¢ Gennett red label record we will exchange one new record for four old Gennett records—no matter how old or what condition your records are in."*(318) The Meyer-Seeger Music Company in Appleton, Wisconsin, made this observation, *"New records keep the phonograph from getting stale."*(306)


In July, the New York office of the Starr Piano Company reported that the Gennett records, particularly those of the foreign language catalog and of old-time tunes, had decided upward sales. While sales were brisk for the entire record catalog,

the “mountain country” music, which sold in volume throughout Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and new records in the Irish series, were most active. Two new releases of Irish dance music, “*Braes of Mar Highland Strathspey*,” coupled with “*Irish Barn Dance*” (#5731), and “*Kitsheelan Bridge*,” coupled with “*Clune*” (#5730), were selling exceptionally well.(252)

With the death of William Jennings Bryan on July 26, Gennett record dealers from all parts of the nation reported increasing demand for his records. The Starr Company planned an extensive campaign to feature the Gennett records by Bryan. The sales department of the Gennett Record division stated, “*Whether or not all agreed with the political or religious beliefs of William Jennings Bryan at least there is no dispute that he will always be remembered for his magnetic*

The Voice of Wm. Jennings Bryan

ON GENNETT RECORDS



The Bryan Recordings are:

THE VIRGIN BIRTH IMMORTALITY	}	No. 5216 .75
THE LORD'S PRAYER Nearer, My God, To Thee Westminster Quartette	}	No. 5225 .75
THE CROSS OF GOLD SPEECH, Part I		} No. 40000
THE CROSS OF GOLD SPEECH, Part II		} 2.50
THE IDEAL REPUBLIC National Emblem March Gennett Military Band	}	No. 5224 .75
THE 23rd PSALM Lead Kindly Light Westminster Quartette	}	No. 5226 .75

oratory. Future generations and many of the present who could not have the privilege of sitting under the spell of that magic voice can still get much of its beauty and charm from the phonograph records which he recorded for Gennett records." Harry Gennett, President of the Starr Company, reported, *"For one so much in the public eye, Mr. Bryan was strangely reluctant to have his voice recorded."* The sensational evolution trial at Dayton, Tennessee, that summer, and Mr. Bryan's sudden death, created a tremendous demand for his *"Virgin Birth"* record.(253)

In the mid-1920s, Gennett was producing three million records and 35,000 spring-driven phonographs annually. Also, by the mid-1920s, Gennett appears to have abandoned competing with Victor and Columbia in classical and operatic music, which were never Gennett's main efforts.(18) In 1925, the Starr Company signed a contract with Sears, Roebuck, & Company to produce 500,000 records for Sears with the Silvertone label.(37)

Gennett records were exported to Australia and sold through Suttons Ltd. in Sydney.(98) In 1925, the Compo Company in Canada ended the connection with the Starr Piano Company but continued issuing records under the Starr and Starr-Gennett names until well after 1934.(5) The Compo Company was recording and pressing records for the Canadian market mostly using its own record masters. For a brief period in 1925, Wilfred Stevenson from Canada became a vice-president of the Starr Piano Company in Richmond, the first non-Gennett family member to hold an administrative position in the company.

In 1925, Gennett began to record old-time musician, Doc Roberts, who both sang and played fiddle. A native of central Kentucky, from 1925 to 1930, Roberts visited the Richmond studio a dozen times and recorded one hundred songs. On Gennett's later electric Electrobeam records, he appeared as Fiddlin' Doc Roberts, but was listed under different pseudonyms on the Champion and Sears discount labels. Roberts often accompanied other old-time singers and string players during recording sessions. Roberts used an unusual "long bow" type of fiddle playing.(108) Kentucky was the state contributing the largest number of country talent for the Gennett label.(154)

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Electrical Recording

Early in 1925, the Western Electric Company licensed patent rights for the new electrical recording method to the Victor Talking Machine Company and the Columbia Phonograph Company. The newly-developed electrically recorded records had not only more volume but much expanded fidelity. With the acoustic recording method it was difficult to capture sound waves below 250 cycles—just under middle “C” on the piano. The new Western Electric recorders were designed to operate over a range of frequencies from 30 to 5,500 cycles. Processes driven by vacuum tube amplifiers have many times the force of the sound energy collected by horns; electrical recording did not rely on the sheer force of sound. Electronically amplified treble frequencies became clearer and brighter; bass sounds, largely lost on acoustic discs, added fullness.

Gennett experimented with electrical recording using equipment from the General Electric Company. Gennett records issued from these efforts had “GE” in a small circle printed on the label. However, Starr’s recording engineers experienced continual problems with the new electronic equipment.(27) The first fully acceptable electrically recorded Gennett records did not appear until late 1926.(100)

In August, Gennett Records released a new record by the popular Irish vocalist, Frank Quinn, “*Innisfail*” and “*My New Shoes*” (#5740). Vernon Dalhart was a very popular vocalist as was evidenced by large sales of his recordings on several record labels, especially his version of, “*The Prisoner’s Song*.” For Gennett Records, Dalhart recorded, “*The Little Rosewood Casket*” and “*The New River Train*” (#3084). Dalhart accompanied himself on the banjo and harmonica.(254) For release in September, Dalhart recorded, “*The Blue Ridge Mountain Blues*” and “*The Lightning Express*” (#3129). Dalhart also recorded a novelty song for Gennett, “*Sneezing Song*” (#3107) as there was a vogue for novelty records.(256) Buddy Lee, vocalist and vaudeville artist recorded four tunes for Gennett, “*Oh, Say, Can I See You Tonight*” and “*If I had My Way About My Sweetie*” (#3090); “*Want A Little Lovin*” and “*Some Other Bird Whistled A Tune*” (#3132). Lee accompanied himself on the ukulele.(255)



In September, Gennett entered the low-price field with the Champion label, using the same recordings that appeared on Gennett but generally employing pseudonyms for artists. Thus, Bailey's Lucky Seven became The Seven Champions, Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians became the Hill Top Inn Orchestra, and the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra as Jack's Fast Steppin' Bell Hops. Some musicians were not informed that their Gennett recordings

had been issued on the Champion label under a pseudonym. To help camouflage the origins of the Champion records, the matrix numbers printed on Champion labels were the reverse numbers of the matrix number used for the same selections on the Gennett labels.⁽¹⁵⁾ Champion records were priced at three for a dollar; they were to be sold by chain stores outside the Starr retail network.⁽⁹⁴⁾

In November, the Starr Piano Company presented the National Museum in Washington a complete set of the Gennett records made by the late William Jennings Bryan together with the copper masters of the records. The presentation was made at the request of Mrs. Bryan. The recordings included several speeches and scriptural readings. Bryan's address on "*Immortality*" and his "*Behold A Republic*" were taken from his speech of acceptance of the presidential nomination in 1900. The copper master plates had a coating of nickel; they could be kept for centuries without deterioration. Thus, the voice of the "Silver Tongued Orator" would be preserved for future generations.⁽²⁵⁷⁾

In December, reports from all parts of the country indicated that the new Gennett fifty-cent records were meeting with popular favor by the public and many

dealers reported that the red label records had been an important factor in renewing interest in records.(258)


New artists to record for the Starr Piano Company during 1925 included solos by pianist James Hughes and violist Louis Heidelberg. String quartets featured the Gennett String Orchestra and La Page String Quartet. Popular songs were recorded by the Harington Sisters, Wilson Harper (tenor), Harold Kane (tenor), Buddy Lee, the Radio Franks, John Ryan (tenor), Edward Toomey (baritone), and the Tremaine Brothers.

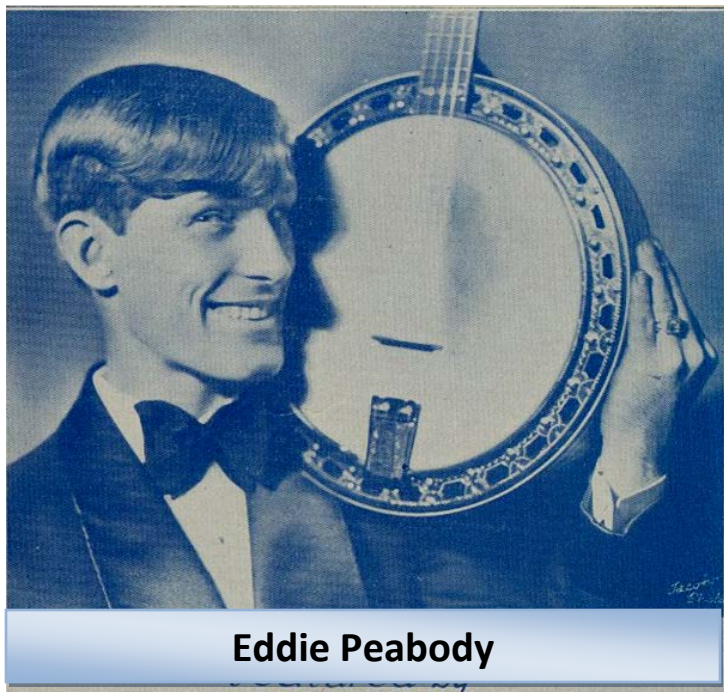
Orchestra and band selections were recorded by Bailey's Dixie Dudes, the Blue Beaver Orchestra, Perley Breed's Shepard Colonial Orchestra, the Travis Carlton Orchestra (Bailey's Lucky Seven), the Chubb-Steinberg Orchestra, the Club Macon Orchestra, Dawson's Specialty Orchestra, Bob Delkman and His Orchestra, Wally Erickson's Coliseum Orchestra, Thomas Griselle and His Orchestra, The Happy Collegians (Nathan Glantz), Jud Hill's Blue Devils, Hitch's Happy Harmonists (with Hoagy Carmichael), Richard Hitter's Blue Knights, the Hollywood Night Owls, The Jolly Four Orchestra, "Piggy" Jones and His Orchestra, the Kentucky Blowers, the Marigold Serenaders, the Miami Lucky Seven, Flash Miller's Orchestra, the Original Indiana Five, the Original Memphis Melody Boys, Art Payne's Orchestra, the Rainbow Serenaders (Bailey's Lucky Seven), Ross Reynolds and His Orchestra, Red Sanders and His Orchestra, The Southerners (Jud Hill's Blue Devils), Jack Stillman's Oriole Orchestra, Straun's Pullman Porters (Nathan Glantz), Henry Thies and His Castle Farm Orchestra, The Virginia Entertainers, the Westchester Biltmore Country Club Orchestra (Hazay Natzy), and "Fess" Williams and His Royal Flush Orchestra.

**No Camping or Lake Trip
Complete Without the
Starr Portable**

It is a little gem—adds life and pep to any outing. Excellent tone and plenty of volume for any gathering. Special terms. Priced

\$20.00 and \$25.00





Eddie Peabody

Blues were featured by Marie Grinter, Albert Jones, Hociel Thomas, and the Rocky Mountain Trio. Old-time tunes were recorded by George Ake, Edgar Boar (guitar), Homer Davenport, John Henry Howard, David Miller, Doc Roberts, The Ritz Quartet, and the Young Brothers. Spirituals records featured Washington's Kentucky Quartette.

Hawaiian music was recorded by W. B. Patterson and M. L. Romano. Irish tunes were by

Michael Curran (violin), Patrick Doran (flute), Joseph Lee (baritone), the Four Provinces (jigs), James McCarthy (violin), Seamus O'Doherty, the McNamara Trio

and the Patrick Brothers.

Italian music was furnished by I. Suonatori Ambulante, G. de Laurentis, and Gina Santella (soprano). Spanish music was recorded by Jose Alvarez Alba (tenor), Evita Alves (soprano), Banda Militar Gennett, Orquesta Mariani, Tomas Parduscoy y su Orquesta, and Los Toreros Musicos. Welsh songs were recorded by Ivor Foster.



Unusual recordings were made by Jimmy Bay and His Uke, Milton Charles (organ), Patrick Doran (flute), Paul

Earle (comic songs), Sammy Friedman (banjo), George Hamilton Green

(vibraphone), Iasille and His Symphony Band, Eddie Peabody (banjo), Razaf (the Melody Man), and Whistler (accompanied by his Jug Band). Popular radio star Harry Lawson and His Blue Uke recorded vocal blues. Gennett record #5744 featured canary bird singing.





INCORPORATED UNDER THE LAWS OF

INDIANA

Shares 150

The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation

Richmond, Indiana

Capital Stock \$10,000.00

This Certifies that The Starr Piano Co is the owner of
One hundred and fifty shares of the Capital Stock of

The Starr Piano Co Sales Corporation

Transferrable only on the books of the Corporation by the holder
hereof in person or by Attorney upon surrender of this certificate
properly endorsed.

In Witness Whereof, the said Corporation has caused this Certificate to be
signed by its duly authorized officers and to be sealed with the Seal of the Corporation
this 20 day of January A.D. 1923

John W. Starr
President

Harry G. Smith
Secretary

SHARES

\$50.00

EACH

The Year 1926

In January, Fred Gennett, secretary of the Starr Piano Company, reported that 1925 was the best year enjoyed by his company, as more musical instruments were made and sold than ever before. Mr. Gennett expected that 1926 would see still further expansion, as advance orders already received warranted a high feeling of optimism.(259)

In February, the Starr Piano Company purchased all the machinery, patents, raw materials, parts, etc. from the receiver for the Thomas Manufacturing Company of Dayton, Ohio, maker of the Portophone portable phonographs. In keeping with the Starr Company's expansion plans, the Portophone was added to the list of products manufactured by Starr. The "suitcase" portable models were popular summer selling instruments for outdoor and back porch listening.(260) Starr



planned two Portophone models, one, known as the Starr Portable, and the other as the Gennett Portophone, the latter being designed for distribution through Gennett records dealers. The instruments were well-made, compact, lightweight, easily carried, and had excellent sound reproduction.

Simultaneously with the placing of the two portables on the market, the Starr Company announced the introduction of two new types of phonographs of standard size. One followed the designs of Dr. Arthur L. Foley, professor of physics at Indiana University, and represented the successful culmination of a number of years of scientific experimenting. In 1913, Professor Foley was the first person to photograph sound waves. The second model was designed in the Starr Company laboratories, and similarly embodied a number of new features. Starr considered both instruments to represent, "*...distinct advancements in the development and reproduction of tone.*"(263)

By March, Gennett had recorded a series of "Old Time Mountain Tunes," played



"Fiddlin' Sam" and His Accompanist

by Sam Long, "Fiddlin' Sam," of Oklahoma, champion fiddler of the Ozarks. "Fiddlin' Sam" had won the first prize of the Old Time Fiddler Contest held in the New Memorial Hall, Joplin, Missouri; he won this championship in probably the largest contest of this kind ever held. There were ninety-one fiddlers competing for a variety of prizes, including a free trip to the Gennett recording studio for the winning fiddler and his or her

accompanist. Attendance at this event was large and the ticket sales so great that the contest had to be divided into two performances. The New Memorial Hall, seating four thousand, was filled to capacity on both nights. Sam Long was also booked for performing in vaudeville. Before coming to the Gennett recording studio, Mr. Long performed at a meeting of the Joplin Kiwanis Club. He also played with the Muehlback Orchestra in Kansas City, where the programs were broadcast. Considerable demand had developed for old-time tunes, played in the characteristic old mountain style.(261)

In mid-March, continuing problems with the General Electric recording equipment caused Fred Wiggins to suspend electronic recording and return to acoustic recording.(27)

Starting on page 13 of the March 25 issue of the *Richmond Item*, a special seven-page section of the paper was devoted to the Starr Piano Company's celebration for the opening of the newly-remodeled Starr Piano Company Sales Corporation building at 10th and Main Streets in Richmond. The public was invited to attend. Among other retail outlets, the building now housed the Kiser Radio Shop, which featured RCA, Stromberg-Carlson, Atwater Kent, and Crosley radio brands. The Starr Music Shop sold all types of musical instruments. A special offer for Gennett records was made, "*Buy two; get one free!*" Starr offered a 25 to 50 percent discount for Starr pianos, with, "*...pay nothing down.*"

In April, Harry Gennett, president of the Starr Piano Company, was pleased to report that in February the record department of the Starr Company had shipped the largest number of records in the history of the company. Mr. Gennett also stated, "*Our phonograph shipments are steadily increasing. March orders indicate the biggest month in this department since 1923. We are looking forward optimistically to a very satisfactory year for 1926.*" The Starr Company's piano sales also reached a record volume in February; Starr's new grand piano was especially popular.(262)

In March, May, and June, evangelist Homer Rodeheaver again recorded at the Gennett recording studio in New York; several of the recordings were pressed for Rodeheaver's Rainbow records. In the Fall, Gennett recordings by Rodeheaver were released on the Silvertone label and were listed in the Sears, Roebuck & Company's fall catalog.(280)

The Starr Company's newly-developed phonographs were called the Isosonic models; they featured a much-improved mechanical sound box that utilized a thin aluminum alloy diaphragm that was capable of the greater "push" and "pull" required by the new electrically recorded records. The diaphragm, stylus bar, and pivot assembly were the same as the new mechanical reproducer used in the Brunswick Company's exponential Panatrope models. The new Starr sound boxes performed amazingly well but today are seldom found in usable condition. The new Isosonic models, Style XXX and Style XXXI, featured larger internal horns

which were not folded.

One mid-priced model featured a five-foot long rubber horn, made by the Miller Rubber Company; the horn was positioned in the cabinet to resemble a saxophone.



In June, Ezra Wickemeyer from Richmond, and J. O. Prescott from the New York studio, took portable acoustic recording equipment to Harvey's El Tovar Hotel at the Grand Canyon in Arizona to record Hopi

Indian chants. Dr. J. Walter Fewkes, chief of the Bureau of Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution, supervised the recording sessions, which were made in the Grand Canyon about one hundred miles from the Hopi reservation. The recording sessions were held with the cooperation of the Santa Fe Railroad. The dozen recordings were issued in 1927 and were among the last acoustically recorded Gennett discs. Master records were sent to the Smithsonian Institution and other museums. The Hopi records were expected to sell well at tourists'

stopping places in the Southwest; however, the tribal records did not have high sales.(103, 264)

Also in June, the New York office of the Starr Piano Company discontinued serving as jobber for New York area Gennett record dealers. Instead, retailers were to order new Gennett records directly from the factory at Richmond, Indiana. The change was made to eliminate overhead and other charges incidental in the carrying of a large stock of records. It was expected the new policy would also better serve Gennett dealers.(265)

In July, in Indianapolis, Indiana, the Gennett Realty Company, a holding company for the Starr Piano Company, filed papers of incorporation showing a capital start of \$750,000, of which \$500,000 was preferred and the balance common stock. The company was formed for the purpose of acquiring real estate in Richmond, Indiana. Incorporators were Alice I. Gennett, Clarence Gennett, and Fred Gennett.(266)

In October, a branch of the Starr Piano Company was opened at 114 West Fifth Street in East Liverpool, Ohio. The facility included a large wareroom and was equipped to facilitate service to dealers.(267)

The November issue of the *Talking Machine World* contained an article with statistics from *The Announcer*, one of the publications issued by the Stewart-Warner Speedometer Corporation. In the United States, there were 17,500,000 homes with automobiles; 9,300,000 homes were without. 10,500,000 homes contained a phonograph; 16,300,000 homes were without. 5,000,000 homes had a radio; 21,800,000 homes were without. The source of these statistics was *Radio Retailing*, which compiled the data for the statistics. It was evident there were millions of homes still without a phonograph or radio.(268)

In December, the Starr Piano Company sent to dealers new holiday literature printed in the colors traditional of Christmas. The literature contained illustrations and descriptions of Starr pianos and both the standard and portable Starr phonographs.(269)

By the mid-1920s, old-time rural vocalists and string players became popular with much of the American public; major record companies hired talent scouts and

sent crews with portable recording equipment to record rural musicians on location. Gennett, however, waited for the musicians to come to the Richmond and New York recording studios. With Gennett's reputation to record even obscure artists, many rural musicians came to the Gennett studios to record. Music agents from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia brought gospel, old-time singers, and string bands for recording sessions in Richmond. Gennett released many of these recordings on Gennett, Champion, and the Sears discount labels. Musicians also scheduled their own recording dates; many were from the Appalachian Mountains and were hoping their records would earn them a few extra dollars.

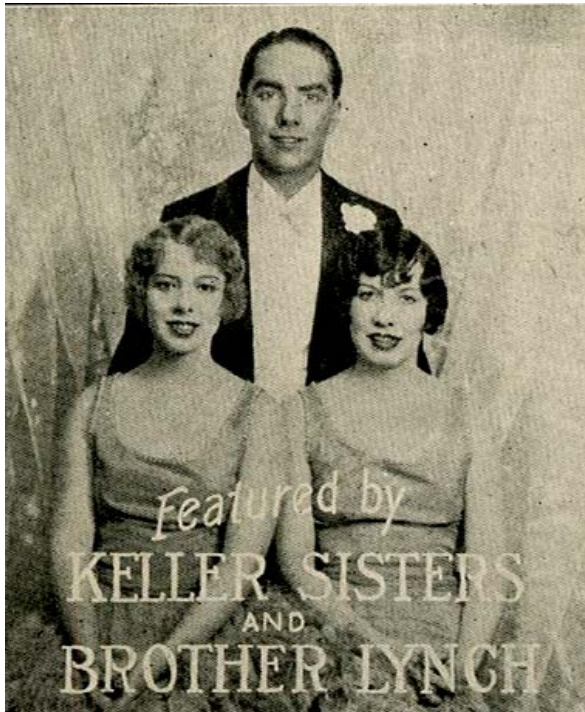
The thousands of songs issued on Gennett and its affiliated budget labels contributed to the massive body of old-time music and helped form the foundation of today's country music. Most of these musicians provided original and unadulterated examples of old-time music. The output of recordings from the Richmond studio was remarkable. The large number of old-time musicians passing through Richmond each day caused local residents to re-name the Whitewater gorge as "Banjo Valley." It was rarely necessary for the Richmond studio to hire musicians.(105) Standard recording contracts for many Gennett artists were for royalties of one penny per side of each record sold on the Gennett

label and one-half penny per side for the discount labels.(109)



The Ponce Sisters

Gennett found that old-time record buyers, especially in rural areas, were low-income consumers and most still owned the older spring-wound phonographs with mechanical sound boxes. Thus, Fred Wiggins found that it was not essential for Gennett records to have the highest fidelity. Gennett records continued to be more fragile than other label discs due to the limited amount of shellac used in the record matrix. Even less shellac



was used in the Champion and Sears discount discs.(106) With the proliferation of budget label records and generally improved conditions for the phonograph and records industry, 1926 was one of Gennett Records best sales years. The new Gennett Portophone proved popular with the public.(102)

New artists to record for Starr in 1926 included violin solos by Milan Lusk and Myron Roberts; piano solos were by Vera Guilaroff. Popular vocals were

recorded by Jack Brown, Bernie Grauer, The Keller Sisters and Lynch, Bert Lewis, Dick Miles, the Peerless Entertainers (vocal quartet), Dorothea and Ethel Ponce (vaudeville artists), The Radio Kings, and the Wesley Female Quartet.

Dance music was provided by The Arabian Knights (Nathan Glantz), The Belvedere Inn Orchestra, The Broadway Nightclub Orchestra (Nathan Glantz), Joe Candillo and His Everglades Orchestra, Marian Davis and His Orchestra, James G. Dimmick's Sunnybrook Orchestra, Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, Felix Ferdinand and His Orchestra, Al Gentile and The Americans, Gordon's Metropolitan Orchestra, Gowan's Rhapsody Makers, The Happy Collegians, Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra (often as the Dixie Stompers), Jud Hill's Monroe Orchestra (formerly the Blue Devils), Kerr's Famous Players, Sam Lanin's Orchestra, Lieutenant Matt's Rhapsodists, the Miami Beach Orchestra, The Flash Miller Orchestra, Murray's Green Gable Orchestra, Pickard's Chinese Syncopators, Pinkie's Birmingham Five, Harry Pollock's Club Maurice Diamonds, Bobby Randall and His Bandits, Fred Rich and His Times Square Orchestra, The Royal Troubadours, Red Sanders and His Orchestra, the Saratoga Red Birds, Fred Sharp's Royal Cubans, The Southerners, The Stillman Club Orchestra, Johnny Sylvester and His Orchestra, The Tennessee Ten, Chick Winter and His Orchestra, and Barney Zeeman and His Kentucky Cardinals.



Blues were provided by Caroline Johnson (accompanied by "Fats" Waller on piano) and Alberta Jones. Spirituals were sung by Alta Brown, Porter Grainger's Jubilee Singers, Bertha Powell, and the Little Mount Zion Choir. Fiddle music was recorded by Murray Kellner, Sam Long, and Tom Owen's Barn Dance Trio.

Hawaiian music was provided by the Honolulu Trio. Spanish music was recorded by Angel Romero (tenor), Jose Garcia's Spanish Serenaders, and the Orquesta del Teniente Felix Ferdinando. Unusual records were by Bob Blake (comic-- often listed as the,

"Reincarnation of Bert Williams"). The 1926 Gennett records catalog included three sides by Theo Karle, famous operatic tenor.(153)



The Year 1927

In January, Fred Gennett believed 1927 would bring vital changes, *“In our opinion the coming year will continue to produce many improvements and changes, both in phonographs and records. We are not at the end, by any means, of the possibilities that science may produce to improve the quality and quantity of sound reproduction.”*(270) In 1926, the Starr factories in Richmond consisted of 32 buildings with floor space of 500,000 square feet; 1,500 workers were employed. That year, the Starr Piano Company produced 20,000 pianos, 15,000 phonographs, and 4,000,000 records.(297)

Also in January, Starr licensed and installed the more reliable RCA Photophone electronic recording equipment and resumed electrical recording. The new recording method was a marked improvement over Gennett’s earlier electrical recording efforts.(19). RCA had developed the Photophone for use with motion pictures. The RCA recording equipment was also portable, permitting convenient recording at other locations.(18, 101) The Gennett-Electrobeam records were introduced with record #6001 in February; the new records featured a black label



with gold lettering.

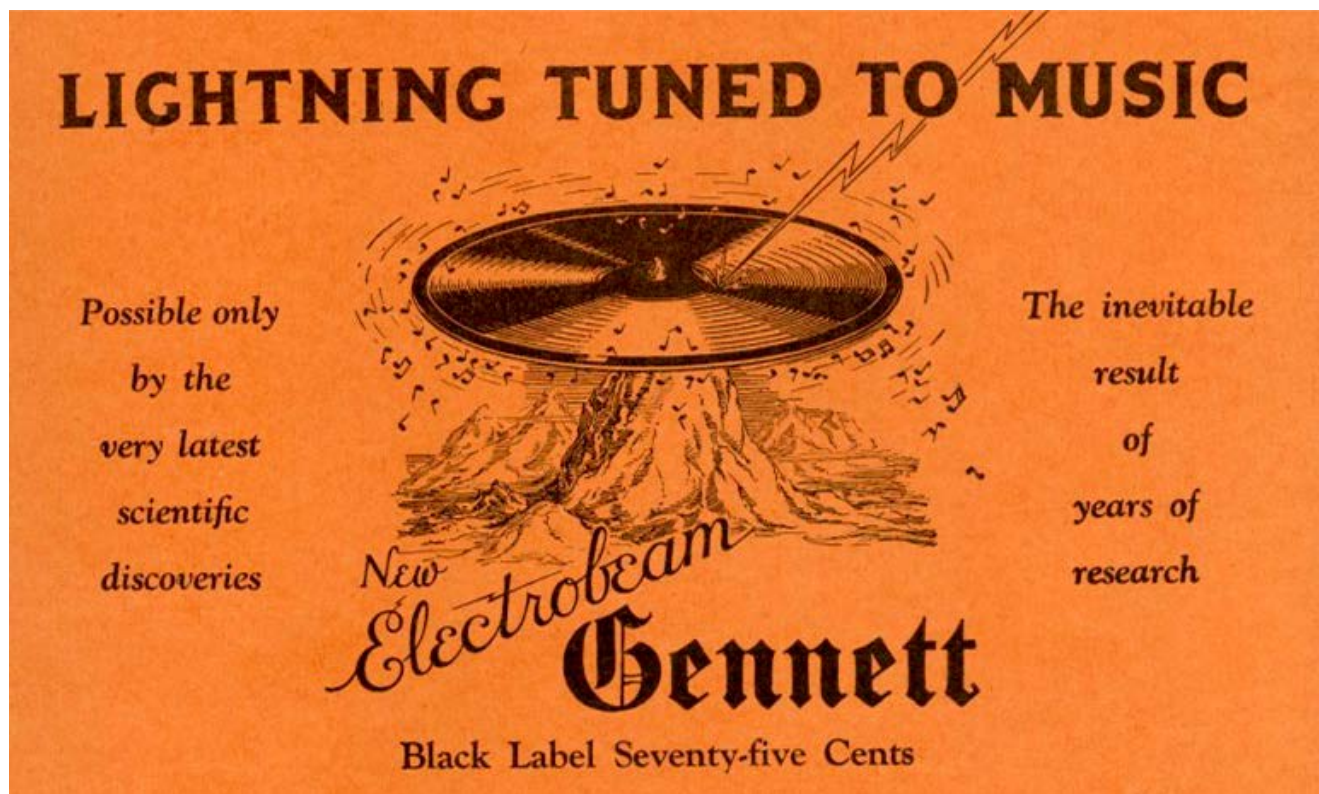
Records sold for 75¢. By 1927, Champion record labels no longer listed master numbers.

Champion Electrograph records were introduced at about the same time as the Gennett-Electrobeam records.(25) Gennett-Electrobeam records were almost the only records to have the term “Race Record” printed on some labels.(123)

Musicians recalled the Richmond recording studio now featured a single

microphone positioned in the center of the room. Constant interruptions from trains on the railroad above the studio on top of the Whitewater gorge continued to be a problem for recording.(113)





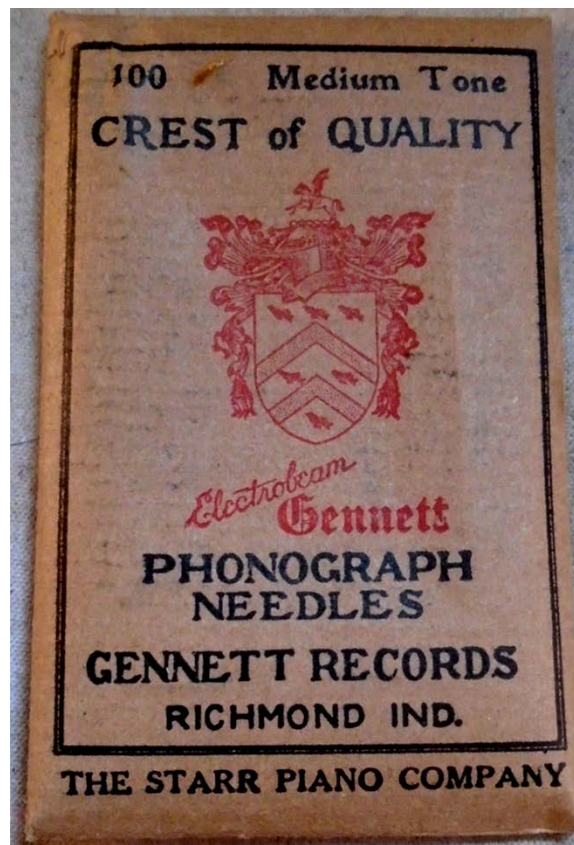
In February, the Starr Company advertised a new portable phonograph to retail for \$20.00; it featured water-proof leatherette covering in a choice of colors—black, blue, green, gray, red, or tan.(319)

In early 1927, Edward Barrett, former executive of the Wisconsin Chair Company's New York Recording Laboratory (Paramount records), joined with Fred Gennett to found the Chicago Record Company and Black Patti records. Barrett and Gennett pooled \$30,000 to fund the new enterprise; it was incorporated on March 11. To support the enterprise, the partners incorporated a music publishing company, the State Street Music Publishing Company. Starting as early as February 22, Gennett recorded and pressed records for the Black Patti label using portable



recording equipment provided by the Richmond studio. A race-record label, Black Patti commissioned exclusive recordings and reportedly paid Gennett thirty dollars per record master. However, the sales of Black Patti records did not prove to be the money-making enterprise that had been anticipated. The last recording session was in August, after only fifty-five releases. Black Patti records mainly sold by mail order; they sold in small numbers

and today are very rare and much desired by collectors.(23, 125, 149)





In May, the new Style XXXII Starr phonograph was introduced; it contained the new Iso-sonic internal horn which was designed and perfected by Dr. Arthur L. Foley. The new instrument was slightly larger than the popular Starr Style XXX; the upright cabinet featured double doors and record storage space. Starr company officials reported that the new instrument created a demand beyond expectations and Starr dealers anticipated a most satisfactory sales volume.(271)

Special Features -- Starr Iso-sonic Style XXXII

SOUND BOX—Of specially alloyed aluminum. Diaphragm of microscopic thickness, finely rolled, treated and tempered. Very sensitive. No screws or loose parts to rattle.

TONE ARM—Base and bracket of specially alloyed cast brass, tubing of drawn brass. Throw back type. Revolves on ball bearing base and pivot point. Entire arm and base air-tight to avoid any leakage of vibration.

MOTOR—Starr designed, double springs, powerful, smooth, noiseless. Runs with absolute precision.

HORN — New type acoustical

horn of aged, straight grained silver grain spruce. Reproduces all tones with exact fidelity to original. The melody brought forth by the Starr is a revelation in tonal achievement.

FINISH AND SIZE—Either high light blended mahogany or walnut of rich and appealing color effects. Height 40½ inches; Width 22¼ inches; Depth 22¼ inches.

OTHER FEATURES — The Starr is replete in refinements and conveniences that provide for the owner's complete satisfaction and only add to it as a musical creation of unsurpassed excellence.



In June, the Starr Company announced a rare exclusive Gennett recording artist, Dolores Valesco, who was a favorite with vaudeville and radio audiences. Miss Valesco was a native of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The records made by Miss Valesco at Gennett's New York recording studio reveal a voice with a warm sympathetic appeal. The Starr Company prepared a lobby display for use in the theaters at which Miss Valesco was appearing. (272)



G. H. Keats, in charge of recording at the New York studio, reported that the new electrically-recorded Gennett records were selling in a most satisfactory fashion. One of the best sellers was the coupling of "*Play Gypsies—Dance Gypsies*" and "*Blue Skies*," sung by Walter Woolf (#6043), assisted by the Hungarian Gypsy Orchestra. Mr. Woolf

and the orchestra were featured in the Broadway production of *Countess Maritza*,



from which the first selection is taken. Starr's New York studio was making efforts to record Broadway show numbers with the artists who appear in the original casts. Another successful combination was the coupling of "Hallelujah" and "Sometimes I'm Happy," sung by the Locust Sisters (#7090), who were appearing in *Hit The Deck*, the popular Broadway musical. Mr. Keats also reported that the new Isosonic Starr models XXX and XXXII were selling well, as were the new Starr portable models, using the new Isosonic principle.(273)

As he did for many other labels, Vernon Dalhart recorded, "*Lindbergh, The Eagle of The USA*" on Gennett records.(320)

In July, with the RCA portable electric recording equipment, a recording expedition from the Starr Company was sent to Birmingham, Alabama, to record local artists, both vocal and instrumental, for the new Gennett-Electrobeam records. Gordon A. Soule supervised the musical arrangements while A. J. Lyons was in charge of technical recording.(274) With the success of the recording expedition to Birmingham, in August, the Starr Company established a complete recording laboratory in Birmingham on the third floor of the Starr Piano Company building at 1820 Third Avenue, where the company planned to record Alabama folks songs. At the expense of \$275,000, the laboratory was fully equipped and included a complete staff of technicians. The first Birmingham organization to record was the Eddie Miles Orchestra of Cascade Plunge. The Black Birds Of Paradise band recorded nine sides for Gennett of which six were released on the Gennett and Black Patti labels. Other notable musical organizations and singers



were planned to be recorded so that music of the South and of its composers would be fittingly represented.(275)

In October, a recording expedition from the Starr Company was sent to St. Paul, Minnesota, to record local talent at the Hotel Lawry. Harry Bernstein, of the Northwestern Phonograph Supply Company, selected all talent and arranged the numbers to be recorded. Among the selections recorded were “*Rain*” and “*Love Me*” by Less Backer (#6162); “*Gypsy*

Love Song” (#6224), “*Love’s Old Sweet Song*” (#6209), and “*Memories*” (#6174) by the Gold Medal Four; “*Old Music Box Melodies*” (#6179) by Gayle Wood; and the “*Colonial March*” (#6213) by the St. Paul Police Band. The recording expedition was very successful; the Gennett-Electrobeam recording apparatus was scheduled to return to St. Paul to secure pipe organ recordings of several of the local organists.(276)

By October, the Starr Piano Company was selling pianos with the special chromatic glissando keyboard which enabled the pianist to make difficult runs--ascending or descending--for a “sliding” effect. The Starr Company claimed the device had been, “...*perfected by Starr.*”(321)

In 1927, Gennett closed the New York recording studio and opened new recording facilities in Long Island, New York. Ezra Wickemeyer left Starr in 1927; from August, 1921, to mid-1927, Wickemeyer had been the recording director in Richmond, waxing thousands of musicians.(76) He was replaced by Gordon A. Soule.(37) Fred Wiggins, Gennett’s operating manager, continued to steer Gennett Records towards recording blues and old-time music and to support Gennett’s many affiliated discount record labels.(127) Between 1925 and 1934,



the Richmond studio recorded large numbers of Appalachian vocal and string band music. (95, 120)

Gennett's talent scout, Clayton Jackson, enlisted a number of the WLS National Barn Dance performers to record for Gennett. This included singers Grace Wilson and Bradley Kincaid, banjo player Chubby Parker, the Maple City Four (vocal quartet), and WLS organist, Ralph Waldo Emerson.(112) Using portable recording equipment, Gennett opened a temporary recording

studio in Chicago on the west side of South Wabash Avenue in the 200 block. However, continued interruption by near-by speeding elevated trains caused Gennett to move to a quieter location at the corner of Wabash and Adams Streets.(125) Radio in the late 1920s did not offer major competition for race records; blues and gospel music were rarely broadcast.(122)

Starting in October, for a few weeks, Gennett recorded and pressed records for the independent Bell label.(22) By 1927, Starr was the main supplier of records for Sears, Roebuck & Company's Silvertone label; Gennett pressings were used for the new electrically-recorded Silvertone Truphonic records.(13) By the late 1920s, competing record labels produced most of America's jazz records. (92)

The Artophone Company in St. Louis, Missouri, was a wholesale dealer of electrical appliances; the company also owned the now-rare Herwin discount record label. During the 1920s, the Artophone Company leased master discs from Gennett and Paramount for pressing the Herwin discs; most Herwin records were sold by mail and mainly to rural customers.(124)



With talent scouts in places around the South, Gennett's portable electronic recording equipment enabled Gennett to record many obscure and strictly local musicians that would otherwise have never recorded.(118) Fred Gennett expanded Gennett's recording of country blues and gospel singers, although Paramount was clearly the leader for recording country blues singers. These singers usually accompanied themselves on the banjo, guitar, or harmonica. This primal and less structured musical style contrasted with the

more "refined" style of the female blues singers of the early 1920s when such singers as Bessie, Clara, and Mamie Smith worked from stock arrangements and were often backed by jazz musicians.(119) Gennett Records had the policy of never paying traveling expenses for musicians.(121)

New artists to record in 1927 on the new Gennett-Electrobeam records included the New Hotel Lowry Ensemble (instrumental music). Popular artists featured Les Backer, The Four Bachelors, Gene Carroll, Charles Forsythe, The Gold Medal Four, Al Grady, Edythe Handman, James Kelly, Bradley Kincaid, Vivian Lawrence (The Ukulele Girl), The Radio Franks, Mose Sigler, Elliot Stewart, Moe Thompson, Delores Valesco, Grace Wilson, Gayle Wood, and Walter Woolf.

Dance and jazz bands to record included Walt Anderson and His Golden Pheasant Hoodlums, the Black Birds of Paradise, The Broadway Strollers (Nathan Glantz and His Orchestra), Frank Bunch and His Fuzzies Wuzzies, Eddie Carlew's Baby Aristocrats, Johnny Clesi's Areolians (with Miff Mole and Red Nichols), Bob Deikman and His Orchestra, Felix Fernando and His Orchestra, George Flores' Clover Gardens Orchestra, Lou Gold and The Melody Men, Ross Gorman and His Fire Eaters, Tom Gates and His Orchestra, Gowan's Rhapsody Makers, Elmer Grosso and His Greenwich Village Orchestra, Haring's Happy Harmonizers, Alex



**Twelve
Year Old
Price
Goodson
of Galax,
Virginia**

Jackson's Plantation Orchestra, Jelly James and His Fewsicians, George Matthews' Carolina Nighthawks, Mendoza's Specialty Orchestra, Eddie Miles and His Club Florentine Orchestra, the Northwest Melody Boys (Walt Anderson's Hoodlums), The New Yorkers, George Osborn and His Orchestra, Harry Pollock's Blue Diamonds, Andy Preer and The Cotton Club Orchestra, Dunk Rendleman and The Alabamians, Lyst Reynolds' Logola Orchestra, Johnny Ringer's Rosemont Orchestra, Bernie Schultz and His Crescent Orchestra, the State Street Ramblers,

Johnny Sylvester and His Playmates, and Milt Teller and His Golden Pumpkin Orchestra.

Blues artists included Katherine Baker, Wiley Barner, Jay Bird Coleman, "Crying" Sam Collins, the Dunham Jazz Singers (of Birmingham, Alabama), Joe Evans, Frankie Jaxon, Bertha Ross, the Triangle Harmony Boys, Whistlin' Pete, and Lizzie Washington. Blues artists William Harris and Joe Robinson recorded several sides, which were issued on the Electrobeam, Champion, and Sears discount labels. Old-time tunes were recorded by Jelly Roll Anderson, Ruben Berns, Billy Bishop (harmonica), Ray Covert, Da Costa Woltz's Southern Broadcasters (with twelve year-old Price Goodson on harmonica and ukulele), Tommy Daudur and His Gang (old time dance with calls), Fiddlin' Dock Roberts, The Grayson Country Blues, Wyzee Hamilton, Sam Harris, John Hammond, F. Jenkins (fiddle & banjo), David Miller, Chubby Parker (banjo), Walter Peterson (harmonica), Holland

Puckett, Alton Ray, The Short Creek Trio, Ernest "Pop" Stoneman, Taylor's Kentucky Boys, and Marion Underwood (banjo).



Sacred music was recorded by J. T. Allison's Sacred Harp Singers (of Moody, Alabama), the Brooklyn Male Choral Club, Ruth Donaldson, the Eva Quartet, Reverend J. M. Gates and His Congregation, Ben Jarrell, Helen Jepsen, the MacDonald Quartet, Arthur McKee and Congregation (Hour of Hope), the Nazarene Congregational Church Choir of Brooklyn, the Woodlawn Quartet and the singing duo, John McGhee and Frank Welling. Hawaiian music was provided by Franchini's South Sea Serenaders, Henry Johnson and His Boys, Sam Ku, Jr., Lei's Royal Hawaiians, and Frank Plada's Serenaders.

Novelty records included The Five Harmaniacs, Henry Lawrence (comedy), Henry Lucas (comedy), Cornelius Maffie (organ), R. Buchanan Morton (organ chimes), George Tremer (novelty piano), and Gayle Wood (old music box melodies). Gennett-Electrobeam record #6220 featured the Richmond Cotillion-Barn Dance with calls by Ben Jarrell and backed by Da Costa Woltz's Southern Broadcasters.

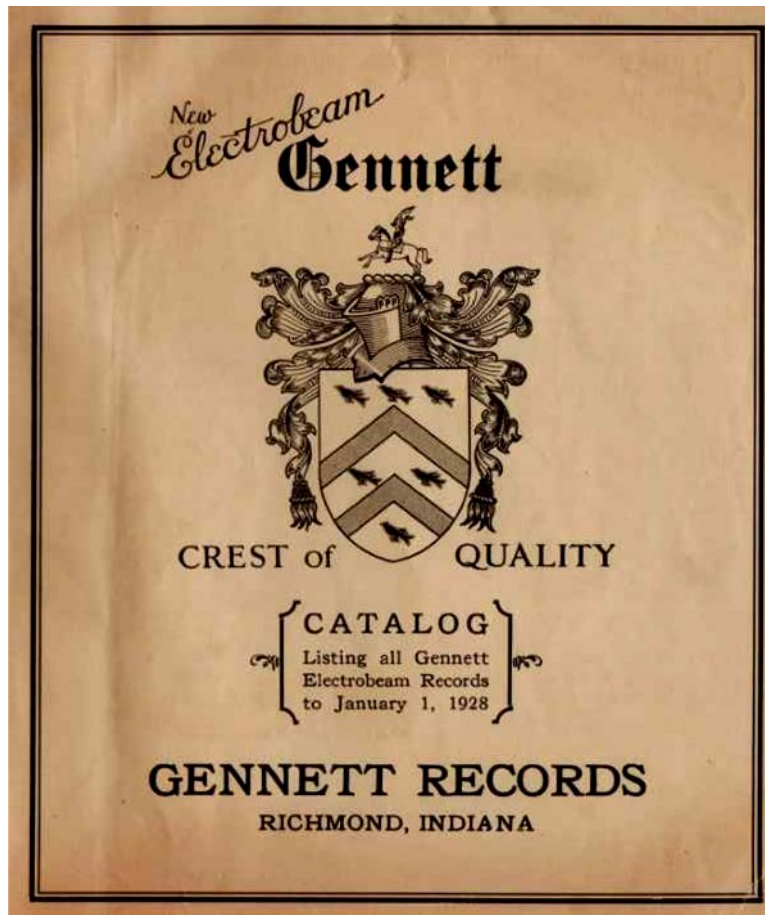
Jack Lane and His Uke appeared on the Champion label.

The Year 1928

The last Starr Piano Company advertisement to appear in the *Talking Machine World* was on the inside cover of the January 15 issue; no additional Starr advertisements appeared in the journal. New Gennett records were listed only in the January, April, and May 1928 *Talking Machine World* issues.

In early 1928, the Starr Company introduced budget records with the Superior

label. All Superior record selections had also appeared on Gennett or Champion records, usually under different identities.(3)



Sears, Roebuck & Company discontinued selling records with the Silvertone label in 1928. Instead, Sears adopted the Supertone and Conqueror labels; Gennett pressed hundreds of records for Sears from 1928 to late 1930. The Challenge label was used by Sears from 1926 to 1929 as their lowest-priced label; many have Gennett as their origin.(6) Many records listed in the Sears mail order catalogs

were targeted for rural customers, who did not have convenient access to department and music stores. Many unreleased takes from Gennett recording sessions were used to press records for Sears, often using slightly lower quality shellac. Sears budget label records were sold for 17¢ to 39¢. By 1928, it is estimated that Gennett had supplied Sears with more than a million records.(96)

NEW ELECTROBEAM (Black Label) GENNETT RECORDS

MARCH 1, 1928 LISTING

POPULAR DANCE

6367 .75
Beautiful (Fox Trot—Vocal Chorus)
She Wears The Pin Of A Xi Psi Phi
(Waltz—Vocal Chorus)
Emil Seidel & His Orchestra

6368 .75
You Can Tell Her Anything Under The Sun
(Fox Trot—Vocal Chorus)
Keep Sweeping The Cobwebs Off The Moon
(Fox Trot—Vocal Chorus)
Hogan Hancock & His Orchestra

6369 .75
Hollywood Shuffle (Fox Trot)
Good Stuff (Fox Trot)
Wallie Coulter & His Band

6370 .75
Ragamuffin Stomp (Stomp)
Willie Jones & His Orchestra
Lovely Little Silhouette (Fox Trot)
Bill Wyder & His Orchestra

OLD TIME SINGIN' & PLAYIN'

6373 .75
I'll Never Be Yours
Shout Lula
Henry Whitter & G. B. Grayson

6374 .75
A Rovin' Little Darkey
Chubby Parker with Banjo Acc.
When The Moon Shines Down Upon The Mountain
Vernon Dalhart with Guitar & Violin Acc.

6376 .75
It Can't Be Done
Adam and Eve
Otto Gray's Oklahoma Cowboy Band
Sung by Owen

POPULAR VOCAL

6371 .75
I Wouldn't Care
The Song Is Ended (But The Melody Lingers On)
Homer Bernhardt

6372 .75
(I Scream—You Scream—We All Scream For)
Ice Cream
Henry's Made A Lady Out Of Lizzie)
Jack Tilson

OLD TIME PLAYIN'

6375 .75
Salty Dog
Camp Nelson Blues
Booker Orchestra

HAWAIIAN

6377 .75
Happy Heinie March (Duet)
Waialae (Duet)
Sam Ku, Jr.
(Of The Irene West Royal Hawaiians)

RACE RECORDS

6378 .75
Down Home Special (Instrumental Blues)
Watson's Pullman Porters
Bearcat Blues (Instrumental Blues)
Geo. Jefferson & Willie Woods

6379 .75
It Won't Be Long (Vocal Blues)
Hesitation Blues (Vocal Blues)
Sam Collins



Conqueror

Records

Proper Playing Speed

All Conqueror Records should be played at a speed of 80 revolutions per minute. If they are played faster than this, the pitch will be higher than the original music. If played slower, the pitch will be lower.

Most people rely upon the sound of the record to guide them as to the proper speed, but is a good idea to make a positive test once in a while to make sure you are getting the best reproduction the record is capable of giving. The best results can be obtained only when the speed is 80 revolutions per minute.

To test the speed, slip a piece of paper under the record, allowing it to project out far enough so it can lightly brush your hand as the turntable revolves. Now with watch in one hand and the other hand placed where the paper can touch it each time it comes around, count the revolutions. The paper touching your hand at each revolution makes it easy to count.

If you find the speed greater or less than 80 revolutions per minute, turn the regulator and try it again. When the regulator is accurately adjusted to speed of 80 revolutions per minute, let it stay there. Do not change the speed for different records. They all require the same speed.



Sears, Roebuck and Co.
The World's Largest Store



Needles

Loudness and tone quality may be varied and controlled to a large extent by the kind of needle and the way in which it is used. The greatest volume is obtained with a short, thick steel needle. Longer or more slender needles give a softer reproduction. Any needle, when pushed as far as it will go into the needle holder, will give a louder reproduction than it will if not pushed in so far.

We furnish the Silvertone Steel Needles in five grades, Soft Tone, Medium Tone, Loud Tone, Extra Loud and Giant Tone. For most records when played in the home, we consider the Medium Tone needles the most satisfactory. For dancing, outdoor use and for certain records, band pieces for example, we advise the Loud or Extra Loud Tone needles. For Violin selections or other soft, sweet music, the Soft Tone needles are very desirable. Giant Tone needles are used when exceedingly loud reproduction is desired. Keep some of each grade on hand.

Special needles of various kinds will be found described in our catalog and it is well to have a variety on hand from which to select. Then your needle can be carefully chosen to suit the selection to be played or your own personal taste.

Diamond, sapphire or other jewel point needles should never be used with Conqueror records. They do not give good reproduction and they damage the record.



The Starr Company published a glossy twenty-page brochure, *New Electrobeam Gennett Records of Old Time Tunes*. It featured photographs and descriptions of a number of singers and instrumentalists.

Many of the last fifty records with the Bell label were pressed by Gennett in 1928.⁽⁶⁾ Also in 1928, the Q-R-S Company of Chicago again arranged to have Gennett record and press records for the

Q-R-S label. Recordings were made at Gennett's new Long Island recording studio; most Q-R-S recordings were original material.⁽³¹⁾

By 1928, Sutton Ltd. in Sydney, Australia, was using Gennett masters to press records under a special "Australia Gennett" label.⁽⁹⁹⁾

Gennett record dealers in Indianapolis experienced a decided increase in record sales, due to the recent appearance of Les Backer, Gennett recording artist and radio favorite, at B. F. Keith's theater in Indianapolis. Les Backer sang a variety of popular songs, playing his own accompaniment on the guitar. Radio station WFMB received hundreds of letters from all over Indiana requesting favorite numbers by Les Backer. The Starr Company received many requests for Backer to autograph records.⁽²⁷⁷⁾ On many of his records, Backer was listed as "The Gennett Aristocrat."

In February, the Starr Company advertised three Iso-sonic phonograph models available for \$95, \$125, and \$150.⁽³²²⁾



In a Class by Itself

The Starr Isosonic is the very best and finest low and medium priced phonograph you can buy—to see it and hear it will readily convince you. It brings new pleasure from both old and new music.

And Now on New Low Terms

for a short time we will make deliveries on this wonderful phonograph on terms that enable all to enjoy it. Come in and hear it—you'll want one delivered. Terms.

\$5.00 Cash; \$5.00 Per Month

10 RECORDS FREE WITH EACH CONTRACT

In March, the Style XXXIV Starr electric phonograph was introduced. No illustrations or descriptions of this model have been found.(323) Also in March, the Starr Company advertised a “*Feast of Bargains*” in Richmond newspapers. Used pianos were priced as low as \$49.50 and used player pianos at \$198.00. New “cut out” Gennett records were listed at fifteen cents.(324)

On June 20, the Starr Company placed a large advertisement in the *Palladium-Item* newspaper: “*FREE CHILDREN and ADULTS—One Full Term—10 Private Lessons—Music Lessons. This is not a selling scheme. No strings attached. We have arranged with a number of Richmond’s most popular studio teachers and we will accept as many pupils as these fine teachers can accommodate. The only cost is one dollar enrollment fee. Lessons are offered for piano, violin, brass instruments, orchestral instruments, banjo, and guitar. Lessons provided at the Starr Piano building at Tenth and Main Streets (in Richmond).*”(298)

Lawrence Welk and His Orchestra had a recording session at the Richmond studio on November 16. Welk included a little jazz rhythm when he recorded, “*Spiked Beer*” and “*Shanghai Honeymoon*” (Gennett #6712))(132) and on the Champion

label (as George Tucker and His Novelty Band) (#15639). On November 17, the band recorded “Doin’ The New Low Down” (Gennett #6697; Champion #15638).

Also in November, Fred Gennett disclosed that the Starr Piano Company had contracted with the Hannaphone Company of Philadelphia to produce sound recordings for synchronization with moving pictures. The Hannaphone Company controlled a large number of theaters.(325)

An article in the December 23 issue of the *Richmond Item* announced the Starr Piano Company’s new Starr Talk-Phone which included a six-foot horn with a diameter of approximately three feet at the open end. For use in theaters and public places, the Talk-Phone was capable of increasing the volume of radio or phonograph music. The Talk-Phone was not illustrated or further described. (326)

By the late 1920s, Gennett was recording and pressing records for more than twenty-five different record labels worldwide; most were budget label records. Gennett’s ability to supply large quantities of low-priced records helped to influence music styles. Budget records were especially appealing to rural customers; Gennett often recorded traditional rural music which had been

neglected by most of the record industry.(95)



New artists to record for Gennett in 1928 included popular vocals by Homer Bernhardt, J. Lynn Griffith, “Buddy” Kelly, The Monitor Boys of Crosley Radio WLW, The Radcliffe Brothers, The Recorders, Jack Tilson, and Edgar Welch. Dance bands included The Cotton Pickers, Wallie Coulter and His Band, Ruby Green’s Manhattan Mad Caps, Elmer Grosso and His Mount Royal Orchestra,

Hogan Hancock and His Orchestra, Gordon Howard and The Multnomah Chieftans, Willie Jones and His Orchestra, The Newton Pippins, The New Yorkers, the Rainbow Garden Revelers, the Red Castle Dance Orchestra, Emil Seidel and His Orchestra, the State Street Ramblers, the Tin Pan Paraders, Van and The Half Moon Hotel Orchestra (Peter van Steeden) and Bill Wyder and His Orchestra. At the Richmond studio on October 31, Hoagy Carmichael and His Pals recorded "Stardust" as a stomp (#6311).

Blues were recorded by Louise Anderson, Sam Collins, George Jefferson (with Willie Woods), King Grady's Clarinet Band, Albert Jones, Duke Owens (piano), Watson's Pullman Porters, and Bud Wilson (guitar). Old-time melodies were provided by Thomas G. Ashley, The Booker Orchestra, Ted Chestnut, Otto Gray's Oklahoma Cowboy Band, John McGhee, Paul Miles and the Red Fox Chasers, Billy Milton and His One Man Band (harmonica and guitar), Byrd Moore (banjo and guitar), Chubby Parker (with banjo), Harley Stratton, and Henry Whittier with G. B. Grayson. Hawaiian music was provided by Irene West's Royal Hawaiians and The Ookola Serenaders; sacred tunes were recorded by Pohlman Hathaway and the Gennett Sacred Quartet. Novelty items were recorded by Lou Calabrese and His Hot Sketches and by William Reinhart and Al Goodheart at the Starr Glissando Grand.



Starr Portable With Isosonic Sound Box

RADIO BY
ATWATER KENT
CABINET
BY
Starr

is the combination soon available to distributors thus unqualifiedly answering the public's demand for radio of unfailing performance and beauty in appearance.

Radio cabinets designed and developed by Starr have enjoyed an unprecedented sweep of popularity because they embody the craftsmanship of one of America's outstanding fine cabinet builders.

We confidently believe this combination will, in view of the increasing demand for more style, greater beauty and complete efficiency in radio equipment, meet every requirement of the trade.

By 1929, the Starr Piano Company was making cabinets for Atwater Kent radios: *"Cabinets With Personality"*
Atwater Kent Manufacturing Company, 41723 Wissahickon Avenue,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.(501)

The Year 1929

Starting in January, the name of the *Talking Machine World* was changed to the *Talking Machine World and Radio-Music Merchant*. Throughout the 1920s, developments in radio technology and advertisements by many radio companies appeared in the journal. Radio technology advancements from early radio-telephony to the screen-grid vacuum tubes and electro-dynamic speakers were reported and advertised. Despite the success and popularity of the Starr Piano Company's products, the sales of phonographs, records, and even radios were down by 1929; there were too many radio brands on the market.

No advertisements for the Starr Piano Company appeared in the 1929 issues of the *Talking Machine World and Radio-Music Merchant*; no listing of new Gennett records appeared in the journal. Sales of the Gennett-Electrobeam records never matched the sales of Gennett's earlier acoustically recorded records; the Electrobeam records had more limited distribution and never became a major label in the market.(102)

February 26 was special "Dollar Day" sales day for Richmond merchants; the Starr Company offered, "*We will allow \$50.00 on any old piano as a trade in allowance on the first new Starr Electric Phonograph. Also, Champion records 5 for \$1.00.*" (327) The Starr Company added the Zerozone brand of electric refrigerators to the list of products handled by the company. Easy terms were offered for the \$190.00 refrigerators, which were manufactured by a Chicago Company.

From March through October, a new recording studio was being built for the New York Recording Laboratory in Grafton, Wisconsin. During this time, Gennett leased the Richmond studio to the New York Recording Laboratory for recording Paramount label records at forty dollars a side. Gennett's recording engineer, Harold Soule, supervised the recordings with one of the New York Recording Laboratory's recording directors observing. Starting on June 6, Paramount recorded 186 sides in the Richmond studio; some of the resulting record masters were also used to press records on the Gennett and Champion labels.(28)

REG. U.S. PAT. OFFICE

PARAMOUNT Records



Paramount Records

are recorded by an exclusive process which insures faithful reproduction. Every Paramount Record is guaranteed — and is notable for its tone, melody, rhythm, volume and long wear.

The New York Recording
Laboratories, Inc.
Port Washington, Wis.
U. S. A.



Among the more notable Paramount musicians to record at the Richmond studio were singer Edith Johnson (accompanied by pianist Roosevelt Sykes), blues singer Blind Lemon Jefferson, and guitarist Charley Patton. Mr. Jefferson's Richmond recording session proved to be the last of his career; he died on December 19 shortly after the stock market crash in October. Tenant farmer, Charley Patton, took his guitar for the long train ride from Jackson, Mississippi, to Richmond for a recording session on June 14, arranged at the Gennett studio for Paramount Records. In a style all his own, Patton sang and played guitar on fourteen of his blues and gospel

songs. Patton's recording sessions at the Richmond studio are considered by many as some of the most significant sessions in blues history.(126, 128, 150)

In April, the Starr Piano Company entered the world of talking pictures by installing the new Gennett Synchronizing Equipment into Richmond's Albert Hudson Theater: *"For some time past the work of installing a Starr sound reproduction device has been in progress and tests made of it the past few days have satisfied the exacting experts in charge of the work with naturalness of the sound reproduction and the perfect synchronization of the sound with the action of the picture."*(328) The complex device included a motorized record turntable and an "arm" which extended to the film projection machine. Installation of the equipment required several changes in the theater, including a new screen. The first talking picture to be listed was *Syncopation*, which featured Morton Downey and Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians. This was followed by a number of recently-released sound pictures, including the popular Hollywood movie, *Coquette*, with Mary Pickford. For some time, the Starr Company had also been making records of incidental music to be used with silent films.

The *Richmond-Item* newspaper of April 5 claimed (page 12): *"The Starr Piano Company's talking reproduction equipment has created a sensation among theater owners around the country."* The Starr Company expected a great

I'll Always Be In Love With You

WORDS & MUSIC BY
HERMAN RUBY
— AND —
GREEN AND STEPT



SENSATIONAL THEME SONG OF
SYNCOPTION

R.K.O. ALL TALKING MOTION PICTURE
EXTRAVAGANZA

— STARRING —
WARING'S PENNSYLVANIANS
MORTON DOWNEY — BARBARA BENNETT
BOBBY WATSON & DOROTHY LEE



SUNG ON THE SCREEN BY
MORTON DOWNEY



PLAYED IN "SYNCOPTION" BY
WARING'S PENNSYLVANIANS

Published by

GREEN & STEPT INC.

MADE
IN
U.S.A.

demand for the sound synchronization machine and it was expected to be one of the most important products produced in the Richmond factories in the near future.⁽³²⁹⁾ Starr placed a large advertisement for the Gennett Synchronizing Equipment in the April 14 *Richmond Item* (page 17). The device is illustrated on page 110 of *Gennett Records and Starr Piano* by Charlie B. Dahan and Linda Gennett Irmischer. However, the use of a strip of sound on films in the 1930s made the sound synchronization machine obsolete.

Starting in April, the Starr Company advertised “*Special Bargains*” weekly in issues of *Richmond Item*—special sales of new and used pianos and the new Iso sonic phonograph models at half price. By May, some Starr dealers were offering “*Rock Bottom Prices*” for the (obsolete) Starr Style I phonograph—this \$150 model was available for only \$24.00.⁽³⁴⁰⁾

The Starr Company first advertised their Starr-Freeze Refrigerators in the August 25 *Richmond Item* (page 3); the refrigerators were manufactured in Starr’s Richmond factories.

The Starr Piano Company store in Nashville, Tennessee, advertised on page 8 of the September 12 issue of *The Tennessean*: “*Phonographs—All Makes—All Models—All Styles—All Must Go. 20 machines for \$19.00 each; 17 machines for \$32.00 each; 14 machines for \$49.00 each—Before going out of business.*” Similarly, the Starr Piano Company outlet in Mansfield, Ohio, advertised in the November 27 *News Journal*: “*We Are Selling Out. The \$135 Starr phonograph model—now \$35.00 plus 15 records free. The \$169 model—now \$55.00 plus 30 records free. The \$175 model—now \$40.00. Records 10¢ each.*”

RELEASE OF MAY 15, 1929

POPULAR DANCE

6815 .75
 BUTTON UP YOUR OVERCOAT (From "Follow
 Thru") (Fox Trot—Vocal Chorus)
 LOVER COME BACK TO ME (From "New
 Moon") (Fox Trot—Vocal Chorus)
The University Orch.—Sam Lanin, Director

6816 .75
 KANSAS CITY KITTY (Fox Trot)
Ezra Buzzington's Rustic Revelers
 DEEP NIGHT (Fox Trot—Vocal Chorus)
Carl Fenton and His Orch.

6817 .75
 MY ANGELINE (Waltz—Vocal Chorus)
Carl Fenton and His Orch.
 MARIE (From "The Awakening") (Waltz—
 Vocal Chorus)
Willie Creager and His Orch.

6818 .75
 DANCE OF THE PAPER DOLLS (Fox Trot—
 Vocal Chorus) *The New Yorkers*
 ILL TELL THE WORLD (YOU'RE ALL THE
 WORLD TO ME (Fox Trot—Vocal Chorus)
Ernie Golden and His Orch.

POPULAR VOCAL

6819 .75
 I'M MARCHING HOME TO YOU (STEP BY
 STEP—MILE BY MILE)
 MY CASTLE IN SPAIN IS A SHACK IN THE
 LANE *Howard Hafford*

6820 .75
 WHO CARES WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN
 IF I HAD YOU *Jack Bain*

6821 .75
 I ONLY HOPE THAT YOU ARE NOT FOOL-
 ING ME (Vocal Blues)
 LINGER A LITTLE LONGER (AND LOVE
 LITTLE WHILE) (Vocal Blues)
Catherine Boswell—"The Sunshine Girl"

SACRED HARP SONGS

6827 .75
 NEW HOSANNA
 OLNEY *Dye's Sacred Harp Singers*

STANDARD INSTRUMENTAL

6822 .75
 SONG OF LOVE (From "Blossom Time")
 "NAILA" INTERMEZZO
Gennett Symphony Orchestra
Reuben Lawson, Conductor

OLD TIME SINGIN'

6823 .75
 THE WRECK ON THE C & O ROAD
 PEARL BRYAN
Bradley Kincaid with Guitar Acc.

6824 .75
 BRACE UP AND BE A MAN, SHE SAID
 I FELL IN LOVE WITH A MARRIED MAN
Norman Woodlieff,
Acc. by Guitar and Fiddle

6825 .75
 THE CAT'S GOT THE MEASLES AND THE
 DOG'S GOT THE WHOOPIN' COUGH
 OLD JOHNNY BUCKER WOULDN'T DO
Walter Smith,
Acc. by Guitar and Fiddle

OLD TIME BARN DANCE WITH CALLS

6826 .75
 THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME
 WHO'S BEEN HERE SINCE I'VE BEEN GONE
Doc Roberts & Asa Martin

RACE RECORDS

6828 .75
 IT'S TIGHT LIKE THAT (Vocal Blues)
 LIGHT HOUSE BLUES (Vocal Blues)
Southern Blues Singers—Trio

6829 .75
 GIVIN' IT AWAY (Vocal Blues)
Charlie Davenport
 SHADOW BLUES (Vocal Blues) *Ivy Smith*

6830 .75
 TEXAS WILD CAT CHASE (Imitations)
 SUNRISE ON THE FARM (Imitations)
Freeman Stowers,
"The Cotton Belt Porter"

The Sixth Annual Radio World's Fair was held at Madison square Garden in New York City, September 23 to 28. The list of exhibitors included the Starr Piano Company (Booth #W1).(279) The Starr Company did not advertise the development of all-electric phonograph models to play shellac 78 rpm records; this would have involved the use of electronic components, including vacuum tubes, magnetic head pickups, and electronic speakers.

Jazz was still very popular in the late 1920s; Gennett's Richmond studio was open to lesser-known Midwestern jazz musicians and traveling bands. One group, the State Street Ramblers, included pianist Jimmy Blythe, cornetist Natty Dominique, clarinetist Johnny Dodds, and drummer Warren "Baby" Dodds.(131) Joseph "Wingy" Manone twice recorded in Richmond before the Electrobeam label was discontinued in 1930.(132) By the late 1920s, many jazz bands had developed into full dance orchestras, inspired by the success of Paul Whiteman's large band. A number of Midwest orchestras recorded for Gennett, including Zach Whyte and His Chocolate Beau Brummels and the Alphonso Trent Orchestra. Wilmer Watts and his band, the Lonely Eagles, recorded several sides in Gennett's new Long Island studio. Other bands to record were Ezra Buzzington's Rustic Revelers, Bud Carson and His Collegians, the Champion Dance Kings, Willie Creager and His Orchestra, Carl Fenton and His Orchestra, Ernie Golden and His Orchestra, "Bob" McGowan and His Gennett Recording Orchestra, and The University Orchestra. (133)

Popular tunes were recorded by Jack Bain, Frederick Beckner, Catherine Boswell (The Sunshine Girl), Charles Hart, Howard Hofford, Robert Kirby, and Norman Terrell. Old time music was recorded by Arthur "Blind" Blake, Charlie Davenport, Leonard Rutherford (fiddle), Ivy Smith, Walter Smith, the Southern Blues Singers, Freeman Stowers (the Cotton Belt Porter), and singers John D. Foster and Carl Turner.(110) Sacred music was recorded by Dye's Sacred Harp Singers. Doc Roberts and Asa Martin recorded old time barn dance tunes with calls. Luther W. Ossenbrink, the "Arkansas Woodchopper, was a popular WLS National Barn Dance guitarist and singer; he recorded some twenty sides for the Gennett and Champion labels in 1929 and 1930.(52) Blues pianist, Charles "Cow Cow" Davenport, had several recording sessions at the Richmond studio in 1929 and 1930.(53)

The *Montgomery Advertiser* newspaper in Alabama contained an announcement in the December 27, 1929 issue, *"Faced with the necessity of reducing expenses or increasing prices, the Starr Piano Company will close the Dexter Avenue store January 1 along with several other stores throughout the country, and concentrate their stock at centrally located points. The Montgomery stock will be sent to the Birmingham store."*(293)

The Year 1930

With the advent of the Great Depression, several recording companies were soon bankrupt. In the United States in 1929, record sales were \$75 million; in 1930, \$18 million and in 1931, \$5.5 million. Gennett and many small record labels went out of business in the early 1930s. Gennett's glory days lasted only two decades. The Starr factory continued to manufacture pianos and press records for other concerns, but actual recording slowed to a trickle. The Starr Company discontinued manufacturing Starr phonographs. As the Depression deepened, the public developed an anti-phonograph sentiment as phonographs and records represented prosperous times and free spending.

The January 29 issue of the *Dayton Herald* (Ohio) contained an advertisement from the local Starr Piano Company store at 116 North Main Street in Dayton: *"PHONOGRAPHS GIVEN AWAY –Free upon the initial purchase of two records weekly for a limited time. Phonographs delivered for free."*(237)

Despite economic difficulties, in February, the Starr Piano Company proposed erecting a small radio broadcasting station to cover the local Richmond area.(299)

Starting in June, 1930, country singer Gene Autry recorded many ballads, yodeling songs, blues, and cowboy songs for Gennett. His first records were issued on the Electrobeam label; when this label was discontinued, Autry's songs were released on the Champion label. Ultimately, nearly fifty Autry sides were issued. An enduring artist, many of his records were reissued in the 1930s by Decca Records.(114) Old-time or country music accounted for as much as a quarter of all popular record sales by 1930.(33)



Harry Gennett, Jr. was a somewhat eccentric member of the Gennett family. With recording activity in the Richmond studio dwindling in the early 1930s, he found a way to keep recording and pressing records by producing sound effects records, which were mostly sold by mail to radio stations for use during live drama programs and for commercials. Sound records were also sold to schools

and film companies. Using the Gennett portable recording truck (a 1929 Studebaker containing over a ton of equipment), for several years Harry Jr. and Robert T. Conner roamed the United States recording hundreds of different sounds, including airplanes, bells, birds, cars, fog horns, frogs, guns, hogs, insects, sirens, steam boats, traffic jams, trains, waterfalls, etc. Despite the hard economic times, Harry Jr. and his crew





had a wonderful time traveling and recording "sounds."

Sound effects records were released on the Gennett, Speedy Q, and Syncro Sound Effects labels. Possibly the most popular sound effects record was #1008-B, *"Automobile Continually Running."* Most of the sound effects were authentic with original sources. Sound effects records were still being produced and sold into the 1940s.(139)

Starting in early 1930, a few Starr piano outlets advertised they would loan pianos to private homes without rental charge to help with storage space limitations.



(292) Other dealers reduced rental charges for new and used pianos. The Starr Piano Company store in Decatur, Illinois, advertised, *"\$3.00 down and \$1.00 per week is all you need to pay on a brand new Grand Piano."* Unusual terms were offered, *"Your piano or phonograph accepted in trade at a liberal allowance."*(288) By June, the Starr Company was offering customers to just,

"Pay balance due" for a used piano.(300)

The Gennett-Electrobeam 6000 record series reached #7324 in December, 1930. The Gennett label was discontinued in favor of the lower-priced Champion and Superior labels.(19) Annual sales of records in the United States dropped from one hundred four million copies in 1927 to barely six million copies in 1932.(134) In 1932, Starr discontinued the short-lived Superior budget label but continued to record and press records on the Champion label until December, 1934.(135)

With the Depression of the 1930s, Gennett records and a special era in music



recording came to an end. For a time, a number of old-time musicians continued to record for Gennett and its affiliated labels. Vocalist Carson Robison recorded over thirty selections for Gennett as a soloist, with Vernon Dalhart, or with Frank Luther. Robison even recorded the novelty tune, *"Did You Ever See A Goldfish Sing?"* (#7124). (156) The Richmond studio managed to record tunes by pianist Roosevelt Sykes, guitarist Scrapper Blackwell, guitarist Big Bill Johnson (Bill Broonzy), and Ted Gossett's String Band before recording ceased in 1934. Shortly before the Champion label was discontinued,

the Richmond studio recorded Tennessee singer and banjoist, Uncle Dave Macon; six sides by Macon were released.(116) Cliff Perrine and His Orchestra recorded for Gennett in 1930. In the early years of the Depression, pressings and record releases were amazingly small.(129) Many Gennett-Electrobeam releases never sold more than a few hundred copies; most Champion releases sold only a few thousand copies. Many of Gennett's recordings for Sears' discount labels had the widest distribution.

Champion records were distributed mainly in the South.(115) The last commercially issued Champion record was recorded on October 25, 1934.(20) Phonograph records were considered luxury items which most Americans could no longer afford. The Gennett recording studio in Long Island was closed; most records being recorded and pressed by the Richmond studio were the sound effects records.(135) Hundreds of musicians who had recorded in the 1920s never again entered a recording studio.

In 1931, Starr purchased the Kulair Refrigeration Company and began to manufacture both Starr Freeze refrigerators and freezers.(302) In the 1930s, Fred Wiggins joined Fred Gennett in a new enterprise, Gennett & Sons, which for a time sold electric refrigerator equipment, then stainless steel products at a store at First and Main Streets in Richmond.

On April 28, 1931, the Starr Piano Company of Richmond, Indiana, applied to the Federal Radio Commission for a construction permit for a new broadcasting station of 1,500 kilocycles and 100 Watts and to share air time with radio station WKBV.(285) Russ Henegan and His Recording Orchestra and Jack Wallkup and His Melody Boys managed to record in the Richmond studio.

By September, 1931, the Starr Company was offering factory and retail clearance sales for new and used radios, pianos, piano rolls, records and cabinets, *"We are clearing our factory and sales floors to make room for expansions in our electrical refrigeration department. Costs mean nothing; sell is the word."* The Starr Company offered:(330)

*4,000 records--Gennett & Champion—Recent Recordings—While
They last--10¢ each—No limit
Portable phonographs—While they last--\$4.95 each
Record albums (Leatherette finish)—10-inch for 5¢--12-inch for 10¢
Final Clearance of phonographs--\$5.00 to \$50.00*

Finis

In 1932, Starr introduced the Iceray model refrigerator; priced under \$100, it retailed for \$97.50.(331) Also in 1932, in Canada, the Compo Company's connections with the American Record Corporation allowed Compo to press Brunswick and Melotone records. In 1936, Compo made arrangements to press Decca records.(2)

In November, 1933, the Starr Company was awarded a U.S. Government contract for \$30,000 worth of refrigeration equipment to be used on U.S. Navy ships.(332)

In 1934, the Starr Piano Company declared bankruptcy. The factory continued operation as a diversified manufacturer producing pianos, refrigerators, wood cabinets, and other products; the company was restructured and renamed the Starr Company.(37, 140)

American Decca Records, Inc., started in 1934. Headed by entrepreneur, Jack Kapp, Decca's plan was to offer the public high quality records at thirty-five cents each, or three for a dollar. For bargain prices, Mr. Kapp purchased the rights to thousands of old record masters from several failed record companies. On June 28, 1935, Harry Gennett sold the Champion trademark and rights to many Gennett and Champion record masters to Decca Records. Decca leased the Richmond record pressing plant and office space from Starr.(37) Decca reintroduced the Champion label in August, 1935, using both Gennett material and new recordings in popular, country, and race series. Decca reissued hundreds of records derived from old record masters from Gennett and other defunct companies. Mr. Kapp even arranged to have some Gennett masters reissued on the budget labels sponsored by the Compo Company in Canada. In 1936, Decca pressed numerous records from the Electrobeam and Champion masters for Montgomery Ward & Company's discount catalog. Decca discontinued pressing records on the Champion label in April, 1936.(25, 137)

In early 1935, the Gennett Recording Laboratories were formed by Harry Gennett. The Recording Laboratories provided custom recording and contract pressing



facilities. Gennett electrical transcriptions, sound effects, background music, and other private and special recordings were produced.(28) The last reported recording session was on November 9, 1940.(34)

Many thousands of Gennett record masters were destroyed in the mid-1930s. With hard economic times at Starr and the need to earn cash, Fred Wiggins had thousands of the copper metal record masters pulled from a storage building, loaded into railroad cars, and hauled away to be sold for scrap.(138)



During World War II, the old Starr factory produced bomb sights and again airplane propellers. The last Starr piano was made when operations terminated in 1949.(37, 157)

Joe Davis, publisher and talent scout in the 1920s, was known as “The Melody Man” and a radio and recording artist in the 1940s. He placed an advertisement in the September 24, 1944 edition of the

entertainment industry's newspaper, *The Billboard*. Davis announced the re-launching of Gennett Records; he had licensed the brand from Harry Gennett. New recordings were made and the records were pressed in Richmond; a new record label was designed. The new Gennett label records only lasted a little over a year.(54)

In early 1952, the Starr Company was sold to the J. Solotken Company of Indianapolis, Indiana; this company specialized in scrap metal and paper salvage. At the time, the Starr Company still owned 450,000 square feet of factory space in Starr Valley; 165,000 square feet had been leased to Decca Records. A year later the Solotken Company auctioned the Starr factory assets, including machinery, lumber, office equipment, furniture, etc.(142)

On November 4, 1952, Harry Gennett Sr. died after a brief illness; Clarence Gennett died on January 15, 1953, due to a heart attack.(303, 304)

In late 1952, the Solotken Company gave Harry Gennett, Jr. the recording ledgers for Gennett records from the 1920s and 1930s for both the Richmond and New York recording studios. They also gave him stacks of metal record masters and stampers which had been stored in one of the old buildings and had escaped the scrap metal sales. Harry Gennett Jr. stored the metal plates in his basement along with plates from the sound effects records. As Harry Gennett Jr. and his family were planning to move to California, he placed the entire collection for auction. In 1953, Bill Grauer of Riverside Records in New York, bid on the large collection; his winning bid was around two thousand dollars. It took twenty-four crates of metal plates, four containers of filing cards, and two cartons of original Gennett records to ship the collection to New York. Two weeks after the auction, when it was too late, a United States Navy officer offered Harry Gennett, Jr. ten thousand dollars for the collection. Bill Grauer sold the metal plates for scrap, although Riverside Records did reissue many of the classic jazz Gennett records, but they were copied from Gennett records, not pressed from original metal masters.(143) Eventually, Bill Grauer gifted the New York and Richmond recording ledgers to the Institute for Jazz Studies at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey; the ledgers are kept with the Gennett collection.

Over the years, after the closing of the Starr factory, several buildings in the Starr Valley complex were leased to other companies. The six-story record pressing



plant continued in operation, first under Decca Records, then in 1958, Decca Records was sold to National Record Pressings. In 1961, National Record Pressings was

sold to the United States Consolidated Electronics Industries Corporation, which formed the Mercury Record Manufacturing Company. Mercury Record and several smaller companies continued to use the old Gennett record pressing plant; Mercury used the facility until 1969. Many of the old factory buildings were abandoned and gradually deteriorated. The old recording studio was boarded and eventually collapsed; it was cleared away. Then, in 1976, Frank Robinson, a local real estate investor, purchased the Starr Valley property for \$84,000. He had the old buildings gradually demolished.(146)

Despite the value and historic importance of many Gennett records, the Gennett records division was strictly a sideline for the Starr Piano Company and valued mainly for its commercial viability.(141) The Gennett family did not consider their Starr and Gennett records to be as important or as significant as later scholars, collectors, and record researchers believed them to be.(144) Even the citizens of Richmond did not know that the music recorded by Gennett was valued or important.(145) Former employees of the old recording studio recalled that many of what were to become great artists in the future did not look and sound particularly impressive at the time. Despite the somewhat hollow fidelity of many Gennett records, original Gennett, Champion, Electrobeam and the Sears discount label records by obscure jazz, blues, and old-time artists are much sought-after by collectors and some original 78's can command a small fortune.

The music preserved on Gennett records has long outlasted the Starr Company. Already, by the 1930s, jazz fans were collecting the acoustically recorded Gennett jazz records.(156) The King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton Gennett records often head the list of required listening for courses in early jazz. Music fans still make pilgrimages to Richmond and the Starr Valley. With modern technology, original Gennett 78's can be digitally re-mastered, thus removing much of the scratch noises and improving fidelity. The Starr Gennett Foundation has for sale several CDs of Gennett artists from different musical genres. Many hundreds of jazz, blues, and old-time Gennett recordings have been transferred to different CD labels and more recently have been available as downloads from the Internet. (117)





Gennett family mansion at 19th and East Main Streets in Richmond, Indiana. Built by Henry Gennett in 1898. The white pillared house was constructed with yellow bricks. Many social functions and musical programs were held in the mansion.

In the 1980's, the citizens of Richmond decided to reclaim their Starr-Gennett musical heritage. Citizens Albert Gentry and Steve Kroger formed the Starr Gennett Preservation Fund. In 1985, the Preservation Fund sponsored the Richmond Jazz Festival. In 1997, the Preservation Fund became the Starr-Gennett Foundation; it was organized by volunteers. The Foundation lobbied the City of Richmond to purchase the old Starr Valley property. Over the years, with grants and fundraising events and the help of the Richmond Department of Parks and Recreation, the Starr-Gennett Foundation transformed the site of the Starr piano factory into a public park. In 2007, a concrete walkway, called the Gennett Walk-of-Fame, was installed at the site along South First Street. Along the walk, over



Parking Lot For The Gennett Walk-of-Fame -- Richmond, Indiana

thirty large ceramic and bronze medallions resembling 78 rpm records include images of many of the early Gennett recording artists; accompanying bronze plaques summarize their musical achievements. A marker identifies the location of the original Gennett recording studio. Even the Gennett family mansion on Main Street was renovated.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ Each year, the weekend after Labor Day, new inductees are honored at the annual Walk-of-Fame Musical Festival.

On August 10, 1998, an auction was held for the Gennett family estate in Richmond. The auction was mostly attended by local Richmond residents. A Starr phonograph went for \$60.00. Only seven records were included; winning bid was \$45.00. A rosewood Chase brand square grand piano went for \$1,000.00. The Gennett family mansion was not included in the auction; it was listed for sale at \$350,000.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

In the winter of 2001-2002, the Starr Gennett Foundation started a newsletter, the *Starr Gennett News*, to increase membership and support and to promote the Gennett legacy around the world; the Foundation hoped to eventually establish a

**Starr
Gennett**
Foundation Inc.

NEWS

VOLUME I, ISSUE I
WINTER 2001-2002

Inaugural Issue

This has been an incredible year for the Starr-Gennett Foundation, and we are excited to build on our progress by distributing our first official newsletter. As the new year approaches, the time has come to extend membership to all parties who are interested in our mission and projects, and we encourage you to join us as we continue to move forward. Over the past twelve months, we have significantly increased our level of activity, and the word is finally getting out. The history of recorded sound and its impact on the development of American music and culture cannot be adequately conveyed without a thorough treatment of the Gennett Record Company. If you are not yet familiar with our organization or the Starr-Gennett legacy, we hope that this newsletter will serve as a valuable introduction.

The original Starr-Gennett enterprise began in the late 19th century as the Starr Piano Company, a relatively small piano manufacturer in Richmond, Indiana. Eventually, however, this entity grew to become a complete "music factory" that was responsible for recording, pressing, and distributing a significant number of groundbreaking records while continuing to manufacture pianos. This was accomplished through the creation of a Starr phonograph and recording branch, eventually incorporated as the Gennett Record Company. Gennett Records' catalog included classical, ethnic, jazz, and popular selections, just to name a few. Many jazz aficionados recognize the fact that Gennett's highly influential records by Louis Armstrong, Jelly Roll Morton, Bix Beiderbecke, and many others were among the first of their kind. What is less well known is that the company's influence extends well beyond jazz into the realms of blues, old-time country, gospel, folk, and extremely diverse oral histories. The breadth of this output sheds a unique light on American culture in the early part of the twentieth century, and the Starr-Gennett Foundation is working to increase the public profile of this important cultural resource.

The Starr-Gennett Foundation was incorporated in 1991 as a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and promoting the rich musical heritage of the Gennett Record Company and its parent Starr Piano Company, originally located in the Whitewater River Gorge of Richmond. In 1998,



the Foundation grew from a few enthusiastic volunteers to a large group of community leaders, committed to preserving the Starr-Gennett legacy for visitors and for future generations. An initial fund-raising campaign commenced in 1999, generating over \$200,000 in local pledges, and a full-time director was hired in 2000 to coordinate and propel the Foundation's initiatives.

As to be expected with the hiring of our second staff member, this past year has been a particularly busy one. Among other developments, 2001 has seen the widespread dissemination of *Gennett Records Greatest Hits, Volume II*, the creation of a multi-faceted website, the first Starr-Gennett Legacy Award presentation, the first Starr-Gennett benefit performance, and now the release of *Gennett Records Greatest Hits, The Collection*. We are also working with the architectural firm Woollen, Molzan, and Partners on the design of a Gennett Recording Studio reconstruction. The publication of this newsletter marks the beginning of our national membership campaign, which will allow us to continue our projects that are so vital to the preservation of the Starr-Gennett legacy. The Starr-Gennett Foundation is working to restore and present the original Starr-Gennett site, to promote the legacy around the globe, and to establish a permanent museum. Your support is needed for these valuable projects to succeed, and we hope that you will express your support by becoming a new member, ensuring our progress in the months and years ahead.

A PUBLICATION OF STARR-GENNETT FOUNDATION, INC.

33 South 7th Street • Richmond, IN 47374 • 765-962-1511 • fax 765-966-0882
www.starrgennett.org • email gennett@starrgennett.org

permanent museum. The Foundation produced a number of CDs from original Gennett records; the CDs are for sale at the Foundation's store, located inside the Richmond Furniture Gallery at 1180 Fort Wayne Avenue, Richmond, Indiana, 47374. The CD's concentrate on popular, jazz, and early country music. A performance pavilion was constructed in the surviving assembly building; music events are held year round.

The current address of the Starr-Gennett Foundation:

Starr-Gennett Foundation, Inc.
33 South 7th Street
Richmond, Indiana 47374
I info@starrgennett.org

The Archives of Traditional Music, located at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana, contain more than 600 original Gennett records. The Archives also house the Hoagy Carmichael collection, the largest collection of Hoagy Carmichael material in any institution in the world.

The Online Discographical Project (<http://settle.facebook.com/>) lists the more important Gennett records in series: 6001, 2500, 2600, 2700, 2800, 3001, 4500, and 9000.

On Sunday, January 7, 2018, an auction of twenty-four Starr phonographs from the estate of the late Albert C. Gentry was held by Walter & Hawkins Auctioneers in Richmond, Indiana. The auction was held in a building at the Wayne County Fairgrounds. However, Indiana weather was bad that day and depressed attendance. There appeared to be little interest in the Starr phonographs; average prices were very low. The auction included one Victor and three Edison phonographs as well as a Reginaphone, five record cabinets, and many disc and cylinder records. Al Gentry was a co-founder and past president of the Starr-Gennett Foundation.

Former Starr Piano Company employees recalled working for the Gennett family at the Starr factories in Richmond: *"Gennett Workers Recall Good Times."*(301)

Over the years, Harry Leavell worked at various jobs in the factory, including painting offices and delivering mail. He recalled that a job in the Valley meant a steady, if modest, paycheck.

Ryland James worked for a time in the recording department where he learned to make record "masters" and "mothers." The process started with shaving wax into vats and boiling for a day and, *"If you didn't do it right you'd end up with two big kettles of soap."* He also commented, *"You worked overtime but you didn't get paid overtime."* By the 1930s, James was involved with recording the sound effects records. He once traveled to Virginia to record the sound of a sixteen-inch naval gun. He was also involved with recording the sounds of trains, birds, and a machine gun borrowed from the sheriff's office.

For a time, Irma Hill kept Gennett's "Bibles"—the logs in which each recording session was listed by date, artist, and composer. Ms. Hill recalled that the hillsides along the road leading to the Starr complex were covered with flowers and well-tended lawns. *"They had every color of Iris you could think of,"* she recalled.

James McLain started in the woodworking department in 1922; he



made the horns used in the Starr phonographs. He said the horn "throat" was cut from maple and the funnel-shaped horn was made of white pine. (Not silver spruce?) He claimed, *"I could rout out a hundred of them in a day."* After three years, McLain worked as a truck driver delivering the full line of Starr Company products, often for far distances. McLain worked thirteen years for the Starr Company; his salary finally reached \$19 a week. He commented *"You didn't get much, but it was a wonderful place to work."*



Clyde Smith was the second shift foreman of the record department from 1945 to 1951, when the company folded. Smith remembered the Gennetts as nice people, *"It was a happy place to work. It was just a big happy family."*

Style III Star Phonograph



Starr Phonographs



Special Offer 1
\$24.75
In Oak or Mahogany
Consists of
1 Style A Machine
12 Selections
(6 double-face records)
1 Record Cabinet
(With Vertical Filing Shelves)
Special No. 2
\$19.50
Same as No. 1, but without Record Cabinet.

Payments Arranged

1915

Special Offer 3

\$55.00

In Oak or Mahogany

Consists of

1 Style B Machine

12 Selections

(6 double-face records)

1 Record Cabinet

(As Shown)

Special No. 4

\$39.50

Same as No. 3, but without Record Cabinet.

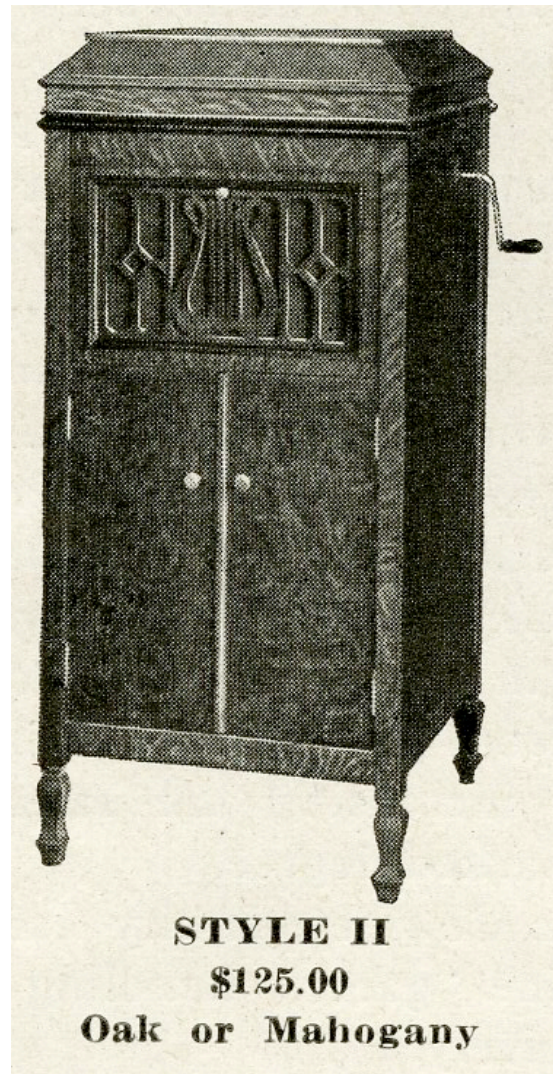


Payments If You Like

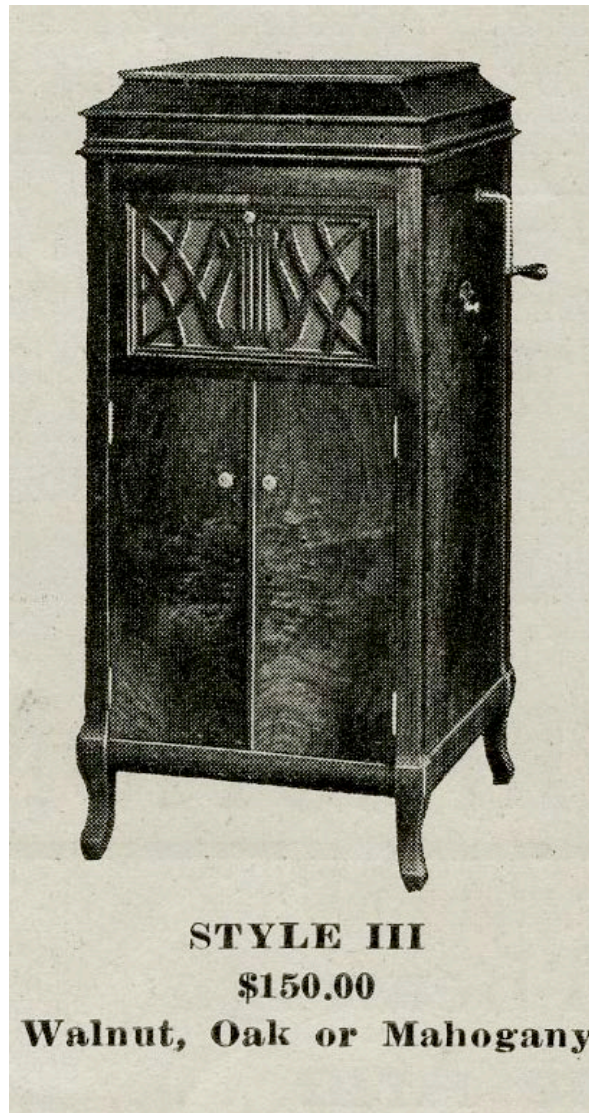
1915



1916



1916



1916



STYLE IV

\$175.00

Walnut, Oak or Mahogany

1916

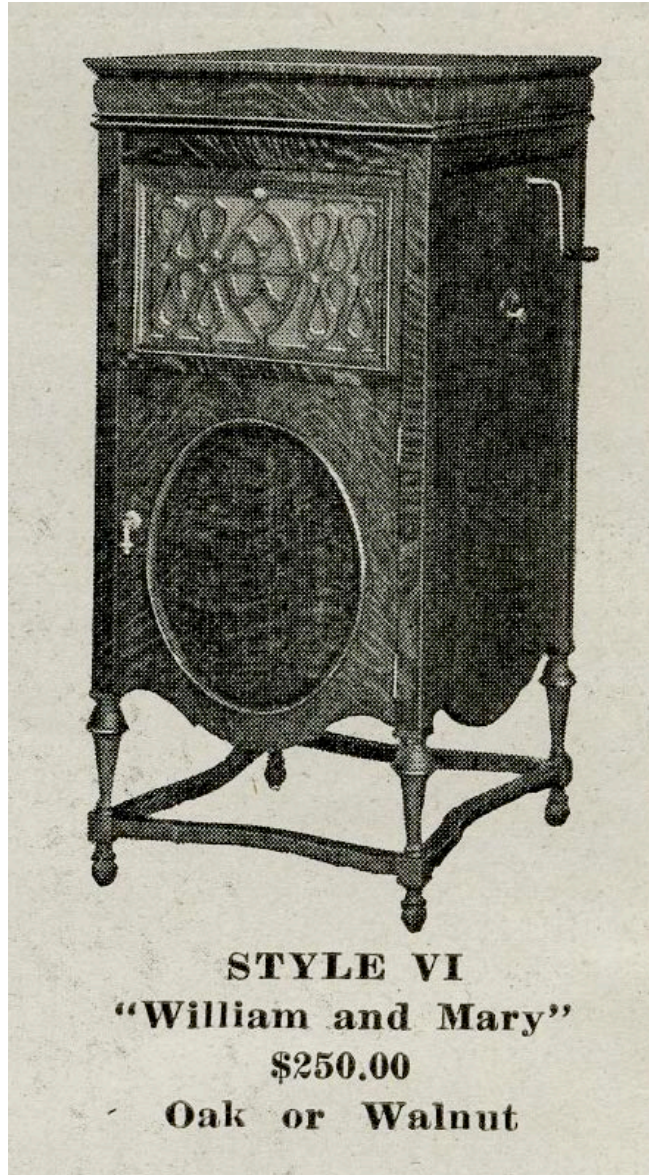


STYLE V

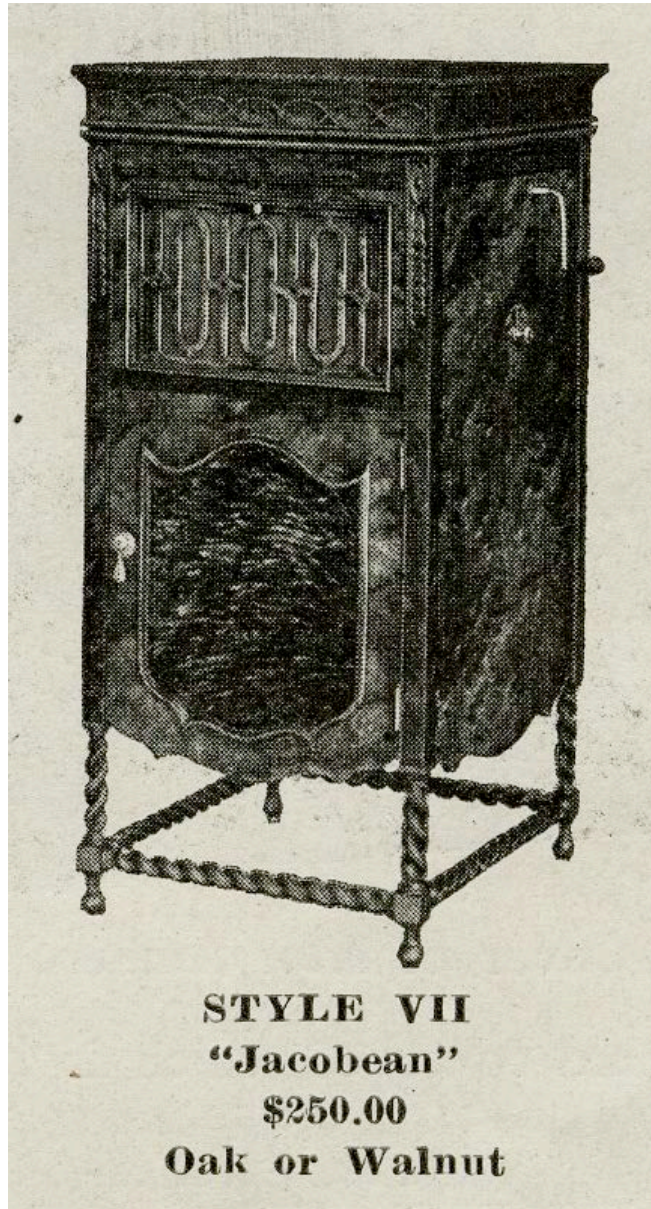
\$200.00

Walnut, Oak or Mahogany

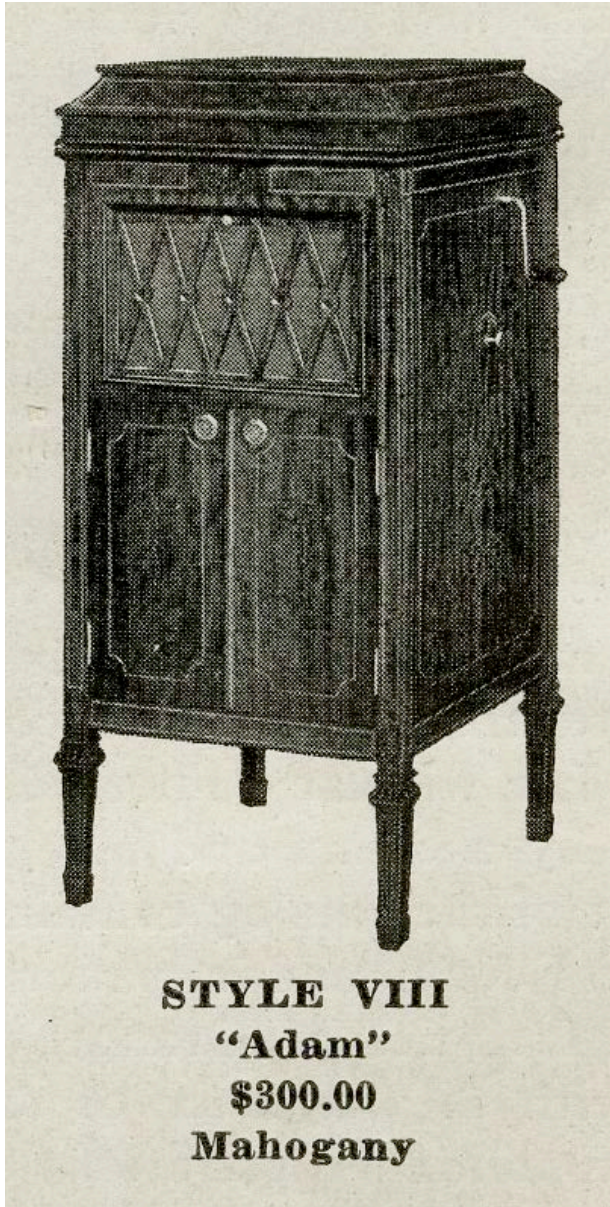
1916



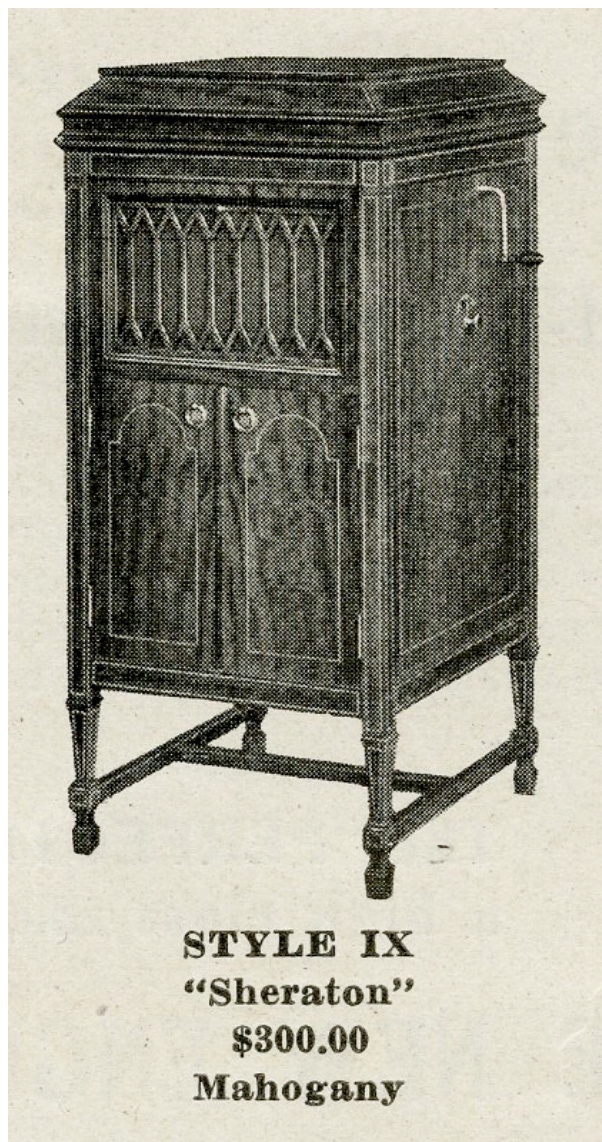
1916



1916



1916



STYLE IX
"Sheraton"
\$300.00
Mahogany

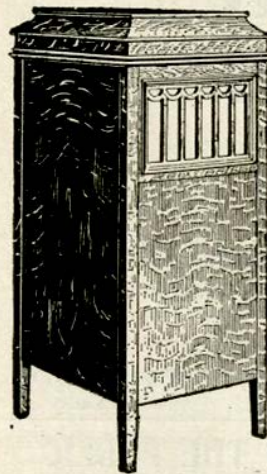
1916



NEW MODEL STARR PHONOGRAPH

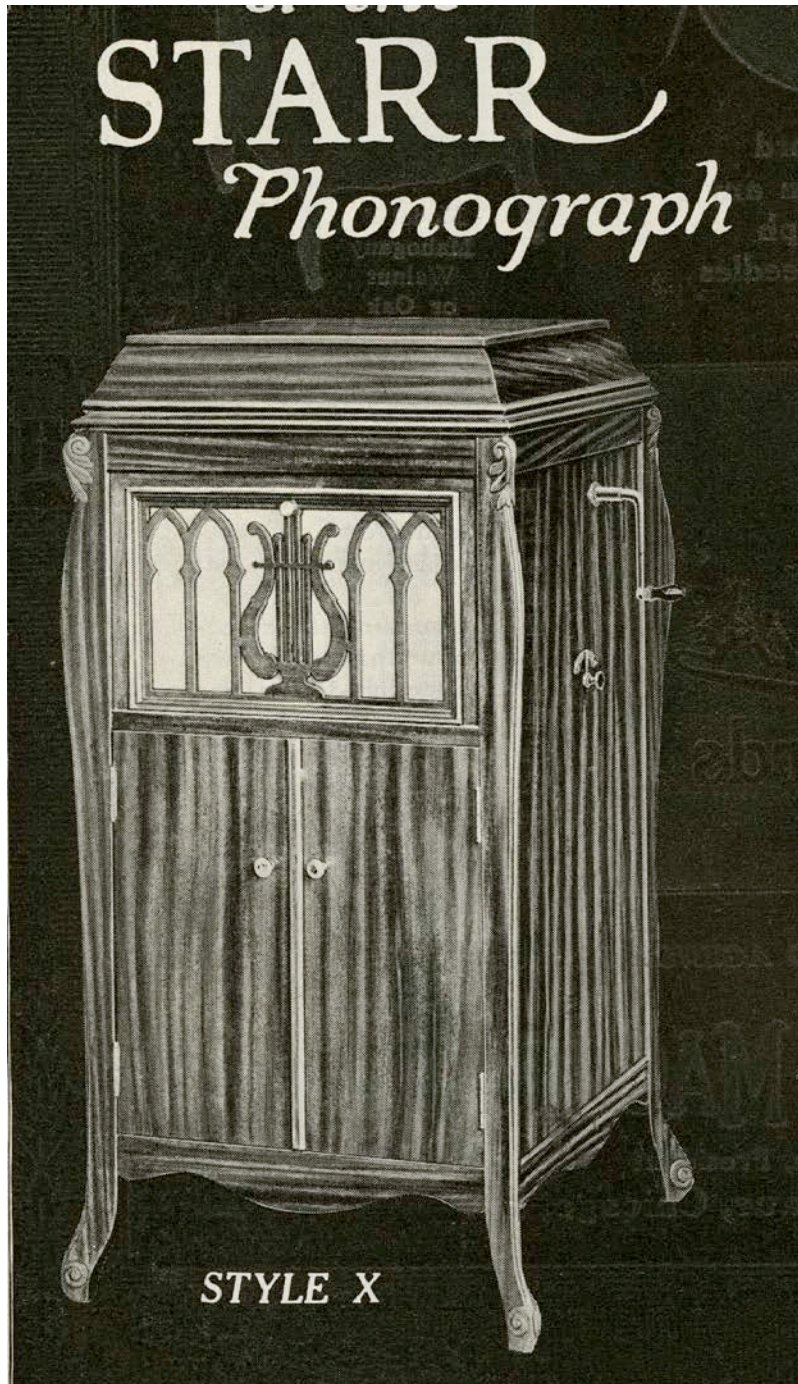
**Style Three-quarters, a Small Cabinet Machine
Priced at \$75—Ten Styles Now in Starr Line**

CINCINNATI, O., January 5.—The Starr Piano Co. has added another model to its line of phonographs, Style $\frac{3}{4}$. Owing to its inability to fill the orders for this model it was not announced until after Christmas, but several hundred were distributed a week or two previous to Christmas.



The new style was added to comply with the great demand for the smaller instrument and is a beautiful little cabinet phonograph finished in oak or mahogany. The dimensions are: height, $42\frac{1}{2}$ inches; width, $19\frac{1}{4}$ inches; depth, $22\frac{1}{4}$ inches. It sells for \$75. Starr distributors have contracted for large orders of these instruments in the belief that the demand will be very great.

1917



1919



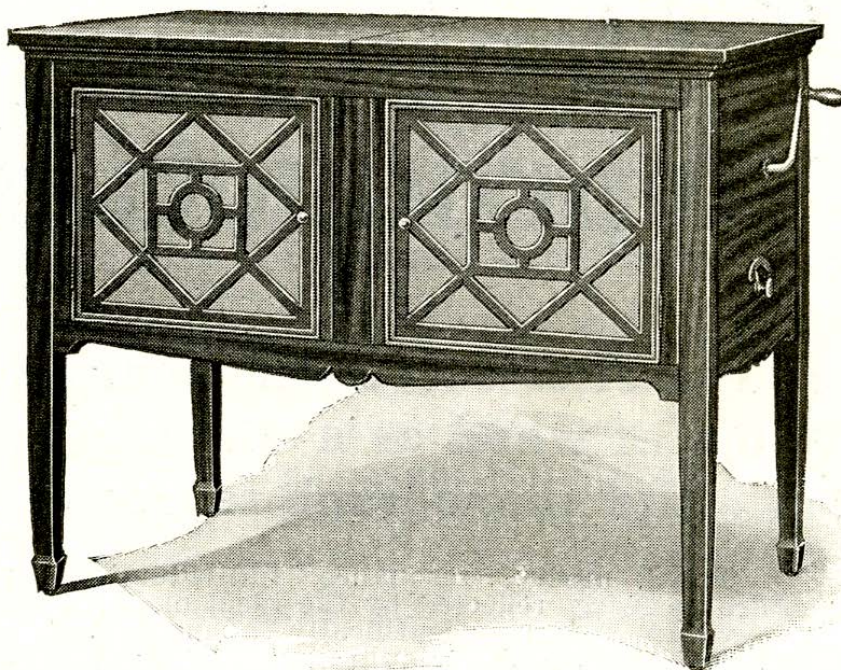
Style Unidentified



**Starr Table Model Style 1/2
1919**



Starr Phonograph -- Style XV -- 1920



STYLE XVIII

Oak, Walnut or Mahogany

Height 32 inches; width 42 inches; depth 24 inches; adjustable tone-arm for playing all disc records; high grade, silent, Starr-made motor; twelve-inch turn-table; speed control; automatic motor stop; tone regulator; nickel-plated hardware; one package steel needles; Starr improved filing system.

1922



Style Unidentified



Style Unidentified



Style Unidentified

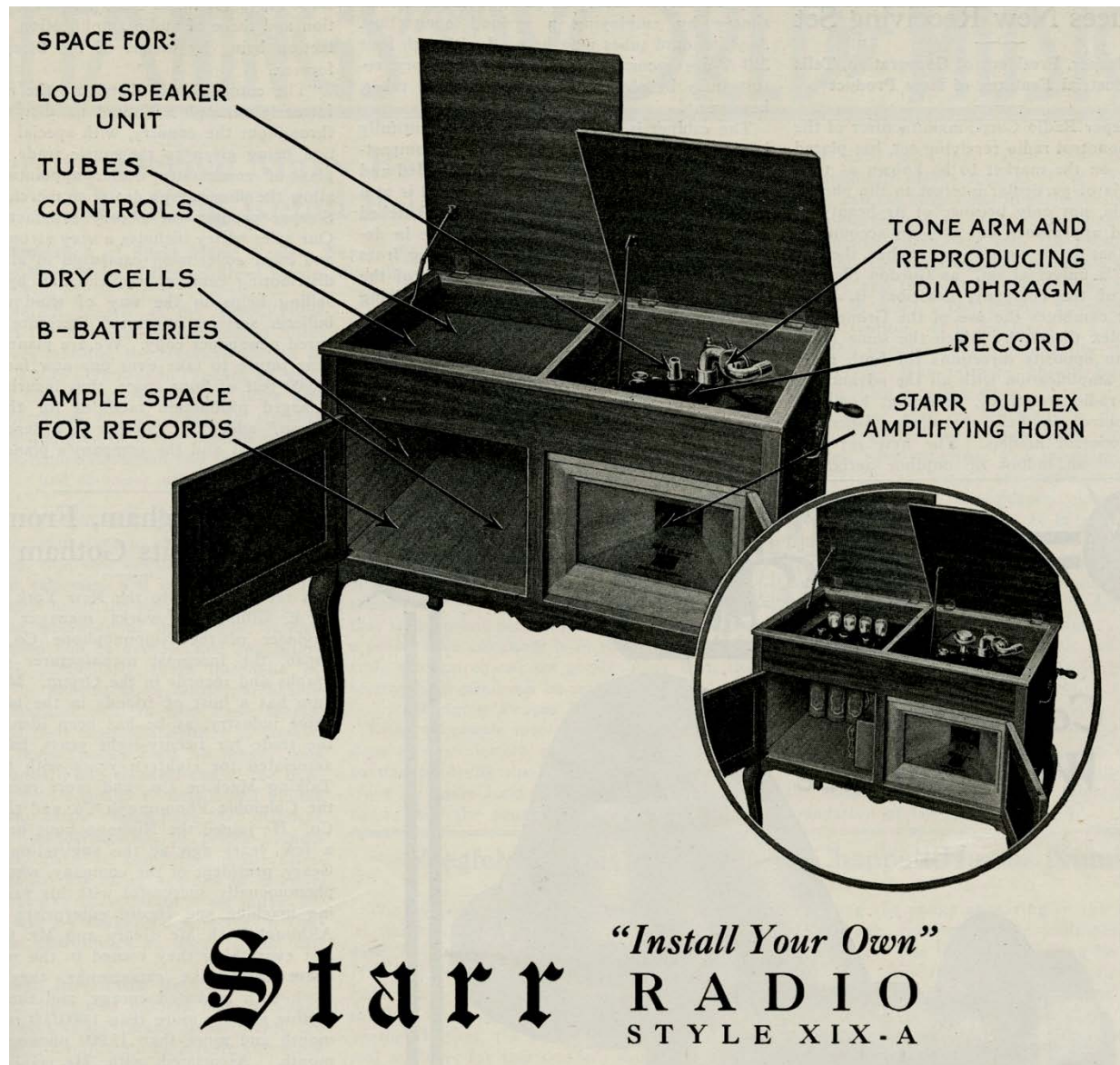


STYLE XIX

Oak, Walnut or Mahogany

Height, 33 inches; width, $36\frac{1}{8}$ inches; depth, $21\frac{1}{8}$ inches; adjustable tone-arm for playing all disc records; high-grade, silent, Starr-made motor; twelve-inch turn-table; speed control; automatic motor stop; tone regulator; nickel-plated hardware; one package steel needles; filing system.

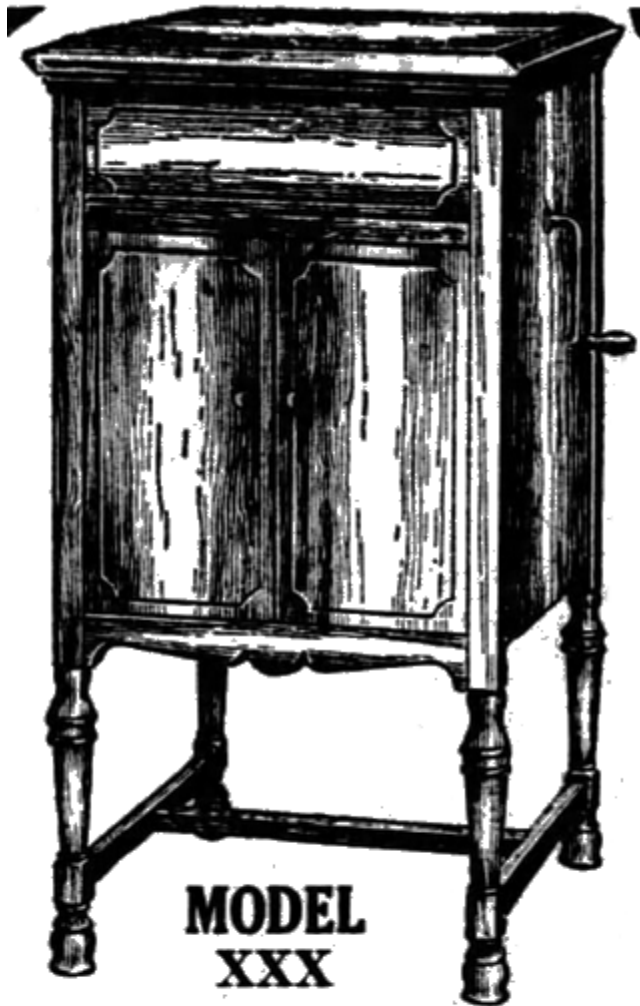
1922



1924



1924



**MODEL
XXX**

Every resource of material and artistic skill has been utilized to make the new Starr Phonographs. Every feature has been constructed in the newest scientific manner and brought to the highest state of perfection.

1926





The New
Starr
ISOSONIC
PHONOGRAPH
 Style XXXII

Meets the New Phonograph Standard



SPECIAL FEATURES

SOUND BOX—Of specially alloyed aluminum. Diaphragm of microscopic thickness, finely rolled, treated and tempered. Very sensitive. No screws or loose parts to rattle.

TONE ARM—Base and bracket of specially alloyed cast brass, tubing of drawn brass. Throw back type. Revolves on ball bearing base and pivot point. Entire arm and base air-tight to avoid any leakage of vibration.

MOTOR—Starr designed, double springs, powerful, smooth, noiseless. Runs with absolute precision.

HORN — New type acoustical

horn of aged, straight grained silver grain spruce. Reproduces all tones with exact fidelity to original. The melody brought forth by the Starr is a revelation in tonal achievement.

FINISH AND SIZE—Either high light blended mahogany or walnut of rich and appealing color effects. Height 40½ inches; Width 22¼ inches; Depth 22¼ inches.

OTHER FEATURES — The Starr is replete in refinements and conveniences that provide for the owner's complete satisfaction and only add to it as a musical creation of unsurpassed excellence.

The Starr Piano Company

Established 1872 Factories: Richmond, Indiana

BRANCHES IN

New York, Boston, Detroit, Cleveland, Dayton, Cincinnati, Chicago, Indianapolis, Nashville, Birmingham, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Portland, San Francisco.



Style
XXXII.

1926



Provide clean, cultural entertainment that will make your home life more attractive to your children. The new STARR ISOSONIC is making themselves of homes happier. Popular price, beauty of design, perfect tone and easiest of terms make this the ideal phonograph for your home. Investigate the Isosonic and you will be convinced of the superiority.

Style Unidentified
1927



1926



STARR PORTABLE

Made in black leatherette. Light in weight; ruggedly built; tone pure and far-carrying; has new type sensitive reproducer; correctly tapered tone arm; smooth running, strong Starr-made motor; all metal parts nicked; handy compartment for carrying records.

The Starr Style S-4 offers tone, performance, appearance, value—an embodiment of every attribute of fine portable construction. The Starr Portable will make a fine gift and so reasonably priced, too.

Only \$**17.75**

1927



Starr Portable -- Style Z



--THE STARR PORTABLE -- 15 ½ inches wide; 11 ¼ inches deep, 8 ¼ inches high. Nickel-plated hardware inside; brass hardware outside. Case available in black, blue, brown, grey, wine color, or grey-black. Also available with Lizard grain, hornback grain, honeycomb grain, or blue grain.

Iso-sonic sound box. Spring motor is quiet—even running, strong, and built for long service.

1927





Starr Portable With Isosonic Sound Box

Richmond Phonographs

RICHMOND PHONOGRAPHS

MOTORS. All Richmond phonographs are equipped with STARR-MADE motors, conceded by engineers of recognized ability to be dependable and scientifically correct. They are silent in winding and running, steady and accurate in speed; every part being so precisely adjusted, one with the other, that wear is practically eliminated.

TONE-ARM. The Richmond is equipped with STARR-MADE ball bearing tone-arm, insuring non-resistance in the travel of the needle over the face of the record, thus prolonging the life of the record.

REPRODUCER. The importance of the reproducer or sound-box can hardly be over-estimated, since the reproducing of the sound waves of the record depend almost entirely on the response of the sound-box. STARR-MADE sound-boxes are sensitive to all shades and degree of tone, insuring an exact reproduction of the original recording.

UNIVERSAL. All STARR-MADE arm and sound-boxes are equipped with an adjustable shaft, making them instantly adaptable to play all makes of records.

TONE-CHAMBER. The tone-chamber or amplifier in the Richmond is made of three-ply elm, bent into shape to conform to the lines of the human throat, amplifying the tone waves naturally and preserving all the musical qualities of the record.

Richmond Phonographs



1920



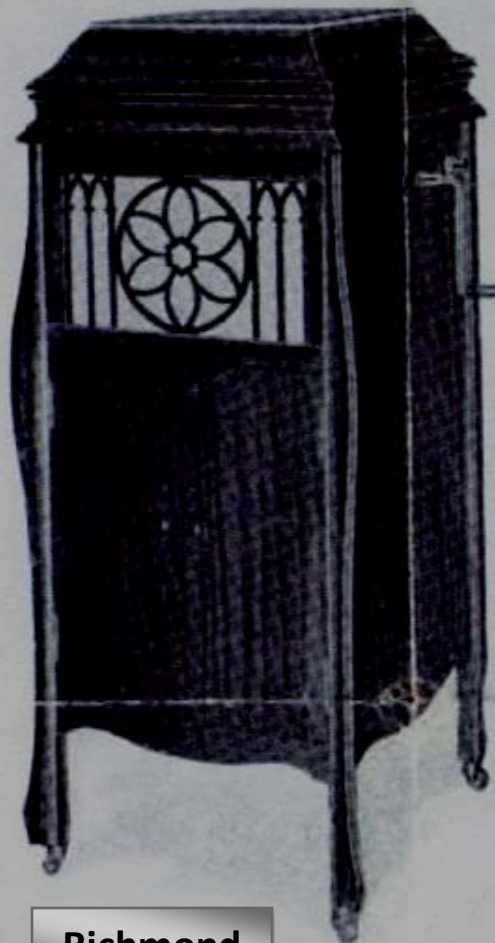
Richmond

MODEL "A"—CURLY BIRCH
MAHOGANY FINISH

Height 44½ inches; Width 19½ inches;
Depth 21 inches

Adjustable tone-arm for playing all disc records;
high grade, silent, Starr-Made Motor; twelve-
inch turn-table; speed control; tone regulator;
nickel-plated hardware; two packages steel
needles; ample record filing space

1920



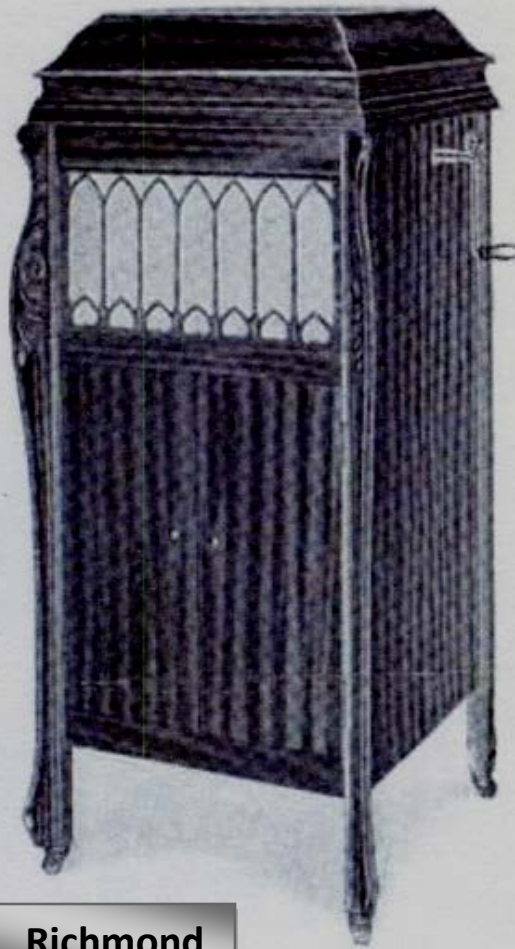
Richmond

MODEL "B"
MAHOGANY

Height 46½ inches; Width 20 inches;
Depth 20½ inches

Adjustable tone-arm for playing all disc records;
high grade, silent, Starr-Made Motor; twelve-
inch turn-table; tone regulator; speed control;
nickel-plated hardware; two packages steel
needles; ample record filing space

1920



Richmond

MODEL "C"
MAHOGANY

Height 50½ inches; Width 22½ inches;
Depth 22½ inches

Adjustable tone-arm for playing all disc records;
high grade, silent, Starr-Made Motor; twelve-
inch turn-table; speed control; tone regulator;
nickel-plated hardware; two packages steel
needles; ample record filing space

1920

Partial (Incomplete) Listing of Starr Phonograph Models

For an extra \$50, most models could be equipped with an electric motor to power the turntable

Style (Upright Models)

- I -- \$100 in 1916
- II -- \$125 in 1916
- III -- \$150 in 1916
- IV -- \$175 in 1916
- V -- \$200 in 1916
- VI -- \$250 in 1916; William and Mary
- VII -- \$250 in 1916; Jacobean
- VIII -- \$300 in 1916; Adam
- IX -- \$300 in 1916; Sheraton
- X -- 1919
- XIV -- \$95 in 1924; mahogany, oak, or walnut
- XVI -- \$150 in 1924; mahogany, oak, or walnut
- 3/4 -- \$75 in January 1917

Style (Console Models)

- XVII -- \$135 in 1924; mahogany, oak, or walnut
- XVIII -- 1922; \$175 in 1924; mahogany, oak, or walnut
- XIX -- 1922; \$125 in 1924; mahogany, oak, or walnut
- XIX-A -- \$140 in 1924 ("Install Your Own" direct current radio);
mahogany or walnut
- XXI -- \$150 in 1924; mahogany or walnut
- XXII -- \$175 in 1924; mahogany or walnut
- XXIII -- Henry VIII Tudor; \$200 in 1924; mahogany or walnut
- XXIV -- \$100 in 1924; mahogany or walnut
- XXIV-A -- \$115 in 1924 ("Install Your Own" direct current radio);
mahogany or walnut
- XV -- \$350 in 1924; mahogany, oak, or walnut
- XLX -- \$125 in 1924

School Model

Style XXVII – mentioned in the *Talking Machine World*, May 1925,
Pages 127,128 and *Richmond Item*, March 25, 1926.

Style (Table Models)

A – 1915; \$19.50; lidless table model; mahogany or oak
B – 1915; \$39.50; mahogany or oak
1/2 – 1917; \$65 in 1924; mahogany, oak, or walnut

Style (Desk Model)

XV – 1920; mahogany

Style (ISOSONIC ACOUSTICAL)

XXX -- 1926
XXXI -- 1926
XXXII – 1927
XXXIII – 1927(mentioned in *Music Trade Review*, September 10, 1927. Page 15)

Style (ISOSONIC ELECTRICAL)

XXXIV -- 1928

Style (Portable)

Starr Portable --1926
Gennett Portophone – 1926; available in black, blue, brown, gray, green, or red

New Starr portable models, using the new Isosonic principle – Portophone Style 6
-- 1927

Style (?) Mid-priced model – 1926 -- featured a five-foot long rubber horn, made by the Miller Rubber Company; the horn was positioned in the cabinet to resemble a saxophone.

To
Unpack, Assemble, Operate
and Care for Your
Starr Phonograph
Carefully Read this
Instruction Book



1920

The Starr Piano Company

Established 1872
Richmond, Indiana

Introduction

Each Starr Phonograph, regardless of the model, is simply constructed, but well and durably made, and with ordinary care will give absolute satisfaction. Handle the various parts carefully, follow closely the instructions herein given and do not tamper with any of the parts unless sure that they are out of adjustment and then only when you know how to handle them. We want you to be perfectly satisfied with your Starr and get the utmost pleasure from it, and we know you will if you follow these instructions.

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY.

Directions for Unpacking

Tools Required: Monkey wrench, screw driver and nail puller.

First: Lay the phonograph box on its back having the side marked "open here" up. With the monkey wrench entirely remove the four bolts in the bottom of the box.

Second: With a nail puller or screw driver, remove the nails or screws holding the cross section between the two sides. These nails or screws will be found in the center of the veneer section near the top. This brace is only used when the cabinet packed in the packing case is smaller than the case.

Third: Remove the screws or nails from that side of the packing case marked "open here."

Fourth: Lift off the side removed.

Fifth: Raise the case until the cabinet stands in its normal position on its legs.

Sixth: Remove the bracing at the top of the cabinet.

Seventh: Lift the cabinet so that the legs clear the braces in the bottom.

Eighth: Pull directly forward and lift out of packing case.

Ninth: Unwrap after unpacking.

To Set Up Instrument

First: Open the box inside the cabinet containing the small parts.

Second: Remove the turn-table and place it upon the shaft and see that it revolves, shutting brake against rim of turn-table.

Third: Insert winding handle in hole on right side of cabinet.

Fourth: Place pin receptacles in holes provided.

Fifth: Remove sound box from box in which it is contained. Place sound box in tone-arm so that the pin in sound box sets into the slot cut into the end of tone-arm part and tighten. Tone-arm with sound box set parallel to right hand side is for **Lateral Cut**

Records. Tone-arm with sound box set parallel to front of cabinet is for "**Hill and Dale**" Records. The Gennett Record is of both the "hill and dale" and "lateral" type.

Be sure and set sound box properly for the type of records intended to be played.

Sixth: Unpack needles and fill the needle cups with such steel needles as may be desired to use. Place the sapphire point in small drill hole between the needle cups and keep it there, after which wind instrument and it is ready to be used.

Warning

The motor parts such as springs and bearings have been oiled before leaving factory. If machine is shipped in cold weather, allow machine to stand unboxed for 24 hours before playing, if possible. This prevents varnish checking in cold weather and permits the lubricated parts to warm to the temperature at which they have been regulated to play properly.

**Read the Following Instructions
Before Playing!**

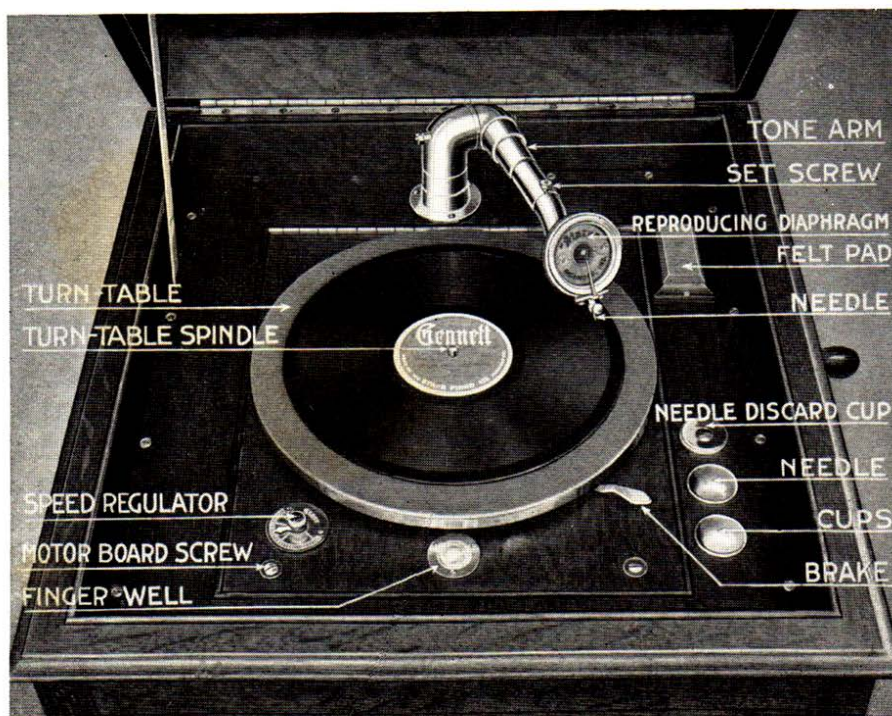
How to Operate

Carefully wind the motor by turning crank to right, stopping when you feel the springs fairly tight. The leverage provided to insure an easy winding motor is sufficient to break the spring if wound too tight. Put a drop of oil at winding crank escutcheon to prevent squeaking.

Place Gennett Lateral Record on turn-table. See that the section of tone-arm that sets the sound box or reproducing diaphragm parallel to side of cabinet is used. (See Figure B.)

Place needle in needle hole with point down and adjust set screw tight.

Release turn-table brake, which protrudes at your right hand from the turn-table by pulling to left, and gently lower the diaphragm or reproducer to the outer lines of the **Revolving Record**.



Top of Instrument Showing Various Parts
Sound Box is set to play "Hill and Dale" Records

Be especially careful to see that you do not play a record with the wrong kind of needle. Gennett Records must be played with a **Steel Needle**. Other makes of records should be played with the needle recommended by the manufacturer of the record.

The Tone Arm

The new Starr Universal Tone-Arm has been so designed that either type of record—"Hill and Dale" or "Lateral"—can be played with only a simple turn of the Sound Box.

To play a "Hill and Dale" record the Sound Box must be parallel to the **Front** of the phonograph. (See Figure C.) To play a Lateral record the Sound Box must be in a "sideways" position or parallel to the **Side** of the phonograph. (See Figure B.)

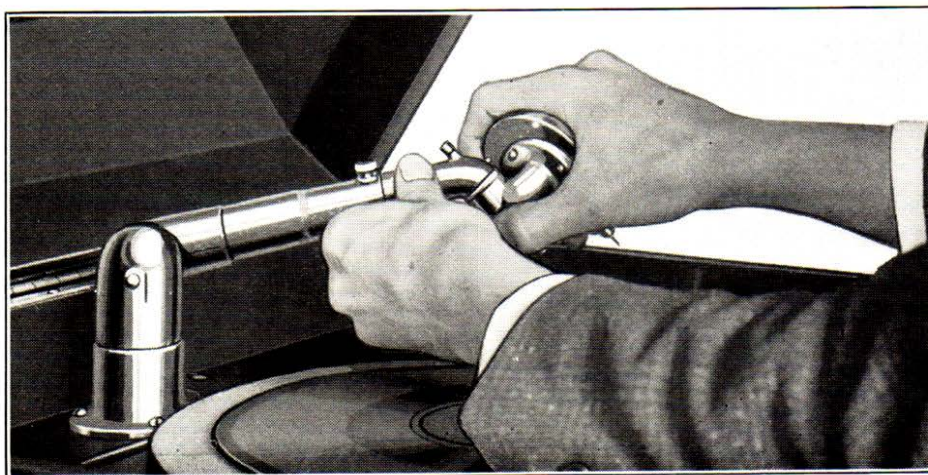


Figure A. Showing How to Grasp Sound Box for Changing to Either Position.

TO CHANGE TO EITHER POSITION hold Tone-Arm with left hand (See Figure A) and grasp Sound Box firmly at tubular portion at rear of Sound Box with right hand, pull down, and turn to either right or left depending on the record about to be played. If "Hill and Dale" type, and Sound Box is in a sideways position to the right, pull down and turn so the Sound Box faces to the front of phonograph. (See Figure C.) To play

a "Lateral" record pull Sound Box down and turn to right so that it is again in sideways position running **PARALLEL TO THE TONE-ARM**. (See Figure B). A spring holds Sound Box securely in either position.

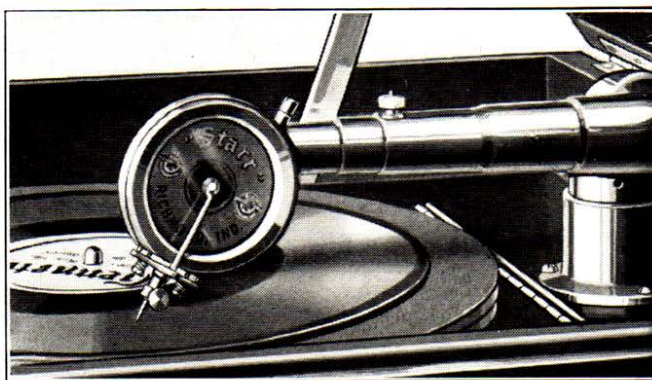


Figure B. Position for Gennett "Lateral" or any "Lateral" Record.

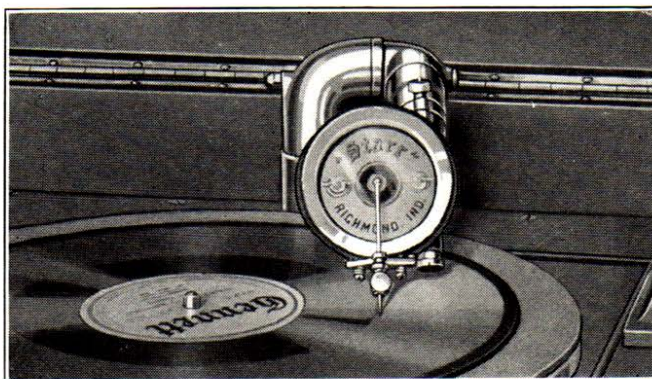


Figure C. Position for Gennett "Hill and Dale" or any "Hill and Dale" Record

The Throat and Horn

These parts need no attention whatsoever.

The tone volume can be controlled by turning the knob on the side of the instrument below the crank. To the left increases the volume and to the right checks it. This device requires no care. The adjusting knob will be found in the further right hand corner of top in Styles $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$.

To stop record, raise reproducer and rest it by the needle point on the felt pad at your right, at the same time pulling brake lever to right, which stops the turn-table.

As each disc is played rewind the motor by a few turns so that it will not stop when playing any of the records which follow. This insures a steady, uniform speed at all times.

How the Melody is Produced

In order that you will know the main parts of your phonograph so that you can more intelligently adjust any irregularity, read carefully the next paragraph and the instructions which follow and preserve for future reference.

There are four parts connected with phonographic reproduction: The reproducing diaphragm with needle, the tone-arm, the throat and horn. In the reproducing diaphragm is set a needle which, in following the grooves of the revolving record, vibrates. This in turn vibrates the reproducing diaphragm. These vibrations then set the air in motion and tone waves result. The tone waves are then carried from the diaphragm through the tone-arm down into the throat where they are amplified then on down to the horn where they are further enlarged and thrown out into the air.

The Reproducing Diaphragm and Needles

The reproducer needs no attention except to see that the screws at its back are tightly set. This can be done with a small screw driver. If these become loose the records will make a buzzing sound and the reproduction otherwise will not be clear. In changing the needles care should be taken that the thumb or fingers are not pushed through the delicate mica or that it is not broken in any way.

It is always best to hold the tone-arm directly back of the reproducer, between the first two fingers on the left hand when changing needles. In this way the reproducer need not be touched except to turn the needle set-screw. Always be sure that the screw holding the needle is tight or a buzzing or scratching, similar to that made by a loose reproducer, will result.

The Starr Motor

The function of the motor is to revolve the turn-table at a continuously even speed. The best speed for playing the average record is 80 revolutions per minute and to this the Starr Motor is adjusted. However, if you wish to vary this you can do so by moving the regulator to any speed desired. **Never revolve your turn-table backwards.**

Your motor has been properly adjusted, lubricated and tested before leaving the factory, therefore, if any trouble develops it is due to some outside influence such as rough handling in transit, or by unnecessary tampering. **ALWAYS CONSULT A STARR DEALER IN CASE OF TROUBLE.**

Lubricating

Keep your motor well lubricated and you will have no trouble if it is not wound too tight or mistreated in any other way.

To lubricate, first see that crank is removed by unscrewing or winding backwards, then loosen the two set screws in corners of motor board and lift by inserting forefinger in fingerwell. This exposes all lubricating points. (See diagram).

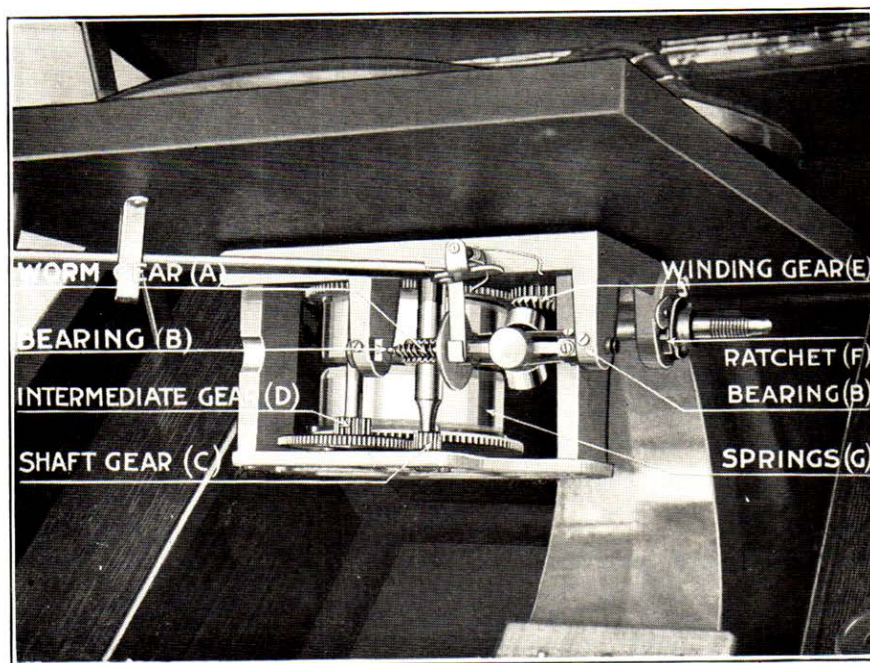
Oil the worm gear with a good sewing machine oil or Starr Motor Oil (A). Also the bearings at end of this gear (B).

Put some oil or vaseline on the turn-table shaft gear (C), and also on the intermediate gear (D).

The winding gear (E) and ratchet (F) should be oiled.

The large springs (G) should be greased with a special graphite compound which can be procured from the factory. If they become dry a thumping or knocking will result. These seldom need attention and one application of graphite will last from six months to two years, depending on usage of motor. A grinding noise or uneven running of the motor also indicates that they need lubricating. It is a good plan to let the motor run down completely occasionally so that the grease in the spring

will be properly distributed. It is also a good plan to clean all moving parts with gasoline to cut any gum which might accumu-



Oiling Points of Starr Motor

late—then re-oil and grease again. **Be attentive to your motor and it will last a lifetime.**

The turn-table needs no attention, but the brake should have a drop of oil on the felt stopper and also on the base.

Be Careful of Your Records

The Gennett Record is well made of a very hard substance, yet should be handled carefully and taken care of so as to prolong its life.

It is a good plan to wipe off each side of the disc before playing as this removes all particles of dust and grit. This insures a better and smoother reproduction as all foreign particles cause a scratchy tone and help to wear out the disc. A piece of carpet around and tacked to the ends of a small block makes a good cleaner. The records should be given no other cleaning.

Do not slide them over the top of a table in picking them up, as this wears out the lines.

Do not let them drop.

Always keep them properly filed when not in use, and let them lie perfectly flat.

Don't let the needle in the reproducer slip and fall on the disc when you start to play, but lower it gently. A thump or knock in your record each time it revolves indicates that its surface has been damaged in this way.

Use a steel needle but once, as the point becomes dull and injures the lines of the next record played. Changing the needle each time gives a clearer reproduction.

Notice

If there is any trouble for which you find no remedy in this book do not experiment, but see the Starr Dealer who will be glad to adjust the irregularity.

Preserve this book for future reference, as it may save you unnecessary annoyance and contribute to your pleasure of owning a Starr Phonograph.

Starr Patents

A. F. IRETON.
STOP DEVICE FOR PHONOGRAPH DISKS.
APPLICATION FILED MAR. 7, 1916.

1,218,560.

Patented Mar. 6, 1917.

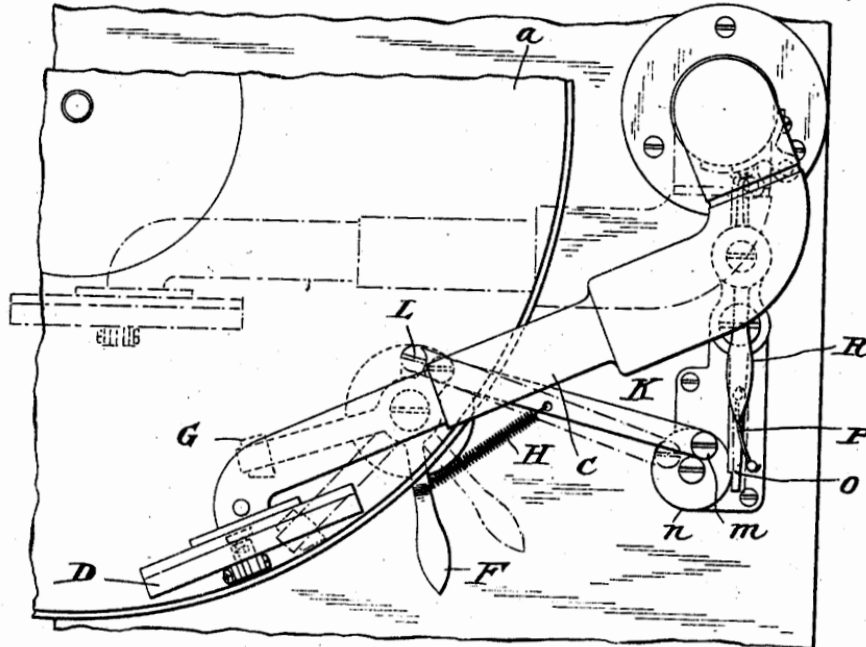


Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

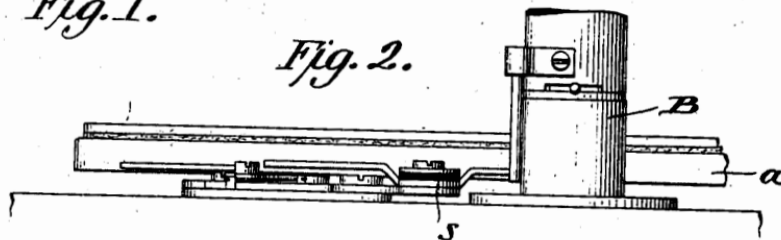
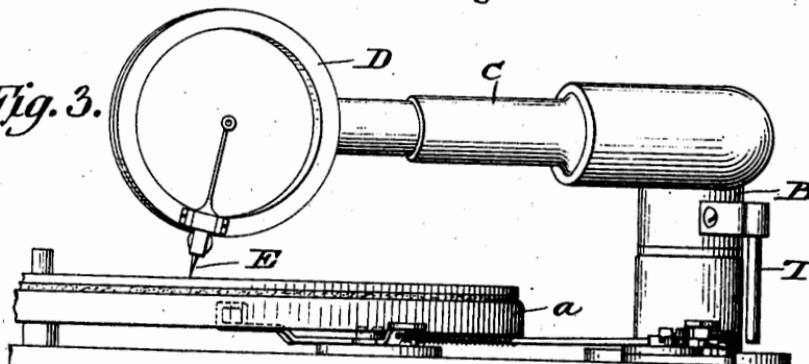


Fig. 3.



Inventor
A. F. Ireton
By his Attorneys
Kerr, Page, Cooper & Hayward

1,291,061.

F. G. MAYER.
SPRING MOTOR.

APPLICATION FILED AUG. 31, 1918.

Patented Jan. 14, 1919

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

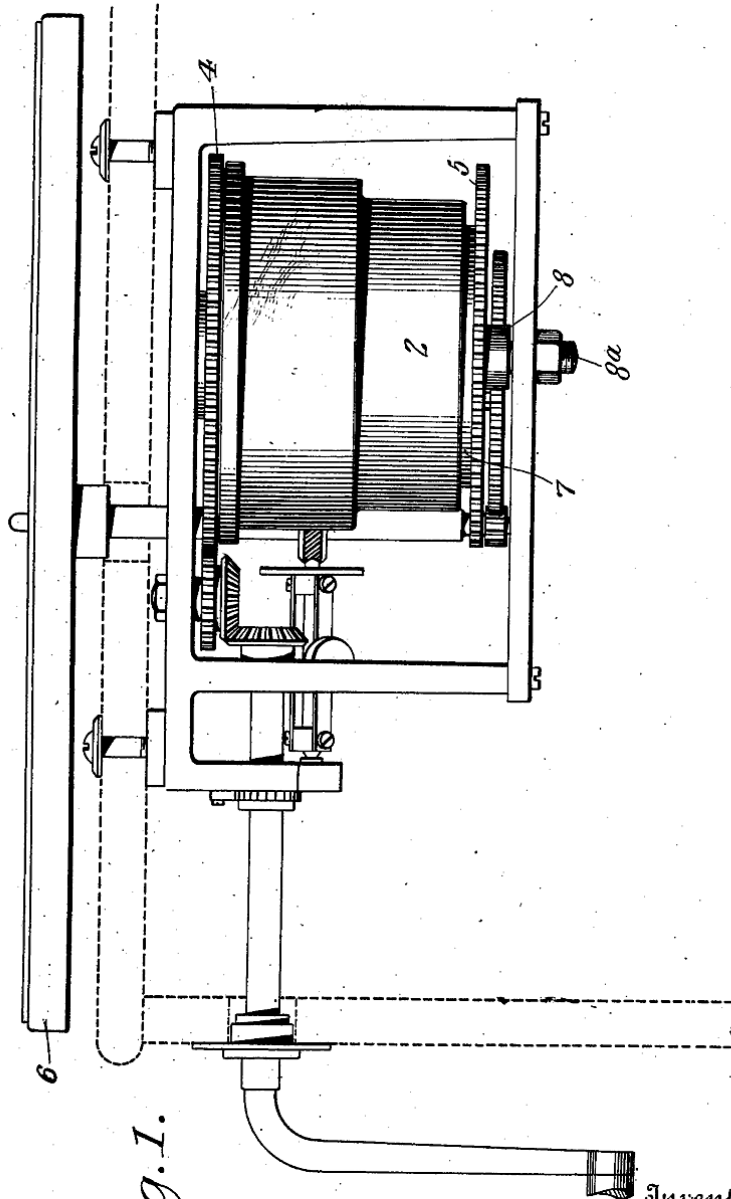


Fig. 1.

Inventor
Fred G. Mayer.
By his Attorneys
Kerr, Page, Cooper & Hayward.

1,291,061.

Fig. 2.

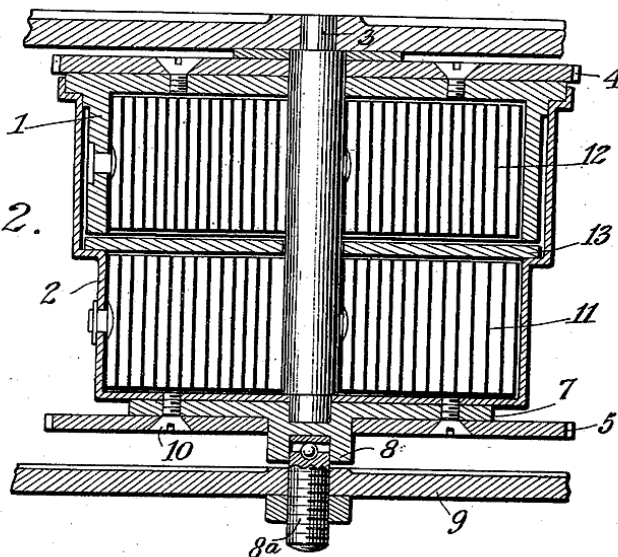
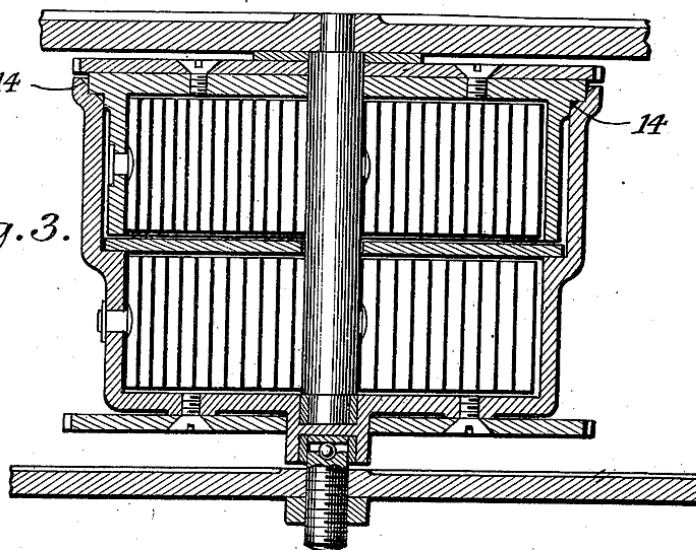


Fig. 3.



Inventor
Fred L. Mayer
By his Attorneys
Kent, Page, Cooper & Hayward

F. G. MAYER.
MATRIX FOR SOUND RECORDS.
APPLICATION FILED JULY 2, 1919.

1,327,722.

Patented Jan. 13, 1920.

Fig. 1

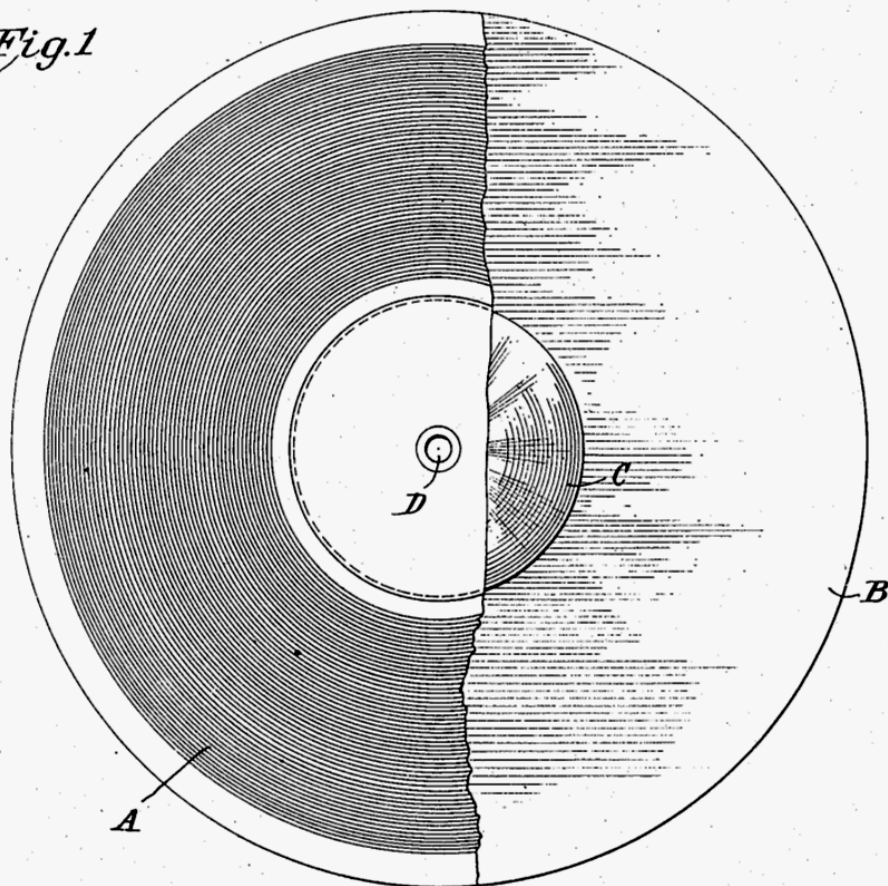


Fig. 2



Fred G. Mayer, Inventor,
by Kerr, Page, Defero & Hayward,
his Attorneys

E. PHIPPS.
 AMPLIFIER FOR PHONOGRAPHS AND THE LIKE.
 APPLICATION FILED FEB. 25, 1920.

1,381,430.

Patented June 14, 1921.

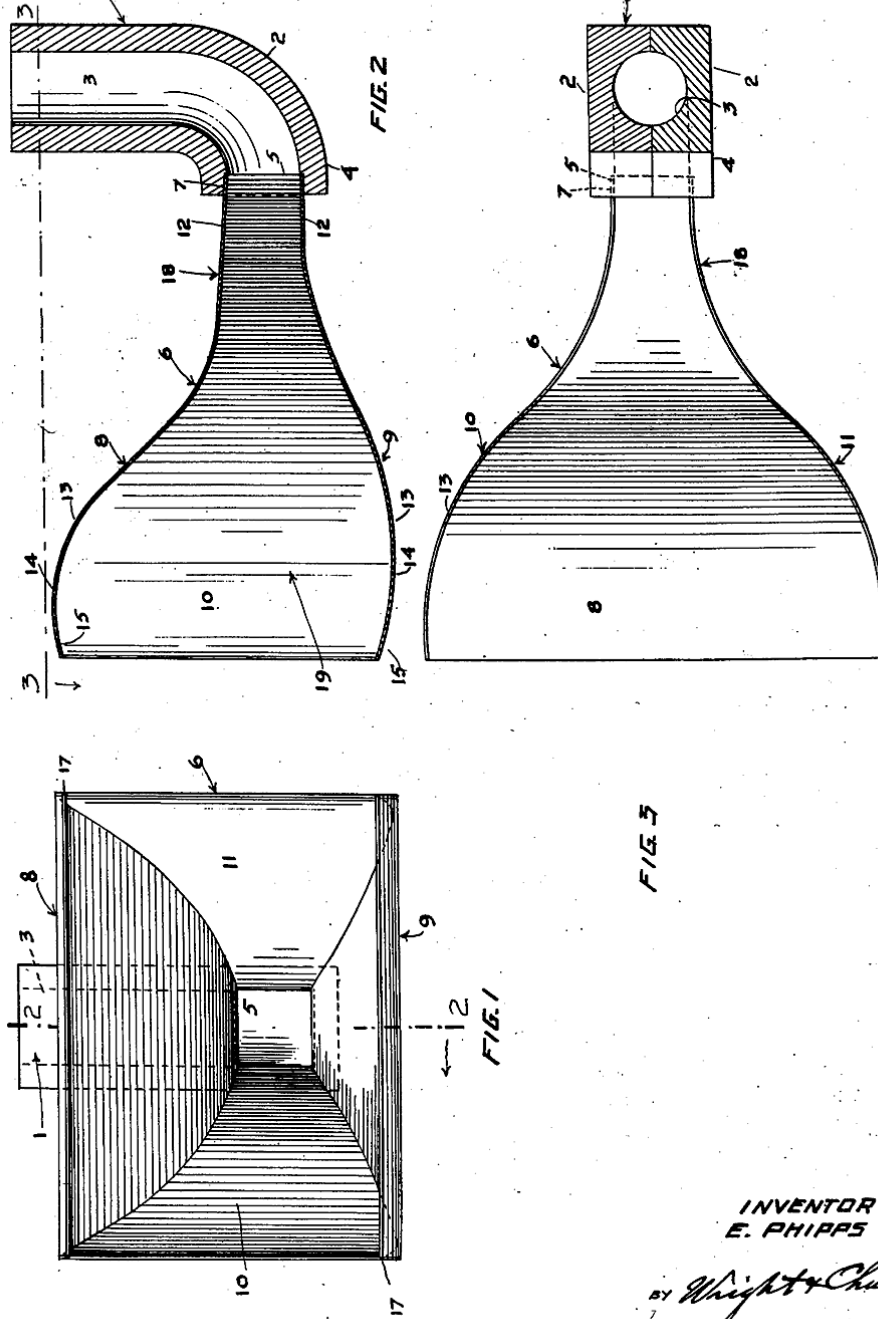


FIG. 3

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

INVENTOR
 E. PHIPPS

BY *Wright & Chase*
 ATTYS.

Apr. 3, 1923.

1,450,299

F. G. MAYER

AUTOMATIC STOP FOR PHONOGRAPHS

Filed Nov. 28, 1921

Fig. 1.

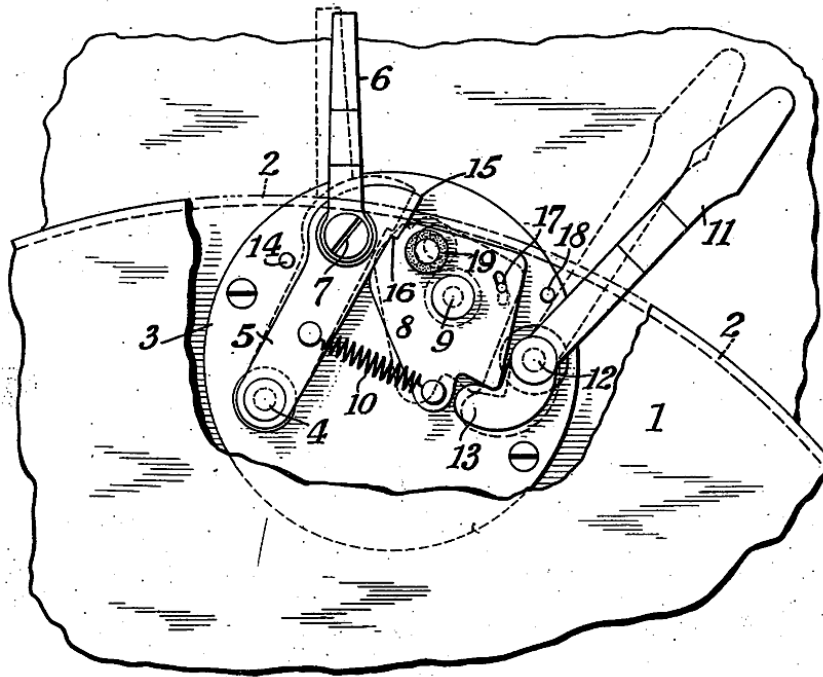
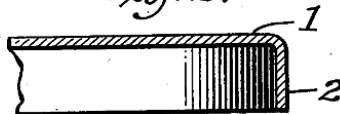


Fig. 2.



INVENTOR
Fred G. Mayer
BY
Cooper, Hays & Durham
ATTORNEYS.

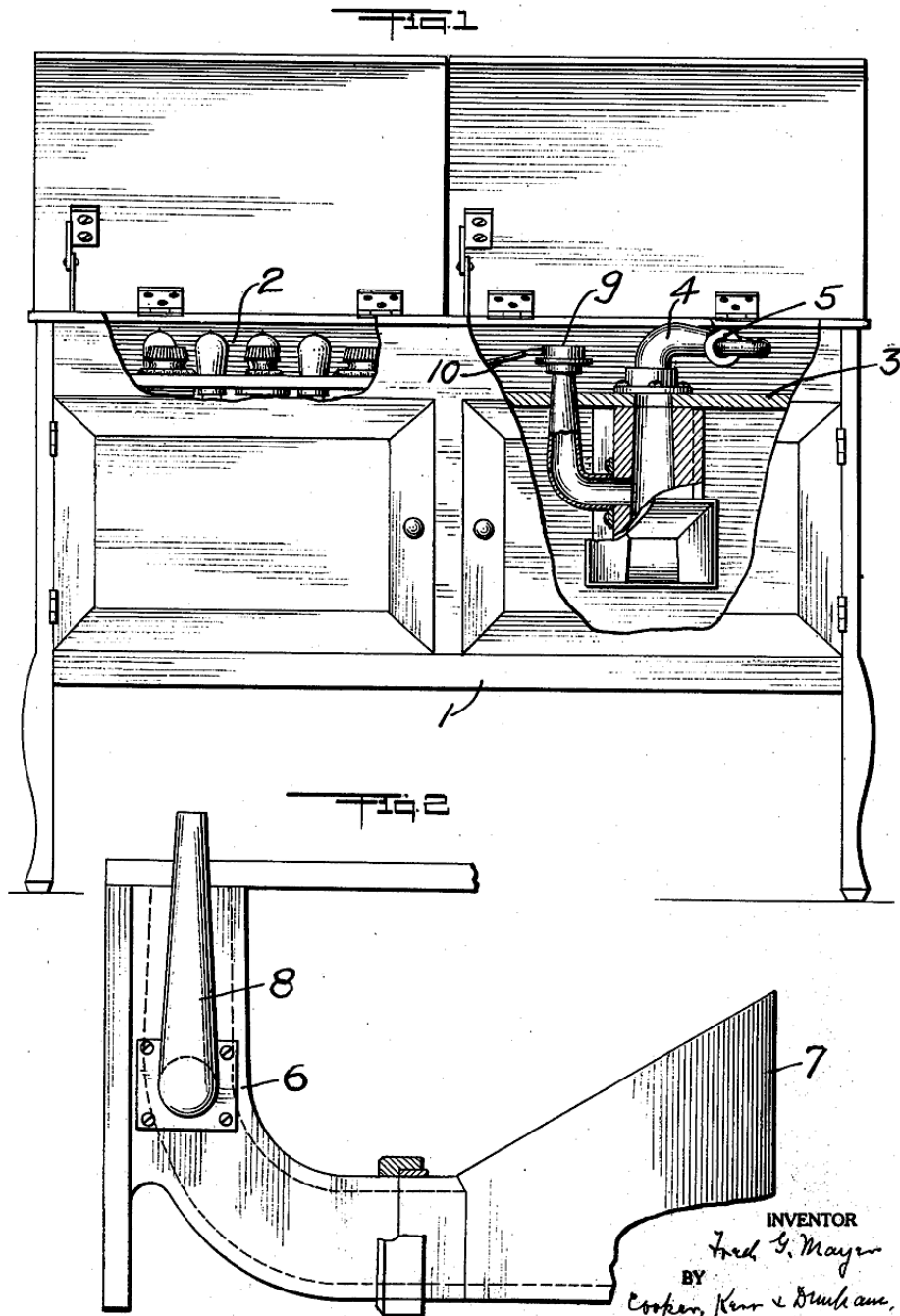
March 8, 1927.

F. G. MAYER

1,620,481

COMBINED RADIO AND PHONOGRAPH APPARATUS

Filed June 24, 1924

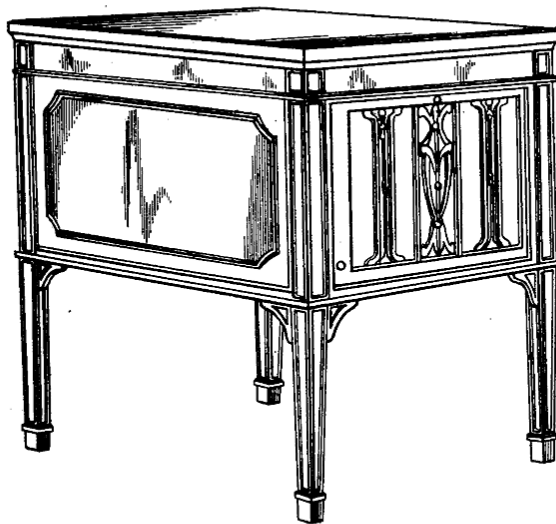


DESIGN.

H. B. GREENE & H. F. CHATFIELD.
CABINET FOR PHONOGRAPHS.
APPLICATION FILED JAN. 8, 1916.

48,679.

Patented Mar. 7, 1916.



Harry Bloomfield Greene
INVENTORS
And
Henry Finch Chatfield
BY
Forckner & Co. ATTORNEY

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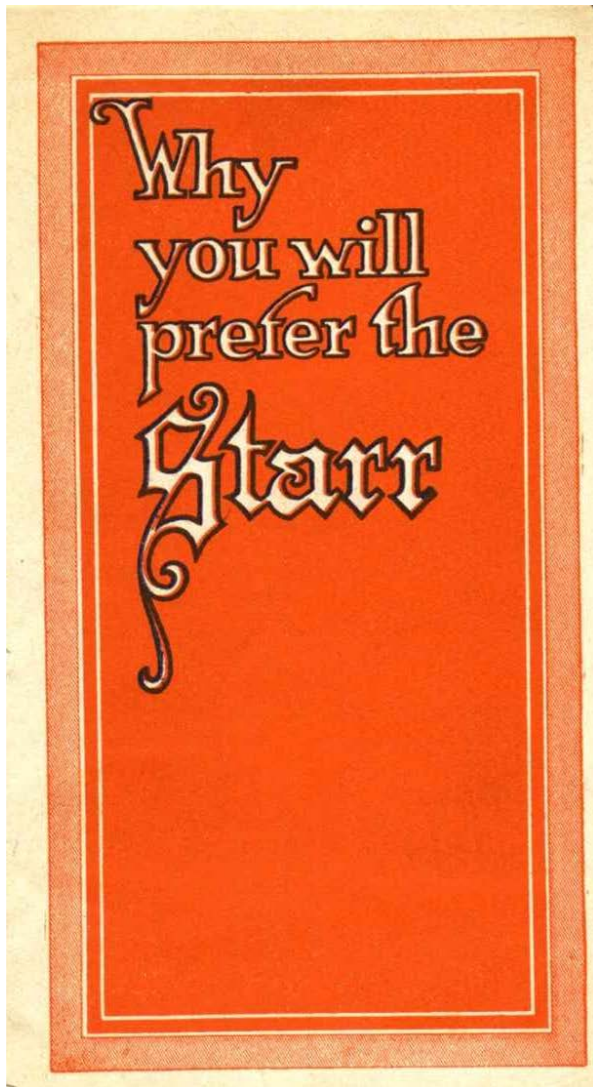
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MISCELLANEOUS

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Why you will prefer the
STARR

OF THINGS musical the primary consideration is tone. In the violin, in the piano, in the phonograph a pure, sweet singing tone has long been sought for—a tone free from all harsh qualities, from metallicness, and from unevenness.

Music itself is an art of the ages, a necessity of life. No other art has a more ennobling influence. It is a part of life itself and to thoroughly appreciate music the tone quality of the medium through which it is presented is of utmost importance.

A pure, rich tone is elusive. It is difficult to produce. Years and years have been spent in the quest of a perfect tone. Tone is made from air vibrations which are initiated into being by some impulse after which they are amplified to give volume. In the violin, tone is obtained by passing the vibrations set up in a string through a hardwood bridge set on a sounding board which in turn vibrates in sympathy with the string as well as directly through the impulse set up by the string passing through the

bridge and throws the vibrations known as the violin tone into the air. In the piano a string is set into vibration by a blow of a felt hammer and the vibrations pass into the sounding board which vibrates in sympathy with the string. In the phonograph the vibrations are initiated by the point of a steel needle coming in contact with a revolving disc record, the vibrations of the needle passing through the Sound-Box where the air is set into motion, these vibrations then passing through the tone-arm and into the Sounding Board Horn where they are amplified.

**Silver Grain
Spruce**

But to determine the proper material for amplifying the tone vibrations so that the tone would be clear, sweet and rich was a difficult matter and the old masters spent years in determining the comparative acoustic properties of substances. Wood and metal and other substances had been tried with various degrees of success. Yet since Stradivarius created his first master violin from Silver Grain Spruce no other material has since been found to equal this wood to bring forth the sweetest quality of tone. The violin tone is universally considered the sweetest character of tone produced by any

instrument. Spruce has since been used by the world's master violin makers for the backs of their famous instruments; by the old masters for the sounding board of the clavichord which preceded the piano; and by the piano makers of the present day for the sounding board of the piano. Spruce is supreme in bringing forth a tone of rarest richness, of purity, of sweetness because it contains to the correct degree the molecular composition which vibrates easiest in sympathy with vibrations passing along the grain of the wood itself, and which is most easily affected by vibrations in the atmosphere. No other wood or material is of a similar composition and consequently cannot do this.

The Starr Piano Company has been building musical instruments which have become famous the world over for a half century. By reason of their thorough understanding of things musical they have built musical instruments of rarest quality.

**The "Singing
Throat"**

Therefore when the Starr Phonograph was made its **tone amplifying chambers**, the "Singing Throat" and Sounding Board Horn were of time honored Silver Grain Spruce. And in the Starr the "difference in the tone" was immediately apparent. There

was an entire absence of all nasal, metallic, harsh qualities which heretofore had characterized the tones of a phonograph because its tone chambers were of tin, cast-iron or some vibrationless wood. Each and every tone was sweet, rich and clear and produced with exact fidelity to the original because the Starr had been designed in strict accordance to the old laws observed hundreds of years ago by the world's master music instrument builders. The tones of a voice thus produced are the true tones of a voice, the tones of the violin that of the violin, the tones of a band like that of a band, so clear and life-like is the reproduction through the Starr's throat and horn of mellow, straight grained Silver Grain Spruce, the master "music wood of centuries."

Although the Starr excels in tone the craftsmanship of Starr factories has perfected the Starr in many other ways and there is an embodiment of all that is useful and convenient in making the ownership of every Starr Phonograph a pleasant one.

The "Reproducing Diaphragm" In creating the initial tone-vibrations each Starr is equipped with a high grade, scientifically constructed Reproducing Diaphragm or Sound Box

designed in the Starr factories of exact proportions to best reproduce accurately all vibrations initiated by impulses of the needle in contact with the revolving record on the turn-table. You will note immediately, elimination of all raspy or buzzing sounds.

The Starr Tone Arm The Starr has a well-proportioned tone-arm which carries with fewest number of turns the vibrations from the Reproducing Diaphragm to the Throat, thus eliminating all chances of echoing, etc. The Starr Tone-Arm is made of brass which least affects these delicate vibrations and is designed to change the Reproducing Diaphragm to play any disc record of either type, just as it was originally intended to be played. Restriction to one make or type of record, which limits you to certain selections, is impossible, which means the world's entire record library is at your command.

The Starr Tone Modifier The Starr has a scientific tone modifier, which enables you to regulate the tone at its source and before it has been fully amplified, thus permitting you to hear all tone shadings, as distinctly as if they were unchecked. It does away with the

old fashioned idea of amplifying the tone, then abruptly muffling it to decrease the volume which is like decreasing the volume of a song by claspings the hand over the mouth. The tone is controlled at its source not after it has been fully amplified.

The Starr Motor The Starr has a quiet, strong, long-running motor, made entirely in the Starr factories, and is guaranteed to give lasting satisfaction. It can be wound playing and is easily accessible for lubrication.

The Starr Turn-Table The Starr has a 12-inch turntable which enables you to play the largest and smallest records at uniform speed.

The Starr Speed Regulator The Starr has a speed regulator which permits you to play any record at any speed desired.

The Starr Design The Starr has been designed to meet the requirements of every home. The demand today is for simple, graceful lines with an elimination of all freakishness and each Starr has been thus designed, beautifully

hand-polished to a finish unequaled in the finest pianos.

Other Starr Conveniences Every Starr has ample filing space, is equipped with domes instead of casters, needle discard cups, and has many other conveniences and refinements which contribute to the owner's complete satisfaction.

The Starr Guarantee of Quality Today, the Starr Phonograph born of a half century of musical craftsmanship, with a tone quality that is unequaled, and with every facility, convenience and refinement for enjoying in your own home the music of the entire world, is the first phonograph to become a true musical instrument because it has been designed according to the long established laws of musical instrument building. It is the instrument for the music loving. And because the Starr Piano Company's half century's experience in building 150,000 of the best musical instruments the world has ever known, has enabled them to build a phonograph of such quality, this experience has also enabled them to place in each and every Starr Phonograph the guarantee which stands back of each and every Starr product: a

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Why you will prefer the Starr

strict and absolute guarantee of quality as exemplified in the "Mark of Quality," famous the world over for half a century.

THE STARR PIANO COMPANY

Established 1872.

Richmond, Indiana

Branches, distributors and dealers
everywhere.



