

The Fort Wayne Organ Company & the Packard Legacy

Volume 1: Nuts, Bolts, & Other Tidbits



ca. 1885 Salesman's Display

Charles A. Robison

Pictured below and on the cover are photos of a ca. 1885 Packard Orchestral Organ salesman's sample of a Style 16. The actual parlor organ listed for \$280 in the 1885 catalog.

In April 2006, this sample sold at the Rich Penn Country Store Auction for \$20,000. The auction provided the following description:

Salesman's sample parlor organ, Fort Wayne Organ Co., walnut w/lots of burl, simply spectacular detail, keys do not move or it would probably play, c.1885, a Very Rare salesman's sample, one professional repair on small pc. of upper trim, otherwise in Mint original condition, 28"H x 18"W x 9"D.



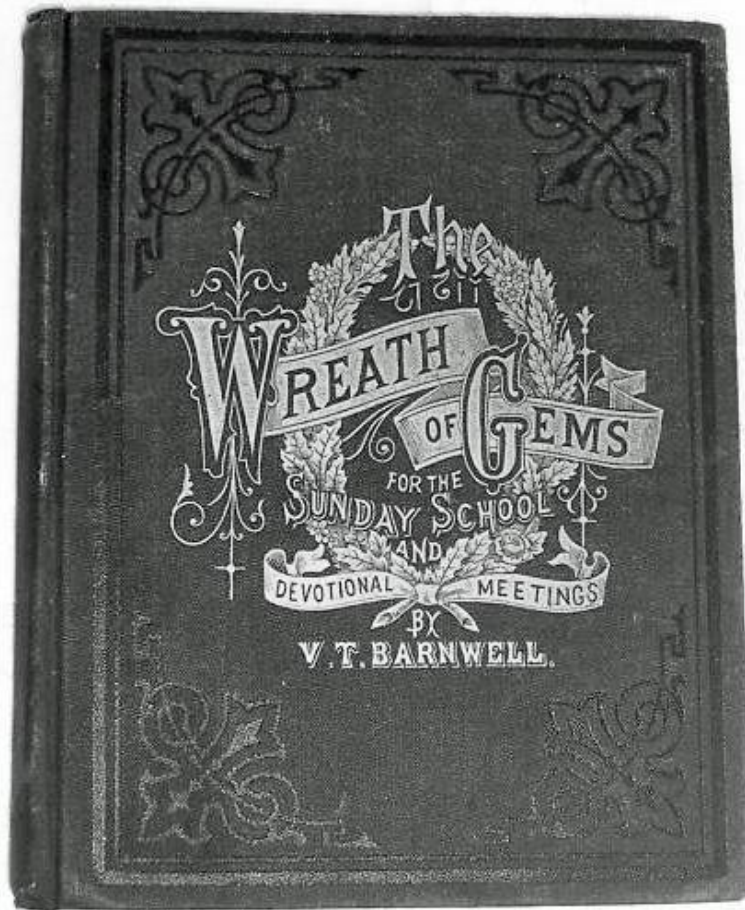
(Photos used with permission of Rich Penn Auctions, Waterloo, Iowa.)

*The Fort Wayne Organ Company
& the Packard Legacy
Volume 1: Nuts, Bolts, & Other Tidbits*



Charles A. Robison

The Wreath of Gems for the Sunday School and Devotional Meetings song book was copyrighted in 1879 by V. T. Barnwell. Barnwell was a music dealer in Atlanta, Georgia. The Packard ad appearing on the title page was pasted into the back of this book.



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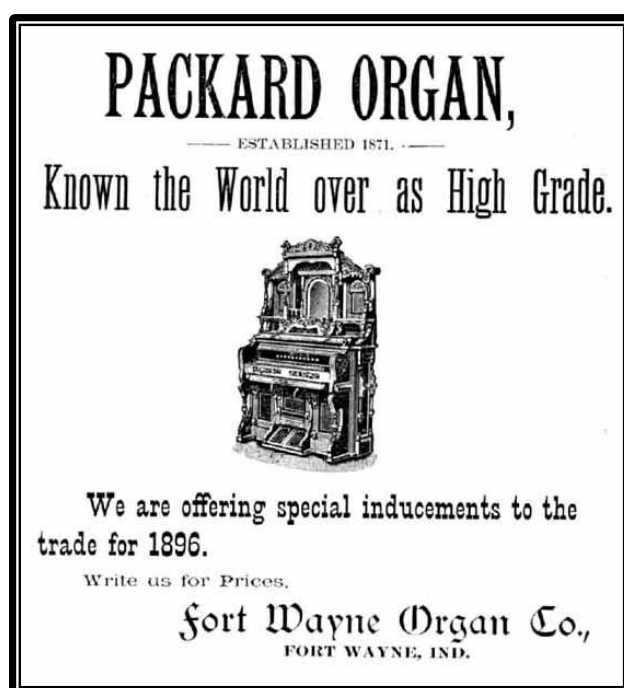
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my long-suffering wife. She has been my support, a former English teacher and editor to my rescue, and prodder to finish the task!

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank and acknowledge all my many friends and fellow enthusiasts in the reed organ world. They have provided encouragement, organ leads, and fed my project with valuable information they discovered within their own Packard organs. Ed Boadway and “Fritz” Gellerman, both now deceased but names known to many in this arena, provided valuable resources as well.

*In particular I want to thank Sue Bacheller of Massachusetts who kick-started this project with her tireless research into the life of Isaac T. Packard and other associates in the business. As a bonus, she took the information and created the text of chapter 3: **Isaac Turner Packard**.*

A special shout-out to Pam and Phil Fluke of the United Kingdom. After having the privilege of visiting with them in their Saltaire Organ Museum a number of years ago, they agreed to copy their collection of Packard catalogs and mail them to me. Without this information, there would have been a large gap in my understanding of the company’s policy regarding their domestic and export business.

Joop Rodenburg of the Netherlands provided a valuable service through his vigilance in searching the European sales network for Packard organs. He would graciously send me the links. These provided another valuable source of understanding the reach of Packard’s export business.



REED ORGAN SOCIETY

AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

PO Box 47, Independence MO 64051 USA



This original family photo contains no written information. One can only surmise the importance of each item that has been carefully selected for inclusion. What is known is that the parlor organ is a

Fort Wayne Organ Co. Packard, Case 390 ca. 1891.

Membership Directory 2015

I joined the Reed Organ Society in 1989. I no longer remember how I heard about the organization, but when a gathering was announced to be held at Heiss Haus in Nashville, Michigan, in 1997, I was determined to go. I persuaded my wife, Pam, that it would be a fun adventure, and she reluctantly agreed.

What transpired became a transformative event for us. Not only did I have a wonderful time, but Pam became hooked as well. We have not missed an ROS event since!

Without our experiences within the organization, there is no doubt in my mind that this history would never have been written. We have met and made many wonderful friends whose support and encouragement made this journey possible. To the organization and the people who brought it to life, I want to shout out a big THANK YOU!

Some Opening Thoughts

I never intended to write a book! I simply wanted to find out more about the history of the Packard organ that fascinated me when I was a teenager. I had found a Packard organ case at a garage sale. It was made of the most beautiful walnut I had ever seen in Victorian woodworking! It was missing the action (the part with the keyboard, stopboard, and reeds). The only reason I knew that it was a Packard was because the name was on the fall board and the upper part of the case. I would later discover that this Packard was made during the time frame when this was the company's practice. I determined then that I wanted to find a complete organ. In my mind, I also equated the name Packard to the quality automobile by the same name. Surely it would be a wonderful instrument!

Hence began a journey that has brought me to this point where I have decided to put the rambling thoughts and bits and pieces of information that I have collected into some sort of organized structure that might be of benefit to others – others who likewise have come to love these instruments and are interested in the history of the company that produced the Packard legacy.

When I first began to fantasize about compiling a book of some sort, I envisioned it along the lines of a book titled *Estey Reed Organs on Parade* by Robert B. Whiting that basically was a compilation of catalogs depicting organs as they were designed and offered during the life of the company. It did contain a brief history and other aids that helped to identify and date their instruments.

It soon became apparent, however, that the tidbits I had collected that might also be of interest to others would reach beyond the scope first envisioned. I began to see the necessity of writing a two volume set.

The first book, titled *The History of the Fort Wayne Organ Company & the Packard Legacy; Volume 1: Nuts, Bolts, & Other Tidbits*, will emphasize basic facts including catalog illustrations and instrument designs throughout the organ life of the company. Historical tidbits and other data that will help identify and date organs are also included.

The second book, titled *The History of the Fort Wayne Organ Company & the Packard Legacy; Volume 2: Justice-The Secret of Good Business*, will primarily focus on the years 1895 until 1930, the year the company went into receivership as a result of the stock market crash. These were also the years of piano production, WWI, and the development of a model business policy that was highly respected around the country. Out of the development of this business policy, which arose because of employee unrest, came the Packard slogan, "If there is no harmony in the factory, there will be none in the piano."

Volume 1 Overview

I begin with a one-page timeline of the company's history, noting its major milestones. This is followed by the organization of the Fort Wayne Organ Company during its first three years, ending with the death of its namesake, I. T. Packard.

Isaac Turner's biography follows. While he held many patents, I have included only one, the one that was frequently desired by buyers of his instruments. I say "his instruments" because Isaac saw organ production as simply the continuation of his former business ventures dating back several decades. Sadly, his time in business in Fort Wayne was all too brief.

Chapters four through twelve are divided into the various features that make a Packard a Packard. Included are numerous catalogs and photographs of various instrument designs. I have broken down the catalog chapters into three primary time periods: the early years, 1872-1887; the decade of Hill case designs, 1888-1897; and the closing years of organ production, 1898-1914.

Following these chapters are two sections identifying mechanical features and designs that can be useful in dating a Packard organ.

The data chart is one I have created by tracking organs for about 15 years. On many of the organs I collected the information myself, either by inspecting others' instruments or from ones I purchased directly. Other folks have sent me information about their organs via my website, *packardorgan.com*. Still other information came from friends who have also become aficionados of the Packard brand.

I close out the book with a brief chapter "The Handwriting on the Wall," that leads into *Volume 2: Justice – The Secret of Good Business*.

I have made no attempt to write a narrative of the company's history from beginning to end. I have not had the time or skills to enter into the research for such a task. I will leave to others in the future the pleasure of delving deeper into the fascinating history of this significant company. My primary concern has been to make available all of the knowledge and primary materials that I have collected over the years before my time on this earth is ended. Selfishly, I don't want it to be lost. I feel I owe that much to the memory of those who have gone before.

The Fort Wayne Organ Company's instruments found their way into many homes, churches, schools, and other locations, delighting generations with their music. The legacy continues to linger in the instruments that are collected and brought back to life in this generation. The pianos and organs that have survived are a testament to the quality of workmanship instilled in each one. My hope and desire is that I have been faithful in helping to preserve the workmen's legacy, a legacy of which they can rightfully be proud.

1. Fort Wayne Organ Company Timeline

1871 (October 8-10) – Great Chicago Fire: Isaac Packard with other skilled factory workers moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana, and helped organize the Fort Wayne Organ Company.

1871 (November 20) – Fort Wayne Organ Company incorporated with capital stock of 800 shares at \$50/each; Lindley M. Ninde, President; Isaac Packard, Secretary and Superintendent; Stephen B. Bond, Treasurer.

1871 (December 1) – Land purchase completed for the new factory; groundbreaking followed.

1872 (April 24) – First organ was completed.

1873 (September 11) – Isaac Turner Packard died at the age of 56.

1874 – Ft. Wayne City Directory: S.B. Bond, President; J.D. Bond, Treasurer; G.E. Bursley, Secretary and Manager.

1895 – Fort Wayne Organ Company introduced its first piano catalog offering one style.

1899 (September 5) – Name of company was officially changed from the Fort Wayne Organ Company to The Packard Company.

1900 – By early 1900, the major emphasis in production had shifted from organs to pianos.

1907 (July 20) – Stephen B. Bond, president, died and was succeeded by his son, Albert S. Bond.

1914 – By the outbreak of WWI, organ production totally ceased.

1915 (November 25) – The name of the company was officially changed from The Packard Company to The Packard Piano Company; legal papers had been filed September 15, 1914.

1918 – With the entry of the United States into WWI, Packard manufactured wooden airplane propellers for the military in support of the war effort.

1930 (February 6) – The Packard Piano Company went into receivership following the stock market crash of October 29, 1929. The following information appeared in an article in the *Fort Wayne News Sentinel*, May 27, 1958:

At full production, Packard would produce between three and four thousand pianos a year. It took approximately nine months to make a piano, starting from the time lumber was stored to dry. As the company grew and prospered its stock value rose to \$720,000.

After 59 years of operation, the company went into receivership on Feb. 6, 1930, one of many victims of the great depression. The death blow resulted from a by-product, cabinets for radio manufacturers. The radio companies also went under and couldn't pay for the cabinets they had on order.

1931 (February 13) – Albert S. Bond, president of the company, died at the age of 68, a little over a year after the company went into receivership. According to his death certificate, he had been struck by an automobile while crossing the street the evening before.

1937 – The city of Fort Wayne acquired the former Packard Piano Company property. The buildings were torn down and the land turned into a city park, now known as Packard Park.

2. *The Beginnings of a Company*

After the Chicago fire of October 8-10, 1871, legend says that Isaac Packard got on a train and told the conductor that when his money ran out, let him off the train. It ran out at Fort Wayne, Indiana.

However, the facts don't support the legend:

1. Fort Wayne was only about 175 miles from Chicago. Even taking into account train travel in 1871, it was not long by either distance or time.

2. Isaac was not traveling alone. He came to Fort Wayne with Robert F. Keith and Henry Talbot. The three men had been working together in the Burdett Organ Factory and may have been planning on starting a new organ concern while in Chicago. The fire changed those plans.

3. When the Fort Wayne Organ Company was organized before a notary (Fig. 1) on November 13, Packard invested \$2000 in stock. Hardly someone who had run out of money just the previous month!

A question that might be asked is, "Why Fort Wayne?" Evidence has surfaced that I. T. Packard was already familiar with Fort Wayne. An 1862 exchange of letters between his brother Edmund, the A. Davis & Co., and himself revealed that Isaac had been traveling through Indiana and was in Fort Wayne promoting the sale of Packard melodeons (see 3. *Isaac Turner Packard* p. 11). It may not have been the only time he was in the state.

More importantly, according to the company's catalogs:

... Situated in the heart of the finest black walnut country in the world, and right near to it are the immense pine forests of Michigan. Most of the trunk railroad lines, between Chicago and New York, either pass-through Fort Wayne or have branches terminating there. What was more natural than that experienced organ builders should see the advantages the city afforded for a first-class organ manufactory?

As mentioned, the "Articles of Association" were presented before a notary on November 13. The company was incorporated with capital stock of 800 shares at \$50/each; however, the initial stock sale among the stockholders totaled just \$23,000. (Within two years, the corporation was amended to limit stock to \$24,000.)

These were the initial stockholders and board of directors as listed in order on the application – all listed Fort Wayne as city of residence (board directors are indicated by *):

- Henry Talbot* – 100 shares, \$5,000
- Robert Keith* – 60 shares, \$3,000
- Isaac Packard* – 40 shares, \$2,000
- C. McCulloch – 20 shares, \$1,000
- Charles D. Bond* – 60 shares, \$3,000
- John H. Bass* – 40 shares, \$2,000
- James A. Hay – 20 shares, \$1,000
- Lindley M. Ninde* – 40 shares, \$2,000
- C.L. Hill – 20 shares, \$1,000
- S.B. Bond* – 60 shares, \$3,000

First officers were Lindley M. Ninde, president; Isaac Packard, secretary/superintendent; and S.B. Bond, treasurer. The Articles were received by the Indiana Secretary of State on November 20, 1871, and the Fort Wayne Organ Company became official.

One of the first acts of the newly organized company was to purchase land for the building of a new factory. The purchase was quickly closed on December 1, 1871 (Fig. 2). The land was purchased from Lindley M. Ninde (and his wife), the first president of the company!

The Beginnings of a Company

Ground was soon broken and construction of the new facility was begun. Because of the experience of the Chicago fire, it was built to be fireproof.

Apparently the factory (Fig. 3) was completed by early 1872 as the following one-sentence announcement appeared in the *Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel*, April 25, 1872: "The Fort Wayne organ manufactory completed their first instrument yesterday." The *Fort Wayne News-Sentinel* March 25, 1925, informed its readers the company had begun production with the "...factory employing 24 men...."

On August 6, 1873, less than two years after the opening of the factory and one month before Isaac Packard died, the following appeared in *Fort Wayne Gazette* giving us an early glimpse of the factory's operation:

A reporter of the GAZETTE on yesterday paid a visit to one of the most extensive of the manufacturing establishments which abound in our flourishing city and go so far to make up its greatness. We refer to the Fort Wayne Organ Factory, located on Fairfield Avenue, about one mile south of the Toledo, Wabash & Western Railway track, and within the classic precincts of South Wayne. After a pleasant drive along the beautiful avenue, with its elegant residences and shady surroundings, our eyes are greeted with the large and imposing building constituting the factory. The commodious structure is surrounded on all sides by neat dwelling houses, most of which have been erected since the factory was started, showing what a marked improvement it has made in locality where it is situated.

The enterprise which is thus in the full tide of success is a new one. Work on the building was commenced in November, 1871, and operations were begun in April, 1872—*only a little over a year ago*. The building is constructed of brick, is four stories high and occupies an area of 40x100 feet, with a rear wing, also of brick, two stories in high [sic] and 20x40 feet in dimensions. It was rather a formidable task which this company under took—to open in the West an establishment for the manufacture of musical instruments and enter into competition with old established and wealthy companies, whose instruments had a high standing and whose managers would use every means to crush out the new opposition. Very few there were who thought that a superior organ could or would be made in Fort Wayne. But there were some advantages possessed by our city over Eastern points, prominent among which were our excellent shipping facilities, and these were estimated at their proper value by the keen and energetic men who started the project.

In the first place it was determined to make an organ which should be excelled by none. For this reason the building was fitted up with the most rare and costly machinery, much of it imported, and very intricate and complicated in its operations. Of course, it was necessary to secure the most skillful and accomplished mechanics to manage this machinery, and the hands employed are therefore all of them finished artisans and sober, intelligent men. It is interesting to the uninitiated to watch the different processes which literally convert the trees of the forest into the marvelous instruments which sound the praises of God in thousands of churches and Sabbath Schools, or make sweet music in multitudes of homes. The lumber is thoroughly seasoned in the drying house and then removed to a large wooden store room on the first floor, where it is planed off and cut up into strips of the proper size. It next takes a ride on the elevator to the third floor, where it is fashioned and shaped by skillful hands into cases in what is called the "case room." From there it goes to the fourth floor, where the work of finishing and polishing goes on. On the third floor is the "action room," perhaps the most interesting part of the entire establishment. The "action

The Beginnings of a Company

room” is where the mechanical parts of the organ are constructed and put together, and here a novice may see the interior arrangement of the instrument, and learn the parts played by the bellows, reeds and air chambers in the production of music when manipulated by practiced hands. Here, also, is where the elaborate carving (which adds so much to the beauty of the Packard organs) is done.

The cases, having been finished, are sent to the “fly finishing” room on the second floor. Here the “stop work” and putting together are done, and across the hall are the tuning rooms. The many pieces of mechanical ingenuity which go to make up the harmonious whole are at last in their proper places and enclosed in tasty and attractive cases. The organ—for it can now be called by that name—passes into the hands of Mr. R.F. Keith, the chief tuner, and his assistants. It is really marvelous to see how quickly Mr. Keith’s practiced ears will detect the slightest irregularity in tones, and how the slightest filing of the reeds will remedy the error. After the first tuning the instruments stand for about ten days. While the newly exposed surfaces of the reeds are subject to the action of the air. Then the organs again pass through the tuners’ hands, after which they are examined by Mr. I.T. Packard, who goes through the operation known as “correcting,” perfecting the tones by the slightest touches upon the reeds. The most trivial defect does not go unnoticed by his keen eye and acute ear. The organ we have followed so long now passes into the “regulating room,” where every part is thoroughly tested and perfectly adjusted. The organ is now sent to the packing room, from which it leaves the building to be transported, perhaps, hundreds of miles, a splendid specimen of Fort Wayne enterprise and skill.

The office and wareroom, on the first floor, is a large and well-lighted room, 20x40 feet in size. Here the business is transacted and a large number of instruments, of different styles and sizes, handsomely finished up, are kept on exhibition. The lumber used for the cases of the organs is black walnut; that for the interior is pine, cherry and maple. Of course, it takes an immense amount of lumber to supply the factory with the amount consumed.

The motive power which runs all this complicated machinery is furnished by a magnificent steam engine, of 60 horse power, from the works of John H. Bass, which is one of the finest pieces of mechanism of the kind we have ever seen, and is another triumph of Fort Wayne workmanship. The company is well provided for in case of a fire breaking out. There is a well near the building, eleven feet in diameter and fifty-five feet in depth, which furnishes an inexhaustible supply of water. This is pumped up into a tank in the fourth story by a small engine, and on each floor five buckets constantly full of water are kept together with a supply of hose for any emergency.

We believe that few people in or out of Fort Wayne have a definite impression of the size of this establishment or the extent of its business, of which we have attempted to give some idea in this article. It now has facilities for turning out 150 organs a month. Wherever these instruments have been introduced they have met with marked approval, and they are now sold in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Tennessee, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska. There was at first a general disinclination to touch a new and untried instrument made in the West, but the superior character of these organs, the correctness of every tone, the beauty of their construction and their numerous other merits, have given them a truly wonderful popularity, considering the short time which has elapsed since their manufacture was begun. The chief of the mechanical department, Mr. Packard; the superintendent of tuning, Mr. Keith, and their assistants,

The Beginnings of a Company

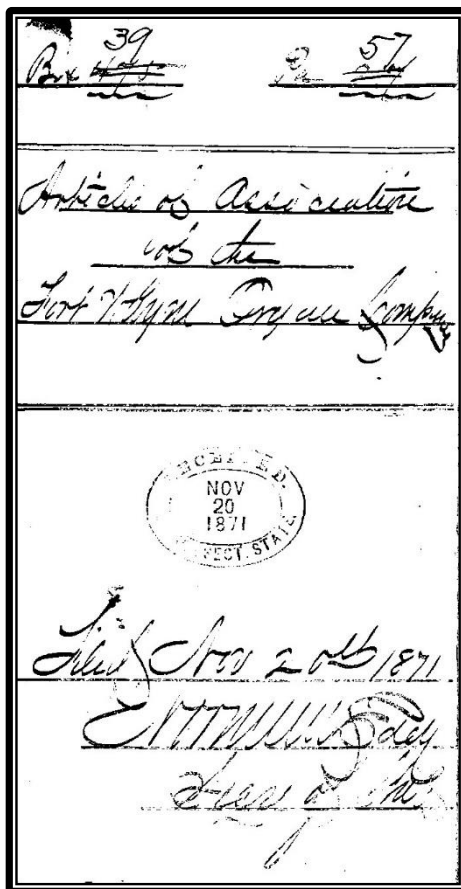
are men of energy, ability and experience to whom is largely due the uniform excellence of these organs.

The company was especially fortunate in securing at the outset as manager a gentleman of so much practical business tact, indefatigable industry and executive ability as G.E. Bursley, Esq. Mr. Bursley gives every detail of the immense business under his charge the closest personal supervision, and it is to his superior management that the excellent system which characterizes every department is due. Mr. Bursley informs us that the company will keep pace with the rapidly increasing demands upon it. He has just returned from a successful business tour to Michigan in the interests of the company and will soon leave for the West on a similar errand.

We regard this organ factory as one of the institutions of which every citizen may feel proud. It is the largest one in the West, and its rapid progress in the past warrants us in making the most hopeful predictions as to its future success.

After the death of I. T. Packard on September 11, 1873, the company was reorganized. The 1874 Fort Wayne City Directory listed Stephen B. Bond as president; J.D. Bond, treasurer; and G.E. Bursley, secretary/manager. The Fort Wayne Organ Company flourished under the able leadership of President Bond, who remained president until his death in 1907.

Figure 1. Articles of Association, p. 1/3.



The State of Indiana
Allen County

Personally appeared before me the undersigned Notary Public within & for said County Henry F. Lott Robert F. Youth Isaac F. Packard Charles McConerch Charles D. Bond John H. Hay's James A. F. Bradley M. Wade Charles L. Hill and Stephen B. Bond and acknowledged the execution of the within and foregoing articles of association for the uses and purposes therein expressed

Witness my hand and official seal this 18th day of Nov 1871
M. S. Philley
Notary Public

Figure 1. Articles of Association, p. 2/3.

Articles of Association of the Fort Wayne Organ Company

We the subscribers hereby certify
an agreement to organize ourselves
into a corporation for the manufacture
of Musical Instruments and agree
to be governed by the following
Articles of Association,

- Article 1st This corporation shall be known
by the name of "Fort Wayne Organ
Company"
- Article 2^d The object for which said Corporation
is formed shall be the Manufacture
and sale of Musical Instruments and
for the prosecution of such branches
of business as are properly connected
therewith.
- Article 3^d The Capital Stock of said Corporation
shall consist of Eight Hundred shares
of Fifty Dollars each
- Article 4th The existence of this Corporation
shall continue if desired by the
Corporators for a term of Fifty years,
- Article 5th The number of Directors for the
Management of the business affairs
of said Corporation shall be Seven,
and Isaac S. Packard Lindley M

Figure 1. Articles of Association, p. 3/3.

^{Henry H. Talbot}
 Under Robert H. Keith Stephen
 O Bond John H. Gaff and Charles
 A Bond shall constitute the Board
 of Directors for the Management of the
 affairs of said Corporation for the period
 of one year from the completion
 of its organization by the filing
 of this certificate in the Records
 Office of Allen County

That the operations of said Corporation
 shall be carried on in the Sanfuid
 Addition of Out-Lots to the City of
 Fort Wayne, Allen County, Indiana

Said Corporation shall have
 power by its Board of Directors to
 make and establish By Laws for
 its Government, and to alter and
 amend the same at the discretion
 of their said Board of Directors

Names	Residence	No of Shares	Amount
Henry H. Talbot	Fort Wayne Ind	100	\$5000
Robert H. Keith	"	60	3000
Charles A. Bond	"	40	2000
John H. Gaff	"	20	1000
Stephen O. Bond	"	60	3000
John H. Gaff	"	40	2000
John H. Gaff	"	20	1000
Charles A. Bond	"	40	2000
C. L. Hill	"	20	1000
<hr/>			
S. B. Bond	"	60	\$3000
		40	2000

The Beginnings of a Company

Figure 2. Deed of Sale, December 1, 1871 pp. 1-2.

This Indenture Witnesseth that Dudley W. Smith and Beulah L. Smith in con-
 sideration of two thousand dollars to them paid by the First Oregon Oregon Trading
 Co. the receipt thereof is hereby acknowledged do grant bargain sell and convey with
 said First Oregon Oregon Trading Co. Successors and assigns forever the following
 Real Estate in Allen County and State of Indiana and described as follows to wit
 Three Acres off the South Side of our S.W. Quarter Section (13) in
 Township addition of our S.W. Section in the East Half of the North West Quarter
 of Section Numbered Fourteen (14) in Township Numbered Twenty Six North of Range
 Numbered Twelve East in said County being three acres off the South Side
 of the premises conveyed by Hugh McButtack and wife to said Arthur Fisher by deed
 bearing date Sept. 11. 1873 together with all the privileges and appurtenances to

the same being more fully described in the said First Oregon Oregon Trading
 Co. Successors and assigns forever the grantors their heirs and assigns hereby commanding
 him the grantors do Successors and assigns that the title so conveyed is clear free and unincumbered
 that they are lawfully seized of the premises aforesaid as of a sure and indefeasible estate of in-
 dividually in fee simple and that they will maintain and defend the same against all
 claims whatsoever

In Witness Whereof the grantors have hereunto set their hands and seals this 1st day of Dec 1871
 (Stamp #245)

Dudley W. Smith (Seal)
 Beulah L. Smith (Seal)

State of Indiana Allen County, ss

Personally appeared before me the undersigned Notary Public within and for
 said County the above named Dudley W. Smith and Beulah L. Smith the grantors in the foregoing
 deed and acknowledged the execution thereof for the uses and purposes therein named
 Minnie Rayburn and William Seal this 1st day of Dec 1871

William L. Phelley (Seal)
 Notary Public
 Allen County

I certify, that the deed of which the above and foregoing is a true copy was duly stamped as
 provided by law of Oregon and recorded on the 2nd day of Dec 1871 at 1 1/2 PM
 C. R. Kears Recording Allen County Ind

Figure 3. Cover of souvenir folder for Fort Wayne, Indiana.
Copyrighted 1888 – Includes factory engraving.

