

THE CHICKERING-DOLMETSCH EARLY-INSTRUMENT LOG-BOOK

A Transcription with Notes

In 1905 Arnold Dolmetsch was engaged by the piano manufacturing firm of Chickering & Sons in Boston, USA, to supervise a department making early instruments, including various kinds of keyboard instruments as well as viols, lutes, and psalteries. Production started in 1906 and continued until 1910 when a financial crisis forced the company to close the early-instrument department. As each instrument was made, it was listed with its number and details of the price and first owner in a register or log-book. The keyboard instruments, regardless of type, were entered in one sequence at the start of the book; the non-keyboard instruments were recorded in a separate sequence at the back of the book.

Later the Chickering company was merged with other firms, eventually becoming part of the Aeolian-American Corporation, which ceased trading in 1985. In 1987 sixteen cubic feet of papers in 37 boxes containing the Chickering records from 1864 until closure were deposited at the Archives Center of the National Museum of American History (part of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC).

Among these papers was the early-instrument log-book, which has now been made available on the Smithsonian website; see:

<https://sova.si.edu/record/NMAH.AC.0264>

(accessed 5 March 2022)

In the table which follows, the first six columns contain a transcription, as precise as I can make it, of the handwritten entries in the early-instrument log-book. Columns 7 and 8 give, where known:

- the date of construction (in the case of harpsichords and clavichords, as it appears on the nameboard; in the case of virginals, spinets and octavinas, as it appears elsewhere on the instrument)
- the current location of the instrument.

Column 9 gives (briefly) any other available information.

A key to some of the names that appear in this annotated transcription can be found here:

<http://www.peter-bavington.co.uk/chickering-personalities.pdf>

I am most grateful to Richard Troeger for his help in preparing this transcription. Any errors in it are entirely my own; I would be grateful for any corrections or further information from users, which may be sent to me by e-mail to peter.bavington@ntlworld.com.

Peter Bavington, March 2022

Sources of information in columns 8 and 9:

[B] Peter Bavington, 'Arnold Dolmetsch's Clavichord-Making in the Years Before 1914', *De Clavicordio VIII*, Magnano, 2008, pp. 35–7.

[C] Gregory Crowell, 'An Interview with Christa Rakich', *Clavichord International*, Vol. 23 No. 1 (May 2019), p. 4.

[CB] Joan Benson, *Clavichord for Beginners*, Indiana University Press, 2014; especially the DVD issued with this book.

[D] Larry Palmer, 'Autobiography of a clavichord', *The Diapason*, December 2015, pp. 12–13.

[H] Information kindly provided by David Hackett.

[LB] Information kindly provided by Lothar Bemmman.

[LL] Information kindly communicated by Laurence Libin.

[LM] Laurence Libin, *American Musical Instruments in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1985, pp. 191–2.

[M] Mabel Dolmetsch, *Personal Recollections of Arnold Dolmetsch*, London (Routledge & Kegan Paul), 1957.

[MacC] Thomas G. MacCracken, 'The Dolmetsch-Chickering Viols', *Journal of the Viola da Gamba Society of America*, Vol. 48 (2013–14), pp. 25–66, especially pp. 36–46. I thank Richard Troeger for drawing my attention to this article.

[P] Larry Palmer, *Harpsichord in America*, Indiana University Press, 1989.

[T] Information kindly communicated to me privately by Richard Troeger in March 2022.

[TDC] Richard Troeger, 'The Dolmetsch/Chickering Clavichords and their Model', *De Clavicordio II*, Magnano, 1996, p. 223.

Unmarked information comes from my own observations and notes, and from public-domain sources on the internet.

NO.	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	NAME	ADDRESS	SHIPPED	Date	2022 location	Remarks
1	Clavichord – Green & Gold & Red Lacquer inside. Inscription in Gold “Musica magnorum est solamen dulce laborum”.	250	Charles T. Carruth	4 Fayerweather St, Cambridge	Feb 16, 1907	1906	New Haven CT: Morris Steinert Collection of Musical Instruments, Yale University 4954.1989	See: https://music.yale.edu/collection (accessed 10 March 2022)
2	Clavichord, Green case, Red inside; Cabriole legs, Inscription “Musica Lataetia [sic] Comes Medicina Dolorum”. Decorated by F. H. B. Byrne.	250	George Eustis	Venice, Italy	November 1 st , 1907	1906	Private owner [TDC]	
3	Clavichord, Cherry case.	200	Southern California Music Co.	Los Angeles, Cal. Returned 3/5/1912	Jany 24, 1907 Sold June 7, 1913 to Mr Richard Aldrich, Barrytown, N.Y.	1906	Private owner [TDC]	Later owned by the harpsichordist Putnam Aldrich (1904–1975), who was Richard Aldrich’s nephew [T]
4	Clavichord, Green case, Pale green inside. Sound Board decorated by Mr Byrne	250	Bissell-Cowan Piano Co. E. P. Warren	Chicago, Ill. Liverpool, England	Jany 1 1908 Retd. 12/12/09 July 18, 1910	1910	London, Horniman Museum 2013.352	The date is given as 1906 on the hitch-pin rail but 1910 appears on the nameboard, recording an overhaul by Chickerings at that time. See https://www.horniman.ac.uk/object/2013.352
5	Clavichord, Maple, Lacquered Green & Gold, Flemish stand Inscription “Musica Magnorum Est Solamen Dulce Laborum”	200	Mrs George L. Nichols	66 E 56 St, New York, N.Y.	Decem.19, 1907	1906		
6	Clavichord, Cherry case	200	Dr J. Humfrey Anger	44 Chestnut Park, Toronto, Ont.	Decem. 15, 1907	1906	Private owner [B]	
7	Clavichord, Cherry case	200	E. F. Searles	Methuen, Mass	Feb. 7, 1907	1906	Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 1981.753	Inherited from E. F. Searles by B. Allen Rowland of New Castle NH, whose heirs gave it to the Museum. See https://collections.mfa.org/objects/51044/ (accessed 5 March 2022). See also No. 17
8	Clavichord, Mahogany Case	200	Richard S. de Gozzaldi	3 Brentford Mall, Cambridge	11 Oct. 1909	1906	Private owner [T]	Was re-strung in steel by Gozzaldi [T]
9	Clavichord, Mahogany Case	200	Mary P. Webster	14 Harris St, Cambridge	Novem. 1, 1906	1906	Larry Palmer, Texas [D]	From Miss Webster it passed to Austin Warren; then Dr Wallace Fowlie; then to the present owner in 1992. {D} [T]
10	Clavichord, Oak case	200	H. Asa Thomas	Lawes House, Lawes, England [sic: actually Lewes]	8 Novem. 1909	1906	Provo UT: Brigham Young University, Lotta van Buren collection No.947050000	How and when Lotta Van Buren acquired the clavichord is not known.
11	Clavichord, Cherry case	200	B. Curtag & Son	San Francisco, Cal.	Decem 6, 1906	1906		
12	Clavichord, Oak case, natural color, Beeswax finish	200	Frederick M. Griswold	Chicago, Ill	Jany 14. 1907	1906	Oberlin OH: Oberlin College and Conservatory [C]	
13	Virginal, Green case, Pale green inside. Decoration: wreath around rose which is Jenkins’ 1st design	200	W. L. Johnson	133 Dakota Street, Dorchester	Feb 8, 1908			Dorchester is a suburb of Boston.
14	Virginal, Green case, Pale green inside	255 pd.	Cressy & Allen Returned to Factory by Cressy & Allen 7/10/14 to be sold for them.	Portland, Maine Sold to John S. Newbury 2097 E. 46 St. Cleveland O. for \$325 including box and frt. charge. Shipped to Miss Lucille Reynolds, Dickson, Illinois	Oct. 16, 1913 Dec. 2, 1914	1906	New York NY Metropolitan Museum of Art 60.51a–c	The description here does not match the actual instrument, which is painted dark brown with printed papers inside. See https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/504601

15	Virginal, Green case, Red inside	200	Dr. Saxton Pope	Watsonville, Cal.	4 Dec/09			
16	Harpsichord, Green case, Pale green inside. Inscription	[blank]	Frank Taft	Montclair, N.J.	May 16-10	1907[T]		
	[Page 2]							
17	Harpsichord, mahogany, inlaid with boxwood & black	2500	E. F. Searles	Methuen, Mass.	October 25, 1907	1906(?)	Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 1981.752	Inherited from E. F. Searles by B. Allen Rowland of New Castle NH, whose heirs gave it to the Museum with clavichord 7. See https://collections.mfa.org/ (accessed 5 March 2022)
18	Harpsichord, Ebony inlaid, with ivory	800	E. B. Dane	6 Beacon St. Boston	April 16, 1914	1906	Was Harvard University HUCP3314, now at University of California, Berkeley [T]	
19	Clavichord, Green case, Pale green inside	200	Arnold Dolmetch [sic]	Cambridge Mass.	March 10, 1911	1907	Private owner [TDC]	
20	Clavichord, Green case, Pale green inside	200	John F. Moors	95 Milk St., Boston shipped Mrs Oscar K. Cushing 37 Seventh Avenue San Francisco, California	July 28, 1911	1907	San Francisco Conservatory of Music [TDC]	
21	Clavichord, Green case, Red inside [actually green] Inscription	200	Smith College	Northampton, Mass.	March 6, 1908	1907	Private owner [T]	Actually green inside, with no inscription, and was originally so [T]
22	Clavichord, Green case, Red lacquer inside Gold lines and Inscription	250	Dr Frederick Peterson	4 W. 50th St, New York, N.Y.	Decem.21, 1907	1907		
23	Clavichord, Green case, Red inside Special keys. Inscription	200	Arthur Whiting	[blank]	April 16 1914	1907	Private owner [TDC]	
24	Clavichord, Green case, Pale green inside. Inscription	200	Mrs S S Beman	317 e 49 St., Chicago, Ill.	March 23, 1908	1907		
25	Clavichord, Green case, Red inside. Inscription	200	Howard, Farwell & Co.	St. Paul, Minn.	March 21, 1908	1907	Washington DC Dumbarton Oaks [TDC]	
26	Clavichord, Green case. Pale green inside	200	Wm. Howard Hart	131 E 66th St., New York, N.Y.	Novem. 12, 1907	1907		Was exhibited at the Boston Early Music Festival in 2007 and offered for sale through the Harpsichord Clearing House of Rehoboth, Massachusetts. http://www.harpsichord.com (accessed 2 February 2007)
27	Clavichord, Green case, Red inside. Gold inscription	200	R. R. Whitehead	Woodstock N.J.	April 18, 1908	1908	Private owner [TDC]	The date is given as 1908 on the nameboard but as 1907 on the hitch-pin rail [T]
28	Clavichord, Green case Red inside Inscription	200	Wellesley College	Wellesley, Mass.	Mch. 16/08 Sold Jan 1/08	1907	Still at Wellesley College [TDC]	
29	Clavichord. Green & red	200	Corinne Brown	Prospect St., Worcester, Mass.	September 29, 1910	1907	New Haven CT: Morris Steinert Collection of Musical Instruments, Yale University 4952.1984	
30	Clavichord. White Lacquer. Red inside	200	Re-possessed 7/21/11 John Wanamaker	Philadelphia, Pa	Dec 29, 1908 Ret. to Factory 7/21/11 -P.O. letter 7/24/10	1908	Washington DC: Smithsonian Inst. 1983.0157.01	
31	Clavichord. Green & red Case made to order	200	Mrs J. P. Chamberlain	Highfield, Middleburg, Conn.	June 2, 1910	1908	Private owner, Boston MA	The date is given as 1908 on the nameboard but as 1907 on the hitch-pin rail. This clavichord can be heard on some tracks of the CD 'J.S. Bach: The Art of Fugue', Hungaroton HCD 32784-85 (performer Bálint Karosi) [LB]

32	Clavichord, Green case Red inside	200	Mrs E. A. Greene-Passaie M. J.	To Prof. Hammond, Mt Holyoke College Holyoke, Mass	7 June 1909	1908	New Haven CT: Morris Steinert Collection of Musical Instruments, Yale University, No. 4943.1957	
	[Page 3]							
33	Clavichord White	200	Neatell F. Abbott	59 Sacramento St, Cambridge	29 Oct/09	1908		
34	Clavichord White Lacquer Inscription	200	E. B. Dane	Chestnut Hill, Mass	June 12, 1911	1908	Berkeley CA University of California, Berkeley [T]	
35	Clavichord 2 Shades Green	200	Mrs Adrian M. Jolius	1 W. 72nd St. New York, N.Y.	Feby 11, 1909	1908	New York NY Metropolitan Museum of Art 1992.386.2	The date is given as 1908 on the nameboard, but as 1907 on the hitch-pin rail
36	Clavichord Green & red Case made to order	200 18	Miss Parrish	Radnor, Penn.	March 7, 1910	1909	Indiana University, Jacobs Music School [T]	Said to have once belonged to Dorothy Swainson. [T] The date is given as 1909 on the nameboard but 1907 on the hitch-pin rail [CB] This instrument can be heard on the DVD issued with Joan Benson's book [CB]
37	Clavichord Green & red	200	O. G. Sonneck	Washington, DC	Feby 11, 1909		Hartford CT: Wadsworth Athaneum Museum of Art [TDC]	Dolmetsch played this clavichord to President Theodore Roosevelt and Mrs Roosevelt at the White House on 16 December 1908 [P, p. 23]
38	Clavichord, White & Red	200	Vassar College	Poughkeepsie, NY	28 Sept 1909	1909	Still at Vassar College [TDC]	Mabel Dolmetsch's story [M, pp. 74, 95-6] that the students clubbed together to buy the instrument after hearing Arnold play it cannot be correct: his recital was on 3 November 1909 [LL]
39	Octavina Green case Light green inside	50	C. H. W. Foster	Charles River Village, Mass	June 20, 1908	1907	Private owner	
40	Octavina Green case Light green inside	75	George L. Nichols	66 E. 56th St New York N.Y.	Decem. 10, 1907			
41	Octavina Green case, Light Green inside	50	E. F. Searles	Methuen Mass	April 10, 1908			
42	Octavina Green case, Light green inside	50	Mrs S. S. Beman	317 E 49th St, Chicago, Ill.	March 12, 1908			
43	Octavina Green & Pea Green	50	Edward Perry Warren	Hotel Bellevue Boston, Mass.	31 Dec. 1909		New Haven CT: Morris Steinert Collection of Musical Instruments, Yale University No. 4898.1984	
44	Octavina Green & Pea Green	50	Edward Perry Warren		31 Dec. 1909			
45	Octavina Stained green	50	Mrs John F. Perry	Fenway Boston	5 Feby 1909			
46	Octavina White	60	Spencer Borden Fall River, Mass	To Mrs Bernard W. Trafford Grosie Point Farms-Detroit-Mich	22 July 1909	1909	Boston MA, Museum of Fine Arts, 2017.4466	Inherited in 1936 by Lorna Trafford Owen; given in 1962 to her niece, Elizabeth M. Possidente, who gave it to the Museum. See https://collections.mfa.org/objects/638651/ (accessed 5 March 2022)
47	Octavina Green with red foundation	50	H. W. Parsons	34 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, Mass.	March 18, 1910			
48	Octavina White	60	Mrs John F. Perry	Fenway Boston	23 Oct 1909	1907	New York NY Metropolitan Museum of Art 67.36 [LM]	
	[Page 4]							

49	Octavina Green & Pea-green	60	Baronin M. von Zoë	Rhein, Germany	Feb 2, 1910			
50	Octavina White & Gold	100	Geo L. Nichols To Mr & Mrs Spencer Trask	Gaddo, Saratoga Springs, N.Y.	Decem 23 1907			
51	Clavichord Green & red	200	Montenegro Riehme Music Co.	Louisville, Ky.	December 18, 1909	1909	Formerly William Dowd, then Christopher Hogwood; now Douglas Hollick, Grantham	This clavichord can be heard, played by the present owner, on the CD 'Light and Shade' (Riverrun Records RVR CD 122)
52	Harpsichord. Plum pudding mahogany case with Boxwood line inlay	1000 600	Re-possessed Mary P. Webster.	40 Prentiss St., Cambridge	March 21, 1908			See also clavichord 9
			Smith College	Northampton Mass.	May 22, 1917			
we were notified by N.Y. Office that they had sold above.								
53	Harpsichord Mahogany	600	Mr Archer Gibson	Hotel Bretton Hall New York New York	1916 [no other date]	1908	Colonial Williamsburg VA 1953-1196A	Bequeathed to Alta Rockefeller Prentice, who gave the harpsichord to Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in 1953. Images of this harpsichord are available at https://emuseum.history.org/objects/34430 (accessed 6 March 2022)
54	Harpsichord, Japanese Decoration		Mrs Spencer Kellogg	805 Delaware Ave Buffalo NY	October 4, 1910			
55	Harpsichord Green case - Red inside	800	Arnold Dolmetch [sic]	Cambridge, Mass.	March 10, 1911		New Haven CT: Morris Steinert Collection of Musical Instruments, Yale University No. 4894.1975	Given to the museum by Ralph Kirkpatrick. One of only two harpsichords with 16-foot stop, the other being No. 61. It later belonged to Lady de Whalen who lent it to Violet Gordon Woodhouse, and after the latter's death it was bought by Kirkpatrick, who recorded on it in 1952 [T]
56	Harpsichord Green & red		Miss Florian A. Shepard	The Shepard School of Music Orange, New Jersey	April 30, 1918			
57	Harpsichord Green & red		Miss Frances Pelton Jones	Hotel Endicott First[?] 81st St. N.Y. New York	April 12, 1916 Pd. for Nov. 1, 1920			At one time owned by Ralph Kirkpatrick [T]
58	Harpsichord Green & red	400	Mr Henry L. Gideon	[no address]	[no date]	1907	Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution 1980.0020.02	Images and further information available at https://www.si.edu/object/chickering-sons-double-manual-harpsichord:nmah_606309 (accessed 5 March 2022)
59	Harpsichord Green & red		Mrs Joseph Chamberlain 9/3/11	Highfield Middlebury Conn 830 Park Ave., New York N.Y.	November 1911	1909	New York, Mertropolitan Museum of Art No. 1981-374	Used by Arthur Whiting (see clavichord 23) [T]. See: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/504339 (accessed 5 March 2022)
60	Harpsichord Green & red		[in pencil] Ferruccio Busoni	Berlin Germany	[no date]		New Haven CT: Morris Steinert Collection of Musical Instruments, Yale University No. 4897.1984	Was returned to Chickering & Sons after the composer's death in 1924 and bought by Lotta van Buren, who sold it to Ralph Kirkpatrick in 1934 [P] [T]
			[in faint pencil] Mr Byrne on July 1, 1915 wrote that Busoni has this on loan & he would see him about it this summer before B. went back.					
61	Harpsichord Green & red	500	Mr E. B. Dane.	6 Beacon St., Boston	March 12, 1914			One of only two harpsichords with 16-foot stop, the other being No. 55. Was listed for sale in February 2022 by Zuckermann Harpsichords International: now sold (?)
62	Piano [illegible word: perhaps transferred wet ink from another page or blotter]							Probably sold by Aeolian Piano Co in 1930s [T]
63	Piano		[in very faint pencil] In Factory					
64	Piano		[in very faint pencil] In Factory					

	[Page 5]							
65	Octavina White	60.-	E. P. Warren Esq. To R. Bennett Marshall Esq.	Lewes House, Sussex, England Fenwick St. Liverpool	June 6, 1910			
66	Octavina White & Gold	60.-	F. E. Peabody	120 Commonwealth Ave, Boston Mass	June 10, 1910			
67	Octavina	50	E. P. Warren To R. B. Marshall	Lewes House Sussex Eng Fenwick St. Liverpool "	Dec. 30, 1910			
68	Octavina		Helen M. Smith	Stamford, Conn.	June 21, 1910			
69	Octavina		Cressey & Allen	Portland, Maine	June 6, 1911			
70	Octavina	60.-	Mrs Gordon Woodhouse	9 Park Place St James, London	November 28, 1910			
71	Octavina	60	E. P. Warren To Miss Cornelia Warren	Sussex Eng. Cedar Hill, Waltham, Mass.	Nov. 12 1910 January 5, 1911			
72	Spinet	300	John F. Moors	95 Milk St. Boston shipped Mrs Oscar K. Cushing 37 Seventh Ave., San Francisco California	July 28, 1911	1910	Private owner [H]	Given to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music by Mrs Cushing. Thence via other owners to the present owner. Cherry-wood case..
73	Spinet	300	E. P. Warren	Shipped to Westbrook, Maine Sussex Eng.	Aug 26, 1911 Nov. 12 1910			
74	Clavichord White & Gold Louis XIV Style	575	F. E. Peabody	120 Commonwealth Ave., Boston	December 20, 1910	1910	Private owner [T]	Illustrated in Mabel Dolmetsch's <i>Recollections</i> , opposite p. 64
75	Spinet Special case \$30 no case	300	Repossessed 2/24/11 Mrs S MacD Sheridan Mrs Jennie T. Sedgwick	19 West 9th St New York NY. 2015 Kenwood Parkway, Minneapolis, Minn.	January 24, 1911 Oct. 16, 1912			
15 76	Viola da Gamba. #15	150	E. B. Dane	6 Beacon St. Boston	April 16, 1914			
	[Nos. 77-80 lines left blank]]							

Non-keyboard instruments.

A separate sequence of numbers covers the non-keyboard instruments. Entries for them were made on two pages at the end of the log-book, instruments 1 to 16 on the page originally numbered 3185-3200, and numbers 17 and 18 on the previous page, numbered 3169-3184. The printed numbers on these pages were crossed through, as indicated below, and the new instrument numbers were written in red ink above them.

NO.	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	NAME	ADDRESS	SHIPPED		2022 location	Remarks
1 3185	Psaltery	35	Mrs Kate Wisner McCluskey	2249 Sherman Ave, Evanston, Ill.	Oct. 25, 1907			
2 3186	Psaltery	35	Miss M. P. King	264 W. 57th St. New York N.Y.	Mch 13, 1907			
3 3187	Psaltery	35	Franklin H. Sargent	Room 141 Carnegie Hall New York N.Y.	July 27, 1907			

4 3188	Psaltery							
5 3189	Viola da Gamba		C. H. W. Foster	Boston Mass			New England Conservatory of Music [MacC]	Presented to Foster by Dolmetsch on 18 October 1906 [MacC]
6 3190	Viola da Gamba							
7 3191	Treble Viol		C. H. W. Foster	Boston Mass	Jan 7, 1909			
8 3192	Treble Viol							
9 3193	Treble Viol						Private owner [MacC]	
10 3194	Tenor Viol						New England Conservatory of Music [MacC]	
11 3195	Tenor Viol						New England Conservatory of Music [MacC]	
12 3196	Tenor Viol						Private owner [MacC]	
13 3197	Lute	160	Jules Ecorcheville	Paris France	Dec. 27, 1907			
14 3198	Lute							
15 3199	Viola da Gamba		[in pencil] Loaned Miss Alice Kelsey	4 Buckingham Pl. Cambridge	Jan 19/09 R		Private owner [MacC]	See entry on keyboard instrument page 5 (line 76)
16 3200	Theorbo Lute	200	Maude Adams	131 E. 66th St. New York N.Y.	Jan 6/09			
	Entered on previous page:							
17 3169	Theorbo Lute	200 less 10% <u>20</u> 180	Mrs W. H. Graves	69 Brattle St., Cambridge	Dec. 22/08			
18 3170	Aeolian Harp	25	J. G. Ramsbottom	86 Commonwealth Ave. Chestnut Leue[?]	Dec. 14/08			
	[lines 171-185 left blank]							