

American Record Companies and Producers

1888–1950

An Encyclopedic History

Second Edition

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American Record Companies and Producers, 1888–1950: An Encyclopedic History Second Edition

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Introduction: A Brief Overview of the American Recording Industry (1888 – 1950)

Introduction: A Brief Overview of the American Recording Industry (1888 – 1950)

The invention of Thomas Edison's tinfoil phonograph in 1877, momentous as it was, did not mark the beginning of the commercial sound-recording industry. Although Edison's machine was capable of recording and reproducing music in a crude fashion, the delicate tinfoil sheets it employed were unsuited for mass duplication and distribution. Edison soon shifted his attention to development the incandescent light, and public interest in the phonograph waned. It might well have languished as little more than a scientific curiosity and parlor toy were it not for the efforts of two men outside of Edison's circle, Charles Sumner Tainter and Chichester A. Bell.

Tainter, an assistant to Alexander Graham Bell, began experimenting with wax as a recording medium in the early 1880s. At about the same time, Bell launched the Volta Laboratory Association in Washington, D.C., bringing in his cousin Chichester. Although Volta was formed to carry out general acoustic and telephonic research, attention soon shifted to improving the phonograph, in the hope of drawing Edison into a joint venture. It was not to be.

On June 27, 1885, Tainter and Chichester Bell filed a U.S. patent on a sound recording and reproducing device employing a floating reproducer and interchangeable wax-surfaced cylinders, representing a marked improvement over Edison's tinfoil device. The Volta Laboratory Association was reorganized on February 3, 1886, as the Volta Graphophone Company. The Bell-Tainter patent (which was destined to become one of the most valuable and highly contested patents in the recording industry) was granted on May 4, 1886. Eleven days later, it was licensed to the newly formed American Graphophone Company in Washington, D.C.. Tainter went on to file a patent embodying various improvements to the graphophone on July 7, 1887.

News of the graphophone's launch rattled Edison, who condemned the new company as "a bunch of pirates." Spurred to action, he filed a patent on November 26, 1887, for a completely redesigned phonograph. Incorporating a greatly improved cutter and reproducer, and equipped with a battery-powered electric motor, Edison's improved phonograph employed reusable, interchangeable solid-wax cylinders, in a larger diameter than those used on the Bell-Tainter machines. Like the Bell-Tainter graphophone, the improved phonograph was originally envisioned as a dictating machine. Unlike the graphophone, it was also capable of reasonably accurate musical recording and reproduction.

1888 – 1899

As early as December 1888, F. W. Baldwin, editor of the Orange, New Jersey *Chronicle*, had written to Thomas Edison, offering the services of "some musical friends" in making recordings on the improved phonograph. At that point, Edison showed little interest in any but the technical aspects of record-making. No evidence has been found that he took Baldwin up on his offer, although experimental musical recordings were already being made in the Edison Laboratory.

In the meantime, Jesse Lippincott, who had secured an exclusive marketing license from the American Graphophone Company, found himself faced with a competing Edison machine that was markedly superior to the graphophone. Realizing its potential to undermine graphophone sales, Lippincott offered to purchase the Edison Phonograph Company. In June 1888, Edison assigned all marketing rights to Lippincott but retained the manufacturing rights. On July 14, Lippincott chartered the North American Phonograph Company to trade in phonographs, graphophones, and sundry materials relating to the recording and reproduction of sound. Lippincott modeled his business on the Bell Telephone Company, renting rather than selling the equipment. Leasing and servicing would be handled by a group of local sub-companies, each of which was licensed to operate in a strictly defined sales territory.

On May 24, 1889, the Edison Laboratory formally opened what it designated it “musical cylinder account,” effectively marking the beginning of the commercial recording industry. On that day, engineer Theo Wangemann recorded eight flute selections by Frank Goede. Recording sessions at the Edison Laboratory increased steadily as 1889 progressed. Duplicated at the Edison Phonograph Works, these early cylinders were purchased mainly for use on coin-operated machines or for exhibition in “phonographic concerts,” or were used for demonstration purposes in the showrooms of North American’s sub-companies. The high prices of Edison’s phonographs and records, and the complexities of repairing and maintaining the electric-motor machines, with their cumbersome batteries, discouraged home use.

A commercially viable method of mass cylinder production had not yet been developed. After some experimentation with molding from a permanent metal, Edison settled on a far simpler method of duplication, developed by Walter Miller, involving a direct mechanical link between a playback machine and a multi-cylinder copying device. The duplication process, although far more efficient than recording each cylinder individually, still required performers to sing or play a title repeatedly into a bank of recording machines until enough masters had been made to provide the requisite number of copies. Only a few copies could be made from each master before it became too worn to use, so remakes were still required. The results could vary considerably, depending upon the performers’ distance from each of the multiple recording horns, variations in the artists’ performance from one “round” of recording to the next, the wearing qualities of the individual masters, and other variables. The need for remakes also precluded the use of many celebrity artists, whose traveling and performance schedules prevented regular visits to the studio. Instead, the need for talent was filled largely by a pool of freelance artists, some of them literally recruited off the street. Many would go on to have long careers in the recording studios, and a few even ascended to management positions within the industry.

Under his agreement with Jesse Lippincott, Thomas Edison had reserved the exclusive right to supply musical records to the North American Phonograph Company and its sub-companies. The sudden surge in demand for cylinder records posed difficulties for the Edison Laboratory, which struggled to keep up with orders. Stung by complaints of poor-quality cylinders and unfilled orders, Edison declared, “Perhaps it might be more satisfactory for the different phonograph companies to make their own records.” In December 1890, he agreed to allow the North American Phonograph sub-companies to record and sell original records, provided that they were made on Edison blanks and duplicated at the Edison Phonograph Works (although many soon found ways of making their own duplicates and even blanks). The decision would have profound consequences for Edison and affect the future course of the recording industry.

Foremost among National Phonograph’s licensees was the Columbia Phonograph Company of Washington, D.C. Headed by American Graphophone’s Edward D. Easton, Columbia held a lucrative sales territory comprising Delaware, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Almost from Columbia’s inception, Easton (having largely given up on the flawed Bell-Tainter machines) grasped the phonograph’s potential as an entertainment device. As early as November 1889, Columbia was advertising that it kept “high class” musical cylinders constantly in stock. A February 1890 brochure (possibly the oldest surviving Columbia sales list) appears to have been made up of Edison recordings, but Columbia was soon offering its own recordings, employing a mixture of local Washingtonians and visiting artists, with a small contingent from the U.S. Marine Band a particular favorite. Many other local companies followed suit, although their output never approached that of Columbia.

Commercial exhibitors and nickelodeons constituted the primary market for cylinders in the early 1890s, but the general public began to show more interest as phonographs became less expensive and simpler to operate. The tipping point came during 1896, when Edison and Columbia introduced \$40 spring-powered phonograph intended for home use. Their introduction set off a price war that would rage into the late 1890s (when Columbia reached the bottom with its \$5 open-works Type Q Graphophone) and sparked consumer demand for what until then had been a largely unaffordable luxury.

Emile Berliner’s disc phonograph was not yet a viable competitor when Edison and Columbia first entered the entertainment market. Initially unable to secure a U.S. patent

on his invention, Berliner returned to his native Germany to launch his disc machines and records. His original U.S. patent application, made on May 4, 1887, was clearly inspired by Leon Scott's earlier Phonautograph (which was able to record sound but not reproduce it), depicting a cylinder on which was inscribed a laterally modulated groove. His second U.S. patent, filed on March 30, 1892 but not approved until February 1895, instead depicted a disc containing a lateral groove of unvarying depth, which would serve to propel the reproducer. Like Bell-Tainter, it would prove to be one the most valuable and most contested phonograph patents.

Berliner's Gramophone was first marketed in Germany in 1889, as a toy. A crude hand-cranked device, its reproduction was so garbled that labels were attached to the reverse sides of some discs to aid listeners in understanding what was being said or sung. Berliner returned to the United States in the early 1890s and settled in Washington, D.C., where he was soon making experimental recordings with a eye toward commercial production. Berliner recorded on zinc discs coated with an acid-resistant substance, which was cut away by the recording stylus to expose the zinc. After being acid-etched to set the groove, the discs were electroplated to produce stampers from which multiple copies could be pressed, a distinct improvement over the mechanical copying employed by cylinder makers. Discs were produced on a very limited scale in the U.S. during 1892–1893, and in 1894 Berliner opened his first retail store, in nearby Baltimore. Production began in earnest in 1895, after Berliner's patent was finally approved in the United States. With the introduction of improved pressings and spring-driven motors in 1896, the Berliner Gramophone was finally positioned to compete with the cylinder.

Berliner, however, made a fatal error in October 1896, when he granted an exclusive Gramophone sales license to advertising executive Frank Seaman. Through some complex maneuvers that are covered elsewhere in this volume, Seaman eventually substituted his own Zonophone products for Berliner's Gramophone line and secured an injunction that put an end to Berliner's U.S. operation. Its closure would soon lead to the formation of the Victor Talking Machine Company.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the American recording industry was expanding at an impressive rate. Edison, having intentionally bankrupted the North American Phonograph Company to regain control over his invention, reentered the record business in 1896 in the guise of the National Phonograph Company. By 1899, he was averaging forty new releases monthly in the general catalog, along with a substantial output of foreign titles. Columbia was producing at a comparable level, and new cylinder startups, many of them operated by the recording artists themselves, were appearing at regular intervals. Berliner's phonographs and discs, having undergone considerable improvement since the mid-1890s, were slowly gaining on the cylinder as far as sales, and were attracting some unwelcome competitors. Eager to cash in on the disc's rising popularity, Columbia attempted to enter the market by offering questionable patent protection to two makers of imitation gramophones, without success. However, the company would persist, and soon succeed, in its efforts to enter the disc market.

1900 - 1909

As the new century began, the American record industry was dominated by Edison, who produced only cylinders; Berliner, who produced only discs; and Columbia, which was producing only cylinders but had already made one unsuccessful attempt to enter the disc market by licensing an outside manufacturer. Much of the next decade would be devoted to perfecting the machines and records, while fending off would-be competitors.

The introduction of molded cylinders by Edison and Columbia in 1901 eliminated most competitors in the cylinder field within several years. Molding was a complex operation employing secret wax formulations, complex manufacturing processes, and expensive, patent-protected equipment not available to the smaller companies. With the hard molded cylinder so obviously superior to pantographed soft-wax copies, demand for the latter soon vanished, as did the companies that produced them.

Edison and Columbia and Columbia would not have the field to themselves for long, however. Edison had rejected celluloid as a molding medium, and so on August 14, 1899, Thomas Lambert filed a patent application for a method of molding cylinders from "softened material such as cellulose."

The Lambert Company was chartered in March 1900, to manufacture molded celluloid cylinders, and reportedly was marketing the records on a small scale by the summer of that year. Crudely manufactured from undyed celluloid at first, they attracted little attention until 1901, when the company introduced its signature fuchsine-dyed bright-pink cylinders. Although Lambert severed relations with the company in the spring of 1902, its cylinders continued to undergo steady technical improvement.

Those improvements were not enough to offset weak marketing, spotty distribution, lax quality control, and legal challenges from Edison's National Phonograph Company. The Lambert Company eventually trumped Edison in the courts, but by then it was financially ruined and largely dormant. In August 1906, the Lambert Company's assets and patents were sold to an investor acting on behalf of the newly formed Indestructible Phonographic Record Company, whose inexpensive celluloid cylinders would present serious competition to Edison's.

On the disc front, the legal skirmishing between Emile Berliner and Frank Seaman had continued unabated. Finally, on June 25, 1900, at Seaman's behest, an injunction was granted preventing Berliner from marketing Gramophone merchandise outside of Washington, D.C., effectively putting an end to his business. Eldridge Johnson, with his vested interest as Berliner's machine supplier, attempted to carry on the business under his own name. He had been quietly experimenting for some time with wax masters, achieving results that were markedly superior to those of Berliner's noisy etched zinc. However, he did not patent the process, possibly realizing it could be construed as infringing Columbia's Bell-Tainter patent.

Prevented from using the Improved Gramophone name within a few months of its introduction, Johnson introduced his Improved Record. It was soon supplanted by a new brand that would prove to have far greater staying power — Victor. On October 3, 1901, the Victor Talking Machine Company was incorporated by three of Johnson's associates. Johnson was not an incorporator, but he was clearly behind the launch. The new company held the option to buy out Johnson's business, which it did two days later, paying him in stock and installing him as president of the company he would head for the next quarter-century. Protected by the Berliner patent, Victor would become the dominant force in the American record industry, but its fate in 1901 was far from certain. The reorganized Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Company was marketing its Zonophone discs and machines aggressively and had already established a European affiliate.

Even more threatening to Johnson was Columbia's 1901 entry into the disc market with a disc produced by the Globe Record Company. Globe was subsidiary of the Burt Company, a molding plant that had recently begun to press disc records. In September of that year, George Burt made a verbal agreement under which Columbia would market Globe's Climax discs with a Columbia Phonograph Company imprint. A month later, Columbia unveiled its own Disc Graphophone. However, when Columbia became delinquent in its payments to Burt, Johnson stepped in. On January 19, 1902, he purchased the Globe operation for \$10,000 and an agreement to turn over a portion of Victor's pressing work to Burt through July 1903.

Columbia president Edward Easton, suddenly deprived of a disc supplier, began immediate negotiations to purchase Globe from Johnson. In February 1902, Johnson sold the company to Easton for his original \$10,000 purchase price, along with Easton's promise to abandon a pending patent-infringement suit against Victor. Columbia took possession of the Globe masters and recording equipment on February 13, 1902, and the Climax label was quickly scuttled in favor of Columbia's own.

Each company now controlled a patent essential to the other's continued operation: Victor, the Berliner patent on a laterally modulated groove that served to propel the reproducer; and Columbia, the Jones patent on lateral-cut mastering in wax. On December 8, 1903, after two years of threats and litigation, Victor and Columbia agreed to the first of several cross-licensing agreements that would ensure their control of the lateral-cut disc record market for years to come. Zonophone was eliminated as a serious competitor in August 1903, after Eldridge Johnson (but not Victor *per se*) purchased the American portion of the business and recast the company as a low-cost operation that catered to a less affluent clientele than Victor.

Still, there was no shortage of aspiring competitors, some of whom resorted to devious or even illegal schemes in their attempts to gain a foothold. They were aided considerably in their efforts by the fact that sound recordings were not protected by copyright law. Consequently, some contenders simply helped themselves to material recorded by legitimate manufacturers.

At the turn of the century, the American Talking Machine and Universal Talking Machine companies sold discs that were copied illegally from Berliner records. The American Vitaphone Record, introduced around 1902, used masters electroplated from commercial Columbia and Victor pressings, with the original catalog numbers often still clearly showing in the pressing. As late as 1909, Winant Van Zant Pearce Bradley, founder of the Talk-O-Phone Company, was enjoined from issuing pirated Victor and Fonotopia material under his Continental Record Company label. Lacking copyright protection, legitimate manufacturers were limited to suing for patent infringement or unfair competition.

A still greater threat to Victor and Columbia came from several large, well-financed companies that produced original recordings in violation of the basic Berliner and Jones patents. The earliest was Bradley's Ohio Talking Machine Company, which introduced Monogram discs in the early 1900s using masters recorded in its Toledo "laboratory." Reorganized as Talk-O-Phone, in late 1903 it became affiliated with the New York firm of Leeds & Catlin, which had begun to produce its own foil-labeled Leeds discs. Not long after, the Philadelphia manufacturing firm of Hawthorne & Sheble joined forces with John O. Prescott (the brother of Frederick M. Prescott, founder of the International Zonophone and International Talking Machine companies) to serve as sales agents for the newly formed American Record Company, the American affiliate of International Talking Machine. In 1905, the Auburn Button Works (a pressing plant that had recently lost Zonophone as a customer) launched the International Record Company as a recording subsidiary and joined the fray with its inexpensive Excelsior, Lyric, and Mozart labels.

These companies operated with little concern for patents or licenses. All did a healthy business in custom, mail-order, and department store labels in addition to their own brands. International for a time even wholesaled generic-label discs upon which retailers could rubber-stamp their own makeshift brands. All produced reasonably good-quality products and proved to be remarkably persistent in face of frequent patent-infringement suits.

Beginning in 1904, Victor and Columbia kept these and other patent-infringing companies in court almost constantly. Defense attorneys at first challenged the basic validity of the Berliner and Jones patents, claiming lack of invention or anticipation by earlier patents. When that tactic failed, the infringers turned to such ploys as spring-loaded tone arms and mechanical-feed devices in a futile attempt to circumvent Berliner's specification that the reproducer be propelled by the groove. In desperation, Leeds began to offer its discs in partial exchange for worn or broken records, claiming they were simply replacement parts and thus not subject to patent restrictions. That strategy also failed in the courts.

The American Record Company was the first to fall, as the result of a 1906 lawsuit. Hawthorne & Sheble (without Prescott) carried on, marketing discs and phonographs under the Star brand for several years, but the records used masters obtained legally from Columbia, which eventually took over the company's pressing plant. The International Record Company fell in June 1907, stopped by an injunction that did not affect the parent Auburn Button Works. Leeds & Catlin proved to be the boldest and most resilient of the group, even ignoring a 1907 preliminary injunction, but finally was forced into bankruptcy in the spring of 1909. In a final ironic twist, Columbia sold some surplus Leeds pressings it had obtained as part of the settlement and was promptly sued by Victor for selling infringing records.

With the infringers vanquished, there followed a period of relative calm for the three major producers. Technical quality had improved greatly since the 1890s, as had the phonograph's image. Much of the latter can be attributed to the phonograph's increasing acceptance by internationally renowned stars. Enrico Caruso's signing with the Gramophone Company in 1902 is often cited as the turning point in the phonograph's acceptance as a serious instrument, but Feodor Chaliapin and others of equal stature had done the same a year earlier, and some even more illustrious stars (at the time) had gladly recorded in the previous century for Gianni Bettini, who sold premium-priced copies of their records to an elite clientele.

The calm was interrupted in 1908, when Columbia announced that it was converting its catalog to double-sided pressings. From the start, the norm for disc records had been a single title per record, with the reverse side left blank. Johnson and Berliner had already made a few experimental double-sided pressings, and Johnson issued the first commercial double-sided disc (a children's record) November 1900, but these were anomalies. In 1904, Ademar N. Petit was granted U.S. patent on a process for pressing double-sided discs. Petit assigned half-interest to Frederick Prescott, whose International Talking Machine Company had already produced some double-sided pressings for sale in Europe and South America. As an International Talking Machine affiliate, the American Record Company made some double-sided pressings beginning in 1905, but they were custom-order items. It also pressed double-sided discs for export to England, where they were marketed under the American Odeon Duplex name.

Columbia had made an earlier attempt to market double-sided discs in 1904 but abandoned the line within two years. Its 1908 move was far more ambitious and proved to be a game-changer in the record industry. With his hand forced, Eldridge Johnson reluctantly followed suit, announcing double-sided black-label Victor pressings in October 1908, and purchasing rights to Petit's patent several months after the fact. Zonophone followed suit in the same month. Although Victor continued to press its prestigious Red Seals in single-sided form until 1923, double-sided discs quickly became the new industry standard.

1910–1919

Although the events of 1904–1909 left no doubt that Victor and Columbia would defend their positions aggressively, further outside competition was inevitable. By 1910, the success of Pathé Frères' vertical-cut discs in France was attracting notice in the United States. Pathé hesitated to enter the U.S. market, but several small American companies were preparing to introduce vertical-cut discs modeled on Pathé's. Key patents on the vertical cut had expired, lessening the likelihood of legal challenges from the major companies. The risk instead lay in assuming that consumers, who were already being well served by the lateral-cut companies, could be motivated to switch to an unfamiliar format that offered no clear advantage over standard records. Nevertheless, by 1911 three domestically produced vertical-cut brands — Sonora, Princess, and Phono-Cut (in order of introduction) — were being offered to consumers who had little interest in them.

These early ventures not destined to survive for long, with incompatibility issues being the main impediment. Vertical-cut discs could not be used on standard lateral phonographs, and purchasers of vertical-cut phonographs initially were limited to the use of three labels, none of particularly high technical or musical quality. Princess and Sonora quickly perished, while Phono-Cut barely survived into 1913. Philadelphia's Keen-O-Phone Company introduced its own vertical-cut discs in 1913 and reported excellent year-end sales. However, in early 1914 it was announced that Keen-O-Phone was no more. Its factory and patents were taken over by the newly organized Rex Talking Machine Company, which launched its own Rex label while phasing out the remaining Keen-O-Phone inventory.

The vertical-cut Edison Diamond Disc, unveiled to dealers in 1912 after numerous delays, but not generally available until well into 1913, further confused matters. Although technically superior to any record then on the market, the Diamond Disc could be played only on expensive Edison phonographs, which in turn could not play lateral-cut or sapphire-ball (Pathé-type) vertical-cut discs without the use of after-market adapters (which Edison strongly discouraged but was powerless to prevent). The Diamond Disc's potential was considerably diminished by Edison's insistence that he personally pass judgement on all recordings, resulting in a catalog that too often reflected his eccentric tastes and hidebound beliefs regarding music. He was also reluctant to pay for the sort of high-priced celebrity performers who graced the Victor and Columbia catalogs, insisting that the technical superiority of his records, rather than the stature of the artists who performed on them, would win over customers. That notion would cost Edison sales and, ultimately, his record business.

Pathé record production finally commenced in the United States in 1914, handled by an independent American-owned venture under license from the French company. It brought with it an air of prestige and quality that had been lacking in the earlier sapphire-

ball operations. In addition to its domestic recordings, American Pathé was licensed to issue recordings from the parent company's extensive holdings, which included an impressive roster of international celebrities rivaling Victor's and Columbia's. Independent manufacturers were soon offering "universal" reproducers, and new vertical-cut labels began to appear in the wake of Pathé's success, providing a wider array of material than had previously been available in the vertical format. Some, like Aeolian-Vocalion, Gennett, and Okeh (the latter quietly backed by the Carl Lindström organization in Germany) were the products of well-established companies seeking a way into the record market, and they would go on to flourish in the next decade. Others, like Operaphone and Lyric, foundered nearly from the start, only to perish in the early 1920s recession. American consumers were willing to accept the vertical cut to some extent, but they never embraced it.

The Starr Piano Company began producing lateral-cut Gennett discs in 1919, and Victor immediately sued. Starr countered successfully, and with the support of other manufacturers, the company persevered as the case worked its way through the courts. On October 14, 1919, Victor's request for a preliminary injunction that would have halted Starr's production of lateral-cut discs was denied. Subsequently upheld by the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals, the ruling opened the way for an industry-wide conversion to standard lateral-cut discs and encouraged the formation of new startups that collectively would pose a competitive challenge to Victor and Columbia. Although a final ruling in Starr's favor would not be handed down until October 1922, by the Supreme Court, it was clear by 1920 that the Victor-Columbia stranglehold on the lateral-cut market had been broken.

1920 - 1929

The American recording industry in 1920 remained hobbled by outdated attitudes and business models. It was still dominated by Victor, Columbia and Edison (in that order, by volume of sales). All three companies were owned and managed by wealthy, conservative White businessmen, many of them past middle-age, who relied heavily on their legal departments to keep aspiring competitors at bay.

Decisions regarding who and what to record were still being made largely in-house, by risk-averse men with little tolerance for diversity and, in many cases, no real knowledge of music or popular culture. As a result, the catalogs had become drearily predictable, dominated month after month by the same artists, many of whom were entering their third decade in the studios. Repertoire was largely dictated by a group of New York music publishers who, not coincidentally, were major advertisers in the phonograph trade publications. As researcher Dick Spottswood has observed, "Records were expected to do little more than keep standard material available, supplementing it with soundprint equivalents of published sheet music. New York-created products sufficed to supply a broad-based market that demanded little else."

The new entrants that flooded the market in the late 'teens and early 'twenties were at first content to follow the time-worn patterns set by the established companies. Aside from a lack of expensive celebrity talent, their catalogs closely resembled those of Victor and Columbia. It was not a formula for success, and gradually, some of the newcomers began to pull away from the pack. The first notable departure came in late 1920, when Okeh took a chance on Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues," the first recording by a Black woman performing in a blues style (although the title was not an actual blues, and the question of whether Mamie Smith was a blues singer in any but the broadest definition of the term still sparks lively debate).

Okeh's gamble paid off handsomely. Mamie Smith's records sold well from the start, opening the way for an entire class of performers who until then had been shut out by the record companies. By the spring of 1921, Harry Pace (with the encouragement and financial support of W. E. B. Du Bois) was preparing to enter the market with Black Swan, the second label to be owned by African Americans (the first having been George Broome's small niche operation), and the first to succeed commercially, albeit briefly. Paramount, which thus far had failed to distinguish itself in the marketplace, launched its own race record series in August 1922 and in 1924 took over the failed Black Swan label. By the late 1920s, race records would comprise the greater part of Paramount's sales. The major companies were slower to enter the race market, but all (excepting Edison) would eventually do so.

Another overlooked market was revealed in the summer of 1923, when Okeh's Ralph Peer reluctantly agreed to make a "hillbilly" record by Fiddlin' John Carson, on the recommendation of Atlanta record and furniture dealer Polk Brockman. The company apparently had so little faith in the record's sales potential that it required Brockman to guarantee a purchase of five-hundred copies to ensure at least a break-even. However, demand proved to be so strong that by October, praise for the "picturesque Southern mountaineer" was appearing in the trade papers. Inspired by Carson's success, Peer began to actively scout remote locations for other White country artists, often relying on locals for recommendations. By the mid-1920s, country music was becoming so popular on records that Columbia and others began allocating special catalog series to the genre.

Although progress was being made on the musical front, the record companies remained technologically stagnant, with recordings still being made acoustically. Although the acoustic process had been refined considerably over the years, it had undergone little fundamental change since the nineteenth century. It was an entirely mechanical process, employing a horn to focus sound waves on a circular diaphragm of glass, mica, or other material, which vibrated in response to those sound waves to drive an engraving stylus. Control over input was limited to the physical placement of performers in the studio, or to trial-and-error experimentation with different horns, diaphragms, and cutting heads. Singers — crowded around primitive recording horns and performing at full voice, with a studio orchestra huddled just a few feet away — sometimes complained they were unable to hear themselves above the din of the accompaniment.

The acoustic method's low sensitivity and very limited frequency response required that substitutions be made for some instruments. Violins and violas were replaced by Stroh instruments, horned contraptions with metal resonators in place of the wooden bodies. Low woodwinds were substituted for cellos, and tubas for stringed basses. Bass and snare drums, which could cause over-cutting of the wax, were moved to the far reaches of the studio, if not banished altogether. On many acoustic recordings, the only audible percussion is the occasional cymbal crash.

There was no ability to edit or modify the finished recording except by primitive mechanical dubbing methods, and the process provided no way for the engineer to monitor the actual recorded sound. Instantaneous playback was impossible without damaging the wax master, so evaluation of a recording had to wait for several days, while the master was electroplated and processed into a stamper from which a test pressing could be made.

The recording systems suffered from multiple resonant points that could be corrected only to a limited extent, by laborious trial and error. Photographs taken in the Gramophone Company's studio in London, and Columbia's studio in New York, show recording horns wrapped with cloth strips in an attempt to damp some of the resonances. Even when such primitive corrections were successful, they were likely to be negated in playback by yet another set of resonances inherent in the acoustic phonographs of the day. Victor's recording and reproduction systems in particular were plagued by marked mid-range resonances that imparted the disconcerting "honking" effect so familiar to modern collectors.

The coming of commercial radio broadcasting in the early 1920s gave consumers their first taste of electrically transmitted sound, and they liked it. Even heard through the primitive headphones and horn speakers of the day, radio broadcasts had a "live" quality that the best acoustic recordings could not duplicate. Some began to question why that sound could not be replicated on records.

Experimentation with electrical sound recording in one form or another had been under way virtually since the invention of the phonograph, most often involving attempts to combine phonograph and telephone components. The invention of the vacuum-tube amplifier made electrical recording feasible at the commercial level, but development lagged. By the early 1920s, however, Orlando Marsh was making commercial electrical recordings for clients in his small Chicago studio. Marsh's process, which employed a simple carbon-button microphone, was limited in its frequency response and prone to distortion, but it did emulate the popular "radio sound." Marsh inexplicably failed to tout his process as electrical at first, thus losing a valuable marketing advantage.

In the meantime, engineers at Western Electric's Bell Laboratories had perfected a high-quality electrical recording system suited to commercial use. Columbia and Victor began experimenting with the equipment in 1924, as confirmed by some surviving dated test

pressings, and both licensed the system in early 1925. Their initial electrical releases appeared in the spring. They were not announced as electrical at the time, but the difference was immediately apparent to listeners, and the rush was soon on by other companies to adopt electrical recording.

With Western Electric working exclusively with Victor and Columbia, other companies found their options limited. Brunswick settled on Charles Hoxie's Pallophotophone, a photo-electric system originally developed for sound-film production. Prone to distortion, it was eventually replaced by more reliable General Electric equipment before being quietly replaced by Western Electric equipment, in a deal that was kept secret until former Brunswick musical director Gus Haenschen finally revealed it many decades later. Pathé (and briefly, Gennett) turned to Emile Berliner's son Herbert, who had developed his own electrical system and was employing it in his Toronto and New York studios. Smaller companies were left to cobble together their own systems, usually with dire results. Okeh hinted that its new True-Tone process might be electrical, although an executive later confessed it was not. Thomas Edison stubbornly stood by his acoustic process. When the company finally began to convert in May 1927, it was at the insistence of Edison's son Charles. Although advertising copy suggested that the new system was Edison's own, the company employed the same sort of General Electric equipment as Brunswick and Gennett. It later switched to the RCA Photophone system, as did Gennett.

The introduction of relatively portable electrical recording equipment made it easier for recording teams to tour the nation in search of talent far beyond the New York–New Jersey corridor, where the record companies had long been entrenched. In the process, the record companies began to shed some of their reliance on in-house artist-and-repertoire managers, turning instead to independent talent scouts. Foremost among them was Ralph Peer, who left Okeh in late 1926 and approached Victor with an unprecedented offer.

Peer asked for no salary from Victor. Instead, he would sign personal management contracts with the artists he secured for the company, receive a cut of their royalties, and take the mechanical-reproduction rights to their compositions for his nascent music-publishing operation. Because of the latter's potential value, Peer insisted that his artists record only their own original material (or at least, traditional material that was sufficiently altered that it could be copyrighted as original). The result was a considerable freshening of Victor's country list, which until then had been dominated by traditional, public-domain tunes. Peer, despite his personal dislike of country music, had a remarkable ear for talent, and his signing of the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers in 1927 catapulted Victor to preeminent status in the country-music market.

Peer's counterpart in Chicago was music publisher Walter Melrose, who earlier had scouted for Gennett records. Although not formally affiliated with Victor in the way that Peer was, he was largely responsible for developing the company's race catalog, beginning with the creation of Jelly Roll Morton's *Red Hot Peppers* in 1926. Other notable early freelance scouts included Polk Brockman in Atlanta (who scouted for Okeh) and H. C. Speir in Jackson, Mississippi (who scouted primarily for Paramount but also sent several important blues singers to Victor), among many others. While Peer, Melrose, and company were developing the race and country-music markets, the major company's classical divisions were busy producing superbly recorded and packaged albums of complete classical works, elevating the image of the phonograph record among serious music enthusiasts and reviewers.

In just a decade, American record-making had evolved from a stagnant, hidebound business into something vital and exciting. Dire predictions that radio would destroy record sales, heard since the early 1920s, proved to be untrue. Although record sales were off their early 1920s high, they remained healthy until late in the decade. Victor, Columbia, and Brunswick (the latter having surpassed Edison earlier in the decade as the nation's third-largest record producer) maintained their leads in the market by a wide margin, but many of the smaller companies prospered as well. Even the chronically cash-strapped Grey Gull, Gennett, and Paramount operations managed to open new studios in the later 1920s. In 1928, Pathé absorbed the struggling Cameo Record Corporation, which in 1929 was merged into the new American Record Corporation, along with the Regal Record Company and the Scranton Button Company pressing plant.

However, there were signs of softening demand for consumer goods by early 1929. The

recording industry suffered a minor casualty early that year, with the collapse of Charles Hasin's Consolidated Record Corporation, the last producers of Emerson records. The original Emerson operation had failed in the early 1920s, and attempts by various successors to rescue the brand had been caught in a long downward spiral that ended with the label's reduction to a cheaply produced, three-for-a-dollar brand. Hasin discontinued the Emerson label in 1928, after which his company limped along for a time as a producer of obscure client and private labels before exiting the record business entirely. Hasin's attempt to recast his operation as a producer of movie sound tracks, in the guise of Consolidated Studios, was a failure.

A far more significant failure was the closure, in October 1929, of Edison's phonograph division. For reasons that are detailed in the main text, sales of Edison records had been declining steadily for many years. A last-ditch effort to compete in the real world, with a standard electrically recorded lateral-cut disc, came far too late to save the operation. An internal memo written by Arthur Walsh in 1929 disclosed that Edison's phonograph division had been losing money since 1912; during 1924–1928 alone, it had suffered a \$1.3 million loss. The phonograph division, as it turned out, had been kept afloat largely by diverting cash from Edison's more successful mining and manufacturing operations. Although Edison might appear to have been the first major victim of the 1929 crash, the company's problems pre-dated that event by many years and had been largely self-inflicted.

1930–1939

The standard narrative among pop-culture writers is that America's recording industry collapsed and went into a decade-long hibernation following the 1929 crash. It did not. Certainly there were some casualties at the start, and record sales declined precipitously for several years, but new ventures still managed to launch even during the darkest days of 1930, and a rebound was well under way by mid-decade.

Despite the devastated economy, several new record companies appeared in the early 1930s. The Durium Products Corporation — the brainchild of a Columbia University physicist who invented a linseed-oil based plastic — offered a product perfectly suited for hard times. Its superbly recorded Hit of the Week cardboard-based records initially sold at news stands for 15¢. The company assembled a roster of nationally known performers, many of them recently let go by the major labels. Demand for the records was tremendous, reminiscent of what had occurred with the launch of the 10¢ Little Wonder discs many years earlier. But margins were too thin to sustain the operation, and the final Hit of the Week releases appeared in June 1932. The remaining Hit of the Week inventory (consisting of more than two-million discs) was sold to Montgomery Ward, which offered the records in their catalog at twenty for 49¢, or sixty for \$1.25.

In late 1930, a group of executives from the Plaza Music Company (which had been left out of the American Record Corporation merger) launched the Crown Record Company to produce a 25¢ disc meant to compete with ARC's dime-store labels. Unlike Hit of the Week, Crown made no apparent effort to recruit star-quality talent, relying largely on the same tired studio freelancers as Plaza. The records excited little interest, and by early 1932, some dealers were disposing of their Crown records for as little as 10¢ each, or three for 25¢. The final release appeared in September 1933. By then, pressing had been taken over by RCA (which had nothing to do with the recording), under the supervision of Eli Oberstein. Six years later, the masters would serve as fodder for Oberstein's newly launched Varsity label.

These start-ups aside, conditions within the record industry became increasingly grim as the Depression took hold. Grey Gull suspended operations in mid-1930. The Starr Piano Company discontinued its venerable Gennett label at the end of that year, although it continued to produce the cheaper Champion and Superior labels for a time. The New York Recording Laboratories' Broadway and Paramount labels failed in 1932. Both were revived briefly by other companies in 1934–1935 before finally disappearing.

The major labels survived the early Depression years, if just barely, under new ownership. Victor, now a subsidiary of the Radio Corporation of America, saw its record sales fall from a high of more than 34 million records in 1927 to a low of just 1.6 million in 1933. RCA made two notable missteps during the period, introducing expensive and technically flawed home-recording systems and long-playing Program Transcriptions at

a time when few customers could afford them. But at the same time, it began to experiment with new low-priced labels, finally settling on the popular Bluebird brand in 1933. Excess pressing-plant capacity was put to use pressing records for Montgomery Ward. Retailing for just 21¢ each, they were little more than a break-even proposition for Victor, but a welcome source of revenue nonetheless.

The American Record Corporation, with its well-established line of cut-rate labels, was acquired by Herbert Yates' Consolidated Film Industries in 1930. In the same year, Brunswick-Balke-Collender sold its Brunswick and Vocalion labels to Warner Brothers Pictures, which quickly lost interest in the failing record industry and licensed them to ARC in late 1931. At the same time, Columbia, along with its Okeh subsidiary, was sold to the Grigsby-Grunow Company, for a small fraction of its pre-Depression value. A mismanaged radio and refrigerator manufacturer, Grigsby-Grunow did nothing to help its new acquisition, and much to impede its operation. The company collapsed in 1934, taking Columbia with it. Herbert Yates purchased Columbia for a paltry \$70,000, through a shady shell corporation formed two days prior to the sale. Although Columbia would operate as a semi-autonomous division within ARC, it was left to nearly perish. One unforeseen result of Columbia's sale was the launch of Decca Records in the United States.

Edward R. (Ted) Lewis, the head of Decca Records in London, had also attempted to purchase Columbia, in partnership with Brunswick executives Jack Kapp and E. F. Stevens. Finding they had been preempted by Yates, the three instead decided to launch their own label with Lewis' financial backing. The result was the formation of Decca Records, Inc., which was incorporated in New York on August 4, 1934.

Despite protests from Kapp (who wanted to retain a traditional three-tiered pricing structure, ranging from budget- to premium-priced lines), Lewis insisted that Decca records retail for a uniform 35¢. Furthermore, top talent was to be employed, unlike other budget labels. Kapp held management contracts with some of Brunswick's most popular artists in the early 1930s, which contained a clause allowing them to leave Brunswick should Kapp do so. In short order, Kapp persuaded Bing Crosby, Guy Lombardo, the Dorsey Brothers, the Mills Brothers, and other Brunswick stars to follow him to Decca. After some initial problems with defective pressings and late deliveries were resolved, the records proved very popular.

Small independent producers began to emerge in mid-decade, at first in upscale classical market, which had not been as severely impacted by the Depression as other sectors. Two of the earliest—New Music Quarterly Recordings and The Friends of Recorded Music—were launched as adjuncts to music journals and were sold by subscription. The former, devoted solely to contemporary American avant-garde works, was produced under the auspices of *New Music Quarterly*, a journal founded by Yaddo associate Henry Cowell. Critical response to the records was mixed, with critics generally applauding the concept but sometimes looking askance at the results.

Cowell's involvement with *New Music Quarterly* came to a sudden end in May 1936, when he was arrested in San Francisco on what were euphemistically termed "morals charges." Sentenced to serve four years in San Quentin prison, Cowell turned management of the label over to others. Cowell was later marginally involved with Yaddo records, which were produced under the auspices of the Yaddo artists' colony in Saratoga Springs, New York. They were sold on a very modest scale during 1939–1940.

A second journal offshoot, The Friends of Recorded Music, made its appearance in 1936. The label was produced for *The American Music Lover*, a magazine for classical music enthusiasts, and predecessor of *The American Record Guide*. Annual dues of \$2.75 included a subscription to the journal and a "permit" to purchase the society's records at a discount. Unlike the New Music Quarterly and Yaddo ventures, Friends of Recorded Music specialized in the lesser-known works of European composers.

Gamut Records was also conceived as a subscription label, but the model was abandoned by the time it reached market in 1937. Launched by Daniel Wolfert, a twenty-three-year old music-appreciation instructor, Gamut specialized in esoteric classical material for sale to the general public. The label's debut escaped public notice until November 1937, when *Time* magazine briefly noted its existence.

The most successful of the mid-decade classical startups was Musicraft. Launched in late 1936, it was a purely commercial venture, initially headed by former attorney Milton

L. Rein and music instructor Henry Cohen, with Herman Adler serving as resident music researcher. By 1938 the Musicraft catalog had grown to more than forty releases, nearly all of which were devoted to classical material. In the 1940s, however, Musicraft largely abandoned the classical market, recasting itself as a jazz and pop label.

Other independent classical labels appeared as the 1930s drew to an end. Timely, a label originally devoted to leftist political material, was sold in 1937 to an insurance-company executive who shifted the label's focus to esoteric classical works. New York's Schirmer Record Shop, the retail outlet for music publisher G. Schirmer, also briefly produced its own label, recruiting pianist Harold Bauer (who was working for Schirmer at the time as a musical editor) for its initial release. Like Musicraft, Schirmer later drifted into the pop market.

The late 1930s saw a blossoming of independent labels, ranging from small ventures like the Commodore, H.R.S., and U.H.C.A. jazz labels to ambitious undertakings like Eli Oberstein's United States Record Corporation, the producer of cut-rate Varsity and Royale records. Many of the small independents labels catered to niche markets that were being passed over by still-cautious major producers, bringing some much-needed diversity to the scene.

The 1930s were also the years in which the recording industry lost its innocence, with the introduction of adult-content "party records" (and sometimes comical attempts by law enforcement to locate their producers) and the use of phonograph records for disseminating political propaganda. There were revelations of appalling working conditions in the pressing plants, lawsuits over unpaid royalties and unfair artist contracts, and increasingly strident demands by union leaders that record companies share their newfound wealth with their employees and artists.

There were also accusations of improper dealings between record companies and jukebox distributors. Jukeboxes (still known at that time as "coin-operated" or "automatic" phonographs) had been gaining steadily in popularity since the early 1930s, which did indeed drive much of the growth in record sales beginning in the later 1930s. As a result, jukebox distributors and operators were becoming increasingly influential in determining who and what was recorded.

The record companies had been supplying jukebox distributors for a decade, but other than occasionally producing custom couplings, they so far had made little effort to accommodate the jukebox trade. The situation began to change in July 1939, when brothers Leon and Otis Rene launched Ammor (an acronym for Automatic Music Machine Operators Recording), the first label produced exclusively for jukebox use. Demand does not appear to have been great, however. In 1940 the Renes bowed out and the company was moved to New York, where the label was recast for regular retail sale by its new owners and promptly died. The Rene brothers went on to launch the more successful Exclusive and Excelsior labels, which were heavily promoted for jukebox use in affiliation with Jack Gutshall, a West Coast distributor who was not above strong-arming the labels he handled into recording artists and titles he personally favored.

In December 1938 the Columbia Broadcasting System purchased the American Record Corporation from Consolidated Film Industries for \$700,000. ARC had discontinued its dime-store labels before the CBS takeover, the beginning of a product-line revamping that Columbia would pursue aggressively.

1940 - 1950

As the new decade opened, the American record industry was dominated by RCA Victor, Decca, and the newly rejuvenated Columbia. The last vestiges of the American Record Corporation were about to be obliterated, beginning with Columbia's abandonment in April 1940 of the Brunswick label, which was now an unwelcome competitor to the new Columbia red-label discs. It was followed in July by Vocalion, sacrificed to make way for the newly revived Okeh label, which at 35¢ would serve as Columbia's budget-priced line. Columbia took advantage of the transition to purge some of the slower-selling ARC, Brunswick, and Vocalion artists and releases. Rights to Brunswick and Vocalion subsequently reverted to Warner Brothers. Wanting nothing to do with the radio or record businesses, the film giant sold those labels to Decca Records on May 2, 1941.

The three major producers would no longer have the field largely to themselves. With the economy now largely recovered, the record market looked increasingly attractive to outsiders, and a host of independent pressing plants and studios stood ready to serve those wanting to test the waters. Among the best-known independent studios were those of Hazard Reeves, E. V. Brinckerhoff, radio station WOR, and the Associated Music Publishers. All had been producing transcriptions and special-use recordings for some time, and now they were now offering their services to small independent companies and start-ups as well.

The use of outside studios by small record companies was not a new practice. In the early 1920s, the Arto and Grey Gull ventures had commissioned masters from the New York Recording Laboratories and Independent Recording Laboratory, among others. But those were studios that produced their own labels; they booked outside sessions only as a side-line. Most truly independent studios in the 1920s, like New York's Electric Recording Laboratories, limited their services to the production of custom labels and personal recordings. The high fees they charged for their services virtually guaranteed that the records could not be sold profitably at prices comparable to those charged by the commercial labels.

The boom in independent studios that began in the mid-1930s was driven in part by the growth of the broadcast industry, with its growing need for air-checks and transcriptions. The recording media of choice was the instantaneous recording blank, a coated aluminum or glass disc that supplanted traditional wax masters in the transcription studios. Referred to informally (and not always accurately) as "lacquers" or "acetates," they provided a smooth, virtually noise-free surface.

Bulky and easily damaged, wax masters were destroyed in playback. The only safe way to audition one was to electroplate it and then make a test pressing, an expensive and time-consuming process. Acetates, on the other hand, could be played back immediately with little risk of degradation if handled carefully and played with a lightweight pickup. The recordings could be easily dubbed to conventional wax masters for commercial production.

The dubbing process had the added advantage of allowing for some degree of editing and audio correction, and a cottage industry soon developed that offered those services. Les Cahan's Beltone Recording Corporation was one of the first such companies, and it built an impressive clientele. *Billboard* reported that the company's work represented "a lot of saved dollars and an antidote to recording headaches... Cahan can, with his equipment, wash out surface noise...and achieve the proper high level of musical brilliancy by bringing out or cutting down bass and treble tones." By the end of the 1940s, a substantial number of pressing plants, large and small, were offering master-reprocessing services, with Allied Record Manufacturing claiming to be the largest.

Reprocessing was not without its risks. Goldband's initial release, for instance, had to be withdrawn because the master-processing service deleted the last four bars of one selection in the transfer. But such occurrences were uncommon, and they became even less so as record producers and master-processing houses became accustomed to working with each other.

One of the first to utilize instantaneous recordings for commercial work was Columbia's Edward Wallerstein, who in 1939 ordered that the company's new studios be equipped to record simultaneously on standard 78-rpm masters and 33¹/₃-rpm 16" acetates. Wallerstein was already planning to launch a low-speed, long-playing disc, and the acetates were to be held in reserve as a source from which the new records could dubbed without the need to cobble together 78-rpm masters. Some other companies followed suit, holding the acetates as "safeties" in case of damage to the original masters.

Growth in the record industry accelerated rapidly in 1940 and 1941, only to be cut short by the United States' entry into World War II in December 1941. Within a few months of the U.S. declaration of war, personnel and material shortages (particularly of shellac, which would soon be rationed) began to take their toll on record production. Decca's planned revival of the Brunswick label was put on hold, as was Columbia's development of the long-playing record. Nevertheless, new companies continued to appear, and the recording industry might have survived the war years relatively unscathed had it not been for James Caesar Petrillo, the head of the American Federation of Musicians.

Petrillo had long held a vendetta against what he termed "canned music," blaming it

for a downturn in demand for live performances. Widely reviled by recording-industry executives as an obscenity-spewing petty dictator, he did not hesitate to employ strong-arm tactics against those who opposed him.

Petrillo presented his case at the AFM's convention on June 9, 1941. He contended that although AFM members earned approximately \$3 million annually in royalties from recordings, they lost \$100 million as the result of what he termed "reduced employment opportunities" from the substitution of recorded for live music. Admitting that he had no statistics to back up his claims, Petrillo nevertheless estimated that eight- to nine-thousand AFM musicians could be put to work if records were not available and public establishments were forced to rely on live music. He demanded that the record companies be charged a royalty on each record sold, to be deposited into an AFM-administered fund. Until the record companies complied, there would be no more recording by union musicians, who comprised the vast majority of recording instrumentalists.

On June 27, 1942, Petrillo served notice to all transcription and record producers that he intended to ban recording by union members beginning on August 1. Petrillo agreed informally to exempt transcriptions for the armed forces and government agencies involved with the war effort, although he soon reneged on even that meager concession. Recordings for motion-picture sound tracks would be allowed, provided that the recordings did not find their way onto the airwaves or commercially issued records. Private recording for home use was allowed to continue under the ban, but only if the manufacturers of recording blanks guaranteed the records would not be broadcast or used in jukeboxes. There would be no cooperation from manufacturers of recording blanks, who disclaimed responsibility for the uses to which their products were put. With blanks and portable recording units readily available, a lively underground market soon developed for custom-duplicated discs from private recording sessions, live performances, and air-checks.

The Justice Department failed in its last-minute attempt to delay the AFM ban. For the newly launched Capitol Records, the ban was catastrophic. Chartered in April 1942 as Liberty Records, the company had already suffered the embarrassment of having to abandon its original name on complaint of the Liberty Music Shops. The company's first releases had appeared just a few weeks before the AFM's mandated August 1 cut-off. Capitol was forced to wait out the ban with just seventy-six masters to draw upon. Many other start-ups and small independents found themselves in the same position. Unlike Capitol, not all would survive.

Some small producers attempted to negotiate with Petrillo, to no avail. Hazard Reeves and E. V. Brinckerhoff formed a trade association comprising thirteen New York-area recording studios that they believed would give them a negotiating advantage with the AFM. They were ignored. Musicraft president Paul Puner made his case to Petrillo personally, reasoning that Musicraft, as a small company, should be allowed to pay a lower royalty rate than what Petrillo was demanding. In return, Puner promised that Musicraft would affirm its support of the AFM's basic principles. Petrillo dismissed the offer as "peanuts."

The record companies were allowed to continue manufacturing and selling their pre-ban recordings, so with the strike looming, they scrambled to stockpile enough new material to sustain them during the work stoppage. The major labels seemed well-positioned to weather what was expected to be a short strike. For a time, they made do by drawing down their stockpiles of new masters and combing their vaults for unissued older material. But as the strike dragged on, they were forced to become more creative. In mid-January 1943, *Billboard* reported that Decca was about to release the last of its pre-ban masters, and speculated that Victor and Columbia would soon find themselves in the same position. With no more new material to offer, Decca's solution was to substitute vocal ensembles for instrumental backing, as singers were not subject to the ban. The idea that was soon being copied by Columbia, Victor, and many minor labels. Infuriated, Petrillo strong-armed Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, and some other leading singers into honoring the ban, even though they were not AFM members.

One producer refused to be cowed. New band recordings continued to flow on Eli Oberstein's Hit label, although they were not by any recognizable groups. One anonymous informant, identified in a 1976 interview only as "the music director of a major label," remembered that the recording sessions were held in a New York hotel room, with the

unidentified participants being paid in cash when they left. “I don’t know who those guys were,” he admitted, “but they were good.”

The band recordings caught Petrillo’s attention, since there was no evidence that Oberstein had obtained AFM clearance to record the titles. Oberstein offered several colorful explanations to the AFM board, finally declaring the recordings had been obtained in Mexico from a mysterious individual he was no longer able to locate. He was expelled from the union in June 1943, on the grounds that his continued release of instrumental recordings was “damaging to the interests of the Federation.” The action no doubt had a chilling effect on other producers hoping to skirt the ban.

In the meantime, negotiations between AFM officials and a committee comprising representatives of Columbia, Decca, and RCA had broken down. However, Decca attorney Milton Diamond continued to meet privately with Petrillo. On September 18, 1943, Decca’s Jack Kapp announced that his company and its World Broadcasting subsidiary had signed four-year contracts with the AFM that would allow them to resume recording immediately. Capitol Records capitulated on October 9, agreeing to the same terms as Decca. Four independent transcription companies signed slightly modified agreements several weeks later, amidst charges from the National Association of Broadcasters that the payment plans were “as economically and socially unsound as extortion is immoral and illegal.”

With the prospect of Decca and Capitol dominating the pop-tune market, many industry observers correctly predicted a rush by other labels to sign with the AFM. Within a matter of months, virtually all had done so, leaving RCA and Columbia as the last significant holdouts. Since every other record and transcription company had already settled with the AFM, Petrillo declared, he saw no reason to offer them concessions. Their alternatives exhausted, Columbia and RCA finally capitulated to Petrillo’s demands on November 11, 1944.

In the end, industry experts estimated that the AFM ban had done little damage to most record companies, and might actually have helped some. There had been no decline in record sales or profits during the first two years of the ban. The lack of significant growth was attributed more to wartime shortages, and to the fact that a vast number of record customers were out of the market until their enlistments ended, than to the ban. In addition, Capitol and other promising newcomers had gained a competitive edge by signing with the AFM and resuming production while the two industry behemoths remained locked in battle with Petrillo.

With World War II drawing to a close, the AFM impasse settled, and restrictions beginning to be eased on shellac use (which was already being supplanted by vinyl), the recording industry returned to normalcy in 1945–1946, then boomed in the later 1940s. The trade papers were hard-pressed to keep up with all the new labels, and unlike in the past, New York was no longer necessarily the favored location. A marked shift to the Los Angeles area had been under way for several years, with Chicago and Texas also making strong showings. In addition, new labels were turning up in some unlikely locations throughout the South and Midwest, many of them catering to locals who were not being well-served by the larger companies.

Aiding and abetting all of those aspiring producers were countless new independent studios and pressing plants. Small studios like Sam Phillips’ Memphis Recording Service (which advertised, “We Record Anything, Anywhere, Anytime”) charged a mere \$2 for a single-sided acetate, or \$3 for a double. King executive Jim Wilson recalled, “Theoretically, you could walk into King Records in the morning, record, then walk out of there with a dee-jay copy in your hand to take to the radio stations.” Marketing the results could be considerably more complicated, but tales of the occasional lucky hit were sufficient to encourage countless startup attempts, some of which managed to progress beyond the demo-record stage.

Some of the new companies were launched by returning G.I.s who had gained electronics or other technical training while enlisted. Among the spoils they brought back were German wire and tape recorders, which were disassembled, analyzed, and reworked for commercial recording purposes. Magnetic tape quickly became a popular alternative to direct-to-disc mastering, one that would allow a degree of editing and manipulation that had been impossible to achieve with the older technologies. Although acetates remained the favored mastering medium for small studios well into the 1950s, the major studios began to adopt

tape in 1948, and its use was becoming commonplace by 1950. Existing master-reprocessing services developed expertise in salvaging less-than-expert tape recordings and converting them to conventional disc masters.

The final element enabling small startups was the compact record press. Early presses were steam-operated monstrosities, some weighing a half-ton or more, that were suitable for use only in an industrial setting. Beginning in the early 1940s, some relatively lightweight electrically heated units began to appear on the market that could be set up and operated in a small space. Some startups did just that, converting back-rooms into what they proudly proclaimed were their own “pressing plants.” One company even marketed a small press for record-store use, which employed vinyl pellets to produce pressings-to-order while the customer waited.

By the late 1940s, anyone with a few dollars to invest could launch a record company in a matter of weeks, and many did. The new cheap-and-easy approach to record production inevitably attracted some whose motives and qualifications for running a record company were questionable. The field became overrun with small-time music publishers who set up labels to plug songs the established did not want, performers who could not land major-label contracts, and opportunists who charged amateur songwriters to record their pieces and then took the profits in the unlikely event that a piece became a hit. Attempts to bribe disc jockeys and jukebox operators became increasingly blatant, leading to the “payola” scandals of the 1950s. Many of the new entrants were hoping for little more than a local hit or two that would garner enough jukebox and radio play to merit purchase by a larger label. A handful succeeded despite the odds, but many more perished after making just a few releases.

The last great technological improvement of the period covered by this work came with Columbia’s long-delayed launch of its microgroove LP, a format that would revolutionize the record industry. After having kept the project secret for so long, Columbia officials finally began demonstrating the new records to industry insiders in the spring of 1948, in an attempt to secure licensing deals. On June 18, the company hosted a preview of the new records and player for industry executives, during which the technical details were publicly disclosed for the first time. Two days later, fifty reporters got their first glimpse of the LP when Edward Wallerstein demonstrated it at New York’s Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

The LP was an immediate sensation, but Columbia failed in its attempt to license the format to other companies. Realizing that the LP embodied little that was patentable, and that it could succeed commercially only if universally adopted, Columbia executives in June 1948 made the process freely available to other companies, even providing technical assistance to those making the conversion in exchange for a pressing contract. The strategy succeeded.

As eager as many companies were to adopt the new format, few were quite ready to forsake the 78 entirely. The U.S. version of the London label, which added LPs to its product line in 1949, and 45s in January 1950, took a step back in April 1950 with its “Shellac Is Not Dead” campaign. Twelve new 78-rpm album sets and twenty new 78-rpm singles were announced, but the campaign was soon abandoned.

Some dealers actively opposed the transition, seeing it as a form of price-cutting and fearing they would be left with a glut of unsalable 78s. Among them was David Krantz, president of the Philadelphia Retail Record Dealers’ Association, and producer of the miniscule Krantz Records label. In early 1949 he launched a local campaign against the LP that succeeded only in losing business for his store and antagonizing some Columbia sales executives. His battle ended abruptly in June 1950, when he and seven other Philadelphia record-store owners were arrested and charged by the Justice Department with conspiracy to fix record prices.

Krantz and his kind were the exception, however. Despite some initial trepidation, the LP format was soon embraced by record companies and dealers, in no small part because of its potential for wringing additional profits out of material that had otherwise run its course in terms of sales. The vast majority of early LPs were simply cobbled together from material that had previously been issued on 78s. Nevertheless, sales boomed as consumers rushed to replace their old shellac pressings with the quieter, more convenient long-playing versions.

Announcements of companies’ impending LP launches were appearing regularly in

the trade papers by late 1948. Some were premature, and there were some false starts. Savoy announced its first LP release in December 1948, dubbed from previously released Errol Garner recordings, then but retreated, not issuing LPs on a regular basis until March 1950. The Bihari brothers announced that Modern Records was about to launch LPs in the summer of 1949, but the first releases did not begin to appear until October 1950.

Some record companies undertook the conversion piecemeal, sometimes testing the market with the less-important segments of their catalogs before committing to large-scale LP output. Allegro, which Paul Puner had launched after leaving Musicraft, began by test-marketing LPs for the children's market; Dial, which was predominantly a jazz label, began with a small group of LP classical albums using leased foreign masters.

Atlantic, Mercury, and M-G-M took the LP plunge in early 1949, followed by Tempo in May, Decca in August, and a host of smaller labels as the year came to a close. The independent classical labels, in particular, were quick to embrace the LP. Among the earliest to do so was Vox, which began releasing LPs in early May 1949. *Billboard* reported that Columbia was giving the company its full cooperation in making the conversion. (Columbia was not being entirely altruistic, having gained Vox's pressing business in the process.) The prestigious Concert Hall Society began with a single "experimental" LP in January 1949, and by the early 1950s it had followed Vox's lead to become an LP-only line. Several new entrants in the classical field during 1949–1950, including Period and Renaissance, went directly to LP production without ever having produced a 78.

RCA officials offered no public response to the LP until early 1949, when they countered with what they claimed would be entirely different format. Given the code name "Madame X," RCA's new offering was eventually revealed to be a fine-groove 7" thin-vinyl pressing with a 1½" center hole and a maximum playing time of 5½ minutes at 45 rpm. The record-and-changer combination was touted as the "first in history of the industry to be designed specifically to complement each other," conveniently ignoring Columbia's specially designed LP player.

The new 45s and accompanying player attachments were introduced with considerable fanfare in April 1949, and RCA officials predicted that other record manufacturers would quickly embrace the new format. But unlike Columbia, which was making the LP format freely available to other manufacturers, RCA insisted on licensing fees for use of the 45-rpm format, a stumbling block for companies that were already investing heavily in the conversion to LPs. Dealers and consumers, having already committed to LPs, were not particularly enthusiastic about yet another new format, nor were jukebox manufacturers eager to convert their machines to handle the as-yet unproven records. After taking a loss on record sales in 1949, RCA capitulated. It made the 45-rpm format freely available to other manufacturers and began producing LPs, becoming the last major producer to do so.

The 45 finally began to gain traction after RCA dropped its licensing requirement. By the mid-1950s, sales of 45s had surpassed those of 78s, which by decade's end were little more than memory.

User's Guide

A Note Concerning the Second Edition

Since the first edition of *American Record Companies and Producers* was published seven years, a substantial body of high-quality primary-source material has become available, either in digital form online, or in physical form in archives that were not accessible at the time I was conducting research for that edition. Materials that have been made available in the interim include the late Raymond Wile's invaluable archive of court records and corporate documents relating to the recording industry's earliest days, digitized by Ryan Barna and posted on the Internet Archive; the Victor Talking Machine Company's Executive and Management Committee reports, digitized by the Hagley Library; materials added to the Edison Papers by Rutgers University and posted on the Internet Archive; privately distributed digital scans of the Columbia, Okeh, and Brunswick matrix-card microfilms; and the countless additions made to Newspapers.com, a tremendous resource for period reports covering record companies and producers.

Those and other equally reliable materials, along with valued input from many readers over the years, have all gone into producing this new enlarged edition. The original entries have been reviewed by myself and trusted others over the past few years, and have been revised and/or expanded as needed. A few entries have been deleted, for lack of convincing evidence that those companies had any serious intention of producing records; however, many more have been added. As a digital document, the second edition can be easily updated as the need arises, so I encourage readers to continue to submit documented additions and corrections (not too many of the latter, I hope).

This work is devoted to the companies and individual involved in the production of phonograph records for public consumption, from the start of the industry in the late 1880s through the beginning of the LP era in the early 1950s. Although artists and repertoire are certainly discussed, the book is first and foremost a business history.

The encyclopedia is the result of twenty-five years' original research, relying wherever possible upon primary-source materials (company and legal documents, court reports, trademark and patent filings, period newspaper and trade-press reports, interviews, diaries, etc.). Secondary sources have been consulted sparingly, and only if their authors have well-established reputations for accuracy and have cited credible sources. Unmoderated blogs and websites, crowd-produced sites like *Wikipedia*, and a great many mass-market books have been disregarded. Consequently, some of what appears here might contradict material in less rigorously researched (if perhaps more readily available) works.

Criteria for Inclusion

To be included, a company or individual must have produced phonograph records (disc or cylinder) for entertainment purposes from 1888 through 1950, with the intent to distribute or sell those products to the general public, or a significant portion thereof. This includes companies that produced records exclusively for jukebox use, the contents of which ultimately were disseminated to the public; and subscription operations, which although limited in sales goals, still dealt with the public at large.

"Entertainment," of course, is largely in the eye of the beholder. Modern readers, for example, might not think of political speeches as entertainment, but our ancestors did, and so I have included labels like The Nation's Forum.

The criteria have been relaxed mainly for the earliest cylinder producers (the North American Phonograph sub-companies), due to the nature of the early phonograph

business. Cylinder records at that time were employed largely for use on coin-operated machines, in “phonographic concerts,” and for demonstration purposes in phonograph showrooms. Soft-wax cylinders were easy to produce, requiring only a phonograph with a recording head and some reusable blanks. We know from numerous newspaper accounts that many of the early phonograph companies made their own recordings, often employing a mixture of local and visiting talent. A tremendous number of cylinder recordings undoubtedly were made during the 1880s and 1890s that received public exposure but were never offered for sale to the general public or duplicated in any significant quantity. Because so few cylinders and catalogs have survived from this period, we cannot rule out the possibility that all of these companies made original recordings, at least for demonstration to the general public, if not for outright sale. Therefore, all have been included.

Custom and personal labels present a less clear-cut situation. Most were self-financed ventures, with limited distribution goals, but those are not automatically grounds for exclusion. The key to inclusion here is the presence of a business model, or at least the appearance of one, to the extent that it can be determined from the surviving evidence. Some custom products that were not advertised to the general public — such as certain ethnic, religious, and Ku Klux Klan-affiliated labels — still had sufficient marketing and distribution to merit inclusion. In deciding which to include, I have factored in (to the extent possible, given the scarcity of data on many of these ventures) the nature and number of artists featured; where, how, and to whom the records were marketed; and whether surviving documentation and the general nature of the output suggests the venture was intended to be an ongoing, if limited, business.

Single-issue labels present the same problem. Many are obviously vanity issues, and have been excluded. Others, however, were clearly intended to be going concerns, as evidenced by coverage in newspapers and trade journals, the presence of advertising, use of distributors, and other factors. Preferring to err on the side of inclusion, I have included single-issue labels that meet these criteria.

Personal or “vanity” issues (self-financed records made purely for the edification of the artists and perhaps a few of their fans or family members) are not included. The intent usually appears to have been nothing more than to sell out a small pressing run and move on. There were a few notable exceptions, such as the Columbia Personal Records made for Roland Hayes, which became the basis for a very modest and short-lived mail-order business. However, the vast majority of personal issues one is likely to encounter were made for amateurs or semi-professionals who are long forgotten today, often for reasons that are painfully obvious to modern listeners. Some personal-record ventures undertaken by professional artists, like Hayes and the Christian and Missionary Alliance Gospel Singers, more closely resemble custom-label operations. They have not been included mainly because of the slippery-slope factor. An examination of all known personal records would require a volume unto itself.

Labels intended for the ethnic markets present a similar challenge. Papers trails range from sparse to nonexistent for many early ethnic labels. Some appear to have been owned or operated by the artists they feature, which seemingly places them in the personal-record category. Further investigation, however, has revealed that many of these companies were indeed being operated as commercial entities (albeit at a very basic level), filing copyright and trademark applications, advertising in domestic foreign-language papers, and selling through small retail establishments in immigrant communities.

Not included are companies that produced only children’s, educational, or special-use recordings (air-checks, radio transcriptions, sound-effects records, etc.), unless they also supplied masters to commercial labels; companies that did not make or commission original recordings (primarily those that produced only reissues or relied entirely on imported or other licensed recordings, unless those recordings were specially commissioned for their use); and, with several unusually interesting exceptions, pirating operations.

Format

The encyclopedia is arranged alphabetically by company or producer. Separate entries have been assigned when a company underwent a significant change in ownership or operation, as in the case of Brunswick’s record division. Thus, the history of a given label

may be split across multiple entries, which can be tracked through the Label Index. Exceptions have been made for Berliner, American Graphophone/Columbia Phonograph, and the Victor Talking Machine Company and its immediate predecessors. Splitting these entries to reflect corporate changes that had no real impact on record production would have served only to fragment what are already complex narratives.

Company names are followed by the format (disc and/or cylinder) in which they produced records for commercial use. A directory section follows that contains the following information:

Record Production — This line lists the years during which a company produced sound recordings of any sort, commercial or otherwise. Some companies, such as Brunswick-Balke-Collender and Starr Piano, were in operation for many years, in other lines of business, before they commenced record production, and those date are noted in the main text. For some companies (particularly the transcription producers), the years during which they produced records for commercial distribution comprise only a portion of their production-date range. In those cases, dates of commercial production will be found in the main text.

Offices — The addresses given are those of the company's headquarters, followed by any significant branches (minor sales or distribution branch offices, which are numerous for the larger companies, usually are not noted). Many of the smaller businesses leased space in multi-tenant buildings like New York's Brill Building (which housed several record companies in the 1940s), and a common address does not necessarily indicate any corporate relationship. Address changes can be somewhat problematic. Where it has not been possible to ascertain moving dates from company documentation or reliable press reports, I have had to rely upon advertisements, the copy for which was sometimes prepared many weeks in advance, or might not have been updated immediately after a move. In general, however, address changes should be accurate to within a month or two, unless noted as *circa*.

Original-Master Source(s) — The "original" qualification is an important one. Many companies licensed and released material from outside sources, in addition to their own recordings. The master sources listed here are only those that supplied original recordings to the company, either as an in-house function or on commission. Details concerning outside master sources will be found in the text.

Pressing — Only confirmed pressing plants are shown. Most of the larger companies operated their own plants or were closely affiliated with outside plants, as in the case of Victor and the Duranoid Company. In the early days of record production, independent pressing plants were relatively scarce, and their products are often sufficiently distinctive to allow for easy visual identification. The situation changed dramatically in the 1940s, when countless new plants (some major, some just small back-room operations) sprang up to service the new labels that were flooding the market. Some, like The Bishop Presses, left their marks indelibly in the pressings. Many more did not, leading to an endless guessing game among collectors in which I have chosen not to participate for the purposes of this work.

Record Products — Here are listed all labels a company owned or controlled (including client labels), and for which it supplied the masters (either recorded in-house, specially commissioned from other studios, or licensed from other company's catalogs). In most cases the company was also responsible for manufacturing (although not always in-house) these labels, but did not necessarily have a hand in their distribution or sales, as in the case of client labels like Sears' Silvertone. Commercial U.S. labels are listed first, followed by children's and other miscellaneous labels, custom and special-use products, and masters or pressings made for other companies. Label names reused by unrelated producers have been assigned identifying numbers, in chronological order, which appear in brackets following the name. The listing includes 78-rpm labels introduced after 1950, but does not include labels produced solely in LP or 45-rpm formats.

Foreign Affiliates — Only companies having formal corporate, financial, and/or licensing connections with American producers (such as The Gramophone Company, with Victor Talking Machine) are listed here. Foreign concerns that simply leased masters to and/or from American companies, but lacked formal corporate or financial ties, are not considered affiliates for the purpose of this work.

Foreign Labels Using Masters — Although a diligent effort has been made to locate all foreign labels employing American masters, omissions are inevitable, given the vast number of foreign labels produced during the period covered by this work, and the tendency of some foreign companies to substitute false master numbers or efface tell-tale marks from the stampers. Readers are encouraged to submit verifiable additions to the list.

A Note on Sources

Selected references are listed, by company, at the end of main text. It is by no means a complete list of sources consulted (the inclusion of which would have expanded the volume to truly epic proportions, while adding little benefit for the reader), but it does include the most reliable and relevant.

Wherever possible, I have employed primary-source material. Many companies, large and small, have left paper trails (intentionally or otherwise) in the form of corporate filings and legal documents; patent, trademark, and copyright applications; recording and production files and internal correspondence; court proceedings; a wealth of catalogs, house publications, advertisements, and press releases; and the diaries or memoirs of those involved, which admittedly must be approached with caution but can still provide valuable insights and serve as a point of departure for further research.

Industry trade papers are a particularly rich source of information, beginning with the first incarnation of *The Phonogram* in the early 1890s and proceeding through *The Phonoscope*, *Music Trade Review*, *The Talking Machine World*, *Variety*, *Billboard*, and *Cash Box*, along with many lesser publications. Each had its biases, and none was entirely error-free, but taken together, they paint a remarkably detailed and generally accurate picture of the record business during the years covered by this work.

Local newspapers also yielded much valuable information, especially regarding small local producers. The phonograph was still such a novelty in the 1880s and 1890s that the doings of North American's various sub-companies, including their recording activities, were often covered in detail by the local press. In later years, many companies based outside the New York area, such as the Boston Talking Machine Company, Starr Piano Company, and any number of small mom-and-pop operations received excellent coverage in their hometown papers.

There was a dark side to the record business, which harbored its share of shady operators, although one might never guess it from perusing only the trade journals. Newspapers and court records often disclose information that the trade publications (being cheerleaders for the industry) chose to censor or suppress, ranging from mismanagement and shoddy business practices to copyright and patent infringements, failure to pay taxes and royalties, stock fraud, embezzlement, and felony indictments of record-company executives.

Secondary sources have been consulted very selectively, and with an abundance of caution. There have always been careful, conscientious researchers and writers in the field who are expert at locating, evaluating, and citing sources, and who possess what Victor historian John Bolig likes to call a "built-in bullshit detector." Many of their books, articles, and Internet postings will be found among the selected references. Unfortunately, they are greatly outnumbered by those who fail to cite their sources, pass off guesswork and anecdote as fact, think that casual "Googling" constitutes serious research, or make careers of cobbling together whatever material they can scrounge from readily available secondary sources, be they good, bad, or indifferent. The same can be said of the AI-generated documents that I have seen to date. Other than providing some occasional comic relief, shlock-work of this sort has played no role in the production of this book.

That being said, I do not presume that a work of this scope and complexity is, or ever can be, entirely complete or error-free, and I encourage you to alert me to any mistakes or omissions you find. Just be sure to cite your sources.

American Records Companies and Producers, 1888–1950

AMERICAN RECORDS COMPANIES AND PRODUCERS (1888–1950)

An Encyclopedic History

— A —

A-1 RECORDS OF AMERICA (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: 580 5th Ave., New York (at founding); 16 E. 43rd St. (Room 604), New York (late 1946–mid-1949); 1650 Broadway (Suite 709), New York (mid-1949–early 1950s); 2511 Tilden Ave., Brooklyn, NY (early 1950s); 8204 Morton St., Los Angeles (branch)

Record Products: A-1

Launched in 1944 by Eugene A. Panzone in conjunction with A-1 Music Publishers of America, which operated at the same 5th Avenue address. Panzone served as recording manager, and Helen Couchman as assistant and talent manager. Baline La Marr (Mrs. B. L. Bowlin) served as recording manager of A-1 Records' West Coast branch office. The company served as its own distributor.

A-1 Records of America was first listed by *Billboard* in its 1944 *Music Yearbook*, and its initial releases were advertised in July of that year. La Marr resigned in mid-1945 to launch her short-lived La Marr Record Company (*q.v.*), taking along the A-1 masters by Dusty Brooks, to which she owned the rights. Little more was reported concerning the label following La Marr's departure, and by the early 1950s A-1 Records was primarily a distributor of other companies' records. It probably was inactive but the time it last appeared *Billboard's* March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

The A-1 name was later used by several unrelated labels, including a very short-lived version, credited to the A-1 Recording Company of Hollywood, that might have been produced during the period covered by this work. Other than the presence of future Musketeer Jimmy Dodd on one release, no reliable information has been located concerning that company.

ABBEY RECORD CORPORATION / ABBEY RECORDS, INC. / PETER DORAINE, INC.

(Discs)

Record Production: 1948 - 1952

Offices: 754 10th Ave. (1949–mid 1951); 418 W. 49th St., New York (from mid-1951)

Pressing: Own plant (Jersey City, NJ)

Record Products (78): Abbey, Allen [1]

Launched in December by Peter Doraine, after resigning from Banner Records. Gus Statiras, using the name Gus Grant, served as artists-and-repertoire manager. Doraine owned a small pressing plant, which he expanded in June 1949 with equipment acquired from Herbert Plattner's Mayfair Plastic Industries plant. In return, Doraine agreed to press for Mayfair at a discount.

Several pop singers who had worked with Doraine at Banner Records followed him to his new company. Abbey's first release received a passing mention in *Cash Box* on December 25, 1948, but otherwise the label initially received little coverage in the trade and entertainment papers. A country-and-western series was added in late 1949, under Grant's supervision. The company expanded its rhythm-and-blues operation in the spring of 1950 with the appointment of Roody Toombs to manage artists and repertoire. His initial signings included "Fat Man" Humphries and calypso singer Enid Raphael.

The Abbey label continued to attract little attention until March 1950, when it had a surprise novelty hit with "The Old Piano Roll Blues" by Lawrence (Piano Roll) Cook and the Jim-Dandies. As with many Abbey releases that would follow, Cook was not performing in the studio, but via a hand-played piano roll that Doraine commissioned from Cook's longtime employer, the Q. R. S. Company. The record sparked a minor craze in the early 1950s for recordings from player pianos, hands organs, and other vintage mechanical music

devices. In the wake of its success, Doraine signed an agreement with the Imperial Industrial Corporation (the owner of Q. R. S.) granting him the exclusive right to make recordings from its piano rolls.

Doraine later took on Gene Novello and C. C. (Kelly) Camarata as partners. The company was reorganized in October 1950, after Doraine bought out Camarata's share. Novello, who previously had taken no active role in the organization, became treasurer and manager of artists and repertoire.

Abbey LPs were introduced in early 1952. The company's final releases, on standard 78s, appeared at the end of the year, after which Doraine moved to the newly launched Allen Records (unrelated to the Marshall Record Company's earlier Allen label) as sales and artists-and-repertoire manager. Doraine was later involved with several other record companies, including the short-lived 1955 revival of Vulcan Records.

ABC RECORDS / ABC-EAGLE RECORDINGS — See Eagle Records

ACA RECORDING STUDIOS, INC — See Audio Company of America

ACE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1945

Offices: Brill Building (1619 Broadway), New York

Record Products: Ace [1]

Launched in 1944 by songwriter Gil Mills, as an adjunct to the Arrow Music Company publishing operation, of which Mills was general manager. Both companies operated from the same office. Helen Couchman served a talent manager. Ace Records's first known listing appeared in the *Billboard 1944 Year Book*.

The Ace Record Company handled its own distribution, did virtually no advertising, and was largely overlooked by the trade papers. It appears to have gone dormant in late 1945, after Mills left Arrow Music to work as a press agent for Cosmo Records. The Ace Record Company was still listed in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook*, but with no information given other than its address.

An unrelated Ace Record Company was incorporated by Alan J. Zander in Buffalo, New York, in August 1948, but what (if anything) it produced has not been discovered. The Ace name was later used for several unrelated labels, including one produced by the Roy Milton Record Company (*q.v.*) during the period covered by this work.

ACME RADIO AND RECORD CORPORATION, et al. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1962

Offices: Various addresses in Columbia, KY (from 1949); Campbellsville, KY (from 1951); and Manchester, KY (from late 1950s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Own plants — Campbellsville and Manchester, KY

Record Products: Acme [3]; personal recordings; custom labels

Chartered in Columbia, Kentucky, on January 17, 1949 by Rev. Clifford Spurlock, S. C. Bybee, and W. R. Wooten, to produce phonograph records and radio broadcasts. Spurlock, who has been characterized as a "sometime preacher and borderline con man," previously operated the Acme Broadcasting Company in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. His recording company would change names (and later, owners) several times before finally closing in the early 1960s.

Spurlock claimed to have been producing records since 1940, using unnamed West Coast manufacturers, for sale to radio stations. On January 5, 1949, he announced plans to build a pressing plant in Columbia, Kentucky, pending approval of Acme's incorporation filing, and named a half-dozen apparently local performers he claimed to already have under contract.

Acme's charter was approved on January 17, 1949, and the company apparently was producing records by April, when it sponsored a local appearance by its Green Valley Boys. Acme began advertising nationally in the autumn of that year, focusing exclusively on country-style material. Spurlock at first guaranteed dealers that they would sell every

record they purchased, and he took the unusual step of offering full refunds for returned records. Performers initially were drawn largely from the Louisville area, many of whom were affiliated with WHAS and other local radio stations. Spurlock also made personal recordings, for which the performers paid all production costs. He heavily promoted his for-hire pressing plants, which produced discs of generally mediocre quality.

In 1952 Spurlock reunited members of the Carter Family, who made the first in a new series of recordings for Acme in Bristol, Tennessee. In the same year, the Acme label was consolidated with Jim Stanton's Rich-R'-Tone label. The company set up a custom-label division and also began producing 45s and LPs at about that time.

Under Stanton's management, Acme began looking further afield for its talent, placing ads in *Billboard* reading, "Attention, Hillbilly, Sacred Artists — We have an attractive offer to make to you if you are interested in making records." Spurlock's influence within the company declined markedly under the new arrangement, but he continued to produce and promote new Carter Family releases for the label into 1957, for which the Carters allegedly never received royalties.

Spurlock's Acme label later passed through a succession of owners, including Zeke Clements (in 1958, doing business as Acme Enterprises in Manchester, Kentucky) and Steve Keith (in 1960, doing business as Acme Records) before it was discontinued in the early 1960s.

ACORN RECORDS — See Savoy Record Company

ADAM RECORDS, INC. — See Admiral Records, Inc.

ADMIRAL RECORDS, INC. / ADAM RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1951

Offices: 701 7th Ave., New York (1949–3/1951); 563 Water St., New York (from 3/1951)

Record Products: Admiral (1949–1950), Adam; Admiral Star Series (children's)

Launched in November 1949 by "Admiral" Nicholas R. (Nick) Carrano. The title was honorary, having been bestowed by Nebraska governor Val Peterson in recognition of Carrano's efforts to find a song about the state suitable for recording purposes. Officers included Carrano (president), Ross J. DiLorenzo and Dr. Walter B. Nicora (vice-presidents), and Jerome Lipskin (treasurer and, from January 1950, general manager). Lipskin, who had managed the De Marco Sisters, was the only Admiral executive with any discernible experience in the entertainment business.

Carrano signed his first artists, husband-and-wife vocalists Dick Merrick and Cathy Allen, in June 1949. The company's launch was reported in the trade papers in November, and its initial releases appeared a month later. Admiral was primarily a pop and light-jazz label with an artist roster that included singer Russ Vincent (a Connecticut pizzeria owner discovered and managed by Carrano), pianist Johnny Guarnieri, and bands fronted by Raymond Scott and Mitchell Ayres. Labels featured small photographs of the artists.

In late December 1949, Admiral announced that it was undertaking a major effort to develop a line of children's records, beginning with a series by cast members of CBS's "Chuck Wagon" television show. A later children's series, produced for Admiral by Selma Rich, featured child actor Freddie Bartholomew. Admiral added LP pressings to its line in late 1949 and 45-rpm pressings in May 1950, the latter initially only in the children's line. Sales representative Jane Grogan spent ten weeks promoting Admiral records on the road during the early summer of 1950.

On July 22, 1950, *Billboard* announced that Admiral Records was looking for a new name at the request of the unrelated Admiral Corporation. A long-established manufacturer of radios and other electronic goods, the Admiral Corporation claimed that Carrano's use of the name was causing confusion in what it considered a related field. Carrano complied voluntarily and announced a contest to select the new name, the winner of which was to receive a phonograph-radio-television combination courtesy of the Admiral Corporation. The winner was disc jockey Mickey Else of station WWPA (Williamsport, Pennsylvania), with "Adam Records — First with the Best." Advertisements for Adam records began to appear in November 1950. Labels included the notation, "Formerly Admiral Records, Inc."

Carrano relocated in March 1951 and phased out Adam Records over the remainder of the year, beginning with the release of Selma Rich's copyrights in April. In November he allowed singer Russ Vincent to buy out his management contract, after which little more was reported concerning the company. In May 1953, Carrano sold thirty-four Admiral/Adams masters to Decca's Coral Records subsidiary.

The Admiral name was briefly used again in the later 1950s, for a label having no connection to Carrano or the Admiral Corporation.

ADVANCE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – 1948

Offices: 2546 Westwood Blvd., Los Angeles

Record Products: Advance

Founded in 1947 by Bert Shefter, originally as Allegro Records. Shefter conducted several "pop concerts" at Carnegie Hall (New York) in the same year, but had no discernible experience in the recording industry.

Shefter abandoned the Allegro name after discovering that Paul Puner had launched an identically named venture at about the same time, and subsequently changed his company's name to Advance. Conflicting information concerning the company's startup appeared in *Billboard*, which first listed Advance in its May 1947 directory, then later reported that the company was to be launched on February 1, 1948. Thus far, no evidence of the company's operation after 1948 has been found. The Advance name was subsequently used for an unrelated label launched by Bob Thiele in 1951.

ADVENTURE RECORD COMPANY / ADVENTURE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1953

Offices: 9721 3rd Ave., Brooklyn, NY (1946–1947); 1600 Broadway, New York (1947–1953)

Record Products: Star [5]; Adventure Records (children's)

Originally a children's-record company, Adventure was launched by Sol Goodman in 1946. Goodman wrote the scripts for the earliest releases, which featured WNEW radio personality Uncle Henry (Henry Walden). Originally packaged in illustrated albums that retailed for \$2.25 per set, some records were later sold individually, without any special packaging.

In October 1947, Adventure Records launched the Star label, a pop and country-and-western line marketed mainly for jukebox use. The label was still active in mid-1948, but it received virtually no coverage in the trade papers, and no documentary evidence has been found that Star survived beyond that year.

Adventure Records was belatedly incorporated in November 1948, at which time it was announced that the company was converting to LP production; 45-rpm discs followed in mid-1950. In July of that year, Goodman secured the recording rights to children's books published by Tell-Well Press (Kansas City). The company received a plug for its children's line from Eleanor Roosevelt on her WNBC radio show in December 1950.

In April 1953, Goodman sold Adventure to Gotham Records, which retained the brand name and remastered and reissued many of Goodman's recordings in cheaper editions. After a long period of inactivity, the Adventure name was revived by an unrelated company in 1963 for a new children's label.

ADVERTISER PUBLISHING COMPANY, LTD. — See Hawaiian Transcription Productions

ADVERTISERS RECORDING SERVICE, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: From early 1930s

Offices: 113 W. 57th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above location

Record Products: Masters for New Music Quarterly and probably other independent labels; custom recordings; personal and custom recordings

Primarily a provider of custom recording services, headed by James A. Miller. The company also made a few recordings for a few commercial clients, most notably New Music Quarterly. Initially the studio produced only instantaneous recordings, but in 1939 it began advertising

that it could also record standard wax masters for commercial use. Recording engineer Harry Smith (*q.v.*) was affiliated with the studio in the later 1940s. There is no connection to Montreal-based Advertisers Recording, Inc., which operated in the same period.

AEOLIAN COMPANY, THE (Discs)

Record production: 1918–1925

Offices: 29 W. 42nd St., New York

Original-Master Sources: Own studio — 53 W. 43rd St., New York

Pressing: Own plants — New York (to 11/1920); Meriden, CT (from 11/1920); unknown Canadian location (to c. 1924). Gavenite Company (test pressings, early 1920s)

Record Products: Aeolian-Vocalion, Vocalion; University Records, other private and custom labels

Foreign Affiliates: The Orchestrelle Company (225 Regent St., London), to 1920; The Aeolian Company, Ltd. (London), from 1920; Polyphon Company (Berlin), from late 1923; Milano Laboratories (Milan), from late 1923

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Omar (Australia); Aco, Beltona, Coliseum, Gamage, Grafton, Guardsman, Homochord, Kildare, Ludgate, Meloto, Scala, Sterno (England); Cymot (South Africa), other foreign labels

A major producer of organs, player pianos, and other musical instruments, Aeolian descended from the Mechanical Orguinette Company, which was founded in New York in 1878 by William Burton Tremaine to manufacture automatic organs and rolls. Tremaine reorganized Mechanical Orguinette as the Aeolian Organ and Music Company in 1888, then shortened the name to The Aeolian Company in 1895. Aeolian added player pianos to its line in the late 1890s and in 1913 introduced the Duo-Art player, an attachment capable of reproducing pedal action. On August 3, 1903, The Aeolian Company became a subsidiary of the Aeolian-Weber Piano and Pianola Company, a holding company formed by Tremaine to control the stock of a group of instrument manufacturers in the United States, Australia, Great Britain, and Germany.

Aeolian Company officials approached the Victor Talking Machine Company in the summer of 1912 with a proposal that Victor manufacture a phonograph attachment for player pianos, which Victor rejected. By 1914, Aeolian was formulating plans to manufacture its own phonographs, although record production apparently was not yet being considered. The company began phonograph production on a small scale in mid-1914 and offered its first models for sale late in the year, at which time it declared itself "the largest manufacturer of musical instruments in the world."

The company's trademark application claimed use of the Aeolian name on phonographs since "before December 1, 1914." The machines' chief selling point was the Graduola, a mechanical volume control with a retractable cable that allowed users to adjust the volume remotely. Licensed from Australian inventor F. J. Empson, it was prominently featured in Aeolian's advertising. Harry B. Greene assigned rights to numerous cabinet designs to Aeolian in May 1916, some of which were in production by the end of that year. *The Talking Machine World* for August 1916 reported, "The Vocalion is coming right along and is expected to be one of the leading sellers this fall."

Having yet to release any records, in 1917 Aeolian purchased the U.S. rights to a patented recording process that was being used by its London affiliate, The Orchestrelle Company. This is believed to have been Percy J. Packman's British patent for a fine-groove vertical cut, which initially was employed on British Marathon discs. Apparently some progress was being in the U.S. on development of a disc when Aeolian's British branch cabled New York to say it had received sample recordings of superior quality from a local inventor. After some negotiations, Aeolian secured rights to that process and development resumed, using the new process.

Recording sessions began in Aeolian's New York studio long before the records' initial release. The original Aeolian-Vocalion recording files have long-since vanished, but the diary of Original Dixieland Jazz Band cornetist Nick La Rocca shows that the band first recorded for Aeolian on July 29, 1917. However, nearly a year would elapse before the first Aeolian-Vocalion discs were placed on sale, in May 1918. No documentary evidence has been located that would explain the delay in bringing them to market, but it seems likely that wartime labor shortages and the changeover in recording systems played a role. Labels on the fine-groove vertical-cut discs showed a 1916 copyright date, referring to the brand-name registration, not to the year in which the label was launched. The company filed

several other copyrights on the Aeolian and Vocalion names for various purposes in the same year. The complete Aeolian-Vocalion label design was finally copyrighted on August 26, 1918.

Edward Falck served as Aeolian's first musical director. The "recording suite," initially managed by Oscar W. Ray, was said to be the most lavishly furnished studio in the United States. Among its earliest offerings its recordings by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, which had briefly been allowed to stray from Victor after their initial, ground-breaking release for that company in 1917. Aeolian also developed a distinguished classical roster that included Giulio Crimi, Marguerite D'Alvarez, Maurice Dambois, Rosa Raisa, Giacomo Rimini, Lionel Tertis, John Charles Thomas, Roland Hayes (from English masters), and others of equal stature. The popular catalog relied heavily on the usual studio freelancers of the period, but there were occasional releases by Eddie Cantor, Sophie Tucker, and other headliners, as well as a long series of dance records by various groups under the direction of Ford Dabney. Imported masters were obtained from Orchestrelle, which had begun making recordings for export in February 1917. (Orchestrelle was later reorganized as The Aeolian Company, Ltd., and introduced British Vocalion records in December 1920.)

In the autumn of 1918, Aeolian attracted attention with two multicolored discs ("America & The Star Spangled Banner"/"Patriotic Medley" in mottled red, white, and blue; and "Allied National Airs," in a near-fluorescent mix of colors representing the Allies' flags). Other instances of Vocalion "spatter" discs are known, mostly from the early 1920s, but those appear to have been special pressings that were not made for general sale.

Despite the quality of its offerings, Aeolian's vertical-cut records do not seem to have sold particularly well, and in late 1919 the company began to produce record standard lateral-cut discs. The first were announced in *The Talking Machine World* for January 15, 1920. Aeolian discontinued production of its vertical-cut line two months later. At the same time, the company stopped distributing Columbia records, which it had handled while developing its own line. Distinctive reddish-orange pressings and a new advertising slogan ("Red Records Are Better") were introduced in the August 1920 list. That month also saw the label name shortened to simply "Vocalion" and the introduction of a new, if only slightly less ornate, label design.

Aeolian's record division underwent many changes during 1921. In May, George Sheffield replaced Ray as studio manager after Ray was placed in charge of record wholesaling. A few months later, record-division manager Thomas P. Ratcliff resigned to accept a position with Homer Rodeheaver's new recording operation. *The Talking Machine World* for May 15, 1921, referred to a new Vocalion "steel matrix system" but did not elaborate on the process. If used, it does not seem to have produced any discernible change in sound or pressing quality.

Vocalion's own recordings were supplemented by a few masters imported from The Aeolian Company, Ltd. Use of imported masters increased beginning in late 1923, after Aeolian procured the U.S. rights to masters recorded in Europe by Deutsche Grammophon (licensed through its Polyphonwerke export division) and the Milano Laboratories (Italy). Including material from the English branch, the arrangement reportedly made 12,000 titles available, of which only a small proportion was issued domestically. Vocalion's own recordings were widely exported, appearing under various labels in Australia, England, and South Africa, sometimes with pseudonymous artist credits. In Canada, Aeolian-Vocalion and Vocalion discs were distributed first by The Nordheimer Company (1919–1921), and then by the Scythes Vocalion Company, Ltd. (from 1922).

In a trend-setting departure from the usual practice of accompanying singers with a studio orchestra, Vocalion began employing Ben Selvin's popular dance orchestra to accompany its vocalists in the early 1920s. Frequent releases of the latest song hits by Selvin's Orchestra, the California Ramblers, Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra, and other prominent bands helped to make Vocalion a success in the pop market. A modest race-record series, introduced in July 1923 and incorporated within the standard popular catalog, relied largely on vaudeville and cabaret blues singers booked through talent agent Joe Davis, including Rosa Henderson, Viola McCoy, and Lena Wilson.

On December 1, 1924, Aeolian Company officials announced the impending sale of its Vocalion record division to the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, citing a desire to focus fully on the production of musical instruments. In a statement published by *The Talking Machine World* in December 1924, general manager W. H. Alfring declared, "The

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AMERICAN RECORD COMPANIES AND PRODUCERS, 1888–1950 (2nd Edition) • Allan Sutton / Mainspring Press

Aeolian Company believed it advantageous to its organization to withdraw from the record field in order to permit of expansion and development with the products which have made our company internationally famous — pianos, reproducing pianos, and player pianos."

Aeolian's sale of the Vocalion record division became effective on January 3, 1925. Its offices were moved to Brunswick's New York headquarters, and recording operations were consolidated and transferred to the Brunswick studios. In March 1925, Vocalion's lateral-cut masters were shipped to Brunswick's pressing plant in Muskegon, Michigan (the vertical-cut masters were not; what became of them was not documented). Although Brunswick's initial press release stated that production of Vocalion records would continue under "a distinct and separate organization," control of the label was assigned to Brunswick vice-president Edward R. Strauss. He quickly demoted Vocalion to a 50¢ brand, discontinued the premium-priced classical and operatic series, and transferred some of Vocalion's most popular artists to the Brunswick label.

Vocalion's sale to Brunswick marked the end of The Aeolian Company's involvement with record production. On September 1, 1932, it merged with the American Piano Corporation to create the Aeolian American Corporation, which later acquired the assets of many independent American piano makers. After several name changes and corporate reorganizations in the 1970s and early 1980s, Aeolian was purchased by former Steinway executive Peter Perez in 1983 and was declared bankrupt in 1985.

AETNA MUSIC CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 232 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore

Record Products: Aetna

Founded by Nolan F. Knowles in mid-1946. Primarily a music-publishing operation, Aetna also briefly produced its own label, which advertised its first releases in June 1946. The few known releases comprise a mixture of pop, novelty, and country-and-western fare by obscure artists. No new releases are known to have been made after 1947, although there is an anecdotal report that the company was still doing business in 1949.

AGUILA RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 475 N. Bernard, Chicago

Original-Master Sources: Universal Recording (Chicago)

Record Products: Aguila Discos

A trade name of Arthur Velen, a Chicago accountant and owner of the Advanced Distributing Company, which initially specialized in records for the Latino market. Velen filed for copyright on the Aguila label design on July 21, 1947, and *Billboard* first mentioned the company in September of that year. There was no connection to Mauricio Garten's Los Angeles-based Aguila Recording Company, which operated during the same period.

The few known Aguila releases employ a mixture of imported masters and recordings made in Chicago by local Latino performers. Aguila's chief selling point was that the records retailed for 79¢ at a time when other Latino labels charged \$1. The company was last mentioned by *Billboard* in 1949. The Aguila name was later used for several unrelated labels.

AGUILA RECORDING COMPANY — See Garten, Mauricio

AJAX RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1923–1925

Offices: 108 W. Lake Ave., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): H. S. Berliner Laboratories (Compo), New York; Compo Company (Canada)

Pressing: Compo Company (Canada)

Record Products: Ajax

During the summer of 1923, Herbert S. Berliner (the son of gramophone inventor Emile Berliner, and founder of the Canadian-based Compo Company) launched the Ajax Record Company to market a race-record label in the United States. Berliner had already filed a

U.S. trademark application for the Ajax brand on January 17, 1922, claiming use on records since November 2, 1921, but no evidence has been found that any Ajax records were issued before 1923.

Although Compo was to handle production, the Ajax Record Company was kept at arm's-length from the parent operation. Except for the earliest recordings, Ajax masters were numbered separately from Compo's (Compo's recording files have survived, but Ajax's have not), and Ajax recordings were not used by Compo's own labels. Compo's connection to Ajax was never mentioned directly in press releases, although the trade papers disclosed that Compo general manager Thomas Nash would run the company's Chicago headquarters at 108 West Lake Avenue.

How much business was actually conducted at the Chicago address remains open to question; it appears to have been little more than a sales office. Contrary to some jazz discographies, no Ajax recordings were made in Chicago. The few supposed Chicago recordings actually were made in Compo's Montreal studio and were numbered within Compo's own master series, as confirmed in the surviving Compo ledgers.

Berliner, for all of his technical expertise and business acumen, apparently had little understanding of the American race-record market. He selected Chris Smith (a well-known but rapidly fading vaudevillian and songwriter whose specialty was stereotypical "coon songs") to make the first Ajax recordings. With pianist Henry Troy, Smith recorded the initial Ajax masters in Compo's Montreal studio on July 17, 1923. The records were first advertised in *The Chicago Defender* on October 20, 1923, but the outdated material apparently aroused little interest.

In the meantime, Berliner had shifted Ajax's recording sessions to New York, where in addition to securing better talent for Ajax, he could save on travel expenses for the American pop artists he had been dispatching to Montreal to record for Compo's mainstream Apex label. The first New York race-record sessions, involving Edna Hicks and Hazel Meyers, were held in or around September 1923, possibly at the Independent Recording Laboratory (the main supplier of masters to the Plaza-Regal label group), which Berliner is known to have used for a Compo session on December 13, 1923. However, Berliner's use of independent New York studios was only a stopgap measure. By January 1924, Ajax sessions were being held in his new studio at 240 West 55th Street (*see* Berliner Recording Laboratories).

Once Berliner's New York studio was fully operational, Joe Davis (a songwriter, talent agent, and owner of the Triangle Music Company) became Ajax's unofficial manager of artists and repertoire. Davis had already assembled a large roster of popular vaudeville and cabaret blues singers, including Rosa Henderson, Viola McCoy, and Josie Miles, and he kept a reliable group of Harlem musicians on call to provide their accompaniments. Davis made himself invaluable to Ajax and other race-record producers by supplying complete packages comprising singers, songs (mostly from his Triangle Music catalog), accompanists, and copyright clearances, all for a reasonable fee. Ajax records were advertised regularly in *The Chicago Defender*, often employing stereotype-laden cartoons that were soon being emulated by Paramount and other race-record labels.

The Compo files confirm that Berliner made monthly trips to New York (where he maintained a luxury hotel suite), which probably correspond to the Ajax sessions. Pianist Louis Hooper stated that Berliner and Davis were both present at the recording sessions, which he recalled as marathon affairs stretching over several days and nights, sometimes in uncomfortable conditions. A small group of Davis' regular musicians, often credited as the "Choo Choo Jazzers," was employed for most vocal accompaniments as well as many of the purely instrumental numbers. Hooper recalled that the group included himself, cornetist Bubber Miley, trombonist Jake Frazier, clarinetist Bob Fuller, and banjoist Elmer Snowden, with Davis himself providing the occasional special effects.

Ajax never advertised one its most popular singers by name. Monette Moore's twenty-two Ajax releases all appeared under the name of Susie Smith, and Ajax even fabricated a face to go with the name, for reasons that have never been discovered. The company made much of its 1924 signing of Mamie Smith, apparently unaware that sales of her Okeh records had been declining for several years. Her Ajax records sold poorly despite being widely advertised, and she vanished from the Ajax roster after just three releases. Ajax had even less success with its two releases by boxer Jack Johnson (recorded in

Compo's Montreal studio on March 7 and 8, 1924), which by Berliner's own admission were financial failures.

The Compo ledgers show no recording activity in Montreal from February 19 through March 16, 1925. Presumably, this was the period during which Berliner was reconfiguring his New York studio for electrical recording. During the transition, Berliner filled out the Ajax catalog by licensing mainstream pop recordings from the Plaza Music Company's Banner label. It is unclear whether Berliner was attempting to broaden Ajax's appeal, or was simply using the Plaza material as a stopgap measure while his studio was being overhauled. Given the lack of publicity for the records (which were not advertised in *The Chicago Defender* or listed in *The Talking Machine World* advance bulletins), the latter seems more likely. The Plaza-derived issues appear to have sold poorly, and Berliner soon shifted his attention back to producing original recording for the race-record market.

By May 1925, Ajax was back in the race-record business, now with its own electrically recorded masters. Behind the scenes, however, Berliner was already in the process of shutting down the operation. The final Ajax sessions probably correspond to Berliner's absence from Montreal during March 25–April 1, 1925. Ajax's last known record listings appeared in the May 1925 *Talking Machine World* advance bulletin, as June releases. An additional seven issues, which seem to have gone unadvertised, probably were released in July, a month before the Ajax Record Company suspended operations. By then, Berliner had moved his New York studio to the Hilton Building, where he continued to offer custom recording services as the Berliner Recording Laboratories. Some Ajax masters were subsequently licensed by Pathé, which would go on to use Berliner's studio before acquiring its own electrical recording equipment.

In Berliner's and Davis' hands, Ajax stood little chance against Okeh, Paramount, and other emerging leaders in the race-record field, whose managers better understood the market and were willing to venture beyond New York to obtain talent. Davis largely withdrew from the field in the mid-1920s, to devote full attention to his performing and publishing activities. Berliner went on to build the Compo Company into a major Canadian operation that eventually was acquired by Decca Records.

ALABAMA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889

Offices: Anniston, AL (main office); Potter Building (Room F), Birmingham, AL (sales office)

Record Products: Possibly cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Alabama. President Charles A. Cheever was also an officer of the Automatic Phonograph Exhibition Company and, with the Cahoon Syndicate, was involved in the formation of several other North American Phonograph sub-companies. Other officers included James R. Roberts (secretary, and later vice-president and general manager) and E. G. Roberts (secretary and treasurer).

Although the company's main business appears to have been placing phonographs for business use (along with Smith typewriters), it also promoted them as entertainment devices. James Roberts demonstrated a phonograph at the Birmingham Opera House Hotel as early as July 1889, playing recordings of "songs, poetry, and conversations...to the delight of the crowd." At a demonstration in Montgomery in October, it was reported that Roberts had "a number of cylinders on which were recorded music, both vocal and instrumental," although it was not stated whether any were the company's own recordings. Alabama Phonograph's last known newspaper advertisements appeared in April 1892.

ALADDIN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946–1961

Offices: 427 W. 5th St. and 5352 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles (at founding); 4918 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA (5/1946–9/1950); 451 N. Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills, CA (combined with Mesner Sales, Inc., from 9/1950)

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, Radio Recorders, WOR studios, other independent studios

Pressing: Empire Record Company, Monarch Record Manufacturing, other independent plants; own plant (Hollywood CA) from early 1950s

Record Products (78s): Aladdin, Intro, Lamp, Score, 7-11

Aladdin was the successor to Philo Records (*q.v.*), a short-lived Los Angeles company founded in 1945 by Leo Mesner (president), Edward (Eddie) Mesner (vice-president), and Ida Mesner (secretary and treasurer). *Billboard* occasionally misspelled the name "Menser."

The name change came after the Philco Radio Corporation (which was manufacturing recording blanks and considering launching its own record label) filed for an injunction in December 1945, claiming that the Philo brand too closely resembled its own. The case was settled out of court on February 2, 1946, when the Mesners agreed to drop their use of the Philo name. They originally planned to rename their company Medlee Records, as advertised in *Billboard* shortly after the settlement with Philco, but instead decided on Aladdin, a stylized representation of whom had appeared on the Philo labels. Early Aladdin advertising carried the notation, "Formerly Philo."

Aladdin Records commenced operation on March 1, 1946, after an apparently seamless transition during which new Aladdin-label pressings were made from the Philo masters. Distribution was handled locally by the owners, doing business as Mesner & Mesner, and elsewhere by a large number of distributors that specialized in small independent labels, including at least one agency in Hawaii.

Aladdin soon emerged as an important rhythm-and-blues and gospel label, with an artist roster that included Charles Brown, the Famous Soul Stirrers, the Five Keys, Gene and Eunice (Forest Gene Wilson and Eunice Russ), Billie Holiday, Lightnin' Hopkins, Amos Milburn, Shirley and Lee (Sherman Goodman and Leonard Lee), and Thurston Harris. Although it received less attention, there was also a jazz series featuring Kenny Drew, Illinois Jacquet, Art Pepper, and other notable (if not always commercially successful) musicians. The jazz catalog was supplemented in 1948 by some H.R.S. recordings the Mesners obtained from Jack Caidin in exchange for agreeing to send Aladdin's East Coast pressing work to Caidin's Empire Record plant in New York.

In August 1947, Aladdin was one of several small West Coast labels that began air shipment of its records to the East via Flying Tiger Airlines, a marked time-saver over the usual ground transportation. East Coast distribution got an additional boost in 1948, when Caidin's New York plant began pressing the records. A Canadian pressing and distribution deal was signed with Charles Darwyn's Toronto-based Monogram Records/Ambassador Music Company conglomerate in the late 1940s.

Score, the first of several Aladdin subsidiary labels, was launched in the spring of 1948 with releases by the Trumpeteers, a Black gospel quartet. It was followed by Intro Records in April 1950, and by 7-11 in 1953. Score survived into 1958, by which time it had been recast as a budget-priced LP line.

Aladdin began producing LPs in November 1950, beginning with a group of 10" albums compiled from previously released material. In 1951 it began issuing recordings concurrently in 78- and 45-rpm format. By 1956–1957, the company was branching into material with crossover potential in the mainstream market. Several such Aladdin releases (most notably, Thurston Harris' 1957 "Little Bitty Pretty One") made good showings concurrently in the pop and rhythm-and-blues charts. However, Aladdin's output and sales declined in the later 1950s. Only a single new release is known to have announced in 1961, the company's last full year of operation.

Imperial Records' Lou Chudd purchased Aladdin's assets on February 12, 1962, including approximately 3,000 masters. The Aladdin catalog currently is owned by the EMI-Capitol Records.

ALBEN RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1950

Offices: 19 Selden Ave., Detroit

Original-Master Source(s): Independent studios

Pressing: Vargo, Inc. (Owosso, MI)

Record Products: Alben, Hush-Hush

Launched in August 1948 by Alan Smith and Ben Okum, of the O-Kay Vending Company (Detroit). Okum was also acting president of the Michigan Automatic Phonograph Owners' Association, from which he retired in early 1949 to devote more time to his new record business.

The initial Alben releases appeared in September 1948, in a 100 series for jazz and pop, and a 500 series for country-and western. Its first jazz offering (the Candy Johnson Sextet's "Mood by Midnite") received an enthusiastic review in *Cash Box*, which reported that it "rolls rhythm and bop together into a unique and different beat." The *Billboard* critics were less impressed with some early Alben releases, dismissing them as "easy, corny riffing" (Candy Johnson) or "nasal chanting" (Jimmy Work & his Border Boys). *Cash Box*, on the other hand, lauded Work for his "nasal tones that satisfy." *Billboard*'s criticism of Work did not deter Decca from quickly signing him away from Alben. Several of the Johnson sides were later licensed to the Danceland label, which released them under alternate titles. At one point, Alben offered recording contracts to participants in a Detroit gospel singing contest who it found "suitable for waxing."

In March 1949, Okum and Smith launched the Hush-Hush label for an album set of mildly risqué adult party records by comedienne Nan Blakstone, using masters leased from an undisclosed source. They were taken over by Jubilee Records' Jerry Blaine in April 1950, by which time Alben probably was inactive. The company's brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies), probably can be disregarded. In October 1952, *Billboard* reported that Okum and Smith were busy building O-Kay Vending's business, which by then included television sales, but no mention was made of record production.

ALCO RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – Early 1950s

Offices: 8913 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles

Record Products: Alco; transcriptions

A cooperative venture launched in 1946 by British natives Alec, Manuel, and Sara Compinsky (comprising the Compinsky Trio) and members of the Pacific Symphoneta. In one account, by International News Service columnist Owen Callin, the company got its start after Elsa Lanchester asked the trio to make a recording of Haydn's "Gypsy Rondo" for use in her Los Angeles puppet theater. Coupled with De Falla's "Fire Dance" for commercial release, the record reportedly sold well enough that the family decided to launch its own company.

The Compinksys contributed \$1,000 each to the start-up. Callin's 1949 article credited Alec Compinsky as "the guiding hand behind Alco," although Manuel was Alco's musical director, as well as conductor of the Pacific Symphoneta. The same article also erroneously reported that Alco Recording was only six months old at the time.

Alco had already released several classical albums by February 1947, when it was first listed in *Billboard*'s label directory. Its artist roster included (in addition to the Compinksys) Alice Mock, Felix Slatkin, Earl Robinson, the American Art Quartet, and the London String Quartet. The latter's Alco offerings were praised by critic Mildred Norton as having been recorded "with extreme care and regard for instrumental balances."

Alco specialized in lesser-known and previously unrecorded compositions, including works by Debussy, Grieg, Hindemith, Schoenberg, Shostakovich, and Toch. The latter's "Chinese Flute" reportedly was one of Alco's best-selling releases. An early 1948 report noted that an album of Christian Science hymns and a "long list" of Jewish and Italian recordings were also available by special order. The company sponsored several concerts at the Wilshire Ebell Theater during 1947, at which artists performed some of the compositions they had recorded for Alco.

Alco appears to have been experiencing financial difficulties by September 1947, when it mortgaged nineteen of its masters to Security-First Bank of Los Angeles. Later that year, the company requested that it be exempted from the impending American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, on the grounds that it was a co-op in which the members and musicians shared the profits. Nothing further was reported concerning the request, which presumably was denied. Despite such difficulties, the company appears to have rallied in early 1948.

Alco attracted attention with its March 1948 recording of Franz Waxman conducting his score from "The Paradine Case," one of the earliest recordings of movie background music. In June of that year, Alco introduced long-playing sixteen-inch transcriptions that included reissues of its pre-1948 recordings, which were exempt from the AFM ban. In the later 1940s, the company took the unusual step of offering its commercial 78s in both shellac and vinyl pressings, the latter at a small premium. Standard LPs were added to the line in 1950 or 1951.

Alco appears to discontinued operations in late 1953. There was no connection to Alco Research and Engineering, a large Los Angeles pressing and master-processing plant (*see next entry*). The Alco name was later used by an unrelated 45-rpm label.

ALCO RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING COMPANY / CREST RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1942 – 1980s

Offices: 1107 N. El Centro Ave., Los Angeles; 6201 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles; 8639 W. 3rd Ave., Los Angeles (Crest Recordings)

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products (78s): Crest; pressings for Discovery and other independent labels

A major independent pressing plant founded by Alex H. Levine and Lester Cottrell, Alco briefly produced its own Crest label. The company began operations in 1942 but was not incorporated until January 22, 1948. There was no connection to the Alco Recording Company, a cooperative venture that issued classical recordings on the Alco label (*see previous entry*). In addition to pressing for many independent West Coast labels, Alco processed masters and stampers for companies that pressed elsewhere. In July 1946, Levine and Cottrell sued several companies to recover 8,000 of its pressings for which it had not been paid.

Levine and Cottrell launched Crest Recordings as an Alco subsidiary in the summer of 1946, to specialize in country-and-western and Latino material for the retail and jukebox markets. There was also a children's series that included Sterling Holloway's reading of "Aesop's Fables." A September *Billboard* article reported that several artists had already recorded for Crest. However, marketing support for the label was negligible, and production appears to have ended by the later 1940s. The Crest name was later used by several unrelated labels.

Alco's pressing plant and 250,000 records were destroyed by fire on June 9, 1950, which also claimed the life a Los Angeles fire captain. The company rebuilt at the same location and continued to press for numerous major and minor labels until November 1982, when it filed for bankruptcy. The plant was reactivated in February 1983, under new ownership, and continued to operate into the late 1980s.

ALERT RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946–c. 1950

Offices: 1303 Fulton St., Brooklyn, NY (1946–mid-1948); 2413-A 65th St., Brooklyn (from mid-1948)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations

Record Products: Alert; Kiddie Time (children's)

Founded in early 1946 by Sollie Abrams, whose Alert Records Distributing Company operated at the same address. The latter distributed some other minor labels, including Bell Novelty Records. Theodore Gottlieb served as president, Melvin Herman as secretary-treasurer. In addition to Abrams' own distributing company, the records were handled by small distributors in Baltimore, Chicago, and Shreveport.

Alert specialized in race material, with an artist roster that included Champion Jack Dupree and Brownie McGhee. The latter scored a minor hit in early 1948 with his Alert release of "The Baseball Boogie," dedicated to Jackie Robinson. Alert also produced records

in pop/jazz (200), blues (400), and gospel (600) series, all of which retailed for 79¢. In late 1948 it added a children's series, on the Kiddie Time label.

The company appears to have undergone a reorganization during the summer of 1948, when the offices were moved. An August *Billboard* ad solicited new salesmen, offering a plan to triple their commissions. In October 1949, the Kiddie Time masters were sold to Jubilee's Jerry Blaine, and Alert Records appears to have suspended operations not long afterwards.

ALGENE SOUND AND RADIO COMPANY / ALGENE RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices: Witherspoon Building, 140 Juniper St. (1938–1948); 1915 Walnut St., Philadelphia (from 1948)

Record Products: Algene; custom recordings

Primarily a provider of custom recording services, the Algene Sound and Radio Company was registered as a Pennsylvania business in March 1937 by Albert M. Battis, Eugene J. Speitel, and Miriam Alter, all of Philadelphia. In 1938, Algene was listed as a Presto recording-machine dealer, and office photographs taken the same year show the company was also handling Webster public-address equipment. A second company registration was filed in January 25, 1946.

Algene produced its own commercial label very briefly. Launched during the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban in the spring of 1948, the Algene label featured *a capella* groups, which as vocal ensembles were not bound to honor by the ban. The label had a local jukebox hit with "Tea Leaves" by Emil Côté's Serenaders, which was purchased and reissued by Columbia. Côté went on to work as Algene's New York sales representative.

Algene apparently purchased some pressings from the defunct Tune-Disk operation in 1948, over which it pasted its own labels. In September 1948 the company purchased some recordings by the Five Kings from the group's manager, Baggy Hardiman, but did not issue them, instead selling them to Mercury. After late 1948, nothing more was heard of the Algene label. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

Battis appears to have been Algene Sound and Radio's sole owner by March 1957, when the city of Philadelphia sued the company for more than \$95,000 in unpaid taxes. Algene is still registered as an active company in Pennsylvania, but attempts to confirm its ownership and the current nature of its business have been unsuccessful.

ALLEGRO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1952

Offices: 2 and 5 Columbus Circle, New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products (78): Allegro, Allegro Artist, Allegro Holiday; Allegro Junior, Discos Allegro (children's)

Allegro Records was founded in late 1947 by Paul Puner, following his resignation from Musicraft. An identically named venture, launched in California at about the same time by Bert Shefter, changed its name to Advance Records to avoid conflict with Puner's brand.

Allegro's initial focus was on children's records. The Allegro Junior label, originally credited to Allegro Music, was produced under the guidance of Puner's wife, Helen, a journalist who specialized in child psychology. Most featured Crane Calder, a classically trained baritone. In July 1948 the company announced it would introduce microgroove LP children's records in the fall and would market an LP adaptor.

A subsidiary company, Discos Allegro, Inc., was set up in April 1949, under the direction of Buenos Aires radio producer Jacobo Muchnik, to produce children's records for the Latino market in Texas, California, Florida, and New York. At about the same time, Puner began to expand his production of children's material with low-cost radio transcriptions of children's shows written by Martin Weldon, and reportedly was considering a move into televised children's programming.

Allegro made an unremarkable entry into the classical market in early 1948, offering small groups of budget-priced 78s as incentives to its best-performing dealers. Retailing

for 45¢ each, the first group consisted of Strauss waltzes performed by anonymous orchestras, pressed from some of the same masters that Pruner had used on Musicraft's cut-rate Masterpiece label. The offer was repeated in 1949, at a reduced list price of 39¢. By then, Puner had begun focusing on the higher-end classical market with the Allegro Artist label, which used newly recorded material by recognized artists. In May 1949, he announced that Allegro was abandoning shellac pressings, in favor of plastic, and would convert the entire classical line to the LP format.

The first Allegro LPs were released during the week of May 21, 1949, at which time production of classical 78s was discontinued. Pruner had ambitious plans for Allegro's classical LP catalog, installing Richard Moses as artists-and-repertoire manager, and relying to a greater extent than many companies on original domestic recordings. Its early LP roster included sopranos Elisabeth Schumann, Uta Graf, and Maria Kurenko; tenor John Brownles; pianist Soulima Stravinsky (the son of Igor); and the Dallas and Oklahoma City symphony orchestras.

In late 1950, Puner signed reciprocal agreements with Philippe Loury in France and Morris Levy in England, under which he acquired the U.S. rights to recordings from the Disco France and Oriole catalogs, respectively. The latter including excerpts from Shakespeare's plays performed by members of the Stratford-on-Avon Company. A year later, Puner set up a British subsidiary, Allegro Records, Ltd.

By April 1952, Allegro owed \$50,000 in back taxes, and on October 28 of that year, the company was judged to be bankrupt. On November 25, 1952, Eli Oberstein purchased Allegro's assets, including most of its masters, for \$75,000 at a trustees' auction. Allegro had released approximately 160 LPs at the time it suspended operations. It was reported that Oberstein was also negotiating with creditors for the use of Puner's Musicraft catalog, M-G-M's control of which had recently been allowed to lapse.

Oberstein continued production the Allegro label, using Puner's material as the basis for a new mid-level brand (priced above Oberstein's own cut-rate \$1.89 Royale classical LPs) in his Record Corporation of America lineup. Although Oberstein continued to list Allegro LPs at \$5.95, the records were never meant to be sold for that amount, but instead were hawked as "half-price specials" at \$2.85.

In 1953, Puner launched Educational Audio-Visual, which produced filmstrips and other materials for schools. He retained control of the Allegro Junior masters, which he later licensed to other labels. The Allegro name was later used for an unrelated Texas label.

ALLENDER RECORD DISTRIBUTORS / MIDWEST RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – Late 1950s

Offices: 1304 W. 8th St., Amarillo, TX; Dalhart, TX (sales; PO box number only)

Record Products: Midwest, Time

Owned and operated by Dan Allender, a Texas record distributor who also owned furniture, appliance, and hardware stores in Dalhart and Amarillo. Among them was the Imperial Venetian Blind Company (Amarillo), which marketed novelty radios, including one shaped like a football.

Allender launched the Midwest Recording Company c. 1947, as an adjunct to his record distribution business. Aside from a passing mention of Midwest by *Billboard* in May 1947, Allender's recording operation garnered no attention in the trade papers. He did virtually no national advertising, and distribution appears to have been limited largely to Texas and Oklahoma. A 1951 profile characterized Allender's recording operation as "one of his hobbies."

Allender's Midwest and Time labels featured country-and-western and pop material, much of it by performers recruited from local radio stations. Among them were Gene Armstrong's West Texas Nighthawks, Billy Briggs, and Coy Palmer (the manager of KPND in Dalhart). The X.I.T. Boys (from the X.I.T. Ranch in Buffalo Springs, Texas) provided the accompaniments on many sides. Allender himself sang on at least one release.

In 1952, Allender mounted an unsuccessful campaign for president on a "real-deal businessman's platform" that included a promise to fire large numbers of federal employees. The editor of *The Austin American* wrote that Allender "is entitled to credit at least for an innovation in campaign tactics. He has announced by way of a phonograph record." Coy Palmer wrote and recorded two campaign songs for Allender, and the disc was advertised

with the tag line, "If you hate Truman, you'll love this record." It is the only Allender record known to have been marketed nationally, in a *Billboard* classified ad. Copies of the record were also sent to members of the Washington press corps, along with an order blank for the hats and ties Allender was peddling to finance his campaign.

The Midwest label appears to have been discontinued in the late 1940s or very early 1950s. Allender's Time records (unrelated to several other labels of the same name) were still being sold as late as 1958.

ALLIED (PHONOGRAPH AND) RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: From 1933

Offices: 1041 N. Las Palmas Ave., Hollywood, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above location

Pressing: 57th Ave., Los Angeles; Belleville, NJ

Record Products (78s): Allied [2]; pressings for numerous labels and clients, including Ammor, Bronze, Columbia and related labels, Hollywood Hot Shots, MacGregor Studios, Racy Records, Specialty, Watch Tower; U.S. Treasury and U.S. War Department transcriptions; custom labels

In 1933, the Allied Phonograph and Record Manufacturing Company took over Columbia's vacated West Coast pressing plant. By the end of the decade, the company had dropped "Phonograph" from its name and become the largest independent pressing facility in California. During the 1930s and 1940s, Allied produced high-quality laminated pressings that are easily mistaken for Columbia's (sometimes employing the same compound originally used for Columbia's Royal Blue pressings) for numerous independent, custom, and vanity labels.

In the late 1930s, Allied opened its own studio under the management of Louis I. Goldberg to provide custom recording services. During World War II it produced transcriptions for the War Department and other government agencies, which remained a core part of its business into the 1950s. To protect the reputation of its studio, the company sometimes added the disclaimer, "Pressed But Not Recorded by Allied Phonograph & Radio Mfg. Co." to the labels of records it pressed from other studios' masters. Allied finally launched its own label in 1953, which was marketed by the Allied Record Sales Company.

Allied was one of the earliest companies to offer plastic pressings for the consumer market, and in the later 1940s it switched to vinyl exclusively. It was also one of the first plants to press LPs and 45s for independent labels, and it remained a major record manufacturer through the end of the LP era. By the late 1940s, Allied claimed (probably accurately) to be largest master-processing and pressing plant in United States.

ALLIED RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 7318 Pittville Ave., Philadelphia

Record Products: Click

Launched in late 1947 by Philadelphia record distributor Sidney Pastner, Allied Recording took over production of Click records from the American Recording Company. The first known Click advertisements under Pastner's ownership appeared in early November 1947.

In May 1948, Pastner and Lou Colantuono launched Pasco Distributors (Philadelphia), which handled distribution for Click as well as the local Flora Records (*q.v.*). At least two of Click's string-band masters were sold to Signature at that time. Click attracted some attention in late 1948 with its release of two vocals by Philadelphia Eagles star Bosh Pritchard, but otherwise the label went largely unnoticed by the trade press. Management of Click passed to Colantuono in 1949, and production appears to have been discontinued by year's end.

Another Allied Record or Recording Company (310 E. Thompson St., Philadelphia) began producing the Mummies label in 1951, featuring local novelty string bands. Its connection to this company, if any, has not been determined.

[J. B.] ALLISON RECORDING LABORATORIES

J. B. Allison (21 Palisade Avenue, Englewood, New Jersey) advertised personal and commercial recording services in 1922. An October 1922 *Talking Machine World* article on Allison (who was also an illustrator and musician) suggests that his studio was more a hobby than a going business. His \$35 "commercial package" included one 10" master, plating, stamper, and three sample pressings. What commercial labels Allison supplied, if any, has not been discovered.

ALPHA RECORD COMPANY / ALPHA RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. Late 1940s

Offices: 501 Madison Ave., New York

Pressing: RCA; independent plant(s)

Record Products: Alpha

Alpha's launch was announced by *Variety* in June 1945. Officers included Aldert Van der Molen (president), Jacob Rudd (treasurer), and Louis Nurko (secretary and sales manager). The magazine reported that Los Andrinis, Elsa Miranda, and other Latino artists had been signed, and that Alfredo Antonini was to conduct the recording sessions. The company handled its own distribution.

In March 1946, Alpha introduced a 12" disc with two selections per side, pressed in vinylite by RCA's Custom Products Division. Moses Asch's Disc Company handled distribution beginning in June 1946. Alpha was last regularly listed by *Billboard* in late May 1947. Its occasional brief reappearances in later *Billboard* directories, ending with the March 1952 list (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Alpha name was later used for several unrelated labels.

ALVIN RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 ?

Offices: 230 E. Ohio St., Chicago

Record Products: Alvin [1]

An obscure and apparently short-lived operation headed by Paul Bennett. The earliest known mention of the company was in *Billboard*'s February 1946 manufacturers' list. No records are known to have been advertised, and the company did not appear in the 1947 *Billboard* list.

ALVIN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 –1949

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Alvin [2]

Operated by Monty Siegel, in conjunction with his Alvin Music Corporation, to promote that company's songs. One of Alvin's earliest releases, advertised in January 1947 with appropriately tacky artwork, was Siegel's mildly risqué "He Kissed Her Where She Sat" by Ray Herbeck's Orchestra with vocalist Lorraine Benson.

In November 1947, *Billboard* mentioned that Leo Pieper's Orchestra was recording for Alvin. The label otherwise attracted little attention until late 1949, when the Chromatic Tones' James Redrick sued Siegel and Alvin Music for breach of contract in failing to release the group's first four recordings and refusing to record the remaining titles that were due under their contract. The suit was dismissed, as was Siegel's counter-claim against the group's manager. The Alvin recording operation appears to have shut down a short time later.

AM RECORDS / AMERICAN MUSIC (Discs)

Record Production: 1944–1961

Offices: 647 Means Ave., Pittsburgh (mid-1940s); 704 Lewis St., Canton, MO; 600 Chartres St., New Orleans (later 1950s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations

Record Products: American Music, (Baby) Dodds

Founded by jazz-record collector and historian William Russell (*née* Russell William Wagner), AM Records specialized in traditional jazz performed largely by aging New Orleans musicians who had little or no experience with making records. A classically trained violinist who studied under New York Philharmonic concertmaster Maximilian Pilzer, Russell developed an interest in traditional New Orleans jazz while a student at the University of Chicago. In the mid-1930s, in partnership with Steve Smith, he opened the Hot Record Exchange in New York to deal in new and collectible used jazz recordings. The shop made the national news in 1936 when it offered two of Earl Hines' used Q. R. S. discs for the then-unprecedented price of \$35 each.

After closing the Hot Record Exchange in 1940, Russell began searching the South for pioneer jazz musicians, particularly those who had not previously recorded. In 1942, during a trip to New Orleans with Eugene Williams and Dave Stuart, Russell made the first recordings by Bunk Johnson, a long-neglected trumpeter who greatly over-estimated his own importance in the history of jazz. On a 1943 trip, Russell again recorded Johnson and his band (this time in San Francisco) before returning to New Orleans to record clarinetist George Lewis. He would continue to record both artists in various locations, including their homes on occasion. Describing one of Johnson's New Orleans sessions, *Record Changer* reviewer Eugene Williams noted, "[Russell] didn't tell them what to do — just switched his recorder on, and told them to start whenever they were ready."

In late 1944 Russell launched AM Records, which marketed his recordings on the American Music label beginning in early 1945. The initial releases were devoted primarily to a group of Bunk Johnson recordings made in New Orleans in July 1944. Johnson would become the label's most prolific artist, but there were also occasional offerings by Louis De Lisle, George Hornsby, Dink Johnson, George Lewis, "Kid Shots" Madison, and other traditional jazz performers. In a minor departure, American Music released four recordings of composer-pianist Charles Thompson performing his classic rags in 1947. Russell also released dubbed reissues of some rare Paramount race-series recordings in a separate series.

The early American Music releases, on 12" pressings, were unusually expensive for the time, retailing for \$1.75 each. Advertising was limited to low-circulation jazz magazines, distribution was by mail or phone order only, and sales were correspondingly modest. By 1946, Russell was producing standard 10" pressings that retailed for \$1.05 and were carried by a few specialist shops. Although reviews were generally positive, the records were criticized on occasion for their uneven technical quality and incomplete or missing composer credits and personnel listings.

Russell stockpiled many of his 1940s recordings for later release. As a result, some made their first appearance on American Music LPs, in the early 1950s. Russell continued to market American Music records until 1961, although he took no active role in their production after 1953, relying instead on his previously unissued material or recordings obtained from other sources. He later licensed the catalog to Dan Records (in the early 1960s) and Storyville Records (in 1972). Shortly before his death in 1992, Russell sold his label and catalog to Jazzology owner George H. Buck, Jr., who reissued many of the recordings in CD format. Buck also published *New Orleans Style*, a posthumous collection of Russell's interviews with Louis Armstrong, Kid Ory, and other jazz pioneers.

AMBASSADOR RECORDS / AMBASSADOR-ENTERPRISE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1949

Offices: Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles (1946–5/1947); 8111 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles (Enterprise Records office, 5/1947–1949)

Original-Master Source(s): Sunset Radio Center studio (Los Angeles)

Pressing: Melodisc (Los Angeles, to 5/1947); Enterprise Records (from 5/1947)

Record Products: Ambassador, Ambassador-Enterprise

Launched in late 1946 by band leader Freddy Martin, following the June opening of his record shop in Los Angeles' Ambassador Hotel. Martin was under exclusive contract to RCA Victor at the time, which agreed to let his band record some selections for Ambassador under the alias "Felix Figueroa & his Orchestra," provided that the material was of a type that would not compete with his Victor output. A poorly kept secret, the agreement was disclosed almost immediately by columnist Jack Lait, Jr., although some in the hinterlands apparently did not get the news. A year after Lait's revelation broke, one Iowa columnist opined that the band "sounds suspiciously like the Martin crew."

The first Ambassador releases were announced in November 1946, although *Cash Box* did not report the label's launch until March 1947. Initially the records were available only at Martin's shop. They gained wider exposure beginning in May 1947, after Martin turned pressing and distribution over to Howard Krause's Enterprise Records. The last known releases, credited to Ambassador-Enterprise Records, Inc., appeared in early 1949. The Ambassador name was used again in 1951, for an unrelated Los Angeles label.

AMERICAN, THE — See Ku Klux Klan-Affiliated Companies

AMERICAN ELITE, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1952

Offices: 245 W. 54th St., New York (1949–mid-1950); 778 10th Ave., New York (mid-1950–1951); 1775 Broadway, New York (from 1952)

Record Products (78s): Elite [2]

Founded in the autumn of 1948 by Emery Rosza (a former sales manager for the Continental Record Company) and Michael Von Mandel (a U.S. sales agent for German Telefunken products). American Elite was licensed by Turicaphon A.G. of Riedikon, Switzerland, a large pressing operation that produced the Elite and Elite Special labels in that country. There was no connection to Eli Oberstein's earlier Elite operation.

Much of American Elite's catalog consisted of traditional and light-classical material from existing Elite masters recorded in Europe. However, the company commissioned some material for its own use, including foreign dance-band recordings on which vocal choruses were overdubbed in English in an American studio. The initial Elite releases (one album each by European operatic tenors Josef Schmidt and Max Lichtegg) were announced in November 1948. In late December, Rosza departed for an extended tour of Europe to oversee recording sessions with Elite affiliates in Zurich, Vienna, and Copenhagen. The company's first LP (a group of light-opera excerpts by Viennese soprano Esther Rethy) was released in May 1949. Plastic 78-rpm pressings followed in July.

Rosza and Von Mandel terminated their partnership in early 1950. Rosza returned to his native Austria, while Von Mandel took over operation of American Elite, later buying out Rosza's share in the company. In April 1950, Von Mandel announced the launch of his Renaissance label, an LP-only classical line that employed Michael Hauptman as musical director. At that time, American Elite sold its label and entire non-classical catalog to the Europa Import Company, which was in the process of reorganizing following the demise of its Radio-Rundfunk affiliate. Von Mandel retained American Elite's classical masters, some of which he subsequently repackaged as Renaissance LPs.

Record production ended in or around 1952. Von Mandel recast American Elite as a dealer in electronic goods (including Telefunken phonographs, radios, and televisions), which he operated for many years. Turicaphon remains in business today in Switzerland as an independent manufacturer of LPs, CDs and DVDs, and downloadable media.

AMERICAN GLOSSITE COMPANY — See Guild Records, Inc.

AMERICAN GRAMOPHONE COMPANY – See Berliner, Emile

AMERICAN GRAPHOPHONE COMPANY

The American Graphophone Company was the manufacturer of Columbia phonographs and records until its reorganization in March 1918 as the Columbia Graphophone Manufacturing Company. The Columbia Phonograph Company (later reorganized as the Columbia Graphophone Company) manufactured nothing, but rather served as the sales agent for American Graphophone Company products. The companies' histories, which are inextricably linked, are combined in the Columbia Phonograph Company entry.

AMERICAN INDIAN SOUNDCHIEFS CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: From 1948

Offices: Andarko, OK (at founding); 713 NW 33rd St., Oklahoma City, OK (from late 1940s)

Original-Master Source(s): Audeon Corporation studio

Record Products (78s): American Indian Soundchiefs

The second Native American-owned record company (Manuel Archuleta Production Enterprise having been the first), American Indian Soundchiefs was incorporated in 1948 by Rev. Linn D. Pauahty, who at the time was minister of the Ponca Methodist Mission at Whiteagle, Oklahoma. Pauahty began documenting traditional songs of the Plains tribes in 1943, when the Board of Missions of the Methodist Church selected him to make recordings for use in a mission-sponsored film, "Great Spirit of the Plains."

Unlike Manuel Archuleta (the only other Native American record company owner at the time, who recorded on location with portable equipment), Pauahty preferred to record in a studio. According to a 1948 account, Pauahty initially made recordings in the living room of his home in Anadarko, Oklahoma. The earliest known examples are instantaneous recordings on lacquer blanks, with pasted-on American Indian Soundmasters labels that show Pauahty's home address. Thus far, no evidence has been found to suggest those early records were intended for sale to the general public.

As interest increased in his work, Pauahty acquired better recording equipment and took courses in electronics at Oklahoma A & M College. In 1948 he discussed the possibilities for expanding his work with Don Whistler, host of the "Indians for Indians Hour" broadcasts on radio station WNAD (Norman, Oklahoma). One outcome was the formation of the American Indian Soundchiefs Corporation, based in Oklahoma City, which by 1949 was marketing commercial releases of Pauahty's recordings on a modest scale. The records were sold in multi-disc albums that were organized by tribe and genre (grass songs, sun dances, peyote songs, etc.), rather than the "sampler" approach favored by some later producers of similar material.

American Indian Soundchiefs LPs were introduced in the early 1950s. By then, the records were being sold through specialty retailers in Seattle and Albuquerque, and at the Southern Plains Indian Museum in Anadarko. Pauahty remained active into the 1980s, amassing a collection of approximately four-thousand recordings before his death on May 15, 1989. His masters were purchased by Tony Isaacs, the owner of Indian Music House (Taos, New Mexico), which has reissued a substantial number of them on CDs and, most recently, as MP3 downloads.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF MUSIC, ARTS AND DRAMA (Discs)

Record Production: c. Late 1930s

Offices: Madison Building, Suite 43 (427 Bloomfield Ave.), Montclair, NJ

Original-Master Source(s): Commissioned from Audeon Corporation studio

Record Products: American Institute of Music, Arts and Drama

The American Institute of Voice and Opera of Montclair was a New Jersey non-profit company founded by operatic tenor Ralph Errolle in 1931 or 1932, depending upon the account (the earliest known advertisement appeared in March 1932). The institute's trustees included George Farny, a well-known industrialist and supporter of the arts. In May 1933 the institute announced ambitious plans to expand its offerings and to reorganize as the

American Institute of Music, Arts and Drama, with Erroll retained as president and director. Founded to foster promising American talent, it sponsored several local opera companies in affiliation with the Works Progress Administration, awarded scholarships, and staged what it termed "semi-private" concerts.

Thus far, no report has been found of the American Institute of Music, Arts and Drama label's launch. Apparently not advertised or widely distributed, it featured the last commercial recordings by Errolle (who had recorded many years earlier for Edison, Gennett, and other companies) and the first by his daughter Marthe, who would also go on to enjoy a notable career on the stage. The records were produced for the institute by the Audeon Corporation, also of Montclair, a manufacturer of portable recording machines, turntables, and other electronic gear.

AMERICAN JAZZ, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1948

Offices: 236 W. 10th Ave., New York

Record Products: Jazz Record

Owned and operated by pianist Art Hodes, who also edited *Jazz Record* magazine from 1943 through 1947. The records were distributed by Black and White, which might have had a hand in their production. The first Jazz Record issue, by Art Hodes' Quintet, was advertised in January 1944. The catalog included some recordings made as early as 1940, which has caused some writers to assume the label was introduced much earlier than was actually the case.

West Coast distribution was taken over by the Yerba Buena Music Shop (Oakland, California) shortly before the label's final recording session on March 27, 1947. American Jazz was last listed by *Billboard* in January 1948. Some American Jazz masters were sold to Lissen Records at about that time, and others were later acquired by Circle Records.

AMERICAN MUSIC — See AM Records

AMERICAN MUSIC PUBLISHING COMPANY — See Gregory Record Company

AMERICAN ODEON CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1920–1922

Offices: 100 W. 21st St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): General Phonograph Corporation (Okeh) studio

Pressing: General Phonograph Corporation (Okeh) plant

Record Products: Odeon (U.S.); importer of European Fonotipia and Odeon pressings

The U.S. licensee of Carl Lindström A.G. (Berlin), the American Odeon Corporation served primarily as an outlet for foreign recordings made by the various Lindström labels, but for a time it also issued original American recordings. There is no apparent connection to an identically named company that was incorporated in New York in 1920 to manufacture phonographs, with a meager capitalization of \$5,000, about which nothing further is known to have been reported.

The American Odeon Corporation was first mentioned in the trade publications in late 1920, as the American distributor of imported Odeon and Fonotipia records. Operations were managed by Miguel V. Voglhut, a longtime Lindström executive residing in New York. As a Lindström affiliate, the company was licensed to issue material from Odeon, Fonotipia, Beka, and related labels in the United States.

American Odeon announced its launch in the January 1921 edition of *The Talking Machine World*. At that time, the company was still only an importer, but in March 1921 it introduced an American-made version of the Odeon label, produced by the General Phonograph Corporation (Okeh), Lindström's U.S. affiliate. The premier offering was an operatic series, employing imported masters that in some cases were more than a decade old. The roster included John McCormack, Frieda Hempel, Riccardo Stracciari, and other artists who were well-known in the U.S. through their Victor, Edison, and Columbia recordings, but there were also offerings by Claire Dux, Maria Ivogun, and other prominent European performers whose records until then not been available on American labels.

American Odeon also produced its own popular series, using masters recorded for their exclusive use in Okeh's New York studio, from February through December 1921. Employing many of the same artists as Okeh, American Odeon's masters were assigned special O- prefixes to distinguish them from Okeh's own S-prefixed masters. Approximately 140 masters (some of which apparently were unissued and remain untraced) were recorded before the series was discontinued. A few titles were subsequently transferred to the Okeh label.

Lindström executive Max Strauss traveled to New York in May 1921 to inspect the Odeon business. The results of his visit were not reported publicly, but in September the company doubled its office space and tripled its storage and shipping area. Nevertheless, it must have become apparent at some point that with Okeh already operating successfully, and capable of taking over the Odeon-Fonotipia import business, American Odeon was a redundant entity within the Lindström organization.

The American Odeon Corporation was liquidated c. January 1922, shortly before Voglhut announced his retirement. American pressing and distribution of Fonotipia and Odeon recordings was turned over to General Phonograph, which soon suspended U.S. production of the Fonotipia label and transferred some of its offerings to the Odeon label. For the next seven years, the Odeon label served solely as an ethnic and classical side-line to Okeh, under the management of A. Thallmayer. Production of American-made Odeon records for the popular market was resumed in 1929 by the Okeh Record Corporation, *q.v.*

AMERICAN PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1898 – 1899

Offices: 567 Broad St., Newark, N

Record Products: Cylinders

Anecdotal accounts in several hobbyist works claim that the American Phonograph Company was owned by members of the original American Quartet (unrelated to the later Billy Murray group) and would make recordings to order of any song, but no supporting documentary evidence has been found. That service was not mentioned in the company's only known advertisement (in the November 1898 *Phonoscope*), which lists the usual studio freelance artists of the period and notes that chimes records were a specialty. The cylinders retailed for 50¢, half the normal going rate for original recordings at that time, suggesting they might have been copies of other companies' records rather than originals.

Several New Jersey newspapers reported in December 1897 that Andrew Devine, a well-known Congressional reporter based in Washington, D.C., had resigned his position to serve as the American Phonograph Company's vice-president, but that report (which pre-dates the earliest known mention of American Phonograph by a full year) was almost certainly incorrect. Devine was associated with the American *Graphophone* Company (Columbia), and was elected to their board of directors in 1898.

AMERICAN PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1901–1902

Offices: Brooklyn, NY

Record Products: Perfection cylinders

The American Phonograph Record Company was in operation by June 1901, when a reporter for the *Brooklyn Citizen* visited its studio. The company was finally incorporated in Brooklyn on April 12, 1902, with capital of \$10,000. Its directors were William F. Hooley, Stephen C. (Steve) Porter, and Samuel H. Rous (*a.k.a.* S. H. Dudley). *The Music Trade Review* erroneously gave Rous' initials as I. H., although they appeared correctly in *The New York Times'* earlier notice of the company's incorporation.

The company produced and marketed brown-wax Perfection cylinders, a catalog of which has not been discovered thus far. Its directors were all experienced studio performers, and Hooley had briefly managed the Excelsior Phonograph Company in 1898. However, technical expertise seems to have been lacking. Rous, complaining to the *Brooklyn Citizen's* reporter that a recording diaphragm produced inconsistent results, stated that the solution was to "lay it aside for a few days...often, after a few day's rest, it will do alright." The company's pantographic duplicating process, as documented in the *Brooklyn Citizen* report, was already verging on obsolescence by the time the company began operations.

W. H. Barker was listed as American Phonograph Records' president in June 1903, when the company applied to change its name to the American Talking Machine Company. The change was approved, but no evidence has been found that the renamed company ever conducted business. By then, Rous was a full-time employee of the Victor Talking Machine Company, working as a studio assistant as well as recording artist, and Porter had departed for London to take a position as recording engineer with the Nicole Record Company.

AMERICAN RECORD COMPANY [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1904–1907

Offices: 241–243 W. 23rd St., New York; Mechanic St., Springfield, MA

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — 241 W. 23rd St., New York

Pressing: Own plant — Springfield, MA

Record Products: American Odeon Duplex Record (export), American Odeon Record (export), American Record Company, Busy Bee, Kalamazoo, Mills "Perfeg" Record, National [1], Peerless [2], Sterling [1]

Foreign Affiliate: International Talking Machine Company (Berlin)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Britannic, Defiance, Leader, Pelican, Pioneer, Rembrandt (England); Disco Americano (Italy); Nipponophone (Japan); probably others, mostly after American Record suspended operations

The American Record Company was the U.S. affiliate of Frederick M. Prescott's International Talking Machine Company, the Berlin-based manufacturer of Odeon records. The firm of Hawthorne, Sheble & Prescott was American Record's exclusive sales agent.

In early February 1904, *The Music Trade Review* reported that John O. Prescott (Frederick's brother) had returned to the United States from Europe and was planning to open a pressing plant. An American Record Company was incorporated in New York on February 20, 1904, but based upon its list of directors and its meager capitalization, this seems to have been an unrelated venture. Formation of the American Record Company as we know it was under way by April 1, 1904, when *The Music Trade Review* reported that John Prescott was completing plans to open an International Talking Machine Company branch and "manufacturing annex" in New York.

Three weeks later, the same publication reported that Prescott and William Barry Owen were planning to launch a new "talking machine company [which] may be an American branch of the International Talking Machine Company of Berlin." The Owen association was not mentioned again, leaving Prescott and the International Talking Machine Company as the driving forces. Details of any financial arrangement between the two companies have never been discovered, but the American venture appears to have had access to ample capital. Although the German connection was widely known within the record industry, it was not disclosed to the general public.

John Prescott served as general manager of the American Record Company's sales agency, which did business as Hawthorne, Sheble & Prescott — a partnership comprising Prescott, Ellsworth A. Hawthorne (as New York office manager), and Horace Sheble (as Philadelphia office manager). Hawthorne and Sheble already had extensive experience in the phonograph business. Blacklisted by Edison in the late 1890s, the Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Company had grown to become a major supplier of horns and other after-market phonograph accessories. The two businesses — Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing, and the newly formed Hawthorne, Sheble & Prescott — were separate entities, shielding the former from the inevitable patent litigation involving the American Record Company. The American discs infringed the basic Berliner (Victor) and Jones (Columbia) patents on lateral-cut sound recording and reproduction, which did not deter the company's owners from rapidly expanding their operation.

Recording probably began during the spring of 1904, in the company's New York studio on W. 23rd Street. Court records reveal that Edwin A. Panacost was American Record's recording engineer in August 1905, and it is likely that he held that position from the start. A pressing plant was opened in Springfield, Massachusetts, with local assistance from the Dickinson Rubber Company, which Prescott made clear to the press had no financial ties to American Record.

The distinctive blue-tinted shellac compound used in the pressings (advertised as Empedite in some foreign catalogs) was touted as "harder and more durable than any

composition yet discovered," although the condition of many surviving specimens suggests otherwise. The ornate lithographed labels depicted a pipe-smoking American Indian listening to a phonograph, with the slogan, "Music Hath Charms." Hawthorne, in a 1904 interview in *The Music Trade Review*, claimed that the inspiration for the trademark and slogan came from a friend who had observed the calming effect that phonograph music had on a group of American Indians he was escorting to the St. Louis Exposition.

The initial American Record Company releases were announced to the trade in October 1904. On October 29, *The Music Trade Review* reported that the company had already booked "a number of desirable orders." The records were being heavily advertised and widely distributed by the end of the year.

Frederic D. Wood served as the company's musical director, arranger, and house conductor, while John Prescott oversaw the studio and was responsible for selecting artists and repertoire. Regarding the latter, Prescott admitted, "At times it is very puzzling to determine the fitness of a new publication for a place in our catalog, and the biggest sellers are not always selections of the highest musical order."

Recording quality rivaled or exceeded that of Victor and Columbia, whose patents the American Record Company infringed. The discs originally were pressed in single-sided 7" and 10¾" series, the latter corresponding to a metric-based size favored by the International Talking Machine Company in Europe. Many of the 7" masters appear to have been recorded at the same sessions as the corresponding 10¾" recordings, showing adjacent matrix numbers and employing the same artists. The smaller discs usually lacked spoken announcements, while the larger ones were unusual in their continued use of announcements (albeit often cryptic ones, sometimes stating only the title) for several years after other disc producers had discontinued that practice.

The American Record Company nearly doubled the size of its pressing plant during the spring of 1905. Besides its own label, the company was soon supplying pressings to client labels, as well as exporting double-sided pressings to Odeon in England. Its largest domestic customer, by far, was the O'Neill-James Company of Chicago, which marketed the popular Busy Bee label. At least one American Record Company recording is known to have been pirated by Albert Armstrong's American Vitaphone operation (*see* American Talking Machine Company [III]).

At one point, it appears that the American Record Company was preparing to produce cylinders. In 1906 Prescott, in partnership with recording comedian and engineer Steve Porter, licensed James K. Reynard's method of gold-plating cylinder masters for American Record's use, but nothing came of the idea. Ultimately, Prescott sold the process to Russell Hunting's London operation in 1906, and in 1907 he sold the cylinder-plating equipment he had retained to the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company.

American Record attracted considerable attention with its release of the first commercial recordings by native Hawaiian performers, credited to the Royal Hawaiian Troubadours. John Prescott made a gift of twenty-four of the Hawaiian discs to the Smithsonian Institution in 1906. He also announced plans for a catalog of six-hundred imported recordings from the Odeon catalog, which apparently never materialized. No American Record Company pressings from Odeon or other foreign masters have been found.

In October 1904, Prescott announced that much of his company's business would be in double-sided discs, claiming "we own the patents and have already notified other concerns exploiting a similar article [apparently referring to Columbia's short-lived double-sided 1904 series] to cease manufacturing and selling the same, or we will go after them with a big stick." Half-interest in the key patent to which Prescott referred (#749,092, issued to Ademor N. Petit on January 5, 1904, for a method of pressing double-sided discs) had been immediately assigned to Frederick M. Prescott in Europe, who licensed use of the process to his brother's American affiliate. Frederick had already pressed a few double-sided discs for sale in Brazil (1902) and Europe (1903), and in February 1904 his Berlin factory began producing double-sided pressings on a regular basis.

In the United States, custom double-sided American Record Company pressings (combining whatever sides were desired) could be ordered by anyone who agreed to purchase twenty-five or more copies of that coupling. However, double-sided discs appear to have comprised only a small portion of the American Record Company's output, and most were intended for export. Double-sided pressings show separate catalog numbers

on each side, and the labels list Petit's patent date, which of course did not apply to, or appear on, the single-sided pressings.

Although single-sided discs continued to be the norm for American Record's domestic pressings, that was not the case in England. In early 1906, the Odeon Disc Talking Machine Company (International Talking Machine's British branch) published a catalog of more than 120 double-sided discs pressed from American Record Company masters. The pressings retained the original single-sided catalog numbers on each side and were given American Odeon Record labels. They employed the same design as their domestic counterpart, but with the addition of Odeon's trademark and, on some specimens, the notation "Duplex" in large type. All known American Odeon discs are double-sided and show Petit's patent for double-sided pressing on the labels. The English catalogs referred to the records as "Blue Odeon Duplex Records, taken by our American company." *The Music Trade Review* reported that large quantities of the records were being shipped overseas, with 8,000 records per week being dispatched to London alone. Regular shipments were also reported to Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Brazil, and India.

In October 1905, retail prices were reduced on all American Record Company 7" and 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " discs (to 60¢ and 35¢, respectively), and dealer return privileges were revoked. The reason for that revocation became apparent the following month, when it was announced that production of both lines would be discontinued in favor of standard 10" discs. The first 10" pressings appeared in the November 1905 supplement, and the complete catalog for February 1906 listed a substantial number of the new 10" releases (which continued their predecessor's 031000 catalog number series), while offering the old 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " pressings at reduced prices. Many of the 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " titles were remade in 10" form, retaining the original catalog numbers, if not always the same artists. The 10" remakes appear more frequently on client labels than on American's own. Late pressings were made in standard black shellac, rather than the distinctive blue, and late labels show New York rather than Springfield as the company's place of business.

The 7" discs were not immediately discontinued. Matrix numbers and song titles confirm that new 7" recordings were still being made and issued well into 1906. In February of that year, an unspecified client (almost certainly the O'Neill-James Company) reportedly placed an order for a half-million of the small pressings. The last new 7" releases were finally listed in September 1906, ten months after the company's announcement that it was discontinuing the line.

In January 1906, John Prescott predicted that his company would press five-million discs in the coming year. A month later, the American Record Company triumphed over the American Graphophone Company (Columbia), if only temporarily, after a U.S. Circuit Court judge ruled that Columbia's all-important Jones patent (#688,739) was anticipated by prior invention and therefore invalid (*American Graphophone Company v. American Record Company*, 145 F. 643). American Record continued to operate, pending Columbia's appeal, but its output began to decline, and no new records were listed in May 1906. A new list finally appeared in June, followed by a large supplement in September that would be the company's last. In the meantime, it was announced that American Record had begun to market a mechanical-feed tapering tone-arm phonograph.

Columbia won its case on appeal in January 1907 (*American Graphophone Co. v. American Record Co.*, 151 F. 595). In a final attempt to save the business, the American Record Company's attorney claimed that its production method involved the generation of an additional matrix, a step not covered by Columbia's Jones patent. Judge Townsend rejected that argument, ruling that the introduction of the additional matrix was superfluous and the claim was without merit. An injunction was granted, American Record suspended operations, and its staff soon dispersed. Musical director Wood moved to Leeds & Catlin. The firm of Hawthorne, Sheble & Prescott was dissolved following American Record's closure. The Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Company, being a separate company, survived unscathed by the American Record Company's collapse and would go on to launch its own Star label under license from Columbia, which supplied the masters.

Prescott had been quietly preparing to resume record production since the collapse of American Record. In January 1907 he had applied for a U.S. patent on a new pressing process that included a provision for double-sided discs. Two months later, *TMW* reported that he had taken over the idled American Record Company studio, which he was operating

in the guise of The Laboratory Association, *q.v.* On February 24, 1908, he filed a trademark application for the Twoforone Champion Record (presumably a double-sided disc), which never reached market.

Prescott appears to have retained control of the American Record Company. By January 1910 he was managing the Japan-American Phonograph Company in Tokyo (forerunner of the Nipponophone Company), thus explaining the appearance of a considerable number of American Record Company recordings in an early Nipponophone catalog. These issues were listed anonymously c. 1910–1911 (occasionally coupled with material from Frederick M. Prescott's Beka label) in a special catalog produced for English-speaking Japanese citizens and visitors. Prescott resigned from the Japan-American Phonograph Company in late 1910, and his place was taken by Thomas Kraemer, who had been associated with the Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Company.

The trade papers reported that Prescott also visited England in 1910. After a brief return to the U.S., in June 1911 Prescott departed for Europe, where he "expected to look the trade over a little." His trip occurred at about the time that the London-based Disc Record Company, Ltd., acquired some American Record Company masters, which were parceled out to Britannic, Defiant, Pelican, The Leader, and other minor labels for the British and export markets. Whether the masters came by way of Prescott, the Lindström organization (which had taken over the International Talking Machine Company's assets), or from some other source, has not been established.

Little more was heard of John Prescott until August 1912, when *The Talking Machine World* reported that he had been in Constantinople for "a year or more," managing an unnamed record company. Prescott eventually resurfaced in the U.S. in 1921, when he was hired as chief technician of Gennett's studio and pressing plant in Richmond, Indiana. Prescott's accomplishments there will be found the Starr Piano Company entry.

AMERICAN RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1951

Offices: Mosque Theater Building, 1020 Broad St., Newark, NJ

Record Products: Arco [2]

Launched in late 1949 by Irving Berman, following the closure of his Manor Record Company. *The Pittsburgh Courier* reported on November 12 that Arco was planning to release about sixteen records before the end of the month. Like Manor, the label would specialize in pop, jazz, and rhythm-and-blues.

At the time Berman launched Arco, he was engaged in a legal dispute with the Four Tunes, one of Manor's most popular groups. They had attempted to sign with RCA Victor while still under contract to Manor, prompting Berman to seek an injunction (which was denied), and the Four Tunes to request that the American Federation of Musicians investigate irregularities in their contract with Berman. The result was a suspension of Berman's AFM recording license, to which he responded by closing Manor and forming the American Record Company on its place.

Pete Ruggolo, formerly an arranger for Stan Kenton's Orchestra, served as Arco's musical director. Much of the Arco catalog comprised reissues of Manor and Regis releases, but some previously unissued material was also released. New recordings were also made, including some by Manor star Savannah Churchill, who signed a new contract with Arco in November 1949. Berman purchased rights to masters from outside sources as well, including some calypso recordings from Moses Asch's defunct Disc label and Volumes 2 and 3 of Norman Granz's "Jazz at the Philharmonic" series, which he reissued on Arco. He sued Mercury Records to prevent their release of certain "Jazz at the Philharmonic" recordings, which succeeded only in producing a standoff until Mercury counter-sued and prevailed. Berman also produced a short-lived "Jazz at Carnegie Hall" series on Arco, using previously unissued recordings of a July 1944 performance by an all-star group that included Dizzy Gillespie, Lester Young, and Oscar Pettiford.

Arco LPs, cobbled-together from previously released recordings, were introduced in the spring of 1950. In the meantime, the AFM had approved the Four Tunes' move to RCA, and the group sued Berman to collect unpaid royalties on some of their compositions. New Arco releases appear to have been suspended by the end of the year, and the label was discontinued in 1951.

Berman's label was unrelated to the Texas-based Arco label (*see* Arco Records [II]), which operated during the same period. The Arco name was later used by other unrelated labels.

AMERICAN RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1929–1939

Offices: Broadway & 57th St., New York (to 1932); 14th Floor, 1776 Broadway, New York (from 1932); 6623 Romaine St., Hollywood, CA (late 1930s); 215 W. Ohio St., Chicago (late 1930s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations, and in Chicago and Los Angeles; temporary studios in Augusta, GA; Birmingham, AL; Dallas, Fort Worth, El Paso, and San Antonio, TX; Hattiesburg and Jackson, MS; Hot Springs, AR; San Francisco; St. Louis, and other occasional locations; Hawaiian Transcription Productions studio (Honolulu, leased beginning 8/1936)

Pressing: Own plants — Cherry St., Scranton, PA (main plant); Auburn, NY; Bridgeport, CT (from 1934); Framingham, MA; Glendale, CA

Record Products: Banner [2], Bernardo, Broadway [1], Cameo (from 1929), Challenge, Collectors Record Shop, Commodore, Conqueror, Fox Movietone, Gramophone Shop Varieties, Hollywood [2], Homestead, Hot Record Society, Jewel [2], Liberty Music Shop(s), Lincoln [1] (from 1929), Master [1], Mel-O-Dee, Oriole [1], Pathé Actuelle (from 1929), Perfect (from 1929), Regal [1], Romeo (from 1929), Shamrock Store, U.H.C.A., Variety [2]; Brunswick, Melotone, Vocalion, and related labels (Brunswick division, from 1932); Columbia, Okeh, and related labels (Columbia division, from 1934); Teddy Wilson School for Pianists, other custom and private labels; Little Tots' Nursery Tunes, Playtime (children's); transcriptions and background-music libraries.

Foreign Affiliates: Crystalate Gramophone Manufacturing Company (England)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Angelus, Clifford (Australia); Ace, Apex, Crown, Melotone, Microphone, Minerva, Royal, Sterling, Sun (Canada); Broadcast, Brunswick, Crown, Decca, Filmophone, Imperial, Key, Mayfair, Panachord, Rex (England); probably others on occasion

The American Record Corporation was organized in July 1929 as a holding company for stock of the Regal Record Company, Cameo Record Corporation, and Scranton Button Company (the Plaza-Regal group's affiliated pressing plant). Through its acquisition of Brunswick's record division in 1932 and the Columbia Phonograph Company in 1934, ARC eventually would grow to become the second-largest record producer in the United States, after RCA Victor.

The consolidation that preceded the American Record Company's formation had been ongoing since January 1929, when *The Talking Machine World and Radio-Music Merchant* reported that the Regal Record Company (manufacturer of the Banner-Regal line of discount-store labels) had merged with "a large and old-established record company in England." That company was the Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Company, which had taken a financial stake in Regal in 1927, and which would now assume full ownership of the company. At that time, Regal and the Plaza Music Company (Regal's sales and marketing arm) were split into separate accounts, although the two would continue to operate in tandem for the time being.

News of the final merger that would create the American Record Corporation was announced on July 24, 1929. The new company would combine the Scranton Button Company (the nation's largest independent pressing plant) and its auxiliary plants in Auburn, New York, and Framingham, Massachusetts; the Regal Record Company; and the Cameo Record Corporation. A short time later, ARC also acquired the remaining outstanding shares in the Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation from James McPherson, Cameo's former owner. Having earlier been split from Regal, the Plaza Music Company was not included in the merger, although its flagship Banner label was. Stripped of its label, Plaza continued to operate as an independent company for several more years, launching the Crown Record Company in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to compete with ARC's popular budget-label line.

Scranton president Louis G. Sylvester was tapped to serve as ARC's president. Other directors were drawn from Cameo, Regal, and Crystalate, which retained a small share in ARC. With the merger completed, the American Record Corporation became operational in early August 1929.

TMW initially reported that the Regal and Cameo divisions would continue to operate separately, but recording activities were soon consolidated. For several months following the merger, ARC allocated different master numbers from three existing master series (Plaza-Regal, Cameo, and Pathé) to identical recordings, depending upon the label group

in which they were to appear. The result was considerable duplication of material between the three label groups, the only difference being the allocation of different takes (and artist pseudonyms, when used) to the various label group.

The practice was halted in late October 1929, when Cameo's and Pathé's own master-numbering series were discontinued. From that point forward, the original Banner-Regal master series (which had begun at #5000 in 1922, and reached #9250 by the end of 1929) served as ARC's default master-number series. (For a time, 10000 was added to ARC's master numbers on some labels; *e.g.*, Oriole "master" 19321 = ARC master 9321). Burdened with a host of largely redundant labels, ARC discontinued Pathé in December 1929 but retained the cheaper companion Perfect label, which would become one of its most popular brands. In 1930 it dropped the Domino and Cameo labels but retained Cameo's popular cut-rate companion, Romeo.

Herbert J. Yates, the president of Consolidated Film Industries (*q.v.*), began negotiations to purchase the American Record Corporation in June 1930. To finance the purchase, Yates authorized the issue of 200,000 new shares of Consolidated Film Industries common stock. Terms of the buyout were finalized on October 1, 1930, and the sale was completed on December 11, through an exchange of 125,000 shares of CFI common stock for all outstanding and preferred shares of ARC. There was speculation that CFI might use the ARC facilities to produce movie soundtrack discs, but that technology had already been largely supplanted by the sound-on-film process, and little if anything was done to pursue soundtrack production.

The American Record Corporation now would operate as a Consolidated Film Industries subsidiary, billing itself as the "World's Largest Manufacturer of Popular Priced Records." The sale to CFI initially had no obvious effect on operations, but Yates soon made his influence felt. ARC president Louis Sylvester, who had been largely responsible for the phenomenal growth of the Scranton Button Company's client-label and record-pressing operations in the 1920s, suddenly resigned without explanation in February 1931. Sylvester's replacement was Moe J. Siegel, a CFI executive with no record-industry experience and an abrasive manner that alienated managers and employees alike.

One of Siegel's first acts was to launch American Record Corporation Theatre Records, a line of background-music discs offered in 78- and 33 ¹/₃ rpm versions. Most were simply repackaged commercial releases, pressed on the same noisy shellac as ARC's budget-label discs. ARC was also advertising an electrical transcription division with "complete facilities for the production of spot broadcasting records — 16" and 12" — 33 ¹/₃ or 78 rpm" by the summer of 1931. The transcription division also marketed pre-grooved metal home-recording discs for a time, which apparently were not a commercial success.

On December 12, 1931, a licensing and royalty agreement was finalized between the American Record Corporation and Warner Brothers' Brunswick Radio Corporation subsidiary, creating the Brunswick Record Corporation. The agreement was not an outright sale, as has been erroneously stated in many accounts; only Brunswick Radio's existing stock of raw materials and supplies was sold outright to ARC. Its masters, artist contracts, manufacturing and sales rights in the U.S. and Canada, and rights to the Brunswick, Vocalion, and Melotone trademarks, were leased to the new Brunswick Record Corporation, with the stipulation that all rights would revert to Brunswick Radio should the new company press and sell fewer than 250,000 Brunswick records annually. The existing Brunswick masters, which were transferred to ARC's Scranton pressing plant, were termed a "loan."

For accounting, and marketing purposes, the Brunswick Record Corporation and American Record Corporation were separate entities under the Consolidated Film Industries' corporate umbrella, but from an operational standpoint they were largely the same company. Brunswick maintained its own artists-and-repertoire department, but its offices and studios were consolidated with those of ARC, and pressing was handled by ARC's Scranton Button Company plant, which was placed under the management of former Brunswick executive Milton Rackmil. Although Brunswick retained many of its well-known artists (at least until being raided by Decca in 1934) and remained a full-price label by contractual requirement, customers and reviewers were quick to notice a cheapening of the product under ARC's management.

Consolidated Film increased its recording-industry presence on April 16, 1934, with

its acquisition of the Columbia Phonograph Company, which it purchased outright for a mere \$70,500. The purchase was made through Sacro Enterprises, a shell corporation that had been organized just two days before the sale. With no significant assets, and only \$1,000 in capitalization, Sacro was later revealed to have been nothing more than a cover for Yates. (Research into Sacro by author Geoffrey Wheeler in the mid-2000s uncovered evidence of possible fraud but failed to establish what the motive might have been in employing a shell corporation to make the purchase.)

The purchase included rights to Columbia's trademarks, labels, masters, physical facilities, and artist contracts. As with the Brunswick arrangement, the Columbia Phonograph Company continued to operate under its own name and retained some control over artists and repertoire, but some key executive and management positions were turned over to ARC personnel. It soon became apparent that ARC's primary interest in Columbia was its Bridgeport plant, which it used to make high-quality laminated pressings for radio transcriptions and its more expensive labels.

The Columbia acquisition sparked an overhaul of ARC's increasingly unwieldy product line in 1935. The Okeh label was discontinued early that year, and production of the Columbia label (which ARC recast primarily as a reissue vehicle for imported classical recordings) was severely curtailed. The Brunswick Record Corporation division, which continued to operate somewhat independently in matters of artists and repertoire, retained Brunswick as its high-priced pop line. The companion Vocalion label increasingly was devoted to the country, race, and ethnic material.

The Scranton plant, which had been plagued by labor problems leading to a widely publicized strike, was sold to a group of obscure out-of-state investors in January, who were granted a charter to do business as the Consolidated Molded Products Corporation. Although not disclosed at the time, the new company was simply another Yates subsidiary. The move marked the beginning of Yates' attempt to exert greater control over ARC. A reorganization was announced during the first week of February 1936, to be carried out under Yates' personal direction.

Brunswick manager Richard Altschuler was put in charge of all recording operations, replacing the rather ineffectual James Case. In short order, Altschuler succeeded Siegel as ARC's president. Arthur Satherley, who had been in and out of ARC's employ since 1929, was tapped to serve as vice-president of sales and recording.

The reorganization ushered in a period marked by steady improvement in product quality and relative calm on the labor front. Speaking to a *Variety* reporter, Altschuler alluded vaguely to expansion plans, upcoming policy changes regarding several unspecified labels, and a push to sign fresh talent. But aside from a deal to lease Hawaiian Transcription Productions' Honolulu studio, few concrete details were forthcoming in the months following Altschuler's announcement.

The company continued to operate as three separate but closely linked divisions — the original ARC budget-label group; the Brunswick-Vocalion group, under license from Warner Brothers; and what was left of the Columbia Phonograph Company — each of which now reported directly to Altschuler. The three divisions continued to share recording and production facilities, and sometimes exchanged masters, while still maintaining some individual control over their artists and repertoire.

Brunswick retained its place as ARC's flagship pop label. Its jazz roster, including the popular Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway bands, was largely provided by talent broker Irving Mills, who according to *Variety*, was commissioned "to spice up the catalog with unique jazz recordings as he sees fit." Vocalion, Brunswick's lower-priced sibling, was competing successfully with Bluebird and Decca in the 35¢ market, particularly in the race, country, and ethnic categories.

The dime-store and client-label group (now whittled down to just ARC's Oriole, Perfect, and Romeo; Brunswick's Melotone; and Sears Roebuck's Conqueror) benefitted from access to selected Brunswick-Vocalion recordings that were somewhat past their prime, but still commercially viable. In late 1935, the company adopted a uniform three-part catalog numbering system for its own budget labels, denoting date and sequence of issue (e.g., #5-12-04 = the fourth ARC issue for December 1935; contrary to some discographies, not every ARC dime-store title appeared on every ARC dime-store label). The budget-label roster was

much improved, having been largely purged of the generic dance bands and freelance studio singers who had dominated its earlier output.

Brunswick retained its slot as ARC's full-price label, although its luster had been considerably dimmed by the loss of many of its most popular artists to Decca. The Columbia division, now greatly diminished in importance and no longer a significant presence in the pop market, continued to serve as ARC's purveyor of high-quality classical recordings (most of them now pressed from imported masters), and as a supplier of jazz recordings to Columbia's foreign affiliates under John Hammond's management. A deal to produce Irving Mills' Master Record Company (*q.v.*) was initially seen as a boon for ARC, but fell apart in the autumn of 1937 after degenerating into a squabble between Mills and Yates over who was to blame for the lack of sale.

During the summer of 1938, Columbia Broadcasting System officials were spotted visiting the Bridgeport pressing plant, and rumors began to swirl that CBS was negotiating a purchase of ARC. On July 30, *Billboard*, citing unnamed "impeccable sources," reported that CBS had made a cash deposit to Consolidated Film Industries in return for an option to complete the purchase of ARC within ninety days. Auditors and engineers had already begun to inventory ARC's equipment, assets, and outstanding obligations (the latter said to be so large that they might prove a significant stumbling block in the negotiations). On August 28, CBS officials reportedly received a twenty-eight page document detailing ARC's licenses and contracts. A short time later, ARC discontinued production of its remaining budget labels.

On December 15, the Okeh Radio and Record Corporation and Sacro Enterprises were suddenly dissolved. The reason became apparent four days later, when it was reported that the Columbia Broadcasting System was purchasing the American Record Corporation from Consolidated Film Industries for \$700,000. On December 21, CBS announced that it had appointed new officers to manage ARC's operations on a temporary basis. The press credited CBS president William S. Paley with masterminding the purchase, although RCA Victor sales manager Edward Wallerstein apparently provided much of the impetus. Wallerstein did not elaborate on his motives in a 1976 *High Fidelity* article, but he was quickly rewarded for his efforts.

CBS' purchase of the American Record Corporation became final on January 1, 1939. Four days later, Wallerstein assumed the presidency of ARC, which by then was being described in press releases as "the newest subsidiary of the Columbia Broadcasting System." A final audit of ARC's books by the Music Publishers' Protective Association revealed widespread "faulty statements" in the company's accounting, setting off a barrage of music publishers' claims for unpaid royalties.

Some modern writers have characterized the ARC purchase as a steal, but it was hardly that. For its investment, CBS received several mediocre studios (which it soon replaced), two antiquated pressing plant notorious for poor working conditions and low worker morale, artist contracts of widely varying value, a massive library of mostly outdated recordings, the costly Brunswick licensing agreement, and a group of redundant labels. In the end, it appears that CBS undertook the purchase primarily to eliminate a competitor in advance of its entry into the commercial record market.

On March 24, 1939, the American Record Corporation, under CBS ownership, filed a certificate of incorporation with the state of New York with the stated purpose of acquiring all of the Columbia Phonograph Company's assets. *Variety* reported on April 5 that the American Record Corporation name had been "discarded," and its three divisions were now consolidated under the Columbia name. On May 22, the company filed an amended certificate of incorporation formally changing its name to the Columbia Recording Corporation. Columbia abandoned the troubled Scranton pressing plant, which was taken over by Eli Oberstein and a group of local Pennsylvania investors.

The American Record Corporation name resurfaced in May 1948, when it was briefly used as a trade name in conjunction with CBS's Special Editions reissue label.

AMERICAN RECORD CORPORATION OF CALIFORNIA

A master-processing and pressing service with the same mailing address as the American Record Corporation's Hollywood office, and additional offices in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle. Managed by G. W. Yates, it serviced independent labels and

transcription producers, including the Associated Cinema Studios, during the 1930s. It is not known to have made recordings for the consumer market and is included here only to distinguish it from the main ARC operation (*see previous entry*).

AMERICAN RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1922 – 1927

Offices: Framingham, MA

Original-Master Source(s): Cameo Record Corporation

Pressing: Own plant — Framingham, MA

Record Products: Pressings for Cameo Record Corporation

Successor to the Record Manufacturing Company (*q.v.*), following its acquisition by the Cameo Record Corporation in March 1922. Reorganized as the American Record Manufacturing Company, the company operated as Cameo's main pressing plant under the management of George Funnell, who left the Berliner Gramophone Company in Canada to accept the position.

American Record Manufacturing owes its inclusion here to the fact that it was credited as the producer of Boy Scout, Kiddie Konzert Karton, and Tremont records, although Cameo handled the recording, marketing, and distribution of those labels. It also briefly took over distribution of the Cameo-produced Muse label from the Kress Stores. In 1924, Harvard University sued American Record Manufacturing for having misrepresented recordings by an unknown group as the work of the Harvard University Band.

The American Record Manufacturing Corporation was still listed as a separate entity in 1927, when it was formally merged with the Cameo Record Corporation. The Framingham plant was listed as a part of the American Record Corporation holdings after Cameo was acquired by ARC in 1929, and its operation was subsequently taken over by the Scranton Button Company, ARC's pressing plant. There was no connection to a later Los Angeles company of the same name, which was a subsidiary of Modern Records.

AMERICAN RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY (II) — See Modern Records

AMERICAN RECORDING AND TRANSCRIPTION SERVICE / ART RECORDS MANUFACTURING COMPANY, LTD. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945–1960

Offices: Cadillac Hotel, Miami Beach, FL (1945–early 1950); 304 Lincoln Rd., Miami Beach (mid-1950–1951); 2185 NW 79th St., Miami (1951–c. 1960); 1224 NW 119th St., Miami (1960s)

Original-Master Source(s): Portable equipment and leased studios (reportedly)

Record Products (78): Art; custom recordings; transcriptions

Founded in 1945 by Harold E. Doane, the American Recording and Transcription Service originally operated as a custom recording studio. In 1948 or 1949, Doane introduced his own Art label, which specialized largely in artists from the Miami area, the Bahamas, and Panama.

Relatively few Art 78s were released, and they were sold only in album sets. Many of the early Art releases were Calypso numbers recorded in the Bahamas, most notably by "Blind Blake" (Blake Alphonso Higgs, not to be confused with Paramount's earlier blues singer of the same name). There were also recordings of local Miami lounge acts, including some mildly risqué titles by lounge singer Goody Goodelle.

Art LPs were introduced in 1951, and production of 78s was discontinued. Doane's later LP brands included Bahama and Panama, both of which were produced only for export. In 1957, American Recording and Transcription was reorganized as the Art Records Manufacturing Company, Ltd, and the Art logo was finally registered as trademark.

In later years, Doane ran a vanity-record operation for local club singers, recording them in live performances and pressing small batches of LPs that they could peddle on their own. Shortly before his death in 1999, Doane sold his catalog to 2Tribes Entertainment, a Miami-based venture headed by Darryl Scott and Drake Sutton-Shearer.

AMERICAN RECORDING ARTISTS / ARA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1944–1946

Offices: 686 N. Robertson Blvd., Hollywood, CA (1944–3/1946); Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles (from 3/1946)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — 6000 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA; Universal Recording (Chicago, from 5/1946), probably other independent studios on occasion

Pressing: Own plant — 686 N. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles; Olympic Recording (Los Angeles) and other independent plants (from mid-1946)

Record Products: American Recording Artists, ARA, Symphony [2]

Founded in 1944 by Russian immigrant Boris Morros as a division of his publishing operation, the Boris Morros Music Company. Morros had been employed by Paramount Pictures since the early 1930s, beginning as a lower-tier musical director. In May 1934 Morros was contacted by a member of the Russian People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD), who asked that he assist with placing Soviet operatives in various Hollywood offices. Vasily Zarubin was assigned to be his handler, but the relationship cooled after it was discovered that Morros had greatly overstated his influence and credentials within the movie industry.

Over the next few years, Morros advanced quickly at Paramount and by 1940 was a well-known figure in Hollywood. Contacted again by the NKVD, in December 1941 he agreed to provide cover for two Soviet spies, in exchange for favors involving family members who were being harassed in Russia. As part of his cover, he formed the Boris Morros Music Company with funding from Soviet sympathizers Alfred K. Stern and Martha Dodd.

In 1944, NKVD officer Jack Soble was assigned as Morros' new handler. American Recording Artists was launched a short time later, again with funding from Stern and Dodd, in part as a means of laundering cash. The Russian's involvement with ARA went undetected by members of the press, who lauded the new operation as an important addition to the growing roster of independent West Coast labels. The company's first releases, announced in late June 1944, were issued under the American Recording Artists label, but the name was soon shortened to ARA. With his extensive contacts in the entertainment industry, Morros assembled an impressive artist roster that came to include Hoagy Carmichael, Smiley Burnette, Phil Harris, Earl Hines, Jan Savitt, Art Tatum, and Bob Crosby's Bobcats.

During ARA's first year in operation, Morros was hobbled by Stern's insistence that he be involved as an operating partner, despite his lack of any expertise in the entertainment and recording fields. In 1945 Morros bought out Stern, and Mark Leff took over as president of ARA. Morros showed a marked lack of interest in the ARA operation following the buy-out, turning the artists-and-repertoire duties over to his son Richard and a new hire, Dave Gould.

Morros' company was reorganized in March 1946, as ARA, Inc., coinciding with its purchase of Symphony Records, a small West Coast classical label that featured the Santa Monica Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Jacques Rachmilovich. *Billboard* later reported that ARA would sign the orchestra for new recordings, focusing on "composers overlooked and under-recorded, altho' regular classical best-sellers will also be cut." Offices were moved to larger quarters on Wilshire Boulevard, and Morros leased a large Los Angeles warehouse to serve as his expanded distribution center. The lease brought ARA's total floor space to more than 20,000 square feet in Los Angeles alone, with additional space leased in other major cities.

The label underwent the first of several redesigns in the spring of 1946, emphasizing the artists' names in large type while down-playing the ARA logo. At the same time, ARA expanded into the children's market when WLS story-teller Martha Blair Fox was awarded a contract to develop a children's series. The company also expanded its country-music and musical comedy offerings at about that time. The Cass County Kids and Judy Canova were added to ARA's growing country line-up, Georgie Jessel agreed to make an album of "torch songs," and the cast of the Broadway production of "Are You With It?" was signed to record an excerpts album.

By the summer of 1946, rumors were circulating that ARA was on the verge of being absorbed by Cosmo Records. In July, Leff announced that he was selling his interest in

ARA to an undisclosed firm or firms, one of which was rumored to be M-G-M Records. The pressing plant was closed, ostensibly to take inventory, during which time manufacturing was contracted to several independent plants. Despite Leff's insistence that the closure was temporary, and that ARA was still a going concern, advertising was suspended following his departure. Late in the month, *Billboard* reported that ARA's operations were "practically at a standstill now, with most of the personnel standing by for further developments." It was reported that the company had invested more than \$75,000 in masters that had yet to be released.

Hoagy Carmichael was the first ARA artist to defect, to Decca in August 1946. By then, majority ownership of the company had passed to attorney Morton Garbus, with the balance split between Morros and Leff. In late August, a group headed by music publisher Ralph Peer made an offer for the company. A premature report claimed that Peer would serve as ARA's new president and chief creditor, but ultimately the offer was declined. A subsequent offer by Apollo Records, to reorganize and operate the company, was also rejected.

ARA Records was placed in receivership in September 1946, just in time to thwart a seizure by the Internal Revenue Service. Its assets had been scheduled to be auctioned piecemeal on October 22, but the sale was called off after a tangle of legal problems surfaced. Among them were questions over the ARA receiver's claimed that its masters were unencumbered and buyers would face no restrictions on their use. The sale was postponed until November 25, 1946, when all of ARA's property, including masters and 400,000 discs and albums, was auctioned in Los Angeles by order of the U.S. District Court. The Los Angeles studio later operated as the 6000 Sunset Radio Center, a custom recording and transcription service.

By late 1946, litigation surrounding ARA was running rampant. An audit had revealed irregularities in the company's operations, including large loan repayments made to three of Leff's other companies shortly before bankruptcy was declared. In January 1947, former ARA treasurer Irving Zeitlin was subpoenaed to explain the firm's accounting, a procedure that *Billboard* estimated could "drag out for months because of many loose ends connected with operation of the former waxery." Multiple civil suits dragged on into 1949. Pieces of the business were sold off in the interim, including the pressing plant, which was acquired by the Bihari brothers' Modern Records in 1947. In October of that year, *Cash Box* reported that lumber tycoon Alfred E. Simpson was "buying up loads" of ARA masters for reissue in Canada, but his plan does not seem to have come to fruition. Ultimately, ARA's masters remained in legal limbo under the jurisdiction of the Comptroller of the State of California. Irving Mills eventually purchased the remains of American Recording Artists and continued to use the name into the mid-1950s for his own record operation.

On July 14, 1947, Morros informed the FBI of his activities for the Russians and agreed to serve as a double agent, reporting on Soviet intelligence efforts. Ten years later, his activities were finally made public by the U.S. Justice Department. Morros' best-selling 1959 autobiography, *My Ten Years as a Counterspy*, served as the basis for the 1960 film, *Man on a String*. He died in New York on January 8, 1963.

AMERICAN RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – 1948

Offices: 226 S. 15th St., Philadelphia

Record Products: American, Click

Formed in March 1946 by Carl C. Weil (recording manager) and Ralph Josephs (sales and distribution manager). A month later, *Billboard* reported that plans for a launch were "still in the nebulous stage," with no recordings yet made. Richard F. Cavella joined the firm as manager of artists and repertoire that autumn, at which time production still apparently had not gotten under way.

In November 1946, *Billboard* reported that the company would produce two labels, American and Click. American was to be reserved for classical releases, for which Cavella signed the Curtis String Quartet and a chamber orchestra directed by Max Arnoff, both based in Philadelphia. Click, a pop label that recorded in New York, reportedly had a promotional arrangement (but no apparent corporate connection) with Frank Palumbo's Click nightclub in Philadelphia.

No reference to the American label has been found after 1947. Sidney Pastner's newly formed Allied Recording Company took over production of the Click label in late 1947 or very early 1948. The last confirmed reference to Click records is a *Philadelphia Inquirer* report, on December 17, 1947, that singer Bob Manning was to record six sides for the label that week, in New York.

AMERICAN RECORDING LABORATORIES

The American Recording Laboratories were incorporated in Passaic, New Jersey, on April 29, 1918, with Carlton E. Sanders the majority stockholder and president. Originally operating at 70 Bond Street in Passaic, it later advertised personal and commercial recording services at 56 W. 45th Street, New York. Eleven-thousand shares of American Recording Laboratories stock were offered at auction on December 8, 1920, but in early 1921 the company was placed in receivership. It was subsequently taken over by the newly organized Phonograph Recording Laboratories. American Recording Laboratories produced a marketing record for the American Home Recorder attachment, but thus far, no reliable information has surfaced concerning what regular commercial labels, if any, were produced by either company.

AMERICAN TALKING MACHINE COMPANY [I] (Cylinders)

Record Production (Unconfirmed): Late 1890s

Offices: Hartford Building (Broadway and 17th St., New York)

Record Products: Cylinders (unconfirmed)

An early dealer in cylinder records and phonographs, managed by Henry C. Spencer. The American Talking Machine Company was a Columbia retailer, and its offerings by Len Spencer, J. W. Myers, George J. Gaskin, Issler's Orchestra, and Sousa's Band, among others, although not identified as Columbia cylinders in the company's advertising, closely match the Columbia output of those artists. Others, including a series by Voss' First Regiment Band, have not been traced to other sources thus far, suggesting that some might be original recordings.

AMERICAN TALKING MACHINE COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1899 – 1900

Offices: 106 Wall St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — 3rd Ave. & Great Jones St., New York (claimed)

Factory: 3rd Ave. & Great Jones St., New York

Record Products: American Talking Machine Record Disc; Vitaphone (export label known in several variations, including American Vitaphone Record)

Successor to the Standard Talking Machine Company (*q.v.*), the American Talking Machine Company was formed in the autumn of 1898 by inventor Joseph W. Jones and investor Albert T. Armstrong. The company negotiated an agreement with the American Graphophone Company (Columbia) to manufacture disc phonographs for which Jones would supply the records, the latter under the protection of American Graphophone's Bell-Tainter patent #341,214. However, it was unable to produce a workable machine, and manufacturing of the device was taken over by the International Stylophone Company (New Haven, Connecticut) in 1899.

The machines were marketed under the Vitaphone brand. Advertisements began to appear during the summer of 1899, touting them as "the Gramophone perfected," and pointing out that they were manufactured "under basic patents of the American Graphophone Co." The accompanying American Talking Machine Record Discs retailed for \$6 per dozen, plus shipping. They were described at the time as being "paper" records, a reference to the same fibrous red compound that had been used in Standard's Wonder Record pressings (no actual paper pressings have been reported). Anomalous black pressing are also known. Refunds were not allowed for breakage in shipment, since the records were claimed to be "unbreakable, except by most careless misuse." In an advertising pitch that would later be echoed by Indestructible cylinders, the Vitaphone catalog urged skeptics to lay a record on the floor and "Step on it. Dance on it... Yet the record, when adjusted on the machine, plays as clearly as if it were the first impression from the factory matrix."

In September 1899, Emile Berliner publicly accused the American Talking Machine Company of illegally duplicating his recordings. *The Phonoscope* for that month claimed, "The red disks advertised by this company are copies of regular Gramophone records and considering that they are quadruplicates from the original they are not half bad, if all are as good as those our representative heard."

In response to those accusations, American Talking Machine placed a notice in the October 1899 *Phonoscope* offering a \$1,000 reward for the arrest and conviction of "parties circulating false and malicious statements" about their products. The manager of Berliner's Philadelphia office was arrested and charged, according to *The Phonoscope*. The action provoked a sharp response from the National Gramophone Corporation, which in November countered with a notice declaring the American Talking Machine Company to be an infringer of its patents.

The rarity of American Talking Machine records makes the degree of piracy difficult to determine exactly. However, there are multiple confirmed examples of original recordings with spoken introductions crediting the American Talking Machine Company, or that have no known Berliner equivalent and probably are original. Research by David Giovannoni suggests that these employed wax masters, based upon aural and physical characteristics, rather than the etched-zinc masters Berliner was making at the time. The company claimed to operate a recording studio on Third Avenue in New York, and it is known that Jones made original recordings (in a sworn affidavit, Charles Rech testified that he made Vitaphone records with a band directed by Otto Schreiber). Original American Talking Machine recordings exhibit surprisingly good sound quality, markedly superior to Berliner's.

The Phonoscope reported that on January 27, 1900, Jones would depart for London, Paris, and Madrid, to make recordings for the foreign markets. He likely took the opportunity to promote his records while there; American Talking Machine discs were marketed overseas under various imprints, including "'Vitaphone' Talking Machine Record, Process of E. W. Jones" and "European Vitaphone Co. Record Disk." One of the most unusual foreign specimens reported from this period is a lime-green pressing made for British distribution.

On April 12, 1900, Columbia notified Armstrong that it was withdrawing its support and would instead grant an exclusive license to manufacture phonographs to the Universal Talking Machine Company (Zonophone). Although the new arrangement did not prevent American Talking Machine from manufacturing records, it did put an end to Columbia's patent protection for the company. Production of the red discs for U.S. distribution apparently was discontinued by the end of 1900. The last known advertisement appeared in the October 1900 *Phonoscope* (which probably was actually published in December of that year).

With the long-delayed approval of his own patent (#688,739) finally imminent, Jones split with Armstrong in 1901 and allied himself with Columbia. The American Talking Machine Company was reorganized and registered in New York as a trade name of Albert Armstrong, who was listed as the company's sole proprietor. A year later, Armstrong reorganized as the American Vitaphone Company, *q.v.*

AMERICAN VITAPHONE COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1902 – 1904

Offices: 165 W. 23rd St., New York; London

Record Products: American Vitaphone Record; Vitaphone Record (export label known in several variations)

Successor to the American Talking Machine Company, *q.v.* The American Vitaphone Company name had previously been used by a Philadelphia company, operating at 1020 Chestnut Street, that had begun operation in 1899 and appears to have merely been a sales agent for American Talking Machine Company products. Its last known advertisement appeared in the spring of 1900.

By 1902, Albert T. Armstrong and others associated with the failed American Talking Machine Company had regrouped as the New York-based American Vitaphone Company, producing records for distribution in the United States, Europe, and the British empire under the American Vitaphone label.

For a time, Armstrong offered to take old Berliner gramophones (which he refurbished and sold as new "Concert Grand" models) in partial payment for a new Vitaphone machine. Sales appear to have been weak, however, and by late 1903 American Vitaphone was also offering a crude \$2.50 hand-driven model ("no springs to break—no complicated machinery") that some newspapers gave away to new subscribers. Financial difficulties quickly mounted, culminating in a 1904 suit brought by several creditors over unpaid invoices.

The American Vitaphone records were clearly pirated by electroplating commercial Columbia and Victor pressings. Armstrong used the original Columbia and Victor catalog numbers, which can often be seen in the pressings. In October 1904, the American Vitaphone Company was sued for pirating Victor records and was enjoined from doing so by court order (*Victor Talking Machine Co. v. American Vitaphone Co., U.S. District Court*), putting an end to the operation. Armstrong died in early 1905. The company was dissolved following his death, and on December 1, 1905, the American Express Company auction all unclaimed American Vitaphone property in its possession.

In 1911 the Vitaphone trademark, which had not previously been registered in the United States, was revived for an unrelated business headed by Clinton Repp, who had previously marketed American Talking Machine Company products in Cuba. The name was revived again in the 1920s for the well-known sound-film process employed by Warner Brothers.

AMIGO MUSIC PUBLISHING COMPANY / ANSA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1948

Offices: 366 Broadway, New York (1948); 562 5th Ave., New York (1949)

Record Products: Ansa

Owned and operated by Dixie and Sammy Shayer, a brother-and-sister team from Pittsburgh. Dixie was an unemployed stenographer at the time she composed "My Dream Romance." In 1942, she and Sammy composed "Vos Zokt Eer?" and moved to New York to launch the Acme Music Corporation. Dixie's song received little notice until 1944, when the Shayers sold the South American rights to publisher Fermata, which successfully adapted it for the Latino market under the title "Maruschka." As part of the deal, the Shayers were granted North American rights to Fermata's Amigo music catalog, which they marketed under the Amigo Music Publishing Company name.

Amigo Music was listed in the *Billboard* directories for several years. Its Ansa Records division was launched in late 1947, shortly before the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, and specialized in American recordings of Latino and novelty dance numbers from the Amigo catalog. The label's first offering, by Ramon Littee and his Sparkling Orchestra, was advertised in February 1948. In early March, *Cash Box* reported that the company was adding pressing plants and that Littee's "Rhumba Jubilee" was "clicking like sixty" (*i.e.*, getting strong jukebox play). Ansa strayed from the Amigo catalog in the spring of 1948, when it had a regional hit in the Pittsburgh area with Littee's recording of "My First Look at Heaven," thanks to aggressive plugging by more than a dozen local disc jockeys. Composed by Pittsburgh locals Harry Kurtz and Bill Marino, the song had been largely ignored since its 1942 publication.

Lee Magid, who handled promotion for Ansa, departed to join National Records in June 1948, after which little more was heard of the label.

AMMOR RECORD CORPORATION / AMMOR RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1939 – 1940

Offices: Hollywood, CA; New York (from early 1940)

Original-Master Source(s): C. P. MacGregor studio (Los Angeles); own studio (New York)

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Ammor

An acronym for Automatic Music Machine Operators Recording, the Ammor Record Corporation was founded in Hollywood in July 1939 by brothers Leon and Otis Rene, marking their first significant involvement in record production. Morry R. Kaplan, who later owned Danceland Records, was a minority investor. Ammor probably was the first West Coast label to be designated exclusively for jukebox use. The records initially retailed for 60¢.

Ammor's West Coast masters, numbered in an AM-prefixed series, were recorded in the C. P. MacGregor studio. The label is remembered primarily for its 1940 recordings by Nat (King) Cole. The roster also included the Larry Breese, Ceelle Burke, and Claude Hopkins orchestras, the Pied Pipers, and singers Sid Garry and Seger Ellis, both of whose careers had peaked a decade earlier.

The operation was moved to New York in early 1940, which appears to have marked the end of the Rene brothers' involvement with Ammor. Reorganized as the Ammor Record Company, it opened its own studio under Philip Bogin's management and began offering Ammor records for retail sale, with a redesigned label, for just 35¢ each. The price was reduced to 25¢ in May. In the same month, Ammor and Bogin were placed on the American Federation of Musicians' "unfair list" for having failed to pay Ellis, Hopkins, and other artists.

The company suspended operations in July 1940. By that time, it had already sold some of its masters to Eli Oberstein, who reissued them on his Varsity label. Two masters found their way onto the Make Believe Ballroom label (pressed by Allied Record Manufacturing in the autumn of 1941, and credited to the Hollywood House of Music). Several others were later licensed by Savoy. Leon Rene apparently retained control of some masters.

Little more was heard of Philip Bogin. Leon and Otis Rene went on to launch Exclusive (which reissued a few Ammor masters) and Excelsior, respectively, in 1944.

AMUKE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 270 E. 10th St., New York

Record Products: Amuke

Founded in 1947 by brothers Milton and Johnny Olekson, Amuke specialized in polka records, many of them by members or friends of the Olekson family. Labels declared the records to be "The finest in foreign dance music." In June 1948, Harmonia's Anthony Benis acquired the Amuke catalog for an undisclosed sum and agreed to pay the Oleksos a small royalty on future sales. Three months later, the Oleksos took an ad in *Billboard* to warn that counterfeit Amuke records were being sold. The Amuke label was still listed in the *Billboard* directories (which included many inactive or defunct companies) as late as 1952, although it does not appear that any new material was released that late.

ANGEL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924

Offices: 682 Park Ave., Brooklyn, NY

Record Products: Angel Record Co.

Successor to the short-lived Palomba Record and Talking Machine Company (*q.v.*), the Angel Record Company briefly produced recordings of Sephardic material for the American immigrant market. The few confirmed issues (which include a reissue of the original Palomba release) feature Isaac Angel, a member of the Stamboul Quartet in the mid-1920s. The records were advertised in *La America* in September 1924.

ANGELICO COMPANY / ANGELOPHONE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1916

Offices: 28 W. 63rd St., New York; 182–184 Fulton St., Brooklyn, NY; London (unconfirmed, per label)

Record Products: Angelophone

The Angelico Company briefly produced 7" vertical-cut Angelophone discs for the religious market. In June 1916, the company secured a special marketing and sales arrangement with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society for Angelophone records and Angelico-branded hymnals and phonographs. *Zion's Watch Tower* magazine initially offered its readers what it termed "jobber's prices" on Angelophone phonographs.

Angelophone discs were pressed with a paper label on one side and an etched label, of entirely different design, on the reverse. Each etched-label side featured a "Hymn Talk" by *Watch Tower* founder Charles Taze Russell, who died in 1916. The labels do not credit Russell by name, although advertisements for the records do. (Russell, in addition to his

work as a pastor, author, and publisher, produced a short film in 1914, titled "Photodrama of Creation," which employed synchronized phonograph records as its sound source.)

The paper-labeled sides featured hymns sung by Henry Burr, recorded in an unknown studio. A writer for *Zion's Watch Tower* (who misidentified tenor Burr as a "barytone"), declared, "Bible students can now have in their homes phonograph music which really represents sentiments much better than does the majority of the jiggy, rag-time stuff."

The Russell recordings appear to have been made expressly for Angelophone. Physical and aural characteristics suggest they were recorded in a different studio than that used for Burr's recordings. Several of the Burr hymns have been reported anecdotally on other 7" vertical-cut brands, but confirmation is lacking thus far.

The manufacturing portion of the Angelico operation was sold following Russell's death, with the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society retaining the sales rights to the records. By November 1916, *Zion's Watch Tower* was offering the entire set of fifty Angelophone records to its readers for a total of \$5, almost certainly incurring a loss on the sales.

ANGELUS RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – 1947

Offices: 6404 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Angelus

A short-lived producer of records for the religious market, registered in Los Angeles as a fictitious firm by Edward and Vivian Ray Dukoff on January 24, 1946. Angelus was first listed in that year's *Record Retail Yearbook*, which gave no details other than an office address. Angelus' "Prayer Time" album (a collection of sermons by Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen) was widely advertised in the autumn of 1946, with proceeds donated to the Martin De Porres Hospital, a maternity hospital for Black women in Mobile, Alabama. What else Angelus produced, if anything, is not known.

ANSA RECORDS — See Amigo Music Publishing Company

ANSONIA RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Present

Offices: 992 Columbus Ave., New York (at founding)

Original-Master Source(s): Commissioned from independent U.S. and foreign studios

Record Products: Ansonia [2]

Still in business today, Ansonia Records was incorporated in New York on June 6, 1949, by Rafael (Ralph) Pérez. A native of Puerto Rico, Pérez moved to New York in 1920. He married Perla Violeta Amado, a Guatemalan-born soprano who recorded for Brunswick, Columbia, Decca, and (much later) Ansonia.

Pérez joined the staff of Decca Records soon after its founding, serving as an artists-and-repertoire representative for the label's Latin-American division. Among other accomplishments, he was responsible for Decca's highly popular series of calypso recordings, which he made on location in Trinidad during 1938–1940. Pérez was still with the company in mid-September 1949 (at which time he had already launched his own business), when he reported to *Billboard* that Decca was planning to sharply increase production of records for the Latino market.

While still with Decca, Pérez launched Ideal Record Sales (*q.v.*; not to be confused with Texas-based Ideal Records) in partnership with Steven Esteban (Steven) Rodriguez. The company issued a handful of records for the Mexican-American market before Pérez bought out Rodriguez in June 1949 and launched Ansonia, which he named for a hotel he favored for housing visiting artists. From the start, the Ansonia label was devoted almost exclusively to authentic Latin music. Pérez did little in the way of print marketing or live promotions, instead relying largely on radio play to publicize his records.

In January 1950, Pérez resigned from Decca to focus full-time on expanding Ansonia. Early recording sessions were held in Beltone's New York studio (which charged the company \$60 per hour) under Pérez' supervision. Pérez also commissioned masters from for-hire studios in Havana, Mexico City, and San Juan, and occasionally licensed existing master from foreign sources, including the Mexican Comix and Orfeon labels.

Many of the early Ansonia releases featured Dominican merengues, a genre that was virtually absent from U.S. record catalogs at the time. Initially there were Serie Hispana and Serie Internacional designations, which were later dropped. Pérez would go on to release a wide array of music intended for the Puerto Rican, Cuban, Haitian, and Dominican immigrant and export markets. LPs were added to the Ansonia line in the mid-1950s, at which time the label was given a more modern design. The company continued to issue 78s well into the late 1950s.

Pérez died on October 19, 1969. His daughter Mercedes and her husband Herman Glass took over the management of Ansonia, moving the company to East Rutherford, New Jersey, in 1985. Glass died in 1986, and his place was taken by his son, Henry Gerard Glass. Ansonia's last new recordings were released in 1990. Since then, the company has concentrated on reissuing its extensive catalog in CD form.

ANTILLIAN MUSIC FEATURES — See Cyclone Records

APEX RECORDING LABORATORY

The Apex Recording Laboratory (1126 Broadway, New York) appears to have been primarily a master-brokering operation rather than an active recording studio. Based upon its July 1922 advertisement in *The Talking Machine World* (which offered 7", 10", and 12" masters, including a substantial amount of ethnic material), the company probably was dealing in masters from the failing Emerson Phonograph Company, which had been sold a month before Apex's first advertisement appeared. Whether Apex produced any original recordings has not been discovered.

APEX RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1948

Offices: 119 W. 57th St., New York (from late 1949)

Record Products: Masters for numerous labels; private and custom recordings

Successor to the Carl Fischer (Miracoustic) Recording Studio, *q.v.* Apex was launched by Robert E. Scheuing in the autumn of 1948, using the former Fischer facility. Key personnel at founding included Scheuing (president and sales manager), Thomas Dowd (chief recording engineer), Jack Keeny (engineer), and Fred Herbert-Oettgen (*née* Herbert F. Oettgen, recording director). Only Herbert-Oettgen had previously worked for Fischer.

Scheuing hosted a cocktail party on October 15, 1948, to celebrate the studio's opening. It was a full-service operation, with tape, wire, acetate, and wax mastering offered from the start. In December 1949, *Billboard* reported that Apex had added a new studio that was operating around-the-clock, seven days a week, due mainly to increased demand for tape and microgroove mastering. The article noted that Apex was "servicing a flock of indie labels," which during the period covered by this work included Atlantic, Mercer, and Sittin' In With, among many others. By 1951 the studio was also offering television air-checks.

Apex is best remembered as the studio in which producer Al Schmitt (later renowned for his work with Jefferson Airplane, Jackson Browne, Neil Young, and others) first worked. Hired by Apex as an office boy in the late 1940s, he went on to train with Thomas Dowd and worked briefly as an Apex engineer before embarking on a long and distinguished career in LP production.

APOLLO RECORD COMPANY [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 – c. 1922

Offices: New York

Original-Master Source(s): Possibly United States Record Manufacturing Company

Pressing: United States Record Manufacturing Company

Record Products: Apollo [2]

A short-lived label devoted to Irish-style material. Two label designs are known, one of which (showing a copyright date of September 20, 1921) was later adapted for the redesigned Bell label.

Apollo received a passing notice in November 1921, when the Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, *Evening News* reported that Marty Walsh (a Eastern League pitcher who had recently given up baseball for music after having been discovered by Standard Phonograph's James Richardson) was recording for the company. Emmett O'Toole, an Irish tenor popular on the college concert circuits, also recorded several selections. Masters appear to have been recorded for Apollo's exclusive use by an unknown studio. Mentions of the company had disappeared by 1922, when several of its recordings were reissued on the Union of Irish Industries' short-lived Emerald label.

APOLLO RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1923

Offices: Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Gennett studio

Pressing: Starr Piano Company

Record Products: Apollo [3]

A short-lived venture possibly affiliated with baritone Bassilios Adrea Kyros, who performed on the few confirmed releases. Recordings were made in Gennett's Richmond, Indiana, studio in August 1923, and the records were numbered within Gennett's 20000 personal series.

APOLLO RECORDS, INC. / APOLLO MUSIC COMPANY / RAINBOW MUSIC SHOP (Discs)

Record Production: 1943 – 1962

Offices: 102 W. 125th St., New York (Rainbow Music Shop); 342 Madison Ave., New York (1944–8/1948); 615 10th Ave., New York (from 1945)

Original-Master Source(s): Commissioned from various independent studios

Pressing: Independent plants (1943–1946); own plant (from 1946); Monarch Manufacturing (Los Angeles, for western distribution; from mid-1950)

Record Products (78): Apollo [6], Hill and Country, Lloyds [2], Teentimer Original; Pelican (children's)

An important independent producer of jazz, rhythm-and-blues, and gospel recordings, Apollo Records was founded in New York in 1944 by Bess and Isaac (Ike) Berman, Herman (Hy) Siegel, and Sam Schneider.

In 1943, prior to the formation of Apollo Records, the Bermans issued several records under a label that credited only their Rainbow Music Shop. The Apollo label (named for the nearby Apollo Theater, with which the company had no official connection), was launched in 1944. The earliest Apollo labels continued to credit the Rainbow Music Shop and lacked any pictorial trademark. A version for the Greek market, labeled with the Apollo name in Greek, was also launched in 1944.

Although Siegel served as the company's first president, the Bermans were largely responsible for managing artists, repertoire, and day-to-day operations. Early Apollo releases had modest sales at best, but the company's signing of Mahalia Jackson in early 1948 marked a turning point. Her "Move On Up a Little Higher" reportedly sold so well that the pressing plant had to work overtime to keep up with demand.

Apollo's identity as primarily a jazz, blues, and gospel label was immediately apparent, but the company made some efforts to diversify in its early years. A general series that included pop, comedy, and ethnic material was added in 1945 and was expanded under the management of Jerry Jerome, who was hired as Apollo's new musical director in September 1946. Pop artists signed during 1946–1947 included Ray Eberle, Jose Morand's Orchestra, and a still largely untested Dean Martin. Martin's subsequent defection to Capitol Records sparked a lawsuit by Apollo, which eventually was awarded \$3,500 in damages. A country-and-western series, launched in the summer of 1947, failed to attract much interest despite some good reviews. Later that year, Bess Berman bowed to pressure from jukebox operators, who were demanding more plays per hour, and began producing some Apollo records with reduced playing times.

In May 1948, Siegel and Schneider sold their holdings in Apollo to the Bermans and resigned from the company. Bess Berman assumed the presidency of Apollo on May 27, only to find that the company was facing a host of problems. Charlie Barnet ordered his Apollo masters seized after the company failed to pay overdue royalties. In early June, music publisher Witmark & Sons sued Apollo for issuing what it termed "a vulgar, obscene,

and offensive arrangement" of "Shanty in Old Shanty Town," in violation of its recording agreement. Apollo had disposed of its own distributing operation and was working with scattered independent distributors. In addition, the Bermans were in the process of separating and had resigned from the company, although for a time Ike Berman continued to oversee the independent plant that pressed for Apollo.

Bess Berman was one of the first record producers to disparage the use of terms like "race" or "sepia" to distinguish records by Black artists. In May 1949 she told *The Pittsburgh Courier*, "Apollo Records has never used these terms and disapproves of the practice strongly." In the same article, Berman noted that Apollo's catalog was composed "principally of recordings by Negro artists." But later that year, Apollo launched the Hill and Country label as a country-music subsidiary, with Apollo sales manager Irving Katz doing double duty as the new line's manager of artists and repertoire. At about the same time, the company announced a cross-licensing agreement with the Vogue label in France, involving an exchange of American recordings by Dizzy Gillespie, Arnett Cobb, Coleman Hawkins, and others, for Vogue's Paris recordings by Errol Garner.

Ultimately, Apollo foundered under Bess Berman's management. Regarded as cheap and abrasive by some of her artists and industry peers, Berman had difficulty retaining Apollo's most popular stars. Her loss of Mahalia Jackson to Columbia Records in 1954 was a particularly serious blow. By then, Berman was also facing mounting legal problems, mostly of her own making. In 1953 she launched Lloyd's Records (unrelated to the earlier Lloyds label of Washington, D.C.) as a subsidiary, specializing in doo-wop and gospel records, and sporting a label design that too closely resembled that of M-G-M Records. Lloyd's quickly became entangled in a lawsuit and was shut down in 1954. In May 1955, the publishing arm of Hill and Range sued Berman, Apollo, and the defunct Lloyd's for copyright infringement, citing twenty of its copyrighted songs that Berman had issued with labels erroneously crediting herself and Mahalia Jackson (who denied any involvement in the deception) as composers.

Apollo discontinued production of 78s in 1957 and increasingly concentrated on 45-rpm doo-wop and rock-and-roll singles. LPs, at first in 10" form, were introduced in 1954 but were released only sporadically. They were largely reissues of material from the 78-rpm catalog, including some of Mahalia Jackson's early sides that were deceptively packaged to suggest they were new recordings.

Apollo finally closed in 1962. Rights to the catalog were acquired by Kenwood Records, which reissued Apollo material in LP form into the early 1970s. Rights to portions of the Apollo catalog have since been acquired several other companies, including Delmark and Relic.

APPLAUSE RECORD COMPANY — See Krantz Records

THE APPLIANCES COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: New York

Record Products: Broadway [2]

The Appliances Company briefly produced the Broadway [2] label for jukebox use. Broadway was reported as a "brand new" label by *Cash Box* in November 1946. The records were sold locally by Broadway Record Distributors Corporation (New York).

Broadway's first release (Marjorie Hudson's "It's Great to Be a Divorcee" / "Fifteen Minutes a Day") received a mixed review in *Cash Box*, which was not optimistic about the record's jukebox potential and noted it was "slightly on the purple [suggestive] side...strictly night club stuff." The reviewer went on to suggest that Hudson "could wax better if she knew more."

Little more was heard of the Broadway label until August 1948, when The Appliances Company protested Remington Records' use of the Broadway name for its new line of cheap discs, which Remington subsequently scrapped rather than risk litigation. However, it appears The Appliance Company's Broadway label was already inactive by then. There is no connection to the numerous other Broadway labels produced during the period covered by this work.

ARA RECORDS — See American Recording Artists

ARCADIA RECORDS AND TRANSCRIPTION COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1953

Offices: 6432 Cass Ave., Detroit; 475 5th Ave., New York (branch office)

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, other independent studios

Record Products: An Arcadia Production

The recording affiliate of the Detroit-based Echoes Music Publishing Company, managed by Lester F. Docking and Richard W. Pascoe. The company was also affiliated with Taylor Plastics, a manufacturer of presses and dies. *Billboard* gave the company's founding date as 1944, although no commercial record output has been confirmed earlier than 1946. The earliest Arcadia labels show the company's location as New York, where Echoes Music maintained a branch office. By May 1947, when Arcadia Records was first listed in *Billboard*'s manufacturer directory, the address given was that of Echoes Music's main Detroit office.

Marketed largely to jukebox operators, most Arcadia records featured local and regional artists performing pop and country-and-western titles from the Echoes Music catalog, along with reworked standards and some Irish-style songs that *Cash Box* described as "tailor-made for the tavern stops." The label's primary star was Smilin' Red Maxedon, a pop singer from Detroit radio stations WJBK and WJR. Arcadia also issued several sides recorded in Houston by Terry Shand, perhaps the label's only nationally known artist.

Arcadia was still soliciting distributors as late as October 1949. Its last known advertisement appeared in May 1953, in *Billboard*. The Arcadia name was also used by several unrelated labels, including those in Arcadia, California (1951) and New Orleans (later 1950s).

MANUEL ARCHULETA PRODUCTION ENTERPRISE (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – Mid-1950s

Offices: Albuquerque, NM

Original-Master Source(s): Own recordings using portable equipment

Record Products: Tom Tom

The first Native American-owned record company, launched in the mid-1940s by Manuel Archuleta (*née* Tse-We Ant-Yen). A native of the San Juan Pueblo in New Mexico, Archuleta worked as a clerk at the Albuquerque Indian School and also lectured on American Indian music at local public schools and the University of New Mexico.

Archuleta was recording traditional tribal songs by the spring of 1940, if not earlier, based on an *Albuquerque Tribune* report that he was broadcasting some of his efforts on a special program over radio station KGGM. His earliest recordings were made purely for documentary purposes, but in June 1946 the *Tribune* reported that he had started a business to market the records. Archuleta recalled that he had used his life's savings to launch the Tom Tom label, telling a reporter for *Desert Magazine*, "we had enough milk for the baby, and a recording machine."

Archuleta's Tom Tom records featured traditional material recorded at Laguna, San Juan, Taos, and other pueblos in the Albuquerque–Santa Fe area. Styled the Save-a-Chant Project Series, they were issued on twelve discs compiled into two album sets. Although initially marketed as limited editions, with only local distribution, some were subsequently re-pressed for the broader consumer market. Archuleta also recorded several of his own songs with his wife, Alycia, and their daughters, in the guise of the Tom Tom Family Singers. On May 23, 1950, two Tom Tom recordings were used (with Archuleta's permission) as background music on the popular radio show, "This Is Your Life."

Archuleta later had to discontinue the Tom Tom name (which he apparently had failed to register) after it was trademarked by a short-lived jazz label. The last known newspaper mention of Archuleta's Tom Tom Records appeared in October 1951. He went on to produce the short-lived Super Chief 45-rpm label — an even more problematic name, given that Super Chief was already a registered trademark of the Santa Fe Railroad. Super Chief released only twelve records before quietly fading away. By then, Archuleta had amassed a large library of unreleased recordings, which are now held in the New Mexico Archives, but he appears to have had no more involvement with commercial record production following Super Chief's demise. He died in November 1963.

ARCO RECORDS [I] Discs

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Mailing Address: Alice, TX (PO box number only; no street address listed)

Record Products: Arco [1]

A short-lived operation launched in 1949 by musician Reymundo Treviño. There was no connection to the various other Arco labels produced in the 1940s and 1950s. Treviño's Arco label specialized in material for the Mexican-American market. Treviño was a member of Beta Villa's band (a seminal group in the evolution of modern Tejano music) and also led his own orchestra, which recorded for Arco. He was the first to record Antonio (Tony) de la Rosa, an important member of the new generation of *conjunto* musicians who emerged after World War II.

ARCO RECORDS [II] — See American Record Company [III]

ARDEN RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1949

Offices: 902 E. Jefferson St., Detroit (to 7/1947); 2059 19th St., Detroit (Melmore pressing plant, 7/1947–1948); 1711 Hazelwood, Detroit (1949)

Pressing: Melmore plant

Record Products: Arden

Launched in early 1947 by William J. Basharra, in partnership with band leader Glenn Moore and songwriter Marian Kay, and in affiliation with the Robin Hood Music Publishing Company. The company's first releases were announced in April 1947. Basharra employed local and regional talent, including Moore's dance orchestra and singer Todd Purse, a disc jockey at Detroit station WJLB.

In July 1947, Arden's offices were moved to the Melmore pressing plant, which Basharra also owned, roughly coinciding with the launch of the Maratone label (*see* Melmore, Inc.). Little more was reported concerning Arden after 1947, other than its move to a new address in early 1949. The company's closure, along with that of Robin Hood Music Publishing, was reported on February 26, 1949.

ARDENE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1950

Offices: 75 Florida St., Elizabeth, NJ

Record Products: Ardene

Of unknown ownership, the Ardene Record Company advertised its first release in November 1948, at which time it was soliciting distributors. The few known issues comprise undistinguished pop and country-and-western fare by local artists with no national followings, including Johnny Lennard (whose "Sleigh Bells" was heavily advertised in several northern New Jersey newspapers in late 1948) and Pete Sherman and his Western Showboys (from the Dixie Belle Inn in Metuchen, New Jersey). Ardene was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1950 directory.

ARDYAL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1927 – c. 1928

Offices: Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Marsh Laboratories studio

Pressing: New York Recording Laboratories

Record Products: Ardyal

Owned and operated by I. Ionescu-Ardeal, and devoted exclusively to Roumanian folk material. Ionescu-Ardeal filed a trademark application on April 26, 1928, claiming use of the Ardyal name on records since September 1, 1927. The earliest known Ardyal masters were recorded by Marsh Laboratories c. June 1927, and the last c. September 1928. Production appears to have been discontinued in late 1928, after approximately seven releases.

ARION RECORD IMPORT COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1920s

Offices: 1501 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia

Original-Master Source(s): Gennett studios

Record Products: Arion

Incorporated in Pennsylvania in November 1920 to buy, sell, trade, import, and export phonographs and phonograph records. Although most Arion releases were pressed from imported German masters, the company also commissioned some masters from the Starr Piano Company (Gennett) in the early-to-mid-1920s.

ARISTA RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 512 Pennsylvania Ave., Baltimore

Record Products: Arista

Launched in late 1946 in affiliation with the Oriole Corporation, a Baltimore-based record distribution company that handled Cosmo and other small independent labels. Both companies operated from the same Pennsylvania Avenue address, a multi-tenant building. There is no connection to Clive Davis' much better-known Arista Records, which was founded in 1974.

Arista specialized in jazz and country-and-western material, in 5000 and 6000 series, respectively. The initial releases in both series were announced in late October 1946. Although based in Baltimore, Arista favored nationally known over local artists. The first two releases in the short-lived jazz series, by the Don Byas Quartet with Errol Garner on piano, used masters that had been recorded a year earlier in New York. The country list was dominated by Dewey Price and his Carolina Hillbillies, who moved to Majestic records in early 1947. Arista last appeared in *Billboard's* label directory for May of that year.

The Oriole Corporation was bankrupt by 1949. Goods remaining in the Pennsylvania Avenue building were seized by its landlord and offered for sale on May 9, 1949. The bulk of the company's assets, including approximately 45,000 phonograph records of unspecified make, were sold at a receiver's sale on August 16, 1949.

ARISTOCRAT RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1950

Offices: 7508 Phillips Ave., Chicago (1947–7/1948); 5249 S. Cottage Grove Ave., Chicago (7/1948–8/1949); 2120 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago (from 1949)

Original-Master Source(s): Universal Recording (Chicago), other independent studios

Record Products: Aristocrat, The Aristocrat of Records

Launched on April 10, 1947, by husband-and-wife Charles and Evelyn Aron, in partnership with Fred and Mildred Brount and Art Spiegel. The partners reportedly played no significant role in the company's operations, which were managed largely by Charles Aron. *Cash Box* reported that Aron had attended the Coin Machine Convention in February 1947, soliciting input from jukebox operators that could be of use in setting up his new business.

Chicago bar owner Leonard Chess joined the company in September 1947, initially as a member of the sales staff. He invested heavily in Aristocrat, and by the late 1940s he had bought out all of the partners except the Arons. Contrary to some modern accounts, Chess' brother Phil was not initially involved with Aristocrat's operation, although he was also an investor.

Aristocrat's early catalog was a hodgepodge of pop, novelty, jazz, and rhythm-and-blues recordings. Talent scout Sammy Goldberg was responsible for many of Aristocrat's early signings in the latter category, including Jump Jackson, Clarence Samuels, Andrew Tibbs, and Sunnyland Slim. The latter brought Muddy Waters along as an accompanist, and Waters went on to have a minor hit for Aristocrat under his own name in 1948, with "I Can't Be Satisfied." At that time, Aristocrat still lacked focus concerning matters of artists and repertoire, but Waters' popularity, along with Leonard Chess' increasing control of the company, helped to establish Aristocrat as an emerging contender in the rhythm-and-blues market.

In June 1948, as it prepared to move to larger quarters, Aristocrat advertised that it was available to distribute other companies' race records in the Chicago area. On August 1, 1949, the Aristocrat offices were heavily damaged by a fire that resulted from a bungled burglary attempt, but operations were not interrupted. By then, the company reportedly was distributing eight small Chicago labels in addition to its own.

The Arons separated in 1948, leaving Phil Chess and Evelyn Aron to run the company. In May 1950, the Chess brothers acquired Evelyn Aron's remaining interest in Aristocrat, becoming the company's sole owners, and Phil (who had been managing Leonard's club) was brought in to assist with operations. One month later, the company was reorganized as the Chess Record Corporation, *q.v.* It was reported that Chess would continue to produce Aristocrat, in addition to its new label, but it was discontinued in early 1951.

ARKAY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: Colonial Building, Philadelphia

Record Products: Arkay

A short-lived jazz label launched by Al Rose in the autumn of 1947. Rose was a locally prominent Philadelphia concert promoter who headed the Jazz Festival Society and hosted "Journeys into Jazz" on Philadelphia radio station WFIL. Promotion was handled by the Frank Trevor Kessler Advertising Agency, the office of which served as Arkay's mailing address.

The Arkay label's launch was announced in October 1947 by *Billboard*, which reported that it would be devoted to "le jazz hot." The first release ("Chicken Shack Shuffle"/"Skiffle Blues," by Dan Burley and his Skiffle Boys) appeared later that month and received an enthusiastic review in the same publication. (Burley, in addition to being a jazz musician and composer, was at that time the managing editor of *The New York Age*, a major African-American newspaper.) In December 1947, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that Arkay had "taken the plunge" into the local talent pool with two sides featuring Philadelphia band leader and saxophonist Jimmy Oliver.

The Burley masters were acquired by Exclusive Records in mid-December 1948, and Arkay Records made its last appearance in the *Billboard* directory a month later. *Billboard* inexplicably reversed its positive assessment of "Chicken Shack Shuffle" at that time, dismissing the Exclusive reissue as "another ricky-tick side with Burley singing some nothing lyrics."

ARROW PHONOGRAPH CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1920

Offices: 1836 Euclid Ave., Cleveland; Newark, NJ

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (16–18 W. 39th St., New York)

Record Products: Arrow

Successor to the short-lived Liberty Phonograph Company (*q.v.*), which had offices at the same address but apparently never commenced production. Frederick W. Matthews served as studio manager and appears to have held a financial stake in the company. A former Indestructible Phonographic Record Company executive, he had also been associated with Liberty Phonograph.

Matthews assigned his U.S. patent #1,350,510 to Arrow Phonograph in 1920. It covered a form of reverse mastering involving the modulation of a raised ridge rather than a groove. The result was a directly produced stamper, eliminating one step in the matrix production process. In December 1919, a Liberty official had stated that its records were "not lateral 'cut' records, but are lateral records involving a new process and method of recording," suggesting that Matthews' process might have been used.

Arrow records, first advertised in February 1920, featured undistinguished pop and standard fare, primarily by the usual studio freelancers of the period. Arrow claimed to operate its own studio, which might have been the source of some masters that have not been traced to other studios. Some later Arrow releases used material from the Arto and Pathé catalogs. The records sold poorly, and Arrow appears to have suspended production by the early summer of 1920.

In July 1920, Matthews advertised that he had secured use of the Arrow studio for a limited time and was offering his services "for master record making or development work of any kind in the phonograph field," but nothing seems to have come of the venture.

ART FLORAL RECORD SHOP — See Joco Records

ART RECORDS MANUFACTURING COMPANY, LTD. — See American Recording & Transcription Service

ART SERVICE MUSIC / MUSICART RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949 – 1960s

Offices: 1715 Chestnut St., Philadelphia

Record Products (78s): Musicart

Owned and operated by songwriter and vocal instructor Grace Pauline Chew, who in late 1949 launched Musicart Records to promote her compositions.

Musicart records were being advertised by January 1950, and for a time they were distributed by Gotham Records. Most featured obscure local or regional performers, some of whom probably were not professionals. They included Leonard MacClain (*a.k.a.* Melody Mac) a Philadelphia radio and nightclub organist who performed on some early Musicart recordings. *Billboard* reviewed what was possibly the final Musicart release in February 1955, dismissing it as "an amateur-sounding effort." Undeterred, Chew went on to release the same sort of material on the Bingo and Silver Song labels, in 45-rpm format, in the later 1950s and early 1960s.

In 1953, Chew self-published an unintentionally comical pamphlet entitled "Know How—A Brochure of Information for the Singer Who Wants to Become Professional," which reflected her deluded view that she possessed vast experience and wide-ranging contacts in the music business. In recent years, Musicart recordings have appeared on various "World's Worst Records" websites and CD compilations, and author Daryll Bullock has devoted a full chapter to Chew in his book of that title.

ARTIST-BAND-COMPOSER COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949–1950

Offices: 1123 Van Ness Ave., Fresno, CA

Record Products: Academy

Academy was a short-lived California label featuring local country-and-western artists, including Dave Stogner's Western Rhythmairs and Rusty Newby's Saddle Serenaders. The records were on the market by June 1950, when Newby was advertised as an Academy recording artist. There is no connection to the contemporaneous Academy label of Annapolis, Maryland, a private label produced for the U.S. Naval Academy Band.

ARTIST RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1949

Offices: 8913 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles (1946–1947); 927 N. Sycamore, Los Angeles (1948–late 1949); 2534 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles (Coast Manufacturing Company, late 1949)

Record Products: Artist

Launched in November 1946 by conductors Nathaniel Shilkret and Werner Janssen, initially as an outlet for "Genesis Suite," an ambitious narrated composition comprising one movement each by Shilkret, Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schoenberg, Darius Milhaud, Ernst Toch, Alexandre Tansman, and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. The premiere performance of the work, by the Janssen Symphony Orchestra, was given at Los Angeles' Wilshire Ebell Theater on November 18, 1945, to mixed reviews.

Janssen and a hundred-piece orchestra recorded "Genesis Suite" at RCA's Hollywood studio on December 11, 1945. The narration by Edward Arnold, and choral portions under the direction of Hugo Strelitzer, were recorded separately and overdubbed. Made on speculation at Shilkret's and Janssen's expense (which according to Shilkret quickly topped \$20,000), the recording was rejected by RCA, leaving Shilkret and Janssen to finance its production as Artist Records' first release, in 1946. The claim in some modern works that

the album was a "strictly limited" edition are at odds with Shilkret's claim that it sold 10,000 copies within approximately the first year.

The earliest address given for Artist Records was also that of the Alco Recording Company, although a connection between the two has not been established. Shilkret withdrew from the venture following the release of "Genesis Suite," the profits from which he claimed were consumed by marketing costs. He purchased the masters from the company and attempted to interest Capitol in releasing a new version, initially without any success. Capitol finally purchased the masters in 1950 and hired pastor Ted Osborne (who asked to remain anonymous) to remake the spoken portions. Shilkret claimed that the remaining Artist pressings of the work were destroyed at that time.

Widely circulated claims that Artist Records was quickly dissolved due to unspecified "financial irregularities" are incorrect, although the company was reorganized following Shilkret's departure. Janssen remained involved, occasionally conducting on new recordings into the later 1940s. One of the label's most notable offerings was an album of excerpts from Alban Berg's "Wozzeck," featuring soprano Charlotte Boerner and an orchestra under Janssen's direction. Released during the summer of 1947, it was dubbed and reissued in late 1949 as Artist's first LP.

There was also an Artist pop series intended for the jukebox market, introduced in the autumn of 1946. Retailing for 79¢, the early releases featured pianist Harry Sukman in a mixture of pop tunes and classical lollipops adapted for jukebox audiences. Later releases included surplus Solar pressings by Dan Michaud's Orchestra, over which Artist labels were pasted.

Santa Ana-based Cormac Records acquired Artist Records and its masters, other than "Genesis Suite," through a stock merger in May 1949, at which time distribution was taken over by the Coast Manufacturing Company.

ARTISTIC RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. Late 1940s

Offices: 3316 San Marino, Los Angeles

Record Products: Artistic

Launched in 1946 by songwriter Toni Beaulieu (*a.k.a.* Leone Perry Allen), whose compositions were featured. Artistic's slogan was "Music That Affects." Beaulieu was listed as a record producer in the *Record Retailing Yearbook* for 1946, at which time he had yet to name his company. Artistic Records made a belated first appearance in *Billboard's* February 1947 label directory.

Artistic's most notable release was what it termed "a modern progressive Latin-American album" of Beaulieu's compositions, performed by flutist Esy Morales and his Latin-American Orchestra with Nestor Amaral and other vocalists. Released in May 1947, the album drew praise from a *Billboard* reviewer, who noted, "Miss Beaulieu proves herself as a capable tune smith [displaying] a well-grounded knowledge of the Latin modal scales with which she builds her appealing melodies." The reviewer's only criticism was the cover copy's "over-selling" and use of "super-superlatives."

Morales soon moved to Rainbow Records, after which little more was heard of Artistic. Beaulieu's company last appeared in *Billboard's* July 1950 label directory, by which time it probably was inactive. The Artistic name was later used by an unrelated Cobra subsidiary label.

ARTISTS MUSIC CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1949

Offices: 1695 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Checkered, Pop-U-Lar; Benick (distribution)

Artists Music Corporation produced several short-lived labels in the late 1940s, all apparently connected with country-music singer Bobby Gregory or members of his band. The Pop-U-Lar label was briefly mentioned in mid-October 1946 by *Billboard*, which reported that Gregory and his Cactus Cowboys had recorded four titles, with four more planned soon.

Nothing further was reported concerning the Pop-U-Lar, label, but in late October

Billboard reported that Gregory and his band had recorded four titles for a new label, Checkered Records. Its output included reissues of Gregory's two initial Pop-U-Lar releases. By June 1947 they being widely advertised by Artists Music as part of a "Sensational 2 for 1 Offer" that included the sheet music for all four titles, an autographed photo of Gregory, and prepaid shipping. The same advertisement touted unspecified "Western Records—Cowboy! Polka! Ballad!," without mentioning a label name.

Artists Music also distributed Benick, a short-lived label of unknown origin. Its first two releases, by Jack Peters (a member of Gregory's Cactus Cowboys), appeared in December 1946. Peters signed with Apollo Records a short time later, after which nothing further was reported concerning the Benick label. *Billboard* last listed the Artists Music Corporation, and its various labels, in 1949.

THE ARTO COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1919–1923

Offices: 29 Central Ave., West Orange, NJ; 1604 Broadway and 1658 Broadway, New York (sales)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — 235 W. 23rd St., New York (claimed; unconfirmed); other masters supplied by Emerson (1922); H & M Laboratories (1922); Jones Recording Laboratories (c. 1920–1921); Independent Recording Laboratory (1923); J. K. Reynard Studio (1921–1922); New York Recording Laboratories (1921–1923); Newark Recording Laboratory (1921–1922); Panhellenion Phonograph Company (1922); Strong Record Company (1923), possibly others

Pressing: Own plant — Central Ave., West Orange, NJ

Record Products: Arto; Ansonia [1], Arrow, Bell [1], Chappelle and Stinnette (C & S Record), Cleartone, Crown [1], Empire [1], Globe [1], Hytone, Meteor [1], Pan; Biondo Special, Earl Fuller, and other private labels; pressings for Nordskog, Sunshine [1]

The Arto Company (or ARTo, as it was styled) was the creation of inventor and entrepreneur George Howlett Davis. Davis founded the Standard Music Roll Company in 1907, basing his operation in Orange, New Jersey. He held numerous patents relating to player pianos, piano rolls, and roll-recording mechanisms, and was a pioneer in developing the hand-played roll, which he was determined to sell inexpensively.

Davis launched the Arto Company in 1915, as a subsidiary of Standard Music Roll. Initially, it was strictly a producer of piano rolls. Despite Davis' later claims to the contrary, the two companies were closely linked, financially as well as geographically. Standard Music Roll owned a controlling interest in the Arto Company, and Davis and other Standard Music Roll executives also held positions with Arto. The companies occupied the same offices and factory complex.

Standard first filed a trademark application for the Arto brand on April 5, 1916, claiming use on piano rolls (but not yet mentioning records) since May 10, 1915. However, the Arto Company was not formally incorporated until October 1919, as part of a conglomerate that included Standard Music Roll, Standard Press, Inc., and the Standard Paper Box & Tube Company. Officers included Davis (president) and former Columbia and Pathé executive Charles H. Mitchell (vice-president and superintendent). The company opened a New York office at 1604 Broadway, in quarters formerly occupied by Rector's (whose resident orchestra performed on the first two Arto releases).

Arto records' impending debut was first reported in April 1919, in *The Music Trades* and *The Talking Machine World*. There was initially some confusion over the format to be employed, with *TMW* stating (correctly) that the records would use the universal cut, but other publications reporting they would be standard lateral-cut discs. Ground was broken for an all-concrete pressing plant adjacent to the piano-roll factory, which was planned as a 16,000 square-foot structure comprising two wings, only one of which was ever built. Optimistic early reports projected a May or June 1919 plant opening, which was quickly pushed back to August. *The Music Trade Review* for August 23 characterized Davis' Arto record venture as "a partly materialized dream."

On May 24, 1919, *The Music Trades* claimed that Arto's studio was in operation and was preparing an "ample stock" of masters in advance of the label's launch. The article reported that Henry Burr had already recorded "A Perfect Day" for Arto. Company officials claimed to have equipped a recording studio in New York, at the same address occupied by the Electric Phonograph Corporation, suggesting (but by no means proving) that studio was the actual source of the earliest Arto masters.

A new Arto trademark filing, made by Standard Music Roll on October 21, 1919, erroneously claimed the Arto brand had been used on phonograph records since October 1 (the same day on which *The Music Trade Review* reported that record production would commence within the next thirty days). However, no Arto records were reported as having been seen until June 1920, when Davis exhibited "laboratory samples" to dealers at a Chicago piano trade show. Marketing efforts were stepped up as the new records' debut approached. The "Arto Girl" (modeled on Laurel Lee, a young vaudevillian billed as "The Chummy Chatterer") was introduced to the trade on May 1, 1920.

In June 1920, *The Talking Machine World* and sister-publication *Music Trade Review* reported that Arto records were finally in the pipeline. In the same month, TMW reported that Vitanola, a Chicago phonograph manufacturer, had gone into the record business. The article described in detail how Vitanola's H. F. Schiff had set up a New York studio and New Jersey pressing plant. The description clearly referred to Arto records and the Arto facilities without identifying them as such, suggesting that Vitanola might have been involved in some way in the launch of Arto's record division.

TMW reported that Davis had announced the initial Arto release would be in September, while MTR reported it would comprise "a long list of standard records" along with a dozen issues featuring current hit tunes. In the same month, the Arto Company began advance advertising for its records in the trade publications, while admitting the records were "not quite ready for distribution." In fact, work was still under way on the Arto pressing plant when these advertisements appeared, and the earliest pressings probably were made in John Fletcher's Operaphone plant, based upon their physical characteristics.

The initial Arto offerings were finally advertised in *Music Trade Review* on August 14, 1920, as September releases. They retailed for \$1 each and were targeted to the same market as Victor and Columbia, whose records retailed for 25¢ less. The labels claimed that the "Arto Universal Record Plays Well On ANY Talking Machine," and the earliest do indeed show J. K. Reynard's patent #1,283,903 (1919), which covered a form of the universal cut. However, Arto soon began commissioning its masters from studios that employed the standard lateral cut, and the Reynard patent notice was removed from the labels (or simply struck-through at first), although the "Universal" notation remained.

George W. Beynon joined the Arto staff as musical director in late 1920. A graduate of the Toronto Conservatory of Music, he had worked for six years as musical director for the Famous Players–Laskey Corporation, where he composed scores to accompany major feature films. Given Beynon's skills as an arranger and conductor, it seems likely that he was responsible for many of the Arto Dance Orchestra and Coreofonic Orchestra recordings that some discographers have attributed (without citing sources or evidence) to other directors.

Arto's general-catalog releases, numbered in the 9000s, had little to distinguish them from competing labels, relying largely on the usual New York studio singers and dance orchestras. The exceptions were its records for the race market, which it entered in the wake of Mamie Smith's success on Okeh. Lucille Hegamin's first sides ("The Jazz Me Blues"/"Everybody's Blues," announced to the trade in February 1921) attracted national attention. She was signed to an exclusive contract following an East Coast tour, and her follow-up, "Arkansas Blues," was a substantial hit that was licensed by numerous other labels, including Black Swan and Paramount. Its popularity probably helped Arto secure much-needed Southern and Midwestern distribution through the Artophone Company in St. Louis. Attempting to follow-up on Hegamin's success, the company signed Alice Leslie Carter in the summer of 1921, and employed James P. Johnson's band to accompany her, but she did not prove to be nearly as popular as Hegamin.

A red-label Arto series, numbered in the 3000s, offered the usual assortment of marches, hymns, old public-domain "standards," and classical and operatic snippets, many of them rendered by the usual studio performers of the day; and yet, some of these recordings had surprisingly long lives, even reappearing under new catalog numbers on the Emerson and Bell labels as late as 1927. The red-label series enjoyed a brief infusion of somewhat more stellar talent in early 1922, when Arto reissued some material from the defunct Critona label. Green labels were used for a few recordings of Irish material, which were also numbered within the 3000 series.

Although the Arto label itself does not appear to have sold particularly well, the company

did a good business producing subsidiary and client labels. The best-known was Bell, which was made for the W. T. Grant stores. Arto originated the brand, filing a trademark application on November 11, 1920, and claiming use of the Bell brand on piano rolls and records since October 1 of that year. However, it seems to have quickly turned the trademark over to the W. T. Grant Company, which one month later filed its own trademark application on the identical brand. Other Arto-produced labels included Ansonia, Cleartone, Crown, Hytone, and Globe. All used the same couplings, and in most cases the catalog numbers corresponded to Arto's in the last two or three digits. The company also produced a few private labels, including Earl Fuller, Biondo Special, and the C. F. Shallcross insurance-company specials.

For a time, the Arto plant pressed Nordskog records from masters Andre Nordskog shipped from Los Angeles. It was not a satisfactory arrangement, with masters reportedly damaged in shipment and long waits to receive the finished pressings back on the West Coast. The problems came to a head after the Arto plant failed to properly label some Kid Ory records that were intended for issue under the Spikes brothers' custom Sunshine label. By that time, however, Nordskog was setting up his own pressing plant in Los Angeles, and the Arto relationship was severed. A few Arto recordings appeared on the Nordskog label (pseudonymously, but with Arto's catalog number clearly visible in the wax), although there apparently was no reciprocal arrangement. Nordskog reportedly was unable to recover his masters from Arto following its bankruptcy.

Master numbers were never shown on Arto's labels and are only occasionally visible on the finished pressings. Many of the earliest Arto releases use masters that have been conclusively identified as the work of the Jones Recording Laboratories. However, some early issues use masters that do not physically resemble those of Jones or other known studios, leaving open the possibility that Arto did indeed operate its own studio, if only briefly.

By the start of 1921, Arto was regularly commissioning its masters from other studios, as revealed in the session logs of band contractor and talent agent Ed Kirkeby, who booked recording sessions for many artists in addition to his own California Ramblers. Kirkeby booked Arto sessions at numerous studios, including the Bell Recording Corporation, Criterion Laboratories, H & M Laboratories, Independent Recording Laboratory, J. K. Reynard Studio, New York Recording Laboratories, and Strong Record Company. At least one Arto recording (the Shallcross advertising talk) was made at the Newark Recording Laboratory (*q.v.*), a custom recording service that George Howlett Davis launched in late 1921. As far as can be determined, none of these studios allocated their own master numbers to commissioned Arto masters.

By mid-1921, the Arto Company was showing signs of financial weakness. On February 1 of that year, the company had been forced to cut its retail price to 85¢ from \$1, after Victor triggered an industry-wide price war. As 1921 progressed, the combination of a lingering recession, weak financial support from Standard Music Roll, poor distribution, and the introduction of competing, lower-priced labels took their toll on Arto.

The Arto Company was declared bankrupt in late 1921. On December 23, former U.S. Congressman Daniel F. Minahan was appointed as receiver, with instructions to continue operations, but pressure was mounting from investors to liquidate the company. In January 1922, the Music Publishers' Protective Association sued Arto for unpaid royalties. Davis attempted to distance Arto from Standard Music Roll, falsely stating that the latter had "no relation to the Arto Company, except to the extent of being one of its largest creditors." Later that year, Davis launched the Dur-A-Tone Record Company to manufacture flexible laminated discs, but nothing more was reported concerning the venture.

Arto-label releases became increasingly sporadic as 1922 progressed. The Arto label was discontinued by the end of that year, by which time Bell had taken its place as the company's primary product. The late 1922–early 1923 Arto-label issues listed in Brian Rust's various discographies, and derivative works, were never advertised on the Arto label, have not been reported in that form by reliable sources, and probably never were issued on that label, although all are known on Bell. In a 2000 conversation with the author, Rust admitted that he had never seen actual specimens of those supposed late Arto-label issues, nor knew of anyone who had, but rather had "posited" their existence based upon the confirmed Bell-label issues.

A receiver's sale of the Arto pressing plant, masters, trademarks, and other assets was scheduled for May 3, 1923, by order of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. However, the sale was rescheduled twice before finally taking place on May 15, 1924. Production of Bell records continued, under George Beynon's management, following Arto's demise (*see* Bell Record Company).

ARTS RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1930s – c. 1947

Offices: 29 W. 57th St., New York

Record Products: Masters for Kismet, probably others; radio transcriptions; custom recordings

Primarily a transcription-production company, Arts Recording was owned by John R. Cieferskor. Its studio recorded masters for the Kismet label (including its popular series by the Kornienko Ensemble) and possibly other small independent labels.

ARVID RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 200 E. 3rd St., Mt. Vernon, NY

Record Products: Arvid

Launched in March 1946 by Thomas F. Hanlon to supply short-run pressings of recordings by artists he characterized as "local in character but popular in special areas." Hanlon solicited acetates from radio stations, independent recording studios, and the artists themselves, who he would charge to transfer the recordings to conventional masters for release under the Arvid label. The minimum order initially was fifty discs, but by early 1947 the company was advertising that it would accept orders of any size. Several Arvid releases were advertised during 1946, but the company was last mentioned by *Billboard* in February 1947.

ASA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 70 Pine St., New York

Record Products: ASA

A short-lived rhythm-and-blues label launched by Arthur Seger in early 1950. Seger was present at the National Association of Music Merchants' convention in July 1950, where he claimed to have secured the services of several small distributors.

The first ASA release (Ida James' "Rough and Ready Man" / "Woogie Woo," issued under the pseudonym "Cousin Ida") was reviewed in late April 1950 by *Cash Box*, which predicted it "should sit well with the hep crowd." In addition to James, ASA's artist roster included Freddy Washington (whose combo provided the backing on some vocal sides), Little Joe Medlin, and the Dayton-Aires.

ASA's last confirmed release was a departure, two straightforward Christmas carols by Vic Bellamy and the Celestial Strings. Its catalog number suggests the start of a new pop series. However, ASA Records last appeared in *Billboard*'s December 1950 directory. Arthur Seger resurfaced in 1952, when he and Irving Perlin launched Seger Records.

ASCH RECORDING STUDIOS / ASCH RECORD COMPANY / ASCH RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1940 – 1946

Offices: 117 W. 46th St., New York; 27 Union Square West, New York (Stinson branch office)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above location

Pressing: Scranton Record Company

Record Products: Asch, Asch Recording Studios, Asch-Stinson, custom recordings, transcriptions

Born in Poland in 1905, Moses (Moe) Asch came to the United States while a child, trained in radio technology at the Elektronische Hochschule in Germany during the early 1920s, then settled permanently in the U.S. in 1925. By 1930, he was working as a recording engineer, along with J. G. Byers, at Metropolitan Studios (Fort Lee, New Jersey), a producer of sound films. He launched Radio Laboratories, in partnership with Harry Mearns, on

May 23, 1938. The company specialized in the installation of broadcasting equipment and reportedly offered custom-recording services to radio stations on a small scale.

Asch Recording Laboratories, for which Asch filed a business certificate in New York on April 15, 1940, offered a wider range of recording and program-production services than its predecessor. An early advertisement boasted, "We do everything from the writing of the script, direction of dialogue, music and sound effects, to the distribution of your records." There was no indication that Asch was contemplating production of records for the consumer market until later in the year, when he launched Asch Records on a minuscule scale.

The earliest commercial releases, on the Asch Recording Laboratories label, included a short-lived classical and operatic series. Asch soon adopted a policy of selling his records only in albums sets and began specializing in jazz, blues, folk music, and politically oriented material with a leftist slant. By 1944 he had assembled an impressive artist roster that included Woody Guthrie, Josh White, Leadbelly, Meade (Lux) Lewis, and Mary Lou Williams. In addition to his own recordings, Asch occasionally reissued material he acquired from outside sources, including a syndicator that handled masters from Eli Oberstein's defunct United States Record Corporation.

In 1942, unable to obtain a sufficient wartime ration of shellac to keep his company operating, Asch entered into a production and distribution partnership with Herbert Harris and Irving Prosky of the Stinson Trading Company, manufacturers of Stinson Records. The relationship was contentious from the start, and Asch struggled to maintain control of his label, which was eventually recast as Asch-Stinson. At one point he advised the Scranton Record Company (which was pressing his records), "For the past three years the Asch Recording Studios has worked as an independent organization and we want to maintain that status even though we may from time to time change our distributorship set up." To further complicate matters, in 1944 Asch agreed to take over the production and distribution of Signature records in what amounted to a ploy by Signature owner Bob Thiele to keep Signature afloat by tapping access to Asch's shellac ration. Thiele later demanded that Asch account for the exact locations of all of the Signature masters, which apparently had been dispersed among several plants. Once rationing was lifted, Thiele severed the relationship.

By the end of 1945, Asch had stopped releasing new material on his label. On December 31, *Billboard* reported that he had split with the Stinson Trading Company (which would still be allowed to distribute Asch records for a time) and was planning to launch an entirely new venture, to be called the Disc Company of America (*q.v.*).

Stinson Trading continued to press and sell Asch-label recordings after the original licensing term had expired, setting off a legal battle during which the title to Asch's masters became increasingly muddled. Asch added considerably to the confusion by repeatedly ignoring requests from Capitol Records (which had taken over the Scranton Record Company plant) to identify which masters were his and which were Stinson's. The dispute was finally resolved on January 7, 1947, when a separation agreement was reached between Asch and Herbert Harris (Irving Prosky having departed Stinson by then). Asch's masters were ruled to be his property, and Stinson was forbidden to use Asch's name after March 1947. However, ambiguities in the agreement resulted in an even longer-running dispute over the rightful ownership of certain Asch masters that Stinson continued to use, even reissuing some on Stinson LPs in the early 1950s. Asch periodically threatened to sue but never acted on his threat.

ASLLAN, AYDIN (Discs)

**Balkan Phonograph Record Company / Metropolitan Phonograph Records Company /
Me Re Record Company /**

Record Production: c. Early 1940s

Offices: 42 Rivington St., New York (Balkan Phonograph Company / Balkan Record Store)

Record Products: Metropolitan [2] (Metropolitan Phonograph Records), Me Re, Balkan [1]

A producer of records for the Armenian, Greek, Turkish, and Sephardic immigrant markets (the latter termed "Spanish Oriental" on the labels). According to one anecdotal account, the Me Re Record Company was founded c. 1940 by Asllan and violinist Nick Doneff.

However, based upon catalog numbers and the appearance of some later Balkan Phonograph Record masters on Me Re, it appears that Metropolitan Phonograph Records was the earlier label, with Me Re being a later shortening of the Metropolitan Record name.

Asllan and Doneff split in the early 1940s, with Doneff going on to launch Kaliphon Phonograph Records (*q.v.*), which specialized in the same sort of material. Asllan launched the Balkan Phonograph Record Company after the split. His Balkan records were advertised as early as January 1943 and used a mixture of domestic and imported masters, the latter usually identified as such on the labels. They were sold by the Balkan Phonograph Store in New York and, according to a catalogue, could be had "at all Oriental music stores in the U.S.A." There was no connection to the Chicago-based Balkan Record Company, *q.v.*

ASSOCIATED CINEMA STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1936 – 1939

Offices: 1357 N. Gordon St., Los Angeles; 1001 Russ Building, San Francisco (office only)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above location

Pressing: Local independent plant(s)

Record Products: Masters for small independent labels; radio transcriptions, custom and personal recordings

Incorporated on February 26, 1936, by Mark L. Gerstle, who had purchased Freeman Lang Enterprises (a West Coast custom recording operation) eight days earlier. Gerstle, a San Francisco capitalist who owned The Emporium department store, reportedly was more interested in sailing than in making records, so he entrusted management of the Los Angeles studio largely to former Freeman Lang vice-president Frank W. Purkett.

Like its predecessor, Associated Cinema catered to local broadcasters and movie studios, specializing in sound-on-film recording, program development and production, and radio transcriptions. For a time, the company leased studio space in its Los Angeles building to radio station KMTR. It also maintained a fleet of sound trucks for on-location recording that were utilized by George Fox Productions and other motion picture producers. Master-processing and pressing services were contracted to the American Record Corporation of California, *q.v.*

Associated Cinema Studios did not produce its own labels for the consumer market, but it occasionally recorded for local independent record companies. Among its commercial clients were several loosely affiliated Los Angeles and San Francisco labels that specialized in mildly risqué "party" records, including Hollywood Hot Shots, Hot Shots from Hollywood, Racy Records, and Torchies from Hollywood, which often shared masters and usually pressed at the Allied Record Manufacturing plant.

Associated Cinema's studios underwent extensive renovation in January 1938, after KMTR (which later launched its own recording division) vacated their lease. On January 10, 1939, Gerstle petitioned for bankruptcy.

ASSOCIATED DISTRIBUTORS, INC. — See Dixie Records

ASSOCIATED MUSIC PUBLISHERS RECORDING STUDIOS — See Muzak, Inc.

ASSOCIATED STUDIOS BROADCASTING AND RECORDING (Discs)

Record Production: 1940s

Offices: Fair Oaks, Pasadena, CA

Record Products: Masters for Fargo and probably others; customs recordings, radio transcriptions

Primarily a supplier of radio programming and transcriptions, Associated Studios produced no commercial label of its own. In the mid-to-late 1940s it recorded masters for Fargo and probably other small local labels.

ATHENIAN RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 647 Guille St., Athens, TN

Record Products: Athenian

A short-lived country-and-western label of unknown ownership. Its first release (Glen Thompson's "Lover's Lane"/"Troubles Keep Hanging Around My Door") was advertised in late November 1950, then was relisted as a new release in March 1951 along with Athenian's second offering, by Bill Carlisle. Known specimens are labeled "Hillbilly Series," although Athenian does not appear to have recorded any other sort of material. A fourth and possibly final release, by Thompson, was later reissued on Clifford Spurlock's Acme label. The Athenian name was also used for an unrelated Greek-music label of uncertain period and origin.

ATLANTIC RECORDING CORPORATION / ATLANTIC RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1947

Offices: Ritz Hotel, New York (1947); Jefferson Hotel, 56th St., New York (1947–1948); 301 W. 54th St., New York (11/1948–early 1950s); 356 W. 56th St., New York (early–mid-1950s); 157 W. 57th St., New York (main office from 1956)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios; Apex Recording Studios, numerous other independent studios

Record Products (78s): Atlantic, Atco; Plaza (subsidiary); Atlantic Records for Children (children's)

One of the most successful independent labels of the post–World War II period, Atlantic Records was launched in September 1947 by Ahmet Ertegun (vice-president in charge of artists and repertoire, production and promotion) and Herb Abramson (president). Ertegun, the son of a Turkish ambassador to the United States, had worked briefly with brother Nesuhi as a partner in the short-lived Crescent Music Corporation, *q.v.* Abramson was a dentist and did not give up his practice until December 1950, by which time Atlantic required his full attention. The two had previously worked together at Quality Records, the first producer of Jubilee records. Ertegun recalled, "We started Atlantic simply because we wanted to sign a few artists whose music we liked, and make the kind of records that we would want to buy."

The Atlantic Recording Corporation was formally incorporated in October 1947. Its initial funding was provided largely by Dr. Vahdi Sabit, the Ertegun family's dentist, who allegedly mortgaged his house to raise the \$10,000 investment. The company was badly under-capitalized at the start, and it experienced chronic cash-flow problems during its early years. Thomas Dowd served as Atlantic's first recording engineer, initially working as a freelancer before signing on as a full-time staff engineer and producer. A publishing affiliate, Progressive Music, was set up under the management of Abramson's wife, Miriam. Ertegun, disguised as "A. Nugetre," composed some of the songs used on early Atlantic releases.

The earliest recording sessions for what would become Atlantic were by Terry Allen (on an unknown date, probably during the summer of 1947) and the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra (on August 14, 1947), prior to the company's incorporation. No further recording was done until November–December 1947, when there was a brief burst of activity in advance of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban. The initial Atlantic releases went on sale on January 26, 1948, with distribution concentrated in the New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, areas. By that summer, the company had secured distributors in a dozen major cities but was still lacking coverage in the South, Southwest, and Northwest.

Atlantic struggled to find material it could release legally during the AFM ban. In April 1948, the company purchased some pre-ban recording by Boyd Raeburn's Orchestra, and that autumn it signed composer-arranger Vernon Duke to oversee a new series devoted to what were termed "undeservedly neglected classical works." The recordings were to be commissioned from Polydor in France, bypassing any entanglement with the AFM, and were to be offered at reduced prices to members of the Society for Forgotten Music before being released to the general public. However, the project appears to have been abandoned after the AFM ban was lifted at year's end.

Atlantic's early catalog consisted largely of jazz, with a smattering of pop, country-and-western, spoken-word, and miscellaneous material. When recording activities resumed following the AFM ban, Ertegun and Abramson began to recruit new talent in earnest and turned their attention to the rhythm-and-blues market in particular. The label's first significant hit in that genre, released in March 1949 and eventually reaching #2 on *Billboard's* rhythm-and-blues chart, was a remake of Stick McGhee's "Drinkin' Wine, Spo-Dee-o-Dee."

In June 1949, Atlantic made its first significant move into the country-and-western market with the purchase of twenty masters from DC Records. In September, Atlantic offered a countrified version of "Drinkin' Wine, Spo-Dee-o-Dee" by Loy Gordon and his Pleasant Valley Boys and released an album of square-dance tunes by Burt Hilber, but the company's interest in country music soon waned.

Plaza, a short-lived jazz and blues subsidiary, was launched in September 1949, with initial releases listed in mid-October. Operating at the same address as Atlantic, Plaza employed its own artists and distributors. Its roster included the Ralph Williams Trio, Toni Mayo, and Sister Barbara Mayo, none of whom had recorded previously. The label, with received little marketing support or press coverage, is not known to have survived beyond the early 1950s.

Atlantic LPs were introduced in late April 1949. The debut LP album (also issued on 78s) was "This Is My Beloved." An uncharacteristic choice for Atlantic, it consisted of a collection of Walter Benton's poems read by actor John Dall, with "symphonic" accompaniment composed and conducted by Vernon Duke. Introduction of 45s, which was delayed until January 1951, began with Joe Morris' "Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere." Miriam Abramson recalled that Atlantic 45s first outsold 78s in 1956, accounting for 75% of that year's singles sales. Atlantic continued to press selected titles in 78-rpm format, in ever-decreasing quantities, into early 1960.

Atlantic's output and sales increased dramatically in the late 1940s and early 1950s as Ertegun and Abramson continued to sign popular rhythm-and-blues artists, including Ruth Brown, the Clovers, Joe Turner, Ray Charles, and the Drifters. Abramson was drafted in February 1953, at which time producer Jerry Wexler (who has been widely credited with coining the term "rhythm and blues" in the 1940s) was brought in as a vice-president, taking over many of Abramson's duties. Wexler was largely responsible for steering Atlantic into the emerging rock-and-roll market, although he lost the bidding war for Elvis Presley to RCA Victor. The label diversified further in early 1955, when Ertegun's brother Nesuhi was hired to rebuild Atlantic's rather neglected jazz catalog.

In 1953 Atlantic was the first label to produce stereophonic recordings for the consumer market, using a binaural recording system that employed a separate groove for each channel. Requiring a special player fitted with a dual-stylus cartridge, the system was a commercial failure. However, many of the early binaural recordings were later reprocessed and reissued in standard stereophonic format. The company continued to be an innovator in stereophonic recording, and its New York studio reportedly was the first in the U.S. to employ Ampex multi-track recorders.

Abramson returned to Atlantic following his discharge in 1955 to find Wexler and the Erteguns fully in control of the company. Although still holding the title of president, Abramson's new responsibilities were largely limited to managing Atco, a new and seemingly redundant subsidiary label that initially did not perform as well as expected. In addition, Abramson's personal relationships with Wexler and Nesuhi Ertegun were deteriorating. He finally departed Atlantic in December 1958, after being bought out by Nesuhi Ertegun and Miriam Bienstock (*née* Abramson) for \$300,000. Ahmet Ertegun assumed Abramson's position as president.

Atlantic's later history is beyond the scope of this work. The company became a wholly owned subsidiary of Warner Brothers–Seven Arts group in 1967, and in 2004 it was spun off as a part of the Atlantic Records Group within the Warner Music Group, its current owner.

ATLAS RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1948

Offices: 8848 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood (1944–late 1945); 6263 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood (from late 1945); 5901 Lindenhurst Ave., Los Angeles (distribution)

Original-Master Source(s): C. P. MacGregor, other independent studios

Record Products: Atlas

Founded in October 1944 by Robert Scherman, in partnership with Arthur N. (Art) Rupe (*née* Goldberg). Atlas was a reorganization of the Premier Record Company (*q.v.*), which Scherman had launched a year earlier. Scherman served as president, Gus Alberts as vice-president. The new operation remained at Premier Records' Sunset Boulevard address during its first two years of operation.

Atlas' slogan was "The World on Records," which was not reflected in its generally pop-oriented catalog. The first releases, advertised in October 1944, comprised some new recordings intermixed with reissues from the Premier catalog. Among the latter were several sides by the Nat (King) Cole Trio, a group with which Scherman worked closely. Atlas also released the first commercial recordings by Frankie Laine, who in 1947 was advertised as the company's "Million \$ Discovery — Nation's Fastest Rising Star." While still under contract to Atlas, Laine signed with Mercury Records, which allowed him to continue recording for Atlas for the duration of his contract. In October 1945, Atlas signed the popular Four Vagabonds away from Bluebird, but they moved on after a single release.

Retailing for 65¢ (excepting the Cole discs, which sold for a dime more), Atlas records were priced below many of the other independent brands. Distribution was handled by the affiliated Atlas Records & Distributing Company. The last new releases appeared in early 1948, by which time Scherman had accepted a recording director's position with King Records. He later launched several other record companies, beginning with Webster (1949) and Skylark (1951). Later operations using the Atlas name, based in Pittsburgh and New York, are unrelated to this company.

ATOM RECORD COMPANY

This company was listed in the at the same address as Blue Label Records in the *Record Retailing Yearbook* for 1946, a year before Blue Label is known to have commenced operations. Nothing has been discovered concerning its connection, if any, to Blue Label. It has been suggested that the name was changed from Atom to Blue Label to avoid conflict with the Atomic Record Company, which was also operating in Los Angeles at the time, but documentary evidence is lacking.

ATOMIC RECORD COMPANY / ATOMIC, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1955

Offices: 5634 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles (1945–1950); 1522 N. Mariposa, Hollywood, CA (1950–1952)

Original-Master Source(s): Radio Recorders, other independent studios

Record Products: Atomic

Launched by band leaders Lyle Griffin (president) and Johnny Richards (musical director) in late 1945. Chester Haskins served as the company's first sales manager. Atomic began advertising in *Billboard* in mid-January 1946, by which time the records were being distributed locally through K & M Distributors in Los Angeles. Standard red-label releases retailed for 75¢, while the All Star Swing Series retailed for \$1.

The earliest Atomic masters were made in Radio Recorders' Hollywood studio. The label initially specialized in jazz, with a roster that included Griffin's band, the Slim Gaillard Quartet, Barney Kessell's All Stars, Dodo Marmarosa's Trio, and Ray Linn's Hollywood Swing Stars. In March 1946, Atomic signed its first country-and-western act, Sons of the Saddle. The label had minor hits with several atomic-themed songs, including "Atom Buster" and "Atomic Cocktail."

Atomic was reorganized in January 1947, at which time Lyle Griffin left the company to launch the Independent Record Releasing Association and was replaced by A. W. Lundgren. Production dwindled in the later 1940s, and the last Atomic release appeared

in early 1952. The Atomic name was later used for unrelated labels in Salt Lake City (1955), New York (1957), and elsewhere. Griffin resurfaced in 1956 with a new venture, Hip Records.

ATWOOD, HARRY G. (Discs)

Atwood-Herscher Publications / Harry G. Atwood Enterprises / Bell Song Publishing Company / Reina Record Company

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1953

Offices: 6132 De Longpre Ave., Hollywood, CA

Original-Master Source(s): International Artist Studio (Los Angeles), probably other independent studios

Record Products (78): Enterprise [2], Opal, Reina, Waldorf

Atwood-Herscher Publications (headed by Harry G. Atwood and J. Louis Herscher) controlled several small music-publishing imprints, including Herscher's Bell Song Publishing Company and the Keynote Music Company. In the early 1950s, they all were consolidated as a subsidiary of Harry G. Atwood Enterprises.

The Enterprise label (unrelated to Enterprise Records' label of the same name) was credited to Harry G. Atwood Enterprises, an Atwood-Herscher subsidiary. Atwood, on his own or in partnership with Herscher, also produced the short-lived Opal, Reina, and Waldorf labels during the period covered by this work, all of which shared the same mailing address as the publishing business. The Reina Record Company was launched in January 1948. Affiliated with Bell Song Publishing, it produced three releases by Benny Carter's Orchestra before disappearing at the end of the year. Reina was last listed in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory; its brief reappearance in the March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Reina name was reused in the mid-1950s for an unrelated label credited to Marlow Productions.

Reina was superseded by Opal Records in early 1949. Initially managed by Herscher, it was an undistinguished pop label that plugged Atwood-Herscher songs and managed to survive through at least 1953. Waldorf, credited to Bell Music Publishing, also appeared in the late 1940s.

AUBURN BUTTON WORKS

Founded as Woodruff's Button Factory in 1876 by John Hermon Woodruff, the Auburn Button Works made a few test pressings for Emile Berliner in the 1890s and later pressed 7" and 9" brown-shellac Zonophone discs for the Universal Talking Machine Company. After Auburn lost the Zonophone account to Duranoid in late 1904, John Woodruff's son Carlton created the International Record Company (*q.v.*) as a recording subsidiary. With a widely diversified product line, Auburn Button survived IRC's forced closure in 1907. In November 1924, the pressing plant was purchased by the Scranton Button Company, from which it passed to the newly formed American Record Corporation in 1929. Auburn's separate plastics-molding operation continued to operate, and in 1949 the subsidiary Woodruff Company was launched to expand the product line. Reorganized as Auburn Plastics, Inc., on July 1, 1957, the company was inactive for many years before being dissolved by proclamation on March 24, 1993.

AUDEON CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1930s

Offices: Montclair, NJ

Record Products: Masters for American Institute of Music, Arts and Drama, possibly other small independent labels.

The Audeon Corporation was a manufacturer of turntables and other electronics equipment in the 1930s, and was only marginally involved in commercial record production. It is known to have recorded several masters for the American Institute of Music-Arts and Drama's label.

AUDIENCE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 230 Park Ave., New York

Record Products: Top Ten

A cooperative venture in which radio stars Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll ("Amos 'n' Andy"), Jack Benny, Edgar Bergen, George Burns and Gracie Allen, Eddie Cantor, James and Marion Jordan ("Fibber McGee and Molly"), and Edward F. Gardner were investors. Gardner was a veteran radio producer-director, writer, and actor, and creator of the popular "Duffy's Tavern" radio series. He filed for copyright on the Top Ten label in 1947 and was the company's nominal manager. H. Paul Warwick, of the Warwick & Legler Advertising Agency, raised \$80,000 in private funding for Audience Records, and served as its president.

Audience Records' launch was widely reported in August 1946. Its plan was to re-create popular radio shows on records, making new recordings with a studio audience rather than dubbing from air-checks of actual broadcasts. *Billboard* expressed some concerns over the high costs inherent in such a plan.

Little more was heard of the venture until early 1947, when C. P. (Pete) Jaeger joined the Audience staff. An ABC Blue Network sales manager, he had launched the short-lived Souvenir Records Company a year earlier. In March, *Billboard* reported that Apollo Records would press and distribute the discs (although Monitor Sales rather than Apollo ultimately handled distribution), with delivery scheduled for early summer. The initial run was estimated at a half-million copies, which the report suggested was far in excess of Apollo's capacity. *Billboard* at first reported that the recordings would be made from actual broadcasts, then corrected itself the following month, confirming that they would be studio re-creations, as originally planned.

In early April, several newspapers reported the records would be available "within a few day," but there was no formal announcement until June 7, when *Billboard* reported the release of seven multi-disc albums on the Top Ten label. The recordings were by Audience's celebrity investors, with one album allocated to each of their shows. It proved to be a case of poor timing, with *Billboard* reporting that initial sales were disappointing because many of the label's stars were off the air for the summer and not available to promote the new albums. Some publications did not review the records until the following autumn. The company also lost valuable exposure by prohibiting the use of its records on jukeboxes and radio broadcasts, necessitated in part by contractual considerations.

The records had some detractors. Critic Paul Gross complained that some of the voices did not sound the same as those on the radio, although he predicted the label would be a success if that problem could be remedied. Another critic opined that after the first two or three playing, the records "begin to wear on the ears."

Rumors that Fred Allen and other stars would also invest in Audience appeared in *The Chicago Tribune* and other newspapers in the late summer of 1947, but no follow-up reports have been found to suggest that they did so. Although several of albums reportedly sold well, no further releases were announced, and Audience appears to have shut down operations in 1948.

AUDIO COMPANY OF AMERICA / ACA RECORDING STUDIOS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1982

Office and Master Source(s): 612 Westheimer Ave., Houston (1949); 1017 Westheimer Ave. (1950s–1960s); 5418 Grape St., 8208 Westpark Dr., Houston (1970s)

Record Products: ACA; masters for numerous commercial labels; transcriptions; custom recordings

Owned and originally managed by sound engineer William Dwight (Bill) Holford. The studio was in use as early as 1949, although ACA's master books, which are housed in the Texas Music Collection at the University of Houston, begin in 1950. At least one modern work confuses Holford's company with Audiophile Custom Associates, an unrelated custom-recording operation that is beyond the scope of this work.

Holford briefly produced his own ACA label in 78- and 45-rpm formats, with labels bearing the slogan, "Where Quality Speaks," but most of his work was done for other companies. His studio quickly established a reputation for producing high-quality

masters. It was booked by numerous small independent labels during the 1950s, including Ayo, Eddie's, FBC, Freedom, Lucky 7, Macy's, Mercer, Opera, Peacock, Royalty, and Starday. He also hosted occasional sessions for Columbia, M-G-M, RCA Victor, and other major labels.

On February 20, 1961, the company name was changed to ACA Recording Studios, Inc., with Holford listed as its registered agent. It continued to operate until 1982, under various managers.

GENE AUSTIN RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: Atlanta, GA; Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Austin

Launched in 1947 by veteran crooner Gene Austin, to market his own recordings. The records, most of which were updated versions of Austin's 1920s hits, are notable primarily for Les Paul's electric-guitar accompaniments, with one anomalous issue instead employing guitarist Otto (Coco) Heimel. Five releases are known to have appeared on the Austin label, bearing different catalog numbers on each side, and alternate versions and couplings exist for several. Four of the discs could also be purchased as an album set. The records were handled by several small distributors and could also be purchased by mail order.

Austin offered his masters, including some unissued recordings, to Universal Records (Chicago) in January 1948. After an unsuccessful attempt by Capitol Records to intervene, the sale was finalized in March, at which time Austin was also awarded a two-year Universal recording contract. Trade-press reports place the number of Austin Record Company masters at between thirty (*Billboard*) and fifty (*Down Beat*), but Universal's Bill Putnam recalled that the actual number was approximately twenty. Several were released on the Universal and Universal Double Feature labels beginning in mid-1948, but many others went unused.

AUTOGRAPH RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: 200 W. 57th St., New York

Pressing: Bard Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Autograph [3]

A short-lived venture launched in the autumn of 1949 by Albert Morehead. George Bard, who served as Autograph's treasurer, also owned the Bard Record Manufacturing Company (Pelham, New York), an independent pressing plant. Morehead's version of Autograph was unrelated to the Associated Distributors' label of the same name (which was produced during the same period), or to any of the earlier or later Autograph labels.

Autograph's initial releases, announced in October 1949, featured nightclub singer Martha Lou Harp, who was performing at New York's Cafe Society and on the "Strictly from Dixie" broadcasts on radio station WJZ at the time. Subsequent releases were devoted to pop and countrified-pop fare. Autograph appears to have suspended operations during the summer of 1950.

AUTO-PHOTO RECORD COMPANY — See CA-Song Record Company

AVALON RECORDING COMPANY / AVALON RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – c. 1949

Offices: 117 W. 48th St., New York; unknown San Francisco address

Original--Master Source(s): Own studios

Record Products: Avalon

Launched in 1944 by songwriters Raymond A. Sterling (president and treasurer) and Edith Sterling (vice-president and secretary), owners of the New York-based Sterling Music Publishing Company. Enoch Light served as Avalon's first musical director. New York-area distribution was handled by the Continental Record Distribution Company.

Avalon's first two releases appeared in the early November 1944 advance lists. Enoch

Light, and various groups under his direction, were featured on many of Avalon's early offerings. The company was last listed in *Billboard*'s 1949 annual directory, at its New York address on 48th Street. It later resurfaced at an unknown address in San Francisco, using the original label design but crediting the Bird House of Music. The Avalon name was later used for what has been confirmed as an unrelated New York label.

AVON RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 16605 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Avon

A short-lived pop label launched in the spring or summer of 1947, of unknown ownership. The company's first recording session, with singer David Street, was held in June, and *Billboard* gave his first release a favorable review later that month. However, the trade papers reported nothing concerning the company. It was last listed in *Billboard*'s December 1948 directory, after an absence of eleven months, but probably was inactive by then. The Avon name was used for several unrelated labels beginning in the 1950s.

AYO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: 1913 Leland Ave., Houston

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America

Record Products: Ayo

Launched in August or early September 1949 by Sam Ayo, the owner of a Houston jukebox business and part-owner of the R & A Distributing Company, National Music Distributors, and Standard Music Distributors. Ayo Records shared the latter's office address.

Ayo records were marketed primarily to jukebox operators. Early releases featured the Richard Prine Orchestra (which had a minor regional hit for Ayo with "Rag Mop") and former Decca country-and-western singer Cliff Bruner. In April 1950, *Billboard* reported that Sam Ayo had just completed a scouting trip through Missouri in anticipation of expanding his artist roster. In the same month, he assumed full ownership of National Music Distributors, and he appears to have discontinued his label a short time later.

— B —

B. J. EXPLOITATION COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1952

Office and Master Source(s): 1522 E. Jefferson, Detroit

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Dansrite

Headed by Jack Paster, the B. J. Exploitation Company produced Dansrite records for several years. Paster was making recordings on speculation by November 1949, when he solicited bids on two of his masters. Dansrite's launch was announced in a *Billboard* blurb on February 25, 1950, after which little more was heard of the label. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

BACCHANAL RECORDINGS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1954

Offices: 103 E. 125th St., New York

Record Products: Bacchanal, Harlem [3]

A calypso label of unknown ownership, launched in early 1950 and distributed by Raymar Sales (Jamaica, New York). Bacchanal was in operation by July 1950, when it was listed in *Billboard*'s NAMM Trade Show and Convention directory. There is no known connection to an obscure Chicago company of the same name.

Bacchanal's initial releases appeared in the May 1950 advance lists, aside from which the label received virtually no trade-press coverage or national marketing support. Its

artist roster included the Calypso Troubadours, Sam Manning, and Lloyd Thomas (*a.k.a.* The Growler). The company also produced a short-lived version of the Harlem label, about which little is known. It was unrelated to the Harlem labels produced earlier and later by Mayo Williams and Morton (Morty) Shad, respectively.

The company released at least two Bacchanal LPs, compiled from previously released 78s, in 1952. It last appeared in *Billboard's* April 1954 label directory.

BACHMAN STUDIO (Discs)

Record Production: 1940s

Offices: 1244 W. Carmen Ave., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Masters for Gold Seal, Miracle, Sunbeam, and possibly other local independent labels; transcriptions and special-use recordings

A custom recording service operated by Myron Bachman from his home on Carmen Avenue in Chicago. Built in 1889, the structure was drastically remodeled by architect Bruce Goff in 1947 to accommodate living quarters and an expanded studio. Bachman rarely advertised, and aside from producing masters for several small independent labels in the 1940s, little is known about his operation.

BACIGALUPI, PETER (& SON) (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1894 – Early 1900s

Offices: 946 Market St., San Francisco (1894–1895); 933 Market St., San Francisco (1896–10/1898); 950–952 Market St., San Francisco (10–11/1898); 786–788 Mission St., San Francisco (1899–1906); 1113–1115 Fillmore St., San Francisco (1906–6/1911); Douglas Building (908 Market St.), San Francisco (from 7/1911)

Record Products: Cylinders

The son of Italian immigrants, Peter Bacigalupi moved from New York to California in or around 1876. He later resided for a time in Peru, where he amassed a fortune as an importer and seller of American goods. He returned to California in late 1893 and in 1894 opened the Bacigalupi Phonograph Arcade in San Francisco, which added the Edison Kinetoscope to its list of attractions in 1895.

Bacigalupi's first documented recordings were made in 1894 at the California Midwinter International Exposition in San Francisco, where he held the phonograph concession. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that Bacigalupi was recording "all the vocal and instrumental noises he can get at the fair," which he intended to exhibit at the South American Exposition in Santiago, Chile.

Bacigalupi operated an Edison sales agency in San Francisco as early as 1895, handling phonographs, cylinders, and Kinetoscopes. He is known to have made original recordings for entertainment purposes in the late 1890s and early 1900s, although these probably were intended for use on coin-operated machines (which comprised a substantial and lucrative part of his business), rather than for sale to the general public. They include the first recordings by tenor Billy Murray, according to Murray's recollections. No specimens of Murray's Bacigalupi cylinders have been reliably reported, which would be consistent with their use on coin-operated machines (such records generally having been shaved-down and the blanks reused once they were no longer generating income).

In October 1898, Bacigalupi opened new sales rooms at 950–953 Market Street. Said to be the finest such facilities west of the Rocky Mountains, they were destroyed by fire on November 23. Bacigalupi relocated to Mission Street, where he was back in operation by early 1899. In November of that year, *The Phonoscope* reported that his company was doing a good business exporting to Canada, Mexico, South America, Australia, and the Philippines. He probably discontinued cylinder production around 1902, when the introduction of molded cylinders rendered his brown-wax records obsolete.

Bacigalupi suffered a total loss in the San Francisco earthquake of April 18, 1906, by which time his company was also handling Victor and Zonophone products. Although insurance covered only a small portion of his losses, Bacigalupi was able to reopen in new quarters later that year, after some suppliers extended special discounts and credit terms in an attempt to keep the business afloat. His largest creditor appears to have been the National Phonograph Company (Edison), which made several substantial loans to

Baciaglupi that he was unable to repay. He was finally forced to drop the Edison line in March 1910, after Edison declined to issue any further credit.

In 1912 Peter Bacigalupi, Jr. took over the phonograph and record portion of the business, which he closed in the summer of 1914. Peter Sr. remained in business for several more years, selling player-pianos and Edison dictating machines. He died in 1925.

BACK BAY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 80 Boylston St., Boston; 118 Tremont St. (Back Bay Music)

Record Products: Back Bay

Launched in late 1947 by Jack Clifford, a former Boston police sergeant turned taxi driver, in affiliation with the Back Bay Music Company, a Boston music publisher. Clifford became a silent partner in the publishing operation in the early 1940s, while still serving on the police force. Finding that the company did not require his full attention, Clifford signed on as a driver with the Red Cab Company of Brookline after leaving the force in 1944. A March 1946 feature in *The Boston Globe* called him "one of the most literate cab drivers in metropolitan Boston."

Back Bay Records stalled almost immediately, having been launched just ahead of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban. The label had a minor local hit in the spring of 1948 with Petty's "Hearts Win, You Lose," a pre-ban recording of a reworked 1903 ballad that reportedly sold 25,000 copies locally within three weeks of release. The master was almost immediately purchased by Universal Records. Relaunched at the end of the ban in late 1948, Back Bay plugged songs from Back Bay Music's catalog. The *Globe* reported that Back Bay records had "a distinctly Boston flavor using only local artists," which included Gloria Carroll, Billy Payne, and the Frank Petty Trio. However, little more was heard of the company in 1949, and its brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

BALCORA RECORDS COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1948

Offices: 6030 W. Fort, Detroit

Record Products: Balcora

Launched in April 1946 by John D. Harmeny, owner of the Harmeny Radio Store, a Detroit radio and record shop. The store name is shown in error as "Harmony" in some modern articles and online postings.

Billboard reported that the Balcora label would specialize in country music, boogie-woogie, and race records. Some obscure artists had been signed by late April (with first releases reportedly expected in late May), including Sale Hunter, Pop Jones and his Tennessee Trail Blazers, Bob Pope and his Victory Playmates, and pianist Wally Werner. Harmeny claimed he had no immediate plans to open his own pressing plant.

Little more was heard of Balcora, which was last listed by *Billboard* in its January 1949 directory. In March 1950, *Billboard* reported the company had closed after having been "relatively inactive for some time."

BALDWIN RECORDING STUDIOS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1930s – 1940

Offices: 17 W. 46th Ave., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above location

Record Products: Baldwin [2] (Baldwin Disc); radio transcriptions, custom recordings

Launched in 1939 by C. Paul Baldwin (president), with Paul W. Wrigley serving as vice-president and treasurer. The Baldwin Recording Studios offered transcription production services, specializing in foreign-language programs, as well as custom recording. Baldwin's private clients included operatic soprano Blanche Arral, whose 1939 instantaneous recordings were cut fifty-one years after she made her first known records.

Baldwin briefly produced an eponymous label for retail sale. Its catalog ran the gamut

from current dance numbers to Haitian, Cuban, and gypsy music. Masters were recorded in Baldwin's own studio.

Baldwin also dabbled in artist management. Among those he represented in 1939 was pianist Willie (The Lion) Smith, who appeared on the Baldwin label's most highly publicized production, a group of Haitian-inspired dance numbers by a small, non-improvising band that included Smith and jazz clarinetist Sidney Bechet. The first of the series, released in September 1939, was judged by a critic for *Jazz Information* to be "authentic, perhaps, but not good." The review was published on October 3, 1939, which, along with the confirmed release date, refutes the November 22, 1939 recording date that is given (with no source cited) in some jazz discographies.

Baldwin discontinued his label in early 1940 and sold his masters to Eli Oberstein, who reissued some of them (most notably, the Smith-Bechet sides) on Varsity. Claims that Baldwin was subsequently employed by Oberstein have not been confirmed. By 1944, he was working as a recording engineer for WOR Studios.

BALKAN PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY — See Asllan, Aydin

BALKAN RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1954

Offices: 1425 W. 18th St., Chicago (to 4/1957); 6917 W. Cermak Rd., Berwyn, IL (Balkan Music Company, from 4/1957)

Pressing: Own plant—Berwyn, IL

Record Products: Balkan [2], Troppe; pressings for small independent labels

A division of the Balkan Music Company (Chicago). Founded in 1935, the company dealt in records, phonographs, and radios. Balkan Records was an outgrowth of Ivan John Krilcich's and Louis Hlad's affiliated Balkan Record Distributing Company.

Krilcich and Hlad's Balkan label (unrelated to Aydin Asllan's earlier New York label of the same name) was launched in 1945. It specialized in Serbo-Croatian dances and vocals for the ethnic market, using a mixture of new and reissued recordings. The companion Troppe label featured vocal performances (some in English) by F. A. H. Troppe and members of his family.

Balkan operated its own pressing plant, where it did contract work for Kismet, Pfau, Polkaland, and other minor labels. The Balkan Record Company was not mentioned in *Billboard* until January 1948. In May 1953, the magazine reported that Balkan was entering the American standards and novelty field after having scored a minor hit with Leon Barry's "Misirlou." Balkan 45s were introduced in the early 1950s.

BALLEN RECORD COMPANY / GOTHAM RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946–1958

Offices: 1515 Jefferson St., Philadelphia (1946–3/1948); 1416 Wood St., Philadelphia (3/1948–early 1950s); 1628 Federal St., Philadelphia (from early 1950s); 1401 S. 10th St., Philadelphia (Gotham Record Corporation office, from 1/1950)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio; independent studios

Pressing: Own plant — Philadelphia; some pressing contracted to Enterprise Records (Los Angeles, from late 1946) and probably other independent plants

Record Products: Gotham, Apex, Music Master, Phenix [*sic*], 20th Century [2]; pressings for numerous independent labels; custom recordings

The Ballen Record Company was founded in early 1946 by Ivin Ballen (sometimes misidentified as Ivan, Irv, Irving, or Irwin, in period trade papers as well as modern works), Rose Ballen, and Irving Leerman. The company originally offered pressing and distribution services to small local labels but produced no label of its own.

A custom record that Ballen marketed for the Philadelphia Mask and Wig Glee Club under the 20th Century label in 1946 sold well enough that he decided to continue production of that label under his ownership. By the summer of 1946, 20th Century had widespread distribution and a diversified catalog, much of it by local talent, that included jazz, pop, Jewish, and Russian fare, as well as what were termed "Operator Specials" that were intended solely for jukebox use. The records originally sold for 75¢ retail, or 49¢ to distributors and jukebox operators. Ballen advertised that 20th Century records "are not

sensational. They have no breakneck tempos, no bicycle pumps, no wild shrieking trumpets, no honking saxophones, no big names."

Ballen greatly expanded his custom-pressing business during 1947, albeit at the expense of his own 20th Century label, according to a *Billboard* report. In April, Modern Music Records closed a deal for Ballen to handle all of its East Coast pressing. By November, Ballen was handling local distribution for several independent labels (including Black and White, Juke Box, and Sterling), was making pressings for many others, and was preparing to move to larger quarters. He also began leasing masters from outside sources, including Mayo Williams' Southern Record Corporation, for release on his own label.

In January 1948, Ballen purchased the Gotham Record Company (*q.v.*) from Sam Goody, along with Goody's S-G Music publishing subsidiary, and moved those operations to Philadelphia. The Gotham Record Company name remained in use for a time, as a trade name of the Ballen Record Company. It was reported that Ballen would continue to produce 20th Century records, but it was soon evident that Gotham's development would take precedence. Under Ballen's ownership, Gotham (which had not developed a large following under Goody's ownership) quickly grew into a successful independent label.

Cash Box reported in May 1949 that Gotham had hired jazz pianist and band leader Harold (Doc) Bagby as its musical director, noting, "there is considerable artist and repertory work to be done, and it is for this reason that Bagby has been added to the staff." Bagby was also to serve as musical advisor to Andrea Music, Ballen's newly launched publishing venture. At about the same time, Ballen formed Gotham Attractions, Inc., a booking agency under the management of Len Schwartz. It initially handled only the Black gospel artists who were recording for Gotham.

In 1949 Ballen launched Phenix (*sic*), a new gospel and rhythm-and-blues label, only to change its name to Apex after four releases for unexplained reasons. The Gotham label itself successfully expanded into the Black gospel market in the same year, signing the Angelic Gospel Singers, Dixie Hummingbirds, National Clouds of Joy, and similar groups all within the span of several months. Gotham also enjoyed some success with its doo-wop releases in the early 1950s, but its attempted push into the Latin-American pop market was largely a failed effort.

The Gotham Record Corporation was belatedly incorporated in Pennsylvania on March 7, 1950, as a subsidiary of the Ballen Record Company. In September 1955, Ballen sold the custom-pressing portion of his business to Quaker Plastic Research (Philadelphia) and began phasing out the Gotham and 20th Century labels. The final Gotham recording sessions were held in the spring of 1958. However, Ballen retained his studio and music-publishing businesses. In the late 1960s, his son Morris began expanding into other formats, eventually offering full-service tape and CD production. The company, which has since relocated to Pennsauken, New Jersey, now operates as Disc Makers.

BAMA RECORD COMPANY — See Pearson's Productions

BANDWAGON RECORDS, INC. / BENNETT RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: 7 W. 46th St., New York

Record Products: Arlington, Bandwagon, Bennett, Hudson [2]; Menagerie (children's)

Launched in the spring of 1948 by George C. Bennett, in partnership with Albert E. (Al) Middleman, as a subsidiary of Middleman's Sterling Records (*q.v.*). In November of that year, Bennett bought out Middleman's share in the label and reorganized Bandwagon as an independent company. He took along the masters to which he personally owned rights, including the "Moe the Schmo" series (comprising some of the last commercial recordings by veteran comedian Irving Kaufman, for which Bennett had written the lyrics). Manufacturing was turned over to the Ballen Record Company (Gotham), with Apollo Records records handling New York and New Jersey distribution.

In early 1949, Bennett added Hudson (a jukebox label that specialized in "sing-along" recordings), which was produced for him by Ballen. They were followed by Arlington (specializing in rhythm-and-blues and country-and-western material) and Menagerie (a children's label), both pressed and distributed for him by Black and White Records.

In the summer of that 1949, Bennett ended his involvement with Bandwagon and reorganized his company as Bennett Records, Inc. Bandwagon was replaced by the Bennett label, the impending launch of which was announced in August 1949. It was to specialize in rhythm-and-blues, country-and-western, and novelty material, according to trade-press reports. Some masters, including sides by Jimmy Cannady, Sticks Evans, and Al (Fats) Jackson, reportedly had already been recorded by the time the label's launch was announced. There were also reissues of some recordings from the Bandwagon and Sterling catalogs, including Irving Kaufman's "Moe the Schmo" records, which retained their original Sterling catalog numbers. Bennett's association with Kaufman ended with the November 1949 release of "The Curse of an Aching Heart" and "Think It Over, Mary," which a *Cash Box* reviewer recommended as "good tavern music."

The Bennett label appears to have attracted little attention, and no mention of it has been found after the early 1950s.

BANG RECORDS — See Mayfair Record and Recording Corporation

BANNER RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1960s

Offices: 1674 Broadway, New York (to early 1949); 33 Union Square, New York (from 2/1949)

Original-Master Source(s): International Recording Company, probably other independent studios

Record Products: Banner [3], Carnival [2]

Banner Records' launch was announced by president Sam Sellsman on January 4, 1947. Key personnel at founding included Vic Sellsman (vice-president, production), Seymour Rechtzeit (vice-president, artists and repertoire), and Peter Doraine (recording manager). There was no connection to the American Record Corporation's earlier Banner label.

Banner specialized in Hebrew and Yiddish material, with an artist roster that included Myron Cohen, Leo Fuchs, George Jessel, Molly Picon, Maurice Schwartz, and other headliners, as well as several prominent cantors. The company did not begin issuing material in English until February 1947, when it advertised several Irish tunes. The same advertisement noted an upcoming Italian series. The company later licensed Irving Kaufman's widely traveled "Moe the Schmo" masters from George C. Bennett (see Bandwagon Records and Sterling Records), who had written the lyrics and originally produced the recordings for Sterling.

Banner introduced the Carnival label in mid-1947, as a conventional pop sideline. In December 1948, the company opened a publishing subsidiary, Banner Music Company. Peter Doraine left Banner in the same month, selling his shares back to the company but taking several artists with him to launch his new Abbey label. His replacement was Arthur Ravel.

After lying dormant for much of 1949, Banner Records was taken over and reorganized in January 1950 by Gerald J. Morse, a textile-industry executive with no experience in the recording or entertainment industries. Morse bought out several of the original investors and announced plans to revitalize the Carnival label, which had seen little activity since its introduction. In August, Banner signed an agreement granting Chaus SLR (Buenos Aires, Argentina) rights to press and distribute Banner discs in South America, in return for which Banner was granted the first U.S. option on material recorded by that company.

Banner LPs, initially cobbled together from previously issued material, were introduced in December 1950. In the same month, Morse announced that Banner was dropping its 12" 78-rpm line, and that all new 78 releases would be 10" "longer-playing" plastic pressings, with an emphasis on cantorials. In 1951, *Billboard* reported that Banner was one of several labels setting new foreign-language lyrics to American pop tunes in an attempt to appeal to the immigrant markets. A year earlier, Banner had issued a Yiddish adaptation of Gilbert and Sullivan's "H.M.S. Pinafore," reduced to twenty-two minutes to fit onto two "minigroove" 78s.

The Banner label was last used in the 1960s for a series of reportedly well-received LP reissues dubbed from the original 78 masters.

BARTHEL RECORDS / BARTHEL, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Offices: 1428 W. Augusta Blvd., Chicago

Record Products: Barthel

Launched in 1949 by Chicago music publishers Jack Barthel (president) and Nick Wayne (vice-president), of Barthel & Wayne Music. Barthel resigned in December 1949, and Wayne acquired his stake in the recording operation. In the reorganization that followed, Wayne took Barthel's place as president, and Paul Cwik replaced Wayne as vice-president. Larry Anzalone served as treasurer-secretary and manager of artists and repertoire.

Anzalone told *Cash Box* magazine, "We are out to prove to the record field that we have a brand new idea in music," but he did not elaborate on what that idea might be, and the label offered little more than undistinguished pop fare by local club and radio artists. Barthel's initial release, in February 1950, featured Toni Rami, a Chicago nightclub singer who had a minor jukebox hit with "I'm Not to Blame." Mention of Barthel Records disappeared from the trade papers after mid-1950. Jack Barthel went on to launch JB Records in the mid-1950s and Deer Records in 1961.

BARTLETT, RAYMOND (GROOVIE BOY) (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: Shreveport, LA

Record Products: Job

Ray (Groovie Boy) Bartlett was a popular disc jockey on Shreveport radio station KWKH in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1950 he produced the short-lived Job label (not to be confused with Joe Brown's J. O. B. label), which issued several sides by Nathaniel (Stick-Horse) Hammond, a Dallas blues singer. Two of the recordings were also released under Jimmy Mercer's Royalty label with markings in the wax that suggest a pirated issue, a not-uncommon occurrence on Mercer's labels (*see* Swing Record Manufacturing). The Job labels show no manufacturer credit or location, and no advertising or trade-paper coverage of the label has been found.

BARTÓK RECORDING STUDIO

Launched in 1950 in New York by composer Bela Bartók's son Peter, a professional recording engineer. Its initial release was a 78-rpm pressing of Bela Bartók playing several Scarlatti compositions, from a previously unissued 1929 test in Peter Bartók's possession. Other than that, the studio was exclusively a producer of LPs, and thus is beyond the scope of this work.

BEACON RECORD COMPANY — *See* Davis, Joe

BECK, JIM — *See* Jim Beck Records / Jim Beck Recording Studios

BECKER RECORDING COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1948 – 1950

Offices: 532 Smithfield St., Pittsburgh

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Bee Bee Recording; transcriptions, custom and private recordings

Launched in the late 1940s by Arthur W. Becker, in affiliation with Andrew H. Hughes and William G. Bickel. Becker's Pittsburgh studio, which was housed in the Record and Gift Center on Smithfield Street, offered commercial and custom recording services.

Showing a 1948 copyright date, Becker's Bee Bee Recordings label was unrelated to the earlier Los Angeles-based Bee Bee Records. A relatively short-lived venture, Bee Bee featured mostly obscure local and regional artists performing cover versions of current hit tunes. Its best-known orchestra was Tommy Carlyn's, whose cover version of "If I Knew You Were Coming I'd've Baked a Cake" reportedly did well on jukeboxes in western Pennsylvania.

Carlyn's loss to Mercury Records in 1950 appears to have marked Bee Bee's end. Becker

Recording was formally dissolved on January 18, 1951. The company's brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

BEE BEE BEE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 1538 Cahuenga Blvd., Los Angeles

Record Products: Bee Bee Bee Records

In August 1946, *Billboard* reported that Los Angeles nightclub owner Billy Berg had purchased a half-interest in Broadcast Recorders and planned to launch Bee Bee Bee Records in partnership with Charles Cooper, the studio's former owner.

A modern-jazz enthusiast, Berg had been recording independently for at least four months prior to the buy-in, in affiliation with Atomic Records' Joe Blue. Claiming to be Berg's representative, Blue sold some April 1946 recordings by Slim Gaillard to the Melodisc Recording Company before the launch of Bee Bee Bee, without Berg's authorization. The matter was eventually settled out of court, and the masters were returned to Berg and issued on his Bee Bee Bee label. Blue had no further involvement with the company.

Berg applied for his recording license from the American Federation of Musicians in August 1946. The first Bee Bee Bee releases, by the Bobby True Trio, were announced in late November. The label featured Gaillard and some other well-known performers who appeared at Berg's clubs, but Bee-Bee-Bee records received no marketing support, and sales appear to have been negligible. The last confirmed releases appeared in 1947. Some of the Gaillard masters were later reissued on the Hollywood-based Bee Bee Records label (not to be confused with the Pittsburgh-based Bee Bee label covered in this work), which presumably had some connection to Berg.

BELGIAN CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 / Lateral

Offices: 51 W. 76th St., New York

Pressing: Siemon Hard Rubber Company

Record Products: Belgian Conservatory of Music

A short-lived label launched in early 1921 by violinist Ovide Musin, president and director of the Belgian Conservatory of Music (New York). The first releases, announced in *The Violinist* for March 1921, were violin solos by Musin. Additional releases were announced in October, after which nothing more was heard of the label. Inspected specimens are 11" recordings pressed on 12" discs, using masters from an unknown studio.

BELL RECORD COMPANY / BELL RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1923–1928

Offices: 38 Clinton St., Newark, NJ (to 1926); 6 W. 32nd St., New York (Consolidated Recording Corporation office, 1926–1927)

Pressing: Scranton Button Company (1923–1927), Starr Piano Company (1928)

Record Products: Bell [1]

The Bell Record Company was organized during the summer of 1923 to take over management and production of the W. T. Grant Company's Bell label, which had previously been produced by the Arto Company. The company was soon reorganized as the Bell Record Corporation under the management of George W. Beynon, Arto's former musical director. The unrelated Bell Recording Corporation (*q.v.*) was already in business, having been launched by C. R. Johnstone a year earlier. Although the two companies are sometimes confused by modern writers, they were distinct entities, Johnstone's being primarily a custom recording operation that did little work for the consumer market.

The Bell label design (which was largely empty, having jettisoned its pictorial trademark at some point in 1921) was given a much-needed makeover by its new owners. They found a ready-made replacement in the United States Record Manufacturing Corporation's defunct Apollo label, on which they simply substituted "Bell" for "Apollo" and a silhouette of Pan for the bust of Apollo. Rights to the design probably were obtained through the Scranton Button Company, which had taken over Apollo following USRMC's failure, and

which handled the pressing for Bell. The figure of Pan was belatedly registered as a trademark in 1925, with first use on records incorrectly given as 1920.

As a Scranton Button Company pressing customer, Beynon's new venture initially obtained most of its material from the affiliated Regal Record Company, duplicating material on Banner, Regal, and related labels. However, the company sometimes commissioned masters for its exclusive use from Regal's affiliated Independent Recording Laboratory. The commissioned recordings sometimes sound and look very similar to Regal's own versions, and so have misled some discographers into listing them as alternate takes of those companies' own masters. However, primary-source documentation such as the Ed Kirkeby and Carson Robison diaries, supplemented by synchronized aural comparisons carried out in the 1950s and 1960s by the *Record Research* group, and supplemented by, offer convincing evidence that these recordings were made exclusively for Bell, in some cases on different dates than the Regal versions.

The new Bell records sold well, and in late 1924 the company celebrated its success with a special promotional issue titled "Broadcasting Grant's Greetings by Bell Record Corporation." In late 1924, Scranton acquired the Emerson Recording Laboratories, and during the summer of 1925 it began adding masters from Emerson's client-label series (Dandy, Grey Gull, *et al.*) to the Bell mix.

In the spring of 1926, Bell began obtaining virtually all of its masters from the newly formed Consolidated Record Corporation, which had recently been launched by a group of former Emerson executives to take over that failing label. Scranton continued to press the records, so Plaza masters were still occasionally used as well during this period. The changeover coincided with the beginning of an apparent decline in Bell sales.

The Consolidated connection was severed in late 1927, after the Bell label became independent of W. T. Grant (which was about to launch Diva as its replacement). Advertisements from that period declared that Bell records could now be sold by all. There do not appear to have been many takers, if the small number of surviving copies from that period is any indication.

In early 1928 the Bell account was turned over to the Starr Piano Company (Gennett). The last of the Scranton issues and the first of the new Gennett series were listed together, as March 1928 releases, in the February 1928 *Talking Machine World* advance bulletin. Most of the 1928 releases duplicated material on Gennett and Champion, nearly always employing pseudonyms to mask the artists. However, the Gennett ledgers confirm that some masters were recorded exclusively for Bell's use. In other cases, Bell was allocated alternate takes and even masters that had been rejected outright for use on Gennett's own labels, the latter being marked as "dogs" in the company ledgers.

Bell's sales appear to have declined even more steeply following the split with W. T. Grant, and the final releases appeared in July 1928. No official announcement of the company's closure has been found.

BELL RECORD COMPANY, LTD. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – Early 1950s

Offices: 315 Royal Hawaiian Ave., Honolulu, Hawaii Territory

Original-Master Source(s): Leo Kupana'i Studio, Honolulu

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing, probably other independent plants

Record Products: Bell [2]; Songs from Renfro Valley, possibly other custom labels; transcriptions

Founded in January 1945 by William B. (Bill) Fredlund and Alice Pualeialoha Davis Fredlund, the Bell Record Company was the second Hawaiian recording company, preceded only by the Advertiser Publishing Company's record division. Young O. Kang, of radio station KONA, served as Bell's recording engineer, and Alice Fredlund's brother, Willie, served as talent scout.

With the Advertiser Publishing Company's record operation temporarily out of production due to wartime shellac rationing, Bell was launched to address the shortage of local recordings by Hawaiian artists. Fredlund reportedly skirted shellac rationing by purchasing surplus discs from a Honolulu warehouse and shipping them to the mainland to be recycled into new pressing material. Recordings were made at Fredlund's Leo Kupana'i Studio in Honolulu, which also produced transcriptions and custom labels.

Bell records were first released in October 1945. The label specialized in Hawaiian and

other Pacific Island music, much of it traditional. It issued the first recordings by Andy Cummings, George Kainapau, the Kalima Brothers, Bill Lincoln, Gabby Pahinui, and other native performers, many of whom would go on to successful careers with other labels. Distribution was limited to the Hawaiian Islands until May 1946 when Fredlund, looking to expand his marketing area, filed a trademark-violation complaint against New York-based Bell Records, Inc. No report of the resolution has been found, but both Bell firms continued to operate.

Fredlund further expanded Bell's operations during the summer of 1946 and finally incorporated in August of that year, with capital stock of \$75,000. A news report at that time noted that the company would record only Hawaiian, Tahitian, Filipino, and Japanese music by native artists. By late 1946, Bell records were being distributed in California by Wilford Brothers and others, and in 1947 Fredlund secured wider distribution with the assistance of independent distributor Jack Gutshall. In the summer of that year, Fredlund took two Hawaiian groups on a marathon promotional tour of the mainland that included a stop at New York's Lexington Hotel.

In September 1947, Bell joined the United Artist Records group, a cooperative venture that handled production and distribution for small independent labels. The UAR pressings appeared with modified United Artist labels, to which was added Bell's pictorial trademark and the legend, "Recorded in Hawaii." By the spring of 1948, Bell was \$13,000 in arrears to UAR for pressings, and had just begun to reorganize when UAR was declared bankrupt.

On April 10, 1948, the majority of Bell's shareholders agreed to assign the company's assets to Howard B. Lyman, who stated that he intended to keep the company running and called on Bell artists to contribute their own cash to aid his efforts. Recording was suspended during 1948 (aside from two titled recorded with AFM head Cesar Petrillo's permission), to honor the American Federation of Musicians' second recording ban, with Bell said to be "almost entirely union owned." The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* reported that three-hundred union members in Honolulu were ready to resume recording following the lifting of the ban at the end of 1948.

The company was reorganized in March 1950, with F. B. Carter serving as trustee and Fredlund retaining the Hawaiian distribution rights. Stockholders and creditors approved the issue of 95,000 shares of preferred stock and Carter stated the company was finally in a position to negotiate for national distribution, although Coast Records (California) appears to have been the only taker at that time. During this period, the company produced at least one custom label, Songs from Renfro Valley, for John Lair (see Ekko Recording Corporation). By the early 1950s, 45s had been added to Bell's product line, and the company had secured other mainland distributors. The records were still being sold by some retailers in the mid-to-late 1950s, although no new releases had been made in some time. By 1956, William Fredlund appears to have left the record business and was running a dredging operation in Honolulu.

BELL RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: Founded 1922

Offices: 9 E. 47th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (415 W. 4th Ave., New York)

Record Products: Private recordings; masters commercial labels (claimed but not confirmed)

The Bell Recording Corporation was unrelated to the Bell Record Company/Corporation (the producers of W. T. Grant's Bell label). It was incorporated on May 26, 1922, with a capitalization of \$5,000, by C. R. Johnstone, a British expatriate who had worked for a time in the Aeolian Company's New York recording studio. Although Louis G. Young was listed as Bell's president, Johnstone (as vice-president and general manager) appears to have been largely responsible for its operation.

The company's advertising noted that it specialized in "private recording and general recording for the phonograph trade." In a *New York Times* interview, Johnstone characterized his private clients as "some aged person who wishes to preserve his voice for his family... the singing voice of the music student, or the voices of children whose parents wish to preserve early words." The wax masters were sent for processing and plating to the affiliated National Metals Depositing Company (of which Young was also president), which was

the extent of Bell's post-production services for its custom-recording clients. The finished metal parts were delivered directly to Bell's customers, who were left to make their own arrangements for pressing and distribution. The company's commercial clients (if any) remain to be discovered.

Johnstone made headlines in July 1922 after recovering a cache of historically important cylinders he had recorded in England three decades earlier, which included the voices of P. T. Barnum, Florence Nightingale, Lord Tennyson, and other significant nineteenth-century figures. He considered transferring and releasing the records in disc form at that time, although it does not appear he did so. Some of the cylinders eventually were dubbed and issued on 78s by The National Vocarium in the early 1940s. The dubbings have since been widely reissued on other labels and incorporated into audiovisual productions, often with no mention of their source.

BELL RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946–1952

Offices: 1658 Broadway, New York (1946–mid-1947); 2382 Pitkin Ave., Brooklyn, NY (from mid-1947)

Record Products: Bell Novelty Records; Madison [2], Zion

Launched in early 1946 by songwriter and comedian Ben Samberg, known professionally as Benny Bell. Bell Records, Inc., appears to have been the successor to Specialty Sales, which operated at the same Broadway address and had been distributing Samberg's Bell Novelty Records since the early 1940s.

Initially Bell Records was largely a one-man operation, with Samberg serving as president, sales manager, and primary recording artist. Manufacturing was handled by Sollie Abrams' Alert Records Distributing Company. In addition to its regular 79¢ line, Bell marketed a special "Dollar Edition" that retailed for 98¢.

Bill Fredlund, owner of the Honolulu-based Bell Record Company, Ltd., filed a complaint against Bell Records' use of the Bell name in 1946. No report of the resolution has been found, but both Bell firms continued to operate. Bell Records, Inc., last appeared in *Billboard's* May 1952 label directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies), by which time the company appears to have suspended operations. Eight months later, the Bell name reappeared on an unrelated line of 7" plastic 78s marketed by Pocket Books, Inc.

BELMONT RECORDS — See Ringle, David (Dave)

BEL-TONE RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1945–1946

Offices: 8624 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio; Monarch Recording Company (Los Angeles), probably other independent studios

Record Products: Bel-Tone; Bel-Tone Playhouse Series (children's)

Incorporated in 1945 by H. R.C. (Dick) Elwell and Robert S. (Bob) Cook, the company's sole shareholders, who served as president and manager of artists and repertoire, respectively. Frank Berger (formerly of Gilt-Edge) served as production supervisor, and Jack Homer as head of sales and marketing. The records were handled by at least a dozen distributors who specialized in small independent labels.

The earliest confirmed Bel-Tone masters were cut at the Monarch Recording Company studios, prior to Bel-Tone's acquisition of the former Fitzpatrick Travel Talks studio in Hollywood. Bel-Tone records, which retailed for 79¢ (or 49¢ for jukebox operators, to whom they were largely targeted), were being shipped by September 1945. They were being distributed nationally by the early summer of 1946, according to Cook. Bel-Tone specialized in country-and-western material but also made some jazz and race-record releases and developed a pop roster that included Frankie Laine and Valaida Snow.

In May 1946, Slim Gaillard signed a publishing agreement granting Bel-Tone the rights to some original compositions he had recorded for them earlier that year. They included Gaillard's novelty hit, "Cement Mixer (Putty-Putty)," which he had previously assigned to Mills Music, touching off a legal scuffle over rights to the song. Continuing to mine the novelty vein, Bel-Tone also had minor hits with Tin Ear Tanner's "Kilroy Was Here" and "I

Used to Work in Chicago." At about the same time, Bel-Tone announced it was "going into the kid field in a big way" with a series of 7" children's record-album sets produced under the direction of Ted B. Sills and Robert Bailey. The latter, a well-known character actor, narrated the records as "Uncle Bob." Six children's albums were released, the rights to which were later acquired by Mercury Records.

Bel-Tone filed for bankruptcy in November 1946, citing \$40,000 in liabilities, much of that figure comprising unpaid artist and publisher royalties. Elwell and Cook subsequently lost control of their masters, which they had mortgaged prior to the bankruptcy filing. Gold Seal purchased the masters in 1947 and reissued many of them, particularly the sides by pop artists Frankie Lane, Cliff Stone, and Artie Wayne. The Beltone name (unhyphenated) was later used for an unrelated company (*see next entry*).

BELTONE RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1960s

Offices: 2 W. 46th St., New York (1947–1949); 709 8th Ave., New York (from 1949); 1650 Broadway, New York (1960s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Beltone; masters, master correction, and processing for independent labels, including Ansonia; transcriptions, private recordings

Unrelated to the earlier Bel-Tone Recording Corporation (*see previous entry*), Beltone advertised "recording catering to the independent phonograph record companies." The operation was headed by Leslie C. (Les) Cahan (who reportedly designed much of his own studio equipment) and Shirley Cahan (vice-president and treasurer), assisted by Jack Griffith. Beltone was first listed in *Radio Annual's* 1947 yearbook.

The company briefly produced its own Beltone label in the late 1940s. However, Beltone's main business was repairing damaged or sub-standard masters for clients that included A-1, Diamond, Musicraft, and Rainbow. *Billboard* reported that the service represented "a lot of saved dollars and an antidote to recording headaches... Cahan can, with his equipment, wash out surface noise...and achieve the proper high level of musical brilliancy by bringing out or cutting down bass and treble tones." Cahan later developed a "compatible" stereophonic cut that could be played on monaural phonographs.

Cahan revived the Beltone label in 1960. In December, Irv Greenbaum took over as the studio's chief engineer, with Cahan retaining his position as chairman of the board. The Lescay label was launched as a Beltone subsidiary in 1961.

BELVEDERE MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 336 Patterson Park Ave., Baltimore, MD

Record Products: Belvedere [2]

Of unknown ownership, Belvedere Music released its first records in December 1950. Its mailing address was a small row-house in a Baltimore residential neighborhood. The original, plain-text label was quickly replaced by a more decorative design depicting a clarinet.

Belvedere's local-artist roster included the Harmonatones, Ted Zamecki's Orchestra, singing disc jockey Dick Coleman (WCBM–Baltimore), and Jarrett (Spotty) Lickle, the latter better known to early Baltimore television viewers as the folk-singer "Patches." There was also a short-lived country-and western series, numbered in the 3000s, with Harry Fowler's Tennessee Valley Boys and Cousin Roy and the Silver Creek Jamboree. Belvedere's last confirmed releases appeared in the *Billboard* advance lists for late June 1951. The company was last listed in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

BENNETT RECORDS, INC. — See Bandwagon Records, Inc. / Bennett Records

BERGER ENTERPRISES — See Enterprise Records (Inc.)

BERLINER, EMILE (Discs)

Record Production (United States): 1891 – 1900

AMERICAN GRAMOPHONE COMPANY (1891–1893)

Offices: New York (principal office); Jersey City, NJ (branch office); 613 New York Ave., Washington, DC (studio and laboratory)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Pressing: Rheinische Gummi und Celluloid Fabrik Werk (Mannheim-Neckarau, Germany), possibly other German plants

Record Products: E. Berliner's Gramophone (experimental and prototype discs)

UNITED STATES GRAMOPHONE COMPANY (Production: 1893–1895)

Offices: 1410 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — 1205 G St. NW, Washington, DC (1893–c. mid-1894); 1410 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington (from c. mid-1894); New York (1894–1895)

Pressing: Possibly John G. Kearsing Manufacturing Company (predecessor to Duranoid, pre-1892); India Rubber Comb Company (hard-rubber pressings)

Record Products: E. Berliner's Gramophone

BERLINER GRAMOPHONE COMPANY (1895–1900)

Offices: 1026–1028 Filbert St., Philadelphia (1895–1897); 424 S. 10th St., Philadelphia (1897–1900)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — 1410 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC (1895–1898); New York (occasional, 1895–12/1896; permanent from 12/1896); 29 S. 11th St., Philadelphia (late 1895–1896); 1032–1036 Filbert St., Philadelphia (1896); 424 S. 10th St., Philadelphia (main studio, 1897–1900)

Pressing: India Rubber Comb Company, possibly another (hard-rubber pressings); Duranoid Manufacturing Company (shellac pressings); Burt Company (shellac test pressings)

Record Products: E. Berliner's Gramophone

Producer of the first commercially viable disc records and phonographs (or gramophones, as he styled them), Emile Berliner emigrated to the United States from Hannover, Germany, in 1870.

Although the Edison and Bell-Tainter patents had anticipated the use of a disc as a recording medium, those patents specified a vertically modulated groove of constantly varying depth. Berliner's concept differed by employing a laterally modulated groove of unvarying depth (anticipated in Edison's 1878 caveat), bolstered in a later patent by the specification that the groove itself propel the stylus (as distinct from the Edison and Bell-Tainter machines, on which the stylus was propelled by a mechanical feed).

Berliner's first U.S. patent (#372,786, filed May 4, 1887, and constituting the first use of the term "gramophone") specified a cylindrical recording surface of paper, parchment, metal, or other material, coated with any substance "easily removed by the action of the recording stylus." The preferred material was lampblack, into which was cut a laterally modulated groove of unvarying depth.

Berliner acknowledged that his recording process was "substantially in the manner of the well-known phonoautograph of Leon Scott." However, Berliner went beyond Scott, who never developed a means of playback (although some of his surviving phonoautograms have since been recovered digitally through the pioneering work of David Giovannoni and associates). Berliner developed several processes by which the delicate tracings could be rendered playable, and could even be copied to more permanent material. He stated that if a sufficiently thick coating was used, varnishing would preserve the recording and render it playable.

Berliner also noted that a recording made on a base through which light could pass could be transferred to a permanent metal copy by photo-engraving. By the summer of 1887, Berliner was experimenting with photo-engraved discs. A specimen dated July 26, 1887, survives in the Smithsonian Institution's collection. But he soon set the process aside, stating, "While I have found the process of photo-engraving to yield admirable copies...I do not mean to confine myself to this process for copying and multiplying the original record."

On March 17, 1888, Berliner filed for a patent covering an improved process that he stated would produce a permanent record "more cheaply and more readily" than photo-engraving. Recordings were made on discs coated with a thin acid-resistant fatty coating

that was cut away by the recording stylus to expose the underlying glass or metal base (zinc was settled-upon for commercial use). The discs were then exposed to acid, etching the groove into the base material, after which the coating was removed. The resulting record could be played directly, or it could be electroplated to produce a negative stamper from which multiple copies could be pressed. Berliner began development of a workable disc in his own laboratory, as well as at his brother Joseph's telephone factory in Hanover, Germany. By 1899, Berliner's disc record and hand-driven machine had advanced to the point where they were ready for commercial development.

In 1889 Berliner returned to Germany, where he made his first attempts to secure investors and develop the gramophone commercially. Response initially was tepid, but Berliner received a boost in January 1890, when the gramophone was successfully demonstrated at the Belle-Alliance-Theatre in Berlin, with a follow-up demonstration a week later before members of the Imperial Physical-Technical Institute. In the same month, *Prometheus* (an influential German applied-sciences journal) published a lengthy two-part article, comparing the phonograph to the gramophone, that was generally favorable toward Berliner. Public demonstrations, for which a modest admission was charged, began on January 10 in Berlin, and were soon being given in other major German cities.

German businessmen Ernst Kämmer and Franz Reinhardt agreed to invest in Berliner's device in the spring of 1890. Grammophon-Spielwaaren-Fabrik Kämmer, Reinhardt & Company was registered in Walterhausen, Germany, in May 1890. Berliner granted the company exclusive use of his German patents as well as a license to manufacture the machines and records. Although it is often claimed that the Kämmer & Reinhardt products were marketed as toys, the dropping of "Spielwaaren" (German for "Toy") from the company name soon after its formation suggests otherwise. By mid-year, Louis Rosenthal had perfected a method of pressing celluloid discs from copper stampers and set up a studio in Frankfurt on the Main to supply masters on which were incised the logo, "E. Berliner's Grammophon." The earliest Berliner discs were manufactured primarily by the Rheinische Gummi und Celluloid Fabrik Werk in Mannheim-Neckarau, but researcher Michael Sherman reports that another firm, identified only by the initials G.F.K.C. in the pressings, was also involved.

Berliner's hand-driven machines and celluloid discs were ready for sale in Europe by the late summer of 1890. Etched-zinc originals were also offered for a time, at a higher price than the celluloid duplicates. The records were crudely manufactured, and markings in the label area were so indistinct that printed title slips (sometimes including the recorded text or lyrics) that were affixed to the blank reverse sides as well as the record sleeves. Recording speeds were not standardized and often fluctuated within a single disc; modern estimates place recording speeds of the celluloid discs within an approximate range of 90 to 110 rpm, with some notable outliers. The repertoire included recitations; instrumental solos, duets, and small ensembles; and vocal selections in various languages by anonymous performers, one of whom is believed to have been Berliner himself.

Berliner returned to the United States on September 10, 1890, leaving the German business in the hands of his brother Jacob. On April 23, 1891, Berliner and a group of New York investors filed a certificate of organization in New Jersey for the American Gramophone Company, the first commercial disc-record venture in the United States. A laboratory and experimental recording studio were opened in a small building on New York Avenue in Washington, DC. The oldest American Berliner recording known to survive — a 6" hard-rubber pressing dated July 3, 1891, but probably pressed later — was recently discovered in a New Jersey antiques shop.

Although several 1892–1893 recordings were later issued commercially by American Gramophone's successor, the company failed to produce either records or machines for sale at that time. Lacking a domestic pressing plant, Berliner had to rely on German manufacturers to press what are believed to have been experimental and prototype discs. In addition, an attempt to develop a marketable spring-motor machine was unsuccessful. American Gramophone went dormant in 1893, and its corporate status was finally revoked by the governor of New Jersey in 1895, for failure to pay taxes.

With the American Gramophone venture stalled, Berliner transferred his patents to the newly organized United States Gramophone Company in April 1893. The company was incorporated in West Virginia for legal purposes, but never actually operated there. It soon

began commercial development of machines and discs for the American market. Regular recording activities with an eye toward commercial release finally got under way in a new Washington studio during the summer of 1894. Fred Gaisberg was placed in charge of securing talent. Many of the artists Gaisberg recruited were also recording for the cylinder companies, but Gaisberg recalled, "We averaged up by employing lower-paid local talent secured from the beer-gardens and street corners of Washington." A plan to customize the discs for individual merchants, by adding brief spoken advertisements, was discussed but apparently not implemented.

Berliner's first "List of Plates," comprising forty-nine selections, was published on November 1, 1894. They were the first American disc records offered for sale to the public. By the time a second list was published in January 1895, the number had grown to approximately eight-five selections. With little funding available, Berliner at first concentrated his marketing efforts in the Baltimore–Washington corridor. The first Berliner retail store, at 109 North Charles Street in Baltimore, opened in the autumn of 1894. Several independent dealers in Baltimore and Washington were handling Berliner products by the end of the year.

Berliner's first American offerings included a simple hand-driven gramophone, a battery-powered version (Model B), and a hybrid "Incandescent Current Model" (Model C) version that could be operated electrically or manually. Although the battery model appear to have sold very poorly, and there is some question whether the hybrid was actually produced commercially, the hand-driven device proved popular as a novelty item. Retailing for \$15, it was essentially a larger version of the German toy model. For the average consumer, its crudeness was offset by its low price and utter simplicity, standing in marked contrast to Edison's and Columbia's expensive, cumbersome, and sometimes temperamental cylinder machines.

The accompanying discs were 7" single-sided hard-rubber pressings from masters made in Berliner's Washington studio by local or visiting artists, and included several recordings made during Berliner's experimental period. Retailing for 60¢ each or \$6.00 a dozen, they were less expensive, and far more durable, than wax cylinders. Paper labels, other than the occasional reverse-side sticker, were not used. Instead, the label information was pressed directly into the disc, and in the early years in particular, there was little consistency in the label styling or typography. Berliner would later produce a few 5½" and 6" discs (bearing A- and B-prefixed catalog numbers, respectively) that are not known to have appeared in the catalogs.

As with the German recordings, Berliner's American recording speeds were not standardized. Berliner's 1895 patent specified a turntable speed of 70 rpm, and notices attached to some machines warned, "Don't run turntable faster than 70 revolutions per minute when reproducing musical records. Run somewhat slower for talking records." However, actual recording speeds varied widely. Although 70 rpm range appears to have been the average, a range of 60–72 rpm has been cited by several experts.

The early Berliner catalog employed a block-numbering system, in which groups of numbers were pre-assigned to various categories (200–249 for cornet solos, 300–349 for clarinet solos, etc.). As was often the case with block systems, not all of the numbers were actually used, leaving gaps in the overall numerical sequence. When a selection was remade, the original catalog number was retained, but a suffix was added to indicate a remake, beginning with the letter Z and working backward to the letter X (or V in rare instances), after which the suffixes started over at ZZ, YY, etc. Frequent remakes were required at first because each master yielded only a single stamper. That problem would be overcome in 1898, with introduction of the so-called three-step method that permitted the generation of multiple stampers from a single master.

The earliest United States Gramophone Company discs of 1894 (marked "E. BERLINER'S GRAMOPHONE" in typeset capital letters, and showing the November 8, 1887, and May 15, 1888, patent dates) were slightly less than 7" in diameter. Titles, performers, recording dates, and locations (or some combination of the latter three) were handwritten on the master by the recording engineer, and the catalog numbers were crudely punched into the bottom of the label area using individual dies for each digit. As he had in Germany, Berliner used paper jackets with printed lyrics for a short time in 1894, at least three specimens of which are known to exist. In 1895, the boldly typeset

brand name and patent notice were briefly replaced by tiny, inconspicuous type. Some pressings dispensed with type altogether, with the Berliner brand faintly handwritten in a nearly illegible scrawl.

A hard-rubber compound was used in the early pressings. Berliner had first obtained hard-rubber test pressings from the India Rubber Comb Company (New York) in July 1889. They had proven unsatisfactory, but further experimentation eventually produced a usable, if still imperfect, disc. The rubber pressings were thicker and more resistant to wear than the German celluloid pressings, but they tended to warp and were marred by irregular surfaces and occasional air bubbles in the material. In addition, sulfur in the rubber compound was found to corrode the metal stampers.

On February 19, 1895, Berliner's patent #534,543 (originally filed on March 30, 1892) was finally granted. It contained thirty-five new claims and improvements, the most important of which was the specification was that the stylus be propelled by the lateral-cut groove itself. This was a significant departure from cylinder technology, which employed a vertically modulated groove and a feed-screw to propel the reproducer. These simple concepts would later prove to be the deciding factor in patent infringement suits brought against would-be competitors in the lateral-cut market. An earlier patent (#548,623), filed on March 18, 1893, covered duplication methods.

With patent protection in place, the Berliner Gramophone Company was incorporated on October 8, 1895. It would succeed the United States Gramophone Company as the manufacturer and marketer of Gramophone products. The incorporators included William J. Armstrong, Max H. Bierbaum, Joseph Goldsmith, Thomas S. Parvin, and Thomas H. Latta, none of whom had experience in the phonograph trade. United States Gramophone, which controlled Berliner's patents in the U.S., remained in existence solely as a licensor of those patents to the new company. Its name continued to appear as late as November 1900, when it published a notice in several magazines warning that lawsuits had been filed against companies advertising "infringing machines made in imitation of the well-known Gramophone," but it had no further hand in production.

Berliner turned much of the control of the new Berliner Gramophone Company over to Thomas Parvin in exchange for his financial backing. Shortly after the company's founding, most of Berliner's operation was moved to Philadelphia, where Parvin had his offices. Frank Seaman, a well-known advertising executive, was granted an exclusive sales agency, at first through the New York Gramophone Company, and later through his own National Gramophone Company.

With a fresh infusion of cash, new Berliner releases began to appear with some regularity in late 1895. So far, marketing efforts had been limited largely to the mid-Atlantic states, but interest in Berliner products mounted during 1896, spurred by a *Scientific American* cover story in May and Frank Seaman's launch of a national advertising campaign that summer. The late autumn of 1896 saw the introduction of two significant technical improvements: shellac-based pressings made by the Duranoid Manufacturing Company (replacing the flawed hard-rubber discs), and the first spring-motor machines (which soon supplanted the primitive hand-driven models).

Based in Newark, New Jersey, Duranoid was a well-established manufacturer of buttons and other molded goods. It had recently developed a shellac-based compound that appeared to be suitable for disc records. Berliner demonstrated the new Duranoid pressings for the Franklin Institute. Recalling that event, recording engineer Fred Gaisberg stated that the new pressings "constituted the most outstanding advance Berliner had to show." Pressing quality and overall appearance improved steadily in the later 1890s, perhaps in response to the entry of the Burt Company, a competing pressing operation, into the market. Berliner obtained sample pressings from Burt in May 1898, but in the end, he remained with Duranoid.

On October 10, 1896, Berliner granted Frank Seaman an exclusive fifteen-year license to buy, sell, and otherwise deal in Gramophone products throughout the United States, excepting the District of Columbia. Eleven days later, Seaman, in partnership with Henry Boutz and William Barry Owen, incorporated the National Gramophone Company with \$50,000 in capital, to serve as the exclusive sales agency for Gramophone products. Terms of the agreement included Berliner's promise to "fill with reasonable promptness and dispatch all orders of Seaman for gramophones and gramophone goods, and agrees that,

if it should make default, Seaman may, after notification in writing to the Gramophone company of his intention to do so, supply the gramophones, gramophone goods, and parts for the repair thereof necessary to fill the orders defaulted on, provided that [they] shall be equal in quality to those supplied by the company...." Seaman would later cite this clause as legal justification for dropping Berliner products and introducing the competing Zonophone line (*see* Universal Talking Machine Company).

New permanent studios were opened in New York and Philadelphia in 1896, attracting a better class of artist than the local performers Fred Gaisberg had been relying upon in Washington. The New York studio was managed Calvin G. Child, an expert recording engineer who had learned his craft with several cylinder companies, and who would go on to play a major role in the creation of the Victor Talking Machine Company.

Gramophone sales were increasing steadily, but production problems and delays in filling orders continued to plague the Berliner operation. National Gramophone was now underwriting Berliner's recording expenses, and Frank Seaman was becoming increasingly critical of the finished records. Berliner admitted, in a letter to Seaman dated December 12, 1896, that "not every record can possibly be made absolutely perfect... If we succeed in increasing the percentage of a good average with now and then an exceptionally perfect record, we are doing well."

In the meantime, Berliner had been working toward motorizing the Gramophone. He had first approached Eldridge R. Johnson and Levi Montross in February 1896 with requests for spring-driven motors. Although Johnson's early efforts were unsuccessful, he soon perfected his design, and during 1897–1897 both Johnson and the Montross Metal Shingle Company provided Berliner with workable motors. Montross fulfilled his contract in September 1898. It was not renewed, leaving Johnson as Berliner's sole supplier, and an increasingly valuable consultant. In turn, Berliner financed Johnson's factory expansion and wax-master recording experiments during 1898–1899.

In an ongoing effort to attract better-known artists, Berliner staged demonstrations at which performers were encouraged to make Gramophone records. At least two such events were reported in New York's Chickering Hall during the late autumn of 1897, under the direction of Calvin Child; the lack of immediate playback capability reportedly did not dampen the attendees' enthusiasm. The company eventually was able to attract some nationally known celebrities, including Buffalo Bill Cody, Chauncey De Pew, Robert Ingersoll, Joseph Jefferson, Jessie Bartlett Davis, Ada Rehan, and cast members of several popular Broadway productions, many of whom recorded only for Berliner.

The need for frequent remakes was overcome in 1898, when the "three-step" method of duplicating masters was implemented. Berliner's annual report for that year states, "Any matrix made from now can be accurately duplicated, thereby insuring the production of practically unlimited numbers of perfect copies..." The process involved pressing sub-masters (commonly known as "mothers") in soft, smooth material, from which new stampers could be plated. Several researchers have suggested that the small single digits seen on some Berliner discs might indicate pressings made from these copied stampers. It is uncertain how widely the process was employed, but instances of remade titles did decline markedly in the later 1890s, suggesting that a sufficient number of stampers had been produced from a single master to satisfy demand. A number of Berliner sub-masters, pressed on thick oversized blanks, have survived.

Berliner's first British catalog, consisting entirely of American recordings, was issued in London on November 16, 1898. In early 1899, Eldridge Johnson negotiated the sale of Berliner's foreign rights to the Gramophone Company of London. Belford G. Royal was dispatched to oversee the set-up of the British studio and manufacturing facilities.

Fully typeset labels, which had first been used by the New York studio in 1897, became standard across the entire line in early 1899, replacing the crudely handwritten titles and artist credits. In March of that, Berliner's complicated block-numbering system was dropped in favor of sequential catalog numbers. The new numbers were preceded by a zero to avoid confusion with the block-numbered issues, and letters were added below the catalog numbers to indicate category ("A" for band records, "B" for orchestra, "C" for trombone solos, etc.). Berliner's sales had improved markedly by then, although cylinders remained the favored format by far. The company's annual report for the fiscal year ending April 3, 1898, claimed sales of 408,195 records.

Meanwhile, Frank Seaman had become increasingly dissatisfied with Berliner's pricing structure and performance. Frustrated by the company's ongoing failure to deliver first-quality merchandise on time, he backed the formation of a new supplier for his National Gramophone Company, as was his right under the 1896 contract. The Universal Talking Machine Company was incorporated on February 3, 1898, and quickly commenced production of competing Zonophone machines (but not yet records) for Seaman. Thus began the complex maneuvering that eventually made it possible for Seaman to secure an injunction against Berliner and put a stop to the production of Gramophone products in the United States.

In retaliation, Berliner stopped shipments to Seaman in 1899. Seaman then successfully sued Berliner for breach of contract in failing to deliver goods as ordered. On June 25, 1900, a temporary injunction was granted enjoining Berliner from selling Gramophone products in the United States, except in the District of Columbia. The final documented Berliner recording session before the injunction was granted was held on May 7, 1900. Eldridge Johnson's wax masters, which he had been developing as an alternative to etched-zinc masters with Berliner's support, reportedly were used for some of the very late Berliner issues. According to Victor recording engineer Harry O. Sooy, some other masters that Johnson recorded for Berliner were instead used on Johnson's earliest records, under the Improved Gram-O-Phone label (*see* Victor Talking Machine Company and Predecessor Companies).

The injunction effectively marked the end of Emile Berliner's business in the United States. On August 6, 1900, Berliner admitted that he had refused to deliver merchandise to Seaman, as required by the 1896 contract, an action he justified by claiming that Seaman had betrayed the interests of the Berliner Gramophone Company to competing and infringing corporations. The injunction was dissolved on appeal, and the case was remanded to the Circuit Court on July 6, 1901 (*Berliner Gramophone Co. v. Seaman*, 49 C.C.A. 99). In February 1902, however, the Circuit Court upheld the injunction against Berliner (*Berliner Gramophone Co. v. Seaman*, 313 F. 750).

Barred from selling Gramophone products in the United States, Berliner transferred his assets to Eldridge Johnson's newly created Victor Talking Machine Company in October 1901 in exchange for stock in the new company. Thus, Victor acquired rights to Berliner's crucial patents as well as to Francis Barraud's painting, "His Master's Voice," which would soon be adopted as Victor's trademark. Berliner had first reproduced the painting in his final American catalog of June 1900, but it had never appeared on his discs.

Berliner (who would have no hand in Victor's operations) moved to Canada, where he had established a branch operation in 1899. He installed four presses in the Bell Telephone Company's Montreal facility (367–371 Aqueduct Street), opened a phonograph factory on Fortification Lane, and initially sold his products through a retail store at 2315–2316 St. Catherine Street. By 1903, Berliner had established legal residence in Montreal, although he made frequent trips back to the U.S. and largely left of the management of the Canadian operation to others, eventually including his son Herbert. In later years Berliner spent most of his time in Washington, D.C. His estate at 1438 Columbia Road, on what was then the far outskirts of the city, included a building that housed his personal laboratory and an experimental recording studio.

In 1904, the Canadian operation was incorporated as the Berliner Gramophone Co. of Canada, Ltd. For the next twelve years, Berliner's company was content to license most of its material from Victor in the U.S., and the Gramophone Company in England. But in 1916, unhappy with the royalties that Victor was collecting for the use of its masters, Berliner's son Herbert began recording independently for the Canadian Victor catalog, often employing visiting American talent. He finally left his father's company in August 1921, taking some key personnel with him, to form The Compo Company (*q.v.*). The Berliner Gramophone Company, reorganized as the Victor Talking Machine Company of Canada, Ltd., came under increasingly strict control by its American counterpart, which finally purchased the company outright in 1927.

In the late 1920s, Emile Berliner developed sound equipment for movie theaters, which was marketed posthumously as the Berliner Acoustic System. He died in his Washington home on August 3, 1929.

BESA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1952

Offices: 1849 3rd Ave., New York (1947–1950); 163 W. 23rd St., New York (from early 1950)

Record Products: Besa

Besa specialized in traditional Jewish material, and its album sets by bass Sidor Belarsky are reported to have sold relatively well. No reliable information concerning the company's ownership or operation has been located thus far.

BETHLEHEM MUSIC COMPANY / BETHLEHEM RECORDING LABORATORY (Discs)

Record Production: c. Mid–Late 1920s

Offices: Atlanta

Record Products: Bethlehem

The short-lived Bethlehem label specialized in material for the fundamentalist Christian market. One Bethlehem issue, commissioned by the Morris-Henson Company (Atlanta), appears to use masters from Winsett Recording Laboratories (Chattanooga). Other masters, some of which were electrically recorded, are from an unknown source and apparently were commissioned for Bethlehem's exclusive use.

BETTINI PHONOGRAPH LABORATORY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1889 – c. 1900

Offices: 110 5th Ave., New York (to c. 8/1898); Judge Building, New York (c. 8/1898–early 1900s); 80 Chambers St., New York (early 1900s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—110 5th Ave., New York

Record Products: Bettini cylinders

Gianni Bettini was the first to produce and market recordings of internationally acclaimed celebrities on a regular basis, albeit in very limited quantities. A former lieutenant in the Italian cavalry, he arrived in the United States in the late 1880s and began experimenting with an Edison phonograph, which failed to meet his standards for musical recording and reproduction.

Bettini's U.S. patent #409,003, filed on April 11, 1889, covered an improved "spider" recorder and reproducer with multiple legs connecting the stylus to the diaphragm. Bettini's patent drawing pictured four legs, but the design evolved over time, and production models used as many as nine legs. An April 1890 *Scientific American* article pictured several variations, including two versions of the standard circular design (with five legs, of equal length on one model, and of unequal length on the other), as well as square and pentagonal models with small multiple diaphragms, one for each leg.

The *Scientific American* article also pictured a complete phonograph apparently of Bettini's own design, but for commercial purposes, the spider reproducer was sold as an attachment for standard Edison (and somewhat later, Columbia) machines. On January 27, 1892, Bettini filed for several improvements to his recorder, including the addition of a shield to prevent extraneous noises from registering on the diaphragm. Bettini employed mica diaphragms, which were more sensitive than the glass used in standard recorders at the time. His recorder was said to be particularly well-suited to capturing the female voice, which was considered a notoriously difficult task at the time.

Bettini was displaying his phonograph publicly by October 1889. Possessing what the press praised as a superior recording device, Bettini set out to lure celebrities of international stature to his comfortably furnished "phonographic salon." Many were happy to oblige, charging nothing for their services in return for the chance to hear their voices properly reproduced. Newspapers began to label Bettini "Edison's rival," praising the quality of his sound reproduction while likening that of the standard phonograph and graphophone to the sounds produced by a telephone. Bettini's status as an industry outsider during the early years of his operation is apparent in the virtual absence of his name from *The Phonogram*, a publication of the Edison's North American Phonograph Company, which largely controlled the phonograph trade at that time.

Essentially a boutique operation during its early years, the Bettini Phonograph

Laboratory was a favorite gathering spot for socialites and the musical aristocracy. The *Brooklyn Eagle* termed Bettini's studio "a resort for many footlight favorites." Among the celebrities who gathered and recorded there in the early-to-mid 1890s were Sarah Bernhardt, Yvette Guilbert, Lillie Langtry, Nellie Melba, Pol Plançon, Mme. Rejane, Francisco Tamagno, Ellen Terry, Mark Twain, and former president Benjamin Harrison. The early recordings were made primarily for the private enjoyment of Bettini and members of his social circle, and not necessarily with commercial release in mind. *The Phonoscope* reported, "The artists who call at the studio are in the habit of using the cylinders to test their voices." It went on to note that test recordings made when visiting artists were "in good voice" were saved by Bettini for unspecified future use.

The recording sessions could be highly informal. In the midst of a Melba recording, *The Phonoscope* reported, "Mark Twain interrupted the singer with a few remarks on the experience he had in trying to make practical use of the instrument." The paper reported that the artists "meet to laugh and talk, smoke cigarettes, and exchange gossip. Their chief business there is to record in the phonograph... But incidentally there is a deal of enjoyment in hearing repeated the voice of other artists."

Bettini filed a patent application for a mechanical cylinder-duplicating device on March 14, 1892 (U.S. patent #488,381). He was soon offering to copy selected recordings for sale, for a premium price. It was a custom service for the affluent that was provided subject to Bettini's whims and the condition of the masters, some of which reportedly became badly worn from repeated copying. By the mid-1890s, Bettini had emerged as a prominent figure in New York society and was catering to a wealthy clientele that included members of the Vanderbilt family.

However, a change in Bettini's business model was becoming evident. In 1896 he began advertising "every kind of musical and other records" for sale at his studio. *The Phonoscope* for December 1896 (which probably was published month or more after its cover date) reported that Bettini had purchased part of the defunct Phonograph Record & Supply Company's stock of cylinders, which consisted of conventional popular fare by less-than-stellar artists. He also hired the Phonograph Record & Supply's John Kaiser as a recording engineer, reflecting the studio's ever-increasing activity. Kaiser stayed until early 1898, when he left to launch the firm of Harms, Kaiser & Hagen.

Bettini reportedly was issuing professionally printed record catalogs by early 1897. The earliest example known to survive, from June 1898, featured celebrity recordings ranging in price from \$2 for selections by Alberto de Basini and Emilio de Gogorza, to \$3.50 for Plançon, \$4 for Guilbert, and \$6 for Bernhardt—three to six times the usual price of other companies' cylinders. Conspicuously absent were the early recordings by Twain, President Harrison, and other notables. However, a blurb noted, "We have in our collection many records from celebrated artists not mentioned in this catalog." By 1899, Bettini was also importing recordings from Europe, Japan, and China.

There were many less-expensive offerings for the popular market. Bettini's June 1898 catalog featured comedienne Lizzie B. Raymond's renditions of "A Hot Time in the Old Town" and "All Coons Look Alike to Me," along with similar material by one "Lady X," who was pictured with her back to the camera. By then, Bettini was also offering a large selection of cylinders credited to the probably fictitious Royal Blue Band, as well as selections by Vess L. Ossman, Charles P. Lowe, George W. Johnson, and other studio regulars of the period. Retailing for \$1.25 to \$2.50 each, Bettini's popular offerings were markedly more expensive than those of his competitors, but *The Phonogram* for April 1899 reported that prices were being "greatly reduced."

Bettini's Micro-Phonograph attachments had been carried by dealers nationwide since the early 1890s, but until late in the decade, his cylinders were available only on direct order from the laboratory. Beginning in late 1898, however, they could also be purchased from Frederick M. Prescott, Douglas & Company, and other dealers and distributors. Bettini developed an export business in the later 1890s, dispatching his cylinders to Europe, South Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, China, and Japan.

During the summer of 1897, Bettini began negotiations with the Edison United Phonograph Company, the agency that handled sales of Edison goods outside of the United States and Canada. The company's main interest was in licensing Bettini's cylinder duplicator, but secretary G. W. Morrison noted, "His record business is also interesting,

and it would be worth controlling, if it can be done without spending much money." Reportedly sarcastic and uncooperative at the start of the negotiations, Bettini eventually relented and granted the company an exclusive agency in the England for all of his inventions, patents, and goods (including records) in March 1898. The relationship would prove to be a contentious one. In October 1898, Bettini mailed Edison United officials a list of complaints that included late payments and failure to properly advertise his goods.

The Bettini offices moved to larger quarters in New York's Judge Building during the summer of 1898, while the studio remained on Fifth Avenue. With Bettini so often out of the country, his brother-in-law took over operation of the American company in 1899. In Bettini's absence, record production appears to have dwindled, and it probably had been discontinued by 1900.

In the spring of 1899, potential purchasers were warned to avoid imitation Bettini attachments being sold in France. Learning of the infringement, Bettini sailed for Europe to investigate. After a brief return to the U.S., he departed in August for Paris, where he sold his patent rights for France and the French Colonies to the newly formed *Compagnie Micro-Phonographes Bettini*. He remained in France until late November to oversee the new company's launch. On February 12, 1901, Bettini and a group of wealthy foreign investors organized the *Societe des Micro-Phonographes Bettini* to produce and market Bettini cylinders throughout Europe. By late 1902, the investors were making plans to enter the disc market in affiliation with the French company *Nicole Frères, Ltd.*, with Bettini to serve as their sales agent.

Bettini attracted international attention on March 3, 1903, when he was permitted to record Pope Leo XIII in the Vatican, with the provision that the recordings not be exploited commercially. Two months later, the French company was reorganized and recapitalized as the *Societe des Phonographes Bettini*. With his financial stake in the company significantly diluted, Bettini was reduced to a management role. During the summer of 1903, the company was absorbed by the newly organized *Nicole Record Company, Ltd.*, of London, which severed relations with Bettini and rejected his bid to press Nicole discs. Bettini went on to launch his own disc venture in Paris, assisted by Henri Vives, under the *Societe des Phonographes Bettini* banner. The records were pressed for Bettini in England by the *Crystalate Manufacturing Company*.

In September 1903, with Bettini now residing permanently in Europe, a reorganized Bettini Phonograph Company was incorporated in Manhattan to carry on his American business. By then it was primarily a retail operation dealing in other company's goods, and no longer making or marketing its own cylinders. In March 1905, Bettini's American business and trade name were sold to a group of phonograph dealers from New York and New Jersey, with daily operations initially handled by Guy Warner. Renamed the Bettini Phonograph Company, Ltd., the reorganized company was a purely a wholesale and import business with no involvement in record production. Among its offerings was the Hymnophon (among the earliest enclosed-horn phonographs), which was manufactured by a German firm with which Bettini had been connected for some years. The reorganized company closed in December 1907, at which time *The Talking Machine World* noted simply that "the scheme failed to work."

Bettini later experimented with motion pictures and developed an affordable camera for amateurs that employed a moving lens to record multiple images on a glass plate, rather than on film. Although a novel piece of engineering, it was impractical for commercial use. After abandoning the project, Bettini served as a wartime correspondent in Paris. His entire collection of master recordings, which he had taken to France, was destroyed during the war. In 1917 he returned to U.S., where he died largely forgotten in 1938.

Bettini's cylinders sold in very small quantities. They are extraordinarily rare today, and the few genuine items that have survived are mostly by lesser artists. The cylinder boxes have been reproduced, and it appears likely that faked Bettini cylinders and boxes outnumber the very few surviving genuine specimens.

BIBLETONE (Discs)

Record Production: 1942 – 1961

Offices: 354 4th Ave., New York (1942–5/1954); Wheaton, IL (5/1954–late 1950s); East Orange, NJ (late 1950s–1961)

Pressing: Scranton Record Company (1942–1946); RCA and independent plants (later 1940s); own plant (1950s)

Record Products: Bibletone

Founded in 1942 by Arthur L. Becker, Bibletone was listed in the 1945 *Record Retailing Yearbook* as "unique among recording companies in that it is the only firm devoted exclusively to the production of religious music albums."

Originally an insurance salesman, Becker self-produced some religious recordings in the early 1940s. They generated sufficient interest that in 1941 he contracted with the Scranton Record Company to manufacture a commercial line for him, but production stalled. In 1942, Becker organized Bibletone as an independent commercial operation, hiring C. B. Slade as executive manager and George Shackley as musical director, and eventually opening his own pressing plant. By the mid-1940s, the records were being distributed nationally through Interstate Music Supplies and other wholesalers specializing in small independent labels.

Full-scale production appears to have gotten under way during 1943–1944, despite wartime restrictions on shellac usage. The records were sold only in album or album-and-booklet sets, which became increasingly elaborate as the 1940s progressed. The company also produced a small number of children's records. For a time, Becker secured free radio advertising by offering stations special fifteen- and thirty-minute transcribed programs featuring Bibletone recordings.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Bibletone catalog shifted increasingly toward southern White gospel material. Bibletone was the first all-gospel label to concurrently release LPs, EPs, and standard 45s, many of them pressed in colored vinyl at Bibletone's own plant. Becker diversified in the early 1950s, operating the Kiddie Funland amusement park in the Bronx and launching Musictone, a Bibletone affiliate that produced special-use recordings of secular material, including pre-recorded audio tapes for use in amusement parks and skating rinks.

On May 29, 1954, it was reported that Becker had sold Bibletone's masters and assets to Van Kampen Press (a Wheaton, Illinois, publisher of religious books and pamphlets, and producer of Singspiration and Singtime records) for \$100,000. The report noted that Bibletone had produced approximately five-hundred masters by then.

In the later 1950s, Bibletone was sold to Rev. Richard Engel, who moved the operation to East Orange, New Jersey. In May 1961, Engel and several other record manufacturers were arrested as part of a record-counterfeiting ring that allegedly pressed more than 50,000 bootleg Frank Sinatra albums. Engel was charged with grand larceny, conspiracy to commit grand larceny, and conspiracy to violate trademark laws.

Production was suspended following Engel's arrest, and the Bibletone trademark was allowed to lapse. Johnny Carter re-registered the trademark in 1967, and the label was later taken over by the National Recording Corporation (Rome, Georgia), which currently produces CD reissues under the Bibletone Gospel Oldies banner.

BIG NICKEL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 132 Nassau St., New York

Record Products: Big Nickel

Owned and operated by C. T. (Chris) Forde and Jack Sloves. *Billboard* announced Big Nickel's launch in June 1950, as a pop and rhythm-and-blues label. Its first release, advertised in the same month, was by Lucille Linden, who was billed as "The Fifteen-Year-Old Bombshell." A *Cash Box* reviewer reported that Linden was "in poor voice," while a *Billboard* critic dismissed her as "an unconvincing thrush...trying to make like an Eileen Barton."

On July 1, *Billboard* reported that Big Nickel had signed several rhythm-and-blues artists, including the Avey Prince Orchestra, Mildred Gettings, and Henry Wright. Claude Hopkins' Orchestra, signed in August, appears to have been the first (and possibly only) nationally

known talent signed by the company. The label's last confirmed releases were listed in November 1950. Big Nickel Records was still listed in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many defunct companies) but probably was inactive by then.

BIG TOWN RECORDINGS — See Geddins, Robert L. (Bob)

BIRCH RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946

Offices: 63 E. 56th St., New York

Record Products: Birch

Headed by Robert Birch (president), Birch Records was listed in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook*. The records were mentioned in a Pennsylvania dealer's advertisement in May 1947, but nothing is known of their content.

BIRDLAND RECORDS — See New Jazz Record Company

BIRWELL CORPORATION — See Pan-American Record Company

BISSELL-WEISERT COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1938

Offices: Michigan Square Bldg. (548 N. Michigan Ave.), Chicago

Record Products: Bissell-Weisert

A Chicago radio dealership headed by John C. Weisert, Bissell-Weisert briefly produced its own record label in the late 1930s. Its initial release, in the summer of 1938, featured Robert McBride's salon-jazz arrangements of "Sweet Sue" and "China Boy" for English horn, harpsichord, and piano. Additional Bissell-Weisert releases have been reported anecdotally, but remain to be confirmed. In March 1950, John Weisert announced that his company was exiting the retail business.

BLACK AND WHITE RECORDS/ BLACK AND WHITE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1942–1949

Offices: 2117 Foster Ave., Brooklyn, NY; and 157 Belmont Blvd., Long Island, NY (1943–1945); 4910 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA (1945–1949)

Pressing: Own plant — Los Angeles

Record Products: Black and White; pressing for Arlington, Comet, and other small labels

Founded in Brooklyn in 1943 by Lester Schriber, Sr., initially as a jazz label. Black and White's launch was delayed by the first American Federation of Musicians' recording ban and wartime shellac rationing. Schriber managed to secure only four titles, recorded by pianist Art Hodes on July 17, 1942, before the AFM ban went into effect. The first two were advertised in *The Record Changer* for July 1943, with the warning, "Better hurry — supply is limited."

The remaining Hodes titles were not advertised until January 1944, at the end of the ban. Recording resumed on March 4 of that year, with a Cliff Jackson session, then stalled again. After a four-month hiatus, recording sessions finally got under way on a regular basis on July 1, with Al Sack now serving as Black and White's nominal musical director.

In early 1945, Schriber sold Black and White, along with Comet Records (in which he was a majority investor), to Paul and Lillian Reiner. Schriber went on to launch the short-lived Red Hot and Blues Recording Company (whose minuscule output was released by Black and White) before scuttling it to launch the Swan Recording Company in 1946. Plastic pressings, initially available only on 12" discs, were introduced in 1945.

The Reiners took over as president and vice-president, respectively, of Black and White. They moved the company to Los Angeles and hired Ralph Bass as their West Coast recording director, talent scout, and producer. A music-publishing subsidiary, the Paul Reiner Publishing Company, was also formed to control the rights to artists' compositions recorded for the label. Some Black and White sessions were supervised by Leonard Feather, who saw to it that his own compositions, and musicians who curried his favor, were well-represented. A recent British transplant, Feather was viewed as a self-aggrandizing

interloper by some American traditional-jazz enthusiasts at the time. As one *Record Changer* columnist wrote, Feather "maintained that the Golden Age of jazz coincides roughly with the date of his arrival in this country."

Black and White had a minor hit in late 1946 with Jack McVea's "Open the Door, Richard," which was soon widely covered (more successfully, in some cases) by other artists. Under Paul Reiner's management, Black and White expanded into the pop, country-and-western, and Latino material markets and issued album sets of children's records, traditional spirituals, cowboy songs, and ballroom dance numbers. Much of the country-and-western material was acquired from Zeke Clement's defunct Blazon Records. After building an artist roster that included such notables as Lena Horne, Jack McVea, Roosevelt Sykes, and T-Bone Walker, Bass resigned on May 1, 1947, citing "a rift in policy." His replacement was band leader and pop vocalist Phil Moore.

By late 1947, Reiner was increasingly focused on developing Black and White's pressing and distribution business, building a client list that came to include the Click, Fine Arts, Highway, Jewel, Modern, and Supreme labels, and many others. In early 1949, Supreme Records filed suit against Black and White, demanding an accounting of royalties. The matter was settled out of court in April, with *Cash Box* predicting (incorrectly, in the case of Black and White) that both companies "will go happily on their respective ways."

The lawsuit coincided with the beginning of a shake-up at the management level. General manager John Blackburn departed in February 1949 to launch the Selective Record Company and was replaced by Mack Green. At the same time, Moses Asch was named manager of Black and White's New York office, which reportedly conducted little business before being closed at the end of May. Sales manager Leo Flack moved to Supreme Records several weeks later.

The final Black and White releases appeared in June 1949, shortly before operations were suspended. Reiner had already begun selling off the masters piecemeal, beginning with a large lot (including Comet's masters by Art Tatum, Red Norvo, and Charlie Parker) Dial Records purchased on June 21. The T-Bone Walker masters were sold to Capitol Records, which reissued them with new master numbers. The remaining masters, including unreleased material, were offered for sale on October 8, 1949, with right of first refusal offered to the artists. By then, Paul Reiner had left the recording industry and reportedly was managing a hardware warehouse.

BLACK SWAN PHONOGRAPH COMPANY — See Pace Phonograph Company

BLAZON RECORDS — See Liberty Record Company

BLU RECORDS / BLUE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1952

Offices: 9512 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles

Record Products (78): Blu, Blue

Founded as Blu Records in late 1948 by Black songwriter, musician and music publisher Dootsie Williams, the owner of Dootsie Williams Publications. Williams composed or collaborated on most of the titles featured by his label. He had worked as a musical director for M-G-M Records before launching his own label. Williams soon changed the spelling of his company and label names to Blue, for unexplained reasons. A May 1949 *Los Angeles Tribune* report referred to Blue as a "new all-Negro recording company."

The initial releases, on the Blu label, were announced in early 1949. The company had minor local jukebox hits in mid-year with Billy Mitchell's "Song of the Woodpecker" and Johnny Taylor's "West Coast Baby." Some later Blue releases were known for their mildly suggestive fare, particularly a series of party records by Billy Mitchell.

Williams launched his better-known Dootone label (later renamed Dooto) in December 1951. Blue Records remained in operation until late 1952, when it closed after producing fewer than forty known releases.

BLUE BONNET MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946–1949

Offices: 3235 Ross Ave., Dallas, TX

Record Products: Blue Bonnet

Founded in the early 1940s by Herbert T. Rippa, Blue Bonnet Music (also styled Bluebonnet in some advertisements and trade-paper reports) originally handled distribution in Texas and Oklahoma for Aladdin, Cosmo, and other independent labels. The company soon expanded into the jukebox supply business. Rippa's wife, Veronica, was involved in the company's operation, although not as recording manager, as has been erroneously reported elsewhere.

Blue Bonnet records were on the market by 1946, when the company released four sides by country singer Hank Thompson. He scored a minor regional hit for Blue Bonnet with "California Woman" before moving on to other labels. Rippa recorded Texas blues singer Smokey Hogg in 1947 and subsequently sold the masters to Modern Records.

Blue Bonnet records were not mentioned in *Billboard* until 1948. The magazine reviewed three releases in July of that year, rating the titles by Buddy Harris' Lone Star Playboys and Benny Brosh's Tune Ramblers as generally satisfactory. Carl (Palomino Kid) Story was given a poor rating, with the comment that he seemed to be "on the verge of slumber." Some Blue Bonnet masters might have been sold to the Country Music Company later in 1948.

The Blue Bonnet Music Company was last listed as a record producer in *Billboard*'s October 1949 directory, although it probably was not releasing new recordings by then. There is no known connection to the later Fort Worth-based Bluebonnet label.

BLUE CHIP RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948–1949

Offices: Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Blue Chip

A short-lived venture launched by songwriter Arthur Schwartz in late 1948. Blue Chip's first release, by Linda Stevens, was belatedly reviewed by *Billboard* in the same month. Its second release comprised two titles by French singer (and future star of *Hogan's Heroes*) Robert Clary, recorded in Paris in September 1948 by Standard Transcriptions' Harry Bluestone. The record was reviewed favorably by *Billboard* and *Cash Box* in March 1949, by which time the masters had been sold outright to Tempo Records for \$10,000, an unusually high figure for the period. The Blue Chip label appears to have been discontinued by the end of 1949.

BLUE DANUBE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1952

Offices: 19194 Montevista, Detroit

Record Products: Blue Danube

Launched in June 1949 by orchestra leader Steve Pavlekovich, in partnership with George Bogich and Elmer Georges. The Blue Danube label specialized in Yugoslavian and other foreign-language material by Detroit-area musicians. Pavlekovich left the company in the summer of 1950 to devote more time to his music school, and Georges took his place as manager of artists and repertoire. The company, which is not known to have advertised or distributed nationally, was last mentioned in *Billboard*'s March 1952 manufacturer directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

BLU-DISC RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924

Offices: New York

Original-Master Source(s): Probably Emerson Recording Laboratories

Record Products: Blu-Disc

The short-lived Blu-Disc Record Company is notable for having released the first records by Duke Ellington (erroneously cited as 1926 recordings in some jazz histories and discographies), and for having advertised the first records by Paul Robeson, although it did not survive for long enough to issue them.

Circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that Blu-Disc was a venture of singer, songwriter, and music publisher Joseph H. (Jo) Trent, with the unique T-prefixed master-number series offering the first clue. Trent, Porter Grainger, and Robert Ricketts comprised the Rainbow Music Company, a Harlem music-publishing house that received financial support from Irving Berlin. Duke Ellington began working as Jo Trent's piano accompanist in the spring of 1924, and Trent himself was featured on one side of Blu-Disc 1003. Virtually all of the titles appearing on Blu-Disc were credited to composers associated with Rainbow Music or other Berlin-affiliated publishing houses.

The company announced only nine Blu-Disc releases, including recordings by Trent himself (accompanied by Ellington and two members of his band), the Leroy Smith and Duke Ellington orchestras (the latter as "The Washingtonians"), and singer Alberta Pryme (misspelled "Prime" on the labels).

Although often characterized as a race-record label, only four of Blu-Disc's nine known releases were by Black performers (one issue credited to Ellington's Orchestra was actually by two different White dance bands). The remaining releases comprised mainstream pop material by White artists from the Emerson, Paramount, and Banner catalogs. The company's own masters are believed to have been commissioned from the Emerson Recording Laboratories, based upon aural and physical characteristics, and on their appearance in early 1925 on labels produced by the Bridgeport Die and Machine Company, which by then was obtaining its masters from Emerson.

Blu-Disc clearly planned to produce further releases by Black artists. A December 1924 poster promised upcoming numbers by Paul Robeson and Fred Weaver. Those recordings were made, and were assigned Blu-Disc master numbers, but the company apparently closed before they were released. Instead, they appeared in early 1925 on the equally short-lived, and possibly even rarer, Up-to-Date label.

BLUE LABEL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – 1949

Offices: 6253 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Blue Label

Launched in early 1947 by movie actor William Gargan, although not listed in *Billboard's* manufacturer directory until January 1949. The obscure Atom Record Company was listed at the same address in 1946. It has been suggested that the name was changed from Atom to Blue Label to avoid conflict with the Atomic Record Company, which was also operating in Los Angeles at the time, but documentary evidence is lacking.

Blue Label received some national publicity in March 1947, when it released an "ecclesiastically approved" album of prayers recited by William Gargan ("without any theological discourse attached," according to one report) at the request of the Holy Name Society of the Catholic Church. Otherwise, the trade papers reported nothing significant concerning Blue Label's operation, aside from its having secured several small regional distributors during 1948. The company was last listed by *Billboard* in late 1949.

BLUE NOTE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1939

Offices: 767 Lexington Ave., New York

Original-Master Source(s): WMGM Studio (1939), Reeves Sound Studios (1939–1940);, WOR Studios (from 1943), Radio Recorders (1940s), other independent sources

Pressing: None; pressing contracted to independent plants

Record Products (78s): Blue Note, Climax [3]; masters for independent labels

Founded by Alfred W. Lion, a German immigrant who arrived in the United States by way of Chile in 1937, Blue Note was one of the most important of the early independent jazz labels.

Lion's first sales leaflet, issued in May 1939, declared, "Blue Note Records are designed simply to serve the uncompromising expressions of hot jazz or swing, in general. Hot jazz...is expression and communication, a musical and social manifestation, and Blue Note Records are concerned with identifying its impulse, not its sensational and commercial adornments." The copy was written by Max Margulis, a leftist sympathizer who supplied much of the financing for Blue Note's startup. At the end of the year, Lion was joined by

Francis (Frank) Wolff, a childhood friend who had recently fled Nazi Germany. Wolff provided the business acumen that Lion lacked and was responsible for securing distribution through Commodore Records.

Blue Note's trademark application claimed use of the name on records beginning January 5, 1939. The first recording session was held the following day, in the WMGM studio (New York), with pianists Albert Ammons and Meade (Lux) Lewis. *Jazz Information* magazine reported, "The plan of recording used at Blue Note's studio sessions, a free-and-easy atmosphere rather like a jam session, gives the records about the same chance to succeed as an actual jam session. A great number of conditions determines whether they are really marvelous or quite bad."

The initial Blue Note releases were shipped to dealers in the spring of 1939. From the start, the labels listed full band personnel, still an unusual practice at the time. The inconsistent sound quality and assortment of nonsequential master-number series reflect Lion's habit of drifting from one studio to another. The earliest masters have been conclusively traced to the WMGM studio, but later in 1939, Lion switched to the Reeves Sound Studios. By 1943 many of the New York sessions were being held in the WOR studios (New York), but Lion continued to use other venues as needs dictated, even recording in Timme Rosenkrantz's New York apartment.

Initially self-distributed, Blue Note records were targeted to a niche audience and were priced accordingly. Retailing for \$1 (10") and \$1.50 (12"), they were considerably more expensive than major-label releases. Initially, the Blue Note artist roster featured such mainstream jazz musicians as James P. Johnson, Sidney Bechet, and Art Hodes. In November 1939, Blue Note made news with its release of what was then the longest recorded jazz performance, Lewis' "Blues," which covered four 12" sides. In December 1943 the company introduced the companion Climax label (using the identical design, but a different color scheme) for recordings of traditional jazz by veteran New Orleans musicians, most of whom had not recorded previously. The first five releases devoted to George Lewis and his New Orleans Stompers, which received charitable reviews but sold poorly. The Climax series proved to be short-lived.

In 1946, *Billboard* identified Blue Note as one of several independent labels that was attracting top-flight sidemen from the major orchestras by paying them substantially more than union scale. However, a brief excursion into the pop field, announced in November 1948, failed to produce notable results, and Blue Note soon refocused on jazz almost exclusively. In the 1950s, Blue Note emerged as an important independent producer of modern-jazz recordings, showcasing the work of Thelonius Monk and Bud Powell, among many others. LPs, the earliest of which were cobbled together from previous 78-rpm releases, were introduced in 1950.

Blue Note's later history is beyond the scope of this work. It operated successfully as an independent company until 1965, when its catalog was acquired by Liberty Records. Lion continued to have some involvement with the label until his retirement in 1967. Blue Note passed to United Artists in 1968, then was acquired by the London-based Electric and Musical Industries after Wolff's death in 1971. Under EMI's ownership, the label lay largely dormant until 1985, when Bruce Lundvall undertook a successful effort to relaunch the brand, with Capitol-EMI handling financing and distribution. The Blue Note label remains in production, in Compact Disc format.

BLUE RECORDS — See Blu Records / Blue Records

BLUE RIBBON MUSIC COMPANY / BLUE RIBBON RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – 1962

Offices: Staunton, IL (PO box number only; no street address listed)

Pressing: Research Craft, other independent plants

Record Products: Blue Ribbon [II], Texas

Owned by country-music singer and songwriter Chaw Mank. The Blue Ribbon name had previously been used for an unrelated and very short-lived Ohio-based label (see Rice Recording Company). *Billboard* first listed Mank as the producer of Blue Ribbon records in May 1947. The label was not advertised nationally and received virtually no coverage in the trade papers, making it impossible to establish an exact launch date.

Blue Ribbon Music, Mank's publishing operation, was finally registered as an Ohio for-profit business on January 8, 1949, a month before it was purchased by King Records as a subsidiary. At the time, Mank was completing work on his book *Saddle Land*, a biographical guide to what he termed "Western folk performers." Mank continued to be involved in publishing ventures following the sale of Blue Ribbon Music.

The Blue Ribbon label plugged many of Mank's compositions, and his name usually appeared in large type above the trademark. Talent for the early releases was recruited from midwestern and southern radio stations, including Ray Anderson's Tennessee Mountaineers (WHTN–Huntington, West Virginia), Jim Hall's Radio Rangers (WFNS–Burlington, North Carolina), and Yodeling Bob Stotts (KMA–Shenandoah, Iowa). Mank later focused primarily on southern and western performers and entrusted much of his promotional work to "Cowboy" Howard Vokes, a small-time record distributor based in New Kensington, Pennsylvania.

Blue Ribbon LPs were introduced in 1953. In early 1955, Mank sold several of his masters to Decca. Blue Ribbon records were still being sold as late as 1962, and Mank continued to be associated with Blue Ribbon Music into the 1970s. In later years he and Brad Steiger co-authored the books *Valentino* (1966) and *Psychic Diary of the Stars* (1970), reflecting Mank's fascination with movies and the paranormal. Mank was still recording, for the Rebel label, in the early 1970s. He died on April 14, 1985.

There is no connection to two Blue Ribbon labels made for the children's market (one produced by Mercury, the other by unknown Los Angeles company) in the early 1950s.

BLUE STAR RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – c. 1949

Offices: 309 Plymouth Building, Des Moines, IA (1945); 2211 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines (from 1946)

Record Products: Blue Star, Jay-Zee

Launched in late 1944 by Jerry Smith (president and sales manager) and Sidney Pearlman (secretary). The company was first listed in *Record Retailing Yearbook's* 1945 edition. Blue Star records were distributed by Iowa Amusement Distributors (Des Moines), a jukebox business with which the label appears to have been affiliated.

Blue Star initially was a cut-rate (50¢) label employing obscure regional pop artists. A country-and-western series was added in July 1945, featuring the former "Barn Dance" team of Jerry Smith and Zelda Scott; the company also produced the short-lived Jay-Zee label for the pair. Blue Star advertised custom pressing services, although it remains to be discovered what commercial labels, if any, it pressed.

There is no connection to the French Blue Star label of the same period, nor to the later Blue Star labels based in Long Island City, New York (a pop label) and Bellaire, Texas (square-dance and folk).

BLU-WHITE RECORD COMPANY, LTD. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1950

Offices: 421 Main St., Hackensack, NJ

Record Products: Blu-White

This company was listed in *Billboard's* manufacturer directory for July 1950, but no reliable information concerning its ownership or output has been discovered. *The International Musician* for August 1950 reported that Blu-White had signed a contract with the American Federation of Musicians. In *Billboard's* October 1950 disc jockey survey, only one response was received regarding Blu-White.

BONEY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1951

Offices: 1104 N. Queen St., Kinston, NC; 807 N. Queen St., Kinston (distribution)

Record Products: Boney

Launched in the late 1940s by George G. Boney, a North Carolina record and jukebox distributor. A *Billboard* article from June 1948, pre-dating the launch of Boney's record operation, reported that he was achieving excellent results by placing jukeboxes stocked

with religious tunes in churches and children's centers. *Billboard* reported the impending launch of Boney Records in July 1949 and first listed the company in its October 1949 directory of country-and-western record producers. Its last known release was listed in February 1951. The Boney name was used in the late 1950s for a country-and-western label based in Norfolk, Nebraska.

BONGO RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1948 – 1949

Offices: 201 W. 94th St., New York

Record Products: Bongo

Several minor distributors advertised Latino dance numbers on the Bongo label in late 1948. The company was listed in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory, but no reliable information has been located concerning its ownership or operation.

BOP RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947– 1948

Offices: 926 S. Westmoreland, Los Angeles

Record Products: Bop!

A short-lived venture launched by Ralph Bass during the summer of 1947. Bass had resigned from Black and White Records in May, over what *Billboard* termed "a rift in policy." Initial trade-paper reports stated that Bass would manage Enterprise Records' race catalog, but Bass opted instead to produce his own label.

Bop's entire output comprised extended performances, each covering multiple sides, that were edited from live recordings of a concert staged in Los Angeles' Elks Auditorium on July 6, 1947. The recordings featured trumpeter Howard McGhee; saxophonists Dexter Gordon, Sonny Criss, and Wardell Gray; the Bill Moore Orchestra, and the Bopland Boys, among others.

In September 1948 *Billboard* reported that Bass had purchased twelve masters by Cecil Gant for the Bop label and had taken over a one-hour portion of Joe Adams' radio show on KOWL (Santa Monica) to promote the Bop label. Soon after that announcement, however, Bass moved to a full-time position with Savoy Records, which took over the Bop catalog. Bass later ascribed Bop's demise to cash-flow problems, recalling "After a year...I couldn't get my money from the distributors." The Gant masters, which were not issued before Bop's closure, were sold to the 4 Star label. Some of the Bopland Boys' recordings were later licensed to Savoy and Regent.

Bass, who once declared, "I didn't give a damn if Whites ever bought my records," went on to have a distinguished career with the Federal and Chess labels, specializing in jazz and rhythm-and-blues artists. He was inducted into the Rock-and-Roll Hall of Fame in 1991 and died on March 5, 1997.

BORNAND MUSIC BOX RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: From 1947

Offices: 333 5th Ave., New York (1947–1950); 139 4th Ave., Pelham, NY (from 1951)

Record Products: Bornand Music Box Record Co., Bornand Music Box Records

Devoted entirely to recordings of antique music boxes and other mechanical music devices, the Bornand Music Box Company announced its first releases in the summer of 1947. The records were sold both singly and in album sets, and plastic pressings were used almost from the start. LPs, initially cobbled together from previous 78-rpm releases, were added to the line in the early 1950s. Bornand's high-quality recordings, which a *Billboard* reviewer characterized as "odd and entirely soothing," developed a small but loyal following among some early audiophiles as well as nostalgia enthusiasts.

BOST RECORDS COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1942 – 1946

Offices: 29 W. 57th St., New York; 43 E. Ohio St. (Chicago sales branch)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above New York address

Pressing: Independent plant(s)

Record Products: Bost, transcriptions, custom recordings

Founded in early 1942, the Bost Records Company offered radio transcription and private recording services, the commercial Bost label initially being something of a side-line. Its letterhead claimed that the studio employed "high fidelity" RCA equipment. Officers at the time of the company's launch included Rudolf R. Steiner (president), John Babb, Jr. (secretary), and Irving Gromet (treasurer). The latter two positions were consolidated around 1944, with Julia Pontell replacing Babb and Gromet.

Herbert H. Borchardt, a former managing director of Polydor in France, was hired to supervise Bost's commercial recording program, although by 1945 he was listed only as the company's sales manager. He had arrived in the United States in 1941, prior to Bost's launch. In addition to his work for Bost, Borchardt served with the U. S. Office of War Information during World War II, helping to secure employment for performers who had fled Nazi Germany.

Bost's initial releases, comprising three album sets, were reviewed by *The New York Times* on August 1, 1942: "Songs of Early America," performed by current and former members of the American Ballad Singers under the direction of Elie Siegmeister; "The Evolution of Piano Music," performed by Sylvia Marlowe on the harpsichord; and "Latin American Typical and Folk Songs," a collection of songs from Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, and Cuba by native performers.

Julia Pontell characterized the label's output as "interesting to the collector, connoisseur, and the music-loving public in general...as well as the educational institutions." Its artist roster came to include Greta Keller; Metropolitan Opera tenor Kurt Baum (who made his first commercial recordings for the label); Brazilian composer-pianist Francisco Mignone; Hungarian pianist Miklos Schwalb; and singer Lotte Lenya, accompanied by her husband, pianist and composer Kurt Weill.

Bost records were sold only in album sets, which included descriptive booklets. Aside from some complaints about noisy pressings at the outset, the records received generally positive reviews, with *The New York Times* noting that the label was "depending in part on fresh ideas to add attractiveness to its youthful list." However, Bost did virtually no advertising, and sales appear to have been meager. The records had only limited distribution, primarily through J. F. Bard in the Midwest, Interstate Music Suppliers on the East Coast, and a few specialty jobbers and retailers elsewhere. Production of new releases was discontinued by the mid-1940s, and the company was last listed in *Radio Annual's* 1946 directory.

BOSTON TALKING MACHINE COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1911 – 1912

Offices: 41 W. St., Boston (incorporated in Maine)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio(s) — Boston (confirmed), possibly New York

Pressing: Own plant—Ames & Amhurst Sts., Cambridge, MA

Record Products: Phono-Cut Record, Colonial [1] (Phono-Cut Record), Perfection Phono-Cut Record

The Boston Talking Machine Company was the third company to produce vertical-cut discs commercially in the United States, following Sapphire and Sonora. It was founded by Josiah B. Millet (publisher of *The American Business Encyclopaedia and Legal Advisor*) and was financed largely by Boston socialites Henry and Henrietta Whitney.

Millet, in addition to his publishing activities, was an acoustic scientist who held several patents on underwater sound-transmission devices. His patent for a flexible laminated disc with a paper core, filed on January 5, 1911, was assigned to Boston Talking Machine. However, no evidence has been found that the company ever produced such records. By the time the patent was finally granted on December 24, 1912, Boston Talking Machine was in the process of winding-down production.

On March 29, 1911, Millet patented a sound-absorbing stylus holder, which he claimed would absorb "objectionable and inharmonic stylus vibrations." A later Millet design patent,

for a phonograph he designed jointly with Dexter W. Allis, was assigned to Boston Talking Machine in April 1912 but not granted until 1916. The company was also the sales agent for the Detectorphone, a telephonic device manufactured by the Millet Signal Company (Boston), which could detect leaks in ship hulls and buried pipes.

The earliest known reference to the Boston Talking Machine Company is an announcement in the March 1910 *Talking Machine World* of a newly organized (but as-yet unnamed) Boston company "in which the vertical cut record will figure." In April 1910 it was announced that George Cheney had resigned from Sonora to serve as recording engineer of the new company. Louis Valiquet, formally with the Universal Talking Machine Company (Zonophone), was retained as a consulting engineer, and James S. Whitney served as sales manager. Loring Leeds, unemployed following the dismantling of the Leeds & Catlin Company, was hired as general manager and oversaw design and construction of the pressing plant. Veteran studio manager Isaac W. Norcross was also briefly associated with the venture, but severed relations in August or September 1910.

The Phono-Cut studio was unusual in that it was located in Boston, far from the New York–New Jersey corridor favored by other record companies of the period, as recalled by tenor Walter Van Brunt, who recorded there. (Circumstantial evidence suggests there might also have been a New York studio, which remains to be confirmed.) Popular song titles on the earliest releases suggest that regular record production did not get under way until early 1911.

Boston Talking Machine's discs were marketed by the Phono-Cut Record Company, from which the label took its name. Like Pathé's discs (which were not yet being produced in the United States), they employed a vertically cut groove that was meant to played with a polished sapphire ball. The company also marketed the diminutive Little Wonder phonograph (subsequently renamed Wondrola), a vertical-cut machine that was unrelated to the later Little Wonder records.

Some modern works state that the Boston Talking Machine Company was formed to record the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Although no documentation has been found to support that claim, and no Phono-Cut recordings are known by the full orchestra, the company did record some Boston Symphony members in small ensembles or as soloists, including André Maquarre (flute); Georges Grisez (clarinet); Karl Barleben, Carmine Fabrizio, Sylvain Noack, Otto Roth, and Anton Witek (violins); and Karl Rissland (viola). Phono-Cut also recorded Carlo Cartica, Rudolfo Fornari, Gaetano Romboli, and other members of the Boston Opera Company. Otherwise, Phono-Cut records relied heavily on the usual New York-area studio freelancers, along with a house orchestra initially under Fred Hager's direction.

On January 24, 1912, the American Graphophone Company (Columbia) announced that had filed a patent-infringement suit (which one Columbia official warned would "be pushed to the limit") against the Boston Talking Machine Company for infringing one of Thomas Macdonald's patent. (A trade-paper report on that suit incorrectly stated that the company had yet to place records on the market). Some key personnel left the company soon after the suit was filed, culminating in March with the departure of musical director Fred Hager and recording engineer George Cheney (the latter being replaced by Charles Hibbard, who had recently left the U-S Everlasting cylinder operation). The lawsuit was settled out of court later that year, after Boston Talking Machine agreed to license to patent in question.

At a time when lateral-cut recordings dominated the American disc-record market, there was little interest in vertical-cut records, and Phono-Cut failed to make any significant impact. Faced with weak sales, the Boston Talking Machine Company appears to have discontinued new record releases in early 1913, but remained in business. In January 1913 the O'Neill-James Company, which had formerly marketed Busy Bee records, became jobbers of Boston Talking Machine products, including Phono-Cut discs, and was reported to have "a stock of records on hand."

The closure of O'Neill-James in the summer of 1913 deprived Boston Talking Machine of one its major retail outlets, and the company began its final downward spiral. On August 12, 1913, Burton H. Corbett was elected president, replacing Millet. The company was placed in receivership on October 2, 1913, on petition of Henry M. Whitney (who

declared the company "financially distressed and unable to meet its obligations"), at which time Corbett and E. Fred Aldrich were appointed as receivers.

Corbett returned to Chicago, and in November he filed a \$100,000 lawsuit against the Whitneys charging them with breach of contract. *The Talking Machine World* for December 1913 reported that Boston Talking Machine was "not doing any business, and some of the leading members of the staff have gone to other places." The Massachusetts state auditor's report confirms that the company last paid taxes for the fiscal year ending November 31, 1913.

Contrary to some published claims, the Boston Talking Machine Company was not purchased by the Keen-O-Phone Company, which by late 1913 was experiencing financial troubles of its own and was on the verge of closing. Rather, the Boston Talking Machine Company was the unnamed, bankrupt Massachusetts firm from which Fred Gennett recalled having purchased some assets when setting up the Starr Piano Company's record division. Gennett's recollections were questioned by several researchers in the 1960s, on rather flimsy grounds, but the use of Phono-Cut masters on Starr Piano's early Remington discs (and absence of them on Keen-O-Phone) supports Gennett's claim.

Shutting down the Boston Talking Machine Company proved to be a prolonged and contentious affair, complicated by creditors' lawsuits and the alleged theft of company stock by the Whitneys. Phono-Cut discs and Wondrola phonographs were still being sold, at deep discounts, as late as 1914. The company's remaining assets (which, according to the legal notices, included machinery, patents, copyrights, phonograph parts, and finished pressings, but apparently not the masters) were finally purchased by Charles E. Whitman in January 1915, for \$30,000.

In November 1915, the remaining Phono-Cut discs were sold to the Wonder Talking Machine Company (New York), a newly formed venture headed by former U-S Everlasting executive Harry B. McNulty. The company issued a catalog of long-deleted Phono-Cut discs in April 1916. By June the company was advertising the records for 25¢ each (40¢ less than the original list price) along with its cut-rate, universal-reproducer Wonder phonographs.

D. E. BOSWELL AND COMPANY

Operating at 154 Lake Street in Chicago, D. E. Boswell and Company was sued by the American Graphophone Company (Columbia) in the summer of 1897 for employing a cylinder-duplicating process the latter claimed to control. The case was decided in Columbia's favor in December 1897, by Judge Grosscup of the U.S. Court for the District of Northern Illinois, and an injunction was granted. The ruling marked the start of more vigorous prosecution of illegal cylinder-duplicating operations. It is unclear whether any of any of the duplicated recordings were Boswell's own.

C. H. BOURNE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 – 1922

Office: Probably New York

Record Products: See Bee

A short-lived Black-owned venture that appeared in mid-to-late 1921. C. H. Bourne is believed to have been related to Clifford S. Bourne, who headed the Guatemalan chapter of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and was an associate of activist Marcus Garvey, the controversial, self-proclaimed "President of Africa."

Bourne's See Bee label is known primarily for having issued Garvey's only commercial recordings, "Speech on his Return to the United States" and "Explanation of the Objects of the Universal Negro Improvement Association," which bore labels stating, "Made exclusively for the U. N. I. A." Garvey's record was advertised for sale by the U. N. I. A. Repository (New York), for 90¢, as early as December 24, 1921. Two weeks later, Garvey was arrested in Chicago and charged with mail fraud for selling passage to Africa on a non-existent ship. In February 1922 he was indicted by a federal grand jury for making false statements to investors in his inoperative Black Star Line.

Based upon the known catalog-number range, See Bee might have released twelve records, of which six have been reliably documented thus far. The recordings are mediocre productions from a technical (and in some cases, musical) standpoint. Among those who

recorded for the label was tenor Walter T. White, a Harlem transplant from Richmond, Virginia, who had concert-hall aspirations and played a minor role in the Avenue Theater's 1922 production of "The Ground Hog." His accompanist was Fred M. Bryan, one of the conductors of Harlem's Clef Club Orchestra in the 'teens, and later an occasional employee of W. C. Handy's. See Bee also issued recordings by the Five Harmoniques and a dance band billed as Wilson's Broadway Orchestra (conducted by Cleveland Jones, a minor Harlem figure who worked at the Commonwealth Casino in the early 1920s) performing current pop tunes in what sound like standard stock arrangements.

With one possible exception, See Bee records were pressed from masters that are not known to have appeared on other labels. Several researchers have suggested that some masters were obtained from the failed Handy Record Company (*q.v.*), which remains to be confirmed. Marketing was virtually non-existent, and other than the Marcus Garvey release, See Bee does not appear to have attracted much notice among record buyers. By the time Garvey was sent to prison in 1923, the label had disappeared as inconspicuously as it had arrived.

BOWMAR RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1950

Offices: 4021 W. 61st Ave., Los Angeles (1950); numerous address changes beginning in 1952

Record Products: Bowmar

Launched in 1950 by Stanley W. Bowmar, who was also a distributor for Young People's Records and other children's labels. His Bowmar label initially specialized in folk songs and dances (particularly Latin-American) and other ethnic fare, for general distribution. By the mid-1950s, however, the company was producing records mainly for school use.

RICHARD BRADLEY AND ASSOCIATES / TOWER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1951

Offices: Civic Opera Building (20 N. Wacker Dr.), Chicago (to 10/1946); 188 W. Randolph St., Chicago (10/1946– c. 1948); 540 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago (c. 1948– 1950); 100 E. Ohio, Chicago (from 1950); Hollywood, CA (from 2/1948); 519 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles (distribution, from 8/1948)

Original-Master Source(s): Universal Recording (Chicago)

Pressing: Mercury Records and Trilon Records plants; own plant—Los Angeles (from c. 8/1948)

Record Products: Teagarden Presents, Tower; Master [3], Stardusk (both announced; unconfirmed)

Richard Bradley and Associates was an outgrowth of Bradley's National Film and Recording Company, which began operations c. 1939 as a provider of radio transcriptions and custom recording services.

Bradley and Associates entered the consumer market in May 1946 with the short-lived Teagarden Presents label for band leader Jack Teagarden. Several weeks later, *Billboard* reported that the company would launch Stardusk (a race label) and Master (a name already in use by Egmont Sonderling's Master Record Company), but nothing further was reported on either label.

In August 1946, Bradley announced that he would soon add a new label, Tower. Recording sessions for the label had been under way since June, and the initial releases appeared in the late August advance lists. Unlike the Teagarden records, which initially had no outside distributors, Bradley arranged for national, and even Mexican, distribution well in advance of Tower's introduction. He also considered making special Tower pressings exclusively for the jukebox trade, with spoken announcements added for promotional purposes, but apparently abandoned the idea before production began.

Tower quickly gained national attention and had a hit in the fall of 1947 with Jack Owens' "How Soon." Owens (billed as "The Cruising Crooner," and a featured artist on Don McNeill's "Breakfast Club" broadcasts) had originally recorded the tune as the reverse-side filler of a promotional disc Bradley produced for the Reynolds Pen Company, but response was so positive that Bradley re-recorded it for release on Tower. Owens went on to become one of Tower's most popular artists, but he left the label in May 1949, after buying out his contract and agreeing to waive future royalties. Also on the roster was Nat Towles' Orchestra, one of Tower's few Black acts. Towles self-promoted the records on a nationwide tour.

Unlike many record companies, Tower initially did not have its own music-publishing affiliate. For a time in 1947, Bradley had a reciprocal arrangement with publisher Art Stevens under which Stevens was given the exclusive right to publish original songs that were recorded for Tower, in return for which Bradley agreed to record a certain number of songs from Stevens' catalog. A dedicated publishing division, Tower Songs, was finally opened in 1948.

Bradley discovered that counterfeit Tower records were being distributed in late 1947, and turned the matter over to the Treasury Department. Their investigation, carried out in affiliation with various law-enforcement agencies, revealed that bootlegging of records was a far more widespread problem than originally thought, affecting numerous labels. However, the perpetrators in Tower's case apparently were never apprehended.

Bradley opened a Los Angeles office to coordinate Western distribution and manufacturing in early 1948, and suggested that he might move the entire operation to California. Little more was heard of the idea until August, when Bradley announced that Tower headquarters were moving to Hollywood, with only a small branch office to remain in Chicago. At the same time, he launched the Tower Distribution Company in Los Angeles to handle West Coast sales and distribution. A new Hollywood office and pressing plant was opened, in the guise of Tower Records of California, Inc., under the management of Mort Linson. Tower announced the impending launch of LPs in February 1950, although introduction was delayed for several months. In early May, 45s were added to the line.

Bradley appears to have largely withdrawn from active management of Tower after the move to California, although he continued to serve as company spokesman. In early 1949 he took over production and distribution of films and recordings for the Photo Electronic Company's Tel-Vision Jr. device (despite what its name implied, this was not a television, but a synchronized phonograph and film-strip projector intended primarily for the children's market.) In November 1951, he turned over all of Tower's pressing and distribution rights to Modern Records (*q.v.*), which operated the label as a subsidiary for a time.

BRIBIESCA RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 11 W. 1st St., Los Angeles

Record Products: Discos Mexico

A producer of records for the Mexican-American market, José Bribiesca launched his Discos Mexico label during the summer of 1946, doing business as the Bribiesca Recording Company. American distribution was handled by Independent Record Sales in Los Angeles.

Disco Mexico's initial releases, advertised in *Billboard* in September 1946, featured Mexican radio and movie star Fernando Rosas, who was appearing in the United States at the time. A *Billboard* reviewer commented, "Interpretive quality is so high that the listener can almost get the gist of the song without understanding the Spanish lyrics." The roster also included Margarita Campero, Julio Flores, and Mariachi Guadalajara, whose records went largely unnoticed by the trade-paper reviewers. Discos Mexico releases covered a wide variety of styles, ranging from authentic ranchero, guaracha, and mariachi pieces to contemporary vocal and dance selections.

Approximately fifty releases appeared before production of Discos Mexico records was quietly discontinued. The last known mention of the records appeared in January 1948, in an advertisement for a music company in Santa Ana, California. The Discos Mexico name was later used by an unrelated Texas-based company, founded in the mid-1950s, that operated well into the LP era.

BRIDGEPORT DIE AND MACHINE COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921–1925

Offices: 170–174 Elm St., Bridgeport, CT

Pressing: Bridgeport, CT

Record Products: Triangle; pressings for numerous labels supplied by New York Recording Laboratories and Emerson Phonograph Company

A major independent pressing plant, the Bridgeport Die and Machine Company owes its inclusion here to its ownership of the Triangle label, for which some original recordings were made, as well as its close affiliation with the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount) and, later, the Emerson Phonograph Company.

The company was founded by James Ogden in August 1912, as a general machine shop, and was officially incorporated later that year. BD&M manufactured several devices on which Ogden held patents, including the Bridgeport Surface Grinder and a high-speed machine for attaching shoe-buttons. Although it has been suggested that the company plated Paramount masters for the New York Recording Laboratories as early as 1918, documentary evidence is lacking.

According to John C. Huenerberg, a former BD&M employee, the company entered the pressing business after an unnamed Long Island company for which they had built a record press (probably Operaphone, based upon circumstantial evidence) went bankrupt in 1920. Huenerberg recalled that he and other BD&M employees pooled funds "to experiment with the machine and get it into service." They succeeded, and by early 1921 BD&M was promoting its record-pressing services to independent record producers. Ogden, in partnership with Victor Emerson, also owned the Kiddie Rekord Company, which shifted its production of children's pictures discs to BD&M in September 1922.

BD&M's output consisted almost entirely of client labels pressed from other company's masters. Its largest customer by far was the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount), for which BD&M launched the Broadway label in early 1921. (The 1923 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory* listed a BD&M studio at 1140 Broadway, New York, which actually was the address of the NYRL studio.) The NYRL connection was further strengthened in February 1922, when BD&M began pressing and marketing the East Coast version of NYRL's Puritan label. Retailing for 50¢, BD&M's version undercut the Paramount releases from which it was derived by 25¢, but sales were restricted to states east of the Ohio River and north of the Potomac, where Paramount had spotty distribution. NYRL continued to market its own version of Puritan elsewhere and later reclaimed full control of the label. Thus, two distinct versions of the Puritan label co-existed for a time, which much to the confusion of early discographers, used the identical recordings but usually not the same couplings or catalog numbers.

By 1923, BD&M was producing a wide array of labels for department stores and mail-order companies, relying primarily on Paramount masters. Most used the same couplings and catalog numbers as BD&M's version of the Puritan label. BD&M also licensed Paramount masters for use on own Triangle label. The only label that BD&M owned outright, and for which original recordings were made, Triangle never gave a label credit to BD&M. The records were announced by *The Phonograph and Talking Machine Weekly* and *The Talking Machine World* in September 1922. They initially were sold by news stands, souvenir shops, and other small retailers, but in the autumn of 1924 they became exclusive to the S. S. Kresge stores. BD&M's own masters, beginning at BDM-1 and recorded for the company in an unknown studio, appeared on a few Triangle releases in 1924. Otherwise, Triangle used the same outside recordings as the other BD&M labels.

In early 1924, BD&M severed relations with NYRL and discontinued its version of the Puritan label, for reasons that were not disclosed. The company was soon securing clients outside the East Coast, beginning with Detroit's J. L. Hudson and Mitchell Phonograph companies. BD&M's new master supplier was the Emerson Recording Laboratories, which had recently begun recording masters for Grey Gull and other client labels. BD&M products from mid-1924 onward drew mainly on ERL's Dandy-Emerson-Grey Gull master pool. Pressings from this period usually show Grey Gull's 3000-series master numbers instead of (or occasionally in addition to) the corresponding Emerson master numbers. Masters from the Regal Record Company (including those of its Federal subsidiary), Pathé, and others were also used on occasion.

BD&M declared bankruptcy in July 1925, after which several of its labels were taken over by other manufacturers.

E. V. BRINCKERHOFF AND COMPANY, INC. / TIME ABROAD, INC. – BRINCKERHOFF STUDIOS / GENERAL SOUND CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1936 – 1943

Office: 29 W. 57th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Records Produced: Nocturne; private, custom, and special-use labels

Founded in 1936 as E. V. Brinckerhoff and Company by Elbert V. Brinckerhoff. Brinckerhoff had been involved in a theatrical consulting business with Frank Cornell a year earlier, but he had no experience in the recording business at the time he launched his company.

Brinckerhoff's studio was in operation by August 1936, when *Variety* reported that Winthrop Steele had been hired as its sales manager. In March 1937, the studio was expanded to accommodate up to forty musicians. It was primarily a provider of custom recording services, specializing in radio transcriptions and special-use material. In 1938 the company merged with transcription producer Time Abroad, Ltd., to form Time Abroad, Inc.–Brinckerhoff Studios, with Brinckerhoff retaining the presidency. Time Abroad's E. P. Kampf served as vice-president. One of the combined operation's early efforts was CBS newscaster Elmer Davis' three-disc "Sound of History — Then Came War: 1939." Commissioned by the World Book Company for school use, it concluded with Davis' appeal to students "to maintain an impartial attitude toward foreign conflicts and a passionate regard for getting the facts straight."

In addition to its custom-recording work, Brinckerhoff produced the Nocturne label. The records were introduced in March 1940 and, according to *Jazz Information* magazine, were intended to specialize in "high-grade popular recordings, emphasizing new methods of presentation and new advances in recording technique." At least two separate series, Swingtime and Melody in Rhythm, were produced. The TA- prefixed masters were original to Nocturne. The source of the M- prefixed and other master series is uncertain, but most if not all appear to have been exclusive to Nocturne. The label was discontinued in late 1941 or early 1942. The Nocturne name was later used for several unrelated labels, beginning with an obscure Los Angeles-based version in the early 1940s.

On December 19, 1940, Time, Inc. (the publisher of *Time* magazine) sued Time Abroad, seeking \$5,000 in damages for use of the "Time" name, which the company claimed was being confused with its "March of Time" radio broadcasts and newsreels. Time, Inc., also claimed that because of its coverage of foreign affairs, it had become known as "Time Abroad." In July 1941, Brinckerhoff agreed to drop the Time Abroad name. Subsequently renamed the General Sound Corporation (not to be confused with Hazard Reeves' General Records), his operation continued to advertise custom recording services and radio-program production.

In January 1943, Brinckerhoff took a leave of absence to serve in the Marine Corps, where he was made a captain and put in charge of recruiting women in the southern states for the Marine Corps Reserve. Operation of his company was left to Dorothy Vanston, who at some point had replaced Kampf as vice-president. Exactly what transpired in Brinckerhoff's absence was not reported, but in late 1943 he lost his studio to foreclosure. In December, the recording equipment was purchased by Eli Oberstein, who moved it to a new location for the use of his Classic Record Company.

BROADCAST RECORDERS, INC.

This Los Angeles-based studio was primarily a producer of radio transcriptions that owes its inclusion here to some peripheral involvement with two small commercial labels. In June 1946 *Billboard* reported that Ted Yerxa had purchased the former Broadcast Recorders studio, which he would use to record his own masters for the Lamplighter label, as well make as air-checks for CBS network stations. In August, however, the same publication reported that Charles Cooper was the present owner of Broadcast Recorders and had just sold a half-interest to Los Angeles nightclub owner Billy Berg, who was planning to launch Bee Bee Bee Records.

BROADCAST RECORDING STUDIOS / BROADCAST RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1951

Office: Lyon & Healy Building (64 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago)

Pressing: Sanruskit Record Company (Arlington Heights, IL)

Record Products: Broadcast

Operated by Robert W. Kittinger (sometimes misspelled Kittenger in *Billboard*), who had been producing Roller Rhythms and other records for skating rinks since the early 1940s. The address given was that of the Chicago Recording Studios, of which Kittinger had served as registered agent since October 1941, and which was producing the masters for his roller-rink records. Kittinger operated his own pressing plant, the Sanruskit Record Company, beginning around 1944.

Broadcast served primarily as a showcase for organist Ken Griffin, whose August 1947 release of "You Can't Be True Dear" became a minor hit for the label, even though he had recorded a competing version for Rondo. Griffin's 1948 Christmas set on Broadcast reached #4 on *Billboard*'s best-selling albums chart. Distribution of Griffin's releases was handled by Universal Records (Chicago) beginning in early 1948. Broadcast's artist roster also included several local cocktail-lounge combos, organist Hildegard Sells, and country singers Grandpappy Nerit and Paul South, none of whom attracted nearly as much attention as Griffin.

By late 1950 Broadcast was also producing 45s and LPs, compiled from previously issued material. The company appears to have gone dormant soon after Griffin signed with Columbia.

BROADWAY RECORDS

The Record Changer for December 1944 reported that jazz pianist Sammy Price and Alex A. Lederer were launching a company to be known as Broadway Records, at 1674 Broadway (a multi-tenant building that was home to many music publishers and small record companies at the time). Nothing further was reported on the venture in the trade papers. The Broadway name resurfaced in 1950, on an unrelated label produced by Dana Records.

BRONCO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1950 – 1951

Office: 2261 Earl St., Los Angeles; 1707 N. Hudson St., Hollywood, CA (SWCI office)

Record Products: Bronco

A subsidiary of Song Writers' Cooperative, Inc., which specialized in publishing songs by aspiring amateurs. Among them was one Starr von Fluss (née Stella May Doty), a Minnesota kindergarten teacher who somehow garnered a position as SWCI's vice-president.

Bronco's output was primarily country-style titles from the SWCI catalog, performed by Sandy Stanton, Karen O' Hara, and other little-known performers. *Billboard* mentioned in February 1951 that Bronco was still recording, but the company was last listed in that magazine's July 1951 directory. Its brief reappearance in the March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Bronco name was later used for an unrelated Texas label.

BRONZE RECORDING STUDIO / BRONZE RECORD AND RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1939 – c. 1949

Office: 623 E. Vernon Ave., Los Angeles

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing (1939–1940); own press (from 1944)

Record Products: Bronze

A race-record operation launched in Los Angeles in early 1939 by Black entrepreneur and artists' agent John H. Levy, and subsequently taken over by Leroy E. Hurte. The studio's opening was reported on March 11, 1939, by *The Pittsburgh Courier* and several other Black-owned newspapers. According the *Courier* report, Bronze's staff included War Perkins (manager), Phil Moore (musical director), and Joe Stevenson (dance director). Levy sponsored the Bronze Recording Orchestra, which performed at local clubs to promote the records.

Bronze was making recordings by late March 1939, when Levy reported that veteran blues singer Gladys Bentley had just completed six sides. The Soul Stirrers, a traveling gospel group, recorded for Levy in late July. In addition to Bronze records, Levy also produced customized greeting records. Early Bronze discs were pressed at the Allied Record Manufacturing, where Leroy Hurte was employed. A classically trained musician and member of the Four Blackbirds vocal group, Hurte recalled in a 1995 interview (in which he was often vague or self-contradictory) that Allied was where he learned mastering and pressing techniques.

In 1940 Levy sold the Bronze operation to Hurte, who had been running a record store on Central Avenue in Los Angeles. Levy moved on to New York, where he later managed Billie Holliday, among other artists. Between Levy and Hurte, the company released approximately fifteen records before suspending operations after Hurte enlisted in the Army, where he served as a radar mechanic.

Bronze resumed operations in 1944, after Hurte's discharge. He purchased his own printing press, along with a used record press that he recalled came from the Allied plant. A March 1945 *Pittsburgh Courier* article reported that Bronze was "the only all Negro setup in the country completely equipped to turn out records — from the actual recording in the studios to pressing and labeling of the finished records." What the *Courier* did not report was that the new Bronze records were of substandard quality. Hurte's pressings were primitive compared with the earlier Allied-produced issues, and the crudely designed and poorly printed labels bore no resemblance to the elegant pre-war version.

Hurte's revived company never evolved beyond a four-person operation, he recalled in his 1995 interview. At full capacity, it employed only himself, his secretary, a record-press operator, and a printer. The label had a local hit with its 1944 release of Cecil Gant's "I Wonder" (which later became entangled in a copyright dispute) and produced some other moderately successful releases by Gant before he defected to Gilt-Edge. Ultimately, Hurte was hobbled the loss of Gant (his most popular artist), Bronze's minuscule production capacity (he recalled being able to produce only 1,000 pressings per week), poor quality control, and spotty distribution.

Hurte stated that the Bronze operation survived into 1948 or possibly 1949. At about that time, W and W Recordings and Distributors moved into the Bronze office at 623 East Vernon and, according to Hurte, "inherited" some Bronze masters. Hurte could not remember the owner's name or details of the apparent takeover. Hurte later licensed some of his masters to Down Beat and other small independent labels. He moved to New York in 1950, then in the late 1950s returned to Los Angeles, where he became increasingly interested in classical music. In the early 1990s he revived the Bronze label for a single LP, "Salute to Black Composers."

BROOME, GEORGE W. (Discs)

Record Production: 1919 – 1920

Offices: 23 Clayton Ave., Medford, MA

Original-Master Source(s): Unknown independent studio(s)

Record Products: Broome Special Phonograph Records

George W. Broome was first Black record-company owner. An alumnus of Howard University, Broome tried to establish himself as a New York theatrical manager in the late 1890s and early 1900s, with little success. In 1907 he moved to Medford, Massachusetts, where three years later he launched the short-lived Broome Exhibition Company to produce films depicting "the progress of the Negro along industrial lines by means of moving pictures."

During 1918, Broome worked as a sales manager for tenor Roland Hayes. Having failed to secure a recording contract with a major label, Hayes paid the Columbia Graphophone Company's Personal Recording Division to record and press several of his solos, which he marketed by mail order and word-of-mouth. However, the operation never advanced beyond the personal-label stage, and by year's end, Broome had severed his business relationship with Hayes. In mid-1919, he launched his eponymous record label in Medford, Massachusetts.

An October 1919 notice in *The Crisis* reported that the first Broome records had been

announced a month earlier, suggesting that the initial Broome sessions were held in the late summer or early autumn of 1919. Recording were made in an unknown studio, probably in the New York area, for Broome's exclusive use. Broome's output was limited to concert material, performed by eminent Black artists.

Broome's first releases included the only known recording by composer Harry T. Burleigh, singing "Go Down, Moses." Despite promises of additional Burleigh recordings, none is known to have appeared. Eventually, Broome recorded five artists in addition to Burleigh — sopranos Antoinette Garnes and Florence Cole-Talbert (both of whom would later record for Black Swan), baritone Edward H. Boatner, pianist R. Nathaniel Dett, and violinist Clarence Cameron White, the latter accompanied by William Leonard King. All were important figures in the Black musical community.

Sales of Broome records appear to have been minuscule, based upon their rarity today. Marketing was limited to occasional advertisements in *The Crisis* (the leading Black-owned magazine of the day), and the records are not known to have been handled by any national distributors or major retailers. Broome did not advertise in White publications, and aside from a belated listing in the 1923 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory* (which erroneously showed the company as having been founded in 1920), Broome received no coverage in the mainstream trade papers.

Broome's production of original "Brown Seal" recordings appears to have ended by early 1920, by which time nine single-sided issues had been advertised. After a brief hiatus, a final Broome release appeared in late 1920, albeit not an original one. In 1908, Booker T. Washington had re-created a portion of his Atlanta Exposition address on a Columbia personal recording, possession of which eventually passed to his son, E. Davidson Washington. In September 1920, *The Chicago Defender* reported that the son had recently visited New York to inquire about production of the record, which, the *Defender* noted, "he has finally been persuaded to put on the market." Columbia pressed a quantity of the discs on its Personal Record label, with the notation, "Made for E. Davidson Washington," over which Broome pasted his own label. Although not common, the relabeled record appears to have sold better than Broome's own recordings.

As far as can be determined, the Booker T. Washington release was Broome's last. His introduction of less-expensive double-sided pressings in early 1921 apparently did little to boost sales. Coupled from the previously released recordings, they seem to have sold no better than the original single-sided pressings. By the time Broome was finally listed in the 1923 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory*, he had stopped advertising in *The Crisis* but reportedly was still selling existing inventory.

Broome later purchased the Shawmut Press in partnership with his son and worked as a printer until his death on April 1, 1941. His obituary made no mention of his record label. Although Broome's operation had no perceptible impact on the mainstream recording industry, it is historically significant as the first Black-owned and operated record company, and for having preserved the work of some important performers who might otherwise have gone unrecorded.

BRUNSWICK-BALKE-COLLENDER COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1919–1930

Offices: 623–633 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago (1919–6/1930); 29–35 W. 32nd St., New York (1919–1924); 52nd St. & 7th Ave., New York (early 1924–6/1930); 120 W. 42nd St., New York (from 6/28/1930). Incorporated in Wilmington, DE.

Original-Master Source(s): Pathé Frères (New York; commissioned vertical-cut masters); 19 E. 21st St., New York (temporary, late 1919–early 5/1920); 16 W. 36th St., New York (from early 5/1920); 7th Floor, Brunswick Building, 52nd St. & 7th Ave., New York (from 3/1924); Brunswick Building, 623–633 S. Wabash Ave. (6th Floor), Chicago (6/1921–5/1929); Furniture Mart Building, 666 Lake Shore Dr. (21st Floor), Chicago (from 5/1929); Los Angeles (temporary, 1922–1927; permanent from late 1927); Reynosa, Mexico (1930); many other temporary locations from 1926.

Pressing: Long Island City, NY (from 1919); Jersey City, NJ (from 1920); Muskegon, MI (from 1922); Auburn, New York (former Auburn Button Works, used as an auxiliary plant to late 1924); Dubuque, IA (from mid-1920s); 2481 Porter St., Los Angeles (from 3/1924); Toronto, Canada (from 1920); phonograph factories in Chicago; Dubuque, IA; Muskegon, MI; New York; Toronto

Record Products: Brunswick, Brunswick Hall of Fame, Silvertone (1925), Vocalion (from 1/1925); private, promotional, and special-use issues; radio transcriptions; synchronized discs for motion pictures

Foreign Affiliates: British Brunswick, Ltd., London (9/1926–10/1929); Warner Brunswick, Ltd. (from 10/1930); Cliftophone Ltd., London (1923–1926; purchased plant 12/1930); Duophone and Unbreakable Record Company, Ltd., London (1928–1930); Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft, Berlin (from 12/1926); Companhia Brunswick de Brasil (Brazil, from late 1927)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Brunswick (international); Simolian (Australia); Cliftophone, Duophone, Levaphone, Oriole (England); Polydor (Germany)

The Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company had its roots in the Cincinnati cabinet shop of John M. Brunswick, a German immigrant who began manufacturing billiard tables in 1845. In 1873 Brunswick acquired his chief competitor, Julius Balke's Great Western Billiard Table Manufactory. H. M. Collender joined the firm in 1879, which was reorganized and incorporated in Ohio as the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company in 1884. By 1890 all three of the company's namesakes had retired or died, and the presidency passed to Moses Bensinger, who aggressively developed new product lines, including bar and bowling alley installations and piano cases. A successor company was chartered on December 27, 1907, as a Delaware corporation, solely for legal and tax purposes.

Moses Bensinger's son Benjamin, who assumed the presidency of Brunswick-Balke-Collender following his father's death in 1904, was responsible for the company's entry into the phonograph market. Initially, Brunswick built only phonograph cabinets, with Edison being one of its largest customers. In early 1915, however, Bensinger authorized the development of a complete Brunswick phonograph. Prototypes were shown to the board of directors on April 3, 1916. They featured an elaborately designed universal reproducer, equipped with a multi-diaphragm rotating head that could play all disc record formats currently on the market. Production began in May 1916. The phonographs (later to be branded Ultona) were first advertised in *The Talking Machine World* in June 1916, and deliveries were slated to begin on August 8. By the end of the year, Brunswick was offering eight phonograph models, all priced to undercut their competitors. The company filed numerous design patents on new cabinets in August 1917, triggering a lawsuit by Victor over alleged patent infringements.

Initially lacking its own record line, Brunswick advertised and sold Pathé discs for use on its phonographs beginning in the summer of 1916, and for a short time marketed its phonographs under the Brunswick-Pathophone name. However, plans were being quietly drawn up to enter the record business — not in the United States, but in Canada. In 1917, the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company of Canada, Ltd., opened a factory on Hanna Avenue in Toronto in 1917, and its universal-arm phonograph caused a sensation at that year's Canadian National Exhibition. At that time, Brunswick announced that records would soon be forthcoming.

The earliest records to bear Brunswick labels, first advertised in November 1917, were vertical-cut discs licensed for sale only in Canada. Brunswick musical director Walter G. (Gus) Haenschen later confirmed that the masters were commissioned from Pathé's New York studio, under the supervision of Brunswick personnel, for Brunswick's exclusive use. The Canadian releases were produced in a \$1 green-label popular series retailing for \$1

(Canadian) and a red-label standard and classical series retailing for \$1.65. Distributed by the Musical Merchandise Sales Company of Toronto, they were never offered for sale in the United States or released under an American label. The label design was in a florid, rather outdated style that bore no resemblance to the later American label design. However, some very late Canadian vertical-cut pressings appeared with standard American-style Brunswick labels, with the added notation, "Jewel Point Record." The last of the Canadian vertical-cut issues were advertised in March 1920. The company never produced a vertical-cut disc for the American market.

In December 10, 1918, Brunswick secretary Percy Deutsch visited the Victor Talking Machine Company's headquarters with the bold proposition that Victor license Brunswick to produce lateral-cut records under Eldridge Johnson's patent. Victor officials' predictable response was a warning that the company would act "promptly and energetically" against Brunswick should it proceed with the production of lateral-cut records. Undeterred by the threat, Brunswick had a standard lateral-cut disc under development for the U.S. market by mid-1919.

Brunswick filed three separate trademark applications on various elements of the lateral-cut label design in 1920, all claiming use on records since June 1, 1919, which likely marked the start of recording activities in Brunswick's own studio. The first of the new American Brunswick records were shipped to distributors in December 1919 and were announced to the general public in an ambitious national advertising campaign that was launched on January 1, 1920. They were the first American recordings to employ a spiral run-out groove, which triggered an automatic turntable brake on the Brunswick machines.

A full-page *Talking Machine World* advertisement introduced members of the Brunswick staff, some of whom were already well-known in the phonograph and recording industries. They included Haenschen (manager, popular record department), W. A. Brophy (general manager, record department), and Frank Hoffbauer (recording manager). Walter B. Rogers, the veteran Victor house conductor who had since moved on to the New York Recording Laboratories, was recruited as musical director. After recording in temporary quarters for several months, the company opened a permanent New York studio suite in May 1920 that included a large balcony overlooking 21st Street and an artists' lounge said to be furnished with "a plentiful supply of books and magazines."

From the start, Brunswick made its presence known in the classical and operatic market, presenting a competitive threat to Victor's Red Seals and Columbia's Symphony Series. Records in its premium-priced classical and operatic series, introduced in early 1920, were pressed in single-sided form until mid-1922. The roster included Michael Bohnen, Richard Bonelli, Mario Chamlee, Giuseppe Danise, Josef Hoffman, Leopold Godowsky, John Charles Thomas, and others of equal stature. In the autumn of 1921, Brunswick received extensive press coverage for its sponsorship of American tours by four prominent European artists (Elly Ney, Claire Dux, Tino Pattiera, and Bronislaw Huberman), all of whom recorded for the company while in New York. An ethnic series was launched in October 1921, with an inaugural offering of ten selections by Cantor Samuel Kwartin.

Brunswick opened a Chicago studio in June 1921, at which time a Midwestern reporter for *The Talking Machine World* proclaimed, "Everybody is, or ought to be, glad that the Brunswick people have opened a recording laboratory in Chicago. We out here have often counseled patience among ourselves, knowing that if we but waited the Eastern monopoly in that respect would one day be broken. We have here in Chicago an army of potential hit-makers, in every branch of music." It was soon disclosed, however, that the Chicago studio was to be used only for experimental work. Brunswick would not make its first commercial recordings in Chicago until August 1923, in a temporary studio outfitted with equipment on loan from New York. Regular commercial recording sessions finally began in Chicago in January 1924, with the opening of a permanent studio there. In the meantime, Brunswick had undertaken its first California recording expedition in September 1923, in conjunction with plans to open a Los Angeles pressing plant.

In October 1922, Brunswick announced a group of specially labeled records by the Original Sacred Harp Choir, which are believed to have been the earliest commercially issued recordings of shape-note singing. However, Brunswick's conservative management kept its distance from the emerging country-music and race-record markets at the time. A minor concession was made to the latter in August 1923, when the company issued a list

of "Special Colored Character Records." The blues singers, including Edna Hicks, Lena Wilson, and Lizzie Miles, were the same freelancers who were already appearing on numerous other labels. The rest of the roster comprised comedian Ham Tree Harrington (a Bert Williams imitator who had worked for a time with Jelly Roll Morton) and what was termed the Cotton Pickers (an augmented version of the all-White Original Memphis Five).

In 1923, Brunswick-Balke-Collender reportedly surpassed Thomas A. Edison, Inc., in sales to become the third-largest U.S. record manufacturer. In the same year, the company broke with the industry norm of issuing new records in monthly batches, instead releasing new records as soon as they were ready for shipment. Brunswick's image as an industry leader was further strengthened in February 1924, with its heavily publicized signing of Al Jolson to a million-dollar contract, followed that summer by introduction of the Hall of Fame classical series.

The Hall of Fame series was an attempt to garner the same sort of brand recognition as Victor's Red Seals for its classical and operatic lines. Several series were produced at varying price levels, including the New Hall of Fame Classical Series (gold label, from domestic masters), New Popular Hall of Fame (purple label, from domestic masters, featuring concert artists in popular songs and other light fare), and later, Hall of Fame International (gold label, from imported masters). Pressings were double-sided, and early releases included reissues of material recorded by Brunswick as early as 1920.

In March 1924, Brunswick announced an alliance with the Radio Corporation of America that resulted in the first large-scale installation of radio receivers in phonographs. As part of its agreement with RCA, Brunswick permitted stations owned by RCA, General Electric, and Westinghouse to broadcast from the Brunswick recording studios "during the periods when its artists are recording for phonograph reproduction, and encourage these artists to aid the programs at other times as well." For a time, nothing came of the agreement, although with stations ranging from New York to California, RCA and its affiliates were well positioned to promote Brunswick's stars nationwide. Finally, on December 9, 1924, WJZ relayed the first "Brunswick Hour of Music" from Brunswick's New York recording studio, featuring tenor Mario Chamlee, soprano Florence Easton, pianist Elly Ney, and the visiting Cleveland Orchestra. The following week, Brunswick showcased its exclusive pop stars on a bill that featured Marion Harris, Margaret Young, the Radio Franks (Frank Bessinger and Frank Wright), the piano team of Victor Arden and Phil Ohman, and Ray Miller's Orchestra.

Brunswick eliminated a strong competitor in December 1924, when it purchased the Aeolian Company's Vocalion label and catalog. Beginning in January 1925, Vocalion was managed as a division of Brunswick under the general management of Edward R. Strauss. Vocalion's studios were closed, its masters were moved to Brunswick's Muskegon pressing plant, and all Vocalion recording and manufacturing activities were consolidated at Brunswick's facilities. In June 1925, Brunswick demoted Vocalion to a 50¢ label, then restored it to 75¢ in response to dealer complaints.

Although the Vocalion division was allocated its own master-number series, and was allowed to make its own artists-and-repertoire decisions to some extent, there were frequent exchanges of masters between the two divisions. When that occurred, false master numbers (and sometimes, artist pseudonyms) were assigned by the division to which the masters were transferred.

Brunswick was the third major manufacturer to convert to electrical recording, after Columbia and Victor. The company had experimented with a form of electrical recording as early as November 1921, when Benjamin Franklin Miessner recorded portions of an operatic performance at Chicago's Auditorium Theater. Sound was transmitted to a Magnavox receiver connected to what the news reports termed an "electrical recording device" at the nearby Brunswick studio. However, the recordings were not released, and nothing was done to develop the process for commercial use.

Brunswick faced a crisis in early 1925, when Columbia and Victor began making electrical recordings. With the Western Electric process already licensed exclusively to those companies, Brunswick turned to General Electric, which held the patents on Charles Hoxie's Pallophotophone, a device originally intended for recording sound on film. The sound-collecting device, or Pallotrope, was a photoelectric microphone employing a narrow light

beam focused on a tiny, spring-mounted mirror that vibrated in response to sound waves. The system had since been adapted for disc mastering, and Brunswick arranged to license it through the Radio Corporation of America.

The Pallophotophone equipment initially was installed only in the New York studio, where the first electric Brunswick recordings were made on April 7, 1925. The results were not issued, but the following day produced two selections (the prelude and intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana," performed by the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra under Gennaro Papi) that were belatedly approved for release in October 1925. By May 1925, Brunswick's New York studio was recording most of its masters electrically, for both the Brunswick and Vocalion labels. Acoustic recording sessions were discontinued in New York on June 1, 1925. Recording activity was briefly paused in July to accommodate conversion of the Chicago studio and expansion of the New York facilities.

Like Victor and Columbia, Brunswick at first withheld news of its electrical conversion from the general public, although the change was readily apparent to dealers and consumers. But on August 12, 1925, Brunswick broke with its competitors and made the transition public, in conjunction with a major advertising campaign for its new Panatrophe, the first all-electric phonograph. For advertising purposes, Brunswick substituted the term "Light-Ray Recording" for the awkwardly named Pallophotophone process.

The early Light-Ray recordings were marred by distortion. Consequently, Brunswick switched to more stable General Electric equipment in mid-1926, then to Western Electric equipment in 1927. The latter arrangement remained a well-kept secret until it was finally revealed by Gus Haenschen in a 1980s interview, although the superior sound quality and presence of a handwritten "W" on some early pressings provided a clue. In September 1925, Brunswick announced that records "capable of playing steadily for a half hour or longer are now in preparation and will be placed on the market shortly." No such records were released, but Brunswick did adopt a slightly tighter groove pitch in the later 1920s which, coupled with a smaller label, yielded a modest increase in playing time.

After having largely avoided the race-record market, Brunswick officials announced the formation of a new Race Record Division under Jack Kapp's direction in March 1926. Initially, most of the race releases were assigned to the Vocalion label. Vocalion titles that proved to be good sellers or were thought to have sufficient cross-over appeal were sometimes reissued on the standard Brunswick label, with false master numbers substituted in Vocalion's own numerical series. That situation changed in 1928, after Kapp hired Mayo Williams to run the race-record division. The result was the launch of Brunswick's own race series, distinguished by a "lightning-bolt" label design that was shared with a new White country-music series. Drawing on the wealth of talent available in Chicago area, supplemented by regular recording expeditions throughout the southern states, Brunswick and Vocalion emerged in the later 1920s as important race-record labels.

The Talking Machine World reported in 1926 that the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company's far-flung operations now employed 5,000 workers in more than 2.1 million square feet of production space at its various factories. In addition to its studios and pressing facilities, Brunswick owned saw and planing mills, a veneer plant, and several cabinet factories. The company also owned and managed 45,000 acres of timber land near Marquette, Michigan, and was served by forty miles of branch rail line. A financial affiliate, the Brunswick-Commercial Investment Trust, Inc., had been established a year earlier to provide loans to dealers.

Brunswick expanded its overseas presence considerably beginning in 1926. Brunswick records had been exported to England as early as 1922, and in November 1923, the Chappell Piano Company (London) became Brunswick's sole British concessionaire. Working in affiliation with Cliftophone Ltd., Chappell had Brunswick masters pressed under the Brunswick Cliftophone label for the British market. At least some of the pressings were made at Pathé's Willesden plant. Catalog numbers, and most couplings, were the same as those on the American releases. In July 1926, Brunswick opened its own pressing plant in London, and on September 20, British Brunswick Ltd. was registered as a private company, and its name was substituted for Cliftophone's on the labels. Managed by Gramophone Company veteran W. Sinkler Darby, British Brunswick held a ten-year contract to manufacture and sell Brunswick products in Great Britain. In August 1928, the Duophone and Unbreakable Record Co., Ltd., took control of British Brunswick, an

association that ended with Duophone's bankruptcy in late 1929. Warner Brunswick Ltd., incorporated on October 11, 1930, resumed production of the Brunswick label in England late in the year.

In December 1926, Brunswick acquired the U.S. distribution rights to recordings made by Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft (DGG) and its Polyphonwerke subsidiary, which produced Polydor pressings for export. Some of this material was issued in Brunswick's Hall of Fame International series and later was reissued on the Brunswick-Polydor and Decca labels. In return, Brunswick supplied American masters to DGG, which issued them in Europe under the German version of the Brunswick label. A Brazilian subsidiary, Companhia Brunswick de Brasil, was established in 1927. Alternate takes of some dance numbers, eliminating the vocal choruses, were made for the non English-speaking markets.

Brunswick vice-president Percy Deutsch left the company in October 1927, taking Gus Haenschen with him, to head the newly formed Acoustic Products Company. Jack Kapp then assumed general management of all recording operations, having worked his way up through the Vocalion and race-record divisions. His former position as recording director was taken over by band leader William F. (Bill) Wirges who, *The Talking Machine World* reported, was to split his time between the New York and Chicago studios. Under Kapp's management, Brunswick's Chicago recording operations were moved into a suite on the twenty-first floor of the Chicago Furniture Mart in the summer of 1929. Boasting four studios of various sizes, as well as a small matrix-processing and pressing plant for on-site production of test pressings, Brunswick's new Chicago headquarters ranked among the most modern recording-production facilities of the period.

Much of the impetus for opening the new Chicago studios stemmed from Brunswick's increasing involvement in radio-transcription production, with the National Radio Advertising Company being one of its major clients. New machinery for the production of long-playing radio transcriptions and synchronized soundtrack discs (including triple-turntable cutting lathes that allowed uninterrupted recording of multi-part transcriptions) was installed in Chicago in January 1930, reflecting that studio's increasing use for custom-recording work. In the same month, Brunswick announced a joint venture with the Artophone Company, a major Vocalion distributor, to open a studio in Reynosa, Mexico (on the Rio Grande, opposite McAllen, Texas) for hosting Vocalion sessions by Mexican and Mexican-American artists. The initial sessions were held in the studio of Reynosa's newly opened radio station XIBC, but it proved to be a short-lived arrangement.

Despite an outward appearance of success, Brunswick's record sales began to decline in the late 1920s. In 1927, total record sales slipped to \$27 million from the previous year's high of \$29 million. After a rebound in 1928, sales declined again in 1929. The election of Al Jolson to Brunswick's board of directors in 1929 brought a flurry of publicity, but it did nothing to reverse declining record sales. Compounding the problem was Brunswick-Balke-Collender's high level of debt. In January 1930, company officials canceled its usual quarterly dividend payment, citing the "need to conserve cash resources."

On April 9, 1930, Benjamin and Bob Bensinger, acting on behalf of Brunswick-Balke-Collender, negotiated the sale of the company's record division to Warner Brothers Pictures, Inc., for \$10 million (*see* Brunswick Radio Corporation). Approved on April 21, the sale to Warner Brothers marked the end of Brunswick-Balke-Collender's involvement with the recording industry, although its former labels continued to be produced under new ownership. Proceeds from the sale were used to pay down Brunswick-Balke-Collender's considerable debt. The company implemented salary cuts on three occasions in the early 1930s and managed to survive the Great Depression, after having bottomed-out in 1932 with only \$3.9 million in sales. It rebounded in the late 1930s and early 1940s, thanks in part to demand for bar fixtures following the repeal of Prohibition, and in part to some lucrative wartime government contracts. Its descendant, the Brunswick Corporation, remains in business today, but has no involvement in record or phonograph production.

BRUNSWICK RADIO CORPORATION (Discs)

Record production: 1930–1931

Offices: 623 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago (4/1930–6/1930); 666 Lake Shore Dr., Chicago (early 1930s); 120 W. 42nd St., New York (from 6/28/1930); 619 W. 54th St., 799 7th Ave., New York (early 1930s; branch office in Hollywood, CA)

Original-Master Source(s): 16 W. 36th St., New York; Furniture Mart (21st Floor), Lake Shore Drive, Chicago; Los Angeles

Pressing: Own plant — Muskegon, MI

Record Products: Brunswick, Brunswick Hall of Fame, Melotone, Polk, Vocalion, Supertone [1]; promotional and private issues, radio transcriptions

Foreign Affiliates: Brunswick Radio Corp., Ltd. (London); Warner Brunswick, Ltd. (London)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Brunswick (international)

On April 21, 1930, Brunswick-Balke-Collender's directors and shareholders approved the sale of Brunswick's record division (including the Brunswick and Vocalion labels) to Warner Brothers Pictures, Inc., for \$10 million. Three weeks earlier, Warner Brothers had purchased Brunswick's Dubuque factory for use as a film-distribution center. In October 1930, it purchased the inactive Cliftophone pressing plant in London, in conjunction with a push into the British market under the Warner Brunswick, Ltd., banner.

Warner Brothers was particularly interested in Brunswick's radio-transcription business, with clients that included the National Radio Advertising Company (which Warner Brother also purchased a short time later) and the *Chicago Tribune* Syndicate. The company operated its new subsidiary as the Brunswick Radio Corporation, and record labels from early 1930 through late 1931 credited production to "The Brunswick Radio Corporation, Subsidiary of Warner Brothers Pictures, Inc." On July 28, 1930, headquarters were moved to New York. The Chicago studio remained in operation, mostly for the production of radio transcriptions.

Under Warner Brothers' ownership, Brunswick entered the cut-rate market with the Melotone label. It initially retailed for 50¢, although some news reports erroneously stated that it was to be a 25¢ line. The records began shipping in early December (the trademark filing claimed use of the brand beginning "about December 1, 1930) and reportedly were on sale by January 1931. Melotone initially operated as a separate division within Brunswick, with E. F. Stevens, Jr., serving as sales manager. Much of the early catalog comprised reissues of Brunswick and Vocalion recordings from as early as 1927, but the proportion of new material increased markedly as the 1930s progressed. Brunswick also briefly pressed inexpensive Supertone discs for Sears Roebuck in 1930–1931. On September 9, 1931, Brunswick signed an agreement with James K. Polk, Inc. (Atlanta, Georgia) to supply Polk-labeled pressings for 17¢ each wholesale, in minimum lots of 100 pressings. Using Brunswick and Vocalion material, the label survived for only a few months.

In 1931, Brunswick became the first record company to actively market its products to jukebox operators, when Midwest sales representative Herb Allen rented a booth at the annual Coin Machine Convention in the company's name. But neither that, nor its new budget and client labels, slowed the rapid decline of Brunswick's record sales. One year after having made its purchase, Warner Brothers announced a loss of \$1.3 million loss in the Brunswick and National Radio Advertising divisions. Warner Brothers stockholders, who filed suit several years later, charged that the company's executives had squandered its assets by purchasing Brunswick and had put unqualified friends and relatives in charge of the record division.

On November 13, 1931, *The New York Times* reported that Warner Brothers was in discussions with the American Record Corporation concerning the sale of the Brunswick record division. The final agreement—which was a licensing and royalty deal, not an outright sale as has been erroneously stated in some accounts—became effective on December 12, 1931 (*see next entry*). The Brunswick Radio Corporation remained in operation as a Warner Brothers subsidiary but had no further involvement in commercial record production. On August 16, 1934, the company sold its offices and facilities in New York and Chicago to Decca Records, "as is," for \$60,000.

The British affiliate, Warner-Brunswick, was sold to Decca Records, Ltd. (London), in April 1932. In September 1935, Warner Radio granted the company exclusive five-year rights to use the Brunswick trademark on records in the Americas, with the exception of the U.S. and Canada.

BRUNSWICK RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1931–1939

Offices: 1776 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Source(s): American Record Corporation studios

Pressing: Scranton Button Company (solid-stock); Columbia Phonograph Company (laminated)

Foreign Affiliates: Decca Record Co., Ltd. (London)

Record Products: Brunswick, Brunswick-Polydor, Melotone, Vocalion; picture labels for Fred Astaire, Casa Loma Orchestra, Horace Heidt, Roy Rogers, and others; private and promotional issues; radio transcriptions; synchronized soundtrack discs

On December 3, 1931, a licensing and royalty agreement was signed between Warner Brothers Pictures' Brunswick Radio Corporation subsidiary (*see previous entry*) and the newly created Brunswick Record Corporation, a subsidiary of Herbert Yates' American Record Corporation (which in turn was a subsidiary of Yates' Consolidated Film Industries). Warner Brothers Pictures was to hold no stock in, or otherwise be involved with, the new company. The Brunswick Radio Corporation would remain in business under Warner Brothers' ownership, but was to withdraw from record production. Recording and manufacturing would be taken over by the American Record Corporation, but the Brunswick Record Corporation would retain control over artists and repertoire.

The agreement, which became effective on December 12, was not a sale, as has been erroneously stated in some accounts. Only Brunswick Radio's raw materials and supplies were sold outright to the new company, for \$190,954.94. Its masters (including those it had acquired from Brunswick-Balke-Collender), artist contracts, manufacturing and sales rights in the U.S. and Canada, and rights to the Brunswick, Vocalion, and Melotone trademarks, were licensed to the Brunswick Record Corporation, subject to the stipulation that all rights would revert to Brunswick Radio should the new company press and sell fewer than 250,000 Brunswick records annually. The existing Brunswick masters were moved to ARC's Scranton pressing plant, which were termed a loan.

For legal, accounting, and marketing purposes, the Brunswick Record Corporation and American Record Corporation were maintained as separate entities under the Consolidated Film Industries' corporate umbrella, but from an operational standpoint, there was considerable overlap. Brunswick maintained its own artists-and-repertoire department, but its offices and studios were consolidated with those of ARC, and pressing was handled by ARC's Scranton Button Company plant, which was placed under the management of Brunswick executive Milton Rackmil. The licensing agreement with Warner Brothers required that Brunswick remain a 75¢ label, but its quality declined markedly during the first several years under the control of ARC, a notoriously cheap operation that had no experience producing higher-end records.

Brunswick's Muskegon plant made its final pressing on December 2, 1931, after which the plant was shuttered and pressing operations transferred to ARC's Scranton plant. The original master numbering series was discontinued soon after the sale, marking the closure of Brunswick's own studios. Subsequent recordings were made in ARC's studios and were assigned master numbers within the standard ARC sequence. Those intended for initial release on Brunswick or Vocalion were given letter prefixes denoting recording location (B- for New York, C- for Chicago, DAL- for Dallas, LA- for Los Angeles, NO- for New Orleans, etc., with an appended X- denoting 12" masters), an extension of a practice begun by Brunswick-Balke-Collender in the mid-1920s. Other Brunswick and Vocalion releases used masters from a shared ARC-BRC pool, resulting in considerable overlapping of material between the various ARC and BRC labels.

Under ARC's control, Brunswick continued to court the jukebox trade, which thus far had been largely ignored by Victor and Columbia. Midwest sales representative Herb Allen had first exhibited Brunswick records at the 1931 Coin Machine Convention, on his own initiative. He again manned booths at the 1932 and 1933 conventions, this time on the company's behalf. According to Manning, sales to jukebox operators accounted for half of all Brunswick's billings in those years.

Jack Kapp resigned from Brunswick in July 1934 to form Decca Records, in an acrimonious split that resulted in him taking along the Mills Brothers, Bing Crosby, Guy Lombardo and other Brunswick stars with whom he held management contracts. Taken by surprise, Brunswick quickly signed Anson Weeks, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Ted

Fiorito, and Hal Kemp to exclusive contracts. Then, in retaliation, BRC began demoting some of its recordings by Crosby and other defectors to ARC's budget labels.

High-quality laminated Brunswick pressings first appeared in 1935. They were made in Columbia's Bridgeport plant on the East Coast (which ARC owned by then), and in the Allied Record Manufacturing plant on the West Coast (a former Columbia facility, explaining the appearance of some laminated Brunswick pressings in Royal Blue shellac). A redesigned Brunswick label in silver on black finally replaced the familiar scrollwork design in 1937.

In 1937 Brunswick introduced the Brunswick Polydor label, comprising the first new Brunswick classical and operatic offerings since the demise of the Hall of Fame series in the early 1930s. The records were laminated pressings, made at Columbia's Bridgeport plant, from European masters licensed through Deutsche Grammophon. The series boasted an outstanding artist roster drawn from the Odeon, Parlophone, and Polydor catalogs, and also included reissues of some material that originally had appeared in the U.S. in the Hall of Fame catalog. The series was discontinued in 1938, after Deutsches Grammophon signed a licensing agreement with American Decca, which reissued some of the same material on its Decca Odeon-Parlophone label.

On January 1, 1939, the Columbia Broadcasting System finalized its purchase of the American Record Corporation from Consolidated Film Industries for \$700,000. Intending to revive Columbia as its flagship label, and Okeh as its budget-priced line, CBS had no use for the Brunswick or Vocalion labels. Consequently, it reduced production of Brunswick records to levels below those specified in the 1931 licensing agreement with Warner Brothers. In January 1941, a Warner Brothers audit of the Brunswick files confirmed that monthly sales had not exceeded 150,000 copies for the past year, constituting a breach of the agreement and triggering a reversion of rights to the Brunswick Radio Corporation. In turn, Warner Brothers sold the Brunswick Radio Corporation to Decca Records on May 2, 1941. CBS retained rights to the Brunswick-Vocalion masters recorded under ARC's control, while Decca took control of those recorded prior to the 1931 agreement.

JAMES (JIM) BULLEIT (Discs)

Bullet Recording and Transcription Company / Bullet Plastics / Bullet Records / Bulleit Enterprises, Inc. / Jim Bulleit Record Company

Record Production: 1946 – 1953

Offices: 423 Broad St., Nashville, TN (1946); 2320 12th Ave. S., Nashville (1947–2/1948); 421–423 Broad St., Nashville (2/1948–1953); 417 Ash St., Nashville (Bulleit Enterprises, from 1949)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios; International Recording Company, other independent studios

Pressing: Independent plants (1946–3/1948); own plant—Nashville (from 3/1948)

Record Products (78): Bullet; Collegiate, Delta [3], J-B, Village; pressings for independent labels

The Bullet Recording and Transcriptions Company was founded in late 1945 by former "Grand Ole Opry" booking agent James (Jim) Bulleit, in partnership with Wally Fowler and C. V. Hitchcock. Bullet initially cultivated its image as a homegrown local operation, as exemplified by a January 1949 *Billboard* advertisement proclaiming that "Randy's Record Shop in Gallatin, Tennessee, sold 30,000 Bullet records in 30 days." Distribution was handled by Volunteer Music Sales (Nashville) and a network of other regional distributors. Bulleit operated his own studio in Nashville but also recorded extensively in the southern states, favoring Texas in particular.

Bulleit released his first records on May 1, 1946, on the Bullet label. He initially relied on previously unissued recordings licensed from outside sources, but soon launched his own recording program in Nashville and also began booking sessions at independent studios in Cleveland, Dallas, New York, and other cities. Bulleit required his artists to assign him the copyrights to all original songs they recorded for his label, and in September 1947 he announced that he had formed a partnership with Dreyer Music to publish those songs. A month later, Bulleit rejected a bid by Signature's Bob Thiele to take over the Bullet label.

Bullet offered several catalog series in addition to its mainstream pop offerings, including country-and-western (under Overton Ganong's supervision), White gospel (largely under Wally Fowler's supervision), "Sepia" (race, personally overseen by Bulleit),

and Mexican. The label's best-selling artist by far was pop singer Francis Craig, whose "Near You" topped the *Billboard* chart in the autumn 1947, passed the million-copy mark in late October, and remained a strong seller well into 1948. Several of Craig's Bullet masters were subsequently licensed to Brunswick in England.

In February 1948, Bulleit announced expansion plans that included new offices and his own pressing plant (operating as Bullet Plastics), to be housed in the former Air Transport Command building at Nashville's Berry Field. In June, he began soliciting contract-pressing work from other labels. Later that year, he took over production and distribution for Bill Beasley's Collegiate Recording Company, a small Nashville pop label whose releases were generally dismissed as "filler" by the *Cash Box* reviewers. By then, Bulleit was also handling local distribution for Disko and other small independent labels.

Bullet's race series featured Harvey Cooper, Walter Davis, Wynonie (Blues) Harris, Cecil Scott, Leon Payne, and other well-known performers, but it seems to have attracted little attention until Bulleit's mid-1949 signing of B. B. King. The country-and-western series was promoted more aggressively. In 1946, Bullet advertised it had "exclusively more 'Grand Ole Opry' stars than any other company in America," including Clyde Moody, Minnie Pearl, Pee Wee King, Sheb Wooley, and Chet Atkins (then known as Chester), many of whom made their first records for Bullet. But as was the case with many small independent labels, Bullet soon lost its best-selling artists to the major labels, beginning with Pee Wee King's defection to RCA Victor in 1947.

Jim Bulleit later sold many of his pop-catalog masters to Mercury Records and other companies. In 1949 he sold his interest in Bullet Records, which he left to launch Bulleit Enterprises. His new company introduced the Village and Delta [3] labels in April of that year (the latter unrelated to two earlier versions, one produced by Woody Broun and the other by Session Records), while continuing to produce Collegiate. However, production was temporarily suspended in June, when Bulleit was injured in an auto accident, after which little more was heard of his new labels. The Delta name was later used for several unrelated 78-rpm labels, beginning in the early 1950s.

Under new ownership, Bullet Recording and Transcription introduced the J-B label in 1952 while continuing to produce Bullet records into 1953, but the company faced mounting financial and legal challenges. In August 1950, Bullet Recording had been named as co-defendant, along with several major labels, in a copyright infringement suit brought by the International Music Company, which claimed that "Mop Rag" was plagiarized from Henry (Red) Allen's unpublished tune, "Get That Mop." Bullet was named in other copyright-related lawsuits over the next several years, including a claim disputing the authorship of "Near You" that ultimately was dismissed.

The last new Bullet releases were advertised in 1953. A studio calling itself Bullet Recording, which opened in Nashville in late 1981, is of no relation to this company.

BULLET RECORDS — See James (Jim) Bulleit,

BURKE & ROUS / BURKE TALKING MACHINE AND NOVELTY COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1903 – 1906

Offices: 334 (later, 334–336) 5th Ave., Brooklyn, NY

Record Product: B & R Records (cylinders)

Thomas Burke and (?) Rous initially marketed cylinders in standard (35¢) and concert (\$1.50) sizes under the B & R brand, also advertising "special records made to order." It is the last American company known to have produced non-molded brown-wax cylinders. The company also sold Victor, Edison, and American Record Company products, was a Zon-O-Phone jobber, and rented out phonographs for a dollar a week. During 1905, Burke & Rous placed several classified ads seeking a "young lady to sell records and sheet music, who can read at sight."

Hobbies columnist Jim Walsh claimed that the Rous involved with this company was a brother of Samuel H. Rous (better known to record buyers as the baritone S. H. Dudley), without stating a first name or citing any documentary evidence to that effect. He might have been confused by a news report that a "Brother Rous, of the firm of Burke & Rous" presented a phonograph concert at a Brooklyn meeting of the International Order of Odd Fellows in September 1904, in which no first name or initials were given. It seems unlikely

that Samuel Rous himself was directly involved with the operation of Burke & Rous. He was a full-time employee of the Victor Talking Machine Company by then and was occasionally out of the country for extended periods, as a member of Victor's foreign recording expeditions.

An undated B & R catalog lists cylinders that have not been traced to other sources and are believed to have been original recordings. The song titles suggest that the records were produced from approximately 1903 into early 1904. Burke & Rous continued to advertise cylinders into 1906 that were intended for use on coin-operated phonographs. In February of that year, the company noted that it would read dealers' names in the spoken announcements of its cylinders, when ordered in lots of one-hundred at 21¢ each. By then, the company was also advertising a "specially hardened black cylinder," suggesting a molded product, of which Columbia would have been the only likely supplier. No catalog of those cylinders has been located.

Burke & Rous last advertised in *The Talking Machine World* in April 1906. The partnership was dissolved in May, and the following month, Thomas Burke incorporated the Burke Talking Machine and Novelty Company in partnership with Elizabeth Burke and J. A. Fagan. The new company was billed as "Successor to Burke & Rous" and operated at the same office address. It briefly advertised "unbreakable" cylinders of unnamed make, about which nothing is known, and which likely were not its own product. Thus far, no evidence has been found that Burke's new company produced any original recordings.

The Burke Talking Machine and Novelty Company was placed in receivership on March 11, 1907. Thomas Burke, who claimed to have no financial interest in the company, voluntarily declared personal bankruptcy at about the same time, and the company's outstanding accounts were assigned to the Mechanics' Bank of Brooklyn in April 1907.

BURT (MANUFACTURING) COMPANY

Founded c. 1896 by George Henry Burt, originally as a manufacturer of molded celluloid and shellac-based goods, including billiard balls and poker chips. Burt provided sample disc pressings to Emile Berliner in May 1898, and was awarded a contract in July, but quickly lost Berliner's business to the Duranoid Company. By 1899 Burt was pressing for the Universal Talking Machine Company (Zonophone). In March 1901, Burt hired recording engineer John C. English away from Zonophone and launched his own recording operation, which was incorporated in New York on June 19, 1901, as the Globe Record Company (*q.v.*). Eldridge Johnson acquired Globe from Burt on January 19, 1902 (agreeing to turn over a portion of Victor's pressing work to Burt through July 1903), then sold the company to American Graphophone (Columbia) the following month (see the Columbia and Victor entries for details of these transactions). Columbia subsequently acquired Burt's pressing plant as well and moved the equipment to its Bridgeport factory in late 1902.

BUSTER RECORDS / PLASTIC PRODUCTS, INC. / WILLIAMS DISTRIBUTING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 1082 Union Ave., Memphis, TN; 1746 Chelsea, Memphis (Plastic Products)

Record Products: Buster

A short-lived label launched in 1949 by Memphis record distributor Robert E. (Buster) Williams. Williams co-founded the Music Sales Company (a record and jukebox distributor with offices in Memphis and New Orleans) in or around 1943. He left the company in early 1947 to launch the Williams Distributing Company, which handled records and jukeboxes.

Williams' short-lived Buster label produced at least one release by veteran blues singer Gladys Bentley in its "Original Memphis Series" before quietly disappearing. In 1949 Williams launched Plastic Products, Inc., which would quickly grow into a major independent pressing plant. A March 1950 profile of Plastic Products noted that it did not produce its own recordings.

BYERS RECORDING LABORATORY, INC. / BYERS STUDIO (Discs)

Record Production: 1930 – 1934

Offices: Woodside, Long Island, New York (1930–7/1932); Goodrich Building, Broadway & 58th St., New York (from 7/1932)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above locations

Record Products: Fiskana; radio transcriptions, private recordings

Although primarily a custom-recording and transcription studio, Byers Recording Laboratory also produced the first Fiskana release for comedian Dwight Fiske in 1933, and its JBR-prefixed masters appear on some early-1930s private-label issues.

The company was founded by J. G. Byers, who had previously worked as a recording engineer (along with Moses Asch) at Metropolitan Studios and the Stanley Recording Company. Scott Howe Bowen, a prominent advertising executive and owner of radio station WIBX (Utica, New York), purchased a 50% stake in the studio shortly after its opening in 1930. Members of Ed Kirkeby's dance orchestra recorded radio transcriptions at Byers' Woodside studio between April and November 1931 for the Sunskist, Hummingbird Hosiery, and Butternut Coffee programs. Some Byers recordings made for the Ford Motor Company were sent to the Columbia Phonograph Company in August 1931 for dubbing to radio transcriptions.

Byers' studio was moved from its original Long Island location to more spacious quarters in New York's Goodrich Building in July 1932. In 1934, the company became entangled with Bowen's Group Broadcasters, Inc., a cooperative venture that was seeking a single transcription supplier for its member stations. After failing to strike a deal with the World Broadcasting studios, Bowen vacated his office in the Chrysler Building and moved into the Byers studio. He pressured his co-op members to finance the studio's operation, including the purchase of Western Electric equipment. In return, Bowen promised, the studio would provide free recording services to members.

After members rejected Bowen's plan, Byers Recording Laboratory was declared bankrupt, and was placed in receivership on August 1, 1934. Several weeks later, the company was given a thirty-day extension to present a reorganization plan and settle with creditors. In late September, the New York Federal Court returned control of the studio to J. G. Byers, ending Bowen's involvement, and appointed Byers trustee of the creditors' fund. Little more was heard of the studio, and in September 1937, Byers joined the staff of Sound Reproductions Corporation (New York), a transcription producer. He later acquired control of WIBX and moved to Utica, where he oversaw its operation until his death on December 22, 1941. Family members retained ownership of the station until 1979.

— C —

C & S PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY — See Chappelle & Stinnette Record Company

CADET RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – Late 1940s

Offices: 717 N. Vine St., Hollywood, CA; 1234 Grand, Kansas City (distribution branch); Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City (branch offices); Hollywood (post-office box only, later 1940s)

Pressing: Own plant—Kansas City (from early 1947); independent pressing plants

Record Products: Cadet

Launched by band leader Jack Riley, Jr. in December 1945, in affiliation with his father's Kansas City–based publishing house, the Jack Riley Music Company. In addition to its Hollywood recording operation, the Cadet Record Company maintained a Kansas City distribution branch.

Riley signed Slim Gaillard in December 1945 and promoted his trio's first release, "Cement Mixer (Pu-Ti-Pu-Ti)," with a give-away offer on Alex Cooper's "Klambake Kitchen" broadcasts. The record proved to be a surprise hit, with *Billboard* reporting such strong demand that Cadet found further releases "impossible to handle" for a time. The *Kansas City Times* reported that "six small pressing companies can't keep up with the local orders, let alone the national clamor."

Based upon the sales of that record, Riley embarked on a major expansion of Cadet that included opening a Kansas City pressing plant and distribution center. The latter, managed by Jack Riley, Sr., also handled regional distribution for Maestro, Mastertone, and other small independent labels, catering largely to the jukebox trade.

Riley went on to sign singer Curt Massey, who had recently left Columbia, in June 1946. In December, Massey's "There's Nothing the Matter with Me" was used to test "Perma Groove," a proprietary pressing material the company claimed could withstand more than a thousand playings. After testing on Kansas City jukeboxes, the new pressings were to be made available in Chicago, Dallas, and Kansas City.

Cadet never produced another hit on the magnitude of "Cement Mixer." Its last known advertisement appeared in December 1946, and little more was reported concerning the company after early 1947. The Cadet label underwent a major redesign shortly before disappearing in the late 1940s. By then, the company listed only a post-office box number in the *Billboard* directory. The Cadet name was later used for an unrelated record-pressing operation launched by Jules Bihari in the 1950s.

CADILLAC RECORD COMPANY [I] (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – 1948

Offices: New York

Record Products: Cadillac [2]

An apparently short-lived company, unrelated to the Jerry Harris–Graham Prince venture of the same name (*see next entry*). No reliable information has been located concerning its ownership or operation, other than a mention that some of its masters were purchased by Signature Records in April 1948.

CADILLAC RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1957

Offices: Detroit (1/1950–9/1951); Brill Building (1619 Broadway), New York (9/1951–8/1953); 55th St., New York (from 8/1953)

Record Products: Cadillac [3]

Launched in 1950 by Jerry Harris, as an adjunct to his Detroit-based Park Avenue Music Publishers (subsequently renamed Cadillac Music Publishers). There was no connection to the earlier New York-based company of the same name (*see previous entry*).

After having attracted little attention, the Cadillac recording operation was taken over by Graham Prince, who moved it to New York in September 1951. Harris stayed in Detroit to oversee publishing but remained a partner in the record operation. In May 1953, he took over distribution of the label through his new Cadillac Record Distributing Company (Detroit). The last confirmed 78-rpm releases appeared in December 1955.

CALIFORNIA RECORD (MANUFACTURING) COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924 – c. 1925

Offices: 703 Southern California Music Building, Los Angeles

Original-Master Source(s): Possibly own studio

Record Products: California; personal recordings

Founded in 1923 by Hugh P. Fay and Harold Suikert, who had previously been involved with the Gaelic Record Company in New York. According to a report in the *Los Angeles Evening Express* for May 22, 1924, Fay had ambitions to make Los Angeles "the manufacturing center of record-making," having already selected a four-acre site for his pressing plant and ordered the necessary equipment. Fay claimed to have twenty-six years' experience in the recording industry at the time, which remains to be confirmed.

The California Record Company operated a complete record-manufacturing facility, according to a report in *Presto* magazine. It specialized in personal recordings but also made a few commercial releases on its California label, using its own masters as well as some material from the defunct Golden Record Company. Golden founder Theophilus Fitz was working as California Record's recording engineer and general manager by October 1924, when he made the first commercial recording of the bells at the San Juan Capistrano mission.

The California Record Company appears to have suspended operations in early 1925. On September 14 of that year, Fay was arrested on battery charges after slapping a woman in Los Angeles, an incident that the *Los Angeles Daily Times* termed a "deep mystery." Little more was reported concerning him until 1931, when he demonstrated his Fay Home Recording System in England.

CALIFORNIA RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1922 – c. 1923

Offices: 1803 Girard St., Los Angeles; New York (from late 1922)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above address and 57th St., New York

Record Products: Sunshine [2]

Founded by saxophone soloist and instructor S. R. Parmegiani in 1922, the California Recording Company claimed to do "independent recording of every description" in its 1923 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory* entry.

Parmegiani moved the operation to New York in late 1922, which went unreported in *TMW*. In early December it was reported that Harry MacDonald's Californians (which had recently taken up residence in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania) had been booked by one "S. R. Tarmartiani" for a six-hour session in the California Recording Company's studio on 57th Street in New York. Tarmartiani (presumably a typo for Parmegiani) was described as "formerly of the [West] Coast but now a musical broker in New York." At least two of the MacDonald masters were released in early 1923 with Sunshine labels crediting "California Recording Company, New York," but nothing further was reported concerning the company.

CALIFORNIAN RECORD COMPANY

This possibly fictitious company is credited as producer of the obscure Californian label, probably in the late 1940s. Confirmed releases are reissues of Gladys Bentley's Excelsior sides (with Excelsior's catalog numbers serving as master numbers), but thus far, no original recordings have been reported.

CAMEO RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 – 1929

Offices: 102 W. 38th St., New York (1921–early 1923); 249 W. 34th St., New York (early 1923–early 1925); 1571 Broadway, New York (combined Cameo–Grimes–Waterson offices, early 1925–9/30/1927); 114 E. 32nd St., New York (from 10/1/1927)

Original-Master Source(s): H & M Laboratories (acquired in early 1923); Own studios at above locations; Rodin Studio Building, 200 W. 57th St., New York (probably mid-1924 only)

Pressing: Siemon Hard Rubber Company (early 1920s); Own plants — Jersey City, NJ and Framingham, MA; Own plating plant — 11th Ave. & 20th St., New York

Record Products: Cameo, Harmograph (1922), Lincoln [1], Mitchell (1926–1928), Muse, New Phonic, Romeo, Roycroft, Tremont, Variety [1]; Golden Dawn and other custom and promotional labels; Cameo Kid, Jackie Coogan, Kiddie Konzert Karton, Uncle Wiggly (all children's)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Angelus, Electron, Gibsonia, Golden Tongue, Gracelon, Grand Pree, Masterpiece, Melotone, Paramount, Popular, Starr, Worth (Australia); Dominion (England); Peerless (unknown nationality)

Incorporated in November 1921 by former Columbia vice-president Edward N. Burns, with the financial backing of music publisher Henry Waterson and an initial capitalization set at \$1.9 million. Others associated with the company at the time of incorporation included Earle W. Jones (owner of Jones Recording Laboratories), vice-president; Samuel McMahon (owner of National Concerts, Inc.), vice-president and treasurer; Thomas McMahon, secretary; and Wallace Downing (a former Columbia recording engineer), studio manager. Carl Siemon, whose Siemon Hard Rubber Company operated an independent pressing plant, was an early investor in Cameo and also served on its board of directors.

Although Waterson was largely responsible for funding Cameo's launch, his name was rarely mentioned in connection with the new company. According to Earle Jones' recollections, neither Waterson nor Burns (who Jones dismissed as a "figurehead") took an active role in its operation. However, Waterson's publishing house maintained close ties to Cameo, ensuring that its titles were well-represented on Cameo records, and cross-

marketed those records in its sheet-music advertisements. In 1925, Waterson published the first in a series of "Cameo Dance Folios."

The Music Trade Review for November 26, 1921, announced that the Jones Recording Laboratories had been "absorbed" by Cameo. The earliest Cameo masters were recorded by Jones, who moved reportedly his equipment into the Cameo studio. A few Jones Recording Laboratories masters, previously issued on Lyric and related labels, were also used. In a 1955 interview, Jones claimed to have recorded the first masters for Cameo in September 1921; however, there are many demonstrable errors in his recollections, including his insistence that he had personally founded Cameo. It is more likely that the first Cameo sessions were held in early December, based upon Cameo's late-November office opening and acquisition of Jones' company. The first pressing contract was awarded to the Siemon Hard Rubber Company, in which Jones had previously pressed his own records.

Cameo records were introduced as a medium-priced (50¢) line in mid-February 1922, along with Muse, a client label produced for the S. H. Kress stores. Jones was absent from an updated February listing of Cameo executives, and a month later, *The Talking Machine World* reported that he had left the company. Waterson stepped in briefly, installing his son, Henry Jr., as Cameo's general manager and assistant treasurer.

Jones' departure left Cameo temporarily without a studio. Based upon band-contractor Ed Kirkeby's session logs, it appears that in the spring of 1922 Cameo's recording activities were transferred to H & M Laboratories, an independent studio operated by former Columbia and Emerson engineer Harry Marker that Cameo subsequently purchased. At the same time, the company began transferring pressing operations from Siemon Hard Rubber to the American Record Manufacturing Company (Framingham, Massachusetts), an independent plant that it purchased in March 1922 and reorganized as the American Record Manufacturing Company. It also purchased the former Brunswick pressing plant in Jersey City, New Jersey, in December 1922. Amidst all those changes, Frank Hoffbauer was hired away from Brunswick to oversee Cameo's technical staff. His arrival is evident in the addition of a spiral run-out groove (a feature of the Brunswick discs) and a marked improvement in sound quality. However, Hoffbauer soon returned to Brunswick, coinciding with the spiral run-out's disappearance from Cameo pressings and a decline in sound and pressing quality.

Wallace Downing resigned in August 1922, and Edward N. Burns sold his interest in Cameo to Waterson, who along with Samuel Geneen was reported by *Variety* to be in full control of the company. A week later, *Variety* reported that Cameo was "doing its recording now at two places because of the extensive production." Cameo soon took over Harry Marker's studio and rehired Earle W. Jones, who served as recording engineer until resigning on July 1, 1924. (In his problematic 1955 interview, Jones claimed to have stayed with the company until 1925, but his 1924 departure date is confirmed in several trade-paper reports).

Cameo was soon attempting to compete with larger companies for artists, signing exclusive contracts with Lucille Hegamin, William Robyn, the vaudeville teams of Cross & Healy and Crafts & Haley, and other popular performers. Bob Haring and Arthur Lange, both of whom worked as arrangers for Waterson, served as Cameo's in-house arrangers and conductors. However, a cheapening of Cameo products became evident as 1923 progressed. The early striped labels were replaced with a simpler design, initially in gold on black that lacked any pictorial trademark, then the familiar gold, white, and black label on which the cameo device reappeared.

Pressing quality continued to decline, as did the quality of Cameo's catalog and artist roster. By 1924 the company was relying largely on inexpensive freelance artists and frequently using pseudonyms to mask an increasingly lackluster roster. The dance band roster was dominated by the usual freelance orchestras, along with undistinguished studio groups directed by Haring and Lange, which often employed aliases. There was no notable attempt to enter the classical market, aside from a few violin solos by a young Eugene Ormandy.

By late 1924, Cameo's retail price had been reduced to 35¢, repositioning the label as a cut-rate brand competing in the same market as the Plaza-Regal labels. The company did a strong business producing other budget-priced labels, including Lincoln (from 1923), and two additional Kress labels — Tremont (in 1924, replacing Muse) and Romeo (from

1926). All issued the same material as Cameo and usually employed artist pseudonyms. Cameo also did produced a popular line of inexpensive children's labels, which included the Boy Scout and Jackie Coogan series. In 1927, Cameo was commissioned to produce recordings for The Roycrofters (*q.v.*), marking its first and only involvement with a high-end line.

On January 16, 1925, the Cameo Record Corporation merged with David Grimes Radio. The latter was founded in September 1924 by radio engineer David Grimes, inventor of the Grimes inverse duplex circuit. Grimes maintained offices in New York and laboratories and a radio factory in Jersey City, New Jersey. Henry Waterson, who arranged the merger, served as president of the new and rather awkwardly named David Grimes Radio & Cameo Record Corporation. The two divisions continued to operate independently, and Grimes' name never appeared on Cameo products. Aside from consolidating the distribution of Cameo and Grimes products, the merger did not affect Cameo's overall operations.

Sale of the new corporation's stock probably provided the capital for experimentation with electrical recording, which reportedly began in mid-1925. The equipment employed was not identified in the trade press reports, but given David Grimes' expertise in electrical research, it might have been developed in his laboratory. After a few isolated electrical sessions, full-time electrical recording commenced around March 1926, probably at master #1854 ("Thanks for the Buggy Ride," credited to the pseudonymous Caroliners). Although Cameo's electrical recordings sound rather murky to modern ears, a writer for *The Talking Machine World* (in which Cameo and Waterson frequently advertised) found the records highly satisfactory, declaring "the bass notes are particularly 'rounded' in the manner that is at present so popular."

Grimes' radio division was forced into receivership in late 1925, and by the spring of 1927 the company was unable to meet expenses. On May 4, 1927, both the Grimes and Cameo divisions consented to the appointment of a new receiver, under whose control the Cameo record portion of the business (which remained financially solvent, if barely so) was to be continued. The radio business was dissolved, and Grimes went on to work as an engineer for the Radio Corporation of America and, much later, Philco Radio. He was killed in a secret air mission over Ireland in 1943.

In October 1927, the Cameo Record Corporation was purchased by James E. MacPherson, a former Massachusetts state senator who had recently succeeded Eugene Widmann as president of the Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation. In March 1928, MacPherson arranged for the newly formed Dominion Gramophone Records Ltd. (London) to purchase the British rights to Cameo's recordings, some of which were reissued under that company's Dominion label. Dominion was also granted rights to "all processes or formulas" employed by Cameo, as well as the services of an unnamed Cameo engineer in setting up its own studio. MacPherson served on Dominion's board of directors, and although the agreement was later expanded to provide for reciprocal rights, Cameo did not issue any Dominion recordings.

The Cameo Record Corporation retained its corporate name and label brand names following its acquisition by McPherson, but operations were slowly combined with those of Pathé. In July 1928, the Cameo and Pathé offices and studios were finally consolidated at Cameo's 32nd Street premises. Two months later, the Lincoln Record Corporation (which had served merely as a marketing operation for the Lincoln label) was formally merged with Cameo. Although Cameo and Pathé continued to maintain individual legal identities, they now effectively operated as a single organization.

The consolidation marked the beginning of joint Cameo-Pathé recording sessions. Each division retained its own labels and master-numbering system, but now the same recordings were often used by both. Different takes were usually allocated to each label group, although that practice was not consistent. Contrary to what appears in some discographies, Pathé take numbers and Cameo take letters from this period do not always correlate (*i.e.*, Pathé take 1 does not necessarily correspond to Cameo take A), based upon extensive dual-turntable comparisons carried out by members of the *Record Research* group. Dance-band scores were sometimes varied slightly for each division's use, employing different introductions, inverting the verse-chorus sequences, and/or altering placement of the vocal choruses. Some sessions were still booked for only one of the two divisions, as confirmed in Ed Kirkeby's session logs for the period. If it was subsequently decided to

transfer a recording to the other division, a false master number would be assigned at that time, which in some cases has caused discographers to incorrectly estimate recording dates by many months. To further confuse matters, older Pathé masters, including some recorded as early as 1919, were assigned false Cameo master numbers when reissued on the Cameo-group labels.

In July 1929, the Cameo Record Corporation, Regal Record Company (but not Regal's Plaza Music Company affiliate) and Scranton Button Company were merged to form the American Record Corporation (*q.v.*), a holding company that also acquired James MacPherson's controlling interest in the Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation from several months later. The Cameo Record Corporation name continued to appear on Cameo labels after the merger, although the company no longer existed.

ARC initiated a new Cameo catalog-number series in January 1930, beginning at #0101. The slow-selling Lincoln label was discontinued a short time later. Although press releases stated that each ARC division would continue to operate independently, Cameo's master-number series was discontinued at the end of June 1930, leaving Cameo entirely dependent upon ARC's own masters. The last confirmed Cameo releases used ARC masters recorded in August 1930, and production of the label appears to have ended that autumn. Romeo, the last vestige of the Cameo Record Corporation, continued to be produced by ARC into the late 1930s.

CAMPUS CHRISTIAN RECORDING CORPORATION — See Sacred Records, Inc.

CANDELARIO, JOHN S. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – Early 1950s

Offices: 156 W. Palace Ave., Santa Fe, NM; Taos, NM (PO box number only)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (Taos, NM)

Record Products: Candelario

Produced by or for John S. Candelario, Jr. A nationally renowned photographer and cinematographer, he also owned the Candelario Indian Trading Post in Santa Fe, New Mexico (which his father founded in the early 1900s as the Original Old Curio Store), although by the 1940s he was leaving its management to others.

Candelario sold the curio business on May 21, 1947. In February 1948 he traveled to Chile to shoot a motion picture for the International Nitrate Company. His recording venture probably was launched soon upon his return, in or around April 1948. The record labels instructed persons wanting to secure a license for commercial use to contact Candelario in Taos, New Mexico, with no street address given.

Candelario maintained his own recording studio in Santa Fe. His initial releases, labeled Candelario Gems for Collectors, were devoted to recordings of traditional Apache, Hopi, Navajo, and Taos songs. The records were sold in album sets beginning in 1948, in the Candelario store and by mail-order. In late 1949 he produced a two-record album by New Mexico transplant Frieda Lawrence reading several poems by her late husband, D. H. Lawrence. Candelario was still producing records in January 1950, when he purchased fourteen masters from singer Augustine Hernandez.

The Candelario label received no trade-paper coverage and was listed only once by *Billboard*, in its July 1951 directory. Candelario appears to have closed his commercial record operation in the early 1950s, as he became increasingly involved with motion-picture production. In 1955 he launched his own film company, Cine 937 Productions. In April 1958 he incorporated Cinemark II Productions in Santa Fe, which specialized in documentary films. Candelario also continued to make recordings of traditional tribal songs (on magnetic tape in later years) for his personal use. He died in 1993.

A representative of Philips Records expressed interest in acquiring Candelario's recordings in 1962, but apparently a deal was not reached. Many were later reissued on LPs, under the Thunderbird label. In 2002, the Fray Angélico Chávez History Library (New Mexico History Museum) received a grant from Recordings at Risk (a program conducted by the Council on Library and Information Resources) to digitize more than two-hundred of Candelario's recordings.

CANZONET RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1950

Offices: 1244 Arapahoe St., Los Angeles (1947–1950); 2134 Clinton St., Los Angeles (early 1950s)

Record Products: Canzonet, Highway

Launched in 1947 by songwriter Owen Edward Flynn. After releasing a few sides on Canzonet, Flynn introduced the Highway label, which he copyrighted on October 23, 1947. Highway records were distributed nationally, initially by Black and White, then later by Jewel Records.

Highway at first was exclusively a country-and-western label. *Detroit Free Press* critic Jim Wilson dismissed one of Highway's releases by Don Paull as "sheer corn...too bad to be true." A *Cash Box* writer, on the other hand, praised Paull as "a gorgeous new voice [who] simply swept this reviewer off his feet" and awarded a Bullseye of the Week to his first release. A conventional pop series was added in early 1950 but attracted little attention. Highway appears to have gone dormant in late 1950. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard's* July 1951 label directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

CAPITAL SOUND STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1930s

Offices: 29 W. 57th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Masters for New Music Quarterly and possibly other independent labels; custom recordings, transcriptions

A custom-recording service managed by William Smith. Capital Sound's only commercial client to be confirmed thus far was New Music Quarterly Records, which booked sessions there beginning December 1, 1933.

CAPITOL RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: From 1942

Offices: 1483 N. Vine St., Hollywood, CA (1942–early 1949); 5515 Melrose Ave., Hollywood (from early 1949); Eastern and International Divisions: 1 E. 57th St., New York (to 5/1947), 250 W. 50th St. (from 5/1947)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (5515 Melrose Ave., Hollywood, from 1/1949); temporary studios in Kansas City, New Orleans, and other cities; numerous independent studios, including C. P. MacGregor (1942–1945), Muzak (early–mid-1940s), Radio Recorders (1945), Pathé-RKO Studios (11/1946–11/1948), Universal Recording (Chicago, 1950s)

Pressing (78s): Clark Phonograph Record Company (1942), Scranton Record Company (1942–1946; acquired by Capitol, 1946); own plants (Los Angeles; Scranton, PA; Winchester, VA; Anderson, IN)

Foreign Affiliation: Electric & Musical Industries (England)

Record Products (78s): Capitol, Capitol Americana, Capitol Criterion, Capitol-Telefunken; pressings for many independent labels; professional (Pro-Disc) and home-recording discs

The company that would become Capitol Records was incorporated on April 8, 1942, as Liberty Records (of no relation to earlier and later companies using similar names). On June 4, 1942, the name was officially changed to Capitol Records, reportedly to avoid confusion with the Liberty Music Shops' record line. The first eight masters were recorded before the name change and showed LIB- prefixes, which were subsequently cancelled on some stampers and replaced with Capitol's standard CAP- prefix.

The venture was founded and largely financed by Johnny Mercer, Buddy De Sylva, and Glenn E. Wallichs. Wallichs recalled, "I happened to be operating a music and record store at the time, and Johnny Mercer was a regular customer of the shop... Johnny commented frequently about various recording artists and the songs on records, and I recall how we both agreed that there just might be room for a new company. And shortly, with a very big assist from...Buddy De Sylva, Johnny Mercer and I rented office space and founded Capitol Records."

Mercer and De Sylva served as the company's first president and vice-president, respectively, and Wallichs (who was also operating a small custom-recording studio on Hollywood Boulevard at the time) as general manager. Mercer took advantage of his

extensive contacts in the entertainment business to persuade Paul Whiteman, Freddie Slack, Gordon Jenkins, Tex Ritter, and other stars to sign with the new label.

Capitol's earliest Hollywood sessions were held in the C. P. MacGregor studios. The first six releases, beginning with two Whiteman titles on Capitol 101, were announced in early July 1942. But after a well-publicized launch, the company was forced to suspend its recording program almost immediately by the first American Federation of Musicians' recording ban. The last pre-ban Capitol master (CAP-76) was recorded in Los Angeles on July 31, 1942, one day before the ban took effect. Pressing of existing masters continued, however, with Capitol at one point being accused by competing companies of violating wartime shellac rationing in connection with pressings made for it by the Clark Phonograph Record Company.

Capitol finally capitulated to the AFM's demands and resumed recording with union musicians in October 1943, a month after Decca and others signed similar agreements. Once recording resumed, Mercer moved quickly to expand Capitol's operations. His opening of branch studios in New York, Kansas City, and New Orleans caused *Billboard* magazine to comment, "Capitol's phenomenal expansion has won the company a rating and importance to rival that of Victor, Decca, or Columbia." In June 1946, the company announced that its sales had more than doubled over the corresponding period a year earlier. By then the company had established the Capitol Distributing Corporation, a multi-state franchise that eliminated reliance on outside distributors.

Wallichs, Mercer, and De Sylva, in partnership with Mickey Goldsen, also launched Capitol Songs, Inc., as a separate, privately held music publishing operation. Based in New York, Capitol Songs soon came to hold a 50% share in the music publishing operations of Capitol recording artists Tex Ritter, Stan Kenton, and Nat (King) Cole. When that arrangement raised eyebrows, Capitol set up Criterion Music as a separate subsidiary publishing operation to handle the majority of its newer copyrights. In May 1948, Capitol Songs was restructured as a Capitol Records subsidiary, and its holdings were transferred to the record company.

In 1944, the Scranton Record Company (a major independent pressing plant that was successor to the Scranton Button Company) purchased shares in Capitol and agreed to begin phasing out its production of all other labels. By early 1946, Capitol had transferred all of its pressing work to the Scranton plant. On March 26 of that year, Capitol purchased the remaining Scranton shares outright and began revamping the factory as its new, fully-owned manufacturing division. To fund further expansion, Capitol made a stock offering of 95,000 shares on April 30, 1946.

After enduring four years of recording in various New York independent studios, in November 1946 Capitol signed an agreement with the RKO Pathé Studios granting it exclusive use of the facility for any type of recording, other than motion-picture soundtracks. Effective December 2, all of Capitol's New York-area recording activities were to be consolidated there, under the supervision of Walter Rivers. Capitol closed out 1946 on a high note, reporting a 105% increase in sales and 300% increase in net income over the previous year.

The red-label Capitol Americana series was introduced in May 1947 as a race and country-and-western series (the latter managed by Guy Gillet) that retailed for the same price as standard black-label releases. Capitol's belated trademark filing claimed use of the Americana name since June 9, 1947, although *Cash Box* had reviewed the first release (Tex Ritter's "The Last Mile"/"Bats In Your Belfry") a month earlier. The Americana series was dropped in 1948, and race and country-and-western material was subsequently folded into the standard catalog. In April 1949, red labels were reintroduced for an unnamed cut-rate line that retailed for 15¢ less than the black-label releases.

In September 1947, Mercer and De Sylva resigned from Capitol to pursue other interests (although they remained on the company's board of directors), and Wallichs was appointed president. A late-1947 rumor that the American Broadcasting Company was about to purchase Capitol, widely reported in the trade papers, proved to be untrue.

In late 1947, Capitol recorded what would be its largest hit of 1948, Nat (King) Cole's "Nature Boy." The song had been submitted to Cole by Eden Ahbez, a mystic who was living with his pregnant wife in a sleeping bag in Laurel Canyon and washing dishes in a local vegetarian restaurant. Released in the spring of 1948, it was the surprise hit of the year, easily

surpassing the million-seller mark and being covered by other artists on all of the major labels. Capitol even released a parody ("Serutan Yob," credited to the Unnatural Seven). The song itself quickly became entangled in a lawsuit claiming the melody infringed Herman Yablokoff's "Schweig Mein Hartz." The lawsuit did not affect sales of the record.

Capitol had been predominantly a pop label thus far, but Mercer's and De Sylva's departure marked the beginning of an aggressive expansion into other markets, domestic as well as foreign. In October 1947, the company secured distribution in Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela. Mexican distribution began a month later, through a company owned by Carlos Gastel, who also managed Nat (King) Cole, Stan Kenton, Peggy Lee, Nellie Lutcher, and other Capitol stars. Capitol later signed reciprocal pressing and distribution agreements with two other Mexican firms, Articulos Domesticos and Pan American de Discos. The latter agreement was expanded in late 1949, in anticipation of building a catalog of Latino dance numbers for what *Billboard* termed "Yankee hip-grinders." In a more widely heralded deal, Capitol in late 1948 granted exclusive British pressing and distribution rights to English Decca.

In January 1948, Wallichs released a statement to *Cash Box* magazine assuring jukebox operators that the company had been stockpiling masters in anticipation of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban and was prepared to weather a two-year strike. Capitol, having seen its launch crippled by the earlier American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, was the first major label to openly defy the second AFM ban. On February 21, 1948, *Billboard* disclosed that Capitol had ordered Wesley Tuttle (and, reportedly, Benny Goodman and Stan Kenton) to report for recording sessions despite the ban. Tuttle immediately contacted AFM Local 47 and was told to ignore the order. The situation turned into a standoff as rumors swirled that Capitol was preparing to test the legality of the ban in court. No case was brought, however.

By the time the AFM ban was lifted at the end of 1948, Capitol officials were admitting that many of their stockpiled pop titles had become too outdated to be of much commercial value. As recording sessions with union musicians resumed, *Billboard* reported that Capitol would be more selective than in the past, not recording "everything that comes along, but rather [making] fewer and better discs." In January 1949, Conkling announced that the label would go "all out" for bop and other progressive music in the wake of its success with the Stan Kenton band. The company had already announced an all-out effort, headed by Dave Dexter, to establish itself as a major label in the rhythm-and-blues field. Dexter, who had earlier acquired blues artist T-Bone Walker (as well as his Black and White masters) for Capitol, signed approximately twenty artists during the latter part of 1948, including Alton Redd, "Sugar Chile" Robinson, Joe Swift, Kitty White, and rising calypso star Harry Belafonte. At about the same time, it was discovered that Capitol records (like many others) were being counterfeited. An ongoing investigation by federal authorities yielded few leads and no significant convictions.

In the meantime, Capitol had been quietly making plans to enter the classical market. The idea had first been floated in the summer of 1946, when it was rumored the company might form its own symphony orchestra after having failed to sign one. On July 16, 1948, Capitol disclosed that vice-president James Conkling had been discussing a licensing agreement with Telefunken in Germany for the past eighteen months. In October, Wallichs and Conkling signed a reciprocal agreement giving Telefunken the European pressing and distribution rights to Capitol recordings, and Capitol the American pressing and distribution rights to the entire Telefunken catalog. On October 20, the first shipment of Telefunken recordings was dispatched by air to Capitol's Hollywood headquarters. A mixture of disc and tape masters and film soundtracks, it reportedly consisted of four-hundred mostly classical selections. The news came as an unwelcome shock to Mercury and Vox, which were already issuing Telefunken material they had licensed through other foreign channels.

In November 1948, in anticipation of the Telefunken launch, Capitol mailed thirty-page surveys to 1,500 dealers, asking their opinions on everything from customer's musical tastes and buying habits to album design and preferred speeds, with special attention paid to any potential demand the new LP format. The initial Capitol-Telefunken releases appeared in late March 1949, in both 78- and 45-rpm versions, after repeated delays caused by the need to retool for twelve-inch 78-rpm pressings. The 45-rpm versions were Capitol's

first in that format, and initially were pressed by RCA while Capitol went about installing the necessary equipment in its own plant.

On April 2, 1949, Capitol filed suit against Mercury Records, seeking to enjoin it from issuing Telefunken material, and demanding that its existing pressings be impounded. Capitol's case was based upon the fact that Mercury was using masters that had been seized by the Czech government during World War II, without due process or compensation, which were subsequently turned over to the government-controlled Gramophone Works National Corporation, from which Mercury licensed them. Mercury's Irving Green, who declared that the legality of the deal had been thoroughly investigated, immediately threatened to countersue. The case went to court on July 2, 1949, where Justice Sylvester J. Ryan reserved judgement. A final decision was not reached until October 1952, when U.S. District Court Judge Vincent Leibel ruled in Capitol's favor.

Following the Americana series' failure, there was a revived effort to expand Capitol's presence in the country-and-western market beginning in late 1949. In the summer of 1950, Hollywood artists-and-repertoire manager Dee Kilpatrick was reassigned to Nashville to take charge of what were termed "western-hillbilly" activities, making Capitol the first major label with a permanent presence in that city.

In 1948, Capitol became the first company to regularly employ tape mastering in the production of commercial recordings. In January 1949, the company finally opened new West Coast recording facilities in the former Mutual-Don Lee Studios on Melrose Avenue in Hollywood. The space was subdivided into four studios, one of which equipped as a rental studio for live radio and television broadcasts, with audience seating. The Capital Records Broadcasting Division was formed at about the same time. Initially headed by Kenneth Nelson (program director) and Elmo Williams (television production director), it provided musical transcriptions as well as production services for radio and television programming.

LPs were added to the Capitol lineup in September 1949, beginning with the Telefunken classical catalog, making Capitol the first major label to offer records in all three speeds. However, Capitol made it clear from the start that not all titles would appear in all formats. The company continued to manufacture 78s into the late 1950s, but with an ever-diminishing number of new releases as 45s came into favor.

In 1956, London-based Electric and Musical Industries (the conglomerate controlling His Master's Voice, Odeon, Parlophone, and Pathé) purchased 96% of Capitol Records stock for \$8.5 million and a short time later financed the construction of a new state-of-the-art Capitol studio at Hollywood and Vine in Los Angeles. In turn, Capitol purchased EMI's Angel Records in 1957, which was merged with Capitol's domestic operations two months later. Capitol's later history is beyond the scope of this work.

CAPITOL ROLL AND RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record production: 1924–1925

Offices: 721 Kedzie Ave., Chicago; 715 Kedzie Ave. (sales)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (721 Kedzie Ave.)

Pressing: Own plant (721 Kedzie Ave.)

Record Products: Olympic, Supertone [1]

Successor to the Columbia Music Roll Company of Chicago, the Capitol Roll and Record Company was organized in July 1924. Under the new corporate structure, announced in *The Talking Machine World* for August 1924, L. M. Severson of Operators' Piano Company (Chicago) would provide the financial backing, and his staff would manage piano-roll production, while John Fletcher would oversee record production.

Fletcher had previously been involved with the failed Operaphone, Olympic, and Black Swan ventures. His business relationship with the Columbia Music Roll Company seems to have come about in connection with that company's late-1923 purchase of his idled Olympic pressing plant in Long Island City, New York. (Columbia Music Roll never used the property, instead selling it to band contractor Harry A. Yerkes, who was preparing to launch his Yerkes Dance Records label.)

Fletcher moved to Chicago for Capitol Roll and Records's relaunch of his Olympic label. With him came rights to his Olympic trademark and masters, but not to the Black Swan masters, which he had never controlled despite his partnership with Black Swan's Harry

Pace. The entire Olympic operation, aside from a sales office, was housed in a building on Kedzie Avenue, with a plating and pressing department on the first floor, and a studio on the fourth.

The initial Olympic release was planned for September 1924 but was inexplicably delayed until the following month. This final version of the Olympic label used the original 1920 design, with Capitol Roll and Record's name substituted. It drew largely on Fletcher's newly recorded Chicago masters, which included recordings of some local bands (including those of Gus Drobegg, Cope Harvey, and Al Turk) that were not recording for the East Coast companies. The claim in Johnson & Shirley's dance-band discography that some of these were pseudonymous releases of Plaza Music Company recordings is in error. However, Fletcher did license a handful of masters from Paramount and Emerson for the Chicago version of Olympic. Many of the Chicago-period recordings also appeared (exclusively, in a few cases) on Sears Roebuck's new Supertone label.

The *Talking Machine World* for November 1924 reported that Fletcher's new studio was "quite busy of late." But despite such an encouraging report, and the Sears pressing contract, Capitol Roll and Record was facing bankruptcy by then. Only a few more new Olympic releases would appear before the company was placed in receivership in April 1925.

CAPRI RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: Cincinnati

Original-Master Source(s): Spotlight Records studio

Record Products: Albers, Capri

A short-lived venture of former M-G-M distributor Mike Brawley and Petri Wine Company owner William Palazzolo (reported in error as "Azzollo" in *Cash Box* magazine). In June 1949, the trade papers reported that Capri would produce custom-labeled records for sale in Albers grocery stores, beginning with seventy-two Ohio locations. The catalog was to consist entirely of pop material, using masters commissioned from an unnamed New York studio, which was later revealed to be that of Spotlight Records.

Bud Brees, formerly a vocalist with the Art Mooney Orchestra, was chosen for the initial session. Brawley stated that the Albers arrangement was a trial run, the outcome of which would determine whether the company would produce custom labels for other chains. Albers received its first shipment in late June or early July.

The company abruptly changed course a month later, launching its own 39¢ (two for 75¢) Capri discs, which were not tied to any particular retailer. The revised plan was to market Capri records to record stores and jukebox operators, while making the same recordings available to custom-label clients, should any materialize. The Walgreens drugstore chain was mentioned as a potential customer, but little more was heard of the idea, and Capri does not appear to have been active after 1949.

CARDINAL RECORDS, INC. (Discs).

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 521 5th Ave., New York

Pressing: National Records plant

Record Products: Cardinal [2]

Launched in December 1946 by former Cosmo Records president Harry W. Bank. Janet Bank served as secretary, and Lou Randell as treasurer. Pressing and distribution were handled by National Records.

Billboard reported in December 1946 that Bank had already signed Martha Raye and the Charlie Barnet orchestra for Cardinal. The initial release, a remake of "Cherokee" by Barnet's orchestra, was advertised the following month, sharing space with the latest National releases. Bank had to license the composition from RCA Victor, which authorized only a limited number of pressings on Cardinal.

In January 1947, the Cardinal Company (a Los Angeles transcription producer) threatened to sue Bank to restrain his use of the Cardinal name. The matter was settled out of court, but little more was heard of Cardinal Records after May 1947. On December 4, 1948, Bank and six other former Cosmo officers were indicted under anti-fraud provisions of the

Securities Act of 1933, in connection with their operation of Cosmo Records. Cardinal appears to have been inactive by then. The Cardinal name was also used in the 1950s for an unrelated Kansas City label operated by Frank and Louis Blasco.

CAREY MUSIC PUBLISHING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1950s

Offices: Asbury Park, NJ (post-office box number only)

Record Products: Gay Toons, Kayo, Skatin' Toons

Launched in 1946 by Thomas J. Carey, the Carey Music Publishing Company specialized in records for skating rinks and other novelty recordings that generally were of little or no musical interest. Carey served as president, Leta Bender as treasurer, and R. F. Kaiser as sales manager. Skatin' Toons, Carey's most popular label, had its own distribution facility in Malverne, New York, in addition to which it was handled by at least twenty other small distributors.

CASE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices: 106 W. 5th St., Fort Worth, TX

Record Products: Royal-Tone

A short-lived country-and-western label launched by Bill Case in the summer of 1948 to promote his own songs. Case's first release appeared in the August 1948 advance lists, and the label's launch received a brief mention in *Billboard* a month later. The company appears to have closed soon after making its second release in October. It was still advertising locally as late as November 1948; its last appearance in *Billboard* was in the January 1949 label directory.

CA-SONG RECORD CORPORATION / AUTO-PHOTO RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1949

Offices: 1625 Broadway, New York (1946–5/1947); 56 Court St., Brooklyn, NY (from 5/1947); 1451 Broadway, New York (Auto-Photo office)

Record Products: CA-Song; Auto-Photo (children's)

Launched by Michael Cassone in October 1946. CA-Songs' initial releases, announced in early November, featured Johnny Blowers and his Orchestra, a group that Cassone organized and financed. Two sides by Coleman Hawkins' Orchestra, with vocals by Delores Martin (listed in error in some discographies as 1950 recordings) were released in May 1947 but attracted little notice.

The Auto-Photo Record Company, an affiliate of CA-Song, began operation in the autumn of 1947. (There was no connection to the Auto-Photo Company, a Los Angeles manufacture of automatic photo booths and similar equipment.) Its first, and possibly only, release was the children's album, "The Mighty Magic Mandarin," produced and directed by James Ralph Boyle. Narration was by actress Wendy Barrie, whose photograph and facsimile signatures appeared on the labels.

Cassone appears to have closed CA-Song in early 1949. In August, he launched a new operation, the Rialto Record Corporation, at a different address. His later ventures included the Roman (1958) and Como (1967) labels, and a talent agency.

CASTLE RECORD COMPANY / CASTLE RECORDS, INC. [III] (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1951

Offices: 9059 Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA (1948–c. 5/1949); 6205 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood; and 1118–30 Washington Blvd., Venice, CA (c. 5/1949–c. 1950); 5821 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood (c. 1950–1951)

Pressing: Own plant — Los Angeles area

Record Products: Castle [2]

Founded in March 1948 by Bebe Daniels, a former film star and music supervisor for Universal-International Pictures, in partnership with George Howe and David X. Miller. Although the earliest Castle labels state, "A Bebe Daniels, Inc. Production," it appears from

trade-press reports that Howe and Miller were largely responsible for the company's management and daily operations.

The first Castle release, advertised in May 1948, was credited to David X. Miller and his Orchestra. In the same month, the comedy team of Abbott & Costello signed with Castle, granting the company rights to more than one-hundred of their comedy routines. Among them was the Enterprise recording (obtained through United Artist Records, which had taken it over) of "Who's on First?," which had been a hit in its two previous editions. Howe and Miller attempted to stop sales of any Enterprise pressings still in distribution channels, apparently without success, and sued UAR's trustees to prevent sales of their remaining inventory of the disc.

Little more was heard of Castle until November 1948, when it was announced that Miller had acquired full ownership of the company. By then, the company had accumulated approximately 150 masters, some of them purchased from outside sources. After a period of relative inactivity, the company was refinanced in April 1949 and reorganized as Castle Records, Inc., of no relation to the identically named New York corporation (*see* Castle Records [I]). Miller, who retained the presidency, was joined by Seymour Amster (vice-president) and Milton H. Klein (secretary).

The reorganized company recorded its first masters in late April 1949. At the same time, Miller purchased a group of Rudy Vallee masters from the defunct Enterprise label and announced plans to release three more Abbott & Costello routines, including yet another reissue of "Who's on First?" A country-and-western series was launched at about the same time.

Plans to launch a publishing subsidiary, Castle Music, were also announced in the spring of 1949. Instead, in August of that year, Miller, Amster, and Klein took over and reorganized, Hollywood-based Mach Publishers as Castle's publishing arm, with the idea of plugging Mach songs on Castle records, then selling the most successful to larger publishers. Castle was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1951 directory, which included many inactive and defunct companies.

CASTLE RECORDS, INC. [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1951

Offices: 5126 SE 37th Ave., Portland, OR

Record Products: Castle [1], Castle Records

Founded by Harry N. Fosbury in 1944, as a vehicle for the Castle Jazz Band. Producer George Avakian, writing in *The Record Changer* in 1949, characterized Fosbury as "One of those madmen who goes around throwing money away by recording guys he likes, and maybe...he gets back his initial investment, an event that he celebrates by forgetting all the additional expenses he put in." The band and label were named for a popular Portland roadhouse.

The first Castle session that produced issued masters was held on March 20, 1944. The results were released during the summer of 1944, on the Castle Records label, as an unnumbered pressing of only 200 copies. Production was suspended a short time later. It resumed in late 1947, using a fully redesigned label (with the name shortened to just Castle, and sporting a new pictorial logo) that bore no resemblance to the initial 1944 version. Its artist roster consisted entirely of the Castle Jazz Band and pianist Lee Stafford. By 1949, the label had secured national distribution through the Yerba Buena Music Shop (Oakland, California), Rampart Records (New York) and other specialty distributors. The final confirmed session, by the Castle Jazz Band, was held on September 14, 1950.

CASTLE RECORDS, INC. [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1950

Offices: 119 W. 57th St., New York (2/1949–6/1949); 412 W. 42nd St. (6/1949–6/1950); 438 10th Ave., New York (Sittin' In With, 9/1948–6/1949); 412 W. 42nd St. (Sittin' In With, 6/1949–6/1950); 774 10th Ave. (Sittin' In With, 7/1950–11/1950); 733 11th Ave. (from 11/1950)

Record Products (78s): Sittin' In With, Jade, Spirituals

Founded in early 1948 by Robert (Bob) Shad (*née* Shadinsky or Shadrinsky, depending upon the account), in partnership with his brother Morty, originally as a distributing operation. Bob Shad had produced occasional jazz and rhythm-and-blues sessions as a

freelancer for Manor, Savoy, and other independent labels beginning in 1946. With his brother, he had briefly produced the Haven label before being hired by National Records in 1947.

Shad launched Castle's recording division in mid-1948. The debut of its Sittin' In With label was announced by *Billboard* in September 1948, although anecdotal reports suggest that the records had already been on the market for some months by then. In November 1948, Shad sold some Sittin' In With masters to the new Jade label, which was also produced and distributed by Castle.

Early Sittin' In With releases were devoted largely to jazz, but Shad soon shifted the focus to blues, rhythm-and-blues, and jump, with an artist roster that included Champion Jack Dupree, Smokey Hogg, Lightnin' Hopkins, and the team of Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee. Shad traveled and recorded extensively in the South during 1948–1949, and in the latter year he added the Spirituals label as a vehicle for the Black gospel material he had recorded during his travels.

At the end of 1950, Shad closed Castle Records (which soon resurfaced as Bomac Record Distributors) and reorganized Sittin' In With as an independent company (*see* Sittin' In With Records).

CAVALCADE MUSIC COMPANY / CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1945 – c. 1949

Offices: 1674 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Cavalcade

Founded in the mid-1940s by Phil Martin, who served as the company's sales manager. Originally a music-publishing operation, Cavalcade Music was listed as a producer of 12" plastic discs in the 1945 *Record Retailing Yearbook*, with no label name or further details given. The Cavalcade label itself was not launched until early 1947. The few known releases, which were manufactured for Cavalcade by Columbia's custom products division, featured undistinguished pop material by little-known artists. Cavalcade Music appears to have closed in the late 1940s or very early 1950s. By 1953, the name was being used by an unrelated company.

CAVALIER RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1950

Offices: 1814 Walnut St., Philadelphia

Record Products: Cavalier

Launched c. April 1948 by Jimmy Loughran, Cavalier specialized in country-and-western material. Ownership passed to James S. Stewart in late 1949, after which little more was heard of the operation. There is no connection to Tom Spinosa's California-based Cavalier label, which was introduced in 1951.

CAVA-TONE RECORDINGS — *See* Geddins, Robert L. (Bob)

CECILLE MUSIC COMPANY — *See* Republic Records

CELEBRITY RECORDS — *See* Davis Joe

CELESTA RECORDS COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. Late 1920s

Offices: 125 W. 42nd St., New York

Pressing: Starr Piano Company

Record Products: Celesta

A short-lived venture whose only confirmed releases are by New York Symphony first clarinetist Gustave Langenus. Inspected specimens, which are electrically recorded, display markings in the same hand and style as standard Gennett masters but are numbered in an unprefixed three-digit series that has not been located in the Gennett ledgers. Contrary to some published claims, Langenus' Celesta recordings were not his first (he had earlier recorded for Operaphone). The Celesta label appears to have had very limited distribution.

CELPS RECORD (AND SUPPLY) COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1952

Offices: 3607 S. Avalon Blvd., Los Angeles (1950–mid-1951); 2212 San Pedro, Los Angeles (from mid-1951)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Celps

A Black-owned company, of which Prince T. Partridge served as talent director. During 1950 the company sponsored the "Celps Kiddie Revue," showcasing local juvenile talent, which was broadcast locally from its Avalon Boulevard studio. The Celps Record Company relocated in mid-1951, at which time "Supply" was added to its name. The few known Celps releases feature Los Angeles–area Black gospel artists.

CELTIC RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1952

Offices: 152 W. 42nd St., New York

Record Products: Acme [2], Celtic [2], Irish

Owned and operated by Francis X. (Frank) Fallon. The company's initial releases, on the Celtic label, were announced in July 1946 and were distributed by the Runyon Sales Company (New York), primarily for jukebox use. The companion Irish label was introduced on October 10, 1948. There is no known connection to the 1920s Celtic label, which Gennett briefly produced for an unknown client.

The Celtic and Irish labels featured traditional Irish and Irish-American material, including a few performances by Frank Fallon and his brother, Patrick. A *Cash Box* reviewer predicted that two early Celtic releases would "net their own harvest of coinage from locations where the customers gather to remember the shillelagh and how Connally's men sallied out against the infamous Black and Tans...These tunes are genuine."

New 78-rpm releases last appeared in *Billboard*'s January 1951 advance lists. LPs, cobbled together from previously released recordings, were introduced later that year. The company made a brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 label directory, which included many inactive and defunct companies.

CENTRAL NEBRASKA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889

Offices: Midway Hotel, Room 7, Kearney, NE (temporary, from 10/1889; permanent Kearney location unknown)

A short-lived sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in the western portion of Nebraska. The company was incorporated on October 1, 1889, by Erastus A. Benson (director), H. H. Benson (general manager), George F. Wright, Fred Y. Robinson, and George R. Sherwood. Capital stock was listed at \$625,000 in *The Nebraska State Journal* and several others papers, but only \$6,000 in the *Omaha Daily Bee*. The company initially operated in a room in the Midway Hotel in Kearney, Nebraska.

The *Kearney Daily Hub* reported on October 26, 1889, that H. H. Benson had arrived in town to take charge of the operation, accompanied by "several express wagon loads of machines and appliances." Although Central Nebraska Phonograph appears to have been involved primarily in leasing machines for office use, by the spring of 1890 it was presenting public "phonographic concerts" in a Kearney department store. However, no evidence has been found that the company placed coin-operated machines for entertainment purposes, nor that it produced any original recordings. Many of the cylinders listed as having been used in its "phonographic concerts" can be traced conclusively to Columbia.

Central Nebraska Phonograph was last listed in *The Phonogram* in May 1891. It was subsequently taken over by the Nebraska Phonograph Company (*q.v.*), of which Erastus Benson was president. Its charter was not officially cancelled until 1909.

CENTURY RECORD COMPANY — See Meltzer, Sam

CHAMPION RECORD COMPANY [I]

A trade name used by the Gennett Records division of the Starr Piano Company, *q.v.* The full name appears only in advertising and internal documents; labels credit simply "Champion Records."

CHAMPION RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices and Master Source(s): Detroit

Record Products: Champion [3]

One of the shortest-lived record companies, Champion was launched in the autumn of 1948 by jukebox operator William Reed, in partnership with James Catchings and Melvin Rogers, as a rhythm-and-blues label.

Several Champion records had been produced (although possibly not dispatched to distributors and dealers) by the time that *Billboard* announced the company's closure on Christmas day of 1948. The action was taken as the result of a complaint by Decca Records, which owned the Champion trademark. The inventory was taken over by the Idessa Malone Distributing Company (Malone's own Dessa label, introduced several months later, was also discontinued in response to a complaint from Decca).

Unrelated Champion labels were launched in the early 1950s by the Show Tunes music-publishing firm (New York) and record distributor John Vincent (Jackson, Mississippi).

CHAMPION RECORDING CORPORATION / CHAMPION RECORDING SERVICE (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1939 – 1941

Offices and Master Source(s): 1600 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Masters for New Music Quarterly; custom recordings, air-checks, and radio transcriptions

A custom recording service headed by Joy J. Pierri (president) and Joseph L. Victoris (vice-president). *Variety* listed the Champion Recording Corporation as a transcription producer, and *Broadcasting* as a provider of unspecified recording services from 1939 through 1941, after which no further mention of the company has been located. It is not known to have produced a label of its own, but it recorded a few masters for New Music Quarterly, and possibly other small independent labels.

CHANCE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1954

Offices: 2011 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago (American Record Distributors office, 1950–1951); 1151, 1225, and 1153 E. 47th St., Chicago (1952, 1953, and 1954, respectively)

Original-Master Source(s): Universal Recording (Chicago), other independent studios on occasion

Pressing: Own plant (Armour Plastics, Chicago); additional pressing contracted to RCA custom products and possibly other plants

Record Products (78s): Chance, Meteor [2], Sabre

Launched in August 1950 by Art Sheridan, owner of the Armour Plastics pressing plant and co-owner (with his wife, Evelyn Aron Sheridan) of American Record Distributors in Chicago. Recording sessions began in September. Most of Chance's output was targeted to the race-record market.

Chance's first release, by singer Arnold Jones, appears to have attracted no attention, but its second, by saxophonist John (Schoolboy) Porter reportedly was a minor local hit. In May 1951, however, the American Federation of Musicians announced its impending revocation of Sheridan's recording license. At issue was the first Porter session, which allegedly was booked by one Steve Chandler, a name not otherwise known to have been associated with the company. According to a *Billboard* report, Chandler claimed the backing musicians on the session held union cards, but they were not paid-up members at the time. Recording shut down in late July and did not resume until early 1952, when Sheridan recorded some sides by Black gospel artists who were not subject to AFM control. Sheridan's license was restored several months later, and recording sessions employing union artists resumed on May 1, with yet another Porter session. Production of Chance 45s began at about the same time.

Sheridan dissolved American Record Distributors in August 1952. Its former accountant, Ewart G. Abner, Jr., moved to Chance, where he proved to be adept as a talent scout. The label was most active from mid-1952 into early 1954, specializing in rhythm-and-blues with a roster that included J. B. Hutto, Floyd Jones, J. B. Lenoir, Johnny Shines, and Sunnyland Slim. There was also a smattering of jazz, Black gospel, rockabilly, and country-and-western material. A 3000 pop series was added in late 1952, and the subsidiary Sabre label (produced in 78- and 45-rpm versions) was introduced in July 1953. Neither appears to have attracted much attention from the trade papers or public. Although Sheridan recorded most of his own masters, he occasionally purchased material from defunct labels, including Old Swing-Master, Rhumboogie, and Vitacoustic (which he did not reissue on Chance), and Ora Nelle and Opera (which he did).

Ewart Abner left Chance in December 1953 to join Jimmy Bracken and Vivian Carter in their newly launched Vee-Jay label. By then, Chance was making only sporadic releases, the last of which appeared in October 1954. In December of that year, Sheridan closed the Chance Record Company and sold his catalog to Vee-Jay.

CHANGER PUBLICATIONS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 - Early 1950s

Offices and Master Source(s): 125 La Salle St., New York

Record Products: The Record Changer

One of the pioneering magazines for jazz-record enthusiasts, *The Record Changer* launched its own label in late 1949. Releases were tied to an annual amateur jazz-band contest, the first-prize winner of which was awarded the opportunity to record two sides for its Record Changer label. Second- and third-prize winners were given one side each.

The initial Record Changer recordings, made in October and November 1949 and released in January 1950, included bands from Los Angeles, Milwaukee, and Portland, Oregon. All were White band not well-known outside of their own locales, and reflected the editors' overarching preference for traditional, New Orleans-style jazz. Contestants entered from seven states and three nations, including the unfortunately named Darktown Strutters from Basel, Switzerland. The magazine's editor confided, "The only disheartening note was the not-unexpected absence of entries by Negro bands. It was certainly obvious before this contest that few, if any, young Negro musicians have elected to play traditional jazz."

The following year's winners included equally obscure bands (again, all White traditionalists) from New York; Oakland, California; and Greenwich, Connecticut. As with the previous year's releases, they failed bring the winners any substantial national recognition. An LP album of vintage-blues reissues in the early 1950s appears to have been the magazine's final record offering.

The Record Changer ceased publication in 1957. Some of its staffers and columnists went on to launch *Record Research*, which evolved into a more all-encompassing publication for record collectors, respected for high-quality writing and research despite its amateurish appearance.

CHAPPELLE & STINETTE RECORD COMPANY / C. & S. PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 - 1922

Offices: 122 W. 130th St., New York (1921-1922); 424 Lenox Ave., New York (1922)

Original-Master Source(s): Unknown independent studio(s)

Pressing: Arto Company (1921); unknown plant (1922)

Record Products: Chappelle and Stinnette Singers Supreme Records; Chappelle and Stinnette (C&S) Record

An early Black-owned record company operated by Thomas Chappelle, who with wife Juanita Stinnette Chappelle comprised the popular vaudeville team of Chappelle & Stinnette. Thomas was listed as the company's president and general manager. What position Juanita held with the company, if any, has not been discovered. The venture originally operated as the Chappelle & Stinnette Record Company. Bob Slater, a columnist for *The New York Age*, was listed as general distributor.

The Chappelle & Stinnette Record Company's first known advertisement appeared on December 10, 1921, by which time it had already released its first two records, on the Chappelle and Stinnette Singers Supreme label. Thomas Chappelle later disclosed that the first two releases had been issued "for the sole purpose of testing 'what do people want.'" Pressing was handled by the Arto Company, but the studio in which the recordings were made has not yet been discovered.

Apparently satisfied that people did indeed want the records, Chappelle announced three additional releases in March 1922. They appeared with a redesigned Chappelle and Stinnette (C&S) Record label, and obviously were the work of a different pressing plant. Clarence Williams, who sometimes performed with the couple at local theaters, was featured on a single side; the remaining releases in the group, like those on the previous C & S list, featured the Chappelles, in duets or as soloists.

The final group of C & S records was advertised in *The Chicago Defender* in September 1922, coinciding with the team's engagement by the Plantation Room in New York's Winter Garden. At least two masters were numbered within the same J-prefixed series, from an unknown studio, that also appeared on several See Bee discs (see C. H. Bourne). There was an apparent attempt to broaden the catalog by including two dance-band selections, but Chappelle and Stinnette still dominated the roster. The September 1922 series would be the last for C & S, whose advertising ended abruptly in late 1922 after approximately nine releases.

CHARM RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1949

Office: Park Central Hotel, New York

Original-Master Source(s): WOR Studios (New York)

Pressing: Clark Phonograph and Sonora plants

Record Products: Charm Records

Launched in the autumn of 1947 by band leader Phil Spitalny, who reportedly was "disgusted" with his treatment by Vogue Records. Spitalny operated Charm from his Park Central Hotel suite, employing a part-time staff recruited from his orchestra members. Spitalny personally handled all marketing and sales duties, bypassing distributors and selling his records directly to dealers on a strict no-returns basis. The company's mailing address was a Radio City Station post-office box.

The records showcased Spitalny's "Hour of Charm" All-Girl Orchestra. The initial two-day session produced a Christmas album that sold in large numbers, thanks to an aggressive cross-country marketing tour that occupied Spitalny during much of late 1947. Spitalny refused to disclose his sales figures, but in early 1948 he announced he was making plans to produce one-million albums during the next Christmas season. In March of that year, *Billboard* reported that Spitalny had a backlog of twenty-eight masters that he planned to release piecemeal while the second American Federation of Musicians recording ban was in effect, mostly in album sets. However, the supply apparently was exhausted by late 1949, when new releases ceased to appear.

CHARTER RECORDS — See **People's Songs**

CHECKER MUSIC CORPORATION — See **Cova Recording Corporation; Stanley Recording Company**

CHEROKEE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1587 Broadway (Suite 314), New York

Record Products: Cherokee

Launched during the summer of 1949 by singer Emmett Hobson, with the initial release announced in August. Hobson was featured on early releases. The label was quickly taken over by songwriter and publisher Toussaint L. Pope, who expanded its scope to include Black gospel and rhythm-and-blue material before suspending operations in or around 1952. In the later 1950s, the Cherokee name was used by unrelated labels in Ohio and Alabama.

CHESS RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1969

Offices: 5249 Cottage Grove Ave., Chicago (Aristocrat office, at founding), 750 E. 49th St., Chicago (mid-1951–1954); multiple Chicago addresses (1954–1969)

Original-Master Source(s): United Broadcasting Studios, other independent studios; own studio from 5/1957

Record Products (78s): Chess, Checker [2]

Founded on June 3, 1950, as the successor to Aristocrat Records (*q.v.*), after Charles and Evelyn Aron sold their holdings in that company to Leonard and Phil Chess. At that time, it was reported that the Chess brothers would continue to produce Aristocrat alongside their new Chess label, an arrangement that proved to be short-lived.

The initial Chess releases appeared in the summer of 1950, comprising a mixture of reissued and previously unissued Aristocrat recordings, along with some newly recorded material. The Aristocrat label was discontinued in January 1951, although Chess continued to draw heavily on existing Aristocrat masters during its first two years of operation. Chess' later history, which has been extensively documented elsewhere, is beyond the scope of this work.

CHICAGO CENTRAL PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Founded: 1890

Offices: 801 and 804 Home Insurance Building, Chicago (1890); 141 E. Van Buren St. (1891); 3621 S. State St., Chicago

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Cook County, Illinois. Other areas of the state were serviced by the State Phonograph Company of Illinois, *q.v.* The company was incorporated in Chicago on January 25, 1890 (given in error as February 11 in *The Phonogram*) by N. B. Judah, Fred G. O'Connell, and A. A. Bliss, none of whom appear to have been directly involved in the company's operation.

Chicago Central commenced business on February 7, 1890, according to its stock offering notice. Chicago Central's directors included Erastus A. Benson (who was also a director of the Iowa, Montana, and Nebraska Phonograph sub-companies) and Charles Dickinson (a Chicago seed merchant). The company relocated in 1891, coinciding with a reorganization and subsequent installation of new officers who included Charles L. Raymond (president) and E. A. Hamill (vice-president).

In late May 1890, George B. Hoit, the company's first general manager, estimated that placements of Edison machines outnumbered Columbia by four-to-one. He also reported, "The entertainment department is quite a feature with us and will be more so in the near future." However, the relationship with North American Phonograph was sometimes contentious, particularly in regard to Chicago Central's insistence that it had the right to lease its own line of accessories without North American's approval. "All we want is to be let alone," Hoit proclaimed at the First Annual Convention of Local Phonograph Companies. He was replaced by Walter S. Gray a few months later.

Chicago Central's recording activities were occasionally covered by the local press. *The Chicago Tribune* reported in July 1892, "Everybody who comes to town with any reputation as an actor, a vocalist, or a good story-teller, is importuned to try his hand, or rather his voice, in the department where amusement cylinders are manufactured." Not all of the recordings were deemed suitable for the general public. "[Some] stories are of a Rabelaisian character, to be reserved by purchasers for private edification and instruction," the *Tribune* reporter noted, "but the bulk of them will pass muster for general use." A month later, *The Phonogram* declared, "The vocal records made by this company are unsurpassed in excellence. It employs for this purpose the theatrical talent which is constantly traveling about the country." However, no detailed listing was offered, and thus far, a catalog has not been located.

In July 1892, *The Chicago Tribune* reported that Chicago Central had yet to achieve financial success. "[It] has never declared a dividend," the article stated, "and a good many of the stockholders laugh at the idea of it ever paying."

CHICAGO GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

Record Production: 1927 – c. 1929

Offices: Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Columbia Phonograph Company

Record Products: Chicago Gramophone Society

Produced by the Columbia Phonograph Company for the Chicago Gramophone Society. Founded in the mid-1920s, the group met in Lyon & Healy Hall and was open to "anyone interested in the development of recorded music and the recording instrument."

Chicago Gramophone Society records were sold by subscription only, apparently in very small quantities. The recordings were made in Columbia's Chicago studio, for the society's exclusive use, and were assigned master numbers in Columbia's personal-record series. The first release was Cesar Franck's "Prelude, Chorale and Fugue" performed by Marion Roberts, a promising Chicago pianist who was murdered in Paris in April 1927, soon after her recording was made. It received a positive review from *The Gramophone* in England but went virtually unnoticed in the United States, as did the remainder of the series. Soprano Mina Hager was featured on several releases, including John Alden Carpenter's complete "Water-Colors," with accompaniment by the composer.

CHICAGO RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1927

Offices: 3621 S. State St., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Starr Piano Company (Gennett)

Pressing: Starr Piano Company plant

Record Products: Black Patti

Launched in March 1927, the Chicago Record Company survived for only six months, during which time it produced the now-rare Black Patti label. The venture was conceived by Edward Barrett, a disgruntled Wisconsin Chair Company executive.

Barrett had married into the Dennett family, the founders and owners of Wisconsin Chair, of which the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount) was a division. He served as the company's treasurer until 1924, when he finally was handed a minor vice-presidential title. Barrett flaunted his family connections, but in the power struggles that ensued following the death of John R. Dennett in 1924, he reportedly became increasingly marginalized within the company. In late 1926, according to anecdotal accounts, Barrett approached the Starr Piano Company's Fred Gennett with a proposal to launch a race-record company that would compete with Paramount. Mayo Williams severed his relationship with Paramount and invested in the new company, for which he would serve as talent scout, manager, and front-man.

The Chicago Record Company was incorporated on March 11, 1927, with \$30,000 in capitalization. Press releases listed Mayo Williams, Aleta Williams, Millie Williams, and William H. Temple as the new company's incorporators. There was no public mention of Barrett or Gennett, keeping the company's White financial backers out of the public eye. Chicago Record's November 1927 filing with the Music Publishers' Protective Association listed Mayo Williams as the company's general manager and recording manager, and Robert E. Butler as its sales manager.

Williams' involvement with the Chicago Record Company's business affairs appears to have been minimal. His primary role apparently was to serve as Chicago Record's spokesman, talent scout, and artists-and-repertoire manager, leaving Barrett and Gennett to handle the company's finances and daily operations behind the scenes. Williams, however, did fully control the State Street Music Publishing Company, which he launched on his own to control the copyrights on any original songs that were recorded for Black Patti. Aletha Dickerson, Williams' longtime assistant at Paramount, came along as his secretary and transcribed lead-sheets from the recorded performances for copyright purposes.

The Chicago Record Company's new label was named in honor of Sissieretta Jones (*née* Matilda Sissieretta Joyner), a pioneering African-American diva who was billed as "The Black Patti." The company's early advertisements claimed to have her full endorsement. However, no evidence has been found that Jones (who never recorded, and reportedly

was destitute by the time that Black Patti launched) had any direct involvement in the operation, nor has any documentation been found of what compensation, if any, she received for the use of her name and likeness.

Masters were commissioned from the Starr Piano Company's Gennett Records division, which charged the Chicago Record Company \$30 per acceptable selection, as confirmed in the Gennett matrix ledger. The earliest Chicago Record Company sessions listed in the ledger, on February 23 and 24, involved singer Katie Winters, with pianist William Pearson and violinist Maynard King. Neither date yielded a Black Patti release, but Winters' "Indian Brown Blues," from the February 24 session, was picked up by Gennett, which issued it pseudonymously on its own labels. Interspersed with the Williams dates were sessions by the popular Pace Jubilee Singers, whose Victor records had been selling well, and who would be the only nationally known talent that Williams managed to sign for Black Patti.

The first flurry of Black Patti recording activity wrapped up on April 3, 1927, with a group logged by Gennett as Long Cleve Reed and his Down Home Boys (comprising Reed, Papa Harvey Hull, and Sunny Wilson). They would yield Black Patti's first two releases, heading the initial Black Patti list in *The Chicago Defender* for May 21, 1927. Twenty-four records appeared in the May offering, including blues vocals by Mozelle Alderson and Blind James Beck, Blind Richard Yates, Lil and Will Brown, Hattie Garland, and Eloise Bennett. The list was rounded out by assorted gospel selections, dance numbers, and some straightforward pipe-organ solos by White organist Ralph Waldo Emerson, many of them reissues of previous Gennett releases.

After a hiatus of several weeks, Black Patti sessions resumed in late April, beginning with a successful date by Mozelle Alderson and Blind James Beck. Williams continued to book sessions sporadically over the next three months, primarily in Chicago, but also used Gennett's main studio in Richmond, Indiana, as well as its temporary set-up in St. Paul, Minnesota. One particularly intriguing block of five issues that appeared exclusively on Black Patti (8029 – 8033) is undocumented in the Gennett ledgers. The final Chicago Record Company billings appear in Gennett's late July 1927 ledger. All involved members of the Whitman Sisters' road show.

Among the final Black Patti releases were several recordings made by Jaybird Coleman in Birmingham on August 5 and 13. They were not commissioned by the Chicago Record Company, but rather were rejected titles from Gennett's own sessions. Given the Gennett pressing plant's normal turnaround time, the Coleman records would have been listed just a few weeks before Black Patti suspended operations.

Some of the Black Patti recordings were reissued pseudonymously on Gennett and its budget-priced Champion side-line, often just a month or two after they had appeared on Black Patti. After Chicago Record's demise, a few were licensed to Herwin, Paramount, and Q. R. S. In addition, Gennett issued some recordings on its own labels that originally were recorded for, but rejected by, the Chicago Record Company.

The Chicago Record Company's end came abruptly in late September 1927, reputedly by order of Fred Gennett, after sales fell short of expectations. Although Mayo Williams recalled that recording talent was plentiful in the Chicago area, the artists he was able to sign for Black Patti lacked the widespread name recognition and general appeal of Paramount's or Okeh's most popular race stars. Williams' ability to compete with those labels probably was compromised to some extent by his well-known reluctance to travel in search of talent and his disdain for what he termed "low-down country guys," who he recorded only sparingly for Black Patti.

In addition, the involvement of Fred Gennett, whose Champion and Gennett race releases competed in the same market as Black Patti, might have presented a conflict of interest at times. Whether Gennett pressured Williams into issuing of some Black Patti recordings on his own better-distributed labels is unknown, but the practice must have undercut Black Patti sales to some extent. Compounding those problems was the fact that Black Patti had been rushed to market with little advance notice or planning, and not with the most admirable of motives. Little marketing was done, aside from some localized advertising in *The Chicago Defender*, and the company relied heavily on small retailers and mail-order customers for its sales.

Following the Chicago Record Company's closure, Mayo Williams returned to scouting informally for Paramount until mid-1928, then accepted Jack Kapp's invitation to head the Brunswick-Vocalion race division.

CHICAGO RECORDING STUDIOS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1937 – Early 1950s

Offices: 64 E. Jackson Blvd. (Lyon & Healy Building), Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Masters for Camera, Century, Hy-Tone, Melody Lane Record Shop, probably other small independent labels; Roller Rhythms and other special-use, private, and custom recordings

The Chicago Recording Studios grew out of a reorganization of Marsh Laboratories following Orlando Marsh's retirement in August 1937. All of Marsh's assets and patents were transferred to the new company, which was incorporated on September 13, 1937. Wilbur L. Buchanan served as acting president and registered agent. Marsh personnel who stayed on included Joseph H. Bosley (chief engineer) and Josephine Faber (secretary). Buchanan was later replaced by Robert W. Kittinger, who was making his roller-rink recordings in the studio at the time (*see* Broadcast Records).

Like its predecessor, Chicago Recording Studios was primarily a provider of custom recording services, but in the later 1940s it occasionally produced masters for Melody Lane, Hy-Tone, Century, and other small independent labels. The company appears to have been largely inactive by the early 1950s. It failed to pay taxes in 1952 and was officially dissolved on January 4, 1954.

There is no apparent connection to the Chicago Recording Company (221 N. La Salle Street, *a.k.a.* L. S. Toogood Recording Company), a transcription studio that operated during the same period but is not known to have produced commercial recordings.

CHICAGO TALKING MACHINE COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1890s

Offices: 98 Madison St., Chicago (1893–1895); 107–109 Madison St., Chicago (from 1895); 205 State St., Chicago (showrooms)

Record Products: Cylinders

Incorporated in Chicago on October 23, 1893, with \$500 in capital stock, by Charles Dickinson (a Chicago seed merchant previously involved with the Chicago Central Phonograph Company), Lynn Helm, and inventor Leon Douglass. The latter served as general manager. Chicago Talking Machine's early business consisted mainly of renting coin-operated phonographs and keeping them supplied with cylinders. The company also marketed a spring-motor cylinder phonograph it claimed to be of its own design.

By late September 1895, Chicago Talking Machine's capital stock had been increased to \$20,000. Beginning in the autumn of 1898, the company also managed (and apparently was largely identical with) the Polyphone Company (*q.v.*), which marketed Leon Douglass' dual-reproducer Polyphone attachment for cylinder phonographs. The companies shared managers and office space.

The Chicago Talking Machine Company made original cylinder recordings by local talent, including Silas Leachman, Bonnell's Orchestra, and Brooks' Famous Chicago Marine Band, and it also recorded visiting East Coast performers. An advertisement in the November 1896 *Phonoscope* declared that Dan W. Quinn "has been here again, making another 10,000 records" (referring to the number of copies produced for sale, not the number of titles recorded). The same advertisement offered testimonials from Quinn, George J. Gaskin, and Herbert Holcombe, expressing satisfaction with their Chicago cylinders.

Many other cylinders marketed by Chicago Talking Machine were duplicated from Columbia recordings, with their tell-tale announcements omitted in the copying process. Douglass had patented a cylinder-duplicating device in 1892 and assigned it to the American Graphophone Company (Columbia). In exchange, he claimed to have received a verbal license from Columbia president Edward Easton to make duplicates of Columbia recordings, a claim that was later disputed by company officials.

In April 1897, it was announced that the Chicago Talking Machine Company had been purchased by American Graphophone and would be operated as Columbia's Chicago sales agency, with Douglass retained as manager. American Graphophone formally

assumed possession of the company on August 1, 1897. At some point following the acquisition, Henry Babson launched The Talking Machine Company to handle the Polyphone line, which included cylinders as well as the dual-reproducer Polyphone attachments.

The Chicago Talking Machine Company surrendered its charter on February 24, 1899, and the company was officially dissolved at a stockholders' meeting on April 4. A new company using the Chicago Talking Machine name was incorporated on April 25, 1899, but none of the principals had any known connection to the original company, and it does not appear to have been involved in commercial record production.

CHIEF RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1948

Offices: 74 Riverside Drive, New York

Record Products: Chief

Launched in early 1946 by Jerome H. Kanner, formerly the general promotion manager of Top Records. Chief's address was the same as that originally occupied by Top Records, although there appears to have been no direct corporate connection between the two companies. Kanner served as president, Josh Meyer as secretary, Maxwell Frank as treasurer, and Frank Stanton as sales manager.

Chief's advertising slogan was "Heap Plenty Wampum in Juke Box." The initial releases, by Jack Lynn's Swing Stars, were advertised in May 1946, with catalog numbers that inexplicably began in the 6360s. The Chief Record Corporation was last listed in January 1949 by *Billboard* (which consistently referred to it as the Chief Record Company, in error), but it appears to have been inactive by then. There is no connection to Mel London's much better-known Chief label, which operated in Chicago beginning in 1957.

CINCINNATI RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY / CINCINNATI RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – c. 1946

Offices: 521 W. 6th St., Cincinnati

Original-Master Source(s): WOR studios, other independent studios

Record Products: Cincinnati

A short-lived jazz and blues label, of unknown ownership. Cincinnati records were briefly distributed by Paul Reiner's Music Distribution Company in Cleveland.

Cincinnati's first release was advertised in *Billboard* on June 30, 1945. Otherwise, few mentions of the label appeared in the trade papers. Its artist roster included Lem Johnson, Roosevelt Sykes, Inez Washington, and Joe Williams. *The Record Changer* reported that Lem Johnson's session was held for Cincinnati Records at radio station WOR's New York studio on November 9, 1944. Some discographies show masters by Sykes and others as having been recorded in Chicago, with no documentary evidence cited. Several Cincinnati sides were also issued on Reiner's Black and White label.

CIRCLE RECORDS / CIRCLE SOUND, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946–1952

Offices: 38E. 4th St., New York (to 5/1948); 778 10th Ave., New York (from 5/1948); 13 E. 3rd St., New York (distribution and sales office)

Pressing: Bishop Presses, other independent plants

Record Products: Circle, Circle Blue Star Series, Circle Document

Founded in January 1946 by ragtime and traditional-jazz enthusiasts Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis. Blesh was in the process of completing *Shining Trumpets* (an early jazz history) at the time Circle was launched. He would go on to publish *They All Played Ragtime* in 1950, a seminal attempt to chronicle the development of ragtime. Circle Records was first listed in the 1946 edition of *Record Retailing Yearbook*, which gave its address as that of the Jazz Man Record Shop in Hollywood. Blesh and Janis' Circle Records had no connection to the Weiss brothers' Circle Record Company, a San Francisco pressing plant that manufactured the Fantasy [II] label during the same period.

Circle recording sessions began in January 1946. The initial Circle releases, featuring drummer Baby Dodds as a soloist and in various combinations with other musicians, were

first advertised in April 1946, in *The Record Changer*. Circle's catalog included original recordings by such aging traditional jazz musicians as Kid Ory, Kid Rena, Tony Parenti, Sidney Bechet, James P. Johnson, Luckey Roberts, "Mr. Freddie" Shayne, Montana Taylor, and the Original Zenith Brass Band of New Orleans (the latter featuring George Lewis), as well as blues singers Hociel Thomas and Chippie Hill. Early Circle releases were largely ignored by the media, other *The New York Age* (a Black-owned paper) and a few niche publications, which occasionally reviewed them.

Circle finally began to attract national attention in 1948, for its work in producing the first commercial release of Jelly Roll Morton's 1938 Library of Congress recordings. Occupying forty-five 12" discs, the records were issued in album sets over a period of fifteen months, beginning in the early autumn of 1947. Unfortunately, the recordings were transferred at what were obviously incorrect speeds, an error that Blesh apparently failed to detect (and which also occurs in the numerous reissues subsequently made from the Circle dubbings by other labels). The error was finally corrected in the 1990s by Rounder Records, which had new transfers made at the proper speed. Circle also produced the first commercial release of the soundtrack from Bessie Smith's 1929 movie short, "St. Louis Blues."

Distribution was taken over by Sam Goody in the summer of 1946. In July 1948, Circle purchased the Solo Art recordings from Dan Qualey, which the company began reissuing at the end of that year. At about the same time, Circle licensed some recordings by Claude Luter and others from Blue Star in France, which it issued on the Circle Blue Star Series label. The Circle Documentary label, which came and went in 1950, issued some of the earliest recordings made from vintage hand-played piano rolls attributed (questionably, in some cases, as the source rolls were not identified) to Scott Joplin, James Scott, and other major ragtime figures. Circle LPs, including a repackaging of the entire Morton set, were introduced in late 1950, but the company suspended operations at the end of 1952. Its catalog was acquired in the mid-1960s by George Buck, of Jazzology Records.

CITATION RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1952

Offices: 667 W. Hancock St., Detroit

Record Products: Citation

Launched in the autumn of 1950 by Lou Parker, in affiliation with the Mid-West Music Company (Detroit). Robert Hawkins served as musical director, and musician Roy Hall was brought in as manager of the country-and-western catalog in July 1951. Citation was doing business by October 1950, when *Billboard* noted that the Lucky Sparks Trio had been signed, after which little else was reported concerning the company. Its national advertising consisted of occasional small boxed advertisements, the last known example of which appeared in *Billboard* in July 1952.

CITY SOUND AND RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1940s

Offices: San Jacinto St., Houston, TX

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Cireco

Primarily a custom-recording service, the City Sound and Recording Company briefly produced its own Cireco label in 1948. Confirmed releases are country-and-western titles by Jerry Irby's Texas Ranchers and Bill Strength's Saddle Ranchers. Irby's "49 Women" was sold to M-G-M Records soon after release, probably coinciding with the end of the Cireco label.

J. J. CLANO COMPANY / VERDI MUSIC SHOPS (E. E. VERDI) (Discs)

Record Production: 1920s

Offices: 202 1st Ave., New York

Record Products: L'Insuperable, L'Insuperabile

An Okeh record dealer and publisher of sheet music for the Italian-American market, the J. J. Clano Company also marketed its own L'Insuperable records (the labels of which give the name as J. & J. Clano) beginning in the early 1920s. Masters are from unknown sources,

some of which might be foreign. The 5000-series masters do not correspond to the Plaza Music Company–Regal Record Company's 5000-series masters. Early pressings, including some in orange shellac, were made by the New York Recording Laboratories.

In or around 1926, the label was redesigned and its spelling was changed to "L'Insuperabile." The new labels credited E. E. Verdi (New York) and the Verdi Music Shops (New York), but the Clano connection was evident in the large number of reissued L'Insuperable recordings. Some of the new Verdi issues were electrically recorded, with labels stating "Radio Recorded," "Verdi Electric," or "Incisione Ortofonica" ("Orthophonic Recording," although there was no connection to the Victor Talking Machine Company, owners of the Orthophonic trademark).

CLARION RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 – 1922

Offices: 54–56 Bleecker St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Criterion Laboratories

Pressing: Bridgeport, CT (claimed but not confirmed)

Record Products: Clarion [2], Cardinal [1], Cleartone, Melva, Meteor [1], Phantasie Concert Record, Royal [2])

Incorporated in New York on August 17, 1921, with \$5,000 in capitalization, Clarion was a short-lived venture of Jacques M. Kohner, the former sales and general manager of the Lyraphone Company. Although Clarion claimed to operate its own pressing plant in Bridgeport, Connecticut, physical characteristics suggests that the discs were pressed for Clarion by the independent Bridgeport Die and Machine Company.

Rudolph Kamarek was also associated with the Clarion Record Company, in ways that are not entirely clear. His Independent Talking Machine Company of Manhattan had filed for bankruptcy shortly before Clarion was launched. Another of Kamarek's ventures, the Independent Phonograph Manufacturing Corporation (founded in 1914 as the Independent German-American Talking Machine Company) had offices at the same Bleecker Street address as Clarion.

Clarion records were announced to the trade in *The Talking Machine World* for September 1921, although the label was likely in production before that time. The company commissioned its own series of C- prefixed masters from Criterion Laboratories (*q.v.*), many of which also appeared on other minor labels that are listed in the Criterion entry. The catalog was divided into several series, including dance (1000), popular vocal (3000), band (600), Hawaiian (700), and novelty (800).

Clarion's output was undistinguished, for the most part offering little more than routine popular and standard fare, much of it by the usual New York studio freelancers singers and dance orchestras. There were also occasional reissues from the defunct Lyric [3] label, to which Kohner apparently held the rights.

Clarion increased its capital stock from \$5,000 to \$100,000 on January 2, 1922, in an unsuccessful bid to keep the company afloat. Recording activities appear to have been suspended a short time later, coinciding with closure of the Criterion studio, its primary master supplier. The company was disbanded in June 1922, after which Kamarek went on to work for Emerson.

CLARION RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY, INC. / CLARION RECORDS, INC.

(Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1976

Offices: 1310 Callowhill St., Philadelphia (1946–1950s); 1021 (later, 1021–1027) Ridge Ave., Philadelphia (1950s–1976)

Record Products: Clarion [4], Strand; pressings for ABC-Paramount, Tempo, other independent labels

An independent pressing plant, founded by Nathan and Janet Rosengarten Niederman in 1945. The company introduced its own Clarion label c. 1947, initially to specialize in country-and-western material, then added a rhythm-and-blues series in 1949. The Strand label was added to the lineup in June 1948, as a pop line employing locally available talent. The Clarion label was discontinued in the early 1950s, at which time Strand was spun off as a separate operation with offices in the same block as the parent company.

Clarion was one of the first independent plants to offer 45-rpm pressing services. After moving to larger quarters in the 1950s, the company provided pressing services to numerous labels, with ABC-Paramount reportedly its major client.

CLARK PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 – c. 1949

Offices: 216 High St., Newark, NJ

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (reported but not confirmed)

Pressing: Own plant (5 Pomona Ave., Newark, NJ)

Record Products: Wallace Reducing Records and other special-use records; transcriptions; custom recordings; pressings for numerous commercial labels

Incorporated in Newark, New Jersey, on December 5, 1921, by George H. Clark, Frank Lappen, and Wallace M. Rogerson, originally to produce Rogerson's Wallace Reducing Records. Clark also offered custom-recording services in the early 1920s, and he might have occasionally supplied masters to commercial labels during that time, although confirmed examples are lacking.

The company was later reorganized as a family-owned operation headed by George Clark (president), Albert E. Clark (vice-president), and Mildred H. Clark (secretary). It went on to become a major independent custom recording, master processing, and pressing operation, numbering Moses Asch, Joe Davis, Capitol, Manor, Regis, and WOR among its clients. Although Clark Phonograph did not produce any commercial labels of its own (aside from early editions of the Wallace exercise discs), George and Mildred H. Clark held a 50% interest in Manor Records before being bought out by Irving Berman in 1946.

CLASSIC RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1940–1945

Offices: Pittsburgh (1940–1941); 2 W. 46th St., New York (1942); 7 W. 46th St., New York (from 1943)

Original-Master Source(s): Unknown (1940–1941); World Transcription studios (1/1942–early 1944), probably other independent studios on occasion; own studio (*d.b.a.* Transcriptions Inc., early 1944–1945)

Pressing: Scranton Record Company

Record Products: Concertone Records; Elite [1], Hit, Hits By; Lion

Founded in 1940 by Albert E. (Al) Middleman, who later admitted that he knew "absolutely nothing" about music. Originally headquartered in Pittsburgh, the Classic Record Company produced or commissioned some of its own recordings during its initial phase, when it specialized in light classical material. However, there was an apparent connection to Elliot Everet (Eli) Oberstein from the start. Several early Concertone releases used masters obtained from Oberstein's failed United States Record Corporation, and "Elliot Everet" (a slight disguise that Oberstein had employed since the early 1930s) was credited as conductor on a few early Concertone releases.

In late December 1940, the Classic Record Company merged with Oberstein's newly launched Imperial Record Company (*q.v.*). Middleman had been attempting to add a conventional pop line to the Concertone catalog, with little success, while Oberstein so far had failed to deliver the classical line he had promised for Imperial. Soon after the merger, the Imperial Record Company name was abandoned when it was discovered that Imperial was already in use by another company, and the Classic Record Company name was substituted on the Elite label.

Middleman retained the title of president of the Classic Record Company after the merger and remained in Pittsburgh to manage distribution. However, operations were soon consolidated in Oberstein's New York office. From that point forward, the company was largely under Oberstein's control, with Middleman taking a relatively passive role. The Scranton Record Company handled pressing, despite having nearly been bankrupted by its previous involvement with Oberstein's United States Record Corporation.

Launch of the Elite label was marred somewhat by Blue Barron's highly publicized attempt to leave the label for Columbia, and by questions concerning the source of Oberstein's allotment of rationed shellac (to which he responded with a typically colorful tale that it had been salvaged from a torpedoed freighter). There were legal squabbles with other artists as well, including trumpeter Harry James, who protested Oberstein's reissuing

some of his old Varsity recordings on Elite. James, who had since moved to Columbia, claimed that he had never been fully paid for those recordings.

Despite the bumpy launch, by early February Oberstein was claiming that 300,000 Elite records had been sold during the label's first seven weeks. In March, he made a deal with Firestone to sell Elite records in several hundred of their retail branches, and a similar deal was said to be in the works with Standard Oil, for gas station sales. The records were already selling well in several large chain stores, including W. T. Grant and Newberry's. In the Midwest, Oberstein arranged with the theater management firm of Balaban & Katz to have Elite records given away in their movie theaters on designated nights. By early 1942, Oberstein was rumored to be under consideration to head a new Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer record division, which failed to launch at that time.

In June 1942, Oberstein introduced the Hit label (early issues of which were credited to Elite Record Manufacturing) in partnership with Middleman. A month later, the Classic Record Company (which until then had been a partnership) was reorganized as a corporation, with a three-way stock split between Oberstein, Middleman, and Walter A. Valerius. The Hit label proved to be considerably more popular than Elite, which it eventually nudged out. In March 1943 Oberstein hired Picard Advertising to run a national ad campaign for Hit records, which appears to have been a success.

Oberstein, however, increasingly engaged in activities that tarnished his reputation within the industry — most notably, the recording sessions he held during the American Federation of Musicians' recording ban that began on August 1, 1942. The records, all released under artist aliases, quickly caught the attention of AFM officials, who in October 1942 claimed that unnamed union musicians had admitted to participating in Oberstein recording sessions that violated the ban. *The New York Times* reported, "Fictional names... are used to identify the leaders of the bands, which for the most part are small units. A minimum of solo passages and special arrangements also distinguish the discs, making identification more difficult." Further suspicions were aroused in early 1943, when a report circulated that Hit's presumably pseudonymous "Peter Piper" had been identified as AFM member Jack Small.

Oberstein was repeatedly questioned by AFM officials concerning the source of Hit's masters. He feigned ignorance at first stating, "All I do is buy master recordings and then make copies." A few weeks later, he claimed that the masters had been purchased from one "Manuel Valdez, a Mexican," despite the unmistakable presence on several sides of New Yorker Arthur Fields (who, as a singer, was not bound by the ban, although his uncredited accompanists probably would have been). At his third and final hearing, Oberstein falsely declared that he was merely an employee of Classic Record, and as such knew nothing about the company's master sources or production activities.

On May 29, 1943, the American Federation of Musicians filed formal charges against Oberstein. On June 2, AFM president James C. Petrillo applied further pressure by calling on music publishers to withhold recording rights from Oberstein. The Music Publishers' Protective Association rallied to Oberstein's defense, and no action was taken. Undeterred, the AFM expelled Oberstein from Local 802 on June 6, for "conduct prejudicial and unfair to the best interests of the local and the federation." Oberstein responded by threatening to file a \$500,000 lawsuit against AFM officials, charging defamation and discrimination. He also threatened to subpoena a *Billboard* staffer, claiming that his report in advance of the AFM hearings had been prejudicial. The lawsuit did not proceed, and Oberstein was eventually reinstated. In October 1943 he applied for and was granted an AFM recording license, and he resumed recording with union musicians later that year.

In December 1943, Oberstein purchased recording equipment from E. V. Brinckerhoff's recently foreclosed General Sound Corporation and opened a new studio, which he initially planned to call Transcriptions Inc. (a name already in use by Chester Miller's custom-recording service), ending his reliance on outside studios. In October, he signed a deal to produce music-publisher Jack Robbins' Lion label, on the condition that Robbins pay all recording costs. In return, Robbins would receive a small portion of the pressing run with Lion labels, while the remainder would be issued on Hit. Two Lion releases were pressed, only to be withheld after a dispute arose over ownership of the masters.

The Hit label seemed poised for success following the AFM debacle, but within a year, rumors began circulating that Oberstein was seeking a buyer for the Classic Record

Company. On February 14, 1945, *The New York Times* confirmed that Majestic Records, a newly formed subsidiary of the Majestic Radio Corporation, had purchased the company "and other concerns operated by Eli Oberstein" for more than \$500,000. Oberstein joined Majestic in an unspecified "executive capacity," but he resigned in June 1945. The following month he returned to RCA Victor, reclaiming his old post as director of popular artists and repertoire. Middleman moved on to new venture, Sterling Records (*q.v.*), in partnership with Arthur Rupe and Ben Siegel.

CLAUDE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947

Offices: 4105 Liedy Ave., Philadelphia

Record Products: Claude

An apparently short-lived Philadelphia operation that was listed only in *Billboard*'s February and May 1947 label directories. The single release confirmed thus far is by the Park Avenue Jesters, a Philadelphia nightclub act whose advertisements mention only their Click and De Luxe records.

CLEF PUBLICATIONS — See Grimes Music Publishers

CLEF RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947; 1949–1956

Offices: New York (late 1940s); 451 N. Canon Dr., Beverly Hills, CA (from early 1950s)

Original-Master Source(s): Radio Recorders, RCA (New York), Reeves, other independent studios; Live-performance recordings

Pressing: Aladdin Records (1947–1948), Mercury Records (from 1948)

Record Products (78): Clef [1]

Launched in the summer of 1947 by concert promoter Norman Granz to take over production of his live Jazz at the Philharmonic recordings, which previously had been produced for him by Stinson and Disc. Besides his work in promoting Black musicians, Granz was well-known as a civil-right activist who refused to book his artists into segregated venues. In the autumn of 1947 he and five Black musicians filed suit against a restaurant in Jackson, Michigan, that refused to serve them, and he reportedly removed his records from a store in Dayton, Ohio, after the owner requested that only Whites be allowed to attend an autograph session.

The initial Clef album, consisting of Volume 6 in the JATP series, was released during the week of August 18, 1947. Pressing and distribution were briefly handled by Aladdin before being turned over to Mercury Records, which continued in that role into the mid-1950s. After a largely unsuccessful attempt to expand European distribution in early 1948, Granz temporarily scuttled the Clef label and licensed the rights to Volumes 6–8 of the JATP series to Mercury. Mercury released those recordings under its own label until August 1, 1953, when the rights were transferred back to Clef by mutual agreement.

Granz, initially in partnership with Bernie Silverman, revived Clef Records in 1949. By the early 1950s, Clef had switched largely to LP and 45-rpm EP production and was emerging as a leading independent jazz label. The companion Norgran label was introduced in 1952. In February 1956, Granz announced the addition of the Verve and Down Home labels (Verve primarily for pop and big-band material by Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Anita O'Day, Buddy Rich, and other established stars; and Down Home, which he purchased from Lu Watters, for traditional jazz). Granz personally managed Down Home, despite his professed lack of interest in the material. He turned management of Verve over to Buddy Bregman, who with Benny Carter's assistance was given free rein in signing artists.

In late 1956, Granz's various labels were merged into Verve Records, the history of which is beyond the scope of this work. Verve is currently a unit within the Universal Music Group.

CLEVELAND PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY (Cylinders)

Pre-Commercial Record Production: Probably 1908–1909

Offices: Cleveland, OH (incorporated in Columbus)

Record Products: Harris Everlasting Record (probably prototypes only); possibly Cortina

Although the Cleveland Phonograph Company is not known to have produced records for the consumer market, it is included here because of its role as the immediate predecessor of the U. S. Phonograph Company, the makers of U-S Everlasting cylinders. The company was incorporated on August 19, 1908 by E. C. Beach, F. W. Treadway, W. H. Marlatt, and Albert Laustin, with capitalization of \$10,000.

Cleveland Phonograph was formed to manufacture records under Varian Harris' celluloid cylinder-molding patent #854,886, which employed celluloid sheets rather than celluloid tubing. Harris originally assigned a controlling interest in his patent to the Tacoma Manufacturing Company (Toledo, Ohio), which probably never commenced production. On February 3, 1908, a Tacoma stockholder applied for the appointment of a receiver for the company, citing mismanagement and inability to meet financial obligations. Forced to dissolve, Tacoma sold its stake in Harris' patents to the above-named Cleveland investors. On September 18, Harris refiled his patent #854,886 to add an assignment to the Cleveland Phonograph Record Company. One report of the company's formation claimed that its records could "fall from any distance and not break and will last forever."

Cleveland Phonograph apparently planned to market cylinders under Harris' name. At least two examples are known of Harris Everlasting Record boxes, with labels crediting the Cleveland Phonograph Record Company, which were discovered under later, pasted-over U-S Everlasting labels. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported on June 5, 1909, that the company was preparing a display for the Cleveland Industrial Exposition, suggesting that at least prototype cylinders had been produced. However, there is no evidence that the Harris Everlasting Record ever reached consumers, or that Cleveland Phonograph produced any other records for the general market. The company reportedly signed an agreement to produce language-instruction cylinders for the Cortina Company in 1908, but those records probably were not made available until the autumn of 1909, by which time Cleveland Phonograph had ceased to exist.

On August 5, 1909, the *Cleveland Press* reported that Cleveland Phonograph had raised its capitalization to \$1 million and changed its name to the U. S. Phonograph Company (which it mistakenly called the United States Phonograph Company), *q.v.*

CLICK RECORD COMPANY — See Allied Recording Company; American Recording Company

CLIPPER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1951

Offices: 34 Hillside Ave., New York

Record Products: Clipper

A pop label launched in early 1950 by songwriter Paul McGrane in affiliation with Star Songs, a publishing operation that shared Clipper's offices and also maintained a Hollywood office. *Billboard* had recently reported that McGrane's Gem Records was inactive. Clipper's roster included singers Johnny Corvo and Frances Lynn, the latter having recently departed Gene Krupa's band. Its first release, by Corvo, received a favorable *Cash Box* review in May 1950, but the label otherwise attracted little attention in the trade papers. Its last confirmed releases appeared in the summer of 1951.

CLOVER RECORDS COMPANY, LTD. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1949

Offices: 441 N. Camden Dr., Beverly Hills, CA (1948–1949); 964 S. Fedora St., Los Angeles (1950)

Record Products: Clover [2]

An obscure operation about which no reliable ownership information has been located. The first confirmed releases, consisting of pop tunes by obscure artists, were advertised in April 1948 and were handled by the Record Merchandising Company, a Los Angeles distributor. Clover's brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s July 1951 and March 1952 directories (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

CLUB RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices: Los Angeles

Record Products: Club

A short-lived race label launched in 1948 by blue singer Jesse Thomas, the brother of 1920s Paramount recording artist Ramblin' Thomas. Only four releases are known to have been produced, consisting of two each by Thomas and Sister Rosetta Winns' Singers. The operation appears to have gone dormant by 1949, and in 1950 Thomas signed with the Swingtime label.

CO-ART RECORDS COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1939 – c. 1950

Offices: 1403 S. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles (mailing address: Box 1298, Beverly Hills, CA)

Record Products: Co-Art

Founded in 1939 by Arthur Lange, who had begun his recording career in the early 1920s as a house arranger and conductor for the Cameo Record Corporation. Beginning in the late 1920s, Lange shifted his focus to motion pictures, working as a musical director on some of the earliest sound films and developing scoring techniques that remained influential for many years. During the 1930s he was employed at various times by the M-G-M, RKO, and 20th Century-Fox studios.

Although his background was primarily in popular music, Lange devoted the Co-Art label to classical works by contemporary American composers and, to a lesser extent, obscure European works. One report characterized Co-Art as "an organization interested in obtaining a hearing for contemporary composers of merit whose music has not attracted the attention of commercial publishers and record makers." There were also semi-popular releases by pianist D'Varga and Eddie Durant's Latin Americans, among others.

Lange also published the monthly *Co-Art Turntable*, edited by Ethel Dofflemyre using the pen-name Henri Lloyd Clement. Lange's memoirs of his early days in the music business were serialized in the magazine, along with articles by Clifford Vaughan, Karl Wecker, Verna Arvey, George Tremblay, Adolph Weiss, John Crown, Charles Maxwell, and Charles Wakefield Cadman, among others. His *Spectrotone System of Orchestration* was published under the Co-Art imprint in 1943. *Co-Art Turntable* appears to have perished in the same year.

Co-Art records were released only sporadically, pressed in very small quantities, and had very limited distribution. The few published reviews were consistently positive, but production appears to have been discontinued by the early 1950s.

COAST RECORD (MANUFACTURING) COMPANY / CHARLES E. WASHBURN COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – Late 1950s

Offices: 1511 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles (storage and shipping only after 6/1946); 2534 W. Pico Blvd. (main office from 6/1946)

Pressing: Own plant (Los Angeles)

Record Products (78s): Coast, Rodeo; pressings for Lamplighter, Peerless (Mexican, for U.S. distribution), Spinet, and other independent labels

In June 1945, Rodeo Records was reorganized as Coast Records after Charles Washburn decided to expand into the race-record and pop markets. Coast operated as a subsidiary of the Charles E. Washburn Company (*q.v.*), with Washburn's wife, Gladys, serving as treasurer and handling many of the sales, marketing, and general management duties. Washburn was already operating his own pressing plant.

Washburn produced the Rodeo and Coast labels concurrently into the autumn of 1945, at which point Rodeo was dropped and its artists transferred to Coast. Although country-and-western material remained a major component of Coast's catalog, race and pop series were added in the summer of 1945. Band leader Isham Jones briefly came out of retirement to record for the label.

In late 1945, Washburn reorganized his operation as the Coast Record Manufacturing Company, reflecting its expanding custom-pressing business. The company also held exclusive U.S. import and distribution rights to Eduardo Baptista's Mexico City-based

Peerless label. In August 1945, it was announced that Peerless would no longer export pressings to the United States. Instead, Coast would press Peerless records for U.S. distribution, and Peerless would withhold release in Mexico until the corresponding American pressings were ready to release. At about the same time, Washburn sent William Abel to make some recordings for Peerless in Cuba.

Washburn's September 1946 bid to take over the defunct American Recording Artists operation, in partnership with Ralph Peer and John Beck, was rejected by ARA's receivers. Washburn went on to greatly expand Coast's distribution business in 1947 and early 1948, securing the western distribution rights to Bibletone, Dana, Gala, Majestic, Manor, National, and Regent, among other independent labels. The Coast plant also provided auxiliary pressing services to many of those labels. Production of LPs began in late 1948, at first only for Washburn's pressing-plant clients rather than his own Coast label.

In April 1948, Coast acquired the manufacturing and sales rights to approximately two-hundred masters from Ted Yerxa's defunct Lamplighter label, many of them unissued, which were to be released under in a special Coast Lamplighter Series. The initial release was to have been two sides by Kay Starr, prompting the singer (whose Lamplighter contract had been voided after a complicated legal battle) to seek an injunction preventing Yerxa from including her recordings in the sale.

In January 1953, former partner Paul Mayer sued Coast Records, the Washburns, and others affiliated with the company for \$25,000 in damages arising from an alleged violation of Mayer's 1951 sales agreement with the company. The case had no discernible impact on Washburn's pressing operation, which was still manufacturing LPs and 45s for client labels as late as 1959. Washburn's Ace Distributing Company (founded in 1946, at the same address as Coast) was still in business in the early 1960s.

COBRA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1951

Offices: 516 5th Ave., New York

Record Products: Cobra

Launched during the summer of 1949 by Sy Newton, who was joined in December by former Rondo sales representative Gene Gold. Although *Billboard's* September announcement of the company's start-up termed it a rhythm-and-blues operation, its small output consisted largely of undistinguished pop material. The company was still listed in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many dormant or defunct companies), but it appears to have been inactive by then. There is no connection the later, and much better known, Cobra label of Chicago.

CODA RECORD COMPANY — See Spanish Music Center

COLEMAN RECORDING COMPANY / COLEMAN ENTERPRISES / COLEMAN RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1950

Offices: 59 Court St., Newark, NJ

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address; Hertz Recording Studios (Newark)

Record Products: Coleman

Launched in late 1944 by three members of the Coleman Brothers, a popular Black vocal group that had already recorded for Decca and Manor. Lander, Melvin, and Russell Coleman served as president, vice-president, and secretary, respectively, with Larry Smith serving as general manager and Benny Wells as musical director. The brothers purchased a hotel in Newark, New Jersey, that was popular with traveling Black artists, where they opened a studio in the basement. For a time, the Colemans had a live link from their studio to Newark radio station WHBI, over which they broadcast on Sundays.

The Coleman label was launched in 1945. It specialized in gospel and rhythm-and-blues, with an artist roster that included the Dixieaires, Five Blind Boys of Mississippi, National Clouds of Joy, and Ray-O-Vacs. In one of the label's few advertisements, disc jockey Bill Cook of Newark radio station WAAT predicted, quite incorrectly, that the latter group's "I'll Always Be in Love with You" would sell a million copies.

With meager sales and spotty distribution, the Colemans had difficulty attracting and retaining artists. The last known releases appeared in 1950, by which time the Coleman's recording sessions were being held in the Hertz Recording Studios in Newark. In August of that year, the Coleman Brothers signed with Regal Records and appear to have closed their company. The Coleman catalog was later purchased by Savoy Records.

COLLECTOR'S ITEM – See Lincoln, Benjamin

COLLECTORS ITEMS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 119 E. 57th St., New York

Record Products: Collector Item

Launched in late February or early March 1946 by John Horshor, the former president of Spotlight Records. (*Billboard* initially reported that Collectors Items was a renaming of Spotlight, then quickly corrected its error.) The label name is singular, although the company name is plural. There was no connection to Benjamin Lincoln's earlier Collector's Item label.

The unusual label design (styled "Collector:___ Item: ___") provided a blank space in which owners could write their names. The records were first advertised in March 1946 and retailed for \$1, substantially more than the major labels. Despite their name, they are of no particular interest to collectors, consisting of undistinguished pop and light-jazz fare by Day, Dawn & Dusk (a vocal trio comprising Bob Carver, Ed Coleman, and Gus Simons) and other minor acts. Horshor attempted to spin that shortcoming by advertising, "If the following names are not familiar to you...imprint them on your memory so that when you are asked about them, you will know." The records were carried by Macy's, Rabson's, and other New York retailers, but no mention of the company has been found after 1946.

COLLEGIATE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947–Early 1950s

Offices: 423 Broadway, Nashville TN

Record Products: Collegiate

A short-lived company founded by Bill Beasley in or around 1947. Its releases were generally dismissed as "filler" by the *Cash Box* reviewers. The label drew on obscure local performers, including several amateur vocal groups from Vanderbilt University. In late 1948, manufacturing and distribution were taken over by the Bullet Recording and Transcription Company, which introduced red plastic pressings.

COLONIAL RECORDS, INC. [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 100 Boylston St., Boston

Record Products: Colonial [3]

A pop label launched in January 1949 by songwriter and music publisher Arthur Korb. The initial release ("Snow Train"/"Christmas in July," by Ray Dorey and the Twinaires), advertised in late January, was a plug for the Boston & Maine Railroad. Four of Korb's Colonial masters were sold to Apollo Records in March 1949, after which nothing further was reported concerning the label. Modern Records' unrelated Colonial Records subsidiary launched at the same time as Korb's company, perhaps explaining the latter's sudden disappearance.

COLONIAL RECORDS, INC. [II] — See Modern Records

COLONY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949 – 1951

Offices: 135 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles

Record Products: Colony

Launched in early 1949 by Clyde Henderson (president) and J. J. Walker (secretary-treasurer). Colony's launch was briefly noted in April 1949 by *Cash Box*, which reported that the company would specialize in pop, race, and country material.

Colony (whose offices were next-door to Lou Chudd's Imperial Record Company) attracted some attention in the spring of 1949, when *Billboard* reported that one of its square-dance albums was actually pressed from Imperial masters, using different artists credits but the identical album notes. Chudd denied any connection to Colony at that time, but in 1951 the label resurfaced with a new line of pressings from Imperial masters, on which some of the selections were retitled. Nothing further is known to have been reported concerning the company, or the reason for Chudd's reluctance to acknowledge his connection to it.

COLORADO PHONOGRAPH COMPANY / COLORADO AND UTAH PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889 / 1890

Offices: 104 Opera House Block, Denver, CO

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, originally licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Colorado. The company was organized on April 4, 1889, with Edward W. Rollins (a prominent Denver banker and co-founder of the Colorado Electric Company) serving as president. Other officers included Charles W. Hurd (vice-president), S. W. Cantril (manager), and John F. Barber (assistant manager).

In early October 1890, the Utah Phonograph Company was chartered in Salt Lake City with capital stock of \$200,000 or \$250,000 (both figures were cited in the same report), but it almost immediately merged with Colorado Phonograph. The first known mention of the combined Colorado and Utah Phonograph Company appeared on October 24. Thus far, no evidence has been found to suggest that either company produced original recordings for sale to the general public.

COLOSSAL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: 1242 Main St., Green Bay, WI

Record Products: Colossal

A short-lived pop label of unknown ownership, based in Green Bay, Wisconsin. M. Matt Moller, a former West Coast disc jockey, served as vice-president beginning in the autumn of 1948. *Billboard* reported in early October 1948 that Moller would open a New York office for Colossal, which apparently did not occur.

The company's initial releases, credited to the Colossal Modernaires, were released in October and dismissed by a *Billboard* reviewer as "Colossal only in their amateurishness, both in performance and recording." A month later, the manager of the actual Modernaires (a long-established group, which was recording for Columbia at the time) requested that Columbia's legal department intervene to prevent Colossal's use of the Modernaires name. Colossal Records appears to have suspended operations a short time later, and was last listed in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory.

COLUMBIA BROADCASTING SYSTEM (CBS) — See Columbia Recording Corporation

COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY and Related Companies (Cylinders and Discs)

Record Production: 1889 – 1938

American Graphophone Company / Columbia Phonograph Company, General / Columbia Graphophone Company / Columbia Graphophone Manufacturing Company / Columbia Phonograph Company, Inc.

Offices: Washington, DC (American Graphophone, at founding); 472 Louisiana Ave., Washington, DC (Columbia Phonograph, at founding); 627 E St. NW, Washington, DC (1889–1/1894) 919 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, DC (2/1894–12/1896); 27th St. & Broadway, New York (1/1897–early 1900s); 90–92 W. Broadway, New York (early 1900s–1/1907); Tribune Building, Spruce & Nassau Sts., New York (2/1907–4/1913); Woolworth Building, New York (4/1913–4/1921); Gotham National Bank Building, Broadway & 59th St., New York (4/1921–5/1931); 55 5th Ave., New York (from 5/1931); Bridgeport, CT (manufacturing)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations; Chicago (temporary from c. 1916, including the Athenaeum Building, 1916; and Columbia's Wabash St. offices, 1920s); 57th Ave., Oakland, CA (late 1926–early 1930); 1142–46 S. Wall St., Los Angeles (early 1930–1934) other temporary locations. Extensive location recording in temporary studios from early 1920s (U.S.), and from early 1900s (Asia). Some Columbia sessions were held in Okeh's Union Square studio in the later 1920s.

Pressing: Burt Company (1901–1902, later acquired); Own plants — Bridgeport, CT (from late 1902); Oakland, CA (11/1926–early 1930); Los Angeles (early 1930s, subsequently sold to Allied Record Manufacturing); Toronto, Canada (exact dates unknown, but operating by 1919)

Record Products: Columbia (cylinders and discs), Columbia Masterworks, Columbia Symphony Series; Aretino, Chicago Gramophone Society, Busy Bee, Clarion [3], Climax [2] (Climax Double-Disk), Consolidated, Cort, D & R (blue label), Diamond, Diva, Golden Crown Musicalphone, Gospel Trumpet, Grand Opera Disc Record, Harmony [1 and 2], Harvard, Harvard Vocarium, International Record Collectors' Club, Kalamazoo, La Belle (blue label), Lakeside, Liberty Music Shops, Little Wonder, Manhattan [1], Marconi, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (1920s), M-G-M Record (1920s), Nation's Forum, Oxford, Peerless [1], Publix, Puritone [2], Regina, Remick Perfection Record, Republic [1], Silver Tongued, Silvertone, Standard [1], Star [2], Supertone [2], Thomas, United [1], Velvet Tone, Ward's Trail Blazer; Columbia Bubble Books, Harper-Columbia, Toy Graphophone Record (children's); Clarion [1], Diana, Distinctive Recordings, Duplex Record Co., Fairview, Monarch Music Co., Royal [1], Sir Henri (third-party paste-over labels); International College of Languages, Ginn & Company Music Appreciation, other educational labels; Columbia Dance Record, Personal Record, numerous other private, promotional, and special-use records; transcriptions, motion picture soundtrack discs; pressings for Okeh and related labels (from 1927), American Record Corporation labels (laminated pressings only, from 1934)

Foreign Affiliates: Columbia Phonograph/Graphophone Company, General (London, with branches in major European cities); Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd. (London); Carl Lindström A.G. (Berlin, from 10/1925); Electric & Musical Industries (London, from 1931); Nipponophone Company (Tokyo, Kyoto, and Kawasaki, Japan, from 9/1927).

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Columbia (international); Vitaphone (Canada); Columbia-Rena, Phoenix, Regal, Rena (England); Nipponophone (Japan); Disco Doble Columbia (South America), many others

Columbia's roots extend to 1887 and the founding of the American Graphophone Company, which initially was licensed by the Volta Graphophone Company to manufacture cylinder machines under Chichester A. Bell and Sumner Tainter's patent #341,214 (filed June 27, 1885). The patent, which covered vertical-cut recording in beeswax or paraffin, was licensed to American Graphophone on May 15, 1887. An additional patent, filed by Tainter alone on December 4, 1885, specified a removable wax-coated cylinder and included the basic design for what would become the Bell-Tainter graphophone.

Intended solely for business dictation, the Bell-Tainter machines were the first to employ interchangeable cylinders, an important technological advance over Edison's fragile tinfoil sheets. Measuring 6" x 1⁵/₁₆", they were cardboard tubes with a thin coating of ozocerite, a soft mineral wax. The first graphophones, built under contract by Western Electric, proved so unsatisfactory that American Graphophone took over the manufacturing, leasing the vacant Howe Sewing Machine Company factory in Bridgeport, Connecticut. However, the switch did little to address the basic shortcomings of the Bell-Tainter mechanism, and manufacturing was suspended on July 1, 1890.

A separate entity, the Columbia Phonograph Company, was incorporated on January 15, 1889, with an initial capitalization of \$125,000. A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, it was licensed to deal in Bell-Tainter graphophones and Edison phonographs in a particularly lucrative territory comprising the District of Columbia,

Delaware, and Maryland. Columbia would prove to be the most active and financially successful of North American Phonograph's regional sub-companies, and it was the first phonograph company to declare a dividend, on June 18, 1889.

At the first meeting of Columbia's directors, on February 12, Edward D. Easton was elected president, and William Herbert Smith was elected vice-president and treasurer. R. F. Cromelin (who is erroneously cited in some modern works as Columbia's founder) did not join the company until July 1, when he accepted the position of secretary. Prior to that, he had served as official stenographer for the Pennsylvania legislature.

Edward Easton, with his background as a law stenographer and attorney, at first aggressively promoted the Bell-Tainter graphophone to government and law offices in the Washington, D.C., area. In May 1890, a Columbia official reported that rentals of the graphophone outnumbered those of Edison's phonograph by two-to-one. However, Easton was also quick to realize the potential of Edison's technically superior phonograph as an entertainment device, and the company was soon marketing musical cylinders for use on those machines.

As early as November 1889, Columbia was advertising, "The company keeps constantly in stock musical records of orchestras, of brass bands of eight pieces, cornet solos, flute, piccolo, violin, organ, piano, banjo, and other musical records which are sold at a reasonable price and give subscribers the opportunity of having at home at all times a high class of music." At that early date, few are likely to have been Columbia's own. A February 1890 brochure, possibly the oldest surviving Columbia sales list, was made up entirely of Edison recordings.

However, research by Tim Brooks into the whistling records mentioned in early Columbia advertising suggests that Columbia might have been making some of its own recordings as early as 1889. They were compatible with the Edison phonograph, being made on Edison blanks rather than on the narrow Bell-Tainter blanks, which were not suited to musical reproduction. At some point in 1890, Columbia began recording local and visiting talent on a regular basis. A report from that year noted, "The main office of the company in Washington is located in the center of the city. Passers-by on the street are daily greeted by the sweetest strains of the world-renowned Marine Band, or the Third Artillery Band, or, perhaps, by the music of the eminent vocalists, instrumental soloists, etc., who are secured for record making and who do their work in this building." To attract visitors to the office, Columbia invited members of the general public to dictate letters to friends or have their children recorded for a small fee. For businessmen, typists were available to transcribe dictation, and there was even a private apartment could be rented complete with a graphophone.

Columbia also experimented with educational recordings during 1890–1891. In 1890, Dr. Richard S. Rosenthal was brought into the studio to oversee the recording of French, German, Italian, and Spanish lessons in conjunction with his newly opened School of Languages at 13th and F Streets in Washington. Edward Easton took the German course with his wife and declared it a success.

Columbia's recording operation was highlighted by *The Phonogram* in October 1891. The company's musical director at that time was one Professor Bianchi. A photograph accompanying the article shows a recording being made by what was represented as the United States Marine Band, although it comprised just a dozen musicians. Nine recording machines are visible, each of which produced a master cylinder from which multiple copies would be dubbed for sale. The lack of a system for producing permanent metal masters required that selections be remade frequently, since the soft wax masters would deteriorate a bit with each use.

By late 1891, Columbia reportedly had placed 140 coin-operated phonographs, principally in the Baltimore–Washington area. The company's star attraction was the Marine Band, whose cylinders were widely advertised. The group's importance to Columbia became apparent in March 1893, when George Tewksbury and Len Spencer, of the rival United States Phonograph Company, arrived in Washington to record the band. Quickly detected, Tewksbury and Spencer locked themselves in their hotel room while Edward Easton applied for a temporary restraining order, which reportedly was served by a marshal who climbed over the transom. Tewksbury initially was allowed to continue recording the band, provided that the records were immediately turned over to

Columbia, but a permanent injunction, issued on March 9, barred him for conducting any phonograph-related activities in Columbia's sales territory.

Undeterred, United States Phonograph's George G. Frelinghuysen negotiated with Columbia for a license to make its own recordings but missed the deadline for acceptance of the agreement. Columbia later purchased some cylinder masters from United States Phonograph, which were copied and sold under the Columbia name.

By 1892, Edward Easton had come to fully realize the phonograph's potential in the entertainment field. The Bell-Tainter graphophone had proven to be a technical and commercial failure, and the recession of the early 1890s had taken a toll on the dictating-machine business in general. In contrast, Columbia's sales of entertainment records to exhibitors and nickel-in-the-slot operators were steadily increasing. In mid-1892, Leon F. Douglass assigned his cylinder-duplicating process to Easton. Douglass' process was simplicity in itself, involving nothing more than an airtight hollow tube connecting the playback and recording machines. Its patentable feature appears to have been the specification that the tube be squeezed before copying, producing a column of "rarified air" that supposedly would enhance the acoustic transfer.

While the Columbia Phonograph Company prospered, the American Graphophone Company was failing. By 1893 it was debt-ridden and barely operational. Its salvation came on April 10, 1893, with the election of Edward Easton as its new vice-president. Easton retained his position as president of Columbia Phonograph, and one of his first moves, with the support of that company's officers, was to consolidate the Columbia and American Graphophone businesses. Under terms of the proposed merger, which would finally be completed in 1895, Columbia was to handle recording activities and sales, while American Graphophone would handle the manufacturing end of the business. The Bell-Tainter machines would be dropped in favor of a new line of phonographs compatible with standard Edison-type cylinders.

As Columbia prospered under Easton's leadership, many of the other North American Phonograph sub-companies foundered. With the forced bankruptcy of North American in 1894, companies that had relied primarily on Columbia for their cylinders faced an uncertain future. Some, like the New Jersey, Ohio, New England and Louisiana Phonograph companies, were already making their own recordings but were unable to expand beyond their local markets. Columbia, however, was already doing so.

The only major disadvantage posed to Columbia by North American Phonograph's bankruptcy was the loss of Edison as its supplier of blank cylinders. Easton, however, seems to have anticipated just such an event. A year earlier, he had obtained the services of a former Edison employee, who revealed the formula for making blanks. With the process perfected in 1894, Columbia found itself fully self-sufficient, no longer reliant upon Edison in any way, and ready to undertake national distribution. During this period, Columbia also began to purchase recordings for resale from the United States Phonograph Company of New Jersey, as well as other local companies, lessening its reliance on local Washington talent.

In May 1894, the Columbia Phonograph Co., Gen'l., was incorporated to develop business outside of the original sales district. Three months earlier, Columbia had moved into larger quarters on Pennsylvania Avenue, with its studios on the top floor. The ground-level floor housed Columbia's electrically illuminated showrooms, which were advertised as the "Columbia Music Palace." With its business becoming national in scope, in 1895 Columbia opened the first office outside of its original sales territory, at 1159 Broadway in New York. The company's main headquarters were officially transferred from Washington to New York on January 1, 1897, after which the Washington office served mainly as a sales branch.

During the spring of 1897, R. F. Cromelin was dispatched to Europe to set up foreign sales agencies for the company. Now expanding at a remarkable pace, Columbia purchased the Chicago Talking Machine Company in April 1897 and took possession on August 1, 1897, recasting the operation its Chicago sales branch. The company then went on to acquire other regional operations, beginning with the Northern Talking Machine Company (Buffalo, New York) in the autumn of 1897. The factory at Bridgeport, Connecticut, was expanded during the same period, more than doubling its floor space. By early 1898, the recording department occupied the entire third floor of Columbia's Broadway headquarters, where

The Phonoscope reported that it was not unusual "to hear Dan Quinn singing the Handicap Race with the accompaniment of horses hoofs, clanging of bells etc., while in an adjoining room, [Len] Spencer is reading the Ten Commandments, with [George W.] Johnson across the hall in hysterics of laughter with his famous laughing song."

Facing competition following Edison's re-entry into commercial record production in the later 1890s, Columbia proved to be highly adept at public relations and marketing. The company drew crowds at its Broadway show rooms with public recording demonstrations by some of its most popular artists. At the 1898 St. Louis Exposition, it reportedly made 10,000 personal recordings by fair visitors on truncated wax cylinders (termed "napkin rings" by modern collectors), which were presented in special souvenir boxes. Its introduction of \$5 and \$10 spring-motor cylinder phonographs was credited by *The Phonoscope* for spurring the demand for cylinders. Ironically, that demand encouraged the formation of competing record companies, some of which Columbia sued.

Late in 1898, the company introduced oversized (5" diameter) "concert" cylinders and machines. Developed by American Graphophone engineer Thomas Macdonald, originally for internal use as pantograph masters, the records played no longer than ordinary two-minute cylinders but provided a significant increase in volume. The idea was quickly copied by Edison.

Now well-established in the cylinder field, Columbia made several tentative efforts to enter the emerging disc-record market in the late 1890s. However, with the basic methods of lateral disc recording already protected by Emile Berliner's patent #534,543, Columbia found its entry blocked. Its initial strategy was to license other companies to produce disc records and phonographs under the questionable protection of its Bell-Tainter patent #341,214, which covered recording in wax. Its first such venture involved inventor Joseph W. Jones, who had worked briefly in the Berliner laboratory in the mid-1890s.

Jones' patent on a method for wax disc mastering, filed on November 19, 1897, would provide stronger protection than Bell-Tainter, if approved. Jones had worked briefly in Emile Berliner's laboratory, where he had the opportunity to observe Eldridge Johnson's early experiments with wax disc masters. Johnson, however, had not yet filed a patent on his process at the time of Jones' filing. Although little is known of Johnson's earliest experiments with wax mastering, the process probably did not differ markedly from what Jones patented. Jones specified a lateral-cut wax master, which was electroplated to produce a metal negative that could be used as a stamper, or as a source of sub-masters from which multiple stampers could be generated. However, Jones failed to submit a model with his initial patent application, which was quickly rejected, as were several subsequent amended filings. Nevertheless, he managed to attract investors.

During 1898–1899 Jones was involved in string of short-lived ventures, in partnership with Albert Armstrong, Charles G. Conn, and others, that managed to produce workable lateral-cut disc machines and records. American Graphophone executives were sufficiently intrigued that they agreed to protect Jones' products under their Bell-Tainter patent while his own patent was being reworked. But with Jones still having failed to secure his patent, American Graphophone began to explore other avenues in its attempt to enter the disc market. In the spring of 1900 the company suddenly severed relations with Armstrong and on May 12 licensed the more capable Universal Talking Machine Company to manufacture and market its increasingly popular Zonophone products under protection of the Bell-Tainter patent.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that American Graphophone officials saw the Zonophone licensing agreement as merely a stop-gap measure, allowing Columbia to establish a tentative presence in the disc market while work progressed on the company's own disc products. At about the same time, the matter of the long-stalled Jones patent was turned over to Philip Mauro, American Graphophone's chief legal counsel. Mauro submitted a thoroughly rewritten application to the Patent Office, only to have it refused, but persisted in filing rewritten claims into early 1901. By then, the prospects for approval appeared sufficiently encouraging that American Graphophone decided to take an option on Jones' patent.

With approval of the Jones patent seemingly imminent, American Graphophone began drawing up plans to manufacture and market its own lateral-cut disc phonographs under the Columbia brand. The new machines, soon to be marketed as Columbia Disc

Graphophones, were first exhibited to the public at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York.

Columbia had yet to produce its own disc records, aside from a few vertical-cut Toy Graphophone wax discs. Lacking a viable lateral-cut disc for its new machines, Columbia turned to the newly formed Globe Record Company, a subsidiary of The Burt Company that was already had a workable disc. Columbia licensed Globe to produce wax masters under Columbia's Bell-Tainter patent, with pressing to be handled by Burt, and Columbia to act as sales agent.

The Globe-Burt discs bore Climax labels that made no mention of The Burt Company, Columbia, or the American Graphophone Company. They were single-sided pressings with raised-type, rather than paper, labels. Researcher Tim Brooks has pointed out some intriguing similarities between 1901 Climax and Zonophone discs, suggesting that initially, at least, both might have been recorded in the same studio — a distinct possibility, given John English's involvement with both companies. With the Climax discs now ready for market, Zonophone suddenly found its Columbia license withdrawn.

According to later court testimony, Edward Easton entered into an agreement for Columbia to sell the Globe Record Company's discs on consignment in October 1901. The first documented shipments of Columbia's new disc phonographs were made on October 3 (the same day the Victor Talking Machine Company was incorporated). They were being advertised nationally by mid-October.

Shortly after Columbia began shipping its new disc phonographs in October 1901, the raised-type Climax labels were replaced with new paper labels that were redesigned to read, "Climax Record — G.R. Co. — Mfd. Solely for Columbia Phonograph Co." Rather than waste existing pressings, Columbia simply affixed new paper labels to the remaining stock of the raised-type pressings.

By January 1902, Globe was experiencing a shortage of operating cash. Columbia had been placing large orders for the new discs, but under the consignment arrangement, Globe received no payment until the records were sold. Learning of Globe's precarious financial situation, Victor president Eldridge Johnson stepped in. In a clandestine move that would have dire consequences for Columbia, he and Leon Douglass negotiated the purchase of Globe from The Burt Company for \$10,000. Johnson made the purchase on his own behalf, not that of the Victor Talking Machine Company. Johnson's decision not to mingle the Globe and Victor businesses is confirmed in later court papers, which reveal that the purchase was "the individual act of said Eldridge R. Johnson."

The sales agreement was drafted on January 18, 1902. Finalized a week later, it transferred ownership of the Globe Record Company, including its masters, to Johnson. The masters were shipped to Victor's headquarters, where a small, circled "VTM" logo was stamped in the inner margins. Their stay at Victor headquarters would be a short one, and none ever appeared under a Victor label.

Suddenly deprived of a source of discs, Columbia officials sought an injunction to block Victor's use of the Globe masters, materials, and processes. But with no injunction forthcoming and the outcome of a lawsuit far from assured, Easton settled the matter out of court. Ultimately, Johnson agreed to sell Globe to Easton for the \$10,000 he had paid Burt just a month earlier, provided that Easton abandon any impending patent-infringement suits against Johnson or Victor. A Columbia employee was sent to retrieve the Globe masters from Victor on February 15, 1902.

While all of this was transpiring, American Graphophone was preparing to record its own disc masters, which would be pressed by The Burt Company. John English might have been involved in the earliest efforts to produce Columbia masters, but he left Burt in late January 1902 to work for Eldridge Johnson, leaving Victor Emerson to carry on with the development work at Columbia. Emerson had been developing his own disc-recording machine, but it was decided to use Jones' machine, which was already fully operable, although Emerson would go on to patent some improvements to it. Columbia finally began recording its own disc masters in or around April 1902, according to a deposition given by Emerson several years later.

American Graphophone soon acquired all capital stock of The Burt Company, which it would operate as a subsidiary for many years. Burt's pressing equipment remained in Milburn until December 31, 1902, when the factory was closed and its contents moved to

a new building in Columbia's Bridgeport complex. As late as 1909, *The Manual of Statistics Stock Exchange Handbook* was still reporting that Columbia had "a large factory in Bridgeport, Conn., embraced in which is also the plant of The Burt Company."

Much of the focus at Columbia during this period was on perfecting the company's molded "XP" cylinders, but there was also a push to expand the disc line. The Columbia Disc Record label replaced Climax in late January 1902, based upon dealer advertisements. Many of the Climax recordings were remade during 1902–1903, retaining the original catalog numbers, but with spoken announcements now identifying them as Columbia records. By May 1903, Simpson Crawford and other retailers were deeply discounting the outdated Climax-label discs.

The Jones patent was finally granted on December 10, 1901. The American Graphophone Company and Victor Talking Machine Company now each controlled vital patents that were infringed by the other — Victor holding Berliner's #372,786, covering the lateral cut, and #534,543, specifying that the reproducer be propelled by the record's groove; and American Graphophone holding Jones' #688,739, covering the wax disc-mastering process. Realizing that continued litigation would benefit neither party, the companies agreed to cross-license each other's key patents on December 8, 1903.

Edison's introduction of molded cylinders in February 1902 prompted Columbia to announce its own molded cylinders a month later. Initially advertised as Columbia Extra Loud High Speed Records (soon shortened to XP), they showed signs of having been rushed to market prematurely. Whereas Edison's staffers had developed a hard black metallic-soap compound for their new cylinders, Columbia continued to employ the same soft brown wax used in its pantographed cylinders. Despite claims that the cylinders were "case-hardened," they proved to be far less durable than Edison's Gold Moulded records. The company attempted to turn that shortcoming to their advantage, advertising, "All Columbia Records can be shaved and the blank recorded upon — This is true of no other new record on the market."

Columbia belatedly introduced its own molded-cylinder compound in the summer of 1903, which bore a close resemblance to Edison's. Advertisements claimed it was made from "vegetable gum obtained from several trees in Brazil, which is hardened by a process known to the makers." However, chemical analysis submitted in a March 1905 lawsuit confirms that by then, the Columbia and Edison molded-cylinder compositions were virtually identical, consisting primarily of saponified tallow with the addition of a small bit of natural wax and various metallic salts. Columbia continued to produce small quantities of molded brown-wax cylinders into late 1904, primarily for clients like O'Neill-James (Busy Bee) and Sears Roebuck.

By late 1902, Columbia was preparing to introduce a line of celebrity disc recordings, to be called Columbia Grand Opera Records. The earliest Grand Opera recordings were made by soprano Suzanne Adams, probably in very late 1902 or early 1903. The roster was soon expanded to include Edouard de Reszke, Marcella Sembrich, Ernestine Schumann-Heink, and Antonio Scotti, among others. Columbia and Victor were both poised to launch their celebrity series by early 1903, and the race would result in a virtual tie. Columbia mailed its Grand Opera "Catalogue De Luxe" to dealers in early 1903. However, the records were not formally announced to the public until April 4, a week after Victor mailed its first Red Seal list to distributors. Columbia's bright red label was discontinued in 1904, coinciding with Victor's trademark filing for "a red circular label...applied to the center of a disc of a contrasting color." The Grand Opera discs were reissued with ordinary black labels, but by then, the series was clearly a commercial failure, and no new issues were forthcoming. For the next several years, Columbia would have no significant presence in the operatic market.

Columbia briefly dabbled in double-sided discs during this period, beginning with a special double-sided release that coupled two titles by violinist Jaroslav Kocian. It was followed in August 1904 by the announcement of a new group of double-sided "reversible" records retailing for \$1.50 each. The offerings were limited largely to the Columbia house band's renditions of operatic and classical snippets. However, the company did little to develop the "reversible" series, and the discs were finally withdrawn in 1906, after Ademar Petit sued Columbia for infringing his patent (#749,092) on double-sided pressing. Although

sales of the discs had been disappointing, the experience gained in their production probably gave Columbia a significant head-start in launching its Double Discs in 1908.

In 1903, Columbia began supplying custom-labeled cylinders and discs to department stores and mail-order businesses. Sears was already repackaging Columbia cylinders in boxes labeled "Sears, Roebuck & Co.'s Graphophone Records," and it would become one of Columbia's largest store-brand clients, selling Columbia discs under the Harvard, Oxford, and Silvertone brands. The O'Neill-James Company (Chicago), another early client, marketed Columbia-produced Busy Bee cylinders and discs that were specially modified to fit Busy Bee machines. The cylinders' inner taper was modified to thwart use on standard machines, while the discs had a large rectangular slot cut into the disc below the spindle hole to accommodate a lug on the Busy Bee turntable.

By 1910 Columbia was supplying pressings to more than a dozen client labels, most of them based in Chicago. The best known of these — Standard, Harmony, and United — were marketed by Robert Johns and Thomas E. Johns, doing business under various trade names. The Johns brothers' labels were intended for use in premium schemes, in which a phonograph was offered for little or no cash to dealers or customers who purchased a specified number of discs or spent a certain amount on other merchandise. Like Busy Bee, many of these operations employed a "tied-products" marketing model (popularly termed the "razor-and-blade ploy"), equipping their Columbia-supplied machines with oversized spindles to thwart the use of ordinary pressings, thus ensuring a captive audience for the matching discs. The practice finally came to an end in 1918, by which time most of the Chicago premium-scheme labels had been taken over by that city's Consolidated Talking Machine Company.

Columbia continued to develop the cylinder as well, although growth in that sector had begun to slow. In July 1905 it introduced the Twentieth Century record, a premium-priced, six-inch-long cylinder that offered an additional minute of playing time. The cylinders could be used only on expensive new phonograph models equipped with a longer mandrel and carriage. Despite a large number of releases, the Twentieth Century cylinder was a commercial failure. It was abandoned after a final release in July 1908.

On August 16, 1906, *The New York Times* reported that inventor Guglielmo Marconi had joined Columbia's experimental staff as a consulting physicist. Following a tour of the Bridgeport factory and a dinner in his honor at the Waldorf-Astoria, Marconi admitted to a reporter that he was not ready to announce any new ideas, then returned to Italy. Eventually, Columbia announced a lightweight, semi-flexible laminated celluloid disc bearing Marconi's name and likeness, although Marconi had no apparent role in its development. (Columbia's advertising stopped short of crediting Marconi with the records' invention, stating only that the records were "named after" him). In fact, the disc was the invention of Columbia engineer Thomas H. Macdonald, whose patent #862,407 was filed on July 9, 1906, more than a month before Marconi's New York visit. Incorporating improvements to Victor Emerson's earlier flexible-disc patent, Macdonald's patent covered every aspect of what would become the "Marconi" disc, even depicting the same embossed-diamond pattern that appears on the discs' blank reverse sides.

Columbia managers received advance copies of the first Marconi Velvet Tone Records catalog in February 1907. Columbia apparently envisioned international demand for the Marconi discs. Several export versions are known, including those for the South American and Chinese markets. Despite their premium price and exotic appearance, Marconi records were pressed from standard Columbia masters, including material recorded several years earlier. Selling for significantly more than the ordinary Columbia releases they duplicated, requiring the use of expensive special needles, and having a tendency to slip on the turntable, Marconi discs do not seem to have sold particularly well. Production was discontinued in 1908, leaving Columbia with a large unsold inventory that was later remaindered by Simpson, Crawford & Company (New York) for 17¢ each.

Columbia reentered the operatic market in 1906. The records, which were numbered in the same series as Columbia's standard discs, bore an ornate label using the same multicolored banner that appeared on the Twentieth Century cylinder boxes. The label initially was used for a mixture of popular and classical 12" releases, but following the addition of a Symphony Series notation in 1908, it was reserved exclusively for classical and operatic offerings. The Symphony Series roster eventually came to feature Pablo Casals,

Mary Garden, Lillian Nordica, José Mardones, Rosa Ponselle, Riccardo Stracciari, and other artists of international renown, but the series' reputation was somewhat diminished by its occasional use of studio and concert-circuit artists of the caliber that Victor relegated to its lower-priced lines.

In 1907, Columbia made the strategic error of competing with itself by offering a second premium-priced classical and operatic label, this one employing recordings licensed from the Societa Italiana di Fonotipia in Milan. Columbia began importing Fonotipia pressings in the spring of 1907, to which it either affixed small advertising stickers or rubber-stamped its name onto labels. Importing the finished discs proved too costly, so Fonotipia manager Emil Rink agreed in February 1908 to ship only the metal parts, from which Columbia would press the discs in its Bridgeport plant. The plant also produced some flexible Fonotipia pressings with a special Fonotipia-Marconi Velvet Tone label. Fonotipia records were of excellent musical and technical quality, and Columbia supported them with a strong advertising campaign, but the artists were largely unfamiliar to American consumers. With sales lagging, Fonotipia Limited served notice that it intended to terminate its agreement with Columbia in November 1910. New releases were still being listed as late July 1911, but Columbia discontinued the line later that year.

Columbia initially pressed its standard discs on solid stock, but in early 1907 the company introduced laminated pressings that bonded a thin, smooth shellac-based playing surface to a coarse rigid base, with a thin paper layer between the two. The basic concept had been patented in 1903 by Victor Emerson, who had specified a celluloid (rather than shellac) playing surface over a sturdy asphalt-based core, with a paper sheet separating the layers. Building on Emerson's concept, in September 1906, Thomas Macdonald filed a patent on a process in which a powdered shellac compound was applied to a paper layer, which was then bonded in the pressing process to what Macdonald termed a "body of earthy or other plastic material." Columbia's laminated records, although more resistant to breakage than solid-stock pressings, had several drawbacks. The thin paper layer often tore or wrinkled in the press, causing irregular playing surfaces. If the paper was not properly coated, fibers could intrude into the shellac, producing the grainy playing surface that is so familiar to modern collectors. In addition, the thin laminated playing surfaces tended to develop fine cracks over time. Macdonald also patented a process for making new pressings on old discs by resurfacing them with a fresh layer of powdered pressing medium, which is not known to have been employed by Columbia.

On September 10, Columbia startled the industry with the announcement that it was converting its entire catalog to double-sided pressings. Unlike its previous attempt at marketing double-sided discs, this time Columbia had the necessary patent protection in place. Standard 10" black-label pressings would retail for 65¢, just a nickel more than the single-sided discs. The initial catalog comprised couplings of earlier material, some of it recorded as early as 1902–1903, so little new material was released until early 1909. Nevertheless, the records were an immediate success with the public if not with all dealers, some of whom charged that they amounted to price-cutting. Their introduction forced a reluctant Eldridge Johnson to adopt the double-sided format for at least a portion of Victor's output.

In July 1909, Columbia acquired a second Bridgeport pressing plant from the firm of Hawthorne & Sheble, which had been licensing masters from Columbia for its Star label. Hawthorne & Sheble had recently suspended operations following a loss to Victor in a patent-infringement case. Underscoring the close relationship that had quietly existed between the two companies since 1907, Columbia appointed Horace Sheble general manager of the combined Bridgeport plants in September 1909. However, no significant advances in technical or manufacturing processes were forthcoming during Sheble's tenure, and he resigned in May 1912, citing poor health.

These transitions came during a particularly tumultuous period for Columbia, which had begun after president Easton sustained a serious head injury on January 23, 1908. Although able to resume work in August, Easton's leadership skills suffered, and the company endured several years of high turnover and counterproductive shuffling of executives and managers. Thomas Macdonald, whose many patents and innovative designs had contributed substantially to Columbia's growth, was reassigned to head the experimental department and given a seat on the board of directors.

Columbia announced a slightly more expensive blue-label line on September 25, 1910. Priced midway the standard and Symphony Series lines, it was intended to compete with Victor's newly introduced purple-label records, comprising a mixture of popular fare by Broadway headliners, light classics by mostly second-tier performers, and imported operatic recordings. A Professional Department, under the management of Henry D. King, was established to recruit popular stage personalities for the blue-label series. Columbia also emerged as a major producer of records for the American immigrant markets during this period. The company had been producing such records since the 1890s, but its creation of a Foreign Records Department in 1908 signaled an even stronger commitment to those markets. The new department launched a double-sided E-prefixed ethnic series that proved to be highly successful. Employing a mixture of imported and domestic masters, the series was given its own green label in 1910, with other colors used on occasion. A few imported English-language recordings even appeared in the E series, including several by Australian comedian Billy Williams.

With its disc sales soaring, Columbia finally suspended cylinder recording in early 1908. It continued to sell existing stock until July 1909, when the remaining inventory was sold off for 15¢ per record. However, Columbia did not abandon the cylinder market entirely. On September 25, 1908, it purchased the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company (*q.v.*), manufacturers of the celluloid Indestructible cylinders. Beginning that autumn, Indestructible cylinders were packaged and sold under the Columbia trademark, although Columbia had no hand in their recording or production, and no apparent involvement in matters of artists or repertoire. As with all Indestructible products, no brand name appeared on the cylinders themselves. They initially were marketed in the original Indestructible boxes, over which a thin Columbia banner was pasted. Once that supply was exhausted, new boxes were printed with the Columbia Indestructible Record brand. Columbia's enthusiasm for their new cylinder line appeared to wane as 1910 progressed. In November, Indestructible's original owners resumed marketing cylinders under the Indestructible brand, while continuing to supply Columbia. The relationship was finally severed in the spring of 1912, marking the end of Columbia's involvement in the cylinder market.

On January 6, 1913, stockholders of the Columbia Phonograph Company, General, voted to change the official company name to the Columbia Graphophone Company. The change, which became effective on February 1, had no perceptible effect on operations. Another change occurred in the autumn of 1916, when members of the Du Pont organization secured representation on American Graphophone's board of directors after purchasing a substantial holding in the company. American Graphophone Company was subsequently reorganized as the Columbia Graphophone Manufacturing Company in March 1918, although that change also had no effect on daily operations.

On August 13, 1914, music publisher Henry Waterson entered into a joint venture with Columbia to produce Little Wonder, a 5½" single-sided disc that retailed for 10¢. Although Waterson took much of the credit for Little Wonder, the concept was the creation of Victor Emerson, who negotiated an exclusive sales agency for Waterson with Columbia in July 1914. Recording sessions began *c.* September 10, 1914, using Columbia artists who went uncredited on the labels. The records proved to be tremendously popular, with Waterson testifying that twenty-million had been sold by mid-1916. Columbia would continue to produce the records until into 1923 (*see* Little Wonder Record Company).

Edward Easton died on April 30, 1915, following what was termed a "nervous collapse." Easton reportedly had been little more than a figurehead since his accident in 1910; at the time of his death, *The Talking Machine World* noted that he had been in poor health for some years. At about the same time, Victor Emerson resigned from Columbia to start his own company. Recording quality suffered markedly for several years following Victor Emerson's departure, as Columbia worked its way through a succession of recording engineers that included George C. Jell and two of Victor Emerson's brothers.

With the worst of its crises behind it, Columbia saw its sales increase dramatically during the post-World War I phonograph boom. The company set new production records in 1919 and 1920, and projected continued growth. However, management had not foreseen the crippling recession that was about to unfold. Columbia found itself burdened with surplus inventory, excess factory capacity, a high level of debt, and declining sales as the economy slipped further into recession. Further complicating matters were a precipitous

drop in the value of its stock and growing competition from several well-financed new labels. At the same time, Columbia's widely scattered studios and offices were finally consolidated in a seven-floor suite atop the Gotham National Bank Building (1819 Broadway, New York) which opened on April 4, 1921.

Columbia suffered a wave of resignations during the autumn of 1921. The most notable departure was vice-president Edward N. Burns, who left to join the staff of the newly formed Cameo Record Corporation. Burns' departure was followed by a reshuffling of staff, at which time R. F. Bolton was placed in charge of the recording studios. The company's 1921 annual report showed a loss of \$14,579,882.

On February 9, 1922, a group of minor shareholders filed an application for receivership, alleging the Columbia Graphophone Manufacturing Company was insolvent. Francis S. Whitten, chairman of the board, issued a lengthy statement assuring investors and the public that Columbia was financially sound. Nevertheless, there were signs that was not the case. The receivership proceedings were dismissed on February 21, after Judge Hugh M. Morris expressed satisfaction with a rehabilitation plan to be carried out in conjunction with creditor committees. On February 28, the board announced that H. L. Willson would replace president Van Horn Ely, who had resigned after a short and unproductive tenure. Vice-president C. D. Woddrop resigned at the same time and was replaced by Hulbert A. Yerkes in April. Charles Prince, who had served as Columbia's musical director since the early 1900s, departed in November 1922 to work for the New York Recording Laboratories and was replaced by Robin Hood Bowers.

In December 1922, Columbia sold its financial stake in the Columbia Graphophone Company, Ltd. (London) to the Constructive Finance Company, Ltd. The new owners continued to operate the British business under the Columbia Graphophone Company name, and Louis Sterling was retained his position as president. A "perpetual working agreement" was said to be in place between the American and British companies.

Still struggling financially, the American company was placed in receivership in October 1923 and was subsequently reorganized as the Columbia Phonograph Company, Inc., in which the British branch took a financial stake. The company continued to develop and market its products aggressively during this period (including the introduction of improved New Process laminated pressings and a newly launched race-record series), while disposing of excess equipment and portions of its physical plant to raise working capital. On March 1, 1924, H. L. Willson announced that Columbia's reorganization was complete and its receivership had ended.

In the meantime, Columbia had begun exploring electrical recording processes. Experimental electrical sessions had been undertaken as early as October–November 1921, possibly employing equipment designed in England by Lionel Guest and Horace O. Merriman, with which the British branch had been experimenting. On November 11, 1920, they had recorded the burial ceremony of the Unknown Warrior at London's Westminster Abbey. Sold as a private-label issue for fund-raising purposes, the resulting records were of abysmal technical quality, but Columbia officials were sufficiently intrigued that they invited Guest and Merriman to undertake experimental recording sessions in their London studio. The results were deemed unsatisfactory.

Guest and Merriman moved their equipment to the United States in the autumn 1921. During one Columbia experimental session, probably held on November 1 or 2, Gladys Rice recorded "The Rosary" four times electrically, and once acoustically, accompanied by various pianists. The experimental recordings were not approved for release, and Columbia appears to have been quickly suspended further testing.

In February 1924, Western Electric officials offered Victor an exclusive license on its electrical recording process, which Victor officials initially declined. The offer was then extended to Columbia, which began conducting experimental sessions during the summer of 1924. Some test pressings have survived from these sessions, the earliest of which to surface thus far is dated August 25. Others show dates from the late summer through late autumn of 1924. Columbia made some of its notable performers available for the Western Electric test sessions, including violinist George Enescu and soprano Florence Macbeth. No file documentation has been found for the early tests, lending some credence to an anecdotal report that they were held in Western Electric's facilities rather than Columbia's.

The earliest known confirmation that Western Electric equipment was in use in Columbia's own studio is a file entry for a session on November 10, 1924.

After many months of experimentation, Columbia produced several electrically recorded masters in February 1925 that it deemed acceptable for commercial release. The earliest of these, by singer-pianist Art Gillham, was approved for issue as Columbia 328-D. It appeared among the May 1925 releases using a standard label and lacking the circled-W logo that would soon be adopted to identify Columbia's electrical recordings. Electric recording sessions began on a regular basis in April 1925. Columbia did not openly acknowledge the transition to the public until early 1926, when it introduced its Viva-tonal trademark and redesigned label, although the change had been obvious to dealers and consumers from the first.

In February 1925 the Columbia Phonograph Company, Ltd. (London) purchased the Columbia Phonograph Company, in the process securing a license for the Western Electric system. Louis Sterling set out to revitalize the American operation as chairman of the board. English Columbia was flourishing under Sterling's management, and he was quick to allocate cash to his new American acquisition. Imported recordings of extended classical works began to appear on the American label, packaged in expensive album sets under the Masterworks name. The company also hired some key personnel from competing companies, including Victor's John S. Macdonald (known to record buyers as tenor Harry Macdonough), who was brought in as executive director of Columbia's recording department in October 1925. Victor's Edward King followed in 1926, working as a studio supervisor.

Columbia's recently overhauled acoustic studios did not go unused after the Western Electric conversion. In September 1925, Columbia introduced acoustically recorded Harmony records as a budget-priced line. Montgomery Ward advertised the records as "Electrically Processed" (not "recorded"), but with a handful of exceptions, all Harmony masters were acoustically recorded until February 1929, when the label began using Western Electric masters on a regular basis. From that date through May 1930, Harmony used a mixture of acoustic and electric masters, with the balance increasingly tipped toward the latter. Beginning in June 1930, all Harmony masters were electrically recorded.

Harmony records originally were intended to retail for 50¢ each (55¢ west of the Rocky Mountains), but some dealers reportedly offered them at three for a dollar to compete with Banner and other inexpensive brands. Harmony's success spawned a group of companion labels, including Velvet Tone and Diva, that all issued the same recordings. Although the masters were numbered in Columbia's standard series, they were made for release exclusively on the budget-label series. They included pseudonymous releases by some popular Columbia artists, such as the California Ramblers (as the University Six and Golden Gate Orchestra), Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra (as the Dixie Stompers), Fred Rich's Orchestra (as the Astorites), Annette Hanshaw (as Dot Dare or Patsy Young), and Vernon Dalhart (as Mack Allen). Much of its catalog, however, featured the usual freelance dance bands and studio singers, also often under pseudonyms. Columbia masters recorded as early as 1905 were also recycled on the budget labels, leading the *Phonograph Monthly Review* to warn readers that "many old Columbia records, having outlived their years of usefulness...are transferred to the Harmony list."

In October 1926, Columbia purchased the General Phonograph Corporation's Okeh and Odeon record divisions and reorganized them as the Okeh Record Corporation, *q.v.* Otto Heineman remained in place as president of what was now Columbia's Okeh subsidiary. It remained largely autonomous, maintaining its own studios, master numbering system, and artist and repertoire department. Initially, there was no trading of masters between Okeh and Columbia, although that would change in the later 1920s. Joint field-recording trips and cross-booking of studios began as early as 1927.

In November 1927, Columbia International, Ltd., was formed in London as a new holding company for Columbia interests worldwide, including the British and U.S. Columbia operations, as well as the Berlin-based Lindström Company (Okeh's German-based affiliate and the producer of Odeon and Parlophone records). The American branch further expanded its holdings in April 1927, when it purchased a controlling interest in the Tokyo-based Nipponophone Company, the largest Asian record producer at the time. The British branch's 1928 purchase of Pathé's phonograph interests in France and the

French colonies, although it had a marked impact on European operations, had no effect on the American Columbia and Pathé labels.

Columbia had a string of hits in the later 1920s with Moran & Mack's "Two Black Crows" series. In 1928 the company signed Paul Whiteman away from Victor for a sum that many in the industry regarded as a gross overpayment. Stockholders were paid a generous dividend in April 1929. However, record sales had begun to slow, despite aggressive advertising and a large and diverse catalog, and they declined precipitously at the start of the Great Depression. Nevertheless, the company managed to open new Sound-on-Disc (sound effects) and Electrical Transcription (radio transcriptions) divisions in 1930 and expanded its budget-label line with the addition of the Clarion label. The latter was produced for the Clarion Music Corporation which, like its sister Velvet Tone Record Company, was simply a Columbia trade name. By that time, Columbia had largely taken over the management of its Okeh subsidiary, and masters were being swapped freely between the Columbia, Okeh, and budget-label divisions, often with artist pseudonyms and false master numbers employed to disguise sources.

On March 20, 1931, Columbia's British branch merged with the Gramophone Company, Victor's British sibling. Two months later, Electric & Musical Industries, Ltd., was formed in London as a holding company to acquire the shares of both companies. Columbia's American division suddenly faced takeover by a company in which the rival Radio Corporation of America (through its Gramophone Company holdings) owned a 30% stake. Unnerved by that prospect, Columbia's voting trustees moved to prevent acquisition by EMI and sought a buyer. In what amounted to a fire-sale of the second-largest American record company, the trustees agreed to sell 94.5% of the company's stock to the Grigsby-Grunow Company of Chicago in late December 1931. Columbia stockholders were to receive 4.4 shares of Grigsby-Grunow stock in exchange for each share of Columbia. Grigsby-Grunow would acquire all of Columbia's assets, along with control of the business and the Columbia brand in North and South America.

Grigsby-Grunow and its Majestic Household Utility Corporation subsidiary were well-established manufacturers of refrigerators and radios, but neither company had any experience in the recording or entertainment businesses. Grigsby-Grunow had recently emerged from a period of turbulence precipitated largely by the antics of its founder, W. C. Grunow, a profanity-spouting self-made millionaire who had been relieved of his presidency a year earlier.

The sale to Grigsby-Grunow was completed on January 16, 1932. The Columbia Phonograph Company remained a separate corporation for legal and accounting purposes, but its new owners soon began replacing Columbia's seasoned executives with their own men. Shortly after the sale, Grigsby-Grunow's H. E. Ward replaced president H. C. Cox, who had successfully guided Columbia through turbulent times in the early 1920s. Columbia's new priority, Ward declared, would be the production of radio sets.

Under Grigsby-Grunow's ownership, the number of Columbia recording sessions, which had already been in decline before the buyout, was further reduced. The bottom came in April 1932, which saw only three commercial sessions. Recording activity rebounded in May, but it still fell far short of pre-buyout levels. The recording of classical music was largely suspended; instead, most new classical releases would now use masters licensed from EMI in England. By late 1932, the critically acclaimed Columbia Masterworks records were retailing at popular-series prices, packaged in flimsy cardboard albums and often lacked program notes of any sort.

Grigsby-Grunow's house-cleaning began in earnest in June 1932. A temporary halt was ordered to new Okeh releases, and the budget-priced Clarion, Harmony, and Velvet Tone labels were discontinued. Elimination of the budget labels would prove opportune only for RCA, which was quietly developing its own line of low-cost labels. Casting about for a sales gimmick, Columbia introduced moderately priced Royal Blue records in December 1932. Pressed in bright-blue resin, they made a striking appearance in a market awash in black shellac, but Compton Pakenham of *The New York Times* questioned whether the lower price might cause customers to suspect the records were of lower quality than the standard black pressings (which was not the case).

As the Columbia Phonograph Company foundered, so did its new owner. In the autumn

of 1933, petitions for receivership and involuntary bankruptcy were filed against Grigsby-Grunow and Columbia. The Grigsby-Grunow petition was denied, but on November 24 the court agreed to place Columbia under the control of equity receivers. Columbia remained in operation, producing and marketing records on a modest scale, but conditions were quickly deteriorating. On February 21, 1934, the Grigsby-Grunow Company was declared bankrupt. Its assets were sold at auction in June 1934.

With debts totaling \$115,866 (approximately half of which were owed to Grigsby-Grunow), the Columbia Phonograph Company was also declared bankrupt, and the search for a buyer began. On April 16, 1934, Grigsby-Grunow's receivers sold their majority interest in the Columbia Phonograph Company to Sacro Enterprises, Inc., a shadowy group that had been hastily formed just prior to the sale. Characterized by *Metronome* magazine as "an unknown quantity in the music industry and at Dun & Bradstreet's," Sacro in reality was a shell corporation set up by Herbert J. Yates, the owner of Consolidated Film Industries (which in turn owned the American Record Corporation and controlled the Brunswick and Vocalion labels). The \$70,500 purchase price included Columbia's trademarks, labels, masters, physical facilities, and artist contracts. With the purchase, Yates' absorbed yet another competitor, allowing Consolidated Film's ARC-Brunswick-Columbia group to claim the title of second-largest American record producer, behind the Radio Corporation of America.

The sale marked Columbia's end, for a time, as a significant force in the recording industry. The company continued to operate under its own name, but studios and some staff were now shared with ARC. Chick Webb's Orchestra made the last recording to bear a Columbia master number on July 6, 1934. After that, Columbia's recordings were numbered in the same master pool as the other ARC brands, with a CO- prefix added to indicate recordings made specifically for the label. Columbia continued to maintain an artists-and-repertoire department that was largely independent of the main ARC operation. However, its marginalized role under Yates' ownership became apparent in August 1934, when *The Radio Merchant* announced that the popular Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington bands had been signed by what it termed "Brunswick-Columbia," with label assignments to be determined later. In the end, Brunswick was awarded both bands.

Columbia's Okeh subsidiary label, which had served mostly as a race-record line for the past several years, was slated for elimination. Its last sessions were held in November 1934, and the label was discontinued in early 1935. At the same time, the Columbia label was repositioned primarily as a classical and reissue line. Recording was discontinued for the popular market, aside from occasional sessions commissioned by English Columbia, which were overseen by John Hammond. The Masterworks series, which continued to rely on imported recordings, maintained a small following among classical enthusiasts, but otherwise, the late 1930s would be lean years for the Columbia label.

Consolidated Film Industries sold the American Record Corporation, including its Columbia division, to the Columbia Broadcasting System on January 1, 1939, for \$700,000. Intending to revive Columbia as a major label, CBS fired most of the ARC executives, recruited Edward Wallerstein from the Radio Corporation of America, and launched the Columbia Recording Corporation (*see next entry*).

COLUMBIA RECORDING CORPORATION / COLUMBIA RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1939 – 1988

Offices: New York; 1473 Barnum Ave., Bridgeport, CT (plant)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — 799 7th Avenue, New York; Hollywood, CA; many other branch and temporary locations; Columbia and Okeh archival material

Pressing: Own plants — Bridgeport, CT; Kings Mills, OH; Los Angeles (from 5/1947); Mexico City (from late 1947)

Record Products (78s): Columbia, Columbia Entré, Columbia Masterworks, Brunswick (1939–1940 only), Conqueror, Epic, Harmony [3], Okeh, Philharmonic [2], Silvertone Record Club, Special Editions, Vocalion (1939–1940 only); Benny Goodman All Star Recording and other picture labels; Best Loved Music Presentation, Longines Symphonette, Watch Tower, and other private and custom labels; Playtime (children's); radio transcriptions, special-use recordings

In the summer of 1938, Columbia Broadcasting System officials began investigating a possible purchase of the American Record Corporation from Herbert Yates' Consolidated

Film Industries. Formal negotiations began in December, and the sale became final on January 1, 1939. For \$700,000, CBS acquired all assets of the American Record Corporation, including its Columbia Phonograph Corporation and Brunswick Record Corporation divisions.

Intending to revive Columbia as its flagship label, CBS formed the Columbia Recording Corporation and hired Edward Wallerstein away from the Radio Corporation of America to serve as president of the new division. Wallerstein quickly dismissed most ARC personnel and set about restoring Columbia's reputation as a major record label. Production of ARC's budget labels had been discontinued some months prior to the sale, leaving only Sears' Conqueror label as a client brand. Production of the Brunswick and Vocalion labels was scaled back beginning in late 1939, eventually triggering the Brunswick Radio Corporation to reclaim those labels in 1941 after sales fell below the mandated minimum.

The new Columbia records bore redesigned red labels that merged the Columbia and CBS trademarks. RCA subsequently sued CBS over its use of the red label, based upon its Victor's questionable 1904 trademark registration of a blank red label — a case that RCA lost in 1943. Introduced during the first week of September 1939, standard 10" red-label Columbia releases retailed for 50¢, the approximate midpoint between Decca's and Victor's pricing for comparable material, respectively. New Columbia Masterworks classical releases soon followed.

In the autumn of 1939, Goddard Lieberson was assigned to assist Moses Smith, manager of Columbia's classical division. Despite his subordinate role, Lieberson quickly began to recast the Masterworks label. One of his priorities was to reduce Columbia's heavy reliance on foreign recordings, which at the time comprised most of the label's classical catalog. With guidance from Wallerstein, who had come to know many prominent classical artists during his tenure at RCA Victor, Lieberson set out to lure the best of them to Columbia with the promise of higher royalties, national radio exposure, and aggressive marketing. Within two years, a significant number of Victor artists would move to Columbia, including Lotte Lehmann, Lauritz Melchior, Lily Pons, Paul Robeson, and Nelson Eddy. Lieberson also proved to be effective at scouting and luring free agents, signing the Chicago, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh symphonies, among others.

The Masterworks catalog was divided into two series. The traditional blue label was retained for the most highly regarded artists and works, while a less-expensive green label was added for artists and material with some cross-over appeal to the pop market. For the green-label series, Wallerstein transferred André Kostelanetz from the Brunswick label, on which he had been a mediocre seller. CBS management devoted considerable effort to making him a household name, greatly expanding his orchestra, providing frequent radio exposure, and developing special recording techniques that imparted a distinctively lush sound to his string section.

The turning point for the Masterworks series came on July 31, 1941, when Columbia abruptly announced a new pricing structure that deeply undercut Red Seals prices. RCA management, which has just finished stocking its dealers for the autumn selling season, was forced to follow suit several weeks later, but the damage had already been done. By September, Columbia was claiming "as much as a one-thousand percent" increase in Masterworks sales. According to a report in *Variety* that month, Columbia was so overwhelmed with Masterworks orders that the pressing plant was forced to reduce production of its pop releases to compensate. Seven months later, *Variety* reported that Columbia was "cutting deep" into Victor's forty-year leadership in the classical field.

The Masterworks classical line competed so successfully with Victor's Red Seals that in September 1946 CBS announced that new releases would be listed weekly rather than monthly. Taking a cue from Victor's publishing program, in late 1947 Columbia produced *The Columbia Book of Musical Masterworks*. Edited by Lieberson, with an introduction by Wallerstein, it contained one-hundred composer biographies and details of "all types of recordings from the old masters to those by contemporary composers," keyed to the corresponding Columbia catalog numbers.

CBS was equally aggressive in revamping its popular lines, retaining the best of the ARC and Brunswick artists while letting the rest go, while actively recruiting new stars. The Brunswick and Vocalion labels were soon replaced by Okeh, which had been dormant since 1935. Resurrected in April 1940 and retailing for 35¢, Okeh served as a budget-priced

sideline to Columbia. Advertising and record sleeves of the period reminded buyers, "Okeh is the new name for Vocalion Records. Instead of Vocalion, just say Okeh." Although many of CBS's early Okeh releases were simply reissues of Okeh, Brunswick-Vocalion, and American Record Corporation recordings (some of them dating to the late 1920s), the label also featured new recordings by popular singers and bands.

Okeh appeared poised to compete successfully with Bluebird and Decca, so industry insiders were surprised when *Billboard* announced in May 1942 that CBS was dropping the label. The magazine recanted its story a week later, reporting instead that Okeh was likely to be retained as a race and "hillbilly" line, which CBS officials subsequently confirmed. However, Okeh was discontinued in mid-1945, and its better-selling artists were transferred to the Columbia roster. The label was revived yet again in 1951.

Under Wallerstein's management, the Columbia Recording Corporation was renamed Columbia Records, Inc., on March 31, 1947. Tape mastering began several months later, amidst rumors that the launch of a long-playing Columbia record was imminent. As early as 1939, Wallerstein had authorized research into a long-playing disc, with the backing of CBS executives. He had assembled a first-rate research-and-development group that reported to Peter Goldmark, who attributed his early interest in longer-playing discs to a "sincere hatred" of the phonograph as it then existed. Goldmark's team included Columbia Records' Jim Hunter (who earlier had adapted vinylite for use in RCA's Program Transcriptions), Ike Rodman, Vin Liebler, and Bill Savory; CBS's Rene Snepvangers, who was put in charge of developing a lightweight pickup; and Bill Bachman, who was persuaded to leave General Electric for Columbia.

The new records used a 0.001" (1-mil) groove, which Wallerstein had seen tested during his time at RCA Victor in the mid-1930s. The decision to press in vinyl came from Jim Hunter, who had long experience working with the product, and determined that its use would not require major modifications to the existing plating and pressing equipment at Columbia's Bridgeport plant. Exhibiting remarkable foresight, Wallerstein ordered that Columbia's new studios be equipped to record simultaneously on standard 78-rpm masters and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm 16" acetates. The latter were to be held in reserve as a stockpile of masters from which the long-playing discs could be dubbed when the time came.

Development of the long-playing microgroove disc was well under way when the United States' entry into World War II forced a temporary halt to the project. Work resumed in earnest in 1946. The engineers demonstrated a long-playing record late in the year, but it fell far short of Wallerstein's expectations. As costs mounted, CBS president William Paley became increasingly impatient for a launch and ordered Wallerstein, Hunter, and members of the engineering team to meet with him every two months. Every detail was carefully researched, from cutting angles to heated cutting styli, in the seemingly contradictory quest for higher fidelity and longer playing time.

A major advance came in mid-1947, when Columbia abandoned direct-to-disc mastering in favor of magnetic tape, using EMI and Ampex equipment. A seventeen-minute 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm prototype disc, referred to internally simply as the "LP," was rejected in the autumn of 1947, with orders given to extend the playing time to twenty minutes or longer. Another impediment in the LP's journey to market was the lack of an affordable, consumer-grade phonograph capable of playing the records—the same situation that had undermined RCA's long-playing Program Transcriptions in the early 1930s. After concluding that Columbia's engineers lacked the skills and time needed to develop a compatible player, Wallerstein signed an exclusive contract with radio manufacturer Philco to design and manufacture the first models. Working closely with the CBS team, the company quickly delivered an acceptable, single-speed player attachment that could be connected to an existing radio or record player.

In January 1948, Wallerstein was appointed chairman of the board of Columbia Records, the presidency of which was passed to CBS vice-president Frank K. White. By that time, the microgroove LP was approaching its final form, with its playing time now extended to twenty-two minutes on a 12" side. After having kept the project secret for so long, Paley and Wallerstein began demonstrating the new records to others within the industry, in an attempt to secure licensing deals. Wallerstein demonstrated the LP to RCA president David Sarnoff in April 1948, in a meeting that reportedly went poorly. Demonstrations to EMI and Decca executives in England were no more successful.

At the end of May 1948, *Billboard* reported that CBS executives were still "maintaining complete silence on the entire project." The silence was broken on June 18, when the company hosted a preview of the new records and player for recording-industry executives, during which the technical details were publicly disclosed for the first time.

Two days later, the press was given its first glimpse of the LP when Wallerstein demonstrated it to fifty reporters at New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. Columbia's initial LP catalog, consisting of 101 records, was released on the same day. Columbia's LPs initially were pressed in 10" and 12" formats (the latter reserved primarily for classical works), packed in paper sleeves that employed a uniform boilerplate design, and retailed from \$2.85 for standard 10" releases to \$4.85 for the 12" Masterworks series. Much of the early catalog consisted of material that had previously been released on 78s, a shortcoming that did not prevent reviewers from praising the new LPs lavishly.

CBS failed in its attempt to license the LP to other companies. Realizing that the format embodied little that was patentable, and that it could succeed commercially only if the format was universally adopted, CBS executives in June 1948 made the process freely available to other companies. In some cases (as happened with Vox), the company provided technical assistance to those making the conversion in exchange for an exclusive pressing contract. CBS eventually lost its claim to the LP name, which slipped into generic usage after the company failed to enforce its ownership of the brand.

Launched during the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, Columbia's LP initially was forced to rely on pre-ban recordings, of which there was an abundant supply. Once regular recording activities resumed in early 1949, CBS took the opportunity to drop some artists whose sales were in decline, including Cab Calloway, Woody Herman, Claude Thornhill, and Tommy Tucker. Mortimer (Morty) Palitz was brought in to assist Ben Selvin in managing artists and repertoire on the West Coast, bringing further shake-ups in the roster.

By then, distributors were reporting a marked increase in sales of Columbia LPs, with a corresponding drop in sales of 78s, despite a recent price reduction in the red-label line. CBS initially resisted adding 45s to its lineup, not wishing to show support for RCA's new competing format. Instead, in January 1949 it introduced a 7" LP, retailing for 60¢ and devoted largely to pop material, in an unsuccessful bid to compete with the 45. Edward Wallerstein, despite his openly expressed disdain for the format, finally approved production of Columbia 45s in late 1949, reassuring customers that his company would make "any record the public wanted." In April 1951, Columbia announced that pop material would be released simultaneously in 78- and 45-rpm formats. Columbia continued to press 78s through 1958 in the United States, and through 1960 in Canada, but only for selected titles beginning in the mid-1950s.

Columbia's later history is beyond the scope of this work. In 1988 CBS sold its record division, including the Columbia and Okeh trademarks and masters, to the Sony Corporation of Japan.

COLUMBINE RECORDS — See Zomar, Karl

COMAR RECORDS / DIXIE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1950

Offices: 1726 Eastern Ave., Baltimore (Tyson Distributing)

Record Products: Comar; possibly Dixie [4]

Of unknown ownership, Comar Records was affiliated with the Joseph V. Tyson Distributing Company. The label's small output consisted of country-and-western material, primarily by Tex Daniels and the Lazy-H Ranch Boys. The group was broadcasting over radio station WSID (Baltimore) at the time and had a weekly television program on WAAM (Baltimore) beginning in mid-1949.

Daniels' first Comar release was mentioned in October 1948 by *Billboard*, which reported on an additional Comar session in March 1949. On July 3, 1949, the company held an audition for local talent at the Taneytown (Maryland) Air Park. Comar was last mentioned by *Billboard*, in passing, in the same month.

The short-lived Dixie Record Company, also based in Baltimore, was mentioned as a new company by *Billboard* in February 1950. It is believed to have been affiliated with,

or possibly the successor to, Comar Records. Like Comar, Dixie (which was unrelated to two earlier labels of the same name) featured Tex Daniels' band and was distributed by Tyson.

COMET, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944–1949

Offices: 420 Lexington Ave., New York

Original-Master Source(s): WOR studios, other independent studios

Pressing: Black and White plant (Los Angeles)

Record Products: Comet

Founded in 1944 as a jazz label by John Henry Alderton, Jr. (president, and former owner of Music You Enjoy), D. J. Randall, Jr. (vice-president), Wilder Gutterson (secretary), and Herbert Stursberg (treasurer). The company's majority investor was Lester Schriber, Sr., of Black and White Records. In early 1945, Schriber sold his share in Comet (along with Black and White) to Paul and Lillian Reiner. Although the Comet label and trade name remained in use, the Reiners merged its operation with that of Black and White.

Comet's first documented recording session, by the Art Tatum Trio, was held in New York on May 1, 1944. Early releases included recordings by Tatum, Cow Cow Davenport, and Red Norvo's Sextet (the latter including Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker), which received generally favorable reviews. Comet later expanded into the blues market, most notably with some 1947 sides by T-Bone Walker.

In June 1949 the Reiners sold a large number of their masters, including most of those they had acquired from Comet, to Dial Records. The T-Bone Walker recordings were purchased by Capitol Records, which reissued them under new master numbers.

COMMAND RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1951

Offices: 1066 Main St., Buffalo, New York; 1017 Pacific Ave., Long Beach, CA (distribution, 7/1950–c. 1951)

Record Products: Command

Owned and operated by Murray Seidman, who was also the manager of Capitol Records' distribution branch in Buffalo, New York. Seidman financed and initially operated Command Record while retaining his position with Capitol.

Command made several recordings shortly before the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban took effect in January 1948, then went dormant for a time. The label was finally reactivated in November 1949, at which time its first post-ban recordings were released. Command featured lesser-known artists from the Buffalo area, including singer Russ Bates, organist Vic Danna, the Dude Rangers with Al Harris, and the novelty team of Mickey, Dee & Skinner. Its advertising claimed, "Nothing Sensational! No Fantastic 'Hit' Predictions! Just Records That Sell!" The first two claims, at least, were accurate.

Seidman finally resigned from Capitol on February 24, 1950, to devote his full time to Command. In early March, *Billboard* reported that he had leased two Command recordings by Mickey, Dee & Skinner to London Records, which also took a leasing option on other Command masters. Seidman opened a Command distribution office in California in July 1950, after which little more was heard of his label. It appears to have been discontinued in 1951. The Command name was later used by a well-known, and unrelated, LP label.

COMMERCIAL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: 545 5th Ave., New York (at founding); 489 5th Ave., New York (1946–1947)

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products (78): Fantasy [1]

Launched in February 1946 by Robert (Bob) Van Santen, with Marvin Rothenburg serving as production manager. The company initially planned to produce recordings of current hits as well as what it termed "special" tunes, with added commercials, for use on subscriber-based telephonic music systems. Subscribers would be required to air each title eight times daily, for which they would be paid 2¢ per play. *Billboard* reported that three unnamed

companies were considering the model, and that one city had been selected as a test location. However, nothing more was reported on the subscriber service, and the company recast itself as a producer of standard 78s for the consumer market.

By early 1947, the Commercial Record Company was producing the earlier version of the Fantasy label (unrelated to a later San Francisco label of the same name). First listed in *Billboard's* March 1947 directory, Fantasy records were released in a standard commercial series, as well as an unnumbered series with labels marked "For Station Library." The latter series appears to have been intended for use in a subscription service that differed from the original model (auditioned specimens contain no advertising, as had originally been planned). Virtually nothing was reported concerning Commercial's Fantasy label after early 1947.

By the later 1940s, the Commercial Record Company was advertising itself as an independent pressing plant, producing 78-rpm and LP vinyl discs. Fantasy's brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. By then, the Fantasy name was being used by the Weiss brothers' better-known and much longer-lived Fantasy Records.

COMMODORE MUSIC SHOP / COMMODORE RECORD CO., INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1938–1960

Offices: Numerous New York locations given, including 144 E. 42nd St. (early–mid-1940s); 415 Lexington Ave. and 136 E. 42nd St. (mid-1940s–early 1950s); 674 3rd. Ave. (late 1940s); 46 W. 42nd St. (late 1940s–early 1950s); 289 Nepperhan Ave., Yonkers, NY (distribution, from early 1946)

Original-Master Source(s): American Record Corporation (1938), Decca (1939–c. 1944), and probably other independent studios; own studio (from later 1940s)

Pressing: Scranton Record Co. (through 1944); own plant — Yonkers, NY (from 1945)

Record Products (78s): Commodore, Topical Tempos; production services for Jazz Information, U. H. C. A., Voices from History, other independent labels

The Commodore Music Shop had its roots in a New York radio store owned by Julius Gabler. On the recommendation of his son, Milt, Gabler began handling jazz records on Columbia, Victor, and various other labels in 1931. By the mid-1930s, Milt Gabler was operating the business as the Commodore Music Shop, which became a popular gathering spot for jazz musicians, enthusiasts, and hangers-on. In 1936 he began producing jazz reissues for the United Hot Clubs of America using material from the American Record Corporation's Columbia, Okeh, Brunswick, and Vocalion holdings.

Two years later, Gabler launched his own Commodore label to specialize in original jazz recordings. Production originally was contracted to ARC, with pressing handled by the Scranton Record Company. The earliest Commodore releases were a mixture of reissues and newly recorded material. Commodore's first recording session was held on January 17, 1938, under Eddie Condon's direction, at ARC's New York studio. By the 1940s, 10" Commodore records were wholesaling for 60¢ and retailing for \$1 each, in line with other small independent labels of the period. *Billboard* characterized the label as "giving straight commercialism the go-by and still finding a good market for their wares." The records soon developed a following in England and Ireland, where they were featured on the syndicated "Swing Time" broadcasts.

Gabler was deeply involved in the New York jazz scene and was one of the first to publish detailed (if not always accurate) jazz discographies, which he sold under the Commodore imprint. Beginning in February 1940, he sponsored the "Commodore Classics in Swing" broadcasts over radio station WCNW (New York). In 1946, *Billboard* identified Commodore as one of several independent labels that was attracting top-flight sidemen from the major orchestras by paying them substantially more than union scale. It was among the first to list full personnel on its labels (again, not always accurate, in the case of the reissues). Benny Goodman and others who were under exclusive contract elsewhere occasionally moonlighted for Commodore and were disguised by pseudonyms on the labels (Goodman became "Shoeless John Jackson").

Following ARC's sale to the Columbia Broadcasting System in January 1939, Gabler had difficulty locating another producer. New releases dwindled until November 1939, when production (and later, distribution) was contracted to Decca Records. A more decorative label was introduced at that time, along with a short-lived Connoisseur Series

for classical and miscellaneous material, which included such oddities as jazz pianist Bud Powell's interpretation of Brahms.

Gabler recorded at Decca and several small independent studios throughout the 1940s. By 1944 he had incorporated his operation as the Commodore Record Company, Inc., bringing in his brother Barney (vice-president) and father Julius (treasurer), along with Jack Crystal (secretary). In December 1944, Gabler announced that he was setting up his own pressing plant in Yonkers, New York, which was to have a daily capacity of 7,000–8,000 discs. In May 1947 he switched from shellac to plastic pressings, which were made in a compound supplied by Dumor Plastics.

Gabler purchased General Records' holdings from Hazard Reeves in July 1946. The sale comprised approximately 400 masters, including the Gamut and Timely recordings that Reeves had acquired after those companies suspended operations, and the National Vocarium material that had been licensed to Reeves for his Voices from History label. Gabler reissued selected titles on Commodore (including General's Jelly Roll Morton sides), parceled out some others to unrelated labels, and briefly revived the Gamut label.

By 1947 Gabler was working for as a recording manager for Decca Records while retaining his stake in Commodore. In April, he assigned exclusive distribution rights to Decca and granted them the option to purchase Commodore, but the relationship soon became strained. His attempt to launch a Commodore pop series reportedly was vetoed by Decca officials. Gabler left Decca in 1948 and severed his distribution agreement, opting instead to distribute Commodore records independently. During the same period, he reissued some material he had licensed or purchased from outside sources, including some old Varsity masters and additional General recordings made in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The reissue program was expanded in the autumn of 1948 to include some previously deleted Commodore titles.

Commodore's first LP was advertised in January 1950. In July, Gabler suspended pressing services to outside customers and sold off much of the equipment in his Yonkers pressing plant, citing the need to concentrate on development of the Commodore label. Plans were made at that time to expand distribution and transfer much of the 78-rpm Commodore catalog to LPs. However, Gabler discontinued the label in 1952 to return to Decca, as a vice-president.

A reorganized Commodore Records resumed operations in May 1954 under the direction of Milt Gabler's son Danny, in partnership with Jack Crystal and Leonard Feather. Gabler finally closed the Commodore Music Shop on October 31, 1958, citing his inability to compete with the large discount chains. Commodore LPs from his remaining inventory could still be purchased by mail-order as late as 1960.

Mainstream Records acquired rights to the Commodore catalog in the late 1960s, and the label was revived in 1972 under a licensing agreement between Gabler and Atlantic Records. Some material has since been reissued in Compact Disc format.

COMPO COMPANY, LTD. / [H. S.] BERLINER RECORDING LABORATORIES (Discs)

Record Production: 1918–1951 (Compo, Canada); 1924–1927 (Berliner, New York)

Offices: 131–141 18th Ave., Lachine, Quebec, Canada

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — 117 Metcalfe St., Montreal, Canada (from 1921); 240 W. 55th St., New York (1924–1925); Hilton Building, 69 W. 90th St., New York (1925–1927); probably Independent Recording Laboratory, New York (early 1920s)

Pressing: Own plant — Lachine, Quebec, Canada

Record Products (78s, U.S.): Ajax, La Patrie; masters occasionally used by Plaza-Regal group

Foreign Labels Using Masters (78s): Beeda, Leonora, Paling's (Australia); Apex, Apex Radia-Tone, Canadian Music Lovers Library, Crown, Decca, Domino, Lucky Strike, Melotone, Microphone, Opera-Phone, Starr, Starr-Gennett, Sterling, Sun (Canada); radio transcriptions, film soundtrack discs (Canada)

Founded by Herbert S. Berliner, the son of gramophone inventor Emile Berliner, this major Canadian record producer maintained a New York studio that supplied masters to several American labels during the 1920s.

Following the forced closure of his business in the United States in 1900, Emile Berliner turned his attention to developing the Berliner Gramophone Company of Canada, Ltd. Herbert Berliner (one of five original stockholders in his father's Canadian company) trained as a recording engineer before World War I with Deutschen Grammophon.

Appointed vice-president and general manager of Berliner Gramophone in 1910, Herbert reportedly had little patience with the Victor Talking Machine Company, which was the company's primary source of masters. When Victor was slow to authorize double-sided pressings in Canada, Berliner took it upon himself to issue their material in double-sided form for Canadian distribution. In 1916, angered by what he considered excessive royalties being levied by Victor, he established an independent Berliner studio in Montreal, where he recorded visiting American performers (including some who were under exclusive Victor contract in the U.S.) as well as local talent.

In the autumn of 1918, while still vice-president of the Berliner Gramophone Company, Herbert launched the Compo Company as an independent pressing plant in Lachine, Quebec, under the supervision of J. McWilliam. The company (which was not officially incorporated until March 1922) began advertising in 1919, soliciting business from American record companies with promises of cost savings and claims that it could supply "everything but the mother matrix." Among Compo's earliest customers were the Phonola Company (a Canadian label that used Okeh masters) and the Starr Piano Company (which used Compo to press Gennett records for Canadian distribution).

As the Compo Company became increasingly successful, Herbert Berliner came under pressure from Victor officials in the U.S. He finally announced his resignation from Berliner Gramophone on April 4, 1921, and turned his full attention to building Compo. He took several Berliner employees with him, including sales manager Thomas Nash, recording engineer Elmer Avery, and his personal secretary. A month later, Berliner organized the Sun Record Company (210 Adelaide Street West, Toronto) as a sales and distribution subsidiary under Nash's management and hinted to the trade publications that a "new record" was being developed. At about the same time, Berliner opened his own recording studio in Montreal. The first documented session to be held there, on July 7, 1921, produced two unissued test recordings. The first commercially issued recordings, comprising two selections by the team of Tremblay & Germain, were made on July 13.

Apex, the flagship label in what would become a large group of Compo brands, was introduced on September 2, 1921. Many offerings were by Canadian artists who had not previously recorded, intermixed with pop titles licensed from American companies. Retailing for 65¢, Apex was priced to undercut Victor and other established lines. Compo also specialized in the production of inexpensive labels for the chain-store and mail-order markets, pressed largely from licensed American masters. At one time the Compo factory was said to be producing twenty different labels, many of which issued the identical recordings.

During the summer of 1923, Berliner launched a race-record line in the U.S., in the guise of the Ajax Record Company, *q.v.* Although Compo was to handle the manufacturing, Ajax was kept at arm's-length from the parent operation. Except for the earliest recordings, Ajax masters were numbered separately from Compo's (Compo's recording files have survived, Ajax's have not), and Ajax recordings did not appear on Compo's own labels. The earliest Ajax sessions were held in Compo's Montreal studio, and possibly the Independent Recording Laboratories in New York. By January 1924, however, Berliner had opened his own New York studio. Initially it was a part-time operation that was reserved exclusively for the Ajax recording sessions.

A pressing-plant fire in December 1924 caused \$15,000 in damage to the Compo plant but did little to slow the company's growth. In the same year, Compo began licensing Regal Record Company (Banner-Regal) and Pathé masters for release in Canada under its own labels. There was little in the way of reciprocity, aside from some French-American recordings from the Apex catalog that were released in the U.S. on the La Patrie label, and in the later 1920s, some pipe-organ solos that appeared on the Regal-affiliated labels. Compo also manufactured the Starr and Starr-Gennett labels for Canadian distribution through the Starr Company of Canada, Ltd., drawing heavily on American Gennett masters. In 1925 Berliner, in partnership with Roméo Beaudry, acquired Canadian rights to the Starr label. Thereafter, it was managed as Compo's own brand, independent of the Starr Piano Company.

Berliner began making experimental electrical recordings in the Montreal studio in January 1924, using equipment of his own design. He introduced a new E-prefixed master series that began at E-1, and on December 4, 1924, began recording masters in both

acoustic and electric versions. Of surprisingly good quality, the earliest electrical Apex recordings reached dealers in early 1925, several months ahead of the first Columbia and Victor electrical releases. The New York studio appears to have been converted to electrical recording during February–March 1925, based upon Berliner's documented absence from Montreal during that period. There was a mixture of acoustic and electric releases into the early summer of 1925, by which time the older process had been phased out aside from an occasional anomalous session.

Berliner's New York studio temporarily suspended operations in April 1925, after the last of the Ajax sessions. It reopened on July 22 as the Berliner Recording Laboratories. It would now operate as an independent provider of electrically recorded masters to American companies that had yet to make the conversion. The studio supplied many electrically recorded masters to the Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation beginning in January 1926. During the summer and autumn of that year, the Starr Piano Company commissioned electrically recorded masters from Berliner that were renumbered within the Gennett master sequence, with the addition of a BEX- prefix (which is not shown in most modern discographies). Pathé soon became Berliner's major client, commissioning a large number of recordings into early 1927, particularly those by their higher-paid talent. The Compo files for those sessions often contain instructions to "Charge Pathé," although some of the recordings were also issued on Compo-owned labels in Canada. Berliner's last documented New York studio recordings were made in the spring of 1927. The studio appears to have been closed after Pathé began making its own electrical recordings.

Berliner also made recordings from radio broadcasts during the mid-1920s, which he issued on the Apex Radia-Tone label in Canada. The first release consisted of two hymns by the choir and congregation of the American Presbyterian Church (Montreal), with pipe-organ accompaniment, as broadcast on August 9, 1925. In 1926, after much carefully documented experimentation, Berliner began recording pipe-organ solos by Norton Payne, which were transmitted by wire from Montreal's Capitol Theatre to the nearby studios of radio station CKAC. The records sold well in Canada, prompting a 1928 follow-up series by Leo Le Sieur (performing in Montreal's Midway Theatre) that also appeared on numerous cut-rate American labels, often under pseudonyms.

After struggling to survive the Depression (during which the factory turned to the production of dictating-machine cylinders, floor tiles, and other molded good) Compo in 1935 took over Canadian pressing and distribution of Decca records. In the late 1930s Compo also began to press for other U.S. labels. By then the company was no longer in the recording business, but it continued to offer plating and pressing services to independent labels. It had just begun to move into LP production when Herbert Berliner sold Compo and its Apex Records division to Decca in December 1950. It operated as a Decca division until that company's sale to the Music Corporation of America in 1963.

CONCERT HALL SOCIETY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1956

Offices: 250 W. 57th St., New York (1946–1954); 507 W. 56th St., New York (1954–1956); 43 W. 61st St., New York (record club office, 9/1954–1956)

Pressing: Own plant (78s); RCA Custom Record Division (LPs)

Record Products (78): Concert Hall, Limited Editions

Founded in 1946 by brothers Samuel and David Josefowitz, the Concert Hall Society eventually evolved into the first successful classical record club operation. The business was started as a hobby, after the Josefowitz's father, who owned a chemical factory, was offered a shipment of vinyl resin at cost. Having no use for the material, he turned it over to his sons, who used it to launch a record business. Samuel had studied industrial engineering at Rensselaer and had experience with mail-order sales, having started a photographic subscription business while still in college. David, who was chemical engineer and classically trained violinist, would handle artists and repertoire, the latter consisting entirely of classical material.

Partly as a marketing ploy, and partly because their supply of vinyl was limited to what their father had purchased, the Josefowitz brothers initially produced limited editions of 2,000 signed and numbered copies per title. The pressings (some in red vinyl, some in

black) were made directly from the first plating of the master, eliminating the cost of sub-masters and multiple stampers.

The first Concert Hall Society records were released in November 1946, and were available by subscription only. The initial offering of twelve 78-rpm albums was priced at \$105 for the set, and subscribers received a special Bartók "dividend" disc. The records were sufficiently distinctive that *Time* magazine carried a brief report of their introduction, and *The New York Times* praised Concert Hall's "high aims." *Chicago Tribune* music critic Claudia Cassidy was more effusive, writing, "This is not a project to discourage. Its gold-embossed red albums, autographed by the artists and numbered first-edition style, hold smooth red vinylite records...but what really counts is that those records hold good music expertly played and adroitly engineered."

All issues were to be of previously unrecorded works, although that restriction was later relaxed. David Josefowitz was able to secure artists who were well-respected, if not widely known to the general public, including conductor Edgar Schenkman, violinists Jacques Gordon and Daniel Guilet, cellist Raya Garbousova, and pianists Rudolf Firkusny, Ray Lev, and Shura Cherkassky during the label's early years. By mid-1947, with vinyl more readily available and demand increasing, the records were being pressed in unlimited quantities, unsigned and unnumbered.

What was termed an "experimental" LP was test-marketed in January 1949, making Concert Hall the first independent classical label to adopt the format. Concert Hall LPs first appeared in the *Schwann Catalog* in 1950, and 78s were discontinued at the end of that year. At that time, it was announced that Concert Hall would double the number of monthly LP releases beginning in January 1951. By then the subscription model had been dropped for Concert Hall records, which could now be purchased individually from specialty distributors and retailers.

The Josefowitz brothers did not abandon the subscription model entirely. They continued to develop new subscription-only labels in the early 1950s, including the Handel Society, Chamber Music Society, and Opera Society. Far more successful was their mass-market record club, the Musical Masterpiece Society. Launched in November 1952, it sold cut-rate classical LPs by mail. It proved to be very popular, in part because of its tempting introductory "teaser" offers, which included a free LP (or later, four LPs for a dollar) for new members. Additional records were sent subject to a five-day free trial period, after which they had to be paid for or returned. In November 1953, the *New York Daily News* reported that 600,000 records had been sold in the club's first year, with a return rate of only ½ of 1%. Despite its gimmicky advertisements, "special" introductory offers, and even sweepstakes that tempted new members with free trips to Europe or "a small fortune in cash," Concert Hall maintained the high quality of its releases, which for the most part continued to be widely praised by reviewers.

By 1955, the Josefowitz brothers were also operating branches throughout Europe. In the same year, they ventured into the jazz market after purchasing the Dial catalog and launching the Jazztone label, which was sold through yet another mail-order club, the Jazztone Society. But in July, 1956, they sold their American interests in the Concert Hall Society and its affiliated record-club operations to the Crowell-Collier Publishing Company (the publisher of *Collier's* magazine and *Collier's Encyclopedia*), including a catalog of more than a thousand recorded compositions and a mailing list of 600,000 names. Crowell-Collier continued to operate the record clubs as C-C Clubs, Inc., employing the same tacky marketing techniques. The company later introduced pre-recorded Concert Hall tapes, and in February 1957 the price of Concert Hall Society LPs was reduced to \$1.97 each. Concert Hall records were last listed in *The Long Player* in 1959. The brand was revived in the 1970s.

CONCERT MUSIC SHOP, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1935

Offices: 1051 Lexington Ave., New York

Record Products: Concert Music Shop, Inc.

Originally located on E. 204th Street, the Concert Music Shop was opened in the summer of 1922 by Theodore Levy, who had earlier worked as a Victor studio conductor. It dealt in records, phonographs, piano rolls, and player-piano repairs. The store introduced its

own short-lived label in early 1935, which was produced by the American Record Corporation. Its commissioned masters were numbered within the standard ARC sequence but were P-prefixed, indicating a client label. The initial release, by soprano Eleanor Evans, was recorded on January 14, 1935. Concert Music Shop records were included in a 1937 Carnegie Corporation donation of more than 900 records to the University of Queensland in Australia, but otherwise, very little was reported concerning the label.

CONCERT PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY — See E. T. Paull Music Company

CONSOLIDATED FILM INDUSTRIES

Consolidated Film Industries, although not directly involved in record production, owes its inclusion here to its ownership of the American Record Corporation (*q.v.*), which came to include the Brunswick-Vocalion and Columbia-Okeh lines. The company was founded in March 1924 as the Consolidated Film Corporation, a motion-picture film-processing operation that merged the Craftsmen Film Laboratory and Commercial Traders Cinema Corporation.

Among Consolidated Film Industries' incorporators was Herbert J. Yates, who initially served as vice-president and general manager but quickly ascended to the presidency. CFI expanded rapidly under Yates' management. At the time of the company's reorganization in June 1928, its clients included Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, United Artists, Paramount-Famous-Laskey, First National Pictures, Loew's, and Hearst News Service, among many others. CFI reportedly processed more than 406 million feet of commercial film footage in 1929 alone.

In June 1930, Yates began negotiations to purchase the American Record Corporation. Terms of the agreement were finalized on October 1, 1930, and the sale was completed on December 11, through an exchange of 125,000 shares of CFI common stock for all outstanding and preferred shares of ARC. By then, CFI was operating six film studios or processing plants ranging from Long Island City to Hollywood and had recently acquired the Vitacolor Company, a producer of color film. An early report speculated that CFI might use the ARC facilities to produce movie soundtrack discs, although that technology was already being supplanted by the sound-on-film process. Yates went on to acquire the Brunswick and Vocalion labels (licensed from Warner Brothers Pictures) and the entire Columbia Phonograph Company (by outright purchase), which were consolidated under CFI-ARC management, although they retained some degree of autonomy.

Consolidated Film Industries was dissolved in 1939, following Yates' sale of the American Record Corporation to the Columbia Broadcasting System.

CONSOLIDATED PHONOGRAPH COMPANIES, LTD. (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1898 – c. 1900

Offices: 87 (later, 85) Orange St., Newark, NJ

Record Products: Consolidated cylinders

Owned and operated by United States Phonograph Company's George Tewksbury and Simon S. Ott. It has been reported anecdotally that Consolidated Phonograph was formed to serve as export agent for United States Phonograph, with which it originally shared the same Newark address.

In late 1898, Consolidated Phonograph, along with United States Phonograph, were sold to the Philadelphia firm of Fox & Challenger. Under Thomas Challenger's management, the company moved next-door to United States Phonograph's offices and announced a line of original "new process" cylinders in the spring of 1899. At least two Consolidated catalogs were published during that period, touting 50¢ cylinders made on "genuine Edison blanks," and featuring the usual studio freelance artists of the day, but making no reference to an export business. However, *The Phonoscope* for May 1899 reported that the plant was working night and day to fill large orders for export.

The Consolidated Phonograph Companies' charter was declared void in 1904, after the company failed to pay New Jersey taxes for two years.

CONSOLIDATED RECORD(ING) CORPORATION / CONSOLIDATED RECORDING LABORATORIES / CONSOLIDATED STUDIO (Discs)

Record Production: 1924 – c. 1931

Offices: 206 5th Ave., New York (12/1924–2/1925); 10 W. 33rd St., New York (2/1925–12/1925); 6 W. 32nd St., New York (1/1926 – 1930)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations

Pressing: None; pressing contracted to Scranton Button Company

Record Products: Emerson, Bell [1], Clover [1], Dandy, Grey Gull group (Grey Gull, Globe, Radiex, etc.), Everybodys, Excellent, Marathon, National [5], Sterling [2]; personal and custom recordings; film soundtracks (1929–1930)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Austral (Australia); Beltona, Duophone, Goodson, Ideal-Scala, Guardsman, Piccadilly (England); World (England, from dubbed masters); Acme (Germany)

Successor to the Emerson Recording Laboratories, the Consolidated Recording Corporation was incorporated on December 16, 1924 by ERL president Arthur H. Cushman, J. Ennisson, and E. Ennisson. Charles C. Hasin, ERL's studio manager, was also involved with the launch of the company. In addition to commercial recording work, the company offered personal and custom recording services (which it sometimes advertised on Emerson record sleeves) under the Consolidated Recording Laboratories name.

Consolidated, which initially occupied the former Emerson Recording Laboratories offices, is known to have been in operation as early as February 1925. For a time the new company used the ERL name interchangeably with its own. In the meantime, Consolidated had revived the Emerson label, which it relaunched in April 1925. By January 1926, band leader Fred Hall was serving as Consolidated's musical director. Emerson Electrosonic records were introduced in April 1926, employing a distortion-prone electrical process that improved only marginally over the next several years.

In June 1926, Consolidated lost Grey Gull Records (which had been using ERL and Consolidated masters for several years) as a customer. The two companies occasionally traded masters after the split, but Grey Gull's opening of its own studio in mid-1926 ended its reliance on Consolidated.

In the same month, Hasin, Louis D. Rosenfeld, and John A. Lawrence undertook a reorganization of the company, which was incorporated in New Jersey as a new entity, the Consolidated Record Corporation. The change appears to have been connected with a contract for Consolidated to produce Bell records for the W. T. Grant stores, which would offset the loss of Grey Gull as a client. The Bell Record Company, which had previously used multiple suppliers, would now rely entirely on Consolidated Record to supply masters and on Hasin to manage production, with its mailing address now the same as that of the Consolidated office.

Sales of the Emerson Electrosonic records were never strong, and the label was finally discontinued in mid-1927. Consolidated-produced Bell discs fared little better, and at the end of 1927 Bell severed relations with Consolidated and turned production over to the Starr Piano Company (Gennett). Consolidated occasionally supplied masters to Grey Gull and the Plaza-Regal label group during this period, which were issued pseudonymously and, in the latter case, assigned false master numbers in the Plaza series (although Consolidated's 31000-series numbers can often be seen in the wax, under the labels). The company also continued to offer personal recording services and produced several obscure client labels during 1927–1928, including 7" Marathon discs (*see* Nutmeg Corporation). Many of its later masters were licensed to Goodson's in England, as well as other foreign labels. However, the company appears to have suspended operations in early 1929. The last mention of Consolidated was notice of a \$150 judgement against the company in *People of New York v. Consolidated Recording Corp.*, on July 25, 1930.

Charles Hasin went on to launch the Consolidated Studio later in 1929, operating at the same 32nd Street address, and retaining Fred Hall (a mainstay of the earlier Consolidated Recording operation) as head of the music department. A short-lived operation that specialized in sound-film production, Consolidated Studio employed its own script writer, casting director, and location chief. Thus far, no concrete evidence has been found that the studio produced masters for any commercial labels, although the possibility cannot be ruled out that it was responsible for the Madison label's post-Grey Gull masters (*see*

Madison Record Company). In 1930 Hasin launched Electro Broadcasters, a transcription-production company that he operated along with Consolidated, at the same address.

In late 1931, a rumor surfaced that singer Johnny Marvin had acquired an interest in Consolidated Studio. The company denied it, insisting that Hasin was its sole owner, but mentions of Consolidated disappeared from the trade papers at about that time. After a long period during which virtually nothing was reported concerning Hasin, he resurfaced in August 1945, when he joined Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's newly launched record division, where he eventually was made national sales manager.

CONSOLIDATED RECORDS, INC. — See Reeves Sound Studios

CONSOLIDATED TALKING MACHINE COMPANY (1900) — See Victor Talking Machine Company and Predecessors

CONSTELLATION RECORDS — See Westernair Records

CONTINENTAL PHONOGRAPH AND RECORD COMPANY

Founded: 1898

Offices: 253 Broadway (Rooms 719–720), New York

Record Products: Cylinders (advertised, but not confirmed)

Founded in late 1898 by Civil War veteran Col. L. E. Evans, formerly of the New England Phonograph Company. Continental briefly advertised that it sold "first-class records only," although no claim was made that they were original recordings.

CONTINENTAL RECORD COMPANY

A producer of pirated records during 1908–1909, the Continental Record Company was a shadowy operation that marketed illegally copied Victor and Fonotipia recordings under the Continental label. It was owned by Winant Van Zant Pearce Bradley, formerly of the Talk-O-Phone Company. The company made no original recordings and thus is beyond the scope of this work; its history can be found in the author's *A Phonograph in Every Home*.

CONTINENTAL RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1941–1950

Offices: 1841–1843 Broadway, New York (1941–1943); 263–265 W. 54th St., New York (1943–1950)

Pressing: Scranton Record Company (1941–1946). Own plants—34 Chase Ave., Webster, MA (1947–1950); Montreal, Canada (1948–1950); Puerto Rico

Original-Master Source(s): International Recording Company, other independent studios

Record Products (78): Continental, Continental–Elite, Csardas, White Eagle; Maple Leaf (Canada)

Founded by Donald Gabor, a Hungarian emigrant who arrived in the United States in 1938. Initially employed by RCA as a shipping clerk, Gabor advanced to a management position in the company's foreign-record division before resigning in early 1941 to launch the Continental Record Company. Gabor's wife served as vice-president of Continental, and W. A. Timm as its recording manager. The records were distributed by J. F. Bard, Goody's and other firms specializing in small independent labels.

Gabor specialized in records for the immigrant markets, with an eye toward developing crossover sales to mainstream buyers. In 1947 he noted, "Even record retailers who are located in neighborhoods with practically no foreign-born population have established very profitable volumes on their international and foreign language records... 'International records' are being sold in increasing quantity to the general public by merchandising minded retailers who sell Polish records to this last group as 'polkas' and Hungarian records as 'Hungarian Gypsy Music' without the slightest difficulty."

Continental's first recording session was held in RCA Victor's New York studio on February 25, 1941. Several weeks later, Gabor leased office space for his new company. Continental had an inconspicuous launch and went largely unnoticed by the major trade papers until early 1943. By then, the records were being handled by nine distributing companies (including Gabor's own), primarily on the East Coast and in the Midwest. Gabor soon severed relations with RCA and began employing independent recording studios.

Gabor enlisted in the U.S. Navy on June 8th, 1943. In his absence, Continental was managed by his uncle, Gyula Kertesz. Kertesz's son, George Curtiss, joined the Continental staff upon Gabor's return in 1945, initially serving as manager of Continental's foreign production department. His duties included overseeing Continental's Puerto Rican pressing plant.

Although ethnic material would remain Continental's primary focus, Gabor soon expanded into the classical field, beginning with several solo recordings by Bela Bartók. Made in the composer's New York apartment during the American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, they were labeled "Recorded in Europe" to evade detection by the AFM.

By 1944, Gabor had begun to assemble an impressive jazz catalog. Many of Continental's jazz offerings (which included recordings by Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Cozy Cole, Slam Stewart, Ethel Waters, Sarah Vaughan, and other major artists) were also released in Europe. Some were later dubbed (sometimes from alternate takes) and widely distributed on Gabor's cut-rate Remington and Plymouth LPs (*see* Remington Records). In late 1947, Gabor signed a distribution agreement with Elite Records in Switzerland under which Continental would sell Elite recordings in the United States and Canada.

Gabor at first contracted his pressing to the Scranton Record Company, but the relationship soured in late 1945, by which time Capitol Records had acquired a major interest in the Scranton plant. In September of that year, Gabor filed a \$250,000 lawsuit against Scranton and Capitol, claiming that Scranton had violated its contract by slowing deliveries to him, and accusing the two companies of conspiring to drive independent producers out of business. The case was dismissed for insufficient evidence. Capitol in fact was pressuring Scranton to drop its smaller customers, but only to assure that the plant had sufficient capacity to handle all of Capitol's work.

In 1947 Gabor purchased the Webster Manufacturing Company's recently vacated textile mill in Webster, Massachusetts and converted it to his own pressing plant, where he offered custom pressing services as the Record Corporation of New England (later renamed the Webster Record Corporation). The following year he opened a pressing plant in Montreal, Canada, under the supervision of L. Doborvsky, and began issuing Continental material under the Maple Leaf label. The U.S. plant handled pressing for London records and some small independent labels in the late 1940s. Gabor was one of the first commercial producers to manufacture plastic pressings on a regular basis, using a mediocre compound he called "Websterite" and touted as "All-American made." In October 1950, Gabor announced that he was discontinuing contract pressing work in order to devote his plants entirely to the production of his own labels.

In mid-1948, a group of investors headed by Gabor launched Remington Records as a subsidiary of Continental. Gabor initially took no active role in the new company, but instead spent considerable time traveling as a consultant on pressing-plant construction to several foreign companies, including Empire in Canada, Novotone in Sweden, and Krammer in Austria during 1949.

After returning to the United States, Gabor test-marketed a 25¢ 45-rpm disc during the summer of 1949 but quickly abandoned the idea. LPs and standard-price 45s were in production by the end of the year. In 1950 he merged Remington with the dormant Continental operation and assumed control of the combined company under the Remington name. The Continental Record Company survived on paper for a time, but only as a trade name of Remington Records.

Gabor briefly revived the Continental Record Company as an independent operation in the early 1960s. Later in the decade, he dabbled unsuccessfully in pre-recorded tapes, which he marketed under the Radiant brand. A 1969 attempt to sue Gabor for Continental's alleged failure to pay composer royalties was foiled after he claimed he had disposed of Continental to what he recalled only as "an unknown party."

CONTRACT RECORDS — *See* Currier Recording Company

COOK LABORATORIES (Discs)

Record Production: From late 1930s

Offices and Master Source(s): Floral Park, NY (to early 1950s); 101 2nd St., Stamford, CT (from early 1950s)

Record Products (78s): Masters for Tru-Tone, probably other independent labels; radio transcriptions; custom recordings

Owned and operated by Emory Cook, the Cook Laboratories made news in late 1948 with its fine-groove "QC [Quality Control] Process," which was employed to produce high-fidelity 78s containing up to five minutes of playing time on a 10" disc. The first customer for Cook's new process was Tru-Tone Productions, a small producer of religious records based in Anderson, Indiana.

Cook later launched his own label, which in 1952 introduced Binaural Records, the first commercially issued stereophonic recordings. They employed a separate track for each channel, requiring a special dual-cartridge tonearm, which was designed and manufactured for Cook by the Livingston Electronics Corporation. A commercial failure, the Binaural system was quickly abandoned.

In the later 1950s Cook marketed a compact record press, which employed powdered vinyl, to record-store owners who wanted to press their own discs in-house. Tapes or acetates could be shipped to Cook Laboratories, which would master them and return finished stampers from which individual discs could be pressed on demand. The service reportedly was popular for a time in Puerto Rico and Jamaica but otherwise does not seem to have attracted much attention.

In 1990 Emory and wife Martha donated their master tapes, patents, and papers to the Smithsonian Institution, which administers the recordings through its Smithsonian-Folkways division.

COPLEY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1940s – Early 1970s

Offices: Boston

Original-Master Source(s): Commissioned from Decca, RCA, and possibly other studios

Record Products: Copley

Founded by Justus DeWitt, the son of Ellen O'Byrne DeWitt (*q.v.*), who had produced her own label for the Irish-American market in the 1920s; and brother of James De Witt, who carried on his mother's business. In the late 1920s, Justus De Witt moved to Roxbury, Massachusetts, where he launched the short-lived Irish Music House label.

Justus De Witt would go on to launch the more successful Copley Records in the late 1940s, offering the best in traditional Irish and Irish-American fare with little apparent regard for sales potential. In an uncharacteristic departure from that policy, Copley introduced a Spiritual Series in the early 1950s that seems to have vanished after several releases by the Silver Leaf of Boston, a Black *a capella* group.

Like his mother, De Witt commissioned his masters from outside studios and paid his artists flat fees, with no provision for royalties. Initial pressing runs reportedly were 1,000 copies, with re-pressings ordered if needed. LPs and 45s (the latter in standard as well as extended-play format), initially cobbled together from previously issued material, were introduced in the early 1950s. De Witt discontinued record production in the early 1970s.

CORAL RECORDS, INC. — See Decca Records

CORMAC RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 518 S. Main St., Santa Ana, CA (1949–5/1950); 2534 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles (5/1950–5/1951); 1653 Argyle Ave., Hollywood, CA (5/1951–1952)

Pressing: Coast Record Manufacturing, probably other independent plants

Record Products: Cormac; Artist (from 5/1949)

A country-and-western label launched in 1949 by music publisher Wes McWain. Officials included Stan Comstock (vice-president), Ray Pulley (general manager), Johnny Durgam (musical director), and Paul Schibner (sales and promotion manager). Dick Martin, who

served as Cormac's first artists-and-repertoire manager, was later replaced by Fabor Robnison. In 1955 Robinson recalled he had first learned the record business while working at Cormac Records.

Cormac records initially were marketed only in California, Oklahoma, and Texas. McWain did no national marketing at first, depending instead on exposure through jukeboxes and disc jockeys. The latter including Texas Tiny Cherry (KFOX—Long Beach, California), in whose honor Cormac released "Texas Tiny Boogie." *Billboard* reported in early 1950 that singer Glynn Duncan was Cormac's top seller. The label had a minor jukebox hit with Ted Shelton's "Motel Time," which it subsequently licensed to Modern Records.

In May 1949, McWain acquired Artist Records in a stock merger and operated the label as a Cormac subsidiary, specializing in classical and, to a lesser extent, pop material. Under McWain's management, Artist drew on a backlog of masters by Werner Janssen, Victor Young, and others, as well as new recordings by a handful of pop artists. At that time, the Cormac and Artist operations were consolidated at the Coast Records facility, along with McWain's and Robison's offices. Coast handled distribution for the Artist label and pressing for both Artist and Cormac.

Ray Pulley was sent on the road in early 1950 in an apparently unsuccessful attempt to secure expanded national distribution for Cormac records. McWain sold his publishing operation (including rights to 1,300 titles) to the 4 Star label in 1951, and Cormac's final releases appeared late that year. Cormac Records was last listed in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

CORONA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: New York

Record Products: Corona [3]

Launched in the spring of 1950 by Paul Kapp, owner of the General Music Publishing Company. There was no connection to slightly earlier Corona [1] and Corona [2] labels based in San Antonio and Pittsburgh, respectively. Kapp reportedly planned to use his personal collection of masters (some of which were said to be from as early as 1925, but most of them more current), which included recordings by artists who were currently under contract to other labels. A few Corona releases were listed between April and June 1950, and were briefly distributed by Atlantic Records, after which the venture appears to have been abandoned.

CORONET RECORDS (INC.) [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York (to 5/1946); 1450 Broadway (6–9/1946); 53 E. 51st St. (from 9/1946–1947); 1629 Broadway (from 1947)

Record Products: Coronet [2]

Coronet was one of several small labels that had a manufacturing and distribution agreement with music publisher Irving R. Gwartz under which Gwartz would guarantee sales of a specified number of discs in return for significant control over artists and repertoire (the latter to be supplied by one of Gwartz's three publishing companies). The sales-office address originally listed was that of I. R. Gwartz Enterprises. There was no connection to Joe Greene's short-lived, Los Angeles-based Coronet label of the same period, which was withdrawn after *Coronet* magazine objected to the use of the name (*see* Royal Record Company).

Dick Stabile served as Coronet's recording director. The first Coronet releases appeared in February 1946. The label specialized in bland background music. *Cash Box* reviews characterized various releases as "done right for the quieter locations as unobtrusive—but good—music" and "a good disk to place in dinner locations where they want their music strictly as a backdrop." One notable exception was a children's album by Al Trace & his Silly Symphonists, which one reviewer recommended for "kids from eight to eighty" (Coronet's own ads claimed "six to sixty"), which was later sold to Regent records. The Coronet [2] label was discontinued in early 1948.

CORONET RECORDS [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: Oakland, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Sound Recorders, Standard Transcriptions

Record Products: Coronet [3]

A short-lived jazz label launched in 1949 by trombonist Jack Sheedy. Sheedy's own Dixieland Jazz Band was featured on several releases, but the label is remembered primarily for having issued the first records by jazz pianist Dave Brubeck. The records had only limited West Coast distribution, with minimal marketing support. When Sheedy was unable to pay Max and Sol Weiss for their pressing services, the Weisses took over the masters, and Brubeck's recording contract, for their newly launched Fantasy Records.

CORONET RECORDS [III] (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 186-13 Jamaica Ave., Hollis, NY

Record Products: Coronet [4]

A short-lived pop label launched in early 1950 by Bill Baker, Norman Wieland, and Leonard Creo. The initial release, by the Glenn Brown Trio (who were said to have signed a one-year contract with Coronet), appeared in the February 1950 advance lists, but the company was last listed by *Billboard* in July. The Coronet name was later used for an unrelated label produced by Premier Albums.

COSMOPOLITAN RECORDS, INC. / COSMO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1947

Offices: 745 5th Ave., New York

Pressing: National Records (Phillipsburg, NJ), Twentieth Century Records (Los Angeles), probably other independent plants

Record Products: Cosmo

Founded in June 1945 as Cosmopolitan Records by Harry W. Bank, who had worked in the motion-picture and coin-machine industries. Morty Palitz, previously employed by the American Record Corporation and CBS's Columbia Records division, was hired as vice-president after the company had been operating for several months. Herb Hendler joined the company in late 1945 as director of artists and repertoire, after leaving a similar position at RCA Victor. Cosmo Records, Cosmopolitan Record's trade name, was often used in advertising. The records were widely distributed through agencies in more than two-dozen major U.S. cities, Canada, and the Philippines.

Henry H. Reichhold (chairman of the board of Reichhold Chemicals and president of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra) was a major investor in Cosmo, and he figured prominently in the label's early development and promotion. One of Reichhold's synthetic plastic resins, branded "Lifetime Cosmolite," was used in the pressings. Cosmo's claim that it owned a high-capacity East Coast pressing plant was later questioned in a shareholder's lawsuit, in the course of which it was revealed that National Records had manufactured most, if not all, of Cosmo's East Coast pressings. On the West Coast, the Twentieth Century Records plant in Los Angeles began pressing for Cosmo in March 1946, only to suspend service in September over unpaid invoices.

The first four Cosmo releases were shipped to distributors during the week of July 16, 1945. *Variety* reported that Cosmo was paying unusually high rates to its artists. By early 1946 the company had Tony Pastor, Hal McIntyre, Bobby Byrne, and Henry Busse under contract. In February of that year, band leader Larry Clinton signed a three-year contract as Cosmo's musical director, advisor, and conductor. Cosmo also produced children's records, most notably its hit *Tubby the Tuba* album. For a short time, Reichhold personally sponsored a network radio broadcast that promoted Cosmo's artists.

Cosmo's belated initial public stock offering, made on June 13, 1946, posted a 64% gain before selling out on its first day of trading. A rumor that Cosmo planned to buy out National Records proved to be untrue, but Cosmo's distributors did take over National's distribution during the summer of 1946. By then, Cosmo had distributors in more than two-dozen major cities, a fact it flaunted in a four-page advertisement in that year's *Record*

Retailing Yearbook. Behind the scenes, however, Cosmo's management was struggling with union problems and was late in paying its artists.

In September 1946, Cosmo was forced to suspend recording after being placed on the "unfair" list by New York Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians. At issue was Larry Clinton's claim that he had been unable to collect \$6,000 that Cosmopolitan owed him for arranging and conducting. The company appears to have suspended operations a short time later. In December, Herb Hendler filed a \$20,000 lawsuit against Cosmopolitan for breach of contract, in an attempt to recover the balance of his salary due under his contract with the company, plus unpaid commissions.

Reichhold, who reportedly was planning to launch his own label devoted to symphonic recordings, severed relations with Cosmo in March 1946. Harry Bank departed in late 1946, to launch Cardinal Records, and was replaced by Nick Wells. In early 1947, Louis G. Castellano was appointed trustee for the company, in an attempt to reorganize the operation and recoup a portion of the investors' losses. Castellano had planned to auction a half-million Cosmo discs on June 26, but the sale was canceled at the last minute. In late May 1947, the E. B. Marks publishing firm sued Bank and Cosmopolitan Records for unpaid royalties, one of four test cases brought by Marks to determine the effectiveness of suing both an offending company and its chief executive officer. Cosmopolitan filed for bankruptcy a month later, claiming \$1 million in liabilities, and "questionable" assets amounting to \$150,000.

On November 17, seventy stockholders sued Harry Bank and Cosmopolitan's officers and directors over what they claimed were fraudulent financial dealings. The lawsuit alleged that the defendants had entered into a conspiracy in June 1946 to sell 68,700 shares of Cosmopolitan stock at \$4 per share, knowing that the company was insolvent and facing a financial crisis. Further charges revolved around a falsified prospectus, which claimed that Cosmo held exclusive contracts with artists who had already left the company, and that it had a pressing plant capable of producing 100,000 discs per week.

Suits continued to be filed against Bank for several more years. In December 1947, music publisher E. B. Marks' suit to collect unpaid royalties was dismissed in the New York Supreme Court. Bank's defense was that he had little involvement in the firm he founded, claiming, "Although I was president of Cosmo, I was actually only an office boy in the firm." The claim was obviously ridiculous, and on December 4, 1948, Bank and six other former Cosmo officers were indicted under anti-fraud provisions of the Securities Act of 1933.

COUNTRY MUSIC COMPANY — See Dome Records, Inc.

COURTNEY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1950

Offices: 1425 E. Nadeau, Los Angeles (1945–1946); 1424 E. 78th Ave., Los Angeles (1946–mid-1950); 1140 E. 80th Ave., Los Angeles (from mid-1950)

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products (78s): Courtney

A pop and country-and-western label owned and operated by Howard M. Courtney. Courtney records, bearing the logo "Music You Feel," were first advertised in *Billboard* in February 1946. The company operated its own pressing plant, which also did work-for-hire for Rhapsody and other small California labels.

Courtney was introduced as a budget label, retailing for 50¢, but by mid-1946 the price had been raised to the standard 75¢. Intended largely for the jukebox trade, Courtney featured performers with no national following. Its early artist roster included country-music singer Doug Venable, soon to become the owner Western Records (*q.v.*) *Cash Box* reviewed Terry Fells' Courtney release of "Texas a la Mode," which it described as "good hill-billy [that] should draw the coin, especially from an all-male audience pretty much softened up by a nip or two."

In the later 1940s, Courtney reissued a few titles from the Rich Records catalog. The company moved to new offices during the summer of 1950, but no new releases are known to have been made after that year.

COVA RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1930–c. 1931

Offices: 2 S. Lafayette St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Stanley Recording Company

Record Products: Q. R. S. (final version); Checker [1], possibly other special-use discs

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Goodson (England)

Incorporated by S. M. Levy on February 10, 1930, the Cova Recording Corporation revived the dormant Q. R. S. label, which had formerly been produced by the Starr Piano Company (Gennett) under license from the Q. R. S. Company. An article in *Variety* for March 5, 1930, stated that recording for the Q. R. S. label was being handled by the Stanley Recording Company (*q.v.*). Cova's role appears to have been limited to administration and marketing (see Q. R. S. Company for details of this final version of the label).

A Cova-produced picture disc, pressed in clear plastic laminated over a color advertisement and probably dating to the early 1930s, is known to exist. Several of Cova's Q. R. S. masters were reissued in England, on flexible Goodson discs, in the early 1930s. The company was also affiliated with the Checker Music Corporation, which operated at the same address and marketed center-start 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm Checker discs for use with an inexpensive home movie projector.

COVERED WAGON RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 914 State St., Knoxville, TN

Record Products: Covered Wagon

A short-lived country-and-western label launched in 1949 by singer Chuck Rogers, who also supervised sessions for the Dixie Records label in the same year (see Grecol Enterprises). *Billboard* reported on July 2, 1949, that Rogers was preparing records for release, but nothing further was reported concerning Covered Wagon in the trade papers.

COWBOY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1950

Offices: 138 N. 12th St., Philadelphia (1946–mid-1948); 122 N. 12th St., Philadelphia (from mid-1948)

Pressing: Palda Record Company (from 7/1949), other independent plants

Record Products: Cowboy

Incorporated in Philadelphia on April 16, 1946, by James E. Myers (president) and Jack Howard (vice-president). An earlier Cowboy Records has been reported anecdotally, supposedly launched in 1942 by Capitol Records founders Johnny Mercer and Buddy De Sylva, but it is unclear whether that label was actually produced.

Cowboy specialized in country-and-western music despite its urban East Coast location, which was not disclosed on the labels, and which a *Billboard* reviewer jokingly referred to as "Philadelphia's hill country." Many of its artists were recruited from the ABC Network's "Hayloft Hoedown" cast, including Jack Day, Rusty Keefer, Shorty Long, Pee Wee Miller, the Murray Sisters, Elmer Newman, the Sleepy Hollow Ranch Gang, and Shorty Long's Santa Fe Rangers. *Billboard* praised the latter's initial Cowboy release in September 1946 as "instrumentally bright and breezy" and recommended it for jukebox play.

The Palda Record Company took over manufacturing and distribution of Cowboy records in July 1949. Palda reissued some earlier Cowboy recordings on its own label, but control of artists and repertoire remained with James Myers. The Palda relationship was an unhappy one. It was terminated in October 1949 at Cowboy's request, after which production was turned over to Rich-R'-Tone. Cowboy resumed recording new material in the same month, under Jack Howard's supervision. However, few new releases appeared before the label was discontinued at the end of 1950.

The Cowboy Record Company remains an actively registered Pennsylvania business, although it has no apparent involvement in record production.

COZY RECORDS / JOHN BAVA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1972

Offices: 112 Henry Ave., Davis, WV

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (disputed)

Record Products: Cozy

Founded in 1946 by John Bava, who termed himself a "coal miner, spare-time music publisher, and entertainers' manager." Bava had largely retired from mining and was operating Musical Melodies Publications from a converted chicken coop in rural Davis, West Virginia, at the time he launched Cozy Records. The label reportedly was named for the Cozy Rest, a motel and roadhouse in Grafton, West Virginia. An anecdotal report that Norman Kelly (the owner of Process Records in Franklin, Pennsylvania) was a business partner in Cozy has not been confirmed, and is disputed by some researchers. However, the two were well-acquainted.

Bava traveled to New York in late December 1946 to publicize the launch of Cozy Records, which was readying its first five discs for release. Cozy was a country-and-western label specializing in performers from the Allegheny mountain region of West Virginia. Although at least one recording artist has offered a detailed description of what he recalled as Bava's own studio in Davis, West Virginia, Bava's daughter has stated that her father did not own a studio, instead recording in local radio station studios or using recordings that were supplied by the artists themselves.

Cozy was a low-priced line, originally wholesaling for 30¢ and retailing for 49¢. Bava managed his own local sales, while general distribution was handled by Jack Swanson Publications (Syracuse, New York). Some of Bava's better-selling recordings were licensed by Decca's Coral subsidiary, under an agreement that provided some national exposure for Bava's artists while allowing him to continue selling their titles locally on the Cozy label. Beginning in the fall of 1948, Bava promoted his performers on "Country Cousins Jamboree" over radio station WHAR (Clarksburg, Pennsylvania), and on special Sunday-night broadcasts over WDNE (Elkins, West Virginia).

When the Cozy operation experienced financial problems in 1949, Bava sold off selected records at five for \$1 and gave away his self-published comic books and song books with each purchase. Business had improved by the early 1950s, when Bava introduced 45-rpm pressings. By 1959 the company had been renamed John Bava Records, and EPs had been added to the product line. Cozy Records were still being produced as late as 1972, although the final releases were offered only as eight-track tapes. Bava later pursued religious work and died in 1997.

CRESCENT MUSIC CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1946

Offices: 1221 Vine St., Hollywood, CA; 6420 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood (Jazz Man Record Shop)

Pressing: The Bishop Presses

Record Products: Crescent [3]

In late 1944 Nesuhi Ertegun and his brother Ahmet (who would later found Atlantic Records) launched their Crescent label in affiliation with the Jazz Man Record Shop, where Nesuhi was employed. The label was created to showcase a group of traditional New Orleans jazz musicians who were broadcasting as the All Star Jazz Group on Orson Welles' CBS network program. The group (which had been gathered by Jazz Man manager Marili Morden) was renamed Kid Ory's Creole Jazz Band for recording purposes.

Crescent's initial releases, by the Ory band, appeared in December 1944 and were sold by the Jazz Man shop, which did only minimal advertising in a few specialist publications. *Time* magazine reported that the first two records sold out almost immediately, as only 1,500 copies of each had been pressed. Hobbled by wartime shellac rationing, Crescent's progress stalled until November 1945, when two more Ory releases were finally announced. Record producer and Los Angeles *Daily News* columnist Ted Yerxa praised the records as "something Dixie music fans shouldn't miss." There would be four additional Ory releases, along with re-pressings of the earlier sold-out numbers, before the label was retired. A 1946 advertisement for pianist Henry Shayne claimed he had recorded for Crescent in Los Angeles, but if so, the records were never released on Crescent. Ertegun discontinued production of the label after purchasing the Jazz Man Record Shop.

CRESCENT RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Crescent [4]

Launched in early 1946 by Sammy Nate (managing director) and J. Eric Keller. The company advertised its first releases in March 1946, noting "Our specialty hill billy tunes." However, the initial offerings were pop songs, including the mildly suggestive "She Keeps Sittin' on It." A month later, Nate and Keller changed the name to Stork Record Company (*q.v.*), after discovering that Crescent was already in use by the Crescent Music Corporation.

CREST RECORDINGS — See Alco Research and Engineering Company

CRITERION LABORATORIES / CRITERION RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1920–1921

Offices: 1227 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Critona; masters for Clarion Record Company (used on Cardinal [1], Clarion [2], Cleartone, Melva, Meteor [1], Phantasie Concert Record, Royal [2]), Arto and related labels, probably other minor labels

Criterion Records was incorporated in New York in October 1920 by George W. Beadle (president), Arthur H. Cushman (vice-president and general manager), W. H. Gardner and F. H. Wite. Cushman had previously been employed as an Emerson sales representative, and Beadle had worked for Columbia before becoming a consulting engineer to the Emerson-financed Southern States Phonograph Company and United States Record Manufacturing Corporation operations. It was also reported that Emerson musical director Paul Bolognese would serve in that same capacity with Criterion, although evidence is lacking that he actually did so.

Criterion operated its own studio (as confirmed in band manager and booking agent Ed Kirkeby's diary) under the management of Alexander N. Pierman, assisted by George W. Slight. The company produced two distinct groups of masters — an early series made for its own Critona label, which showed no master numbers in the wax; and later, in the guise of Criterion Laboratories, a C- prefixed master series made for Jacques Kohner's Clarion Record Company, *q.v.*

Production of Critona records probably began in the early spring of 1921, at about the time that Beadle was granted U.S. Patent #1,372,992 for a record press. The initial Critona releases were first advertised and reported in *The Talking Machine World* for May 1921. A follow-up article in the June 1921 *TMW* confirmed that Critona's initial releases had first been offered for sale in May 1921 (not in 1920, as is erroneously stated in Brian Rust's *American Record Label Book*). Critona records were issued in several series, including piano solos, classical instrumental, operatic arias (a few of which were pressed from disguised Emerson masters), and popular songs.

Critona's roster featured some well-known performers (including pianists Phil Ohman and Jack Glogau, violinist Milan Lusk, and soprano Eva Leoni), but the records received little marketing support and apparently were poor sellers. They last appeared in *TMW*'s July 1921 advance lists, as August releases. In the latter month, retail prices were reduced from the original 85¢ (popular) and \$1 (operatic and classical) to a uniform 50¢.

During the spring of 1921, the Criterion studio began producing a separate series of C- prefixed masters for the newly launched Clarion Record Company, which were widely issued on the company's flagship Clarion label as well as Cardinal, Cleartone, and other minor brands. Among them were the first two recordings by Ethel Waters, which were allocated to the Cardinal label. Waters' Cardinal record was released in May 1921, by which time she had signed with Black Swan.

Although Criterion apparently did a passable business supplying Clarion and other minor labels, it was experiencing financial difficulties by November 1921, when *TMW* publisher Edward Lyman Bill filed suit to recover \$333 in unpaid advertising invoices. Several weeks later, it was discovered that Criterion had abandoned its offices, leaving no forwarding address. With its source of masters severed, the Clarion Record Company closed in early 1922.

On February 22, 1922, three of its creditors filed a petition in bankruptcy against Criterion. Among them was violinist Milan Lusk, who had not been paid for his recordings. Following the company's closure, some of its masters were leased to Arto and other minor labels, apparently by Earle W. Jones, whose characteristic handwritten "J" was added to many of the stampers.

Beadle later assigned his record press patent to Columbia. On June 1, 1927, he was killed after crashing his car on Riverside Drive in New York. He reportedly had been driving at seventy miles per hour, and two pints of whiskey were found in his coat pocket.

CRO-MART RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – 1948

Offices: San Antonio, TX

Record Products: CroMart

An apparently short-lived venture of H. M. Crowe and S. W. (Buster) Martin, owners of the Crowe-Martin Distributing Company, a Texas record distributor (*see next entry*). The Cro-Mart name appeared in two forms on the labels, with and without a hyphen.

The first CroMart release (#100) was by traditional country fiddler Elmo Newcomer, "The Pipe Creek Kid," who had recorded the same pieces for the Library of Congress' Archive of American Folk Song project in 1939. A separate 5000 series seems to have been reserved for polka recordings by Louie & his Old Time Band, some of which were later reissued on the Globe [3] and Humming Bird labels.

CROWE-MARTIN DISTRIBUTING COMPANY

A Texas record distributor specializing in the jukebox trade, Crowe-Martin owes its inclusion here to its ownership of the CroMart label (*see previous entry*) as well as its close affiliation with several of the independent labels it handled (including Globe [3] and Gulf), for which its sometimes managed recording sessions or assisted with artist acquisitions. Owned and operated by H. M. Crowe and S. W. (Buster) Martin, the company maintained offices in Houston and San Antonio. The S. W. Martin Distributing Company, operating at the same San Antonio address as Crowe-Martin, produced and distributed the Groovy and Martin labels in the early 1950s.

CROWN RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1930 – 1933

Offices: 10 W. 20th St., New York (Plaza Music Company)

Original-Master Source(s): Studio at 122 5th Ave., New York (confirmed, 1930); own studio in former Edison "factory," address not given (claimed but not confirmed, from c. 1/1931)

Pressing: Own plant (reportedly former Edison facility, 1930–1/1932); RCA-Victor (2/1932–8/1933)

Record Products: Crown [3], Gem [1], Homestead

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Angelus, Lyric (Australia)

A subsidiary of the Plaza Music Company, the Crown Record Company was incorporated by several Plaza executives, including Sol Kronberg and Herman Germain, on October 25, 1930. Plaza, which had served as the sales and marketing affiliate of the Regal Record Company, had not been included in the 1929 merger of Regal, Cameo, and the Scranton Button Works that created the American Record Corporation. As a result, Plaza lost its flagship Banner label and access to the Regal masters and production facilities, effectively putting the company out of the record business. The new company's name was taken from that of the Crown Music Company, a musical merchandise jobber that Plaza purchased in the summer of 1930.

Advertised as "Two Hits for a Bit" and retailing for 25¢, Crown records were priced to compete in the cut-rate market that the Plaza-Regal group had exploited so successfully in the 1920s. Distribution was handled by Plaza, which already had a wide network of dealers in place. The records, along with a line of Crown radios, were introduced at an open house hosted by Plaza on November 28, 1930. The new label was not related to the Crown label of Canada, a Compo Company product that employed a somewhat similar label design and often used Regal masters.

Band manager Ed Kirkeby's payroll book confirms that Crown was recording at 122 Fifth Avenue in late November 1930. Although this was the same address as Grey Gull's studio, it is not conclusive evidence that Crown acquired Grey Gull's assets, as has been suggested. The address was that of a large multi-tenant building that apparently catered to recording facilities. At that time, it also housed the Sound Equipment Company and the Chromotone Film Studios, both of which advertised custom disc-recording services, and neither of which appears to have been connected with Grey Gull or Crown.

By January 1931, Crown was advertising that its records were "electrically recorded and made in the former Edison record factory, which has been purchased by the Crown Record Company, and...is equipped with the finest and latest recording equipment in the country." If correct, this negates a questionable but widely circulated theory that Crown purchased Grey Gull's assets. The records themselves do not suggest any connection with Grey Gull. None are known to have used Grey Gull masters, and Crown's sound quality, although not the best, was markedly superior to Grey Gull's from the start.

Crown's first recording sessions probably were held in late October 1930, soon after the company's incorporation. Kronberg oversaw recording operations, with former Plaza-ARC musical director Adrian Schubert serving as studio conductor. Schubert's influence is readily apparent in Crown's reliance on inexpensive freelance bands and studio singers, including some he had overused during his tenure with Plaza-ARC. He even revived some of the old Plaza-group pseudonyms to disguise them.

Crown recorded most of its own masters, but it licensed some material from the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount) for its few race-record releases, including recordings made as early as 1927. The Paramount recordings were assigned false master numbers within Crown's own series. In turn, NYRL issued a few Crown masters on its Broadway label. The company took over production of Homestead from the American Record Corporation around June 1931 and also produced the short-lived Gem label, but sales of both brands appear to have been meager.

After pressing at its own plant for approximately two years, Crown contracted its manufacturing to the RCA Victor plant in February 1932, under Eli Oberstein's supervision. RCA's Crown production cards, which survive in the Sony archives (New York), confirm that the company's role did not extend beyond making pressings from the masters that Crown supplied. RCA was not involved in any way in the recording or marketing of Crown records, nor were masters ever exchanged between the two companies.

In the spring of 1932, Crown lost out to RCA in a bid to produce 20¢ discs for the Woolworth stores. By then, some dealers were selling older Crown releases for as little as 10¢ each, or three for 25¢. Fine-groove, longer-playing Crown discs were introduced in 1933, but little was done to promote them, and they did little if anything to reverse Crown's downward spiral. The number of new Crown releases dwindled steadily throughout the spring and summer of 1933, and the company finally discontinued recording in August. The last Crown record documented in the RCA production files (#3533) was scheduled as a September 1933 release.

The Crown Record Company appears to have gone dormant by December 18, 1933, when it made an assignment to the New York Credit Men's Association. Eli Oberstein later acquired rights to the Crown recordings through unknown but apparently legal means. It is possible that he purchased the metal parts from RCA, which probably became their owner-by-default following Crown's bankruptcy. Unfortunately, RCA's business files, which might reveal how Oberstein obtained the material, are not available for public inspection or disclosure. During 1939–1940, Oberstein's United States Record Corporation reissued dubbings of numerous Crown recordings on the Varsity label, often under colorful pseudonyms.

CROWN RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1953

Offices: Hollywood, CA (before 8/1949); 1520 N. Gower, Los Angeles (8/1950–1953)

Original-Master Source(s): Universal Recorders (Hollywood), probably other independent studios

Record Products: Crown [6]

Launched in early-to-mid 1949 by Los Angeles disc jockey Dick King, and reportedly inactive by August 1949. King revived the operation in July 1950, in partnership with

Leonard Edwards (vice-president) and S. M. Cannell (secretary-treasurer). The reorganized company moved into new offices that it shared with the American Federation of Labor's Models Union.

Crown's first signing was the Esquire Trio. Most of the label's output consisted of middle-of-the-road pop fare, with a smattering of commercialized country-and-western material. Its last confirmed releases were made in the summer of 1953. There was no connection to Jules and Saul Bihari's Crown label, which was launched as a budget-priced line in December 1953, nor to any of the other Crown labels covered in this work.

CROWN RECORDS [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1946

Offices: New York

Record Products: Crown [4]

Launched in late 1945 by Louis Robert (Lou) Chudd (*née* Louis Chudnofsky). Chudd was born to Russian Jewish immigrants in Toronto, Canada, and was raised in Harlem. In 1934 he was hired as an advertising salesman by the National Broadcasting Corporation in New York, where he worked as a promoter for Benny Goodman, Xavier Cugat, and other popular band leaders before moving to NBC's Los Angeles office. During World War II he worked as a producer for the Office of War Information. He was granted U.S. citizenship in 1943.

Crown recording sessions began in December 1945, and the initial releases were advertised in March 1946. The label was devoted exclusively to jazz, with a small but select artist roster that included Mildred Bailey, Red Norvo's Music, and John Kirby's Orchestra with Sarah Vaughan. Crown's Mildred Bailey–Red Norvo album was praised in a March 1946 *Billboard* review as "overflowing with infectious rhythmic lyricism." However, the records had very limited distribution, and marketing was virtually non-existent. They were sold by Rabson's in New York (which did most of what little advertising there was for the records) and other specialty stores.

In June 1946 Chudd moved to Los Angeles, where he launched the more successful Imperial Records (*see* Imperial Record Company [III]). Crown remained in operation, reportedly under different ownership, until at least September 1946, when its last recording session was held. In the meantime, Meyer Rabson had begun using the Crown name for his unrelated New York operation (*see* Crown Records [II]).

CROWN RECORDS [INC.] [III] (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 107 W. 52nd St., New York

Record Products: Crown [7]

A short-lived venture launched in 1946 by Meyer Rabson, the owner of Rabson's Music Shop. M. R. Weinberg served as secretary and Jack Steiner as treasurer. Production appears to have been discontinued after several releases. The Crown name was reused in 1947 by Nicholas Wells' unrelated operation (*see next entry*).

CROWN RECORDS [INC.] [III] / CROWN RECORDING CORPORATION / (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 8 E. 41st St., New York (1947 – 1/1949)

Original-Master Source(s): International Recording Company, probably other independent studios

Record Products: Crown [5]

Launched in early 1947 by Nicholas Wells, formerly of Cosmopolitan Records. The Crown Records name had recently been abandoned by Lou Chudd (*see* Crown Records [I]) and Meyer Rabson (*see previous entry*).

Crown's earliest releases were announced in February 1947. Wells assembled a roster of popular nightclub and radio personalities that included Morey Amsterdam, Arthur Godfrey, Jerry Sellers, and the Harry Horlick and Enoch Light orchestras. There was also a Latino dance series that featured Ramón Monchito's Orchestra. In October 1947, following the signing of Ruby Hill, promotions manager Irving Falk announced that the company

would "concentrate heavily" on the race and folk markets, but Crown remained largely a conventional pop label.

Arthur Godfrey signed with Crown on April 9, 1947. His Crown offerings included two sides he had recorded on his own a year earlier, as part of an album he had planned to market to amusement parks. It was released in August, to good reviews, but Godfrey never received the royalties he was due. He left the label for Columbia in December 1947 and in May 1948 sued Crown for breach of contract. After Crown officials failed to offer a defense, a New York federal court judge ordered that the company release Godfrey from his contract, return his masters, discontinue sales of his records, and pay him \$20,000 in damages, plus royalties. Crown Records appears to have suspended operations by January 1949, the last month in which it was listed in *Billboard's* label directory.

The Crown name was subsequently used for unrelated labels owned by Dick King (*see* Crown Record Corporation), and by Jules and Saul Bihari (for a budget-priced line launched in December 1953, which remained in production into 1972).

CRYSTAL RECORD STUDIO (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1954

Offices and Master Source(s): 2356 Dorris Place, Los Angeles (to early 1950s); 2561 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles (1950s)

Pressing: Own plant (Los Angeles)

Record Products: Crystal [2], Doris (unconfirmed); private and custom recordings

Owned and operated by Henry Schelb, the Crystal Record Studio originally offered custom recording and pressing services to small independent labels in the Los Angeles area. The company was first listed in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook*. A Doris Record Company was also listed at the same address, although neither its existence nor a connection to Schelb have yet been established.

In early 1948, Schelb announced that he would launch his own label, drawing on a backlog of three-hundred masters he had been stockpiling in advance of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban. Crystal specialized in pop and country-and-western fare, with an artist roster that included Johnny Bryant, Eddie Dean, Jad Dees, Smoky Smith, the Frontiersmen, and the Three Broome Brothers. Schelb composed many of the songs that appeared on Crystal. Some others were composed by one of Schelb's discoveries, Gene Bohnen, who was better-known as a prize-winning soap sculptor. Schelb also performed as a pipe-organ soloist or accompanist on a few sides, which generally were not well-received by reviewers. The last new releases appeared in early 1954. The Crystal name was reused for unrelated Chicago- and Memphis-based labels in the later 1950s.

CRYSTAL TONE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1950

Offices: 120 Boylston St., Boston (1947–early 1948); 1182 Columbus Ave., Boston (early–mid 1948); 1206 Tremont St., Boston (from late 1948)

Record Products: Crystal Tone, Solitaire

Launched by Manny Kopelman in the spring of 1947, as a subsidiary of his State Record Distributors. Crystal Tone records (hyphenated in some advertisements and news reports, but not on the record labels) initially were distributed only locally, but the company's first *Billboard* advertisement, in November 1947, stated that the records were ready for national distribution.

Crystal Tone's first release, by the Hy-Lo Trio, appeared in June 1947. Early offerings were largely pop and comedy material by locally available talent, with the Sabby Lewis Band an apparent favorite. Koppelman later signed a few nationally known artists, including Al Donahue's Orchestra in the summer of 1948, but did little national advertising. The companion Solitaire label, launched in July 1949, attracted even less attention than Crystal Tone. A *Cash Box* review of Solitaire's first release ("Wunderbar," by Judy Kane and Chris O'Brien) predicted the record "may catch on," which it apparently did not.

In late 1948, Koppelman arranged to have Crystal Tone records pressed and distributed in Canada by Charles Darwyn's Toronto-based Monogram Records/Ambassador Music

Company conglomerate. In early 1950 Koppelman agreed to give London Records the first option on any masters he produced. The first to be picked up by London, in March, were two sides by the Hi-Lo Trio, followed in September by most of the Sabby Lewis masters, along with a few titles from the Solitaire catalog. The company appears to have suspended operations by the end of 1950.

CRYSTALETTE RECORDS OF CALIFORNIA / CRYSTALETTE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1963

Offices: 1521 W. Anaheim St., Long Beach, CA (1948–1949); 5800 E. 2nd St., Long Beach (1949–mid-1953); 601 E. 4th St., Santa Ana, CA (mid-1953–1954); 5864 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA (Crystalette Records, Inc., from 1954)

Record Products: Crystalette

Founded in late 1948 by Warren C. Coleman, who was also secretary-treasurer of the Crystal Music Company, Inc., a dealer radios and in coin-operated devices. Officers at founding included Lyman G. Berg (president), Carl F. Burns (vice-president), and Coleman (secretary-treasurer). Band leaders Lloyd Schaffer and Carl Hoff served as musical director and general manager, respectively.

The first Crystalette releases were announced in early 1949. In March of that year, Coleman purchased a large number of masters from the defunct Lamplighter label at bankruptcy auction, including material by Charlie Ventura, Claude Trenier, several jazz combos that he renamed the Crystalette All Stars, and Kay Starr's much-contested masters. Singer Mae Williams, signed in March 1950, had several minor jukebox hits for the label. In 1953 *Billboard* reported that Coleman and Burns were on a nationwide tour to promote singer Bob London, who would turn out to be their last major signing.

Crystalette suspended operations at the end of 1953, and in early 1954 Hoff and Schaffer teamed to launch Forecast Records. By then, Carl Burns had acquired control of the company and reorganized it as Crystalette Records, Inc., which apparently did little more than sell off old inventory for the next two years. In early 1956, Burns sold the original Crystalette catalog to Leonard Chess, of Chess Records, then relaunched the label, using new material and a different label design. The revived company survived into 1963, thanks largely to the popularity of its Dodi Stevens releases, many of which were also licensed to the Dot label for national distribution.

CUDAHY RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 2450 N. Terrace Ave., Milwaukee

Pressing: Perfection Plastic Corporation (1948)

Record Products: Chord Records; Cudahy Records (reported but not confirmed)

Launched in July 1947 by Michael J. (Mike) Cudahy, a Milwaukee sound engineer and jazz enthusiast. Henry V. Quarles served as recording director. Dick Stern, hired as vice-president in October 1947, resigned three months later. Cudahy's recording studio was in the basement of his home.

The Chord label was among the earliest to use the phrase, "High-Fidelity." It was conceived as a showcase for Milwaukee-area jazz artists, including Eddie Getz, the Sheboblou Trio, and the Four Steps of Jive. However, Cudahy quickly branched into popular and novelty fare, including a remake by Joe Gumin's Orchestra of its multilingual rendition of "Jingle Bells," which had been a minor hit for Columbia in the early 1930s. "The Mystery Disk," issued in September 1947, featured vocal and instrumental versions of the same tune on two parallel tracks.

In the summer of 1948, Cudahy took a job with Perfection Plastics in California, which briefly took over production of the Chord label, then discontinued it. Cudahy later founded and was the CEO of Marquette Electronics, a medical electronics company that was acquired by General Electric in 1998, and became a noted philanthropist. The Chord name was used again, beginning in the early 1950s, for several unrelated labels.

JOHN CURRIE ENTERPRISES (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: San Antonio, TX

Record Products: Currie

A country-and-western label launched by San Antonio singer, songwriter, and music publisher John Currie in the summer of 1949. Currie's artists, many of whom were recruited from local radio stations, included the Texas Tophands (KABC–San Antonio), Smiley Whitley's Texans (KONO–San Antonio), the Lone Star Playboys (WACO–Waco), and Jimmie Revard and his Oklahoma Playboys (KMAC–San Antonio). The latter had recently been let go by RCA Victor.

Currie lost several of his most popular artists by the end of 1949, including Red River Dave McEnery (to M-G-M), Cliff Warren (to Decca), and the Texas Tophands (who along with Currie went on to launch Everstate Records, *q.v.*). Currie's output diminished in the early 1950s, and his label reportedly was inactive by 1953. He went on to launch Enterprise Records (unrelated to two earlier companies of the same name), which after a period of inactivity was last heard from in 1958.

CURRIER RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1950

Offices: Frankfort, KY; 1350 E. 61st St., Chicago (M & S Distributors)

Original-Master Source(s): WAVE studio (Louisville, KY), probably other independent studios

Pressing: Unspecified New Jersey plant

Record Products: Contract; possibly masters for Radio

Launched in 1946 by Milton Salstone (president of M & S Distributors, Chicago), in partnership with Clarence H. Fleming (general manager of radio station WFKY, Frankfort, Kentucky) and Marshall Peace. The company was chartered in Frankfort on February 10, 1947, by which time production was already under way. Although Currier was based in Frankfort, the mailing address for its Contract label was that of M & S in Chicago, which handled marketing and distribution of the records.

Targeted largely to the jukebox trade, the Contract label featured pop and country-and-western artists from the Louisville area. It was first mentioned in November 1946, when Bob Reid, a fireman turned WHAS staff singer, was signed to record a four-disc Christmas album accompanied by local musicians. The *Louisville Courier-Journal* reported that Contract would mount a major national advertising campaign for the album, which never materialized. The masters were later sold to Bullet Records.

By 1947 Contract was focusing largely on country-and-western material. Currier might have produced the masters for John Lair's Radio label (*see* Ekko Recording Corporation), some of which were also issued on Contract with the notation, "A Renfro Valley Artist." The last confirmed Contract release, by a group fronted by Louisville singer and disc jockey Randy Atcher, appeared c. 1950.

CYCLONE RECORDS, INC. / ANTILLIAN MUSIC FEATURES (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1948

Offices: 1560 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Cyclone

Launched in January 1947 by theatrical producer Adolph Thenstead (president) and calypso singer Samuel L. (Sam) Manning (vice-president and general manager). The pair also owned Antillian Music Features, Inc., which the labels credit as Cyclone's manufacturer. Antillian was producing a touring calypso revue at the time, which after some local try-outs made its Philadelphia debut in October 1947 as "Calypso Swing." The show was a failure; *Variety* reported that many in the audience walked out early in the second act.

Cash Box announced Cyclone's launch in May 1947. Ken Macomber, the calypso revue's musical director, served in the same capacity for Cyclone Records. The initial Cyclone releases, advertised in same month, featured some commercialized calypso titles that a *Billboard* reviewer dismissed as "too synthetic to make for any coin count." Cyclone also offered some conventional pop material, including releases by Mae West (who *Billboard* reported had signed a five-year contract with the company), Buck and Bubbles, Mantan

Moreland (of the "Charlie Chan" movies), and veteran vaudeville blues singer Mary Stafford. *Cash Box* reported that Manning planned to set up Cyclone distribution offices across the nation, but sales appear to have been meager, and the company apparently did not survive beyond 1948. It Mae West recordings later appeared on the obscure Mezzo Tone label, in 78- and 45-rpm formats.

Manning went on to rework "Calypso Swing" as "Caribbean Carnival," a Broadway production touted as "America's first calypso revue." It opened in New York's International Theater on December 5, 1947, and closed after eleven performances, having received little better response than its predecessor.

— D —

"D AND D" RECORDS — See White Church Recording Company

DAGGETT STUDIO

"Studio" in this case referred not to a recording facility, but to a New York speech-training studio operated by Windsor P. Daggett, a noted instructor and a *Billboard* columnist from 1921 through 1926. Spoken Word records, introduced in 1924 in conjunction with Daggett's "Spoken Word Course with Phonographic Records and Phonetic Script," employed E. J. Ballantine, Walter Hampden, and other notable actors, but as instructional records, they are beyond the scope of this work.

JOHN F. DAHL RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1936–1937

Offices: 3309 N. 58th St., Omaha, NE (home address)

Pressing: Possibly Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Midnight

John F. Dahl owned a large vending-machine and jukebox business covering eastern Nebraska. In 1941, he served as a key witness in a criminal case brought against a maker of "slug" coins.

Dahl's apparently short-lived Midnight label featured Deb Lyon and his Cubs (successor to Paul Specht's Orchestra) and Marie Dupre (a singer with Johnny Maitland's Orchestra in Cincinnati). Both were active in Ohio in the later 1930s, but no mention of them has been found in the Nebraska newspapers of the period, nor has any advertising been found for the Dahl Recording Recording Company or Midnight Records.

DAMON RECORDING STUDIOS, INC. / DAMON TRANSCRIPTION LABORATORY AND SOUND SERVICE (Discs)

Record Production: 1943 – 1973

Offices: 1221 Baltimore Ave., Kansas City, MO; 115–117 W. 14th St., Kansas City (from mid-1946)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (17 W. 14th St., Kansas City)

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing, Gennett, RCA Custom Products, Signature

Record Products (78): Damon; Triumph [3]; masters for Period and probably others; transcriptions and custom recordings for numerous clients

Owned and operated by Victor L. (Vic) Damon (not to be confused with the singer Vic Damone). In addition to operating his own studio, Damon worked for a time as an engineer at Kansas City radio station WHB.

The Damon Transcription Laboratory was founded in 1933 but is not known to have produced recordings for the consumer market. In the early 1940s, the company was renamed the Damon Recording Studios. The earliest entries in Damon's recording ledger (which is archived in the Miller Nichols Library at the University of Missouri–Kansas City) are from 1943 and show Damon continuing to specialize in transcription and custom-recording work. His clients at various times included Capitol, Decca, Embassy, Muzak, the Nazarene Radio League, Broadcasters Guild, Midland Broadcasting Company, and numerous local businesses and organizations. During the summer of 1946, Damon took over an adjacent building and opened a new studio, which was floated on rubber blocks to isolate it from

vibration. He began recording audition discs by local artists, including Julia Lee, which he dispatched to Capitol and other labels on speculation.

Damon launched his own label in late 1947 and almost immediately had a surprise national hit with Jon and Sondra Steele's "My Happiness." The reason for this unremarkable record's popularity remains a mystery (*Detroit Free Press* critic Jim Wilson aptly commented that the couple possessed "a charm so elusive that I still haven't been able to find it"), but sales reportedly surpassed a million copies in September 1948. It won *Cash Box*'s Best Record of the Year award, and temporarily boosted Damon to the number-five spot (tied with Victor) on *Billboard*'s list of labels most played by disc jockeys.

The reverse, "They All Recorded to Beat the Band," was a commentary on the flurry of recording activity that had taken place in late 1947, in advance of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban. (The composers later sued the Harry Fox agency after they failed to receive payment for sale of the recording rights to Damon.) Unfortunately for Damon, the Steeles were never able to repeat the success of "My Happiness." Sales of their second release appear to have stalled after a promising start, and their subsequent releases attracted little attention.

The Cecille Music Company (New York) took over national distribution of Damon records in 1948, which passed to Exclusive Records in the spring of 1949. At that time, Damon had only fifteen records on the market, one of which ("Raspa"/"La Souviennne") used masters purchased directly from band leader Harl Smith.

Victor Damon also briefly produced the Triumph label for the probably fictitious Triumph Record Company of Kansas City. He continued to produce the Damon label into the early 1950s, still relying largely on locally available talent. LPs, including some classical releases, were introduced in late 1950. The last known advertisements for the label appeared in 1954, the same year in which Damon added television soundtrack production to his list of services. He was also instrumental in developing the spring reverberation unit and various improvements to disc-mastering equipment in the early 1950s.

The studio continued to make custom recordings in a variety of formats until May 17, 1973, the final date shown in Damon's recording ledger. The business was later purchased by Chuck Chapman, a former Damon employee, who launched Chapman Recording and Mastering in Kansas City. Canadian-based Damon Records, founded in 1969, is unrelated to the original Damon operation.

DANA RECORDS, INC. / DANA MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945–1954

Offices: 516 5th Ave., New York (from late 1946); 286 5th Ave. and 115 W. 45th St., New York (late 1947–8/1950); 120–33 8th Ave., Kew Gardens, Long Island, New York (from 8/1950)

Original-Master Source(s): International Recording Company, other independent studios

Pressing: Connecticut Record Manufacturing Company (Hartford), probably other independent plants

Record Products (78): Dana, Broadway [3]; Dana Song-Story Series (children's)

Founded by Walter Dana (*née* Wladyslaw Danilowski) in 1945, Dana Records specialized in polkas and other material for the Polish-American market. A native of Poland, Dana became director of the light-music department for Warsaw's Federal Radio Network in 1939, and he also served as director of that city's Tip-Top Theatre. He fled Poland for the United States in 1940, initially settling in Detroit. A skilled pianist and composer, he recorded for Harmonia and RCA Victor before launching his own company.

Dana Records were first advertised in late 1946. From the start, its artists were influential in broadening the appeal of the Eastern European polka, updating the traditional instrumentation, increasing tempos, and adding English vocals and other more modern elements. The company had a surprise hit in 1948 with "Helen's Polka," which *Cash Box* reported had sold 300,000 copies within several months, and which *Billboard* credited with "starting the ball rolling on 'modern polka' stuff."

"Helen's Polka" brought the label national attention, garnered the company four new distributors, and encouraged Walter Dana to expand into the pop market. In early 1949 he declared that his label would place special emphasis "on tunes with a continental flavor that have proved themselves abroad and which are ripe for introducing in this country." Dana also entered the children's market in June 1948 with a specially

commissioned series composed by Albert Gamse, who had previously been responsible for Mercury's children's series.

In late 1948, Dana purchased the exclusive U.S., Argentinian, and Brazilian distribution rights to Syrena's Polish catalog from Wloeziemierz Falencki. In the early 1950s, he acquired artists from several labels that had begun to phase-out their production of records for the ethnic markets. Jukebox operators reported some success with his adaptations of current pop hits, with the lyrics sung in Polish. Broadway Records, an auxiliary line, was launched in 1950, initially as a pop label. An attempt to expand into the Latin American market was unsuccessful, and Broadway was quietly dropped after failing to make any impact.

Dana began producing plastic 78-rpm pressings in 1949. LPs were introduced in November of that year, beginning with a compilation of previously released polka recordings, and 45s followed in early 1950. The company had a minor hit at that time with Dana's "Wine Polka," thanks to a promotional tie-in with the Manischewitz Wine Corporation, which supplied the bottles of wine that were given to disc jockeys along with the records.

In August 1950, the company's offices and warehouse were moved to Long Island, New York, near Walter Dana's home, reportedly because an unspecified illness made it difficult for him to commute to Manhattan. Decca's Coral subsidiary took over midwestern distribution of Dana records in 1952, and the last advertising produced under Walter Dana's ownership appeared during the summer of 1953. In 1954 Dana sold the company to Jerry Blaine's Jay-Gee Records (Jubilee), which continued to use the Dana brand as a trade name. Dana Music Company, the affiliated music-publishing company, was not included in the sale and remained under Walter Dana's control until his death. In March 1971, Blaine sold Dana Records to Roulette, which reported that it planned to have repackaged Dana albums on the market within two months.

Walter Dana died on March 4, 2000, at the age of ninety-seven. The ownership of Dana's masters (some of which supposedly were destroyed in a 1990s warehouse fire) was unclear at the time of his death, according to his *Billboard* obituary.

DANCELAND RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1950

Offices: 313 E. Jefferson, Detroit (to early 1949); 8346 Linwood Ave., Detroit (from early 1949)

Record Products: Danceland

Founded in the autumn of 1948 by Morry R. Kaplan, a Michigan distributor of Black and White, King, and other independent labels. Kaplan had been a sales representative for King and several other labels before launching his own distribution company, Kaplan Music Sales, in mid-1947. He had planned to name his label Encore, but substituted Danceland after discovering that there was already another Encore label (but apparently being unaware that it had already been discontinued). *Billboard* belatedly announced the company's launch in November 1948, a month after Danceland made its initial release.

Danceland's output included several sides by Candy Johnson and his Peppermint sticks, licensed from the Detroit-based Alben Record Company, with alternate titles substituted. Other releases, also using local talent, appear to have been original to Danceland. A Canadian pressing and distribution deal was signed with Charles Darwyn's Toronto-based Monogram Records/Ambassador Music Company conglomerate in late 1948. The Danceland label appears to have gone dormant after 1950, although the company was still listed in *Billboard*'s manufacturer directory as late as March 1952. The label was reactivated in 1960 by Kaplan's son, Sammy.

DANCE-TONE RECORD COMPANY / DANCE-TONE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1950

Offices: Medford and Revere, MA

Record Products: Dance-Tone

Launched in June 1947 by Fred H. Freeman, owner of the Bal-a-Roue Rollerway in Medford, Massachusetts. Arthur Freeman, the company's sales manager and field representative, set up distributors in Pittsburgh and Cincinnati in early 1949, then expanded into the Midwest in early summer. Early releases consisted largely of Hammond organ solos, which

were marketed to skating-rink operators. By the later 1940s, the company was also offering conventional pop fare by singer Gloria Carroll and other apparently local artists.

BEBE DANIELS, INC. — See Castle Record Company

DANSRITE RECORD COMPANY — See B.J. Exploitation Company

DAVIS & SCHWEGLER, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1939 – c. 1940

Offices: 1009 W. 7th St., Los Angeles; 11 W. 42nd St., New York (branch)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (Los Angeles)

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: D & S; transcriptions

Launched in 1939, primarily as a transcription producer. Executives included Paul Schwegler (president), Herman H. Aronson (vice-president), Henry Hartman (vice-president in charge of production), and Kenneth C. Davis (secretary-treasurer). The company was affiliated with Robert F. Warner & Associates, whose office was listed as its New York branch.

Davis & Schwegler operated a transcription library service that released sixty-four new selections monthly, in 33 1/3-rpm format. Although the company did not advertise commercial recording services, it briefly produced its own D & S label, which stated that the records were for home use only. Recordings from Nat (King) Cole's first group session, held in Los Angeles in 1939 and credited to the King Cole Swingsters, appeared on D & S, with a label credit to the NBC network. There was also a series of D & S records, featuring Hammond organist Jeff Gedgill, that were intended for skating-rink use.

Davis & Schwegler reportedly filed for bankruptcy after two years of operation. The company was last listed in *Variety*'s 1940–1941 directory.

DAVIS, JOSEPH M. (JOE) (Discs)

Beacon Record Company / Celebrity Records / Joe Davis Record Company / Davis Record Corporation / Jay-Dee Records

Record Production: 1942 – 1970s

Offices: Brill Building (1619 Broadway), New York (1942–1943; and from 1948); 331 W. 51st St., New York (1943–1948)

Original-Master Source(s): Associated, Empire Broadcasting, Mastertone, Muzak, RCA (New York), and WOR studios, probably others on occasion

Pressing: Scranton Record Company (1942–1944), Gennett plant (1944–early 1946); M-G-M Bloomfield plant (from 1946); probably others

Record Products: Beacon, Celebrity, Davis, Gennett [II], Jay Dee, Joe Davis, Song Bird; custom, private, and promotional labels

Joseph M. (Joe) Davis, a prominent New York songwriter, performer, and music publisher, operated under a succession of corporate identities after re-entering the recording business in the early 1940s, covering what was essentially a single, self-owned operation. (His last significant involvement with recording had been his affiliation with the Ajax Record Company, which closed in 1925.)

The Beacon Record Company, launched in 1942, marked Davis' return to the record business. His Beacon trademark application, filed on January 1, 1943, claimed use of the name on records since May 22, 1942, and the first four Beacon releases were announced in June. Davis at first marketed Beacon records primarily for radio and jukebox use, promoting them directly to disc jockeys and jukebox distributors. During the first American Federation of Musicians recording ban, Davis augmented his catalog with material from Eli Oberstein's defunct Varsity label (including dubbings of decade-old Crown recordings), which he licensed through the Record Trust Syndicate.

Production initially was hobbled by wartime shellac shortages. Davis remedied that problem in September 1944, when he teamed with Harry Gennett to launch a short-lived revival of the Gennett label. Arthur Connor, Gennett's veteran plant supervisor, was retained as general manager of the new venture. The partnership gave Davis access to Gennett's unused shellac ration, Decca having recently been evicted from the Gennett plant for failing

to make minimum required payments. Davis, who would serve as recording manager and exclusive sales distributor, loaned Harry Gennett \$15,000, with Gennett's equipment posted as collateral, and transferred his pressing work from the Scranton Record Company to the Gennett plant. Davis would supply masters to the revived Gennett label under a royalty agreement.

The Gennett revival generated some excitement among collectors of vintage jazz and blues recordings, who were soon disappointed. Although the new Gennett discs initially were packaged in surplus 1920s Electrobeam sleeves, any resemblance to the original Gennett products ended there. There would be no reissues of the old Gennett and Champion gems (the best of which had earlier been licensed by Decca), nor did Davis' new offerings approach those in terms of musical interest. The new Gennett label drew largely on Davis' Beacon masters, including some previously unissued sides by college-educated blues singer Gabriel Brown that garnered only a lukewarm response.

Relations between Davis and Gennett were contentious from the start. The joint venture was finally terminated by court order in July 1946, with Davis ordered to pay Gennett \$18,654 for pressing services, and Gennett ordered to return Davis' pressings, masters, and metal parts. Davis' subsequent offer to purchase the Gennett plant was rejected.

During his association with Gennett, Davis had continued to produce his own Beacon and Celebrity labels (the latter having been introduced in May 1944 as a \$1 line featuring what Davis touted as "internationally known artists and America's leading exponents of modern jazz and swing"). In January 1945, he reorganized the Beacon Record Company as the Joe Davis Record Company, Inc., and on January 24 filed a trademark registration for his new Joe Davis label (shortened to simply Davis in early 1946).

In March 1946, Davis reduced his 75¢ line to 50¢ and announced plans to release twenty albums of reissues from Eli Oberstein's old Varsity–Royale catalog, including recordings by Jan Pierce, Harry James, the Korn Kobblers, and the Hot Club of France (the latter from imported Ultraphon masters Oberstein had licensed). Over the next two years, Davis purchased 100 additional recordings from the Producers Recording Company, a licensing operation that had taken control of the Varsity–Royale masters. They included 1939–1940 Varsity recordings by Frank Trumbauer's Orchestra and W. C. Handy, which had not been reviewed very favorably in their original form, and which fared no better on the Davis label. At the same time, Davis announced plans to reissue some 1920s jazz rarities he had licensed from Harry Gennett.

Davis' short-lived Song Bird Record Company, a joint venture with songwriters Jack Yellen and Sammy Fain, probably was launched in the autumn of 1947. Its initial release, advertised as "The Bombshell-sation of the Year," featured Yellen and Fain's "The Jews Have Got Their Irish Up," sung by former vaudeville headliner Gus Van, who by then was long past his prime and on the verge of being forgotten. Song Bird disappeared almost immediately.

During 1947 Davis turned his attention back to publishing and launched Caribbean Music, Inc., as a side-line. New record releases began to dwindle, and the Beacon and Davis labels were finally discontinued in early 1948. Having given the impression he was leaving the record business, Davis abruptly changed course in March 1948 and reintroduced the Celebrity label, which would now be primarily a reissue vehicle for his accumulated holdings. (In the process, he forced Mercury Records to drop its Celebrity Series title, citing his prior use of the name.) Davis claimed to hold more than five-hundred masters acquired from inactive operations and said he was planning to reissue as many as were deemed to be marketable. However, relatively few were ever used.

In the same month, Davis announced he would manufacture custom-label pressings for distributors or dealers who ordered a minimum of 1,000 discs. "You too can have your own record label," he advertised. "No investment. All you pay is distributor's price of 37½¢ (net) per record... A few hundred masters to choose from!" The masters were an outdated mixture of Davis' own material and the Varsity–Royale recordings. The idea appears to have aroused little or no interest.

Davis sold a portion of his master holdings to M-G-M Records in September 1948. The actual number remains unknown, with press reports varying widely. One questionable report claimed the sale involved thousands of recordings, which probably exceeded Davis' total holdings. *Cash Box* reported only that a "great many" masters had been sold, including

some unreleased titles, but went on to state that only four artists' recordings were involved in the sale. In the end, just a handful of Davis' masters appeared on the M-G-M label.

Davis announced that he was reviving the Beacon label, for direct sale to jukebox operators, in May 1948. But by year's end, he had closed his 51st Street office, given his staff three weeks' notice, and was in the process of liquidating his record business. He had no sooner done so than *Billboard* announced, in January 1949, that Davis was planning to reactivate the Beacon Record Company once again, this time to specialize in material for the race-record market.

Davis would continue to produce new recordings, primarily with the intent of licensing them to other companies, for the next two decades. He returned to artist management, initially dispatching his performers to any company that was willing to meet his terms, just as he had done in the 1920s. He became more selective in his placements during the early 1950s, in particular favoring M-G-M for his Black artists.

In May 1953 Davis launched a new label, Jay-Dee (unrelated to Dave Dreyer's music-publishing firm of the same name), to feature many of the artists he had previously sent to M-G-M. The initial Jay-Dee release, numbered 777 for what were reported to be superstitious reasons, was announced in July. His releases by the Crickets (not the more famous Buddy Holly group) sold well enough to justify expansion of Davis' recording business. Extended-play 45s were introduced in early 1954, and the dormant Beacon label was reactivated at the end of that year. Beginning in late 1956, Davis shifted his focus from the production of singles to LPs, which comprised a mixture of new material and reissues of older recordings. He also resumed buying masters from outside sources.

Davis later spent much of his time entangled in legal issues, ranging from disputes over copyright ownership and claims for unpaid royalties, to a criminal case in which he was charged with selling "obscene" recordings. In the late 1960s, he began to sell off his masters and phase out record production. He died on September 3, 1978, at the age of eighty-one.

DAY DISTRIBUTING COMPANY — See Miltone Record Company

DC RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – Mid-1950s

Offices: 1425 Van Buren St. NW, Washington, DC (1947–c. 1950); 4021 9th St. NW, Washington (c. 1950); frequent address changes (various locations in Washington, DC, and Rockville, MD) after early 1950s

Original-Master Source(s): WWDC studio (Washington, DC), other independent studios

Pressing: Paragon Enterprises plant

Record Products (78s): DC

Launched in late 1946 by Lillian Claiborne and Haskell Davis, who also operated Claiborne-Davis Music, an affiliated publishing operation. The company's original mailing address was that of Davis' Van Buren Street residence.

The initial DC offerings, comprising pop tunes by local artists Ted Alexander, Ann Hayden, and Tiny Meeker's Orchestra, were listed in *Billboard*'s December 1946 and January 1947 advance lists, with master numbers also serving as catalog numbers. A *Billboard* reviewer described Tiny Meeker as a "hometown favorite...whose music making is entirely that of the hotel lounges." Ann Hayden was praised as a "full-voiced chanteuse." However, the reviewer's verdict was that the records were "entirely for the Washington area."

DC's main series, numbered in the 8000s, was launched in February 1947. It began as a pop and novelty series featuring Bill McCune's Orchestra and other locally available performers. An April 1947 *Billboard* review of several McCune releases was fairly positive but warned that the records had little potential for jukebox play. By the autumn of 1947, DC's focus had shifted to Black gospel groups (with a roster initially dominated by the Progressive Four) and country-and-western fare (featuring Bob Dean's Hi-Way Wanderers, Sleepy Daniels' Radio Playboys, the Howington Brothers, and the Tennessee Haymakers). Distribution remained largely local, with no apparent effort made to market the records nationally.

What was to have been a spoken-word series was launched in early 1948, during the American Federation of Musicians' second recording ban. Its single known release was

"The Voice of Gandhi," an album of excerpts from a speech Gandhi had delivered in English on April 2, 1947. DC's masters were dubbed from acetate recordings made at the 1947 Inter-Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi, with the addition of narration by journalist Alfred Wagg. *Chicago Tribune* critic Will Davidson noted that the recording of the speech (a copy of which was deposited with the *Tribune* archives) had "all the faults of an on-the-spot broadcast under adverse weather conditions" and lamented DC's poor distribution. Despite a modest advertising campaign, the album does not appear to have been a strong seller. A large cache of unsold copies was discovered in Denver in 2008.

By 1949, production of new DC releases had begun to dwindle. Manufacturing and distribution was taken over late in the year by the Ballen Record Company, which was credited on later labels. On March 2, 1950, Ballen authorized Claiborne to lease some of her masters to Savoy and other labels. In June, Atlantic Records acquired twenty DC masters by the Howington Brothers and others for its country-and-western series. T.N.T. Tribble and the Heartbreakers had their recording contracts taken over in 1951 by RCA Victor, which recorded new versions of their DC titles, although Claiborne retained their management contract.

Claiborne reactivated the DC label in 1953 with new rhythm-and-blues and country-and-western series, numbered in the 6000s, that again relied largely on local talent. The revival was short-lived. Some masters never saw release on DC, appearing instead on the Gem and Marshall labels, with the unused DC catalog numbers visible in the wax.

DE LUXE RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1951

Offices, Studio and Pressing: 1130 St. George Ave., Linden, NJ (from 1944); 19 (later, 20–28) E. Elizabeth Ave., Linden (mid-1947–early 1948); 1540 Brewster Ave., Cincinnati (King Records, from early 1948)

Original-Master Source(s): International Recording Company, J & M Music Shop studio (New Orleans), other independent studios

Pressing: Own plant (from early 1946); Royal Plastics and other independent plants

Record Products: De Luxe [2] (De-Luxe on King pressings); De Luxe Maple Leaf (Canada)

Founded in 1944 by brothers David and Julius (Jules) Braun, as an adjunct to their De Luxe Record Distributing Company, which served jukebox operators. Both companies were entirely family owned and operated. Early De Luxe releases were intended primarily for jukebox use, but the company later developed a substantial retail presence. In 1946 De Luxe claimed to have monthly sales of 300,000 discs and billed itself as "The fastest, the hottest, the heppiest independent in the business."

The earliest De Luxe releases, advertised in late 1944, comprised a mixture of pop, jazz, blues, and Black gospel, with a smattering of country-and-western. The De Luxe artist roster at various times included Benny Carter, Emil Coleman, Denver Darling, Billy Eckstein, John Kirby, the Southern Jubilee Quartet, and Roy Brown. The latter, discovered by the Brauns during a New Orleans scouting trip, had a minor race-list hit in 1947 with "Good Rocking Tonight."

De Luxe made headlines and attracted some ridicule with its 1946 "Time to Sleep" album by hypnotist Ralph Slater, who claimed to be able to induce sleep in his subjects within five minutes. The album notes stated that Slater's aim was "to discourage the fad for sleeping pills." In August 1946, the U.S. Food, Drug, and Cosmetics Administration seized twenty-three of the albums that had been shipped across state lines and summoned Slater to prove that the records could deliver on his claim. In defense of the records, Jules Braun stated, "We never claimed that 'Time to Sleep' would knock the listener out cold. It merely is a sleep-inducing aid, much like a mother's lullaby." The case eventually reached the U.S. District Court, which in April 1950 decided in favor of Slater. In December 1953, however, the case was remanded to the District Court, which vacated the original ruling and ordered that the seized records and accompanying literature be destroyed.

In January 1946 the Brauns broke ground for a new pressing plant with a reported (if questionable) capacity of 1.3 million pressings per month. The plant, which shared a building with a lumber mill, burned in November 1947. The original acetate masters survived and were quickly processed into new metal parts, which were shipped to independent plants for pressing. However, the fire took a financial toll on the Brauns. In

early 1948, they sold a 51% interest in De Luxe to King Records' Syd Nathan, reportedly for \$30,000, and assigned him their distribution rights.

Within a few months of Nathan's buy-in, De Luxe was placed under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Nathan agreed to cover the company's accumulated debts in exchange for a leasing agreement on the De Luxe masters, which did not prove to be good sellers for him. In June 1949, in a final effort to spark interest in De Luxe, Nathan began offering a coupon with the purchase of each record, five of which could be redeemed for a free record from a special list.

Rumors of a rift between Nathan and the Brauns began to circulate during the summer of 1949. On August 6, it was disclosed that Brauns were negotiating a split after accusing Nathan of mishandling and failing to properly market what was left of the De Luxe line. In the meantime, the Brauns had launched their new Regal Record Company (*q.v.*), taking some De Luxe artists with them. Nathan responded by suing the brothers in December 1949, demanding an accounting of property and goodwill lost as a result of the Braun's "appropriation" of artists.

On December 15, 1950, the Brauns, as minority shareholders in the De Luxe Record Company, countered by seeking an injunction to prohibit King Records, the Royal Plastics Corporation (King's pressing plant), and Nathan from having any further involvement with De Luxe. They also sought damages totaling \$280,000, charging that Nathan had diverted De Luxe's assets (which could have been used to settle De Luxe's federal excise tax bill) to benefit his own operations; had "enticed" De Luxe artists to defect to the King label; and had ordered Royal Plastics to press excessive numbers of De Luxe discs at exorbitant fees that were charged to the Brauns.

In early 1951, Nathan bought out the Brauns and revived the De Luxe label as a subsidiary of King Records (*q.v.*). The label's later history, which extended into the early 1970s, is beyond the scope of this work.

DE WITT, ELLEN O'BYRNE — See **O'BYRNE DE WITT, ELLEN**

DECCA RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1934–1974

Offices: 799 7th Ave., New York (8/1934–1938); 50 W. 57th St., New York (from 1938); 48 W. 57th St., New York (Coral division, from 1948); 666 Lake Shore Dr., Chicago (from 8/1934); numerous branch offices, including Atlanta, Boston, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Los Angeles, Memphis, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington DC

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — Chicago, Los Angeles, New York; temporary studios, including Dallas and El Paso, TX; Universal Recording (Chicago) and other independent studios beginning in 1940s

Pressing: Own plants — W. 54th St., New York; Los Angeles; Chicago; independent plants, including Scranton Button Company (to 1936), Gennett plant (leased from 1939, later acquired)

Record Products (78s): Decca; Decca Odeon-Parlophone Series; Broadway [1] (1934–1935), Brunswick (from 1941), Champion [2] (1935–1936), Coral, Commodore (1939–1940), Liberty Music Shop(s), Montgomery Ward, U.H.C.A., Vocalion (from 1949), radio transcriptions and special-use recordings

Foreign Affiliates: Decca Record Company, Ltd. (London); Electric & Musical Industries, Ltd. (London)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Melotone, Starr (Canada); Panachord (England and Australia); Peacock, Rex, Vocalion (England)

Decca Records was founded in 1934 as the U.S. affiliate of the Decca Record Company, Ltd. (London). The Decca trademark had first been registered in the United States on November 18, 1916, by the London firm of Barnett Samuel & Son, Ltd., which claimed use on records and phonographs since March 1914. Samuel & Son marketed the popular Decca portable phonograph in England, but it never produced or distributed records in the United States, despite its trademark claim. It was later reorganized as the Decca Gramophone Company, Ltd., and in 1928 was purchased by Edward R. (Ted) Lewis, who was seeking a way to enter the record business. In January 1929, Decca Gramophone's shareholders approved purchase of the Duophone and Unbreakable Record Company by Lewis and a group of investors. The combined operation, reorganized as Decca Records, Ltd., was listed on the London stock exchange on February 28, 1929.

The company took over a pressing plant in New Malden, England, and after some internal scuffling and a round of resignations, managed to release the first Decca records in July 1929. By early 1930, however, the company's stock was trading for as little as 50¢ per share in the U.S., and it eventually plummeted to 25¢. For its fiscal year ended March 31, 1931, English Decca reported a loss of £83,354 (approximately \$540,000 at 1931 exchange rates). Although economic conditions were dire in England, they were even worse in the United States, enabling Decca to acquire English rights to the Brunswick Record Corporation's American catalog in April 1932 for a negligible sum.

Decca's American launch grew out of a foiled attempt by Edward Lewis, in partnership with Brunswick Record Corporation executives Jack Kapp and E. F. Stevens, Jr., to purchase the failing Columbia Phonograph Company. Finding they had been preempted by Herbert Yates, of the American Record Corporation–Consolidated Film Industries conglomerate, the three quickly laid plans to launch their own label with Lewis' financial backing. The result was the formation of Decca Records, Inc., which was incorporated in New York on August 4, 1934. Lewis served as chairman of the board, Kapp as president, Stevens as vice-president, and Milton R. Rackmil (another former Brunswick executive) as treasurer. Despite protests from Kapp (who wanted to retain a traditional three-tiered pricing model, ranging from budget- to premium-priced lines), Lewis insisted that American Decca records retail for a uniform 35¢ each.

Management of the new American branch was left largely to Jack Kapp. He had begun his career as manager of Columbia's Chicago branch in the early 1920s and later moved to the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, where in 1929 he was given charge of all Brunswick recording operations. He personally managed some of Brunswick's most popular artists in the early 1930s, and his management contracts contained a clause allowing them to leave Brunswick in the event that he did so. In short order, Kapp persuaded Bing Crosby, Guy Lombardo, the Dorsey Brothers, the Mills Brothers, and other Brunswick stars to follow him to Decca. He also instituted a "two-hit" policy for Decca, a departure from the usual practice of filling out reverse sides with less-popular titles.

Decca's initial recording sessions were held in New York on August 2, 1934, and in MacGregor and Sollie's Los Angeles studio on the following day. By late August, Decca was also recording in temporary studios in Chicago and El Paso, and had acquired the former Brunswick studio in New York. Talent scout Mayo Williams, who had been closely associated with Jack Kapp at Brunswick, was recruited to manage Decca's race-record department. Kapp's brother David was given charge of the country-music department.

All did not go well for Decca at first. Launched in haste, the company encountered serious production and distribution problems. The pressings were made on old equipment purchased from the shuttered Brunswick-Balke-Collender plant in Muskegon, Michigan, and the quality was substandard. Lewis recalled that "rejects were high, particularly due to extraneous bits of metal in the record biscuit [pressing material]." Many of the early pressings were returned by disgruntled dealers and jukebox operators.

When Kapp was late to issue refunds for the defective pressings, rival firms began to spread rumors that Decca Records was financially unstable. Kapp initially countered with threats of a defamation suit before hitting upon a more ambitious strategy. On February 26, 1935, Decca Records and the Decca Distributing Corporation filed a lawsuit charging the Brunswick Record Corporation, Columbia Phonograph Company, Consolidated Film Industries and its American Record Corporation subsidiary, RCA-Victor, RCA Manufacturing Company, and various officers of those companies, with maintaining a monopoly on the sale of phonograph records in New York state. Although the suit did not go forward, the threat apparently was sufficient to warn off Decca's detractors. Nevertheless, dealers remained wary of the new records.

While Decca was still struggling to break into the market, Kapp made the mistake of trying to revive the Broadway label, which had been taken over briefly by the American Record Corporation after the New York Recording Laboratories suspended operations. (This was not Kapp's first attempt to revive a dead NYRL brand. Before launching Decca, he had been involved in a failed revival of the Paramount label at the American Record Corporation.) Although some new Decca recordings appeared on Kapp's revived Broadway label, it was devoted mainly to reissues of Champion, Gennett, and Gennett-produced Paramount material. The label was discontinued within a few months.

The failure of Kapp's Paramount and Broadway ventures did not deter him from attempting a third revival, this time of the defunct Champion label. As Gennett's budget-priced sideline, Champion had been a popular brand during the 1920s, and it had managed to survive into 1934. On June 28, 1935, Harry Gennett sold the Champion trademark to Kapp, along with rights to selected Gennett and Champion masters. Kapp's relaunch of Champion in August 1935 was a more ambitious project than his attempt to revive Broadway. The catalog was substantially larger and was divided into popular, country music, and race-record/hot dance band series. Some newly recorded Decca material appeared as well, intermixed with reissues of Champion and Gennett recordings from the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the end, however, the new Champion label did not prove to be particularly popular, and Decca dropped it in April 1936.

In mid-1935, Decca secured a six-month contract to supply Montgomery Ward discs, which so far had been produced entirely by RCA Victor. Comprising mostly outdated material by second-rate artists, the series sold poorly. The contract was not renewed, and Montgomery Ward returned to RCA. Decca resumed supplying Montgomery Ward on a sporadic basis beginning in mid-1937, offering better artists and more current material than previously, but RCA would remain Ward's main supplier.

Despite its botched launch and the failure of its side-lines, the Decca label itself flourished in the later 1930s. In 1935 the company established a presence in Canada, where pressing was contracted to The Compo Company. Decca posted a profit for the first time in December 1935, amounting to \$1,134 for the month, and paid its first dividend in 1937. The company kept its production costs low by discouraging multiple takes and remake sessions, pressing in cheap material at independent plants, and handling its own distribution. The 35¢ records became good sellers, posing serious competition not only to RCA's 35¢ Bluebird label and ARC's chain of cut-rate brands, but also to the higher-priced labels thanks to its stellar artist roster.

Decca, however, would prove to be more than just a purveyor of the latest pop hits. Mayo Williams quickly built up the race series, signing artists he had worked with at Brunswick-Vocalion (and, even earlier, at Paramount) while bringing in fresh talent. Dave Kapp proved to be adept at luring country-music artists from other labels, signing Jimmie Davis and Milton Brown away from Victor, and the Carter Family and Tex Ritter away from ARC, while signing popular new acts like the Ranch Boys, the Rice Brothers Gang, and Cliff Bruner's Texas Wanderers. Ethnic series were added as the decade progressed, including Cajun, Irish, Mexican-American, and West Indian. In the later 1930s, Decca also issued ethnic material that it licensed from Odeon, including some exotic field recordings made in the South Pacific islands.

More surprising to industry observers was Decca's 1936 entry into the classical market with its red-label Personality Series. Featuring domestic recordings by Vincente Gomez, Andrés Segovia, Jan Kiepura, Grace Moore, and others of equal stature, the more expensive Personality Series marked Decca's first departure from its strict 35¢ policy, although the records sold for less than similar material on Victor Red Seals. RCA officials, invoking Victor's 1904 trademark registration of a "red circular label," eventually sued Decca over its use of a red label. Although case was finally decided in Decca's favor in 1943, later Personality Series releases (most notably, Orson Welles' 1945 "In the American Tradition" set) used a black label.

Decca soon expanded its classical and operatic catalog by offering inexpensive pressings of imported Odeon and Parlophone masters, obtained through a licensing agreement with Electric and Musical Industries. In return, EMI was granted rights to distribute Decca recordings in Australia, India, South America, and parts of Asia. Also bearing red labels, the imported recordings initially were sold exclusively by New York's Gramophone Shop, but were soon made generally available as the Decca Odeon-Parlophone Series. The catalog was remarkable, offering classical and operatic material by internationally known artists, including some works that were not available on other American labels. Although many of the recordings dated to the late 1920s, were cheaply pressed, and lacked albums and program notes for multi-disc sets, they were undeniable bargains at only 50¢ (ten-inch) or 75¢ (twelve-inch) each.

For the fiscal year ended August 31, 1938, Decca reported net income of \$207,122, a 258% increase over the previous fiscal year's net of \$80,245. Decca's employees, failing to see any

benefits trickle down to them and complaining of poor working conditions, went on strike in the autumn of 1938. The action resulted in the police issuing warnings to several picketers who, *The New York Times* reported, were "'shagging' and doing the 'Big Apple' in front of the company's offices." The strike had no apparent impact on operations or sales, but it unnerved Decca executives. Determined to avoid another work stoppage and the attendant bad publicity, Kapp leased Gennett's idled Richmond pressing plant on March 22, 1939. In a region where unemployment was still high, Decca had no problem attracting local workers, and relations between managers and employees were said to be cordial.

Decca reported a 41% increase in sales for the first eleven months of 1938, compared with the same period in the previous year. In September 1939, *Time* reported that the company had estimated annual gross record sales of \$4 million, surpassed only by RCA Victor. By 1940, Decca was claiming a catalog of 7,000 titles (a figure that appears to have included the material it licensed from foreign sources), with a combined daily output of 135,000 discs at three plants. The company was also operating a full-service transcription department under the management of C. D. MacKinnon (later replaced by Edward Strauss) in New York, and Sellman C. Schulz in Chicago.

On May 8, 1941, Jack Kapp announced that Decca Records had completed the purchase of all capital stock of the Brunswick Radio Corporation from Warner Brothers Pictures, which had reclaimed rights to the Brunswick and Vocalion labels from CBS' Columbia Records division. As a result, rights to existing Brunswick and Vocalion recordings were divided, with Decca acquiring rights to all Brunswick–Vocalion masters recorded prior to Brunswick-Balke-Collender's sale of its record division to the American Record Corporation on November 17, 1931; and CBS (having acquired the American Record Corporation) retaining rights to Brunswick-Vocalion masters recorded after that date. Decca's plans to develop the Brunswick label as a subsidiary line were delayed by wartime shellac shortages and the first American Federation of Musicians' recording ban. When Decca finally relaunched Brunswick in mid-1944, it was devoted largely to Collectors' Series reissues of 1920s Brunswick and Vocalion jazz classics, pressed from a mixture of original stampers and dubbed masters.

A completely redesigned Decca label was introduced in the spring of 1942. Retailing for 50¢, it marked Decca's end as a budget-priced line. The original 35¢ blue-label line was quickly phased out, remaining in production only for existing issues for which any demand remained. At the end of World War II, the black label series was raised to 75¢. The blue label, which had been discontinued earlier, made a brief return in 1947 as a 50¢ line, primarily for reissues.

In July 1943, Decca purchased a controlling interest in World Broadcasting Systems, Inc., a major producer of radio transcriptions and syndicated programming. On September 30 of that year, Decca and World Broadcasting were among the first record producers to capitulate to the American Federation of Musicians' terms, enabling them to resume recording with union musicians for the first time since the start of the AFM ban on August 1, 1942.

Relations between the British and American Decca companies became increasingly strained as the 1940s progressed, particularly after Decca Records, Ltd., suspended licensing of the Brunswick name, requiring the American company to drop the name as well. A forced resolution finally came in August 1948. Decca by then had become such a major presence in the industry that the U.S. Justice Department brought a civil anti-trust suit against both the U.S. and English companies, charging them with conspiracy to control the world record market. Electric and Musical Industries was named as a co-conspirator in the case, but not as a co-defendant. Both Decca companies sought dismissal in December 1948, with the English firm asserting it did not do business within the U.S. court's jurisdiction. The Justice Department and the U.S. firm met informally in an attempt to reach a consent decree.

With pressure mounting from the Justice Department, an out-of-court agreement was finally signed by English Decca's Edward Lewis and U.S. Decca's Milton Rackmil in June 1949, formally severing connections between the two companies. The English company surrendered its right to sell American Decca recordings in thirty-nine nations. In return, U.S. Decca surrendered its marketing rights to English Decca's increasingly popular FFRR classical recordings, which would now be marketed in the U.S. exclusively by English

Decca's newly created London Gramophone Corporation subsidiary (*q.v.*), on the London label. London was also granted permission, which had previously been denied, to sign and record American artists, and to sell those records in the United States.

In the meantime, Decca had regained control of the Brunswick brand in the United States. In July 1948, the company announced the launch of a new Brunswick Record Corporation as wholly owned subsidiary, which quickly stalled over a copyright conflict. With Brunswick's relaunch temporarily on hold, a second subsidiary, Coral Records, Inc., was formed in November 1948. Managed by Jimmy Hilliard, Coral advertised its initial releases in January 1949. The label was popular from the start, thanks largely to several early hits by the Ames Brothers and the transfer of some well-known Decca artists to its roster. In March 1949, *Cash Box* announced that Decca was "planning to place some heavy emphasis" on Coral, including the acquisition of new talent and stepped-up marketing efforts. Coral made its debut as a 75¢ line but was later downgraded to a cheaper and less prestigious (albeit still very popular) side-line.

In May 1949, Decca announced that it was reviving the long-dormant Vocalion label as a 49¢ subsidiary label, in an attempt to compete with Harmony, Varsity, and several other recently launched budget labels. The first of the new Vocalion releases, comprising pop, country, and "Sepia" (race) offerings, were announced in early June. The records were pressed at the Gennett plant, to which Decca had returned after earlier having been evicted over unpaid bills. To keep costs low, the new Vocalion records were shipped to retailers directly from the factory, bypassing distributors.

Decca was a pioneer in the production of original-cast albums featuring excerpts from Broadway musicals. The company's advertisement in the *Record Retailing Yearbook* for 1945 claimed that the albums of excerpts from "Oklahoma," "Bloomer Girl," and "Carousel" "have scored as much of a smash hit in the record field as the original production did on the stage. ... Show albums featuring original casts receive major share of Decca promotional efforts." In July 1949, however, Decca held a half-price clearance sale of all album sets.

The reason became clear a month later, when Decca announced that it had begun production of LPs, after having wrestled with the decision for some time. The initial LP offering, consisting of thirty albums compiled from previously released recordings, was announced in September 1949. Decca Gold Label LPs, reserved for imported and domestic classical recordings, were introduced in July 1950. In the same month, Decca added 45-rpm discs to its product line. The company continued to press 78s, in ever-decreasing quantities, into 1958.

Jack Kapp hired Gordon Jenkins as Decca's new musical director in February 1949, which would be his last major decision as Decca's president. He died suddenly on March 28, at the age of forty-seven, and Decca's presidency passed to Milton Rackmil. In early 1950, Decca created a new jukebox operators' division under the management of Bobby Arkin, the first of its kind for a major record company. Hailed by *Cash Box* as "a spectacular first," it was a thinly disguised marketing operation meant to steer jukebox operators toward records of Decca's choosing, a model that was soon copied by other companies and distributors. Several months later, Decca announced its participation in Audio Education, Inc., a joint venture with the American Book Company to produce and market educational materials.

Decca Records was sold to the Music Corporation of America in 1962 and subsequently acquired by the Universal Music Group, its current owner. Its later history is beyond the scope of this work.

DELMAC RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: 1515 Howard St., Chicago

Record Products: Delmac

A short-lived operation launched in early 1948 by A. B. McCue and music publisher Robert De Leon. De Leon had planned to launch his own label during the summer of 1945, according to *Billboard*, which reported that he was "plenty miffed over the manner in which major waxing firms have completely overlooked the smaller music publisher." However, it appears he shelved his plan until February 1948, when the new partnership was announced.

The first Delmac release appeared in March 1948 and received a brief, dismissive *Billboard* review in April. A month later, the company placed a small classified advertisement in *The Chicago Tribune* soliciting vocalists, instrumental trios, and an organist willing to record for flat rates. A June advertisement promised "top talent," without naming any artists. The company was last listed by *Billboard* in its January 1949 directory.

DELRAY RECORDING COMPANY / PARADISE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1943 – 1950

Offices: 2640 St. Antoine, Detroit (to mid-1948); 3659 Hastings St., Detroit (mid-late 1948); 1001 13th St., Bakersfield, CA (from late 1948)

Record Products: Delray, Paradise

A race-record operation owned by William Ryans and Delmar Ray. Ray's husband, Reuben, was a major jukebox distributor in the Detroit area. Everett I. Watson was a silent partner in Ryans' jukebox and retail businesses but does not appear to have been directly involved with Delray Recording. The company apparently began recording in 1943 but is not known to have issued anything until 1947.

Billboard reported in November 1947 that Ryans and Ray were reorganizing Delray, which was said to have been inactive for some time. A month later, the same publication reported that the company had a backlog of 150 masters by "Negro talent (hitherto unwaxed)" that it had accumulated over the past five years, and was planning to hold six recording sessions before December 31, in advance of second American Federation of Musicians recording ban. Delray's initial releases, by Lonnie Johnson and Evelyn Collins with the Choclateers, were announced at that time.

The Rays sold their jukebox and retail businesses to Everett Watson in late 1948 and moved the record operation to Bakersfield, California, where it was renamed the Paradise Recording Company. The relocated company does not appear to have survived for more than a year. The Paradise name was used in the 1950s for unrelated labels in New York; Laguna Beach, California; and Amesbury, Massachusetts.

DELTA RECORDING COMPANY — See Session Records, Inc.

DELTA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1940

Offices: New York

Original-Master Source(s): WWL studio (New Orleans)

Record Products: Delta [1]

A short-lived venture of Heywood Hale (Woody) Broun, who traveled to New Orleans in the summer of 1940 in hopes of locating and recording some of the city's remaining traditional jazz musicians.

Broun assembled a small group of veteran musicians, fronted by trumpeter Henry (Kid) Rena, for recording purposes. After an initial rehearsal session on August 14, 1940, the band recorded eight selections in the studio of radio station WWL (New Orleans) on August 21 that were released on the newly launched Delta label, which showed no manufacturer or distributor credits. The records aroused considerable interest among traditional-jazz enthusiasts, despite complaints of poor technical quality and some difficulty in obtaining them. Marketing was largely by word of mouth, national distribution was non-existent, and the label disappeared within the year. However, it sparked demand for similar material, leading to a proliferation of small, traditional-jazz labels in the later 1940s.

Circle Records acquired the Delta masters in the late 1940s. The recordings have since been widely reissued, along with some of Broun's rehearsal recordings that had not been intended for commercial release.

Several unrelated Delta labels were later produced in 78-rpm form, of which two (a 1946 version produced by Session records, and a late 1940s version produced by Jim Bulleit) were introduced during the period covered by this work. Broun went on to become a well-known sports commentator for CBS television, as well as an occasional character actor on Broadway. He died on September 5, 2001.

DELTA RECORDING COMPANY — See Session Records, Inc.

DELVAR RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: 64 Standish Ave., West Orange, NJ (1949); 6 Main St., West Orange, NJ (1950); New Brunswick, NJ (sales office)

Original-Master Source(s): WDHN studio (New Brunswick, NJ)

Record Products: Delvar

Launched in early 1949 by former music publishers Les Voorhees and James V. B. (Jim) Post. Delvar advertised with little regard for the truth, billing itself as "The Biggest Little Record Company," labeling its records "Music Loved by Everyone," and advertising that they were "made in the 'better' recording studios and the best pressing plants," all highly questionable claims.

Delvar's first recording session, held in radio station WDHN's studio on June 18, 1949, was attended by New Brunswick mayor Chester W. Paulus and other locals. The initial recordings were by Ed Farley (composer of the 1930s hit, "The Music Goes 'Round and 'Round"), whose newly formed band recorded four of Les Voorhees' compositions. Although WDHN clearly was not one of the "better" recording studios, *The Central New Jersey Home News* reported that Delvar planned to continue using it because of its "technical efficiency." Subsequent releases featured undistinguished pop, novelty, and international material, mostly by lesser-known known artists.

Delvar Recording was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1950 manufacturer directory. Its masters were purchased by Token Records in early 1951.

DERBY RECORDS CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 –1954

Offices: 767 10th Ave., New York (combined with Derby, 6/1949–9/1950); 520 W. 50th St., New York (from 9/1949); 4852 W. Jefferson, Los Angeles (branch office, 1949)

Pressing: Specialty Records, Economy Record Company, possibly other independent plants

Record Products: Derby

Founded in mid-1949 by Larry Newton (the former sales manager of Black and White Records and, briefly, Peak Records) to specialize in rhythm-and-blues recordings. Eddie Wilcox served as musical director. Newton immediately entered into a cooperative marketing agreement with Eddie Heller's reorganized Rainbow Recording Corporation (*q.v.*). The companies' offices, warehouse space, and advertising were combined, but otherwise each operated independently. In December 1949, Heller and Newton launched Rainbow Booking Attractions, which managed many of Rainbow's and Derby's artists.

Derby specialized in pop, jazz, rhythm-and-blues, and Black gospel. The label had a minor hit in the summer of 1949 with "Slider"/"The Derby" by Freddie Mitchell's Orchestra, which *Cash Box* chose as a June Race Disk of the Week. Initially, the records were marketed primarily to jukebox operators. In early 1950, the company licensed its masters for release in Canada under the Gavotte label.

Derby's marketing arrangement with Rainbow was terminated in September 1950, and Newton moved the company to a new office. Derby LPs and 45s were introduced a short time later, but sales apparently declined in the early 1950s. In 1954, the Harry Fox agency joined a growing list of Newton's unpaid creditors in suing to collect \$10,000 in unpaid publishers' royalties. On October 14, 1954, Newton filed a petition in bankruptcy, claiming assets of \$18,395 and liabilities of \$213,090. Derby's assets, excluding masters, were sold at auction on November 9, 1949. The masters were purchased in late 1954 by Eli Oberstein (doing business as the Record Corporation of America), who also hired Newton to work for his Varsity and Royale labels.

DESERT RECORDING COMPANY / SMART RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1960s

Offices: 1213 E. Highland Ave., Phoenix, AZ (1949–mid-1950s); Sierra Vista, AZ (later 1950s)

Record Products: Smart

Launched in the summer of 1949 by country-music singer and songwriter Jimmie Whittle, after resigning as the record-department manager of Mehagian's home furnishings store in Phoenix, Arizona. *The Arizona Republic* announced the first Smart release on July 24, 1949 (Whittle's "Laughing to Keep from Crying"/"You Make a Pretty Dream"). The paper noted that only limited quantities were available and predicted that the record "might prove to be a collector's item one day."

By 1950, Desert Recording was specializing in square-dance records and was advertising nationally on a modest scale, but production appears to have been suspended later that year. The operation was subsequently taken over by Sheldon Gibbs, leader of the Arizona Ranch Boys and a popular disc jockey on Phoenix radio station KPHO. The Smart label was relaunched in the spring of 1952, at which time *Billboard* reported that Gibbs had started releasing tunes by his band on the label. References to the Desert Recording Company had disappeared by 1953, apparently corresponding to another change in Smart's management. Operating as Smart Records, the reorganized company moved to Sierra Vista, Arizona, in the later 1950s. The last Smart releases known to have been nationally advertised appeared in 1961.

D-H RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1948

Offices: 120 S. Pritchard St., Fullerton, CA

Record Products: Solar

Launched in early 1946 by songwriters Claude Davis and Slim Hammett, whose compositions were featured on the Solar label. The earliest releases were on the market by April 1946 and were handled by K & M Distributors.

Solar's output was primarily country-and-western and pop, the latter featuring an orchestra directed by Dan Michaud (a well-known Hollywood arranger). Early Solar labels showed no company name but carried telltale DH- prefixed catalog numbers. A later version of the label, which bore no resemblance to the original, credited the D-H Recording Company. Solar pressings from several Rich masters have also been reported. Solar was last listed by *Billboard* in its January 1948 label directory. Some surplus pressings by Dan Michaud's Orchestra were purchased by Artist Records, which pasted its own labels over Solar's.

DIAL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 — 1954

Offices: 5946 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA; 520 W. 50th St., New York (branch, from 10/1948)

Pressing: Eastern Record Manufacturing, Signature, other independent plants

Original-Master Source(s): Electro Broadcast, Radio Recorders, C. P. MacGregor, WOR Studios, other independent studios

Record Products: Dial

Launched in January 1946 by Ross Russell, with financial backing from Los Angeles attorney Marvin Freeman. Freeman chose the label's name, reportedly to commemorate *The Dial*, a 1920s literary magazine he admired. Although production began in early 1946, Dial Records was not formally incorporated until October 1948. The records initially were sold by Russell's Tempo Music Shop on Hollywood Boulevard, a popular gathering spot for jazz musicians that opened in June 1944.

Russell was a traditional-jazz enthusiast, but he launched Dial to specialize in be-bop. The label's first recording session, by a pickup group credited as Dizzy Gillespie's Jazzmen, was held in Glendale, California, on February 5, 1946. The session was a poorly organized affair, with saxophonist Charlie Parker failing to appear, and the studio over-run by curious outsiders. Russell recalled, "After that, I made it my business to keep hangers-on, dope heads, and parasites out of the studio."

Once Russell was able to get him into the studio, Parker recorded prolifically for Dial

for a year, interrupted only by a brief confinement in the Camarillo State Hospital, from which Russell helped negotiate his release. Russell's recordings by Gillespie, Parker, Dexter Gordon, and other modern-jazz artists were issued in Dial's Be-Bop Series, a premium-priced line retailing for \$1 per record. In August 1946, *Billboard* reported that a "cooperative arrangement" of some sort was being discussed with Eddie Laguna's Sunset Recording Company, but it failed to materialize.

Russell sold his store in late 1946 and used the proceeds to buy out Freeman's share of the company. Dial Records was finally incorporated in October 1948, and its pressing and shipping operations were moved to New York. At the same time, Russell announced a more conventional 75¢ jazz series that would come to feature Don Byas, Django Reinhardt, and Rex Stewart, using masters licensed from a French source. The jazz catalog underwent a thorough revision during the spring of 1949, at which time some numbers were deleted and others were recoupled. A black-label popular series, introduced at about the same time, does not appear to have attracted much attention.

Russell acquired the Comet catalog from Black and White Records during the summer of 1949. Comet recordings made by Art Tatum, Red Norvo and others during 1944–1945 were reissued by Dial in response to collector demand, some of them dubbed down to new 10" masters from the 12" originals. Russell also negotiated a Canadian pressing and distribution deal with Charles Darwyn's Toronto-based Monogram Records/Ambassador Music Company conglomerate.

In August 1949, Russell made an abrupt and unforeseen entry into the classical market with Dial Contemporary Classics, a new LP series. The initial release was Bartok's "Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion," performed by William Masselos and Mario Ajemian (pianos) with Saul Goodman and Abe Marcus (percussion), followed by Schoenberg's "Kammersymphonie." *Billboard* reported that Russell was "concentrating on avant garde composers which most of the larger waxeries find it profitable to avoid," including Cage, Hovhannes, Ives, Milhaud, Stravinsky, and Webern. Although the albums received generally favorable reviews, sales appear to have been negligible.

A jazz LP series, introduced in 1950, drew from a mixture of Comet and Dial recordings. Some previously unissued material appeared (most notably, many alternate takes by Charlie Parker, and some home recordings made at a 1947 party celebrating his release from Camarillo), as well as imported recordings that had originally appeared on Blue Star, Vogue, and other French labels. By then, however, Dial's best-known jazz artists had moved on to other labels, and production of new jazz recordings had stalled. In December 1950, Prestige Records took over national distribution in an unsuccessful bid to revive Dial's jazz line. The final Dial release was an album of calypso tunes that Russell recorded while on vacation in the Caribbean.

In a move he later came to regret, Russell sold his jazz masters in January 1955 to the Musical Masterpiece Society (the Concert Hall Society's record-club division) for use in a proposed jazz series. In 1956 mail-order distribution rights passed to the Crowell-Collier Publishing Company when it acquired Concert Hall. The records were sold through its Jazztone Society mail-order record club, which in turned licensed some of the recordings to Roost for regular retail sale, touching off a legal dispute that resulted in the recordings being impounded for a time.

Russell's Dial recordings have since been widely licensed or pirated, appearing on a multitude of labels in numerous countries. The Dial Records name was later used for several unrelated ventures, including one based in Port of Spain, Trinidad.

Russell wrote several books in his later years, including *The Sound*, *Jazz Style in Kansas City and the Southwest*, and *Bird Lives* (the latter a controversial biography of Charlie Parker that sparked charges of plagiarism and contained demonstrable fabrications). He died on January 31, 2000. His papers, including those of Dial Records, are housed in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin.

DIAMOND RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1956

Offices: 309 N. Farish St., Jackson, MS

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (Jackson, MS); Audio Company of America, Memphis Recording Service, Scott Radio Service (Jackson), WFOR studio (Hattiesburg, MS), other independent studios

Pressing: Plastic Products, Monarch Record Manufacturing, other independent plants

Record Products (78s): Trumpet

Owned and operated by Willard F. McMurry and Lillian Shedd McMurry as an adjunct to their Music Mart store in Jackson, Mississippi. The McMurrays incorporated the Diamond Record Company on June 27, 1950, with \$2,000 in capital stock. They also operated the Globe Music Company, which controlled the copyrights on original compositions by Trumpet's artists.

Recording sessions had begun by the time the company was officially incorporated. The first, by the St. Andrews Gspelaires, was held in Jackson on May 3, 1950. They were followed by the Southern Sons Quartette on May 31, after which recording activity stalled until November. Recording sessions began in earnest in early 1951, initially concentrating on the rhythm-and-blues material for which Trumpet is best known. In the early 1950s, the roster included Sonny Boy Williamson II (Aleck Miller), Arthur (Big Boy) Crudup, and Willie Love. Elmore James made his first recordings for Trumpet, initially as a sideman on the Love and Williamson sessions. "Dust My Broom," his first solo effort (credited to Elmo James on the labels) was a regional hit in late 1951, then made the national rhythm-and-blues charts in 1952, by which time James had signed with another label.

The gospel roster was expanded in the early 1950s to include the Argo Gospel Singers, Blue Jay Gospel Singers, and Brother Hugh Dent. The McMurrays also dabbled in country music and rockabilly material, recording Kay Kellum, Jimmy Swan, Tex Dean, and other regional performers, often in Houston and other locations outside of Jackson. By 1953, however, several other popular Trumpet artists had been signed away by competing labels. The McMurrays launched a new Globe label in 1954, which attracted little attention, then closed their record business in 1956. Lillian McMurry retained control of the Globe Music Company until 1982.

DIAMOND RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Source(s): Empire Broadcasting, probably other independent studios

Record Products: Diamond [2]

Launched in February 1946 as a division of Irving R. Gwartz Enterprises. Officers included Gwartz (president), Joseph Kupitsky (vice-president in charge of production, also employed by the Gwartz-distributed Seva label at the time), and David Ferber (general manager). In addition to Diamond, Gwartz owned three record distribution companies at the time, and he had previously been the exclusive East Coast distributor for Musicraft, of which he was briefly a part-owner. As a result of his split with Musicraft, Gwartz acquired three music-publishing operations (Chelsea, Saunders, and Viking), songs from which were featured on Diamond as well as other labels he produced or distributed.

The first Diamond releases were announced in April 1946. The artist roster included Jan August (who was managed by Gwartz, and reportedly was the label's top seller), Nat Brandwynne, Nick Lucas, Dean Martin, and Harry (The Hipster) Gibson. After some Diamond race-record releases sparked complaints about their suggestive lyrics, the company declared in an August 1946 advertisement, "You can call them race! You can call them party! But they are not dirty!"

In April 1947 it was reported that Gwartz was ill, prompting rumors that he planned to sell his publishing unit. The company denied the reports, but by in early May it was disclosed that the staff had been "inactivated" several weeks earlier and the publishing operation had been closed. At about the same time, Diamond's assistant business manager and promotion planner left the company, which was said to be struggling financially as the result of Gwartz's continued absence. In August, *Billboard* reported that the American

Federation of Musicians was likely to invalidate Jan August's Diamond contract, freeing the singer to move to Mercury after a prolonged legal battle.

In December 1947, Gwartz made out-of-court settlements for unpaid royalties with Colonial Music and Peer International, but his legal and financial problems were becoming increasingly severe. In early 1948, United Artist Records sued Gwartz for \$12,000 due for pressing services. After slipping away to Arizona, supposedly for health reasons, Gwartz returned to New York in May 1948 to meet with agents of the Internal Revenue Service, to which he owed \$43,000 in unpaid excise tax. In the meantime, Gwartz had counter-sued to enforce his contract with Jan August, a case that would not be settled until late 1950.

The Harry Fox Agency sued Gwartz for unpaid royalties in November 1948, on behalf of twelve music publishers. At the same time, it was reported that Gwartz still owed \$41,000 to the IRS. By then, record production had been suspended, and a distributor in the Bronx was wholesaling Diamond records for 10¢ each. In April 1949, the IRS ordered that 180,000 Diamond pressings and miscellaneous assets (excluding masters) be auctioned to satisfy Gwartz's tax lien, which had grown to \$44,900. *Billboard* reported that claims against Gwartz by Fox and Empire Broadcasting were unlikely to be paid. Ultimately, Empire Broadcasting was awarded Gwartz's masters as settlement for unpaid recording fees, some of which it leased to Mercury and other labels.

The Diamond Records name resurfaced in 1951 for an unrelated operation based in Jackson, Mississippi.

DIAPASON RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 3528 Wisconsin Ave., Berwyn, IL

Record Products: Diapason

An apparently short-lived label devoted to contemporary classical organ music, affiliated with the Meadville Theological School (Chicago). Its very small output included Leo Sowerby performing his "Prelude on 'The King's Majesty'" and "Carillon," recorded in Chicago's St. James Church in May 1946; and several recordings of the Dayton Art Institute's Skinner organ made in July 1946. Known pressings are in plastic. There was no apparent connection to *The Diapason*, a Chicago-based magazine for classical organists.

DICCHA INDUSTRIES — See Vargo Record Company

DISC COMPANY / CORPORATION OF AMERICA (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 117 W. 46th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Asch Recording Laboratories (117 W. 46th St., New York)

Pressing: Clark Phonograph Record Company, Eastern Record Manufacturing, Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Disc, Ballroom Disc, Jazz at the Philharmonic; transcriptions

The successor to Asch Records (*q.v.*), launched in early 1946. By the end of 1945, Moses (Moe) Asch had stopped releasing new material on his eponymous label. On December 31, 1945, *Billboard* reported that he had split with the Stinson Trading Company (which would be allowed continue marketing the Asch label) and would be launching a new venture, the Disc Company of America. Asch had first used the Disc name six months earlier, on Charlie Ventura's artist contract of June 19, 1945.

The earliest known Disc Company advertisement, which included an artist roster but no titles, appeared in *The Record Changer* for March 1946. The initial releases were advertised two months later. Disc was one of the earliest companies to use the term "high fidelity" in its advertising, although from a technical standpoint, the recordings fell short of what that term would later come to represent.

Disc was a far more ambitious undertaking than Asch's earlier label. The new label, Asch declared, would offer "provocative and listenable records for a satisfying record library with ample variety for all tastes...families can keep up with modern cultural trends with DISC just as they read their everyday paper." The records were sold only in album sets, which often featured distinctive cover art and program notes by Charles Edward

Smith, Frederic Ramsey, and other respected writers of the period. There was an apparently short-lived European version of the Disc label that used the same design, to which were added the notations "USA - Series" and "Asch Recordings."

With Disc, Asch was attempting to compete in markets in which he had little or no experience, including children's records, classical music, ethnic material, and modern jazz. The latter involved a partnership with producer Norman Granz, whose innovative Jazz at the Philharmonic recording of extended live performances on Disc were widely criticized at the time for their poor technical quality and inclusion of "extraneous" audience noise. The ethnic series was largely overseen by ethnomusicologist Harold Courlander. Titled "Folkways of the World," it was the inspiration for what would become Asch's final and best-known venture.

In the meantime, the breakup with Stinson Trading had touched off a legal battle over Stinson's continued use of Asch's earlier masters. Financially drained by the costs of launching Disc and battling Stinson, Asch became delinquent in his payments to the Eastern Record Manufacturing Company, the independent plant that was handling his pressing. In December 1947, Asch's warehouse was padlocked by court order. Two months later, he surrendered rights to many of his masters to Eastern Record Manufacturing's George J. Ehrlinger, who largely assumed control of the Disc operation in exchange for a \$10,000 loan to Asch. Marian Distler, Asch's personal assistant, stayed on while quietly planning to launch what would become Folkways Records. Sales manager Nelson Lewis left in the late summer of 1948 to launch the Holiday Record Company. Its financial backer was George Ehrlinger, who turned over Asch's Disc masters to the new company.

On October 19, 1948, a petition in bankruptcy was filed against Asch. Having lost control of his masters and company, Asch went to work as manager of Black and White's New York office in March 1949. When that office closed three months later, *Billboard* announced that Asch would "freelance as an advisor to record companies." Within a short time he was working as a self-described "consultant" to the newly formed Folkways Records and Service Company (*q.v.*).

DISC JOCKEY RECORDS — See Popular Tunes

DISC-CO RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1951 – c. 1951

Offices: Burlington, IA (PO box number only; no street address given)

Record Products: Disc-Co

A short-lived pop label of unknown ownership, distributed by Franklin Sales (Chicago). The earliest releases, by Hammond organ soloist Freddie Wolf, were first advertised in May 1950. The last known releases were advertised in August of that year. The company's final appearance in *Billboard* was in its July 1951 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

DISCO RECORDING COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1941 – Early 1950s

Offices: 334 Arcade Building, St. Louis

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address (portable equipment also used)

Pressing: The Bishop Presses, Research Craft, probably other independent plants

Record Products: Disco Recordings (1942), Disco (from 1946); radio transcriptions, air checks, personal recordings

Launched in the early 1940s by radio star Harry V. (Pappy) Cheshire. The company began advertising widely in the St. Louis area in 1942, at which time its staff included Gordon Sherman (president and chief engineer), Bob Reichenbach (general manager), and Marie Sherman (secretary). Disco Recording initially was a transcription studio that produced "Pappy Cheshire's Old Corral," "Sports Answer Man," and other radio series. The company also offered custom recording services, including personal records "of professional quality...at surprisingly modest cost," and synchronized recordings to accompany home movies, on which clients could record their own commentary, sound effects, and music.

Disco Recordings (later simply Disco), the company's only commercial label, was

launched in 1942, but production was quickly suspended due to wartime shellac shortages. One Missouri newspaper reported that the shellac situation "somewhat hindered" Disco's sales, but that several orders had been filled, with others placed on a waiting list. The company continued to offer transcription and instantaneous personal-recording services during the war, at one point placing a help-wanted ad for a female piano accompanist who could also handle light office work.

Disco (having shed the "Recordings" portion of its name) was relaunched commercially in September 1946. By then, Cheshire had moved to Hollywood, where he reportedly was scouting for West Coast talent. Reichenbach soon moved to Hollywood as well, to join Town & Country Records, leaving Gordon Sherman to manage the St. Louis operation. Sherman was the target of a February 1947 lawsuit by one David Mars, who unsuccessfully sought a temporary injunction after Sherman allegedly made an unauthorized release of a horse-race gambling record that Mars had produced.

In December 1947, Disco placed advertisements urging performers to "get in under the wire" in advance of the looming American Federation of Musicians' recording ban and advising that it would record "seven days a week, around the clock" until the ban took effect. Its later 1940s commercial output consisted largely of country-and-western material, with a roster of obscure talent that included Rusty Marion, Wade Ray, and Skeets Yaney and the Ozark Champions. By 1950 the label was also offering some pop and jazz releases, the latter including two September 1950 sides by Singleton Palmer's Dixieland Six with veteran St. Louis trumpeter and band leader Dewey Jackson.

DISCO RECORDING CORPORATION / DISCO RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: c. Late 1940s – 1950

Offices: 1312 W. Commerce St., San Antonio, TX

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Disco Recordings DRC; private and custom recordings

A division of the J. De Los Santos Company (San Antonio, Texas), Disco was primarily a custom-recording service. Its short-lived Disco Recordings DRC label, probably launched in the late 1940s, featured a mixture of Hispanic and country-and-western material by regional artists.

DISCOS ALLEGRO, INC. — See Allegro Records

DISCOS AZTECA (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – 1965

Offices: Los Angeles

Pressing: The Bishop Presses, probably other independent plants

Record Products: Discos Azteca

Founded in the mid-1940s by Trinidad Pelaiz, owner of La Casa de Musica (Los Angeles). Azteca records were distributed by Sid Talmadge's Record Merchandising Company and were intended primarily for the Mexican-American market on the West Coast. Some Azteca masters were licensed to Fabrica de Discos Peerless for Mexican release. In addition to its own recordings, Azteca issued material licensed from Lyra in Colombia

The exact date of Azteca's launch is uncertain, but it is known to have issued recordings made as early as 1946. It was one of the first independent companies to capitulate to the American Federation of Musicians' demands during the second AFM recording band, enabling it to resume recording with union musicians in January 1949. Its early roster included Lydia, Juanita, and Maria Mendoza; Maria Padilla, and Memo Quintero (the later two comprising the Dueto Azteca on many releases). Mariachi Azteca, a house band featuring trumpeter Rafael Méndez, helped to popularize mariachi music in the U.S.

The Discos Azteca line was expanded to include 45-rpms in the 1950s, but production declined in the early 1960s. In 1965 the Azteca label and catalog were acquired by Al Sherman's Alshire Records, a company that specialized in reissuing other labels' material (including the popular 101 Strings albums) on cut-rate LPs. Its corporate descendant, Alshire International, continues to sell Azteca reissue in CD format, but no new material has been issued on the label since the 1960s. There is no connection to the current Mexican-based Azteca label.

DISCOS CAFAMO / MONTILLA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1949

Offices: 23rd & Lexington, New York; San Nicolas 360, Havana, Cuba

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — Havana; WCMQ studio (Havana), other independent studios

Record Products (78s): Discos Cafamo

A Latino label launched in early 1949 by Fernando J. (Fred) Montilla. A native of Puerto Rico, Montilla came to New York in the 1920s and worked as an engineer for the National Broadcasting Company. He served with the U.S. Navy during World War II, setting up radar systems in Brazil and attaining the rank of lieutenant commander.

Following the war, Montilla moved to Cuba to work as a sound engineer at radio station WCMQ (Havana), where he began recording local talent, including Bola De Nieve and Benny Moré. In 1948 he returned to the U.S. and formed Discos Cafamo. The company's launch was announced in February 1949 by *Billboard*, which reported that Montilla was in the process of opening his own studio in Cuba. In addition to Latino pop material, Montilla planned to record Ernesto Lecuona's operetta "Rosa" in two versions (one in Spanish, and the other as an instrumental, which he hoped to sell to a U.S. producer who would overdub the vocals in English). Although intended primarily for the Cuban and Puerto Rican markets, Discos Cafamo had limited U.S. distribution. The earliest releases appeared in *Billboard*'s advance lists for early March 1949.

Montilla opened his own pressing plant in Puerto Rico in April 1951, using equipment built for him by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in New York. By then, he had a reciprocal agreement with Columbia's Spanish branch, which supplied Montilla masters for release on Discos Cafamo, and in return released some of his material under the Columbia label in Spain. In the autumn of 1952, he reorganized his company as Montilla Records in response to what *Billboard* termed "a budding domestic demand for its product." Packaging was redesigned for the domestic market, and distribution was expanded.

Montilla moved his recording operation to Miami in the 1980s, where he remained active for another decade. He died on June 27, 2104, at the age of ninety-nine.

DISCOS FALCÓN — See Falcon Record Company

DISCOS PEERLESS, S. A. (Discs)

A major Mexican record manufacturer, Peerless owes its inclusion here to the likelihood that it supplied masters to the first incarnation of Eli Oberstein's Varsity label (1939–1940) and possibly other minor U.S. labels, as well as its later affiliation with Los Angeles-based Coast Records, which imported Peerless records in some quantity. Founded in 1929, the company was reorganized on August 14, 1933, as Fabrico de Discos Peerless S.A., by Gustavo Klinkwort and Eduardo Baptista (the latter having produced Olympia, Nacional, and other Mexican labels during the 1920s). Discos Peerless advertised custom recording services in *Radio Annual* and other American publications during the 1940s. Its Peerless label, a major Mexican brand, became widely available in the United States after Coast Records acquired the American distribution and pressing rights in 1946.

DISCOVERY RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1952

Offices: 6207 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Radio Recorders, Sound Stage Recorders, and RCA Victor studios (Hollywood), probably others

Pressings: Alco Research and Engineering plant

Record Products: Discovery, Discovery International Jazz Series

Originally owned and operated by Albert Marx (misspelled Marks in some trade-press reports). Remembered primarily for having privately recorded Benny Goodman's 1938 Carnegie Hall concert, Marx resigned from Musicraft Records in the spring of 1948. Richard Bock serving as Discovery's vice-president, and Johnny Richards as musical director. Arranger-conductor Phil Moore was involved with the launch, although his exact relationship to the company, other than supplying a number of compositions, is

unclear. Many of the titles recorded by Discovery were controlled by the J & J Music Corporation.

Discovery Records was launched in the midst of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban. Its trademark application of October 7, 1948, claimed use of the Discovery name on records since September 22 of that year. Recording sessions with union musicians began in December 1948, after Discovery obtained its AFM recording license.

Discovery was particularly noted for its jazz roster, which included Dizzy Gillespie, Red Norvo, Charles Mingus, and George Shearing. The pop series featured comedienne Martha Raye. Two of her releases ("Ooh, Dr. Kinsey" and "Miss Otis Sends Regrets") were banned by some radio stations for "suggestive" lyrics, although *Cash Box* described the former as "cute as all get-out."

A new line of classical 78s and LPs, announced in January 1949, included material by the Columbus Symphony Orchestra (from recordings made prior to the AFM ban, obtained from an undisclosed source) and the Paris Symphony Orchestra (licensed through Standard Transcriptions on a royalty basis in early 1949). In March of that year, Marx arranged to have his masters pressed under the Maple Leaf label for sale in Canada. In May 1950, Marx announced that Discovery was entering the rhythm-and-blues field, with Joe Adams serving as artists-and-repertoire manager. Adams' signings included Helen Humes, Damita Jo, and "Mighty Man" Maxwell, but the records received little marketing support or trade-press coverage.

Marx admitted that Discovery Records was never a financial success. By early 1951 the company was recording only sporadically. In May of that year it was announced that Good Time Jazz Records' Lester Koenig would take over operation of the business, although rumors of an outright merger were denied by both parties. The relationship unravelled in September, after Koenig decided to devote more time to his own company than to Discovery.

In November 1951, Marx announced that he was finalizing plans to sell Discovery to Vernon Brown, but the sale was not completed. Instead, the company (including its debt) was acquired by Harry Weber, who promoted office manager Ray Boorman to general manager. In January 1952, Boorman announced that Los Angeles attorney F. F. Quittner had been appointed to oversee Discovery's liquidation.

Saul Bolton and Herb Silverman purchased 150 Discovery masters in March 1952, including the choicest jazz items. Two months later, Bolton, Silverman, and Tempo Distributors' Jack Bergman, doing business as Discovery Records of New York, purchased the Discovery trademark and remaining masters, but the venture soon failed. In late 1956, Savoy's Herman Lubinsky purchased 100 Discovery masters, along with the song copyrights held by J. & J. Music. Albert Marx went on to launch Trend Records in the 1950s, then reactivated the Discovery label in 1977. In November 1991, Marx sold his Discovery, Trend, and Musicraft holdings to Jac and Keith Holzman, who two years later sold Discovery Records to the Warner Music Group.

DIX RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1945 – 1946

Offices: 1540 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Dix De Luxe [Dix 1]

Owned and operated by singer-songwriter Dick Gilbert, Dix Records was listed in the 1945 and 1946 *Record Retailers Yearbook*, with no further details concerning the operation given in either edition. The few known releases are by Dix himself, with orchestral accompaniment conducted by Ray Gonzalez. There is no apparent connection to the later Pittsburgh-based label of the same name (*see next entry*).

DIX RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. Early 1950

Offices: Pittsburgh, PA

Record Products: Dix [2]

An apparently short-lived operation of unknown ownership. The company signed a recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians in July or August 1949,

enabling it to employ union musicians. It received a brief mention in *Billboard* in December of that year, but nothing further has been discovered concerning its operation.

DIXIE RECORD COMPANY — See Comar Records

DIXIE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 213½ 2nd St., Marietta, OH (Associated Distributors)

Record Products: Autograph [2] (An Autograph Record), Dixie [2]

Launched in June 1947 by Herb Goddard (president), country-music singer and entrepreneur Buddy Starcher (vice-president), and Isaac Hardesty (secretary-treasurer). The company's formation was belatedly announced in late July 1947 by *Billboard*, which reported that it would cater to the "rustic trade." Dixie initial releases had already appeared in *Billboard*'s May 1947 advance lists.

The Dixie label was followed in July by Autograph (styled "An Autograph Record" on the label). Both featured country-and-western material exclusively. Starcher, who served as the labels' artists-and-repertoire manager, recruited his performers largely from radio stations in West Virginia, Ohio, and the Midwest. The roster included Dick Hart (KARK–Little Rock, Arkansas), Art Gabbard (*a.k.a.* Arizona Rusty, WLCW–Cincinnati), Dolph Hewitt and Mack & Bob (WLS–Chicago), and Big Slim (WWVA–Wheeling, West Virginia). The records were pressed and distributed by Associated Distributors, an Ohio operation that specialized in small independent labels.

The Autograph and Dixie labels were still listed in *Billboard*'s directories for 1950 and 1951, respectively. However, Starcher had moved on to 4 Star Records in 1949, the same year in which an unrelated Autograph label (*see* Autograph Records) and Dixie label (*see* Grecol Enterprises) appeared.

DIXIELAND RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 310 Cigali Building, New Orleans

Record Products: Dixieland

A very short-lived jazz label of unknown ownership, affiliated with trumpeter Sharkey Bonano. Dixieland Records, Inc., was registered in New Orleans on June 7, 1949. It is currently listed as an active Louisiana corporation, although no address, contact information, or the nature of its current business (if any) has been located.

Known issues comprise four titles by Sharkey Bonano and his Kings of Dixieland, recorded in New Orleans on May 26, 1949. One day after Dixieland Records was incorporated, Bonano signed with Kappa Records. Dixieland apparently intended to remain in business, signing a recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians in July or August 1949, but nothing further is known to have been released. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct labels) probably can be disregarded.

DOLPHIN, JOHN (Discs)

Dolphin's of Hollywood / Recorded in Hollywood

Record Production: 1948 – 1953

Offices: 2528 W. Pico Blvd., Hollywood, CA (Dolphin's of Hollywood, to mid-1950s); 223 W. 2nd St., Los Angeles (Recorded in Hollywood, from 1950); 1238 S. Berendo St., Los Angeles (Hollywood Records, later 1950s); 4105 S. Central Ave., 1065 E. Vernon Ave., Los Angeles (store locations)

Pressing: Miltone and Modern plants, probably other independent plants

Record Products: Dolphin's of Hollywood, Hollywood [3], Recorded in Hollywood

John Grayton Dolphin was a Black entrepreneur who produced a string of minor labels from 1948 through 1953. In 1948 he purchased Los Angeles disc jockey Forrest (War) Perkins' record shop, which he renamed Dolphin's of Hollywood. He launched a label of the same name that featured original recordings by local Black artists, supplemented by masters he purchased from Exclusive. It was a rather slipshod operation at first, with duplicated catalog numbers and alternate couplings not uncommon.

Dolphin launched the more ambitious and better organized Recorded in Hollywood label in the spring of 1950. Local musician George Sylvester (Red) Callender managed artists and repertoire for Dolphin, and recorded for the label with various small combos. The initial releases, announced in June of that year, included Percy Mayfield's "Two Years of Torture," which Dolphin had purchased from Supreme. The record was a regional hit, but Dolphin was unable to sign Mayfield, who in the meantime had moved to the better-known Specialty label.

Dolphin's soon earned a reputation as one of the leading West Coast rhythm-and-blues record stores. The business was so successful that it moved into a larger building in January 1951 and became a twenty-four hour operation. For a time hosted, Dolphin's hosted nightly shows by Los Angeles disc jockeys, including Ray Robinson (KGFJ) and Robin Bruin (KWKW), in its street-front display window.

Dolphin went on a signing spree in 1951, announcing his acquisition of Ray Agee, Little Caesar, Scat Man Crothers, Gene Forrest, Jesse Fuller, the Hollywood Four Flames, Sonny Boy Holmes, Rev. G. W. Killens, Big John Tripp, and many others. King Records purchased twenty of Dolphin's master in July 1951, for reissue on its Federal subsidiary label. Production of 45 rpms began in 1952.

In October 1953, Don Pierce (who had recently left 4 Star Records to join the Starday Records start-up) disclosed that he had purchased a 50% interest in Dolphin's recording operation. At first headquartered in Dolphin's former office on Pico Street, Pierce shortened the label's name to Hollywood Records, which for a time he produced along with Starday. Pierce soon acquired full ownership of the Hollywood label, marking the end of Dolphin's involvement, and in 1954 he negotiated a cross-licensing agreement with Decca Records. Hollywood Records suspended operations in 1959, but Pierce revived the label in September 1966.

John Dolphin continued to operate his music shop and publishing business, in new quarters on Berendo Street in Hollywood, following the sale of his record business. He was murdered in his office on October 2, 1958, by singer and songwriter Percy Ivy, to whom he owed money.

DOMESTIC RECORDS (INC.) (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1954

Offices: 20 E. Jackson, Chicago

Record Products (78s): Dome, Process

Launched by Ross Hull in 1948, originally as a subsidiary of his publishing operation, the Country Music Company of Chicago. The Dome label featured country-and-western material exclusively.

Dome got its start when Hull purchased fifty masters from an undisclosed source (possibly the short-lived Blue Bonnet Music Company), including material by Slim Carter and Brown Eyes, the Colorado Cowhands, Chuck Harding, Andy Hill and the Hillsiders, and the Luncetford Lads. Once Hull began producing original Dome recordings, he recruited many of his artists from radio stations in Allegheny Mountain and the Ohio Valley regions. He was soon scouting other area as well, signing "Sheriff" Tom Owen and his Cowboys (radio station WMT–Cedar Rapids, Iowa) and other far-flung acts. Country-music star and disc jockey Woody Wooddell was hired as Dome's musical director at some point.

In November 1952 Hull, along with Wooddell and promotion-and-sales manager Lorraine Yuhasz, reorganized the Dome recording operation as a separate corporation and acquired the catalog of Norman Kelly's Process Records, a country-and-western label based in Franklin, Pennsylvania. In January 1954, Capitol Records requested that the company cease use of the dome pictorial trademark, to which Capitol claimed exclusive rights. Hull reportedly considered replacing it with a depiction of the entire Capitol building, then apparently scuttled the label later that year.

DOMESTIC TALKING MACHINE CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1916–1919

Offices and Factory: 33rd & Arch Sts., Philadelphia (1916–6/1918); Latrobe, PA (7/1918–1919); San Francisco (branch office)

Original-Master Source(s): New York

Pressing: Own plant (Springfield, MA, to early 1918)

Record Products: Domestic

Founded in February 1916 by Horace Sheble, formerly of the Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Company and American Record Company (Hawthorne, Sheble & Prescott), with an initial capitalization of \$200,000. Thomas Kraemer, a Philadelphia inventor and former Hawthorne & Sheble plant manager, served as superintendent. Kraemer, who had filed joint patent applications with Sheble in 1908, assigned at least one of his own phonograph patents (#1,262,810) to Domestic.

Sheble also assigned his design patents on several phonograph cabinets to Domestic in 1916. The line consisted of low-priced models that originally retailed from \$6.50 to \$22.50, and the company claimed to manufacture all parts in-house, other than the cabinets. In a 1916 *Talking Machine World* interview, Sheble characterized Domestic products as suited to those who "enjoy all the comforts of life without false extravagances."

A trademark application, filed on June 22, 1916, claimed use of the Domestic brand on phonographs since February 4 of that year. Neither the trademark application nor the company's 1917 *Talking Machine World* trade directory listing mentioned records. Domestic advertised widely for distributors, placing large advertisements in *The New York Times* and other major papers. Midwestern sales were handled by Carson Pirie Scott & Company (Chicago) beginning in mid-1917. Domestic also maintained a West Coast sales office in San Francisco's Chronicle Building under the supervision of Walter S. Gray, whose career in the recording industry had begun in 1889. According to *TMW*, Gray's duties included demonstrating Domestic products in Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, and other western cities.

Early Domestic phonographs played only lateral-cut discs, infringing at least one Victor patent, but in late 1916 a universal reproducer was introduced, in conjunction with the launch of Domestic discs. The company's first releases, pressed from 7" fine-groove vertical-cut Domino Phonograph Corporation masters, were announced in the November 1916 edition of *TMW*. They were quickly replaced by an 8" vertical-cut series, produced by the Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation. Both series used material that had previously been issued on their suppliers' own labels.

In September 1917, Domestic announced the impending introduction of its own recordings, in 10" and 12" form, with shipment slated to begin in October. By then, Sheble had acquired the former American Record Company plant in Springfield, Massachusetts, which produced Domestic pressings in the same blue-shellac compound that had distinguished the earlier American Record Company discs. Domestic discs using original masters were produced from late 1917 into early 1918, including an orange-label popular series, a blue-label standard series, and an unusual series of 12" discs that offered three selections per disc (a single selection on one side, two on the other).

In March 1917, Domestic announced an entirely new line of "perfected" phonographs, retailing from \$15 to \$50. Horace Sheble resigned suddenly in January 1918, a move the trade papers termed "entirely voluntary," and George Anderson briefly took his place. The Springfield pressing plant was sold to the Otto Heineman Phonograph Supply Company, which was preparing to launch its Okeh label, at about the same time.

On December 4, 1918, came the news that the Domestic Talking Machine Corporation had been reorganized. Joseph S. Truitt, the new president, announced that Domestic would move from Philadelphia to Latrobe, Pennsylvania. A final short-lived series of Domestic records appeared soon after. Bearing black labels that gave Latrobe as the company's location, it was produced by the Operaphone Manufacturing Company, using the same couplings and catalog numbers as corresponding 5000-series (10" vertical-cut) Operaphone discs, which were dubbed from Pathé masters. Few of the 5000-series records appear to have been sold before Domestic suspended operations later in 1919.

DOMINO PHONOGRAPH CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1916–1917

Offices: 4 W. 16th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Possibly commissioned from Rex Talking Machine Company studio

Record Products: Domino [1], Concert [2], Crescent [1] (7" only), Domestic (7" only), Melodograph (7" only), Triumph [1] (7" only)

Chartered in New York on July 23, 1915, this short-lived company produced or commissioned its own masters that appeared on a group of inexpensive 7" vertical-cut labels, of which Domino [1] was the flagship brand. Reliable information concerning the company's ownership has not been found. The New York corporate filing was made by Thomas H. McClure, who served as Domino's general manager.

The initial fifty releases were announced in June 1916. The presence of Fred Hager's Band on some records strongly suggests that the masters were recorded for Domino by the Rex Talking Machine Company. Hager was Rex's musical director at the time, and he and Charles Hibbard owned and operated the Rex studio. However, no corporate connection between Rex and Domino has been discovered.

Domino discs retailed for 35¢ each, or three for \$1. They employed a fine-groove vertical cut and thus bore no physical resemblance to Rex's own masters. The company claimed in an August 1916 *Talking Machine World* advertisement that the records played as long as standard 10" pressings. Aside from Hager's Band, the artist roster was made up largely of the usual studio freelancers. Domino recordings also appeared under several other obscure labels, including Concert [2] and the earliest versions of Domestic and Melodograph.

Domino records originally were marketed by the W. R. Anderson Company (220 Fifth Avenue, New York). Later distributors included the Thomas Manufacturing Company (Dayton, Ohio), a large manufacturer of phonograph motors and parts that normally was not involved with record sales. Anderson and Domino are listed in the 1916 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory*, but both are absent from the following year's edition.

Domino placed a full-page advertisement in *TMW*'s September 1916 edition to proclaim, "The future of the Domino...record is assured." However, sales appear to have been weak despite a national advertising campaign, and the Domino Phonograph Corporation probably suspended operations at some point in 1917. A mechanics' lien was filed against the company on August 24 of that year. By then, several retailers were giving away the records with the purchase of an inexpensive phonograph.

DOMINO RECORD COMPANY

A trade name of the Plaza Music Company, Domino owes its inclusion here to the fact that it originally was a separate division within the Plaza Music Company–Regal Record Company operation and issued a few recordings on the Domino label that apparently were made for its exclusive use. Plaza Music executive Sol Kronberg filed a trademark application for the Domino name on April 8, 1924, giving the company address as that of Plaza's 20th Avenue office in New York. Although early issues show what appear to be Domino's own five-digit master numbers, aural comparisons by the *Record Research* group confirmed that many are simply control numbers, disguising regular Plaza–Regal 5000-series masters. However, a few of the recordings were not found on other labels and appear to have been exclusive to Domino. All were recorded by the Regal-affiliated Independent Recording Laboratory (*q.v.*), based upon aural and physical characteristics.

DOMINO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: 2136 7th Ave., New York

Record Products: Domino [3]; possibly Marlow

Launched in early 1949 by H. B. Graham, who left the operation before any significant output was produced. The company was reorganized and reactivated in December 1949, at which time Seymour Goldblum (former manager of the Chubby Jackson band) took over as general manager, in partnership with Lloyd G. Newton and Jimmie Robinson. Rene Hall served as musical director and house accompanist. The company might also

have produced, or been affiliated with, the short-lived Marlow label, on which Hall was featured.

Domino specialized in jump and rhythm-and-blues records, with an artist roster that included Max Bailey, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Madeline Green, the Magichords, and Buddy Tate. In January 1950, *Billboard* reported that Goldblum was leaving on a trip to secure southern distributors, but aside from Green's signing in February, the trade papers reported little more concerning the label. The last known release appeared in *Billboard*'s May 1950 advance lists. The Domino name was used in the later 1950s for unrelated labels in Detroit and Austin, Texas.

DONETT HIT RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1951

Offices: 21 Shepler St., Toledo, OH

Record Products: Donett Hit Record

Headed by Bill Alden, the Donett Hit Record Company was belatedly incorporated on May 28, 1948, with capitalization of \$100,000, to deal in "machines, devices, etc.," with no mention made of records at the time. The company had begun releasing record locally in late 1947, and was first mentioned by *Billboard* (which misspelled the name "Donnett") in January 1948.

Donett's early artist roster, which was drawn largely from Ohio and southern Michigan, included Cliff Rodgers (a singing disc jockey from Akron, Ohio) and Tommy Thomason and Tex White (both from radio station WTNS in Coshocton, Ohio). The company went farther afield to sign several other artists shortly before the January 1948 start of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, including Al Rogers (WJAS–Pittsburgh) and Dallas Turner (another signing disc jockey, from KCRG–Cedar Rapids, Iowa).

In July 1949, *Billboard* listed Donett (which it continued to misspell) as a "new race and folk waxery." No explanation has been found for why *Billboard* considered Donett to be a new company, but the announcement was followed by a flurry of new releases during the summer and early autumn of 1949. The company's last known national advertisement appeared in *Billboard* on October 22, and noted that sales territories were still available. Donett was last listed in *Billboard*'s July 1951 manufacturer directory.

DORAINE, PETER, INC. — See Abbey Record Company

DOT RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: Shaker Heights, OH

Record Products (78): Dot [1]

A short-lived label launched in late 1947 by a group of staffers from radio station WHK (Cleveland). Dot's first release, by Bert Henry's Upside Down String Band, was advertised in mid-January 1948, along with a solicitation for distributors, after which nothing further was reported concerning the label. The Dot name was also used by two other labels covered in this work (see Dot Records and Down Home Music Corporation).

DOT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1950

Offices: Gallatin, TN

Record Products (78): Dot [3], Randy's

Launched in 1950, Dot Records had its roots in Randy's Record Shop, Randy Wood's record store in Gallatin, Tennessee. Randy's had developed a strong mail-order business in collaboration with WLAC disc jockey Gene Nobles, whose radio plugs were said to generate 3,500 record orders daily. Encouraged by the results, Wood launched his Dot label in the summer of 1950, in partnership with Nobles, and purchased Gallatin radio station WHIN at about the same time. An early news report stated that Dot was "one and the same with "Randy's Record Shop." There was no connection to two earlier, short-lived Dot labels (see Dot Record Company and Down Home Music Corporation).

The Dot label made its debut with an offering by the Tennessee Drifters, a country-and-western group Wood heard at a club on the outskirts of Nashville. The record sold well enough that Wood went on to sign Johnny Maddox, Cousin Clem and his Country Cousins, the Griffin Brothers, the Fairfield Four, and other locally available talent. By the end of 1950, Wood had released a dozen Dot records, had begun advertising in *Cash Box* and other national publications, and claimed to be selling through twenty distributors in addition to his mail-order and over-the-counter business.

The Dot label was acquired by Paramount Pictures in 1957 and later passed through a succession of other owners before finally being discontinued in 2017. The vast majority of Dot's output came after 1950, placing its later history beyond the scope of this work.

DOWNBEAT RECORD COMPANY / DOWN BEAT RECORDS — See Lauderdale, Jack

DOWN HOME CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: Federalsburg, MD

Record Products: Down Home [1], Dot [2]

A country-and-western operation of unknown ownership, which received passing mention as a new company in *Billboard* on June 28, 1947. The first releases on the Down Home label appeared in the September 1947 advance lists. The company also produced Dot records, an obscure country-and-western label that had no connection to the two other Dot labels covered in this work (*see* Dot Record Company and Dot Records).

Down Home featured East Coast radio artists, including the Down Homers (WTIC–Hartford, Connecticut), Cliff Japhet and the Western Aces (WWSR–St. Albans, Vermont), and members of Rusty Wellington's "Radio Roundup" program (WBOC–Salisbury, Maryland). Early issues allocated a separate series to each artist, with corresponding prefixes, including CJ- (Japhet), DH- (Down Homers), and W- (Wellington). No mention of the company has been found after 1949, by which time an unrelated California jazz label was using the Down Home name (*see next entry*).

DOWN HOME RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1951

Offices: Albany, CA (PO box number only; no street address given)

Record Products: Down Home [2]

A traditional-jazz label launched by band leader Lu Watters in late 1949. Distribution was handled by the Melody Sales Company (San Francisco). There is no connection to the earlier Down Home Corporation, a country-and-western operation (*see previous entry*).

The first two Down Home releases, taken from live recordings made of Lu Watters' Jazz Band at Hambone Kelly's in San Francisco on December 7, 1949, were advertised in *The Record Changer* for January 1950. Additional releases, including titles by Watters, singer Clancy Hayes (backed by Watters' band masquerading as the Washboard Five), and pianist Ralph Sutton (performing classic ragtime) appeared at irregular intervals throughout the year. A Down Home LP release, compiled from previously released Watters sides, appeared in early 1951, shortly before the company suspended operations.

The Down Home catalog was later acquired by producer Norman Granz, who initially scuttled the label, then revived it as a Mercury imprint specializing in traditional jazz. The relaunch was set for February 1956, but the initial releases did not appear until mid-May. Granz's version included reissues from the 1950 catalog, as well as newly recorded material. The Down Home recordings were later widely reissued on U.S. and foreign LPs and CDs.

DOWN RIVER RECORDS

Launched in Detroit in October or November 1948 by Joseph F. Goldaisch and Clifford C. Vericker. *Billboard* for November 20, 1948, reported that the Down River label was dropped within a matter of weeks. No releases are known to have been advertised, and it is not known if any were produced.

DOWN TOWN RECORDING — See Geddins, Robert L. (Bob)

DUBLIN RECORD SHOP (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1940s

Offices: 203 W. Wacker Dr., Chicago

Pressing: The Bishop Presses, possibly other independent plants

Record Products: Dublin's

A short-lived jazz label affiliated with the Dublin Record Shop (Chicago) and distributed by John Steiner (*q.v.*), in apparently minuscule quantities. The label received a passing mention in *Billboard* in April 1949. Its small output was drawn primarily from two December 1950 Steiner sessions by a Doc Evans group. There was also at least one release featuring a player-piano solo, recorded at Valente's House of Nickelodeons.

DUDE RECORDS – See Jim Beck Recording Studios

DUDLEY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: Denver, CO (P.O. box number only; no street address listed)

Pressing: Research Craft

Record Products: Dudley Records

A short-lived country-and-western label launched by Dudley (Dude) Jackson in late 1949. Members of Jackson's Colorado Bucakroos (from Denver radio station KMYR) performed on most if not all Dudley records.

Dudley's initial releases appeared in *Billboard*'s advance list for December 31, 1949. They included the Colorado Buckaroos' "Cowboys Left Over There," which a *Billboard* reviewer dismissed as "a dull hunk of material." The label's last known release, in April 1950, fared little better, with a *Billboard* critic opining that it "doesn't come off as anything too captivating." Dudley's first (and possibly only) national advertisement appeared in the same month, after which nothing further was reported concerning the company. Its brief reappearances in *Billboard*'s July 1951 and March 1952 directories (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

DUKE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1947

Offices: 769 Rockaway Ave., Brooklyn, NY; 210 Riverdale Ave., Brooklyn (Duke Music Corporation)

Record Products: Duke

A jazz label launched in 1945 as an adjunct to the Duke Music Corporation (Brooklyn, New York). Duke records were marketed primarily to jukebox operators. The company first advertised in *Billboard* in May 1945, with releases by Trummie Young's Lucky Seven and Frankie Socolow's Quintet, and was last mentioned in that publication's February 1947 manufacturer directory. There is no connection to the much better-known Houston label of the same name, which began operations in 1952.

DURIUM PRODUCTS CORPORATION / DURIUM PRODUCTS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1929–1932

Offices: 460 W. 34th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — McGraw-Hill Building, 469 10th Ave., New York (through 10/1931); unknown location (after 10/1931)

Pressing: Own plant

Foreign Affiliates: Durium Products (G.B.) Ltd. (Slough, England); Durium S.A., Milan, Italy; Sefono (France)

Record Products: Hit of the Week [1], Durium, Durium De Luxe, Durium Junior, Durium Mother Goose (children's); private and promotional issues

The Durium Products Corporation was formed to develop and exploit a plastic product invented in 1927 by three Columbia University chemistry professors — Dr. Hal Trueman Beans, Dr. Louis Hammett, and Dr. George H. Walden, Jr. Incorporated as a Delaware company, Durium leased the fifth floor of the Master Printers Building (460 W. 34th Street, New York). Founding officers included L. A. Van Patten (president), Arthur S. Jones (vice

president), G. L. Smith (treasurer), and F. C. Lowthorp (secretary). A 1931 report stated that Durium held patents in fifty-seven countries.

Durium was a transparent, photosensitive plastic resin that developed a slight brownish tint when exposed to light. The patent application stated that the compound began as mixture of linseed oil and resorcinol, which was blended drop-by-drop with a solution of sodium hydroxide and formaldehyde, and then cooled.

The company investigated several uses for their plastic, including as a marine varnish, before deciding to employ it in a flexible phonograph record. The records had a plastic playing surface laminated to a thin reddish-brown tagboard base, with labels printed directly onto the surface. Unlike the shellac-based mixtures used in standard 78 records, the plastic softened and hardened so quickly that *Time* magazine reported, "[records] can be stamped on it with the speed of a printing press."

Dr. Beans' official role within the Durium organization was solely that of technical consultant, but he would soon become its chief spokesman and promoter as well. On January 4, 1930, *The New York Times* reported that Beans "demonstrated records and talking picture disks made from his new compound... Professor Beans took a hammer and pounded the record until he split the chair he was using for an anvil. The record showed no evidence of its maltreatment when reproduced. Scratching the needle across the surface left marks and damaged the needle but did not affect the quality of reproduction."

On December 15, 1929, Durium filed a U.S. copyright on "Hit of the Week" for its new records. A later trademark filing claimed use of the Durium name on records beginning February 8, 1930. Studio space initially was leased in the original McGraw-Hill Building at 469 10th Avenue (not the second McGraw-Hill Building on 42nd Street, as has been widely misreported; that building did not open until October 1931). Experimental recording sessions and prototype production probably began in late 1929. At least one prototype Hit of the Week pressing has survived. Its catalog number is based on the periodical model ("Volume 1, No. 4," in this case), which was abandoned once commercial production began. The prototype label design bears no resemblance to what was ultimately adopted for Hit of the Week's regular issues.

Regular recording sessions probably began in early January 1930. Bert Hirsch directed the house orchestra. A new song was issued each week, supposedly selected by a well-publicized committee comprising Eddie Cantor, Vincent Lopez, and Florenz Ziegfeld, although the extent of their actual involvement is unknown. The first Hit of the Week release, issued on February 6, 1930, was a demonstration record featuring Don Voorhees' Orchestra playing "Tip-Toe through the Tulips," preceded by a spoken introduction to the new records. A new 15¢ single-sided release appeared on news stands every Thursday. Simple spindle locks were sold to overcome the lightweight discs' tendency to warp and to slip on the turntable. The company also marketed Hit of the Week needles and portable phonographs. For a time, Hit of the Week records were given away with subscriptions to *Liberty* magazine and other popular publication, or were used in various premium schemes. In the early 1930s, a back-issue service was launched to help dispose of old inventory by mail-order.

Demand for Durium's 15¢ Hit of the Week records grew steadily, and by October 1930, *Radio-Music Merchant* was reporting sales of 500,000 copies per week. As sales increased, however, the relationship between Durium Products and Beans, Walden, and Hammett became increasingly strained. During the development phase, Durium had paid the three scientists \$100 per day as consultants. Once the company was operational, the three jointly received 4,123 shares of mixed preferred and common stock, as well as a joint annual salary of \$6,000. However, the team went on to perfect other improvements to the manufacturing process, for which they demanded additional compensation. When Durium refused, Beans approached RCA Victor with an offer to sell them the company's trade secrets, which was quickly discovered by Durium officials. On September 2, 1930, Durium Products applied to the New York Supreme Court for an injunction barring Beans and associates from disclosing any trade secrets to RCA, and requiring them to assign to Durium all patent rights. Perhaps anticipating an adverse ruling, Durium at about that time acquired a patent on a similar plastic-surfaced disc from the German-American chemist Adolf Hawerlander, who had owned the Strong Record Company in the early 1920s. But Durium prevailed in court, and production continued uninterrupted.

As the Depression deepened, demand for Hit of the Week records began to wane. By mid-1931, sales reportedly had declined by half from the previous year, and the company was deeply in debt to music publishers for unpaid royalties. In February of that year, a legal notice appeared in *The New York Times* stating that the Durium Products Corporation had formally changed its name to the Deeantee Corporation, which is believed to be nothing more than a short-lived holding company. The Durium Products name remained in use, and the Deeantee name never appeared on a record label.

On March 19, 1931, Durium Products vice-president Arthur Jones and the Irving Trust Company and were appointed receivers in equity for the struggling company, at the request of creditors and a group of music publishers. Jones was subsequently dismissed following a protest by creditors. Durium's estimated assets at that time were given as approximately \$200,000 and liabilities as \$400,000, the latter including \$120,000 in unpaid publisher royalties that were continuing to accrue at the rate of \$5,500 per week. Irving Trust was instructed to continue production while attempting to liquidate. In June 1931, the Durium Products Corporation was sold at receiver's auction to Erwin, Wasey & Company, a prominent advertising agency.

A new Hit of the Week record, retailing for 20¢, was introduced on August 13, 1931. Labels credited Durium Products, Inc., a reorganized corporation headed by a new president, Ralph H. Maxson. Still single-sided, the new discs used a tighter groove pitch that allowed for playing times of up to five minutes, rather than the standard three. To fill the extra time, many releases featured a full-length main selection followed by a shorter track containing a royalty-free selection, often concluding with a short voice-over pitching the next week's release. A new multi-part catalog numbering system was implemented, with a letter denoting month of release (A for January, B for February, etc.), followed by one or two digits (depending upon the number of selections per side) denoting the order of release for that month. The new records often displayed artists' photographs on their reverse sides and were packaged in individually designed paper envelopes.

Besides Hit of the Week, Durium produced the short-lived Durium Deluxe (apparently a single issue, featuring Eddie Cantor and Phil Spitalny's Orchestra), which at 25¢ was its most expensive offering; Durium Junior, a 4" disc that was sometimes given away in premium schemes; a children's series, labeled Durium Mother Goose; and a wide array of custom advertising and private-issue discs, phonographic postcards, and other novelty items. There were educational issues as well, including Gregg shorthand practice records, a Durium Language Course series, and poet Vachel Lindsay reading "The Congo" and "The Strong Boy of Boston," under a custom Columbia University Phonograph Record label. But the technical improvements and expanded product line failed to reverse Durium's declining sales.

The final Hit of the Week disc (#F-4-5, "My Silent Love"/"Hummin' to Myself," by Phil Spitalny's Music) was released on June 23, 1932. One day later, Ralph Maxson announced that Durium Products would be closing most of its New York facilities and moving the business to England, where Durium Products (G.B.), Ltd., had been marketing American Hit of the Week pressings under the Durium label since April. The official explanation was that the added cost of a newly imposed 5% federal tax (amounting to ¾¢ per record) made production of a 20¢ disc "impossible in the present state of business." Seventy-five New York employees were laid off while Maxson was in route to England to oversee construction of a Durium pressing plant in Slough, near London.

A skeleton staff was left in place in New York to wind-down the U.S. business. In 1933 the remaining Hit of the Week inventory, comprising more than 2 million discs, was sold to Montgomery Ward, which offered them in their catalog at twenty records for 49¢, or sixty for \$1.25. After a long period of inactivity, Durium Products filed for bankruptcy on October 9, 1936, citing assets of only \$7,916. Liabilities were said to be \$394,434, mostly for unpaid notes issued in 1931.

In England, Durium Products (G.B.) continued to operate until 1934, supplying both the British and Australian markets. Sefono, a French company, also produced Durium pressings for a time, which it distributed throughout Europe. Durium-Milano, an Italian company formed in the early 1930s, proved to be the longest-lived of the foreign Durium spin-offs. It began by re-pressing old Hit of the Week masters for the Italian and French markets but was soon making its own recordings. It remained in business at least into the

early 1960s, producing standard shellac 78s under the Durium label, making phonographic postcards and other novelty items, and pressing LPs and 45s for other companies.

A later, unrelated Hit of the Week label was produced by Holyoke Plastics (*q.v.*), which purchased rights to the Hit of the Week name.

— E —

E. A. EILY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945–1946

Offices: 745 5th Ave., New York

Record Products: Rex Experiments in Modern Music

An unlikely subsidiary of the New York insurance firm of Eily, Stackpole & Company, the Eily Record Company produced several albums by noted jazz artists performing material of limited commercial appeal ("disregarding all conventional bounds," as the labels proclaimed). Edward A. Eily, an Egyptian citizen residing in the United States, was a well-known Manhattan businessman, music critic, and socialite. His trademark filing was originally assigned to musician Roger Kay, but subsequently canceled. It claimed use of the Rex name on records since "on or about" February 26, 1945.

Eily's first and most elaborately produced set was "Fantasy for Clarinet and Strings," recorded by Barney Bigard with the Roger Kay Strings on November 27, 1944. The initial run was limited to one-thousand "autographed" copies (Bigard's autograph consisting of a simple "B. B." on inspected specimens) and included a booklet of extensive program notes. It was followed by a three-disc album of Errol Garner piano solos, recorded in December 1944. Eily appears to have done little advertising, and the last known mention of his Rex label is a listing in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook*. His masters were later acquired by Atlantic Records.

EAGLE RECORD COMPANY / ABC-EAGLE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1950

Offices: 1069 Market St., San Francisco (1946–early 1947); 1149 Mission St., San Francisco (early–mid-1947); 1070 N. Fairfax Ave., Los Angeles (mid-1947–mid-1949); 6110 Selma Ave., Los Angeles (mid-1949–1950); 2559 W. Pico, Los Angeles (Majestic revival)

Record Products: ABC, Eagle [2]; Majestic [3] (paste-over label)

Founded as the Eagle Record Company in 1946 by Los Angeles socialite Gordon Burdge. Although Burdge's wife was a prominent fund-raiser for the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Eagle is not known to have produced anything for the classical market. Unrelated to numerous other similarly named labels, it initially specialized in country-and-western music, catering largely to the jukebox trade.

Eagle records were introduced in May 1946, as a 79¢ line (49¢ to jukebox operators and wholesalers), but within a few weeks were reduced to 50¢ retail and 30¢ wholesale. Burdge began by acquiring masters from Dude Martin's short-lived Roundup Recordings (*see* Western Radio Features), and Martin's Roundup Gang dominated Eagle's early releases. Their "Oleomargarine" was advertised as a "Nickel-Nickel-Nickel-Nabbing Novelty." The company moved to Los Angeles in late 1947, after turning production and distribution over the United Artist Records group, a cooperative that manufactured and released Eagle records under its own United Artist label. Eagle made a modest attempt to expand its repertoire, venturing into pop, rhythm-and-blues, and Latino material, before going dormant following UAR's bankruptcy.

Burdge resurfaced in July 1949, using the name ABC-Eagle Records, after absorbing disc jockey Bill (Dusty) Dallas' Fresno-based ABC label, which had produced only a single release (neither label had any connection to the American Broadcasting Company or the later ABC-Paramount label). Jack Rivers managed the country-and-western catalog. Also based in Hollywood, Burdge's ABC label used the same pictorial trademark as his earlier Eagle label.

The ABC label was described in the trade press as featuring "name and semi-name artists," with the latter predominating. Its roster included Red Nichols and others who were past their primes and no longer attractive to the larger labels. ABC generally attracted

little attention but had a surprise hit in 1950 with Sam Hinton's "Old Man Atom," which Burdge subsequently sold to Columbia. Many of Burdge's original Eagle recordings were reissued in inexpensive ABC-Eagle album sets. The records were pressed in "vinyl-type nonbreakable Vinaflex" and were among the cheapest of the period, retailing for only 39¢ each (with an additional ½¢ charged per record in the album sets). In September 1949, F. W. Woolworth agreed to carry ABC records in five-hundred of its stores.

The American Federation of Musicians canceled ABC-Eagle's recording license on September 11, 1950, after local union musicians complained they had not been paid for session work. Burdge left the company a short time later. The Burdges divorced in December 1950, soon after Gordon Burdge revived the defunct Majestic label. His Majestic operation consisted of nothing more than pasting slightly modified Majestic labels over ABC-Eagle pressings, and it proved to be short-lived.

In January Burdge was summoned to appear before the California State Labor Commission to answer to the AFM charges. Burdge replied that he was "too busy to appear" and was subpoenaed and fined. In October 1951 he was involved in the formation of the ABC-Eagle Corporation (an electronics manufacturer unconnected with his former record business), as advertising and promotion manager. At the same time, he announced that he was planning to revive the ABC-Eagle label despite not holding an AFM recording license.

EARLY AMERICAN DANCES (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1942 – 1950s

Offices: Dearborn, MI

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (Ford Engineering Laboratory, Dearborn)

Record Products: Early American Dances

A traditional-dance label produced under the auspices of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford. Ford, who openly detested jazz and what he termed the "Africanization" of American music, tried to counter its growing popularity in the 1920s by reviving archaic American dance tunes, performed in what he thought was historically accurate fashion.

In August 1924, Ford hired Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Lovett to personally instruct him and some family members in traditional dance steps, in anticipation of presenting historical dance programs at his newly acquired Wayside Inn in Sudbury, Massachusetts. "Ford does not approve of modern dancing," Lovett made clear in an August 29 interview. News of the arrangement made national headlines, with the *Buffalo Evening Times* warning "Henry Ford wants to take shimmy out of our dances."

By October, Lovett had organized Henry Ford's Old-Fashioned (or Old-Time) Dance Orchestra, an oddly constituted quartet consisting of violin, dulcimer, cymbalom, and sousaphone, with Lovett serving as caller on some selections. The ensemble made its first recordings in December 1925, for Victor, and later recorded for Edison and Columbia as well. The records received good press coverage (along with a bit of ridicule), but the groups's January 1927 Edison session would be its last for a major label.

Undeterred, Ford retained the Lovetts as resident dance instructors at his Greenfield Village project in Dearborn, Michigan. In 1937 he opened Lovett Hall in a building at the Edison Institute to carry on his quixotic mission.

In or around 1942, Ford introduced his own Early American Dances label. Recorded in the Ford Engineering Laboratory in Dearborn, it relied exclusively on recordings by Lovett's group, which by then was known simply as The Ford Orchestra. The records retailed for 52¢ each through the Montgomery Ward catalog and some specialty shops, along with a 50¢ booklet of dance instructions. They were also offered in album sets. Despite a lack of national advertising, the label was sufficiently successful that in 1944 Ford and Lovett launched a weekly radio broadcast devoted to the same material.

Rights to Ford's masters later passed to the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, which in the early 1950s licensed them for reissue by a different manufacturer under the supervision of Dick Moore.

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1888

Offices: Room 26, 3067 Exchange Place, Philadelphia (at founding); 130 S. 4th St., Philadelphia (by mid-1890)

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in eastern Pennsylvania (*see also* Western Pennsylvania Phonograph Company).

Some confusion surrounds Eastern Pennsylvania Phonograph's official founding date. The company was operational by November 14, 1888, when it exhibited phonographs and graphophones in a Philadelphia office building. It offered 1,500 shares of capital stock, at par value of \$100, on November 20, 1888, but did not apply for a corporate charter until June 24, 1889, casting doubt on *The Phonogram's* report that the company had been organized on May 14 of that year. The incorporators, as listed in the company's charter application notice, included James O. Clephane, Joseph O. Brown, Edwin P. Graham, George F. Huff, Charles B. McVay, and Walter Lyon. In late 1891, Charles F. Berwind was listed as president, L. Halsey Williams (who was also an investor in the Western Pennsylvania Phonograph Company) as vice-president, E. P. Wallace as general manager (later replacing Berwind as president), and Clephane as secretary. Thus far, no evidence has been found to suggest that the company produced any original recordings for sale to the general public.

EBONY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1940 – 1941

Offices: Los Angeles

Record Products: Ebony [1] (An Ebony Record)

Launched by song writers Otis Rene and Shelton Brooks in late 1940 to promote their compositions. Ebony was Otis Rene's second known commercial recording venture, preceded by Ammor and pre-dating Excelsior. Shelton Brooks at the time was making nightclub and stage appearances in the Los Angeles area, sometimes with his son, Shelton Jr., who performed "modern swing tunes," while Shelton Sr. reprised his earlier hits).

Ebony's first release, by the Four Tones, was announced in *The California Eagle* on January 9, 1941. Despite the reporter's claim that "Every machine on the Eastside of the city is playing this new record," the venture appears to have failed quickly. Beginning in 1945, the Ebony name was used by Mayo Williams (*q.v.*) for an unrelated label.

ECCLES DISC RECORDING CORPORATION — *See La Marr Record Company; Melody Moderne*

ECHO RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices: 214 E. Simenole St., McAlester, OK

Record Products: Echo [1]

A short-lived country-and-western label owned by singer Jack Padgett, *a.k.a.* The Texas Wrangler, who was featured on Echo's few known releases. Padgett was a regular performer on radio station KTMC (McAlester, Oklahoma) at the time. The records were first advertised locally in March 1948. Padgett went on to record for Talent Records in Dallas after closing his own company.

ECHO RECORDS [I]

An aborted race-record venture, Echo Records made its only known appearance in a March 1922 *Chicago Defender* advertisement placed by banjoist Gus Horseley (an associate of composer-publisher Perry Bradford), who gave his office address as 1547 Broadway. The address was the same multi-tenant building in which W. C. Handy's music company had its offices, which might have been simply coincidental; no connection has been found between Echo and Handy, who launched and then aborted his own record company several months later (*see* Handy Record Company). According to Horseley's ad, the company was to be incorporated in New York, with a \$10,000 capitalization, and would record Shelton Brooks, Lucille Hegamin, Lena Wilson, and unspecified others "as soon as their current

contracts expire." However, nothing further was heard of Echo Records, and thus far, no evidence has been found that it made or released any recordings.

ECHO RECORDS [II]

Record Production: 1950

Offices: New Orleans (PO box number only; no street address given)

Record Products: Echo [2]

A short-lived country-and-western label about which no reliable information has been found concerning ownership and operation. *Billboard* listed the company in its July 1950 label directory and briefly reviewed an Echo release by Billy Lee and his Red Wagon Boys in September, giving it a "Satisfactory" rating, after which nothing further was reported on the label. There is no known connection to Jack Padgett's earlier Echo Recording Company, nor to several Echo labels that were produced later in the 1950s.

THE CHARLES ECKART COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1950s

Offices and Pressing: 4880 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles

Pressing: Own plant — Los Angeles

Record Products: Cocktail Hour; pressings for independent labels

Charles Eckart was well-known among independent California record producers, many of whom used his master-processing and custom-pressing services. For a time in the late 1940s he served as director of the Pacific Coast Record Manufacturers' Association, a trade group established to promote the interests of small independent West Coast labels. His record company was first listed in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook*, which misspelled his name Eckert.

Eckart briefly produced his own Cocktail Hour label, which featured undistinguished, middle-of-the-road pop fare. The records were being advertised locally by October 1946, with a roster that included Jack Nye and Juan Rolando. The latter, described by columnist Hal Eaton as a "Hindu organist," also appeared in Cocktail Hour's equally innocuous Specialty Series, which was devoted to Latino-style dance numbers that were toned-down for the mainstream market. No new Cocktail Hour releases have been confirmed after the autumn of 1947.

EDDIE'S RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1952

Offices: 2818 Dowling St., Houston

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, Quinn Recording, possibly other independent studios

Pressing: Swing Record Manufacturing, probably other independent plant(s)

Record Products: Eddies's

Launched in early 1948 by Black record-store owner, distributor, and part-time disc jockey Eddie Henry. Henry was loosely affiliated with Freedom Records founder Solomon Kahal, to whom he occasionally supplied masters. Misprinted labels are known that show the correct Dowling Street address, but in Dallas.

Although Eddie's was primarily a race label, Henry later added a country-and-western line featuring the Bar-X Cowboys, and he even released some Czech material for the ethnic market. The company closed following Henry's death in early 1952, by which time it was largely inactive.

EDISON PHONOGRAPH COMPANY OF OHIO (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1897 – c. 1899

Offices: 427 Vine St., Cincinnati (to early 1899); Race St. and The Arcade (from early 1899); branches in Cleveland, Chicago, and Indianapolis

Record Products: Cylinders

This was a reorganization of James L. Andem's Ohio Phonograph Company, which made its own recordings in addition to marketing other companies' records. It was not an Edison company, despite its name.

Andem claimed that he had the right to use the Edison name, and exclusive rights to sell Edison products in Ohio, under his original license from the then-defunct North American Phonograph Company (*q.v.* in the Thomas Edison entry). The company sold its own "first-class, high-grade original records" for 50¢ each, half the average price for cylinders at that time. Artists recording for the company, as listed in *The Phonoscope* for May 1897, included Brand's Bands and Orchestras of Cincinnati and some apparently local singers who were identified only by their last names.

Andem sued Thomas Edison and Edison's National Phonograph Company during the summer of 1899, in a futile attempt to enforce the rights granted him by the long-abandoned North American Phonograph Company agreement. He lost his case and was subsequently ordered to cease his use of the Edison name. In October 1907, Andem was charged with forging the seals and official signatures on a 1905 bill of complaint against Edison. At that time, it was reported that Andem had filed more than three-hundred lawsuits against Edison and his various companies.

EDISON PHONOGRAPH WORKS — See Edison, Thomas A.

EDISON, THOMAS A. (Cylinders and Discs)

EDISON PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (1887–1888)

Offices: Jersey City, NJ

NORTH AMERICAN PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (1888–1893)

Offices: 160–164 Broadway, New York (c. 1888–1890) ; 44 Broad St., New York (from c. 1890); 14–16 Morris St., Jersey City, NJ (distribution); Masonic Temple, Chicago (branch office, from 1892)

Original-Master Source(s): Edison Phonograph Works (Orange, NJ)

Record Products: Cylinders

NATIONAL PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (1897 – 1911)

Offices: Orange, NJ; St. James Building, Broadway & 26th St., New York (to 5/1/1899); 135 5th Ave., New York (5/1/1899–4/1902); 83 Chambers St., New York (5/1902–2/1/1905); 31 Union Square, New York (2/1/1905–9/16/1907); 10 5th Ave., New York (from 9/16/1907); foreign offices in Berlin, Buenos Aires, London, Mexico City, Paris, Sydney

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — W. Orange, NJ (commercial recording through late 2–3/1904, experimental after that); Unknown New York location (c. 1899, unconfirmed); 65–69 4th Ave., New York (from 2–3/1904); Knickerbocker Building, 5th Ave. & 16th St., New York (from mid-1906)

Pressing: Own plant (W. Orange, NJ)

Record Products: Edison Record, Edison Concert Record, Edison Gold Moulded Record, Edison Amberol Record (cylinders); prototype and sample discs

THOMAS A. EDISON, INC. (PHONOGRAPH DIVISION) (1911–1929)

Offices: 51 Lakeside Ave., West Orange, NJ; multiple New York offices, including 10, 70, 79, and 261 5th Ave.

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — 79 5th Ave. (New York) (through 1/22/1929); 261 5th Ave., New York (beginning 2/4/29); 6th Ave. near 19th St., New York (supplementary studio, 7–11/1929); Columbia St. (West Orange, NJ, primarily for experimental and dubbing work); London (closed 1914); Paris, Berlin, Milan, Mexico City (all closed prior to 1914)

Pressing: Own plant (West Orange, NJ)

Record Products: Edison (Diamond) Disc / Edison Re-Creation, Edison Needle Type, Edison 40-Minute Record, Edison 24-Minute Record; Edison Amberol and Blue Amberol cylinders; Ediphone blanks and training cylinders; special-use discs (low-speed radio transcriptions, air-checks, Automatic Slogan Machine records, Selectatune multi-track records, etc.)

There was no commercial recording industry during the phonograph's first decade of existence (1877–1887). Thomas Edison's original phonograph, which made cylindrical recordings on tinfoil sheets, was capable of recording and reproducing music in only the most primitive fashion. The delicate tinfoil sheets did not lend themselves to repeated playings, mass duplication, or easy interchangeability. After the initial flurry of interest in the phonograph subsided, Thomas Edison shifted his attention to development of the incandescent bulb and did little more to develop the device. Only with the introduction of Edison's improved phonograph in 1888, and the beginning of commercial record

production for the North American Phonograph Company in 1889, were the first steps taken toward the development of a viable recording industry.

The event that refocused Edison's attention on the phonograph was the exhibition in New York of a Bell-Tainter graphophone in May 1887. The graphophone employed a reusable, interchangeable cylinder consisting of a narrow paper tube coated with a thin layer of ozocerite, a soft mineral wax. Within days of the event, Edison, with the assistance of Ezra T. Gilliland (one of the original regional phonograph exhibitors of 1878) began a complete redesign of his phonograph. He assigned his primary assistant, Charles Batchelor, the task of developing a more suitable recording surface than tinfoil.

Edison rejected the Bell-Tainter cylinder, opting instead for a larger-diameter cylinder of solid wax or wax-like material. Documentation of this experimental period is sparse, but it is known that Jonas Aylsworth took over research into cylinder materials in July 1887. He tested more than 700 compounds before settling on a form of metallic soap in the autumn of 1888. The exact composition remained an unpatented trade secret.

The Edison Phonograph Company was incorporated in Jersey City, New Jersey, on October 10, 1887, to hold the patents and manufacturing rights to Thomas Edison's improved phonograph and cylinders. The company is not known to have produced any cylinders for sale to the general public, focusing instead on the phonograph's use as a dictation machine. By then, Edison had opened a phonograph factory in Bloomfield, New Jersey, which delivered the first production machines in November. Edison had decided to sidestep the original Edison Speaking Phonograph Company, in part because some of its shareholders were now associated with the competing American Graphophone Company. Instead, Edison and Gilliland would market the improved machines through the newly formed Edison Phonograph Company, with Gilliland handling the marketing.

In the meantime, Jesse H. Lippincott, a Pittsburgh entrepreneur who made his fortune in the glass industry, was in the process of securing an exclusive marketing license with the competing American Graphophone Company. A short time after taking on the graphophone in March 1888, Lippincott was shown the improved Edison phonograph by Gilliland. Realizing the Edison machine's technical superiority, and fearing that it could undermine graphophone sales, Lippincott offered to purchase the Edison Phonograph Company for \$500,000.

Edison agreed to sell his phonograph company to Lippincott in June 1888, assigning all marketing rights to Lippincott but retaining the manufacturing rights. Edison, however, did not realize that the deal secretly involved a large cash payment to Gilliland and his attorney, John Tomlinson. After discovering the payment in September 1888, Edison severed personal relations with Gilliland, whose responsibility had been to develop the phonograph for entertainment as well as business purposes. The rift temporarily slowed development of Edison's phonograph for non-business use, with neither Lippincott nor Edison showing much apparent interest in the potential entertainment market.

On July 14, 1888, Lippincott chartered the North American Phonograph Company to trade in Edison phonographs as well as the competing graphophone and "all materials relating to the recording and reproduction of sound." On July 17, he transferred his agreements with Edison and the American Graphophone Company to North American Phonograph in exchange for \$6,560,000 in capital stock. For the next five years, North American would market both Edison and American Graphophone products.

Lippincott modeled his marketing plan after the Bell Telephone Company, renting rather than selling phonographs and graphophones. Leasing was to be handled through thirty local sub-companies operating in strictly defined sales territories under the North American Phonograph Company umbrella, of which the Columbia Phonograph Company of Washington, D.C., was among the earliest and most successful. Although customers were offered the choice of Columbia's graphophone or Edison's phonograph, the latter was generally preferred.

Demand for musical cylinders was spurred by the introduction of coin-operated phonographs (the earliest of which were on the market by late 1889) and a growing number of traveling exhibitors who staged "phonographic concerts." The Pacific Phonograph Company was among the first to capitalize on the coin-operated machines, placing them in hotels, saloons and even a ferry waiting room, and changing the selections every other day. In November 1890, the Automatic Phonograph Exhibition Company reported that it

had placed 743 coin-operated machines nationwide, with North American's New York, Old Dominion, and Columbia sub-companies accounting for half of those placements.

Edison soon found himself in the position of having to supply the North American sub-companies with large quantities of commercial-grade musical cylinders. Theo Wangemann, an Edison laboratory staffer who was also a skilled pianist, had already produced some experimental musical recordings. As early as December 1888, F. W. Baldwin (editor of local *Orange Chronicle*) had written to Thomas Edison, offering the services of "some musical friends" in making records. Edison, however, showed little interest in any but the technical aspects of record-making, leaving the selection of artists and repertoire in Wangemann's hands.

Wangemann began documenting recording sessions at the Edison laboratory in Orange, New Jersey, on May 24, 1889, beginning with fourteen flute solos by F. Goede. Alfred Amrhein recorded eleven violin solos the next day. Recording activities increased steadily as 1889 progressed, and in January 1890 the company issued its first formal printed catalog. The masters were transcribed to commercial copies at the Edison Phonograph Works and were sold through North American Phonograph and its sub-companies. There was little consistency in the quality of early Edison cylinders, and prices varied accordingly, with "A" grade (first-quality) records listing from 75¢ (for instrumental solos) to \$1.20 (for vocal quartets). Cylinders that were downgraded for low volume or other technical shortcomings were often sold at a considerable discount, rather than being scrapped.

A consistent, efficient method of duplication had not yet been developed for commercial use, although an experimental molding process was in place. Laboratory staffer Franz Schulze-Berge, with assistance from Charles Wurth, had experimented as early April 1888 with a process for plating cylinder masters in a vacuum, at first with silver and later with gold, producing a permanent metal master from which multiple cylinders could be molded. Early results were sufficiently promising that by 1890 Schulze-Berge was producing experimental molded cylinders on a regular basis. However, the process proved to be not commercially viable at that early stage, due to the use of a multi-part mold that left raised ridges on the playing surface along the separation points.

Edison instead turned to a less complex method of duplication, developed by Walter Miller, involving direct acoustic or mechanical links between playback and recording machines. In a later court proceeding, Miller testified that he had begun experimenting with cylinder duplication in or around 1888 and that North American was selling duplicated cylinders made on paraffin blanks in "1889 or 1890." The first mention that a duplicating process was in use appeared in Wangemann's log book on August 23, 1890, but no technical details were noted.

Mechanical duplication, although far more efficient than recording each copy individually (referred to informally as the "round" method), was still a time-consuming process that required performers to sing or play a title repeatedly into a bank of recording machines until enough masters had been made to generate the requisite number of copies. Only a few copies could be made from each master before it became too worn to use, requiring frequent remakes of the most popular titles. The results could vary considerably, depending upon the performers' distance from each of the multiple recording horns, variations in the artists' performance from one "round" of recording to the next, the degree of wear on the individual masters, and many other variables.

Under his agreement with Jesse Lippincott, Thomas Edison had reserved the exclusive right to supply musical records to North American. Consequently, the sudden surge in demand for cylinder records posed difficulties for Edison. As complaints mounted from the local sub-companies over poor-quality cylinders and unfilled orders, Edison rethought his involvement with the commercial recording business. In January 1890 he announced that he was suspending record production at the Phonograph Works, declaring, "I have permitted musical records to be made here purely as a matter of accommodation to the North American people... So long as the work required none of my personal attention I had no objection to its being carried on in my Laboratory, but the number of complaints that I have been asked to read lately has shown me very clearly that this business must be handled by someone who has more time to devote to it than I have; or perhaps it might be more satisfactory for the different phonograph companies to make their own records."

Wangemann's logbook shows the last regular recording session was held at the Edison

laboratory on January 20, 1890. A few new records would be made to order after that date for private clients, including the Lenox Lyceum and unspecified customers in Minneapolis and South America, but the primary job of the Phonograph Works after January 1890 was the duplication of existing recordings for distribution to the North American sub-companies.

With complaints continuing to pour in from that group, Thomas Edison announced a new policy concerning record production that would have a major impact on the nascent recording industry. In a letter to S. B. Eaton, Edison for the first time gave permission to North American's sub-companies to make their own recordings, writing, "I do not want to make original cylinders and have no objection to the local companies making them. What I want is the manufacturing of duplicates, which are very different things from records made by musicians direct." The Columbia Phonograph Company was quick to seize the opportunity, and several other North American sub-companies would soon follow suit.

Edison's reluctance to return to the recording business was reiterated in an unsigned February 1891 *Phonogram* article, which declared, "To prepare for doing this business properly, it will be necessary [for Mr. Edison] to invest a large amount of money in a plant, which would not be justified by the present condition of the musical-record business, owing to the fact that so many of the local companies are trying to make these records for themselves."

In the same month, A. O. Tate reported that a new process for duplicating records was nearly perfected and would soon be placed in operation at the Phonograph Works. Walter Miller broke the news officially at the National Phonograph Association's 1891 convention, promising two classes of duplicated records, the less expensive presumably made by pantographic copying. The more expensive class were to be made using Wurth's molding process. Miller asserted that these were "absolutely perfect" duplicates, with up to one million copies supposedly possible from a single master. However, Miller warned, "Mr. Edison is not in a position yet to furnish the more expensive ones."

Samples of duplicated records were dispatched to the local companies in July. The letter that accompanied the samples explained that records would be duplicated to order at the Phonograph Works upon receipt of orders from North American — a procedure that did nothing to address the slow deliveries about which dealers continued to complain. A report on duplicating expenses, prepared by Walter Miller on October 1, 1891, reveals costs of \$22,232.10 for electroplating, suggesting that large quantities of molds were being made. However, the molding process seems to have abandoned quickly, and development would not resume until the end of the decade. In the meantime, duplicates continued to be made using the pantograph.

Reflecting Edison's newly liberalized stance on independent record production, the company offered to make 30 to 150 duplicates per customer-supplied master, "provided the former reach us in perfect condition and are free from scratching." By March 1892 the Wangemann logs confirm that up to 150 copies were being obtained from each master, albeit by pantographic transcription rather than the molding.

By that time, it was becoming apparent that some of the North American sub-companies were doing their own duplicating. Tate began ordering cylinders from those companies for analysis by Walter Miller, who found them to be "very much inferior to our records in quality, tone and volume." Samuel Insull, Edison private secretary, wrote to the inventor that "it would be excellent policy on the part of the North American Phonograph Company to stop these Local Companies from continuing in business as semi-manufacturers." Unable to do so, North American Phonograph resumed commercial recording at the Edison laboratory and announced its first new releases on April 1, 1892.

Nevertheless, the floodgates had been opened. At the June 1892 convention of the National Phonograph Association, eight of the sub-companies — Columbia, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, New England, New Jersey, New York, and Ohio — confirmed that they were making their own recordings on Edison blanks. At the convention, North American vice-president Thomas Lombard admitted, "Strictly speaking, according to the contract, I do not think they [the local sub-companies] have any right to do it... But at the same time, we did not want to act like the dog in the manger and say: 'We won't make them and you can't make them.' ... You are making these records and we don't want to

bother with it. And if there is any money in it for you, we would be very glad to have you make it. We sell you the cylinders on which to make them and it makes business for us in that way. I believe that we will eventually be able to give you a first-class, high-class record, but at the same time we recognize that a great many of the local companies have exceptional opportunities in obtaining local talent."

In June 1892, Thomas Edison assumed the presidency of the North American Phonograph Company and undertook a reorganization. Over the next two years he assumed an increasing amount of control over the company, as well as its licensed sub-companies, which would now answer to and share profits with North American Phonograph. To underscore the new arrangement, Thomas Lombard and A. O. Tate were dispatched to the sub-companies during the summer of 1892 to bind the agreement.

Having become North American Phonograph's principal creditor during the course of the reorganization, Thomas Edison suddenly resigned as president on January 9, 1894. Jesse Lippincott's death in April of that year provided Edison the opening to retake control of his phonograph patents. When North American was unable to pay a \$78,518.37 demand note presented by Edison, he declared the company to be in default and on May 1 demanded the immediate payment of principal and interest on \$300,000 worth of bonds, an impossibility for the company. North American Phonograph was declared bankrupt, and John R. Hardin was appointed receiver on August 21, 1894. Its record-making operation was taken over by Cleveland Walcutt and Walter Miller on September 1, 1894 (*see* Walcutt & Miller).

In the extended litigation and negotiations that followed North American's bankruptcy, Edison was prevented from producing or selling records, leaving a gap that was readily filled by other companies, particularly Columbia. The impasse was finally resolved in December 1896, when Hardin presented a plan to the bankruptcy chancellor that would allow Edison to dismantle the remains of North American and repurchase his original stock and phonograph patents. In anticipation of the court's approval, a new entity, the National Phonograph Company, was chartered in New Jersey on January 24, 1896. The plan was accepted on January 15, and on February 8, North American's assets were offered for public sale. Edison won all bids and directed that his purchases be transferred to National Phonograph.

The National Phonograph Company marked Thomas Edison's reentry into commercial record production, which he had abandoned following North American's collapse. By the end of 1896, National Phonograph had introduced the spring-powered Home Phonograph, the first Edison machine designed and priced expressly for the general consumer. However, no evidence has been found that National Phonograph was producing its own records for the machines at that early date.

Exactly when National Phonograph began marketing records remains unclear. What is certain is that the company opened a "Musical Records" account on April 30, 1897, which showed ever-increasing expenditures as the year progressed. Based on those ledgers, Edison researcher Ray Wile estimated that National Phonograph first offered cylinders for sale under the Edison brand in May 1897. A catalog reportedly was issued in August 1897, but no copies are known to survive. The earliest published list known to exist, consisting of thirteen selections credited to "Edison's Band," appeared in the November–December 1897 edition of *The Phonoscope*, which probably was published a month or more after its cover date.

Wile suggested that the earliest "Edison" cylinders to be marketed by National Phonograph might have come from the United States Phonograph Company's catalog. Although that suspicion remains unproven, Wile also uncovered ample proof that the firm of Walcutt & Leeds supplied many cylinders to National Phonograph. The key evidence consists of court-ordered reports that Walcutt & Leeds were required to file with any companies to which it supplied duplicated cylinders. Those reports, as interpreted by Wile, show that a significant portion of the earliest Edison-branded cylinders was supplied by Walcutt & Leeds. Another new account, tracking payment to recording artists, was opened on October 9, 1897, probably indicating the resumption of Edison's own recording activities.

The relationship with Walcutt & Leeds appears to have been terminated in April, 1899. By then, recording sessions were being held regularly in Edison's West Orange studio. Although a New York studio reportedly was opened in or around August 1899 under the management of Isaac Norcross, commercial recording did not begin on a regular basis in

New York until February or March 1904, when a permanent studio was opened on Fourth Avenue. After that, the West Orange studios were used primarily for experimental recording sessions and, later, the dubbing of Blue Amberol cylinders and Long-Playing discs.

National Phonograph's factory logs confirm that the company began electroplating permanent master cylinders as early as December 15, 1897. It was doing so on a regular basis by mid-1899, eliminating the need for marathon "round" sessions, in which a selection had to be performed numerous times in order to generate a sufficient number of wax masters from which commercial copies could be dubbed. The molding process, however, had not yet been adopted for mass duplication. However, the use of molded masters and pantographic duplication enabled National Phonograph to keep up with the rapidly increasing demand for cylinders, while introducing some degree of consistency from one copy to the next. Talent costs were reduced as well, since it was no longer necessary to pay artists to endlessly repeat selections, as had been required before the advent of permanent masters. It also opened the way for more recordings by busy celebrities, who would now need to record a selection only once.

After much experimentation, stearic acid (saponified tallow) was chosen as the primary ingredient for Edison's new cylinders, with the addition of various hardeners and other additives. The formulas, continually evolved in the quest for quieter, more durable surfaces. Although universally referred to as "brown wax" by collectors, the formulas contained little actual wax. Edison's cylinders of the period showed no identifying markings, relying instead on title slips and spoken announcements to identify the contents. The earliest records had a stated playing speed of 125 revolutions per minute, yielding a playing time approaching three minutes. Actual speeds varied considerably until late 1899, when 144 rpm became the stated standard. It would be supplanted by 160 rpm once molded cylinders became the norm.

National Phonograph initially used a "block" system for classifying its releases and assigning catalog numbers. Each performer or performance type was allocated to its own numerical block, which would gradually fill up as new releases were added. The first block, beginning at #1 and eventually reaching #161, was reserved for records by the Edison Band. The second and largest, beginning at #500, was reserved for orchestral recordings. However, the system became increasingly unwieldy as new artists and genres were added. It was finally abandoned midway through the May 1899 releases, ending at #7014 in J. J. Fisher's block. Fisher apparently had been allocated numbers through #7099, so his unused numbers were skipped, and a new consecutive (non-block) numbering system was begun at #7100.

In the late 1890s, following Columbia's lead, National Phonograph introduced Edison Concert Records, 5" diameter cylinders that provided greater volume (but no longer playing time) than standard cylinders. Both companies are thought to have originally used the oversized cylinders as pantographing masters from which the standard-size cylinders were dubbed. Columbia was the first to advertise them for sale to the public, as Graphophone Grand Records, in January 1898. Concert-sized Edison blanks were first shipped at the end of 1898, but the exact date on which pre-recorded Edison Concert Records were introduced remains open to question. National Phonograph's trademark application claimed use of the Concert brand beginning in March 1899, but the absence of the Concert designation on some early record slips suggests that some of the oversized records might have shipped before the Concert name was adopted. The factory logs do not show Concert masters being plated prior to May 23, 1899, possibly indicating that the earliest Concert cylinders were pantographed from standard-size masters.

At first, Concert Records (which duplicated only selected titles from the standard catalog) used the same catalog numbers as the corresponding standard issues. Beginning in 1899, however, they were assigned their own catalog numbers, in a "B" prefixed series. The Edison Concert Phonograph was first advertised in February of that year. Initially retailing for \$4 each (compared with \$1 for standard cylinders), Concert Records and the machines on which they were played were priced well beyond the reach of the average consumer. Cylinder prices were reduced to \$2.50 on November 1, 1899, with a corresponding reduction in the price of the Concert phonograph, and there would be further price cuts in the early 1900s.

The last Concert masters were electroplated on January 31, 1901, corresponding to a

change in marketing methods for the large cylinders. The final Concert Record catalog was issued in March of that year, after which mass production of the "B" series was discontinued. Instead, National Phonograph announced that customers could now order any title in the two-minute catalog in Concert format, a practice that continued into the Gold Moulded period. From that point forward, Concert cylinders were custom products, individually pantographed to order. The dubbings were made from standard two-minute records, resulting in a noticeable loss of quality, and unlike the standard two-minute records, they were not returnable. Concert Records were never produced in molded form, as the company periodically reminded its customers and dealers.

In the end, Concert Records comprised an insignificant portion of Edison's overall record sales. According to an internal document, Concerts accounted for little more than 5% of Edison cylinder shipments from March 1899 through February 1902, which appears to have been the high point. The option to special-order records in Concert format last appeared in the September 1907 edition of the *Edison Phonograph Monthly*, although catalogs through 1910 continued to state that the records and blanks were available.

In the meantime, the success of the molded-master process was sparking interest in its potential for mass-producing molded cylinders for commercial sale. After extensive experimentation, a variation on Wurth's molding process, using poured molten "wax" rather than preformed blanks, was chosen for commercial production.

Electroplating of masters for the new molded records began on January 21, 1901, when a new section appeared in the factory plating ledger, headed "Small Moulds for New Process Duplicates — Speed 160." Recording activity reached a peak during the summer and early autumn, in anticipation of launching the molded cylinders in early 1902. No hint of the new process was leaked to dealers or the public. When National Phonograph released its first molded cylinders in December 1901, it was not to the general consumer market. Instead, the new process was used to produce language-instruction records for the International Correspondence Schools of Scranton, Pennsylvania.

The first catalog of Edison molded cylinders for sale to the general public was published in February 1902, comprising remakes of 678 brown-wax titles, most of which retained their original catalog numbers. It also contained a single new Gold Moulded release (#8003), the first Edison recording to be offered only in molded form. Production of brown-wax cylinders, excepting Concert Records and recording blanks, was discontinued on July 25, 1902. By the end of the year, nearly three-hundred additional new titles had been added to the domestic catalog.

Edison's new cylinders at first were marketed as "High-Speed Hard Wax Moulded Records," then as "Moulded Records," and then finally, in November 1903, as "Gold Moulded Records." The speed was standardized at 160 rpm, reducing playing time to slightly over two minutes. Other than a twist of the speed regulator, the new records could be played on existing phonographs without the need for special attachments, although an updated reproducer was recommended. The earliest Gold Moulded cylinders still lacked identifying markings, other than a faint handwritten catalog number and a small facsimile of Edison's signature. That shortcoming was finally remedied in August 1904, when beveled-edged cylinders were introduced that showed catalog numbers, titles, and performance types (but not the artists' names at first) on the rims.

On December 15, 1905, National Phonograph notified its dealers of the impending launch of Edison Grand Opera Records. The two-minute cylinders were to retail for 75¢, significantly undercutting Victor's Red Seal pricing. The initial offering, advertised to dealers in January 1906, comprised only ten titles, but made it clear that Edison was recruiting world-class talent, including Antonio Scotti and Anton Van Rooy, whose Victor and Columbia contracts, respectively, apparently did not prohibit them from making cylinders for competing companies. Although critics and the public praised the records' technical quality, there were complaints concerning the severe abridgements and overly fast tempos necessitated by the cylinders' short playing time. Edison soldiered on with the series despite disappointing sales, but the Grand Opera series barely surpassed one-hundred releases before it was finally scuttled in the summer of 1908.

Although sonically superior to any other record on the market at the time, the Edison Gold Moulded cylinder had two serious drawbacks — fragility and short playing time. Edison had rejected celluloid as a molding medium in the 1890s, thus allowing competitors

to patent a process for producing virtually unbreakable celluloid cylinders (*see* Lambert Company *and* Indestructible Phonographic Record Company). Short playing time became an issue in the early 1900s, with the advent of ten- and twelve-inch disc records that offered one-to-two more minutes of playing time than the two-minute cylinder.

Edison's engineers finally began to develop a longer-playing cylinder at some point in 1906 or early 1907. With so many two-minute machines already in use, Edison wisely rejected "any change in the dimensions of the records themselves [that] would unfit them for use with hundreds of thousands of talking-machines now on the market" — a mistake Columbia had recently made with its "half-foot long" Twentieth Century cylinders. The solution was a seemingly simple doubling of the groove pitch, to 200 turns per inch, but the problems that such a fine groove presented soon became apparent. Initial tests with a standard Edison recorder produced a record of such low volume that an entirely new recording head had to be developed. The metallic-soap composition used in Edison's standard two-minute records proved to be too soft for the new records, and attempts to develop a suitable synthetic resin failed (although the research into that matter would later lead to development of the phenolic resin used in Edison's Diamond Discs). In the end, Edison's engineers resorted to a harder metallic-soap compound that proved to be somewhat more resistant to wear, although more brittle, than the two-minute material. The finer groove also yielded noticeably less volume than that of the two-minute record. Nevertheless, by January 1907 work had progressed to the point that Edison was able to file a patent on a workable four-minute system. Entries for experimental four-minute recording sessions began to appear in the studio cash book in October 190. By the late spring of 1908, four-minute sessions were being logged with some regularity in anticipation of an autumn launch.

The new records would be named Amberols, at Thomas Edison's insistence, although they neither contained nor resembled amber. They were first placed on sale on October 1, 1908, two months after dealers had been notified of their impending arrival. The Amberols were manufactured with flat rim-ends, to prevent confusion with the bevel-edged two-minute issues, and the box was redesigned, doing away with the pressed-cardboard end-caps that had been standard since the 1890s. Instead, the caps fit flush with the main body of the box, giving the container a more modern appearance. Beginning in January 1909 the box lids were labeled with titles and artists, a welcome improvement over the previous practice of showing only catalog numbers.

The initial Amberol Advance List, published in September 1908, comprised fifty numbers. The first records were shipped to dealers on September 24, with the inexplicable provision that sale was strictly forbidden before October 1. The retail price was 50¢, and dealers were instructed to point out to reluctant customers that a four-minute Amberol "will afford as much entertainment as two regular [35¢] Edison records." Aside from the longer playing time, there was little to distinguish the early offerings from Edison's usual two-minute fare. The list was populated largely by the usual studio bands and singers, along with a few offerings by vaudeville and concert-hall favorites. There was no trace yet of a serious operatic or classical series. Early recordings followed the two-minute model, commencing with spoken announcements by Edward Meeker, a practice that was soon abandoned on two- as well as four-minute records.

The Gold Moulded designation was dropped a month before the Amberol's introduction, after which two-minute cylinders were designated Edison Standard Records. Despite the company's assurance that two-minute production would continue, *The Edison Phonograph Monthly* for September 1908 listed two-hundred numbers (some of them barely a year old) that were slated for deletion in December. It was the first of many such purges, which grew larger and more frequent as the Amberol gained in popularity. However, Edison was far from abandoning the two-minute line entirely, as was signaled by the October release of four new titles by Harry Lauder and some highly publicized recordings by presidential candidates William Howard Taft and William Jennings Bryan.

Edison mounted a major advertising campaign for the Amberol beginning in October 1908, placing full-page advertisements (many featuring the work of prominent illustrators) in the most popular magazines. Unfortunately, the company was unable to keep pace with demand for the new records, as well as the new machines and attachments with which to play them. Conversion kits were in especially short supply; a different kit was required

for each phonograph model, and each was installed and operated a bit differently. Late or incomplete deliveries of records and kits were reported through the end of 1913.

Initial enthusiasm over the Amberol was quickly dampened by complaints about premature record wear, breakage, and low volume. The volume problem was solved to some extent with the substitution of an improved, viscous-damped recorder in 1910. Although the new recorder was more sensitive than earlier models, the louder recordings that it produced tended to wear out more quickly. The solution was an even harder, but still more brittle, metallic soap formulation. Despite widespread complaints from customers and dealers alike, only the most oblique references to these problems ever appeared in Edison's house publications.

Amberols were introduced to the British market in December 1908. A month later, the company announced that it would begin closing its foreign molding plants and would transfer all cylinder manufacturing to the Orange, New Jersey plants, for cost-cutting and quality-control purposes. However, the transition was to be phased-in slowly. Edison's recording operations were to continue unimpeded in London, Paris, and Berlin, for the time being.

In the meantime, the number of new Amberol offerings was steadily increasing. The January 1909 advance list contained fourteen new Amberol records; the number jumped to twenty in February. At the same time, more two-minute cylinders were being slated for deletion. In April it was announced that three-hundred additional two-minute titles would be deleted from the catalog on August 1, 1909, and three-hundred more were to be deleted on January 1, 1910. National Phonograph official blamed the action on dealers, citing their complaints about the need to carry an excessive amount of inventory.

May 1909 saw the first Amberol foreign-series releases, beginning with domestic recordings made for the Spanish-speaking market. In May and June, Edison's New York studio hosted no fewer than twenty-five sessions by Argentinian stars Alfredo Gobbi and Flora Rodríguez de Gobbi, who brought along their own chorus. Engineers George J. Werner and F. C. Burt spent the summer in Mexico City, where they made several hundred recordings for the export market. Foreign-language recordings from Edison's Paris and Berlin sessions began to appear in the Amberol list as well.

Work was also under way to expand Edison's domestic artist roster. A special effort seems to have made to procure Victor artists whose contracts did not prohibit them from making cylinder records. The highly popular United States Marine Band, which had been recording for Victor since 1906, was signed in early 1909. In a rare departure from normal practice, Edison did not require the Marines to report to the New York studio. Instead, engineers were dispatched to make the recordings in Washington, D.C., an accommodation that Victor also provided.

News of the Marine Band's signing was quickly eclipsed by the announcement that composer Victor Herbert had signed an exclusive contract to serve as Edison's musical advisor "for an indefinite period" beginning June 1, 1909. Herbert's signing was a remarkable achievement, given his past unhappy experiences with the recording industry. In the early 1900s he had sued the Universal Talking Machine Company to prevent their use of his name on Zon-O-Phone records with which he had nothing to do, and he frequently voiced his resentment over not being paid royalties on recordings of his compositions. Although the extent of Herbert's influence and authority within the Edison organization remains unclear, there was a noticeable improvement in the company's artist roster and recorded repertoire during his tenure.

In July 1909 National Phonograph announced that a premium-priced Grand Opera Amberol series was in preparation. Recording for the new series had already been under way for two months, beginning with May 1909 sessions by tenor Riccardo Martin. National Phonograph Company president Frank Dyer spent much of that summer in Europe, recruiting talent for the Grand Opera records, while taking in the sights with his family. His long trek to visit Leo Slezak in a secluded Pyrenees village garnered an Edison contract with the illustrious tenor. The Grand Opera catalog comprised a mixture of domestic and imported recordings by Slezak, Blanche Arral, Lucrezia Bori, Florencio Constantino, Marie Rappold, and other international celebrities, many of whom were under exclusive contract to other companies for disc recordings. The first releases, listed in November 1909, used B- prefixed catalog numbers that began where the ill-fated two-minute Grand Opera series

had ended. The records were packed in distinctive pebble-textured boxes on which only the word "Edison" appeared.

The wealth of new Edison talent was not limited to the classical catalog. Edison's 1910 signing of Sarah Bernhardt, accompanied by marketing copy that wrongly suggested the Edison recordings were her first, added even greater luster to the Amberol brand. Much to the Victor Talking Machine Company's chagrin, two of its biggest draws — Sousa's Band and Harry Lauder — were advertised as exclusive artists in the Amberol list, sparking a war of words between the companies that became particularly heated in the case of Lauder. Edison even upstaged Victor by announcing its recording of explorer Ernest Shackleton a month before Victor listed its version. In addition to the usual freelance studio performers, the popular catalog now boasted an impressive roster of vaudeville headliners and Broadway stars, including Marie Dressler, Irene Franklin, Stella Mayhew, Nat M. Wills, and Sophie Tucker.

By the late summer of 1909, the four-minute Amberol had clearly emerged as Edison's format of choice. The August advance list contained only twenty two-minute domestic offerings, but sixty-three new domestic Amberols. In the same month, it was announced that beginning with the October list, only ten new two-minute cylinders would be released each month. Any lingering doubts that the Amberol now took precedence were quashed in October, when the company announced the impending arrival of its first internal-horn phonograph, the Amberola. Only the initial Model 1A was equipped to play both two- and four-minute records. Beginning with Model 1B, the Amberola was exclusively a four-minute machine.

In April 1910, National Phonograph began giving away a set of ten special Amberols with the purchase of a four-minute conversion kit. A second such promotional series, intended for what was termed "the Jewish trade," was announced in October 1911. Both sets were packed in Special Amberol boxes, and aside from several issues in the Jewish series, the recordings were not released as standard Amberol issues and could not be purchased outright. Yet another promotional scheme was hatched in July 1910, this time involving a list of twenty-four Special Amberols, with D- prefixed numbers, that were not a part of the catalog. Any "bona fide owner" of an Edison phonograph who brought a dealer a paying customer for a new machine was entitled to select six free cylinders from the list, once the sale was completed. Judging from the relative scarcity of the Special Amberols, the giveaway plans were not a great success.

In the meantime, Jonas Aylsworth and other Edison staffers had been quietly experimenting with a disc record since 1908, eventually deciding upon a fine-groove, vertically cut disc, plastic-surfaced disc. In September 1910, the Condensite Company was formed to manufacture the phenolic resin that would constitute the discs' playing surface. The smooth playing surface would be laminated over a thick core of wood flour mixed with phenol, formaldehyde, and other additives, imparting exceptional rigidity and resistance to breakage.

Cryptic markings in the Edison studio cash books suggest that some experimental disc recording might have been under way as early as 1908. By early 1910, with pressure mounting within the company to bring a disc to market, the New York studio began making recordings with an eye toward commercial release. The first such session, employing Marguerite Sylva and Carmen Melis, was held on January 31, 1910. By the spring of 1910, the "Disc" notation was appearing in the cash books at irregular intervals. The assignment of master numbers began later that year. The first (#100) was assigned to Will Oakland's July 15 recording of "Just Before the Battle, Mother." Because the earliest disc master numbers were allocated at the time a recording was judged acceptable for potential release, rather than on the actual recording date, they do not proceed in strict chronological order. Thus, some earlier disc masters than Oakland's #100 bear higher numbers.

While disc recording proceeded in New York, Thomas Graf, the managing director of Edison's German branch, was assigned to oversee production of 10" and 12" operatic recordings in London, Paris, and Berlin. Although Graf recruited some stellar artists, Thomas Edison bluntly rejected most of the recordings, none of which saw issue during his lifetime. Fortunately, many of those masters survived, and some transfers are available in Compact Disc format. The vast majority of the 1910–1911 domestic disc masters also went unused.

After considerable experimentation by his staff, and a stringent effort to avoid infringing any competitors' patents, Edison filed two U.S. patents covering the basic features of his disc phonograph (#1,184,332 and #1,184,333) in December 1910 and February 1911, respectively. Originally envisioned as a low-cost machine, the increasingly complicated Edison disc phonograph turned out to be quite the opposite. Faced with unexpectedly high manufacturing costs, the company decided instead to target the high-end market. The 1910–1911 masters, which included a substantial number of classical and operatic recordings by highly paid celebrity artists, reflected the change.

Rumors of an Edison disc phonograph and record were rife by January 1911, but they were briefly overshadowed on February 28, 1911, when National Phonograph and Edison's other operations were consolidated under the name of Thomas A. Edison, Inc. The corporation was chartered to combine the inventor's widely diversified companies, including the National Phonograph Company, under a single corporate umbrella. The reorganization came at a time when Edison was developing a more durable alternative to the fragile Amberol cylinder as well as planning his entry into the disc market.

Faced with the popularity of Indestructible's and U-S Everlasting's virtually unbreakable celluloid cylinders, Edison finally ordered the development of a competing product in the summer of 1911. Thomas Lambert's patent on the celluloid cylinder-molding process (later acquired by the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company) had effectively blocked Edison from manufacturing celluloid cylinders for many years. Seeking a work-around, Edison engineer Jonas Aylsworth patented a method of molding unbreakable cylinders using various resins in 1909. Requiring the injection of highly pressurized aldehyde gas into the mold, it was not developed commercially.

Edison's attorneys finally discovered an opportunity in the defunct British Lambert Company, from which they acquired the rights to Lambert's British patent. Edison then hired Brian Philpot, to whom Lambert had assigned a substantial stake in the original celluloid molding patent a decade earlier. By late 1911, the Edison engineers were busy making further refinements to Philpot's celluloid process and ordering new molding equipment in anticipation of launching an Edison celluloid cylinder. Considerable effort went into improving the surface and durability of the celluloid tubing, which was supplied in rather rough form by the Celluloid Manufacturing Company of Newark, New Jersey. Plaster of Paris cores were substituted for Philpot's metal rims and cardboard liners. The records were named Blue Amberols, for the deep blue color imparted by an acetone-based methyl blue dye that was used to harden the celluloid surface.

The Blue Amberol production process was time-consuming and labor-intensive. The celluloid proved difficult to dye in high humidity, a common condition in northern New Jersey. Once dyed, the celluloid tubing was put aside to dry for twelve hours before being cut to size and sent to the molding department. There, a two-man team was assigned to each press — one to load the celluloid blank and position an inflatable rubber bladder that forced the tube against the mold, and the other to operate the machinery. The rubber bladders were a particularly weak link in the process, being prone to blowouts that could damage molds and stall production.

The molded cylinders were allowed to cool for about five minutes before being sent to another area to be backed with plaster. After oven-drying for twelve hours, the cylinders were moved to another area, where the plaster cores were reamed and smoothed to the proper dimensions. The records were then dusted and cleaned with oil and benzene before being passed on to yet another area, where the molded titles were filled with white pigment. Once the pigment was dry, the records were given a final washing and were sent to the packing department where they (and, until late 1914, their matching record slips) were inserted into boxes by hand. The matching lid was applied, and the production cycle was finally complete, two to three days after it had begun. Only minor changes were made to the process over the years.

There was no official advance notice that the Blue Amberols were coming, but dealers might have detected something amiss in the September 1912 *Edison Phonograph Monthly*, which repeated the previous month's Amberol listings but added no new titles. The news broke in the following month's issue, with a cover that trumpeted, "Mr. Edison Announces His New Record — The Blue Amberol." The inventor's long delay in introducing celluloid records was spun as being the result of his time-consuming quest for perfection.

No further domestic "wax" Amberol or two-minute cylinder releases would appear in *The Edison Phonograph Monthly*, which ran its first Blue Amberol list in the October issue. For dealers who were suddenly burdened with obsolete two- and four-minute wax stock, the company offered an exchange program that required the purchase of new merchandise to qualify for rather meager exchange privileges. Discounting, even of obsolete stock, was not an option for dealers who wished to keep their Edison franchises; every issue of *EPM* included a "Suspended List" of those caught cutting prices in violation of their dealer agreements, and the company did not hesitate to prosecute persistent violators. It was soon clear that drastic measures would have to be taken to fend off a dealer revolt.

The crisis was averted on November 20, 1912, when the company announced it would allow dealers to heavily discount the obsolete wax cylinders "to show our appreciation of the loyalty of the trade." Retail prices were slashed to 21¢ from 35¢ on two-minute records, and to 31¢ from 50¢ on standard-series Amberols. There were corresponding reductions in the more expensive Concert and Grand Opera series, with discounted prices ranging from 45¢ to \$1.20 for records that had previously retailed from 75¢ to \$2.75. The wax Amberol had not quite run its course, however; Edison continued to produce new issues for the foreign trade into early 1913. After that, the Amberol quietly slipped into oblivion. Some popular Amberol titles were renumbered and reissued as Blue Amberols before cylinder-dubbing from discs became standard procedure in 1914. A few others were resurrected as Blue Amberols in the late 1920s, in an attempt to flesh out the catalog as cheaply as possible.

At the same time the Blue Amberol was undergoing development, disc phonograph and records were finally being readied for production. The Edison Disc Phonograph made its premature debut to the trade in Milwaukee, on July 10, 1911, at the Fifth Annual Convention of the National Association of Talking Machine Jobbers. The phonographs and records were still in the development stage and not ready for sale at that point. Slow product development, and the premature announcement of those products, were characteristic of Edison's phonograph division, and the new discs products proved to be no exception. Even *The Edison Phonograph Monthly* admitted that development had been "a long, hard grind." Sample discs and machines began to reach jobbers in December 1912, and the company predicted that regular shipments would begin soon. However, the line was not deemed ready for sale to the general public until the following October.

Having rejected some of the finest operatic recordings made by his company, Edison instead chose two stereotypical "coon songs" for his initial disc release. Edison disc #50001, produced for demonstration purposes in late 1912, coupled Arthur Collins' and Byron G. Harlan's "Moonlight in Jungle Land" with Collins' "Down Below the Mason-Dixon Line" (the masters were later remade, as were many of the early disc recordings). The new records were demonstrated to dealers on December 10, 1912, accompanied by a thin flyer listing the initial releases. It was followed in May 1913 by a "Preliminary List of Edison Disc Records," by which time some of the earliest releases had already been replaced by remade or recoupled versions, or deleted outright. Further adjustments to the catalog continued into the early autumn, leaving some numerical gaps in the listing.

Edison required a minimum of three acceptable takes for each selection, and in most cases (but not all, contrary to a popular misconception), all three take were issued. Takes were pre-allocated in blocks of five per session, regardless of how many were actually used. Thus, takes A through E were reserved for the initial session, although A, B, and C usually sufficed. If a remake session was required, it always commenced at take F — even if takes D and E had not been used at the first session — and proceeded through take K (take I was skipped). The second remake session then began with take L, regardless of whether takes J and K had been used in the previous session.

Edison's discs were unlike anything else on the market, and the public was slow to embrace them. They initially were marketed as simply the Edison Disc; the Diamond Disc name was approved in 1913 but did not come into general use until the following year. Weighing nearly a pound each, they had phenolic resin playing surfaces bonded to rigid quarter-inch cores and bore barely legible etched labels that were stamped directly onto the surface. Initially, neither artist credits nor catalog numbers appeared on the labels. Catalog number were stamped into the wide outer edge, not always clearly, and artist credits appeared only on the accompanying boxes (an elegant but short-lived form of

packaging) or paper sleeves. The exceptionally fine vertical groove required a special reproducer fitted with a permanent diamond stylus and driven by a mechanical feed. Thus, the records were suited for use only on Edison machines, which could play standard lateral-cut discs only if fitted with an after-market attachment, an option that Edison strongly discouraged. The machines were expensive, despite their limited capabilities. Of the fourteen models initially offered, the entry-level machine retailed for \$60 (compared with \$15–\$25 for a low-end Victor or Columbia), and most were priced in the \$200–\$450 range.

Disc sales eventually increased in response to several major advertising campaigns and the traveling Tone Test demonstrations. By 1914, the company was focusing much of its efforts on discs, at the expense of the Blue Amberol. Faced with the costly and redundant task of recording identical material in two markedly different formats, Thomas Edison gave his approval to begin dubbing Blue Amberol cylinders from discs on September 21, 1914, employing a horn-to-horn dubbing system. The system underwent considerable experimentation and adjustment over the years, especially during the transitional period of 1914–1915. A sliding damper was developed that allowed rudimentary volume control, and further adjustments could be made by simply varying the depth to which the playback horn was inserted into the recording horn.

The first dubbed cylinder accepted for release was made on September 22, 1914. Direct recording of Blue Amberol cylinders was terminated at the end of October. The last list to contain a significant number of new direct recordings appeared in December, the month in which a fire destroyed much of the "fireproof" Edison plant in Orange, New Jersey. Most of the master records survived, and Edison (who had not insured his buildings, believing them to be fireproof) was able to resume production with the aid of a \$100,000 loan from Henry Ford.

Both direct and dubbed versions of some Blue Amberols were sometimes issued during the transitional period, but dubbed cylinders became the norm after 1914. As a result, the Blue Amberol catalog of 1915–1929 mirrored the disc catalog, although comprising only a small portion of Edison's total disc output. Some recordings that were rejected for issue on disc were approved for transfer to Blue Amberols, and thus were available only in cylinder form, although Edison did not advertise that fact.

Edison did not publicly disclose the new dubbing policy, but the aural deterioration was quickly noticed by dealers and customers. Even at their best, the horn transfers were not exact copies of the source recording, being affected to varying degrees by the acoustic characteristics of the disc reproducer and the playback and recording horns, by alteration of playing speed, and by changes in dynamics introduced by the use of dampers and variable horn placement in the course of dubbing. High and low frequencies were attenuated to varying degrees in the transfer process, some sibilants were lost, and disc surface noise, although usually rather inconspicuous, was audible.

The transfer of disc surface noise had been apparent almost from the start of dubbing. At first, the Edison engineers were careful to use very quiet disc pressings and to start the dubbing as close as possible to the beginning of the music, thus minimizing the listener's awareness of any transferred noise. However, such attention to detail was soon abandoned, and it became all too obvious to listeners that they were hearing a dubbed recording. The problem was exacerbated in 1916, when an embargo on German chemicals forced Edison to substitute his own inferior phenol, the key ingredient in Diamond Disc pressings. The resulting high level of disc surface noise (a problem that was not solved until 1920) is clearly audible in many cylinder transfers of the period.

Another problem faced by the dubbing engineers was the disc's maximum playing time, which exceeded that of the Blue Amberol by nearly a minute. The problem was solved by speeding up the disc, or slowing down the cylinder recorder, to a rate that would permit dubbing of the complete disc. From notes preserved at the Edison National Historic Site, it is clear that speeds were also occasionally adjusted simply to suit the personal preferences of various Edison managers. Thus, dubbed Blue Amberols do not necessarily play in correct pitch at their stated speed of 160 rpm.

Although Edison's dubbing process had serious technical shortcomings, the economic advantages were obvious. The cost savings inherent in dubbing allowed the company's cylinder division to remain afloat at a time when cylinder sales were in steady decline.

Consequently, the Blue Amberol outlived even the popular Indestructible record, Edison's last remaining rival in the cylinder market. Edison staunchly refused to abandon the Blue Amberol, and the company continued to average fifteen new cylinder releases per month for many years.

In early 1916, Edison began to term its discs "Re-Creations," claiming use of the trademark beginning February 1 of that year. By then, the records were being successfully marketed through the highly publicized and carefully staged Tone Tests. The basic format evolved from a demonstration given by Alice Verlet at the Edison plant in August 1915, pitting live singers against their own recorded performances and challenging audiences to detect the difference. Edison's advertising claimed that only stock equipment was employed, but as some surviving company documentation reveals, the demonstrations were rigged to some extent. They are known to have employed special reproducers (which the artists surreptitiously substituted for stock models) and high-quality pressings that were not available to the general public. In addition, artists were carefully coached to ensure that their live performances matched what was heard on the records. Under Verdi E. B. Fuller's management, Edison's recital department staged more than a thousand Tone Tests across the nation by mid-1917.

The phenolic resin used in Edison's pressing employed raw materials imported from Germany. That supply was interrupted in the summer of 1914, with the start of World War I in Europe. Forced to respond with uncharacteristic speed, Edison was soon producing synthetic phenol at his chemical plant in Silver Lake, New Jersey. In a speech to the Third Annual Convention of Edison Dealers in July 1917, Edison vice-president William Maxwell assured the audience that the substitute materials produced superior results, but the discs themselves proved otherwise. Pressings made with the substitute product were marred by a high level of surface noise, a defect made all the more glaring by the sparse, faintly recorded accompaniments that Thomas Edison had mandated some years earlier. A minor improvement was made at the end of 1918, touted to the trade as "velvet surfaces," but Edison's pressings remained inordinately noisy into early 1920.

Experiments with extended recording horns, ranging from 40 to 125 feet, began in 1916, at Edison's Columbia Street studio in Orange. After years of experimentation, the 125-foot horn was judged to be superior, and regular recording sessions with an eye toward producing commercially acceptable recordings began on February 20, 1923. The horn proved to be unsuitable for recording vocalists and large instrumental groups, and a tremendous number of masters were rejected. However, it did yield some issued recordings, primarily of piano solos by Ernest Stevens and small ensembles under his direction, before being abandoned in January 1926. It was sold for scrap in 1937.

In 1921 Edison hired engineer Paul Kasakove to address production and quality issues with the disc records. Kasakove quickly implemented a faster and more streamlined pressing process, allowing the company to move new releases to market more quickly than in the past. An improved phenol formulation was developed that provided extremely quiet surfaces. In June 1921, the dim etched labels were finally replaced by paper, which, had a tendency to peel away from the blank sub-labels onto which they were pasted.

Unfortunately, the catalog and artist roster did not see a corresponding improvement overall. From the start of disc production, Thomas Edison had maintained strict control over his artist and repertoire department, and he insisted on personally passing final judgement on test pressings into the mid-1920s. His personal prejudices and his eccentric views on music and musicians, which are well documented in voluminous handwritten notes that survive at the Edison National Historical Site, resulted in an oddly skewed and generally lackluster catalog.

Edison's musical dislikes ran the gamut from Al Jolson to Enrico Caruso. He was particularly averse to offering long-term exclusive contracts to celebrity artists, declaring, "Chief value [of] all high-priced opera people...may be for advertising purposes only; *i.e.*, to get a few records from them at as low a price as possible so that we will have the right to advertise that they are on our list." He referred to buyers of operatic records as "opera perverts," objected to Giovanni Martinelli's "guttural noises," and dismissed Leo Slezak as "rotten," despite having gone to great lengths to sign him. In the popular-music field, current hits were sometimes withheld for months or even years, or were simply not recorded at all if the inventor found them personally distasteful.

Edison's comments on other companies' blues recordings in the early 1920s clearly reveal a man determined to stay out of the race-record market. He justified his decision on economic grounds, observing, "The negroes who buy [blues records] have no Edison machines as a rule, but only \$25 talkers." Nevertheless, he reluctantly permitted the release of a few sides by Black vaudeville-blues singers during 1923–1924. Little effort was expended on their production. The singers were freelancers provided by music-publisher and talent-broker Joe Davis, who also supplied their accompanists and the titles they were to perform. Edison ordered that the records not be marketed outside of the Southern states, then used the resulting weak sales to justify staying out of the race-record market. To Edison's credit, however, he wrote "Don't bother with this trash" after auditioning a Gennett-produced Ku Klux Klan record in 1924.

Edison was more supportive of White country-music performers, even inviting fiddler Jasper Bisbee to stay as a guest in his home, where Bisbee was induced to "dance an old-time jig before the motion-picture camera." As a result, Edison's company retained a strong rural clientele even after general record sales began to plummet in the mid-1920s.

Edison's insistence on imposing his musical tastes on the public hampered his company's ability to compete with Victor, Columbia, and other less autocratically run companies. Thus the Edison Diamond Disc, despite its technical merits, had largely fallen out of favor with record buyers by the mid-1920s. Weakening demand had become apparent as early as December 1920, when Edison phonograph production was temporarily halted due to oversupply and unacceptably low profit margins. Record production was not affected, and phonograph production resumed later in 1921, but in 1923 the company relinquished its position as third-largest American record manufacturer to the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company.

While most of the recording industry converted to electrical recording processes in 1925–1926, Edison clung tenaciously to the acoustic process. Edison executive Frank Dyer had patented an electromagnetic recording head as early as 1921, but apparently no effort was made to develop or employ the device. Charles and Theodore Edison's attempts to persuade their father to investigate both radio and electrical recording were rebuffed. In the autumn of 1925, they persuaded him to hire Bertil Hauffmann, a Swedish engineer, to conduct experiments in electrical sound reproduction. By then almost entirely deaf, Edison reportedly auditioned Hauffmann's phonograph with the aid of an ear trumpet, pronounced the results "distorted," and dismissed the engineer.

Nevertheless, it was becoming clear that Edison would have to take some action in the face of an industry-wide electrical conversion. The late 1925 Tone Test tour had been largely ignored by the press for the first time, eclipsed by Brunswick's public demonstrations of its new electrical phonographs and records. In response, the company in 1926 introduced what it termed the "Dance Reproducer," a purely acoustic device that it initially claimed would more than double the volume of its standard machines. It did not, nor was it capable of delivering the wide frequency response of the new electrical phonographs. Facing reality after the gadget was largely rejected by consumers, the company's copy writers tempered their claims, promising only "full volume." In a 1927 memo to Charles Edison, Walter Miller admitted that the dance reproducer was a failure.

The company's next move, following the Dance Reproducer gaff, was to counter its competitors' electrical recordings with a long-playing disc, albeit an acoustically recorded one. Edison staffers had experimented with ultra-fine groove discs for commercial use as early as 1925. Perhaps pressured by Brunswick's announcement that it was experimenting with longer-playing records, Charles Edison announced in January 1926 that new records with playing times in excess of twenty minutes would be ready to ship "within comparatively few weeks." True to form, it would be a year before the company's long-playing discs came to market.

Recording sessions for the new discs finally began on a regular basis on August 11, 1926, but problems soon became apparent. The longer playing times greatly increased the chances that mechanical or musical errors would occur during the course of a performance, resulting in the need for costly and time-consuming remakes. Consequently, it was decided to dub the masters from Diamond Disc recordings. Several extended classical works were recorded specifically for dubbing to the Long-Playing discs, in four-to-five-minute increments, but

the remainder of the catalog was cobbled together from existing Diamond Disc releases, including some rather outdated material.

In the same month, Charles Edison succeeded his father as president and chief executive of Thomas A. Edison, Inc., and took over supervision of the Orange, New Jersey plant. Thomas Edison retained the title of chairman, but now entrusted operations to Charles who, under pressure from general manager Arthur Walsh, began to prepare the long-play records for release. They were finally placed on sale in January 1927, a year after Charles Edison's premature announcement. The 80-rpm fine-groove discs were produced in two formats — 24-Minute (10") and 40-Minute (12") — and could be played only on expensive, specially equipped Edison phonographs. Volume level and sound quality were somewhat inferior to that of the standard Edison disc, and the narrow groove was prone to mistracking and premature wear. The long-playing series failed to attract much interest among consumers, and only eight 10" and six 12" records were issued before an end was called to the series. Although the laboratory continued to dub new long-playing masters through November 1928, no new releases appeared after the end of that year.

It had long been apparent to Charles Edison and others that the company would have to convert to electrical recording over Thomas Edison's objections. In addition to an alarming decline in sales that he attributed in part to the company's failure to convert, Walter Miller noted that artists now favored working in front a microphone rather than a primitive recording horn. In the spring of 1927, Charles Edison took the unprecedented step of going outside the company for technical assistance, inviting General Electric engineers to conduct electrical recordings tests in the Edison studio. Such a move would have been unthinkable under his father's management.

The General Electric tests probably began in May 1927, when J. Donald Parker and B.A. Rolfe's Orchestra were paid for unspecified experimental recordings made in Edison's New York studio. Electrical recording of commercial masters finally began on a sporadic basis on June 30, 1927, with a session by singer Juan Pulido. Acoustic sessions resumed on July 1, and they would be intermixed with electric sessions for the next month. The acoustic process would not be fully abandoned until August 1927, making Edison the last American record company to fully implement an electrical recording process. At some point, the company switched to more reliable RCA Photophone equipment, the presence of which in the New York studio is confirmed by a 1929 inventory.

In September 1927, after offering hints to the trade for many weeks, the Edison company publicly announced a new acoustic phonograph, the Edisonic. The machine was designed to play Edison's new electrical recordings, which were erroneously attributed to "Mr. Edison's secret process of recording." If there was a secret at all, it was that Thomas Edison had nothing to do that process, which was entirely the work of General Electric. An all-electric Edison phonograph was finally unveiled in the summer of 1928, in conjunction with Edison's purchase of a substantial interest in the Splitdorf Radio Corporation. Splitdorf's flawed radio and electrical phonograph circuitry reportedly required a substantial expenditure on Edison's part to bring it up to company standards.

The company continued to champion the vertical cut even as it struggled to keep the Phonograph Division afloat. The sole dissenter was Arthur Walsh, the division's vice-president and general manager. On April 25, 1927, he suggested what until then would have constituted heresy in the Edison organization — that the company produce "a disc record that plays on any phonograph" (in other words, a standard lateral-cut record). Confronted with steadily declining sales, management took his suggestion and in late 1927 authorized the development of an electrically recorded lateral-cut disc, to be marketed as the Edison Needle Type. Charles Edison delegated management of the project to Walsh, the company's most progressive and outspoken executive.

An experimental lateral-cut master was recorded on October 1, 1927, and by the end of the year, forty-two lateral recordings had been assigned experimental master numbers. Development got under way in earnest on January 6, 1928, with production of the first in a new series of N-prefixed lateral masters intended for commercial release. The vertical-cut Diamond Disc was to remain in production, so a split microphone line was installed, allowing vertical and lateral cutting lathes to be operated simultaneously, thus avoiding the need to dub from one format to the other. However, the Edison engineers encountered many problems in working with the unfamiliar lateral cut, and hundreds of masters were

rejected during 1928, sometimes for seemingly minor flaws. Lateral-cut masters were not judged acceptable for release with any regularity until late in the year.

Following the same pattern that had marred its introduction of the Diamond Disc in 1912–1913, and the Long Playing records in 1927, Edison announced the Needle Type prematurely, then launched the product in fits and starts over a thirteen-month span. The new records were first announced in the spring of 1928, at which time some sample pressings were exhibited to dealers. The company then went largely silent on the subject until January 1929, when it announced once again that release of the new records was imminent. Needle Type records finally began shipping to dealers in July.

The Edison Needle Type records drew generally favorable reviews from the critics, although from a technical standpoint they fell somewhat short of the results being achieved by Columbia, Okeh, and Victor, which employed the superior Western Electric system. Surviving files reveal that the company lowered its strict standards in an attempt to keep a steady flow of new lateral-cut discs coming, sometimes authorizing the release of substandard or previously rejected masters. It was an unprecedented action for a company known for rejecting masters over the tiniest flaw. Equally unprecedented was the introduction of a \$25 portable wind-up phonograph equipped with a standard lateral reproducer, which was sold at a loss. Although carrying the Edison brand, the machines were purchased from an outside manufacturer.

The company stood by the obsolete cylinder format into 1929, even as initial pressing orders for new releases fell to a meager 100 copies. The decision to abandon commercial cylinder production finally came in July. From August 1 through October 19, 1929, dealers cancelled more than 10,000 cylinder orders that the company was unable to fill from its depleted inventory. The final thirteen Blue Amberols, scheduled for July release, were never issued. To stem any further losses, Charles Edison issued orders on October 26 to discontinue Blue Amberol sales, fire the cylinder division employees, reclaim the shelving and packing crates for other Edison divisions, and burn the remaining cylinder inventory. The remaining Amberola machines had already been sold for scrap.

An attempt to break into the slow-speed radio transcription field, based in Edison's Columbia Street studio in Orange, proved unsuccessful. By the summer of 1929, the company was preparing to abandon Diamond Disc production. Beginning on August 15, all Edison masters were to be recorded only in lateral-cut form, except on special order. Henceforth, if a Diamond Disc release was planned, it was to be dubbed from the lateral-cut master. The dubbing order soon became a moot point, however. Production of new Diamond Disc releases was suspended in mid-September, after which all new releases were to appear only as Needle Types. The last Diamond Disc master was recorded on September 18, 1929.

Six days earlier, Arthur Walsh had forwarded a lengthy memo to Charles Edison in which he weighed the advantages and disadvantages of continuing the record business, and concluded that the Phonograph Division should be closed. Earlier, Walsh had reported that the division not only was failing, but had been losing money since 1912. During 1924–1928 alone, the Phonograph Division lost a total of \$1.3 million, and Walsh predicted a further loss of \$500,000 in 1929. It had been kept afloat largely by diverting profits from Edison's more successful operations.

Charles Edison agreed with Walsh's assessment. While new lateral-cut releases continued to appear at regular intervals into the early autumn of 1929, Edison's managers were quietly preparing to dismantle the Phonograph Division. The last Needle Type records were listed for release on October 18, 1929. The next day, the New York studio made its last recording, at a private session for one Margaret Rogge Becker. The final monthly sales report showed that only 29,766 Needle Types and 8,479 Diamond Discs had been sold in September.

New Edison Needle Type releases had been scheduled through the end of November, and labels had been printed for many of those records, when production was halted on November 1. All further studio bookings were cancelled, and preparations were begun to buy out artists' contracts. Internal memos reveal that the company was sensitive about canceling the contracts of its most popular performers, with particular attention paid to Giovanni Martinelli, whose recent acquisition had been a point of considerable pride for Edison management. Nevertheless, Miller stated that all artist contracts were "to be disposed

of in one way or another" by December 31, 1929. The next two months would be spent issuing settlement checks to performers and selling off the New York studio furnishings.

A proposal to sell the lateral-cut masters to other companies apparently found no takers, although the existence of an Edison Needle Type pressing bearing a sample Brunswick label suggests that at least one company considered the idea. Attempts were also made to sublease the Fifth Avenue studio, initially without success.

On November 8, 1929, several weeks short of the fifty-second anniversary of Thomas Edison's first phonograph patent filing, the general public was finally informed that Edison had suspended phonograph and record production. The West Orange plant was to be converted to radio manufacturing. Edison's New York studio closed its account on December 13, 1929, with a \$2,188 bank balance and \$75 in cash on hand. The Phonograph Division's books were officially closed out on December 31.

Edison's Radio Division continued to operate into the early 1930s under Arthur Walsh's supervision, with distribution handled by the Edison Distributing Corporation. Walter Miller was transferred to the Ediphone dictating-machine division, where he served as general manager until his retirement in 1937. His duties included overseeing production of the last Blue Amberols, in the form of Ediphone dictation training cylinders. Circumstantial evidence in the Edison files suggests that the cylinders were transcribed from discs recorded by an independent New York studio.

Thomas Edison's rarely used 125-foot recording horn in Orange, New Jersey, perhaps his most visible folly, was dismantled for scrap in November 1937. The Diamond Disc masters were later acquired by the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. Edison Industries, the corporate successor to Thomas A. Edison, Inc., was purchased in 1957 by McGraw Electric, which bequeathed the Phonograph Division's files and finished discs to the National Park Service. NPS currently administers those materials at the Edison National Historic Site, along with the Edison disc masters, which the Henry Ford museum eventually turned over to the Park Service.

EDN RECORDS

Owned and operated by Ewing D. Nunn (803 E. Spooner Road, Milwaukee), EDN was the predecessor of Nunn's much better-known Audiophile Records, which was launched after the period covered by this work. Nunn's high-fidelity microgroove 78s were essentially prototypes that he distributed privately beginning in 1947. Nunn and EDN owe their inclusion here to the very short-lived Dixie Bouquet label, which in 1951 issued four sides by a local dixieland band that EDN recorded for them in December 1950.

EKKO RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1948; 1950

Offices: Renfro Valley, Kentucky

Record Products: Radio

Formed on November 21, 1946, and chartered on December 4, by John Lair, Merton W. Patterson, and Clarence H. Fleming, with \$150,000 in capital stock. The company's Radio label specialized in country-and-western music.

Lair was a Kentucky native who had worked at various times as a cartoonist, insurance adjuster, radio producer and announcer, and music librarian for Chicago radio station WLS. He composed several popular songs, including "Take Me Back to Renfro Valley" and "The Man Who Comes Around." In the late 1930s, he returned to Kentucky and began to construct a country-themed tourist attraction that included lodging, a museum, and a large auditorium from which he broadcast his "Renfro Valley Barn Dance" over Louisville radio station WLW. A Sunday-morning program, "Renfro Valley Gatherin,'" added in 1943, was carried by the CBS network. He also managed a traveling stage company, The Renfro Valley Folks. By the mid-1940s, the Renfro Valley complex was a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors from across the country. Lair's passion for local history and traditional folk music was reflected in the fare his artists performed.

The Radio label was launched in early 1947 to promote Lair's Renfro Valley artists, with the first release announced in March. Some Ekko masters might have been produced by the Louisville-based Currier Recording Company (*q.v.*), on whose Contract label they

also appeared. Lair's recording activities received virtually no national trade-press coverage, aside from a somewhat scrambled September 1947 blurb in *Billboard* reporting that his "Echo Records" [sic] had signed Doc Hopkins.

The Ekko Recording Corporation appears to have suspended operations in 1948, reputedly because Lair feared attracting union attention. Lair went on to briefly market the Songs from Renfro Valley label, which was produced for him by Honolulu-based Bell Records. A relaunch of the Ekko operation in 1950 was scuttled after L. Albert & Son (Akron, Ohio) failed to deliver and install new recording and transcription equipment. Ekko secured a \$20,000 judgement against Albert in December of that year but does not appear to have resumed commercial record production. The Ekko name was later used by an unrelated California-based label headed by Richard Hall.

Lair sold his Renfro Valley operation to music publisher Hal Smith in 1968, then repurchased it in 1976 and resumed management with the assistance of family members. He died on November 12, 1985. In 1989 the operation was sold to an investment group from Lexington, Kentucky, which recast it as the Renfro Valley Entertainment Center. In July 2000, ownership was transferred to a nonprofit corporation.

ELECTRIC PHONOGRAPH CORPORATION

Record Production: Uncertain

Offices: 236–238 W. 116th St., New York (1919–1921); 4132 Park Avenue, New York (1922)

Record Products: Possibly masters for Arto

The Electric Phonograph Corporation was best-known for the Phonolamp, a combination acoustic phonograph and electric lamp. Its Phonolamp records, marketed briefly in 1921, were Grey Gull products. The company announced it was opening a recording studio at 235–239 W. 23rd Street, New York, in April 1919. This was the same address given by the Arto Company in 1919 for what it claimed to be its own studio (the existence of which has never been confirmed), suggesting that Electric Phonograph recorded Arto's earliest masters; however, the source of those recordings remains open to question. The company filed for bankruptcy on April 26, 1922.

ELECTRIC RECORDING LABORATORIES [I] / NEW RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 – c. 1924

Offices: 210 5th Ave., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Pressing: Own plant—Newark, NJ

Record Products: Supreme Quality; numerous custom and personal labels, including D. Castellano, Excellent, Golan's Hymns, Playmore, Rappolo, Six Brown Bros. Saxophone Record, Sonare, Splendor, Takoma

Incorporated in New York in 1921 by Robert Quait and J. M. Ehrlich, the Electric Recording Laboratories specialized in the production of ethnic, custom, and personal labels. Quait (whose name was misspelled "Quail" in the 1923 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory*) was a well-known concert tenor who performed with the Apollo Club (Chicago) and, briefly, the Metropolitan Opera Company in the early 1920s. According to a 1921 *Musical Courier* report, Quait was inspired to open a recording studio by his experiments with music "as a medium through which balance or equilibrium of the mind could be established."

According to the 1923 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory*, the company operated under unspecified "special patents which it controls." Several vertical-cut recordings are known on custom labels produced by Electric Recording, but the company's usual output consisted of lateral-cut, acoustically recorded discs. Despite its name, the company is not known to have made any electrical recordings.

Electric Recording's own Supreme Quality label (which did virtually no advertising) featured a mixture of personal and commercial releases, the latter known to have been handled by a few small dealers in the New York area. Personal recording services were first offered in the autumn of 1921, at which time the company charged \$25 per master (soon increased to \$35), with twelve pressings included for the price. Sales director George Farrah was a featured speaker at the March 1922 meeting of The Talking Machine Men, Inc. (an association of recording-industry executives), where he outlined his company's

contract-recording proposal. The company also offered custom-pressing services at its plant in Newark, New Jersey.

Although most artists who availed themselves of Electric Recording's services were rather obscure (and apparently not always professional), the company recorded at least two sides each by the Six Brown Brothers saxophone sextet and Sophie Tucker with her Five Kings of Syncopation, which were released under custom labels.

During the summer of 1924, Quait and Ehrlich launched the New Record Company as a subsidiary, operating at the same address. The company was to produce children's picture discs, but no examples have been located. In August, Moon Radio Corporation's C. W. Williamson announced that his company was collaborating with the Electric Recording Laboratories on an experimental device for transcribing radio broadcasts to disc masters. No commercial releases resulted, and the Electric Recording Laboratories appear to have suspended operations late in the year.

A label named The Electric was introduced in early 1925 as successor to Everybodys, but it had no apparent connection to the Electric Recording Laboratories. It was purely a product of the Scranton Button Company, using masters from the Emerson Recording Laboratories (Emerson–Grey Gull) and New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount).

ELECTRIC RECORDING LABORATORIES [II] (Discs)

Recording engineer Paul Lewis Hodge launched the Electric Recording Laboratories at 6642 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, in August 1929. *The Los Angeles Times* reported that Hodge would offer commercial recording services, in addition to personal recordings, transcriptions, and movie soundtracks. Thus far, it has not been determined whether the studio supplied masters to any commercial labels.

ELECTRICAL RESEARCH PRODUCTS, INC. — See World Broadcasting System

ELECTRICRAFT (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1970s

Offices: 622 Union Street, Seattle, WA

Record Products (78 rpm): Debut, J R Ranch, Listen; instantaneous recordings

Launched as an adjunct to Oliver Runchey's Home Appliance Headquarters on October 16, 1947, Electriccraft sold high-quality audio products, including home recording equipment. Initially Runchey produced only instantaneous recordings for private use, but in the late 1940s or early 1950s he opened a professional recording studio and began producing his own labels, using local and regional performers. Although Runchey's involvement in record production appears to have been short-lived, his retail operation eventually expanded to encompass eight locations. Electriccraft filed for bankruptcy in 1979, and finally closed in 1984.

ELECTRO BROADCASTERS

Launched in 1930 by Consolidated Studio's Charles C. Hasin (*see* Consolidated Record Corporation), and operating at the same address, Electro Broadcasters was a transcription and custom-recording operation. Walter Lemmon served as president, with Hasin (who developed a long-playing disc for the company) serving as general manager and recording engineer. Although it has been alleged that Electro Broadcasters produced some masters for commercial use, conclusive evidence is lacking.

ELECTRO-VOX RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1932

Offices and Master Source(s): Bendix Building, 1206 Maple Ave. (Suites 742–746–750), Los Angeles (1931–1936); 2420 West 7th Ave., Los Angeles (1934–1935); 5546 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles (1936–1960)

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Electro-Vox; Mayesh and other custom and private labels; air-checks, radio transcriptions, instantaneous recordings, other custom recordings

Electro-Vox was one of the longest-lived producers of transcriptions and custom recordings. Founded by Bert B. Gottschalk in 1931, the company leased offices in the Bendix Building

(Los Angeles) in November of that year, although it was not fully operational until the spring of 1932. Gottschalk was a former Warner Brothers sound engineer who for a time had been involved in the production of Vitaphone movie soundtrack discs.

Electro-Vox originally employed what it termed the "Gottschalk Process," recording on uncoated aluminum discs using recording lathes of Gottschalk's own design. The original studio's opening was announced in May 1932. In May 1936, Gottschalk moved his operation to Melrose Avenue, directly opposite NBC's Los Angeles studios. He later opened an electronics store at the same address.

Initially, Gottschalk specialized in custom recordings and air-checks for local radio stations, but he soon expanded into radio transcriptions. He began producing his own programs in 1937, beginning with the twenty-six-episode serial, "Tommy Parker, G-Scout." Electro-Vox began offering commercial recording services at about the same time and probably supplied some local independent labels on occasion. The company also briefly produced its own Electro-Vox label, beginning with an off-the-air recording of King Edward's 1936 farewell message. Releases on the Electro-Vox label appear to have been sporadic, and the presence of artists' contact information on some labels suggests that those records might have been private releases, rather than intended for retail sale. Electro-Vox's clients included Sephardic composer and singer Jack Mayesh, whose records were issued on his private Mayesh Phonograph Company label as well as on Electro-Vox.

Gottschalk died in November 1967. By then, his son Alan had taken over management of the Electro-Vox operation, which finally closed in June 2000.

ELITE RECORD MANUFACTURERS — See Classic Record Company

EMANON RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1951

Offices: Unknown Detroit address (to 9/1948); 2383 Cortland Ave., Detroit (9/1948–1950); 4015 Leslie St., Detroit (1951)

Original-Master Source(s): U.S. and foreign independent studios

Record Products: Emanon

A modern-jazz label launched in the spring of 1948 by David Usher and Raymond Glassman. To skirt the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, Usher and Glassman used a combination of existing French masters and specially commissioned recordings made in France by French as well as visiting American musicians.

According to a *Billboard* report, Emanon's first pressings were made in mid-August 1948. The initial release was reviewed in November in the *Detroit Free Press*, which observed, "French jazz artists have taken to playing bop, even if its is with tongue in cheek. Six Frenchman under the leadership of Kenny Clarke, a visiting American pianist, offer 'Tall Boy (In the Rear Row)'... You may find it the most pleasing bop you have heard in a long time." By year's end, the records were being distributed by Chord Distributors (Chicago) and Idessa Malone (Detroit), but operations were suspended in the spring of 1949, after Usher departed to work with Prize Records (q.v.).

Usher later reactivated Emanon, as a purely domestic recording operation, but the revival was short-lived. By April 1951, *Billboard* was reporting that the company was "currently inactive" and that Usher had entered into a partnership with trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie to produce the Dee Gee label. Usher recalled of the Dee Gee venture, "We wanted to bring non-jazz people into the jazz orbit," but it survived only briefly.

Emanon was last listed in *Billboard*'s July 1951 label directory. Its brief reappearance in the March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

EMBASSY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 1585 Broadway, New York (to early 1949); 1697 Broadway, New York (c. 1949)

Pressing: Signature, possibly other independent plants

Record Products: Embassy

Launched in late 1947 by band leader Lew Gray. Intended primarily for jukebox use, at least five Embassy releases were announced by the end of January 1948.

Embassy's earliest releases were novelty numbers, mostly by Al Stuart and his Orchette. A *Cash Box* reviewer said of Stuart's "The Undertaker Song," "The stuff is so mad, it's bound to break any tavern owner's tickler." There were also some country-and-western offerings by Riley Shepard and the Santa Fe Rangers. Their "Just Because" was a minor jukebox hit and eventually was licensed to other labels, including Musicana in Canada. In April 1948, Gray acquired four sides by Sonny Dunham's Orchestra, via Dunham's manager, that had been recovered from the failing Tune-Disk operation.

Promotion and distribution were taken over by Apollo Records in September 1948. Embassy's offices were moved at some point in 1949, corresponding to a minor change in the label design and abandonment of the original P-1000 catalog-number series. The company was still listed in *Billboard's* January 1949 label directory, but no new releases are known to have been made that year. The Embassy name was later used for several unrelated labels.

EMCEE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1952

Offices: 2446 27th St., Cuyahoga Falls, OH

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Emcee

An independent pressing plant operated by Tom McCormish. *Billboard* made a passing mention of the first Emcee release in April 1950 and noted that McCormish had launched a music-publishing branch to control original titles appearing on the label. The few known Emcee releases employed little-known midwestern performers, including Jan Morgan, Patty Wells, and Andy Imperial's Orchestra. The company last appeared in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

EMERALD RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 303 Nixon Building, Pittsburgh (1944–1947); 708 Arch St., Pittsburgh (from early 1947)

Record Products: Emerald [3]

Launched during the summer of 1946 as a subsidiary of the Dal E. Haun Company, with which it shared office space. An electrical engineer by trade, Haun set up an office in a Pittsburgh hotel room in 1939 and began offering publishing services to amateur songwriters. The *Pittsburgh Press* reported, "Dal E. Haun wants to organize you boys and girls...for your own protection from gyp 'publishers'... Mr. Haun has spent more time looking into the trickery of phoney publishers than anyone we know."

Haun was installed as president of the Songwriters' Guild of Pittsburgh in January 1942. The Dal E. Haun Company, launched in the summer of 1944, offered expanded music-publishing and production services, including a subscription service that supplied title strips to jukebox operators. The company was also briefly a distributor for 20th Century records.

Haun's Emerald records featured generally inconsequential pop fare, including some of his own compositions, performed by obscure local artists. The initial release, credited to the Fiesta Four with Al Nobel, was reviewed in September 1946 by *Cash Box*, which recommended the record be purchased "to give a deserving 'unknown' a break." Intended mainly for jukebox use, Emerald records were distributed by Jack Gutshall, Coinmatic, and other distributors specializing in small independent labels.

Emerald was last listed in *Billboard's* January 1948 label directory, although the Dal E. Haun Company remained in business into the 1950s. Haun died on August 12, 1957. The Emerald name was later used by several unrelated labels, beginning with a Fort Wayne-based version in the early 1950s.

EMERSON PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, INC. (1915–1924)

Offices: 3 W. 35th St., New York (executive offices, 1915–2/1920); Equitable Building, 120 Broadway, New York (sales offices 1915–2/1920); 206 5th Ave., New York (3/1920–10/1922); 105–111 W. 20th St., New York (10/1922–1/1924); 160 Broadway, New York (export offices); Pierce Ave. between 8th & 9th, Long Island City, NY (printing plant); branch sales offices in Chicago (8/1916–5/1922) and San Francisco (9/1916–early 1920s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios (3 W. 35th St., New York, 1915–12/1917; 362 5th Ave., New York, 12/1917–2/1920; 206 5th Ave., New York, 3/1920–10/1922; W. 23rd St., New York, 10/1922–1/1924)

Pressing: United States Record Manufacturing Corporation (Long Island City, NY, from late 1920), Southern States Phonograph Company (Atlanta, GA, from 1921), Scranton Button Company (Scranton, PA). Plating plant on W. 23rd St., New York.

Record Products: Emerson, Clover [1], Dandy, Italianstyle, Lenox [1], Medallion, Melodisc [1], New Emerson, Panhellenion, Polonia, Q. R. S. [1], Regal [1], Silvertone, Symphonola, Talk-O-Photo; Talking Book (children's); private and promotional issues

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Amfonola, Austral (Australia); Apex and related labels (Canada); Beltona, Edison Bell Winner, Imperial, Grafton, Guardsman, Ludgate, World (England); Maxsa (France); Acme (Germany); Usiba (Poland), probably many others on occasion.

A native of San Francisco, Victor Hugo Emerson came east in the early 1890s to work as a telegraph operator for the Lehigh Valley Railroad. He was involved in the organization of the short-lived New Jersey Phonograph Company in 1892, then went on to work as general manager and recording engineer for its successor, the United States Phonograph Company. Emerson moved to the American Graphophone Company (Columbia) as chief recording engineer in early 1898. In the early 1900s he was promoted to general manager of Columbia's recording department, a position he held until early 1915, when he resigned to launch his own company.

The Emerson Phonograph Company was incorporated in New York on April 17, 1915, and became operational on May 1. Officers included Emerson (president), H. T. Leeming (vice-president), Richard D. Wyckoff (treasurer), and a board of directors that included Arthur H. Cushman. The company was first mentioned in *The Talking Machine World* in May 1915, which reported that Emerson would contract all his manufacturing work to outside companies. Emerson registered a facsimile of his signature as a trademark on August 4, 1915, claiming use on records since July 1 of that year. However, the company's financial statement for December 13, 1915, disclosed that it had yet to conduct any "actual business," suggesting that Emerson records did not begin reaching dealers in any appreciable quantities until early 1916.

Emerson had seen firsthand the tremendous demand for inexpensive records, having developed the 10¢ Little Wonder record while employed by Columbia. Following the Little Wonder model, his new company initially produced only small-diameter discs, in several distinct series, that sold for a fraction of the price of standard 10" discs. Its first product was a 6" single-sided green-label disc, which initially retailed for 10¢ in an obvious attempt to match Little Wonder's price. Other than size and price, however, the records had nothing in common with Little Wonder.

Pressed from truncated dubbings of European Pathé and Anglo-Italian Commerce Company recordings, the 6" discs were produced under license from the Pathé Frères Phonograph Company. (Emerson was an investor in Pathé, and he had already laid the groundwork for a joint Pathé venture while still employed by Columbia, having approached the company with a proposal that they supply the masters for Little Wonder). Among the earliest offerings were Pathé-derived recordings by Enrico Caruso (in a clumsily truncated dubbing from one of his 1903 AICC cylinders), Florencio Constantino, Harry Lauder, and other stars who had since become exclusive to Victor or Columbia in the United States. No documentary evidence has been found that Victor threatened legal action, as has been stated in some accounts, but the series was discontinued within a year.

For a short time, Emerson marketed a cheaply made outside-horn phonograph with 5" turntable for use with the records, selling it for \$3 through *Boy's Life* and other magazines. The company also sold sapphire-ball styli for 35¢, for use with the vertically cut discs. In April 1917, Emerson launched the Voice Recorder Company (New York), in partnership with R. W. Ovington and M. R. Braceville, which planned to market a \$10 home-recording device employing wax discs through the Emerson Phonograph Company.

At the same time he was marketing vertically cut discs, Emerson was experimenting with the universal cut, a hybrid groove patented in 1899 by George T. Smallwood (#639,452). Smallwood's groove placed most of the sound on the inclined groove wall (the other wall being perpendicular and only faintly modulated), and thus could be played without special attachments on both lateral and vertical machines. Smallwood assigned his patent to Emerson in 1915, as it was nearing its expiration date.

With the Smallwood patent soon to expire, Emerson applied for patents on his own improvements to the universal cut (#1,213,468, filed December 16, 1915) and a universal reproducer (#1,345,756, filed February 18, 1916), and was soon proclaiming himself the "originator" of the universal cut. Although the general configuration of the universal groove was similar to that of the modern stereophonic groove, Emerson apparently did not realize its potential for recording and reproducing stereophonic sound. Contrary to the claims of some modern hobbyists, Emerson's universal-cut recordings are purely monaural.

For Emerson, the universal cut's greatest value lay in its apparent skirting of the key patents on lateral recording, which Victor and Columbia continued to staunchly defend. In early 1917, Columbia's president suggested that it might be advisable for Columbia and Victor to license Emerson under their patents, a suggestion that Victor management flatly rejected.

At some point in 1916, Emerson abandoned the vertical-cut dubbings and began recording his own universal-cut masters. The company began remaindering its vertical-cut inventory in August, advertising in the trade publications, "As we have discontinued the manufacture of this type of record...we will dispose of any or part of this lot, minimum quantity of 1,000, at 4¢ each." Emerson's 5½" universal-cut discs had the advantage of paper labels that gave artist credits (at least on the later pressings), in contrast to the anonymous, etched-label Little Wonders. However, the records do not appear to have been nearly as popular as Little Wonder, and the series was abandoned in July 1917, after approximately 325 releases.

In the meantime, Emerson had begun producing 7" double-sided discs, also employing the universal cut, that retailed for 25¢ each, or 30¢ on the West Coast. An advertisement in the August 1916 *Talking Machine World* boasted, "Three weeks from Broadway to your store. While other manufacturers take months to release a new number—we take weeks." Unfortunately, the quick response was largely offset by Emerson's inability to keep up with demand. In May 1917, an unidentified company spokesman admitted, "We have often been weeks and even months behind in our deliveries, and our largest customer has received only forty percent of the goods ordered."

Emerson's 1917 catalog claimed a monthly output of more than 1.25 million of the 7" discs, and the company began advertising itself (probably inaccurately) as the nation's third-largest record producer. With sales booming, in February 1917 the company established the Emerson Employees' Association, a profit-sharing program in which employees could purchase shares for 25¢ per week. The program also allocated a seat on the board to an elected representative of each department. In May the Association declared a 5% dividend for its first quarter.

In 1918 Columbia sued Emerson, claiming the perpendicular groove wall of his universal groove was "inert" and did not perform any useful function, and thus infringed Columbia's Jones patent. Emerson produced expert scientific testimony to rebut that contention. In his ruling in favor of Emerson, Judge Julius M. Mayer wrote, "What Emerson sought commercially was the production of a record which could be played sufficiently well for commercial purposes upon all types of phonograph machines. The artistic result might not be (and, indeed, is not) equal to that attained by the Berliner, or zig-zag [lateral cut]; but Emerson evidently appreciated the well-known fact that the majority of the buying public is well enough satisfied with pleasing music. I am satisfied that in seeking this field, he has made an honest effort not to entrench on the Jones patent... The Jones lateral undulations are in both sides of the groove alike and undulate in absolute parallelism. In the Emerson groove... there is no exact parallelism."

Emerson introduced 9" discs in January 1918, still employing the universal cut. The familiar shield design first appeared on Emerson labels in the summer of that year, replacing the cluttered Statue of Liberty design that had been used so far. Emerson filed several

trademark applications for elements of his new design, claiming use of the shield from May 1918, and use of the treble-clef trademark from June 3, 1918.

Standard 10" lateral-cut discs were finally introduced in June 1919. Although it was announced that the 10" discs would be reserved for dance tunes and instrumental standards, the initial 10" releases were mainly vocal selections, with just a smattering of dance numbers, and no standards at all. Twelve-inch discs were introduced in October 1919, but relatively few were produced. The most frequently encountered is a special promotional record for Dodge automobiles. The 7" and 9" pressings were discontinued at the end of 1919. However, the company set up a special department to continue production of 7" recordings on a new 35¢ Melodisc label, which continued Emerson's 7" master-number series and survived until late 1921 or early 1922, but bore no mention of Emerson.

Having made the acquaintance of many celebrities during his Columbia tenure, Emerson was able to coax a few recordings from Irene Franklin, Gene Greene, Gus Van and Joe Schenck, Nat M. Wills, Eddie Nelson, and other headliners. In 1919 he signed Eddie Cantor, Arthur Fields, and Irving and Jack Kaufman to exclusive contracts, followed in 1920 by the team of Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake. House conductors at various times included Arthur Bergh, Hugo Riesenfeld (on a part-time basis, moonlighting from his duties at the Rialto Theater for classical and operatic sessions), and Paul Bolognese (primarily for ethnic material). Emerson's Premier Series records, introduced in 1919, retailed for \$1 (10") and \$1.50 (12"). The records apparently were intended to compete with Victor's blue-label line, offering classical and operatic material by Millo Picco, Eva Leoni, Max Bloch, and other respected, if not quite stellar, performers. Emerson also built an extensive ethnic catalog, and in 1918 he launched Emerson International, Inc., to market classical, operatic, and foreign-language records outside the United States.

Once Emerson began producing larger-diameter discs, the company expanded rapidly. It announced ambitious (but ultimately unrealized) plans to open a studio and factory in Los Angeles. At the same time, the company was also having some success in the client-label market, pressing Medallion, Symphonola, and other mail-order and department-store labels from its own masters.

On March 1, 1920, Emerson's show rooms, offices, and studios were consolidated in larger quarters at 206 Fifth Avenue, one entire floor of which was used by the recording department. In May, Victor Emerson and A. H. Carlisle (president of the Talking Book Corporation) financed the Southern States Phonograph Company in Atlanta, Georgia. Former Columbia engineer George Beadle served as consulting engineer for the new plant, on a part-time basis. The first pressing plant to operate in the deep South, its main purpose was to press Emerson and Talking Book products and handle Southern distribution of Emerson phonographs. The facility did not include a recording studio.

Emerson continued its expansion, leasing an additional 50,750 square feet of space on Pierce Avenue in Long Island City in April 1920. The same building housed the United States Record Manufacturing Company, another independent pressing plant that Victor Emerson had helped to finance, and which also employed George Beadle as a consulting engineer.

Overexpansion of that sort, combined with weak sales, a high level of debt, and various legal problems (including a lawsuit by the Emerson Piano Company, which sought an injunction and damages over use of the Emerson brand on phonographs and records) put an abrupt end to Emerson's growth in late 1920. The company's financial weakness was exposed after one Mary S. Johnson filed suit to recover \$16,686 owed her for printing and advertising materials, leading *The Talking Machine World* to report that the company was "alleged to be unable to meet its maturing obligations." On December 9, 1920, Jacob Scholer and Thomas H. Matters were appointed receivers for the company. There were further problems in January 1921, when creditors of the Southern States pressing plant filed a petition in bankruptcy. In June, the plant's contents were offered for sale by the Dixie Paper and Box Company of Atlanta. Plans to open a Canadian branch were abandoned.

The Emerson Phonograph Company continued to operate while in receivership, although in a more constrained fashion. In February 1921 it made an appeal to budget-conscious consumers with the launch of its Regal Record Company subsidiary, headed by Emerson general manager H. T. Leeming. The 50¢ Regal record retailed for 25¢ less than

most brands and used the same recordings as Emerson, albeit usually disguised by artist pseudonyms. Regal records sold well, revealing a strong market for moderately priced discs. However, Regal's success was not sufficient to offset Emerson's losses.

With financial problems continuing to plague his company, Victor Emerson resigned in March 1922. He went on to launch or invest in several other ventures, including the Kiddie Rekord Company and the Kodisk Manufacturing Company, the latter a manufacturer of blank metal discs marketed for home-recording purposes. An inveterate tinkerer, Emerson had been granted patents on many devices and processes related to sound recording over the years, including an early (if probably commercially unworkable) form of magnetic recording, laminated plastic picture discs (a process utilized successfully in the production of Talking Books and Kiddie Rekords), and an attachment for making recordings on home phonographs. In poor health, in 1925 he moved back to California, where he died on June 22, 1926.

Following Victor Emerson's resignation, the Scranton Button Company offered Emerson's creditors ten cents on the dollar to operate the company. The offer was rejected, and production of Emerson records was temporarily suspended in May 1922. The U.S. District Court accepted a purchase offer of \$90,000 for Emerson's assets from Cummons Brothers (Benton Harbor, Michigan), pending inspection of Emerson's inventory, but the sale was not completed. On May 12 came an announcement that the Regal Record Company subsidiary had purchased Emerson's complete assets, including masters, for \$90,000, but that sale was nullified. Finally, on June 1, 1922, the Emerson and Regal trademarks and all assets except accounts receivable were sold to Benjamin Abrams for \$50,000. Abrams, a Romanian immigrant and phonograph salesman with no experience in the record business, recalled having to borrow from friends to make the purchase. Under Abrams' ownership, Emerson recording activities remained on hold from June through August 1922 while the company underwent reorganization.

The revamped Emerson Phonograph Company was incorporated in August 1922 with a new group of officers that included Abrams (president) and Rudolph Kamarek (treasurer). Charles C. Hasin served as recording manager, and Paul Bolognese stayed on as musical director and manager of the foreign-language division. The company moved its offices and studios out of the Fifth Avenue building, sold or leased the Fifth Avenue studio to the Strong Record Company (*q.v.*), closed the various branch offices, and consolidated pressing work at the Scranton Button Company plant.

Emerson's Regal subsidiary was split off as a separate company, severing its access to Emerson masters (Regal would be briefly supplied by Paramount before it began producing its own masters at the Independent Recording Laboratory; *see* Regal Record Company). The Udell Works of Indianapolis, Emerson's phonograph supplier, dumped its remaining inventory on the market at break-even prices after Abrams awarded a new manufacturing contract to the Wasmuth-Goodrich Company of Peru, Indiana.

When new Emerson releases finally resumed, many used material licensed from Pathé and Paramount. The first newly recorded Emerson masters were released in September 1922, but the company continued to rely to some extent on masters from other sources. Although the quality of Emerson records was declining, the price remained at 75¢.

In January 1923, sales director Arthur Cushman stated that the company did "not intend to manufacture a lower-priced record," but in August, a New Emerson record was introduced that retailed for 50¢, marking the end of Emerson as a standard-priced label. The cheaper New Emerson discs apparently did nothing to revitalize sales. The Emerson Phonograph Company was reorganized once again in January 1924, this time as the Emerson Recording Laboratories, *q.v.*

EMERSON RECORDING LABORATORIES, INC. / EMERSON RADIO AND PHONOGRAPH CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1924–1925

Offices and Master Source(s): 206 5th Ave., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Pressing: Scranton Button Company

Record Products: Emerson, Clover [1], Dandy, The Electric, Grey Gull and related labels (*see* Grey Gull Records, Inc.), National [5], Wise; Sunshine Gospel Record, other custom and personal labels. (*See also* Bridgeport Die and Machine Company and Consolidated Record Corporation.)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Austral (Australia); Grafton, Scala Ideal (England); World (England, using dubbed masters)

Successor to the Emerson Phonograph Company, the Emerson Recording Laboratories were incorporated in New York in January 1924 by Benjamin Abrams (who had purchased Emerson Phonograph Company), M. Abrams, and Arthur H. Cushman. Cushman, who had previously served as Emerson Phonograph's sales director, was elected president of the new company. Paul Bolognese, who had joined the Emerson Phonograph staff around 1918, continued in his role as musical director and house conductor.

The Emerson Recording Laboratories reclaimed the Fifth Avenue studio that its predecessor had sold or leased to the Strong Record Company in 1922. An aggressive attempt was made to revitalize the failing Emerson label, including a national advertising campaign, a price cut, and the introduction of a race-record series (which would prove to be short-lived). At the same time, Abrams launched the Emerson Radio Corporation, an event celebrated with a promotional broadcast from ERL's studio on February 14, 1924, that featured Jack Kaufman, John Ryan, Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra, and other Emerson recording artists.

The Emerson Recording Laboratories developed a strong business supplying masters to chain-store and custom labels. Grey Gull Records was its largest client by far, followed by Bridgeport Die and Machine Company, which previously had obtained masters from the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount). At first the business involved simply licensing old Emerson Phonograph Company masters for reissue, but ERL was soon supplying newly recorded material as well. A dual master-numbering system was implemented in early 1924 to maintain some separation between the main Emerson brand and the client labels. Recordings intended for issue on Emerson continued to show Emerson-series master numbers, while those intended for issue on Grey Gull and other client labels showed master numbers in a new series beginning at 3100. In fact, they were the same recordings, although different takes were usually allocated to the client labels. The company also began licensing its masters for use on foreign labels and revived its export business, shipping finished discs to Australia, the Dutch West Indies, Panama, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Ireland, Denmark, and other far-flung locations.

Arthur Cushman also established a personal recording program under which Emerson dealers received commissions for booking private recording sessions at the Emerson studio. In a May 1924 *Talking Machine World* ad, ERL boasted that it was "the only recording laboratory operated by a phonograph company with a record for performance of long standing, which has placed the facilities of its laboratory at the disposal of the professional and amateur musician for the making of commercial and personal records." But in fact, several of the larger record companies also offered those services.

On October 15, 1924, the radio and phonograph operations were merged as the Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation under the management of H. T. Leeming, with combined offices at 307–309 Sixth Avenue (New York). A month later, the manufacturing rights to Emerson records were sold to the Scranton Button Company, the largest American independent pressing plant, with Emerson Radio & Phonograph retaining the distribution rights. In early 1925, the Emerson Radio Corporation was spun off as a separate company, under the management of Abrams (who later changed the spelling of his name to Abrahams). The radio company, not the recording operation, is the corporate ancestor of the present-day Emerson Corporation.

In December 1924, several Emerson Recording Laboratories executives formed the Consolidated Recording Laboratories, *q.v.*, and on May 4, 1925, they officially dissolved ERL.

EMPEY RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1951

Offices: 115 W. 53rd St., New York

Record Products: Empey

Launched in December 1946 by songwriter and music publisher Maeco Pinkard, with the assistance of his wife, Edna B. Pinkard, and F. L. Hailstolk.

The first Empey releases appeared in *Billboard's* January 1947 advance lists. They included two selections by veteran entertainer Noble Sissle, which were said by a reviewer to evoke "a strong feeling of nostalgia." By May 1947, Pinkard was soliciting masters "suitable for disc jockey and juke box fans" for outright purchase or use on a royalty basis. Later Empey releases, which appeared sporadically into mid-1951, were mostly conventional pop fare by little-known artists. Among them was actress Jean Sincere, a newcomer at the time, whose 1949 recording of Pinkard's "Merry Christmas (Bet Your Buttons)" was dismissed by *Billboard* as a "weak seasonal ditty done without spark."

In early 1952 the Empey label was replaced by Broadway (unrelated to Dana Records' Broadway label, which was discontinued at about that time).

EMPIRE BROADCASTING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1940–Late 1950s

Offices: 480 Lexington Ave., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Masters for independent labels; air-checks, radio transcriptions, custom recordings

The Empire Broadcasting Corporation was founded in June 1940 by Gerald A. Kelleher. Ownership passed to his wife, Helen Dwyer Kelleher, following his death on July 10, 1943. Eugene A. Bresson served as vice-president and general manager.

Empire specialized in custom production and recording services for radio stations, including ad production, script-writing, and talent procurement. In a 1946 interview in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (which gave her first name as "Bijou"), Helen Kelleher recalled, "Everyone advised me to sell out, but I guess there's a little ham in me... No matter what kind of a recording or transcribing job we've been asked to do here, I've never said no, either. Many times we've had to farm assignments out, but it's good business."

Empire initially refused to sign a contract with the American Federation of Musicians at the end of the first AFM recording ban. Recording finally resumed in October 1943, after the AFM agreed not to demand royalty payments on Empire's radio transcriptions, which were meant to be discarded after a program aired.

According to Kelleher, Empire did a large business in one-minute advertising spots. The company also began recording masters for independent commercial labels in the mid-1940s, including Joe Davis (probably their most frequent commercial client), Diamond, Manor, and Musicraft. In the 1950s the company moved into the production of television programming and commercials under Helen Kelleher's management.

EMPIRE RECORD COMPANY / EMPIRE RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1953

Offices: 2060 1st Ave., New York

Record Products (78): Empire [2], Lyric [4]; Discus (acquired from Radio-Rundfunk, 1950); pressing for Aladdin, H. R. S., Viennola, other independent labels

Originally an independent pressing plant and distribution company operated by record-store owner Jack Caidin, whose name *Billboard* sometimes misspelled as "Caiden" (or "Caitin," on at least one occasion). There was no connection to Julius Dixon's and Roy Jorgenson's Empire Record and Music Company (New York), which issued imported recordings during the same period and has been confused with Caidin's operation by some modern writers.

A former glove salesman, Caidin progressed from conducting mail auctions of used records to opening his Collectors Record Shop (New York) in the mid-1930s to deal in rare and out-of-print operatic records. In or around 1936, he arranged to have the American Record Corporation press dubbings of historic recordings under his Collectors Record Shop label. Caidin's catalog came to include rare or previously unissued recordings by

Lillian Russell (from a Columbia personal recording discovered in a New Jersey attic), Rudolf Valentino, and many other important actors and operatic stars, often packaged with illustrated folders containing historical and discographical notes.

Caidin opened a small pressing plant began pressing and distributing for Steve Smith's Hot Record Society in 1945. He also launched the C.R.S. Historical Records label at about the same time, which was devoted to reissuing the same sort of material as his previous label. Both labels were pressed in small quantities, with distribution handled by Caidin himself. In the early 1950s, the recordings were dubbed to LPs and released in a five-disc album, *Famous Records of the Past*.

In February 1946, *Billboard* reported that Caidin's pressing plant would quadruple its output within three months and was ready to take on manufacturing for other small labels. Caidin took over the Hot Record Society masters in 1948, along with Steve Smith's Onyx Publishers. He agreed to lease the Hot Record Society masters to Aladdin, in exchange for which Aladdin gave him its East Coast pressing work.

Empire began full-scale conversion to plastic pressings in the autumn of 1948. Caidin soon expanded his activities to include master-brokering, using masters he had acquired from various struggling or defunct labels, then began producing his own recordings. He entered the children's market in 1949, purchasing masters from Carousel and Lyric and taking over the Lyric label. However, he seems to have put little effort into developing the Empire label itself, which advertised only infrequently.

In January 1949, Caidin announced that he was reorganizing Empire and would be turning general management over to two of his executives so that he could devote his full attention to acquiring new domestic and foreign clients. Among the deals that resulted was a 1949 pressing agreement with Radio-Rundfunk (whose Discus label was subsequently taken over by Empire); an agreement to license the H. R. S. masters to Sofradi (France) also in 1949; and in 1951, the securing of American pressing and distribution rights for the Austrian-based Viennola label. During the same period, Caidin was busy acquiring material from defunct domestic labels, including a group of Jan August's Diamond masters that he purchased at bankruptcy auction in late 1950 and promptly leased to Mercury.

Empire appears to have been inactive after 1953. In the spring of 1956, Eli Oberstein purchased the Hot Record Society masters from Caidin, who had been leasing them to Atlantic for the past several years. By 1959–1960, two unrelated operations in Florida and Louisiana were using the Empire Record Company name.

EMPIRE RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1945 – 1950s

Offices: 1144 Madison Ave., Redwood City, CA; 450 Chestnut St., San Carlos, CA (1950s)

Record Products: Empire [3] (unconfirmed)

Primarily a custom-recording service, Empire reputedly produced its own label c. 1945. Thus far, no reliable information has been found concerning the company's ownership or its supposed label. It should not be confused with a similarly named company in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which produced private and custom recordings during the same period.

ENCORE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 918 S. Flower St., Los Angeles

Record Products: Encore

Launched in March 1946 by Al Williams and Sid Abramson, with Dave Ward serving as general manager. In August 1946 the Encore label was sold to George A. (Bullets) Durgom, the personal manager of Page Cavanaugh, Andy Russell, the Pied Pipers, and other popular artists.

Durgom's main interest in the company appears to have been its Cavanaugh masters, which he licensed to Mastertone Records before scuttling the Encore label at the end of 1946. He then spent the next two years peddling Encore's masters to other labels. Among the buyers were Signature (which purchased twenty-four masters outright in November 1947, including some Cavanaugh recordings) and M-G-M (which purchased fourteen masters by singer Derry Falligant in April 1948).

ENGLEWOOD RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1955

Offices: 516 Englewood Ave., Chicago

Pressing: RCA Custom Products, possibly other plant(s)

Record Products: Englewood

A minor pop label specializing in what it advertised as "cheer-up records — no trouble songs." Englewood's first known advertisement appeared in *Billboard* in January 1946, and only eight releases are known to have been produced during the company's first four years of operation. It was still placing small classified advertisements as late as November 1955, mostly for its 1940s titles. There appears to have been an affiliation with songwriter Bill Sullivan (given as Will Sullivan on some labels), but no reliable information has been found concerning the company's ownership.

ENTERPRISE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 8111 (later, 8109–8111) Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles

Pressing: Berger Enterprises (to mid-1946); own plant (from late 1946)

Record Products: Enterprise [1], Ambassador-Enterprise; pressing for Ambassador, Chapel, Liberty, and other small labels

Launched in early 1946 by Jack Helms (president), Howard G. Krause (vice-president), and Jack Gardiner (secretary-treasurer). Pressing was contracted to Berger Enterprises, which was credited as producer on the earliest version of the label. Frank Berger controlled Enterprise Records at the start and was responsible for hiring Frank Utter (whose experience had been solely in the aircraft industry) as the company's general manager. Jack Kenney, a country-and-western singer who had recently signed with Spotlight Records, served as the company's artists-and-repertoire director.

Enterprise's initial releases began shipping on February 1, 1946. They retailed for a standard 75¢ each (or 55¢ to jukebox operators, to whom they were largely targeted). Berger insisted on test-marketing all recordings before approving release, placing them on a jukebox in the pressing plant to ascertain employees' reaction. The early artist roster comprised country-and-western artists Kenney recruited from local radio stations, including Ken Patton, Russ Pike, Lois (Cow Gal) Powell, Larry Williams, and Buddy Weber. A *Cash Box* reviewer commented on one early Buddy Weber release, "When the boxes start churning out this disc — either side — you'll see the beer-drinkers in the sticks weeping crocodile tears."

Berger announced a complete reorganization of Enterprise in May 1946 that included the opening of a new sales department. Howard Krause replaced Kenney (who stayed on) as manager of artists and repertoire, a change that was almost immediately apparent in Enterprise's shift from country music to mainstream pop. By July 1946, Enterprise's roster had expanded to include the De Castro Sisters, Rudy Vallee, Gus Van, and other well-known pop stars (several of them long past their primes), along with several conventional dance bands. At that time, it was announced that the company had such a backlog of masters awaiting release that it was temporarily putting a halt to recording.

By the time recording resumed in late August 1946, the relationship with Frank Berger (who was said to be suffering from a mysterious bone disease) had been severed. The company was reorganized as Enterprise Records, Inc., with Helms retaining the presidency and Krause now managing most of the operation. Utter and Kenney were let go, the latter replaced by Bennie Krueger, a band leader whose heyday had been in the early 1920s. By the end of the year, Enterprise was operating its own pressing plant. One of the earliest independent operations to offer vinyl pressings, it did contract pressing work for Manor, Gotham, and other small independent labels.

In October 1946, it was announced that the London-based Electric and Musical Industries would distribute selected Enterprise recordings internationally, on a royalty basis. The following month, Krause test-marketed Enterprise records with the Rexall Company, which was considering selling the records in their drugstores. The test run, conducted in Rexall's Los Angeles store at Hollywood and Vine, apparently was not a success.

Enterprise announced a new series of children's records produced by film star Bebe

Daniels in March 1947. In the same month, Krause signed comedians Bud Abbott and Lou Costello to record their "Who's on First?" routine for Enterprise. The pair agreed to waive royalties, which instead were donated to the Lou Costello Jr. Youth Foundation. The original Enterprise edition of the recording (which would eventually pass through many other hands and be the subject of at least one lawsuit) was issued with special picture labels in April. Baseball Commissioner Happy Chandler granted Enterprise permission to sell the records at stadiums nationwide.

Enterprise took over the pressing and distribution of Freddie Martin's Ambassador label in May 1947. At the same time, it was reported that Ralph Bass, who had recently resigned from Black and White, would manage Enterprise's race catalog, but Bass instead launched his own Bop label. In the meantime, Krause announced that he had signed concert pianist Reah Sadowsky and was negotiating with several unnamed West Coast conductors in anticipation of launching a classical catalog.

Before the classical project came to fruition, it was disclosed that Enterprise was experiencing financial problems. In the autumn of 1947, creditors agreed to forestall action until the company could address what *Billboard* termed "muddled finances." Instead, Krause moved to United Artist Records, a cooperative venture that took over Enterprises' masters. UAR also offered Krause a position as general supervisor of sales, but drew the line at taking on any of Enterprise's previous liabilities.

On October 25, 1947, the Lou Costello Jr. Youth Foundation announced that would be filing claim against Enterprise for \$10,00 in unpaid royalties of sales of the Abbott & Costello release. Bankruptcy proceedings against Enterprise began in November 1947, after the Harry Fox agency filed a claim for more than \$2000 in unpaid publisher royalties.

ESLAVA RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1948 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1818 E. 1st St., Los Angeles

Record Products: Eslava

An obscure operation apparently specializing in material for the Latino market. The company was first listed by *Billboard* in its January 1949 label directory. No reliable information has been found concerning its ownership or operations.

ESQUIRE RECORD COMPANY — See Globe Distributors

ESSEX RECORD COMPANY — See Palda Record Company

ETNA RECORDING COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 55 W. 42nd St., New York

Record Products: Etna

Launched in early 1949 by singer-songwriter Nicola Paone, who was featured on many Etna releases. Advertised as "The Peak of Pleasure," Etna records originally specialized in pop tunes and the occasional mildly risqué novelty, a few of which were sung in Italian. The company's first release (Paone's "There's Nothing Like a Dame"/"I Love My Nina") was advertised in the spring of 1949. The company had a minor hit in mid-1950 with "Show Me How to Milk a Cow," which it subsequently sold to London Records.

Etna later tempered its output, beginning in November 1950 with a group of Christmas releases. In the same month, Paone announced he was launching a "folk-pop" series devoted to traditional themes adapted for the popular market. Etna appears to have closed in mid-1951, at about the time that Paone signed with Columbia Records. He later retired from entertainment and opened a restaurant bearing his name in New York.

BUSS EVERETT MUSIC STUDIO (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949 – 1950

Offices: 115½ Jefferson Ave., Dallas, TX

Pressing: Research Craft

Record Products: Mell-O-Tone

A short-lived venture of country-music musician and songwriter Buss Everett. In addition to Everett's own group, the label featured the Beau Jesters. The major trade papers reported nothing concerning Mell-O-Tone. However, Everett's 1949 "Watchin' You Through Those Teardrops, Dear" (which he recorded as a private Mell-O-Tone release) received some attention in the local papers after he reported his inspiration came from watching a blood-transfusion bottle drip while he was hospitalized with an infection.

EVERSTATE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1952

Offices: 125 North St., San Antonio, TX (1949–1951); 1314 N. Brazos St., San Antonio (Tanner offices, 1952)

Record Products: Everstate

A country-and-western label launched in late 1949 by John Currie and members of the Texas Tophands. The latter performed on many of Everstate's early releases. Its first Everstate offering, "Bandera Waltz," appeared in *Billboard's* November 1949 advance lists and reportedly was an immediate local hit. Everstate's artist roster soon expanded to include Del Dunbar, the Lone Star Playboys, Bill Lister (whose "Local Yokel" reportedly was a minor jukebox hit), and other local and regional acts.

Distribution of Everstate records was taken over by Bob Tanner in the early 1950s (see Tanner Manufacturing and Distributing). The label was redesigned at that time, adding an outline map of the United States and substituting Tanner's address for that of Everstate's offices. The company was last listed in *Billboard's* March 1952 manufacturer directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

EVERYBODYS RECORD, INC.

This New York-based marketer of Everybodys records (1924–1925) relied almost entirely on material from the Emerson–Grey Gull, and Paramount catalogs. However, several issues by Richard Hitter's Cabineers use specially numbered masters that have not been traced to other labels and probably were made especially for Everybodys. Everybody's Talking Machine Company (with an apostrophe), a Philadelphia phonograph-parts supplier, publicly disavowed any connection to the Everybodys label.

EVREĬNOW, S. A. (Discs)

Record Production: 1941 – c. Late 1940s

Offices: North High Street, Foxon, CT

Original-Master Source(s): Own masters from unknown studio

Record Products: Paraclete Music Disc, PMD

The Paraclete label was devoted to the piano works of Alexander Scriabin. S. A. Evreĭnow served as president and sales manager. Music critic Marshall Stearns characterized Paraclete as "a private record company which contends that Scriabin can be as popular and enjoyable as Bach, Mozart, or Brahms," adding, "The results support this contention." However, he noted that the recording quality was only "fair."

Paraclete's roster included pianists Yolanda Bolotine, Vladimir Drozdoff, Eunice Easton, Ida Krehm, and Samuel Yaffee. The latter's recordings were the subject of the earliest known Paraclete review, published in September 1941. At least twenty-nine Paraclete releases are known, the earliest with plain white labels that were later supplanted by more decorative designs in gold on red. Evreĭnow sold the records directly, by mail order, for \$1.00 each. Paraclete was listed in the 1945 and 1946 editions of *Record Retailing Yearbook*, after which little more was heard of the label.

EXCELLENT RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1924 – c. 1925

Offices: New York

Original-Master Source(s): Electric Recording Laboratories

Record Products: Excellent

A producer of records for the Italian immigrant market, of unknown ownership. The company's label copyright filing was published on December 27, 1924. Masters were supplied by the Electric Recording Laboratories and were acoustically recorded, despite the studio's name. They appear to have been made expressly for the Excellent label.

EXCELSIOR PHONOGRAPH COMPANY / EXCELSIOR & MUSICAL PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1897 – 1899

Offices: 18 E. 22nd St., New York (1897–1/1898); 42 W. 28th St., New York (2–4/1898); 57 W. 24th St., New York (5/1898–1/1899); Dewey Building, 5 E. 14th St., New York (from 1/1899)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios (42 W. 28th St. from 4/1898)

Record Products: Excelsior cylinders, Giant Tone cylinders

The Excelsior Phonograph Company purchased the cylinder business operated by singer Roger Harding (*q.v.*) in late 1897 and took over his former facilities. Harding was retained as general manager of the new company, for which he made many recordings.

Excelsior first advertised in *The Phonoscope* for November–December 1897, which probably was published a month or more after its cover date. Its artist roster, in addition to Harding, included Steve Porter, Russell Hunting, George Gaskin, Dan W. Quinn, George Washington Johnson, Vess L. Ossman, George Schweinfest, William Tuson, and other studio regulars. The company was also one of the earliest to advertise "Yankee dialect stories" by Cal Stewart, whose name was misspelled "Stuart" in some advertisements.

In February 1898, *The Phonoscope* reported that Excelsior had moved into a larger plant in order to keep up with demand for its records. The company claimed to sell only "originals" and advertised "any special records made to order at short notice — liberal discounts on large orders."

In April 1898, Excelsior merged with G. M. Van Horn's recently formed Musical Phonograph Record Company (*q.v.*). The reorganized company, incorporated with capital stock of \$100,000, operated as the Excelsior & Musical Phonograph Record Company. Its president was Dr. Henry Parker De Doursney, who reportedly used a recent inheritance to fund substantial improvements to the facilities. Roger Harding and G. M. Van Horn stayed on temporarily, serving as vice-president and general manager, respectively. Stephen W. Giles served as secretary and treasurer.

Harding and Van Horn departed during the summer of 1898, and general management was taken over by singer William F. Hooley, who was said to have experimented successfully with a new recording diaphragm and "at last succeeded in improving the records to a great extent." After a short stay, Hooley was replaced as general manager by Stephen Giles. Having no experience in the phonograph or recording fields, Giles soon decided that he was better suited to the fruit business. He sold his shares in Excelsior to Brooklyn record dealers Arthur S. Alexander and A. Allen Stafford who, it was reported, would take over management of the company.

In January 1899, the reorganized Excelsior Phonograph and Musical Record Company advertised that it was under entirely new management and announced its new Giant Tone cylinders, of which it claimed to be the sole manufacturer. Excelsior also appears to have taken over the unsold inventory of Walcutt & Leeds and was the last to advertise those cylinders for sale. The company was officially dissolved in 1899.

EXCELSIOR RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1944–1951

Offices: 3661 S. Gramercy Place, Los Angeles; 1065 N. Fairfax, Los Angeles (distribution, from 5/1947); 606 10th Ave., New York (sales, distribution, and retail, 8/1948–1949)

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing, probably other independent plants

Record Products: Excelsior [2]

Owned and operated by New Orleans native Otis Rene, a Black songwriter known for "When It's Sleepy Time Down South," "When the Swallows Return to Capistrano," and other pop hits. Rene's wife, Margaret, served as secretary and treasurer of the company. A music-publishing arm, Excelsior Publications, controlled copyrights on original songs recorded for the label, many of which were written by Rene.

Excelsior's launch was announced in March 1944, and the records were being advertised by July. According to a *Billboard* report, this was a relaunch of a label that had been dormant for several years, but no details of the earlier version were given, nor is an earlier version of Rene's Excelsior known to exist. The report might have referred to the original Ebony label, Rene's first record venture, which he and Shelton Brooks produced briefly in 1940–1941 (see Ebony Records).

Excelsior records were relatively expensive for the period, retailing for \$1 to \$1.05 and wholesaling for 65¢. Rene defended the pricing even in the face of complaints that his records were not up to current quality standards, countering that the high price was justified by his knowledge of good artists and good songs. As evidence, he cited one of Excelsior's earliest releases, Nat (King) Cole's "I'm Lost," which spent more than twenty weeks on the "Harlem Hit Parade" chart and reportedly earned Rene \$25,000. Few subsequent Excelsior releases seem to have approached that level of popularity, despite a roster that included Buddy Banks, Gladys Bentley, Johnny Otis, Jimmy Rushing, and other well-known artists.

Rene's brother Leon operated Exclusive Records during the same period, and the two companies at first were linked informally through Jack Gutshall, whose Gutshall Distributing Company initially handled national distribution for both. In mid-1945, the Rene brothers and Gutshall formed the RGR Company to consolidate manufacturing, sales, and distribution of the two labels, although Excelsior and Exclusive otherwise remained separate operations.

The Renes and Jack Gutshall formed the Pacific Coast Record Manufacturers' Association in September 1945, appointing executives from several other West Coast record manufacturers to its board of directors. Its primary mission was to reduce production costs and negotiate national distribution deals on behalf of small independent West Coast labels. Meetings were contentious from the start, and the association appears to have accomplished little before it was quietly dissolved.

In 1947 production and distribution of Excelsior records were taken over by United Artist Records, a cooperative venture that issued Excelsior material under a modified version of its own United Artist label, to which was added the legend, "An Excelsior Production." Excelsior survived UAR's bankruptcy in 1948, returning to independent status, but new releases dwindled in the later 1940s and early 1950s. The company continued to operate into the summer of 1951.

EXCLUSIVE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1949

Offices: 1515 N. Vine St., Hollywood, CA (1944–mid 1946); Sunset & Vine, Hollywood (mid-1946–12/1949); 1872 W. Washington St., New York (branch, 1948–7/1949); 1065 N. Fairfax, Los Angeles (distribution, from 5/1947)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Exclusive

Founded in 1944 by New Orleans native and Black entrepreneur Leon Rene. Officers included Rene (president), I. F. Jancke (secretary), and Jimmie Thomas (treasurer). Rene was already operating the Leon Rene Music Publishing Company, which became an Exclusive subsidiary in 1946. *Billboard* in 1947 erroneously stated that Exclusive Records had been producing records for fifteen years.

Rene hired songwriter Ben Ellison as Exclusive's general manager in July 1945, by which time the company was operating its own pressing plant. Marketed mainly to the race-record sector, Exclusive discs originally retailed for \$1.05, well above the national norm, but were reduced to 75¢ in June 1948. Early releases included reissues from the Rene brothers' Ammor catalog of 1939–1940. The artist roster came to include Herb Jeffries (who also served as the company's public-relations director), Ivory Joe Hunter, Hazel Scott, and Joe Liggins' Honeydrippers. Liggins' two-part "The Honeydrinker," released in the summer of 1945, reportedly sold 100,000 copies within several months and might have been the label's largest-selling release. In April 1947, Exclusive began testing the country-and-western market, beginning with releases by cowboy-movie star Doye O'Dell, with considerably less success.

Rene's brother Otis operated Excelsior Records during the same period, and the two companies at first were linked informally through distributor Jack Gutshall. In mid-1945, he and the Rene brothers formed the RGR Company to consolidate the manufacturing, sales, and distribution of the Exclusive and Excelsior labels, although otherwise they remained separate operations. In September of that year, Gutshall and the Renes formed the Pacific Coast Record Manufacturers' Association (*q.v.* under Excelsior Records) to advance the interests of other small, independent record companies. In November, Gutshall announced that jukebox operators would receive first preference for orders of all new Exclusive releases.

Otis Rene and Jack Gutshall initially enjoyed a productive working relationship. Rene, Ellison, and Jeffries even wrote and recorded a song dedicated to Gutshall. On May 24, 1946, Gutshall hosted a lavish open house to mark the opening of Exclusive's new Hollywood facility, with Joe Liggins on hand to autograph what was claimed to be his millionth record. But Rene's relationship with Ellison and Gutshall (who complained that sales had been in a "slump") became increasingly strained as the summer progressed. Ellison departed the company in June 1946, following a dispute with Rene over some extra-curricular song-publishing activities, and launched his own Hollywood International label. In August 1946, Rene severed connections with Gutshall Distributing and the RGR Company to set up his own distribution network. Exclusive and several other small independent West Coast labels made headlines during the summer of 1947, when they began shipping records to the East Coast on Flying Tiger Airlines, rather than relying on sluggish ground transportation.

Rene launched Recordo Music Publishers in early 1948 and continued to cut masters during the American Federation of Musicians' second recording ban. The first such session, held in May 1948, produced Herb Jeffries' cover of "Nature Boy," with a *capella* accompaniment to avoid the use of union musicians. Like other producers, Rene substituted non-union vocalists for instrumental backing during the ban. *Cash Box* reported that jukebox customers were not enthusiastic about the results.

Rene took the opportunity to trim his artist roster following the end of the AFM ban. Citing inadequate sales of their records, Rene refused to renew Herb Jeffries' and Ricky Jordan's contracts in January 1949, but he re-signed several artists who had previously been let go, including the Honeydrippers and Mabel Scott. He also purchased at least two masters from Al Rose's short-lived Arkay Records. There was a brief flurry of publicity on April 9, 1949, when Parker Prescott, acting on behalf of Exclusive Records, presented a plaque to WHOM's Fortune Pope for "fostering inter-racial and anti-discrimination activities" in connection with the Willie Bryant-Ray Carroll disc jockey show. By that time, there were clear signs that Exclusive was experiencing financial difficulties.

Rene closed his distributing operation in May 1949 and turned distribution over to two outside companies. Two months later, he closed the company's New York facilities and laid off all East Coast employees except Prescott, who was retained as a regional sales manager. On December 24, it was announced that Exclusive had held its final recording session and would be suspending operations. Its masters were offered for sale for the benefit of the company's creditors. Initially there were no takers for the recordings, despite Rene's claim to have stockpiled a three-year supply of unreleased material. Rene blamed Exclusive's failure on escalating production costs.

By early 1950, Exclusive Records was little more than a skeleton operation. Sales manager Franklin Kort finally resigned in April, and Los Angeles record distributor Harry Fox was

granted the right to press and distribute Exclusive records on a royalty basis. By October 1950, the masters were being sold off piecemeal. They were purchased in small lots by Mercury, Swing Time, and Specialty. Rene re-entered the record business in 1951, when he launched Class Records.

EXITO RECORDS — See Seeco Records, Inc.

EXNER RECORD COMPANY / F. B. EXNER (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1948

Offices: 509 Olive Way, Seattle

Original-Master Source(s): KOL-Seattle studio (1944), C. P. MacGregor studio (1945), unknown Seattle studio (1947)

Record Products: Exner

Owned and sporadically operated by Dr. Frederick B. Exner, a Seattle radiologist and jazz enthusiast. The records initially were sold by Exner himself, exclusively by mail order. They were later handled by the Yerba Buena Music Shop in Oakland, California, but otherwise had very limited distribution. Only seven issues are known to have been produced.

Exner was acquainted with many local Seattle jazz musicians, and in September 1944 he had the KOL studio in Seattle record several sides by the John Wittwer Trio, in anticipation of launching his own label. Wittwer's initial Exner offering, coupling "Joe's Blues" and "Wolverine Blues," was touted locally as the first jazz recordings to have been made for an independent Seattle label.

Wittwer's clarinetist, Joe Darensbourg, put Exner in touch with veteran trombonist Kid Ory, who was living in Los Angeles and had recently recorded for the newly launched Crescent label. In February 1945, Exner arranged for a Los Angeles recording session by a band under Ory's nominal leadership. Released in June, the records touched off a lively debate among jazz critics and fans over their merits and shortcoming compared with Ory's Crescent sides. Exner's next recording session, in December 1947, yielded several sides by local pianist Barrie Vye and his Rainy City Jazz Band. Their release in early 1948 marked the end of the Exner label.

Dr. Exner was later known as an outspoken opponent of fluoridating public water supplies (a practice he termed "medical insanity"), writing and lecturing widely on the subject. He died in December 1976.

— F —

F AND P RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 211 S. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, CA

Pressing: Research Craft

Record Products: F and P

A very short-lived venture launched in March 1950 by guitarist Les Paul in partnership with accordionist and vocalist Ernie Felice, who had recently left M-G-M Records. Paul, being under contract to Capitol Records, reportedly was limited to selecting titles and overseeing recording sessions.

A single F and P release is known (#1001/#1002, with individual catalog numbers assigned to each side). Well-reviewed by *Billboard* in May 1950, one side featured a duet by Felice and Mary Ford, and the other a vocal by Felice accompanied by Henry Mancini's Orchestra. Felice and Ford were subsequently offered exclusive Capitol contracts, presumably putting an end to the venture. No mention has been found of F and P Records after July 1950. The company's brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 manufacturers' directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

FAIS-DO-DO RECORDS — See Miller, J. D.

FAITH RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Faith

A short-lived religious label launched in September 1950 by talent agent Lou Irwin and film actor James Edwards. Edwards was featured on the initial releases, reciting Biblical passages with the backing of a seventy-five voice choir. *Billboard* reported that the sessions were held in a local church "to achieve fuller sound quality." The records were sold through churches and other religious organizations, as well as by mail order, for \$1 each. The venture appears to have been abandoned soon after its debut. There was no connection the New York-based Faith label, which launched in 1951.

FALCON RECORD COMPANY / FALCON RECORDING STUDIO / DISCOS FALCÓN (Discs)

Record Production: From 1948

Offices: 504 Dougherty, Mission, TX (1948–mid-1950s); S. 17th St., McAllen, TX (1950s–1960s); N. 22nd St., McAllen, TX (from 1960s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Tanner Manufacturing (1948–1974); own plant (from 1974; Discos Peerless (Mexico)

Record Products (78s): Falcon, Mission

Owned and operated by Arnaldo Villareal Ramírez, Falcon was the most successful and longest-lived of the early labels catering to the Mexican-American market. Following World War II, Ramírez hosted a show on radio station XEAW (Reynosa, Mexico) that featured local performers from both sides of the border, some of whom he went on to manage. Realizing that those artists were unlikely to be signed by the mainstream labels, Ramírez opened his own recording studio and in 1947 launched the short-lived Mira Records, *q.v.*

The Falcon operation was launched under the name of Discos Falcón, in Ramírez's home, in 1948. It was quickly split into two divisions and renamed, with the Falcon Recording Studio handling production and Falcon Record Company handling sales and distribution. Artists were recruited locally, allegedly including some Mexican performers who crossed illegally into Texas to record. In the early 1950s, Ramírez arranged to have Falcon records pressed in Mexico, using the same label design, for distribution there. The recordings were also widely licensed to other labels in Central and South America.

The Falcon label was instrumental in popularizing Tejano music in the United States. Early releases favored the *norteño* style, which appealed primarily to rural audiences. Lydia Mendoza and members of her family recorded prolifically for Falcon beginning in the summer of 1950, a relationship that extended into the late 1960s. In the early 1950s, Ramírez began to explore more contemporary styles, beginning with releases by Los Alegres de Terán, a pioneering *conjunto* group that appealed to rural and urban audiences alike. In 1952 he widened Falcon's scope to include Afro-Cuban music, with formation of the Orquesta Falcon, and in 1954 he signed bolero singer Chelo Silva. However, Falcon's main focus remained Tejano music.

In 1960 Ramírez sold Falcon to Centron, which later sold it back to the Ramírez family. Operations were subsequently taken over by Ramírez's son, Arnaldo Jr., who grew Falcon into a major presence in the Hispanic market. After retiring from Falcon, Arnaldo Sr. became involved in local politics, serving as mayor of Mission, Texas, from 1973 to 1981.

Falcon's masters were purchased by the Mexican branch of Electric and Musical Industries in the early 1990s. Arnaldo Ramírez, Sr., died on May 11, 1993.

FAMOUS RECORD COMPANY / FAMOUS RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – c. Late 1940s

Offices: 22 Demarest St. (1944–1945), Newark, NJ; and RKO Theatre Building (116 Market St., Room 303), Newark, NJ (from 1945)

Record Products: Famous [2]

Launched in the autumn of 1944, the Famous Record Company initially appropriated Brunswick's long-abandoned 1920 label design, although there was no connection to that company. Thus far, no reliable information concerning the company's formation or early

ownership has been located. It was first listed in *Record Retailing Yearbook's* 1945 edition, which provided no information other than a mailing address.

The first two Famous releases, by Ross Leonard with Phil Napoleon's Orchestra, were advertised in November 1944 and received mixed reviews in *Billboard*. The artist roster, drawn largely from New York-area nightclubs, was soon expanded to include Jerry Delmar's Orchestra, Margie Hudson, Jim Messner, and Tommy Ryan.

Little more was reported concerning the Famous Record Company until 1946, when it was reorganized as Famous Records, Inc., with Thomas P. Chakiris serving as president. Operating at the same address, the company introduced a new series and label design in 1947 and began advertising nationally on a modest scale, primarily to jukebox operators. Goody's handled distribution in the New York area.

Among the investors in the reorganized operation was burlesque strip-tease star Winnie Garrett (*a.k.a.* The Flaming Redhead), who was made vice-president and promotional director of the company. Garrett, whose main duty initially was persuading disc jockeys to plug Famous records, was said to have been so poorly paid by the company that she could not afford to retire from burlesque. However, she came to play an increasingly active role in the company. In March 1948, Garrett took several Famous artists to Bridgeport, Connecticut, for an appearance on behalf of the Damon Runyon Memorial Cancer Fund. Three months later, she sued 20th Century Fox for \$150,000 over its portrayal of a fictitious Famous Records company (which goes bankrupt) in the film, "You Were Meant for Me," claiming damage to her own and her company's financial reputations.

In November 1948, Garrett was arrested for presenting a "lewd and indecent performance" at New York's Club Ha-Ha. The charges were dismissed after it was confirmed that she had in fact been clothed, albeit very scantily, and Garrett promised to take a "more conservative" approach to her dancing. In May 1950, she sued photographer Murray Korman for mental anguish and distress after he placed photographs of her on penny peep-machines. By then, Famous Records appears to have been inactive, having failed to garner much attention for anything other than Garrett's extracurricular activities. She continued to perform in burlesque into the mid-1950s.

FAMOUS RECORD COMPANY, INC., OF NEW YORK — See Specialty Record Company

FAMOUS SINGERS RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1921

Offices: 135 W. 119th St., New York (at founding); 231 Lenox Ave., New York (to 6/1921); 249 W. 34th St., New York (from 6/1921)

Original-Master Source(s): Probably own studio

Record Products: Famous Singers Records

A short-lived company incorporated on January 4, 1921, by J. M. Ranko, M. W. Rappaport, and Frank A. Lappen, with capitalization reported at \$50,000. John Stege served as recording manager, and band leader and songwriter Charles K. Davis as musical director.

The initial Famous Singers releases were advertised in June 1921. Despite the name, Famous Singers had no celebrity artists on its roster and offered only ordinary popular fare. The company advertised that it would release six "novelty dance records" per month by Charles K. Davis' Orchestra or Trio, and a general catalog was said to be forthcoming in the summer of 1921. However, it is not known to have been published, and no mention of the company has been found after 1921.

There was speculation at one time that Famous Singer records were produced by Grey Gull, based upon the discovery in the 1970s of a Famous Singers Record with a Grey Gull-produced Phonolamp label on its reverse side. However, most Famous Singers records use masters in a P-2000 series that was exclusive to the label, and aside from the anomalous Famous Singers-Phonolamp specimen, inspected examples do not suggest a Grey Gull product.

FANFARE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949– c. 1950

Offices: 1337 N. Orange Drive, Los Angeles

Record Products: Fanfare

Owned and operated by songwriter Ted Mossman, in conjunction with his existing Fanfare Music publishing operation. Mossman is remembered primarily for having plagiarized a theme from Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto for his hit, "Full Moon and Empty Arms." He received his American Federation of Musicians recording license in April 1949. In June, he underwrote the formation of a touring band fronted by Stan Brown.

Fanfare's initial release, announced in April 1949, was a recording of Mossman's "Who Has To?" (co-authored with Steve Allen, who was working as a disc jockey at the time). Mossman claimed that it was a trial run, and that he intended to stay in the record business only if the tune "clicked." Subsequent Fanfare releases appeared only sporadically.

The Fanfare label apparently was intended mainly to bring Mossman's compositions to the attention of better-known music publishers and record labels. Masters were parceled out piecemeal to other companies, with Fanfare sometimes retaining the right to continue selling its own pressings locally. In August 1949, Mossman licensed four Fanfare masters to Herman Lubinsky's Regent Records for release in the East. The Bill Pennell Orchestra's "Heart of Stone," a minor hit in late 1949, reportedly served as the "bait" side among a group of Fanfare masters that Mossman sold outright to London Records in February 1950.

In June 1950, Mossman, Florence Rosen, and Bill Anson were sued by songwriters Dan Franklin and Carol Thomas, the composers of "Heart of Stone." Franklin and Thomas alleged that the melody was plagiarized from their "Heart of Gold," which the pair had copyrighted before the Mossman tune was released. Franklin claimed he had played "Heart of Gold" for Rosen, who stole the melody on that occasion; Rosen countered that she had registered "Heart of Stone" in 1946 and charged that Franklin and Thomas were guilty of infringement. The suit appears to have marked the end for Fanfare Records, whose last known release appeared in August 1950. The company's brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 manufacturers' directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

FANTASY RECORDS [I] — See Commercial Record Company

FANTASY RECORDS [II] (Discs)

Record Production: From 1949

Offices: Oakland, CA (at founding); 654 Natoma St., San Francisco (from 1950)

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products (78): Fantasy [II], Galaxy

Launched in 1949 by brothers Max and Sol Weiss, who operated a plastics-molding plant in San Francisco. A year earlier, they had begun pressing vinyl discs for the Circle Record Company and other small West Coast labels.

One of the Fantasy's pressing clients was Coronet Records in San Francisco (*q.v.*), which made the first commercial recordings by pianist Dave Brubeck. When Coronet found itself unable to pay Circle for their pressings in 1949s, the Weiss brothers took over the label, including Brubeck's masters and recording contract, and renamed it Fantasy after a science-fiction magazine. Brubeck (who was erroneously reported to own a half-interest in Fantasy) helped to assemble an artist roster that included Chet Baker, Gerry Mulligan, and Red Norvo. He left the company after later discovering that he owned a half-interest only in his own recordings.

In 1951 the Weiss brothers launched Galaxy, another jazz label named for a science-fiction magazine. Fantasy, which remained their flagship line, went on to become an important jazz (and later, rock-and-roll) label whose later history is beyond the scope of this work. In 2004, Fantasy was purchased by a consortium headed by television producer Norman Lear and was merged with Concord Records to form the Concord Music Group.

FARGO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1945 – 1947

Offices: 1011½ Washington Blvd., Venice, CA; 2712 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles (Coinmatic office)

Original-Master Source(s): Associated Studios and at least one other independent studio

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing, probably other independent plant(s)

Record Products: Fargo, Rafa, Range

A country-and-western venture launched in late 1945 or early 1946 by songwriter and fiddler Everette Ishmael (Billy) Hughes. In the late 1930s, Hughes moved from Oklahoma to the Los Angeles area and formed the Pals of the Pecos, a popular cowboy-style band. Much of Fargo's small output consisted of recordings by members of that band, including lead vocalist Johnny Tyler. Fargo was a family-owned company, with Del Rey Hughes serving as president and secretary, Billy Hughes as treasurer, and Everett Hughes as sales manager.

Early Fargo labels credited production to Associated Studios Broadcasting and Recording, a custom recording service in Pasadena, California. In late 1945 or early 1946, labels began crediting Fargo Records, with no further mention of Associated, although Fargo continued to record in that studio. The records were intended mainly for jukebox use. The primary distributor's address listed by Fargo was that of Coinmatic, a Los Angeles jukebox and record distributor that was involved with several other local independent labels. The records were also handled by small distributors in Dallas and New Orleans.

The initial Fargo release was not assigned a catalog number. Numbered issues began with 1100, which received a favorable *Billboard* review in September 1945. Hughes' roster, in addition to his own band and Johnny Tyler, included Terry Fells' Red River Rangers and Vic Bias' Panhandle Playboys. Hughes placed a large advertisement in *Billboard* in July 1946, by which time eighteen numbered Fargo records had been released. The 1100 series ended a short time later, at #1119. It was replaced by a new 500 series that was quickly abandoned, possibly after a single release.

Hughes signed with King records in early 1947, after which little more was heard of Fargo Records. The short-lived Range label, introduced in mid-1949 and credited to Carl Lee Arts (with no location given), used Fargo's label design and masters, but it is unclear whether Hughes was directly involved with its operation. A *Cash Box* review of one release, by the Rangeman, suggested that the record would make good jukebox "filler material."

Several Fargo masters were later reissued by 4 Star, for which Hughes also recorded. The Fargo name was used by several unrelated labels in the 1950s.

FAVORITE MANUFACTURING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1940s

Offices: 105–107 E. 12th St., New York

Record Products: Favorite

A distributor of phonographs and records, headed by Sid Blume, Favorite Manufacturing handled Gala, Kismet, Asch-Stinson, and other small independent labels during the 1940s. It briefly produced its own Favorite label in the late 1940s, specializing in novelty and mildly risqué material.

FBC DISTRIBUTING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950s

Offices: 2621 Ave. H, Rosenberg, TX

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, unknown independent studio

Record Products: FBC Records

Launched in 1949 by polka-band leader Ray Krenek, whose group appeared on some FBC releases. The initials stand for Fort Bend County (Texas). *Billboard* belatedly mentioned the label's arrival in February 1950, misspelling Krenek's name "Kranek."

The FBC label specialized in polkas and waltzes by local groups, including the Krenek, Ray Baca, and Joe Patek orchestras. There were also country-and-western offerings by Manny Nichols, Lee Leissner's Texas Rhythm Boys, and Johnny Sklar's Austin County Boys, as well as a smattering of Tejano dance numbers. An October 1950 *Billboard* review

of Krenek's "No No Polka" noted, "Recording sound and band style here suggest *circa* 1920." The company was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1951 and March 1952 label directories, which included many inactive or defunct companies. Some FBC titles were reissued on the Humming Bird label in the 1950s.

FEATURE RECORDS [Louisiana] — See J. D. Miller

FEATURE RECORDS [New York] — See WOR Electrical Recording and Transcription Services

FEDERAL RECORD CORPORATION (Cylinders and Discs)

Record Production: 1917 – 1924

Offices: Albany, New York; 108 E. 16th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Pressing: Own plant—Hamilton St., Albany, NY (1917–10/1922); Scranton Button Company (late 1922–late 1924)

Record Products: Federal [1], Resona, Silvertone; Indestructible (cylinders)

Foreign Label Using Masters: Grafton (England)

The Federal Record Corporation was incorporated on June 1, 1917, with \$100,000 in capitalization, as the result of a reorganization of the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company (*q.v.*), the manufacturers of Indestructible cylinders. The incorporators were J. P. O'Brien, William H. Hastings, and Frederick Goldie, none of whom is known to have been involved with Indestructible. Indestructible's James Snowden, George Snowden, and Henry McSweeney stayed on to manage the new company. George Snowden died in 1921, leaving a will that reportedly took attorneys several years to unravel.

Federal's corporate lineage is underscored by an entry in the 1919 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory*, which erroneously cited 1906 (the year in which Indestructible was incorporated) as the date of Federal's founding. A 1922 Federal advertisement went a step farther, claiming 1900 as the date of Indestructible's founding, tracing the company's lineage directly to the Lambert Company, whose patents were acquired by Indestructible in 1906. A trademark filing for use of the Federal brand on records was not made until May 7, 1920.

Indestructible's metamorphosis into the Federal Record Corporation occurred after a music publisher Leo Feist filed a lawsuit seeking to prevent Indestructible from issuing recordings of Feist songs until back-royalties and damages were paid. Indestructible was shut down within weeks of the ruling in Feist's favor, Indestructible was reorganized as the Federal Record Corporation. The closure coincided with the abrupt disappearance of McSweeney and George Snowden, both of whom would soon resurface at Federal.

The newly organized Federal Record Corporation continued to produce Indestructible cylinders, but also stated that production of "an indestructible lateral-cut [disc] record" would begin in July 1917, an announcement that was both premature and inaccurate. When Federal discs appeared in 1919, and they pressed in ordinary, breakable shellac.

In addition to its own 50¢ label, Federal produced the earliest version of the Resona label for the Charles Williams Stores and the first double-sided Silvertone discs for Sears Roebuck. The company employed an unusual master-numbering scheme in which the take number preceded the master number. Both the take and the master number advanced by one digit for each take; thus, 1-1770 is the first take of a given selection, 2-1771 the second take, and 3-1772 the third. Federal continued to record and manufacture Indestructible cylinders into 1921, although there was no correlation to the Federal disc catalog. Cylinder output and quality control declined markedly after 1917.

Federal's Albany offices and pressing plant were destroyed by fire on October 11, 1922, but the masters survived. Federal continued to record at its New York studio, under the management of W. R. Doyle, and pressing was transferred to the Scranton Button Company. General manager J. P. O'Brien offered his assurance that Federal would "continue in the usual way until further notice," but the company never fully recovered, and its assets were finally sold to the Scranton in 1924. Federal's distinctive take-numbering system was abandoned at that time; later Federal masters used a conventional numbering system, with a single master number allocated to each selection, followed by a take number.

Having done nothing to promote the Federal label, Scranton discontinued it in early 1925 and transferred the studio to its Emerson subsidiary. Some of the last recordings bearing Federal master numbers were released only on Emerson and affiliated labels. A few earlier Federal masters were reissued on various other labels pressed by Scranton.

FEDERAL RECORDS — See King Record Company

FENTONE ENTERPRISES (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: Oakland, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Oliver Record Company

Pressing: Oliver Record Company

Record Products: Fentone

A short-lived jazz label founded by Hal Fenton and Norm Dolgin, and produced and distributed for them by the Oliver Record Company. Many issues show Oliver's O- or OR- prefixed master numbers in the wax.

Fentone is remembered solely for its releases by Charlie Mingus (pretentiously labeled as "Charles 'Barron' Mingus Presents his Symphonic Airs," although the band was not even remotely "symphonic." Discographers disagree on personnel, other than Mingus himself. Recording dates are most often cited as January 1949, but March and even August appear in some works. There was also a short-lived "Bop on the Barbary Coast" series, by San Francisco-area artists. It included titles by the pseudonymous Owl Sextette, members of which were given the surnames "Owl" or "Hoot" on the labels.

FIDELITY RECORDS [I] — See Midget Music, Inc.

FIDELITY RECORDS [II] — See Specialty Records

57th STREET BROADWAY STUDIOS, INC. — See United States Record Corporation

FINE ARTS RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – Early 1950s

Offices: 504 Esplanade, Redondo Beach, CA

Record Products: Fine Arts

Launched in late 1948 by songwriter Peter Tinturin, and distributed for him by Black and White Records. The first release was announced in December 1948. Little more was heard of Fine Arts until April 1949, when *Billboard* mentioned an "expanded" Fine Arts label without offering details. There was no connection to the later Fine Art label of Detroit.

Producer John Blackburn was briefly affiliated with Fine Arts, before leaving to launch Selective Records. He was credited for the Fine Arts' only hit (albeit a minor one), Sandy Sims' "Don't Gamble with Romance." Other than that record, and a lukewarm *Cash Box* review of the Frank Wooley Orchestra's "Faith" and "The Rooster's Love Song" in the summer of 1949, Fine Arts went largely unnoticed. Only a handful of releases had been made by the time Tinturin closed Fine Arts in 1951 to accept a teaching position with the music department of Chapman College. In June 1953, *Billboard* stated that Tinturin was reviving the Fine Arts label, but no follow-up report has been found.

The Fine Arts Recordings name was used briefly in the early 1950s for an unrelated classical series produced and marketed by Texas Christian University.

FINE RECORDING COMPANY / FINE RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1977

Offices: 35 Madison St., Rochester, NY (1949–early 1951); 234 Alpine Rd., Rochester (early 1950s); 114 St. Paul St., Rochester (later 1950s)

Record Products (78s): Fine; custom and private recordings

Owned and operated by saxophonist and band leader Vince Jan (*née* Vincent Giancursio, *a.k.a.* Vince Gian). After serving with a USO unit during World War II, Jan spent a year training as a recording engineer in Hollywood. In 1946 he returned to his hometown of

Rochester, New York, where he operated a custom recording studio above Brownie's nightclub by day and performed in the club at night.

Jan's Fine Recording Company entered the commercial market on a minuscule scale in May 1949, when its first release was advertised in *Billboard*. Jan wrote to *Down Beat* editor Ned Williams in February 1952 that he had produced only three commercial releases so far, although the actual number was approximately twelve by then. He expanded his commercial output substantially in the 1950s and 1960s, specializing in local performers he felt had the drive, if not always the talent, to succeed at the national level. None of his artists (which included pop, jazz, country, gospel, and rock-and-roll acts) achieved that goal, although some gained strong local followings through their records. Pressing runs usually were small, and the artists were sometimes asked to help finance production. Jan claimed to have supervised more than 3,500 sessions in his Rochester studio before his death in 1977.

Some writers have confused Jan's Fine label with the Fine label of Biloxi, Mississippi. Both used catalog numbers in a 1000 series during the 1950s, but they were unrelated.

CARL FISCHER (MIRACOUSSTIC) RECORDING STUDIOS

Launched in the early 1940s, primarily as a custom-recording service. The studio is not known to have produced recordings for the consumer market, but in 1948 it was sold to Apex Recording Studios (*q.v.*), which did some commercial work.

FISKANA (Discs)

Record Production: 1933 – Late 1940s

Offices: Unknown

Original-Master Source(s): Byers Recording Laboratory (New York), RCA Victor studios (New York), Gramophone Company studios (London)

Record Products: Fiskana

The first commercial producer of adult "party" records, albeit only mildly risqué ones. Dwight Fiske was a fixture in exclusive New York and London night clubs during the 1930s and 1940s. He launched his Fiskana label in 1933. Although Fiske was the label's only artist, the records were produced in some quantity over a five-year span, were widely advertised, and were sold by some established retailers, elevating Fiskana above vanity-label status.

The earliest Fiskana release (an unnumbered coupling of "Ida, the Wayward Sturgeon" and "Clarissa the Flea") used masters made in 1933 by the Byers Recording Laboratory. The record appears to have attracted little attention. In October of that year, Fiske shifted production to RCA Victor, which recorded Fiske in its New York studios, numbered the recordings within Victor's standard master series, and pressed the records in its Camden plant. The initial RCA-produced releases were being advertised by January 1934.

Although RCA's Fiskana discs were assigned catalog numbers in the same 36000 series as standard 12" black-label Victor records, they never appeared under the Victor label. Fiske also made several recordings in the Gramophone Company (His Master's Voice) studio during a London engagement in 1936 that were pressed in the RCA series. The records were sold, sometimes rather clandestinely, by the Liberty Music Shop, Schirmer, and other well-respected stores. A writer for the H. Royer Smith Company, a major Philadelphia retailer, touted an early Fiskana release, noting, "The fat dowagers simply explode...the 'ladies' of Park Avenue giggle and blush...the female impersonators go into hysterics...the 'old smoothies' bite their cigars in half."

The RCA affiliation was severed in 1937 and the masters were destroyed, marking the end of the Fiskana label. After recording an album for Liberty Music Shop in 1939, Fiske moved to the newly launched Gala label, which released a mixture of new recordings and mediocre-quality dubbings from the Fiskana discs into the late 1940s. Some of the Gala issues were later reissued as 45s. Fiske died on November 25, 1959.

FLETCHER RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1922 – 1923

Offices: 156 Meadow St., Long Island City, NY

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Pressing : Own plant at Meadow & Creek Sts., Long Island City, NY

Record Products: Olympic, Arthur Fields Melody Record, Black Swan (from mid-1922, credited to Pace Phonograph), La Belle (black label), Mac-Levin, Majestic [2], Master Tone, Melody [1], Symphony Concert Record, Viola

In April 1922, the defunct Olympic Disc Record Corporation's trademark, masters, and facilities were purchased by former Olympic executive John Fletcher in partnership with Harry Pace (the owner of Black Swan) and Michael Naughton (who, with Fletcher, had been an original incorporator of the Operaphone Manufacturing Company). The Fletcher Record Company was incorporated in New York on May 26, 1922, with a capitalization of \$50,000. Fletcher, Pace, and Naughton were listed as directors of the new company, which was chartered simply to "deal in merchandise."

With Fletcher serving as president and Pace as vice-president and treasurer, the Fletcher Record Company was the first American record producer to have a racially integrated executive team. Interaction between Fletcher and Pace appears to have been minimal, with each attending mainly to his own portion of the business. The company initially served only as the studio and pressing plant for Pace's Black Swan records (*see* Pace Phonograph Corporation). However, *The Talking Machine World* for July 1922 reported there was "some likelihood" that Fletcher would revive the Olympic label.

Fletcher's new Olympic series did appear in late 1922, and many Olympic masters would find their way onto the Black Swan label, under pseudonyms, breaking Harry Pace's pledge to use only Black artists. At the same time, Fletcher began soliciting client-label business. In December 1922 he advertised, "Premium departments, jobber, chain stores, large dealers — We make records under your special label. Our plant is complete under one roof. Recording, plating, pressing, label printing." Fletcher secured several clients, including one (Symphony Concert) that marketed operatic recordings pirated from the Victor Red Seal catalog. Harry Pace had earlier refused a request to press such material, writing to W. E. B. DuBois that he feared reprisals from Victor, but apparently John Fletcher had no such concerns.

Fletcher appears to have done a good business in licensing Olympic masters (from both the original and second incarnation of the label) to outside labels, many of which were pressed in the Fletcher plant. He also licensed some of masters from outside sources for use on Olympic. However, the revived Olympic label sold poorly. It was discontinued in December 1923, the month in which Fletcher declared bankruptcy. Louis Bick was appointed receiver for the Fletcher Record Company, which was unable to continue operations. The pressing plant passed briefly to the Chicago-based Capitol Roll & Record Company, which in turn sold the facility to band manager Harry A. Yerkes, who was in the process of launching his own label.

Pace had split with Fletcher before the bankruptcy, so production of Black Swan records continued unimpeded, with Pace moving his pressing work to the New York Recording Laboratories and affiliated Bridgeport Die & Machine Company. Fletcher moved to Chicago in 1924 to work for the Capitol Roll & Record Company (*q.v.*), where he revived the Olympic label for a third and final time.

FLEXO PACIFIC COAST RECORD CORPORATION / FLEXO THEATER RECORD COMPANY —

See Warner, Jesse J.

FLINT RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 1697 Broadway, New York (1947–mid-1948); 1780 Broadway (International Recording Company offices, from mid-1948)

Record Products: Flint

Launched in late 1947 by John W. (Jack) Mangan, as a subsidiary of his International Recording Company (*q.v.*). Flint Records had minor jukebox hits during December 1947–January 1948 with Larry Fontine's "Sorry for You" and "Tell Tale," landing him a spot on

the ABC radio network's "Treasury Bandstand" show. In mid-1948, the company released "Safe at Home," country-music singer Tex Fletcher's tribute to Babe Ruth, and donated 25% of the proceeds to the Babe Ruth Foundation; Fletcher donated 100% of his royalties. The first pressing sold out within several weeks, but Fletcher left the label after approximately three releases.

Other than those releases, Flint Records seems to have attracted little attention. Its few offerings consisted mainly of polka and novelty records, with a smattering of undistinguished country music and pop releases. In August 1948 the company placed an advertisement in *Billboard* soliciting masters on a royalty basis, but if any were acquired, it went unreported in the trade papers. Flint's last confirmed releases were made in the autumn of that year.

FLORA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1949

Offices: 1907 North American Building (Broad & Sansom Sts.), Philadelphia

Record Products: Flora

Registered in Pennsylvania as a fictitious entity on May 7, 1948, by Charles S. Peterson and Sigmund Schotz, doing business as Flora Records. The records were distributed locally by Pasco Distributors, which also handled the Philadelphia-based Click label.

According to *Billboard*, which reported the company's launch in the same month, neither owner had any experience in the record business. No release list has been found, and the company last appeared in *Billboard* label directory for January 1949. Schotz was later employed as vice-president of consumer affairs for the RCA Service Company of Philadelphia.

As of 2018, Flora Records was still listed as an active Pennsylvania company, registered to the original owners, but attempts to confirm that status and the current nature of the company's business, if any, have been unsuccessful.

FLORIDA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889

Offices: Jacksonville, FL (unknown address, 1889–8/1891; 26½ Newman St., 9/1891–1/1892; Room I, Mohawk Block, East Bay St., from 1/1892)

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Florida. Articles of incorporation were filed on February 11, 1889, for the Florida Phonograph and Phonograph-Graphophone Company ("Phonograph-Graphophone" was soon dropped from the name). The company was organized by Thomas Foster Gaines, who served as its first president before resigning to return to New York in 1891. He was replaced by John L. Ingliss, who also served as president of the Georgia Phonograph Company.

The Phonogram later reported that operations had commenced immediately, under the general management of Rev. L. B. Plummer. The former owner and editor of *Baptist Witness*, he was first mentioned in connection with the company in April 1889. Plummer resigned after several months and was followed by a rapid succession of replacements. Florida Phonograph's offices and inventory were destroyed by fire on August 18, 1891. Although the company resumed business in new quarters, *The Phonogram* reported at the end of 1891 that it "has never yet met with any marked success, owing to the sparsity of large towns." In February 1892, Florida Phonograph reported that it had begun placing coin-operated machines "in several of the smaller towns, with gratifying results."

Florida Phonograph apparently obtained its cylinders from the Columbia Phonograph Company, based upon its testimonial in an 1891 Columbia advertisement. Thus far, no catalog or other evidence has been found to suggest that Florida Phonograph produced original recordings for sale to the general public.

FLORIDA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1951

Offices: 2370 7th Ave., New York (from 1/1948); New York (PO box numbers only, 1949–1950); College Station, New York (sales)

Record Products: Florida

A country-and-western label launched by Warren Gladden in late 1947 or early 1948. The first release was advertised in January 1948, but little more was heard of the label until December 1950, when the records were deeply discounted to 30¢ each for distributors and jukebox operators, in the guise of a "special promotion sale." Florida Records' brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 manufacturers' directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Florida name was later used by at least two unrelated, Florida-based labels.

FM RECORDS / FM RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1952

Offices: 1012½ N. Palm, Hollywood, CA

Record Products: FM, Bride and Groom, FM Record Co. Christmas Carols, Frolic

Initially a country-and-western label, first listed by *Billboard* in February 1947. The company and label name often appear incorrectly, in hyphenated form, in the trade papers. There was no connection to Al Katz's and Harold Oxley's F-M Records (hyphenated), a 1946 venture that was to feature "cocktail attractions" but apparently failed to launch.

FM records were heavily promoted by Milwaukee's Frederick Lee, who featured the line at a major coin-machine operators' convention in Minneapolis in April 1948. They were handled by a number of small distributors in the upper Midwest, probably accounting for the large number of polka releases.

Other than several late-1948 issues by Lulu Belle and Scotty, FM appears to have relied largely on obscure, locally available artists. Pop and jazz series were added in the later 1940s, the latter including reissues from Mirror and other minor labels. Frolic, a short-lived subsidiary label that was launched in the summer of 1949 and credited to the possibly fictitious Frolic Productions, specialized in novelty and mildly risqué material. Other short-lived series included FM Record Company Christmas Carols, and Bride and Groom, the latter featuring songs for use at weddings.

The FM label was acquired in the early 1950s by Milwaukee distributor and jukebox operator Amos Heilicher, and 45-rpm pressings were introduced at about that time. Heilicher later reissued some FM recordings on his Soma label.

THE FOLK DANCE / FOLK DANCER RECORD SERVICE

Record Production: From 1950

Offices: Flushing, NY (PO box number only, early 1950s) 108 W. 16th St., New York (mid-1950s)

Pressing: RCA Custom Products Division

Record Products: The Folk Dancer Record Service

Owned and operated by folk-dance instructor Michael Herman, the author of *Folk Dances for All* (1947), publisher of *Folk Dancer* magazine, and director of New York's Community Folk Dance Center (1944–1951) and Folk Dance House (from 1951). With his wife, Mary Jane, Herman was widely credited with popularizing folk dance in the United States during the 1940s and 1950s.

Herman's first experience in the record business had been as the producer of a series of folk-dance recordings made for the Methodist Publishing House's private World of Fun label in 1948. His Folk Dance (later, Folk Dancer) Record Service first advertised nationally in 1949, solely as a distributor. In 1950, Herman launched his own Folk Dancer Record Service label. The records were packaged with dance-instruction sheets and featured the traditional dances of many nations and ethnic groups. In addition to Herman's own orchestra, the artist roster included Kostya Poliansky's Balalaika Orchestra, Elyakum's Israeli Orchestra, and the Romanian Gypsy Orchestra, the latter supervised by Larisa Lucaci. Herman died on May 10, 1996.

FOLKRAFT RECORDS / K-W RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1960s

Offices: 7 Oliver St., Newark, NJ (to early 1950s); 1159 Broad St., Newark (from c. 1952)

Record Products: Folkraft

Folkraft originated as a division of Frank L. Kaltman's and Daniel Wolfert's K-W Record Corporation, a custom recording operation. Kaltman was a recording engineer by trade, and Wolfert had previously managed Gamut Records, which he founded in 1937. The name was often misspelled "Folkcraft" in *Billboard* and other period publications, an error that persists in some modern works ("Folkraft" is the correct spelling, as is seen on the labels and in Kaltman's copyright filings).

Wolfert, although noted primarily for having championed lesser-known classical repertoire on the Gamut label, was also a folk-music enthusiast. Kaltman was a major figure in the folk-dance revival movement of the 1940s and 1950s. He founded *American Squares* magazine, for which he wrote record reviews many years, and was actively involved with several folk-dance programs and other educational efforts. With Rickey Holden (who served as caller on some Folkraft square-dance recordings and later joined the company's staff), he co-authored numerous books and articles on folk dances.

Although Folkraft was launched in 1946, and received occasional passing mentions beginning in 1947, evidence of its operation is sparse until early late 1948, when Bernice Kamsler's album, "Folk Songs of the World and Street Cries," received an ambivalent review from critic Thomas B. Sherman. He found "some turns of phrase...too meticulous and therefore artificial," but praised Kamsler's "appropriate emotion and style."

Early Folkraft records were packaged in well-produced album sets that included explanatory booklets. During 1949, Kaltman promoted the records by directing Saturday morning folk-dance classes in New York's Carl Fischer Building. *Billboard*'s reviewers initially rated Folkraft records as not appropriate for jukebox use but later conceded that some might be suitable in rural locations, as well as on "rural segments" of radio broadcasts. The records were sold by the Dance Record Center (Newark, New Jersey) and other specialty dealers.

Wolfert left the operation in the 1950s, and the company was reorganized as Frank L. Kaltman Enterprises. By then, Kaltman had expanded his repertoire to include foreign folk dances, using a mixture of field recordings (made under the supervision of Dorothy Leadbeater and others) and imported commercial masters. He produced only 78s until late 1958, claiming that the vibrations from large groups dancing in unison would cause the stylus to jump on LPs and 45s.

In October 1958, Kaltman acquired the right to issue material from Livingston Audio Products' pre-recorded tapes (which included pop and classical material) on discs, under the new Janus label. Conversion of the Folkraft catalog (which by then comprised more than four-hundred 78s) to LPs and 45s began at about that time. Folkraft records were still being sold in the mid-1960s, although no new material had been released for some years.

FOLKWAYS RECORDS & SERVICE CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1986

Offices and Master Source(s): 117 W. 46th St. (at founding)

Record Products (78): Ethnic Folkways Library, Folkways, Solo; Cub (children's)

Initially organized by Moses (Moe) Asch's assistant, Marian Distler, after Asch lost control of his bankrupt Disc Company of America (*q.v.*). Distler continued to operate from the former Disc offices, and claimed to have purchased that company's assets with a loan from Vox's George Mendelssohn. Folkways' business filing of July 30, 1948, listed Distler as sole officer of the company. Its first offering, in late 1948, was the Cub children's label, which made its debut with Woody Guthrie's "Song to Grow On" album, portions of which had previously been released by Disc.

As a condition of the Asch's bankruptcy, he was forbidden to serve as the officer of a record company. Consequently, he initially was listed only as a consultant to Distler, although his influence over the new operation was evident from the start. Following his discharge from bankruptcy in August 1949, Asch openly assumed full control of Folkways Records.

Folkways' launch marked a change of direction for Asch, who turned his attention largely to vernacular material, much of it intended for the educational market. The Ethnic Folkways Library (the name that appeared on the earliest labels) was launched in 1949 under the direction of Harold Courlander. It was an extension of Courlander's original ethnic series on the Disc label, which had been advertised as "The Folkways of the World on Record."

The label name was shortened to simply Folkways in late December 1949. *Billboard* described it as a new label that would present "material of a more popular nature," including square dances, Haitian meringues, and albums by Pete Seeger and Leadbelly (the latter posthumously). In the decades that followed, the catalog was expanded to include obscure classical works, spoken word, jazz, blues, gospel, nature sounds, and well-annotated reissues of vintage recordings (most notably, Harry Smith's influential and still much-beloved "Anthology of American Folk Music"). As biographer Tony Olmstead observed, "Asch turned the conventional record industry model on its head. The major labels attempted to sell millions of record quickly. Asch decided instead to sell hundreds of record slowly, but to have such a large catalog that the overall size of the business would be sufficient to meet its costs and provide him with a reasonable living."

Folkways initially issued 78s, but during the summer of 1950 Asch announced that records intended for schools and libraries would be produced only in LP form. Folkway's output beginning in the early 1950s consisted entirely of LPs, and thus is beyond the scope of this work. For a detailed history of the operation, see Tony Olmstead's *Folkways Records: Moses Asch and his Encyclopedia of Sound* (Routledge, 2003).

Asch died on October 19, 1986, approximately a month after the regents of the Smithsonian Institution authorized purchase of his Folkways catalog. The Smithsonian currently holds the rights to Asch's Folkways material (but not his earlier, and much-contested, Asch- and Disc-label recordings) and over the years has made portions of it available in LP, CD, and MP3 formats.

FORD, MR. and MRS. HENRY – See Early American Dances

FORTUNE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1990s

Offices: 11839 12th St., Detroit (1946); 12005 12th St., Detroit (1947–1951); 11629 Linwood Ave., Detroit (1951–1955); 3942 3rd Ave., Detroit (from 1955)

Original-Master Sources: United Sound Studios (Detroit), Sweeney Sound Engineering (Toledo, OH), other independent studios; own studios—Linwood Ave. (1951–1955), 3rd Ave. (from 1955)

Record Products: Fortune

Founded by Jack and Devora (Dorothy) Brown in 1946, reportedly with an initial investment of \$3,000. The Browns also owned and operated Trianon Publications, which shared an office with the recording operation. It published Devora Brown's songs, many of which were featured on Fortune records.

Fortune Records was first mentioned in October 1946 by *Billboard*. Early releases were pitched largely to jukebox operators with the slogan, "A Fortune in Nickels!" After tentative attempts to enter the pop market, Fortune turned to country-and-western material, employing talent recruited from local clubs and radio stations. The production of at least some Fortune recordings was subsidized by the artists. Chuck Oakes, who made his first recording for the label, recalled, "We'd pay them a bunch of money and they'd make a master, press some records, and give us two or three hundred of 'em. We'd have to peddle 'em where we played."

Cash Box dismissed several Fortune releases as "filler material." However, the label had several jukebox hits in the late 1940s and early 1950s, including "Dirty Boogie" (Roy Hall and his Cohutta Mountain Boys) and "The Tattooed Lady" (Skeets MacDonald with Johnnie White's Rhythm Riders). In the late 1940s, Fortune reissued the York Brothers' controversial but very popular "Hamtramck Mama" (originally released in 1939 by the Detroit-based Universal label), which remained in their catalog into the 1970s.

In 1951 the operation moved to a rented building on Linwood Avenue in Detroit, where the Browns set up their own studio and record shop and began production of LPs and 45s. As the decade progressed, the focus shifted to rockabilly and rhythm-and-blues,

again relying largely on local talent. Fortune's most popular act during the 1950s appears to have been Nolan Strong and the Diablos, who recorded prolifically for the label beginning in 1954.

In 1955 the Browns purchased their own building on Third Avenue in Detroit, which housed an expanded record shop and recording studio. The Hi-Q label, added in 1958, appears to have faded quickly. Fortune issued albums by blues singers Ivory Joe Hunter and Big Maceo Merriweather in the early 1960s, but in 1964 *Billboard* reported that the label was shifting its focus back to country-and-western material.

Fortune became largely inactive after Jack Brown was severely injured in an automobile accident in 1973. The company was later taken over the Brown's son, Sheldon, who operated it as a reissue business into the late 1990s.

FOX RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Offices: Columbia, SC

Record Products: Fox

Billboard reported the Fox Record Company's launch in late December 1949, although it had already been in business for at least seven months by then. In May 1949, Fox had offered a recording contract as first prize in a Charlotte, North Carolina, "Battle of Song" contest (the winner's name has not been found).

No reliable information has been located concerning Fox's ownership. The few known releases, with labels bearing the slogan "A Den of Hits," feature regional artists, including the Hinson Brothers and Hobbs Brothers (both from radio station WEGO—Concord, North Carolina) and Rev. Bill Parham and family members from the "Family Altar" broadcasts.

An unrelated Fox Record Company, operating in Hollywood in the late 1940s, produced children's records, but nothing is known concerning its ownership or operation. The Fox name was reused for several unrelated labels during the 1950s.

4 STAR RECORD COMPANY — See Gilt-Edge Record Company

49th STATE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: From 1948

Offices: 1121 Bethel St., Honolulu, Hawaii Territory

Record Products: 49th State Hawaii Records

Launched in 1948 by George K. Ching and Say Young Kim, more than a decade before Hawaii attained U.S. statehood (as the fiftieth state, not the forty-ninth, as Ching and Kim apparently were anticipating). The co-partnership was registered in Honolulu on May 20, 1948. Ching, who served as general manager, was also a principal in the Maestro Music Company, a Honolulu music publisher. Kim owned the Hawaiian Music Stores in Honolulu.

The partnership (which had grown to include Amy Ching) was dissolved by mutual consent on September 30, 1949. The 49th State Hawaii Record Company was reorganized and incorporated on October 4, with George Ching serving as president, Amy Ching as vice-president, Florence T. Otoide as secretary, and Mabel H. Fujimoto as treasurer. Say Young Kim stayed on as a director.

49th State records, which *Billboard* referred to as "pineapple platters," were distributed only locally until October 1948, when Tempo Records acquired world distribution rights outside of Hawaii. Unlike the competing Bell label, 49th State continued to record during the second American Federation of Musicians recording ban in 1948, noting that none of its artists were union members. Most recordings were made in Honolulu, but some early sessions, by John Watkins and other Maui-based performers, were held in the Hotel Hana-Maui, and other locations outside of Honolulu were used on occasion. Plastic "Tropiflex" pressings were made for 49th State by Decca. Other pressings, in plastic as well as shellac, appear to have come from several different suppliers.

The company's warehouse suffered severe flood damage in 1949, with losses estimated at \$10,000. The master for "Hawaiian Poy King," which Ching was predicting to be a hit, was one of the few that survived. The company was soon back in operation, and in

September of that year it distributed special souvenir records to 1,500 radio stations containing an invitation to Honolulu's Aloha Week celebration.

In January 1956, Waikiki songwriter William K. Lincoln alleged that Ching had sold recordings of his songs without permission since 1949. He sued for \$19,000 in damages, charging copyright violation, nonpayment of royalties, and unfair trade practices. The lawsuit had no apparent effect on operations. 49th State records were still being sold as late as 1961, although no new releases had been advertised for some time. The company was still listed in the Honolulu telephone directory in 1972.

FRANKLIN RECORDS — See Music Enterprises, Inc.

FRANK'S FOLK TUNES RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: Cleveland

Record Products: Frank's Folk Tunes

A short-lived country-and-western label owned by singer Frank Dudgeon. Billed as "West Virginia's Mountain Boy," Dudgeon at the time was a member of the "Arkansas Jamboree Barn Dance" company, was traveling widely as a solo radio performer, and had recently launched a songbook series beginning with *Songs of the Hill and Plains*. Frank's Folk Tunes was first mentioned in June 1946 by *Billboard*, which reported that Dudgeon had recorded two titles for the label. The release got a passing mention in October, but Dudgeon appears to have closed the operation by early 1947, when he signed with Serenade records.

FRAN-TONE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1946

Offices: Los Angeles

Pressing: The Bishop Presses

Record Products: Fran-Tone

Launched in 1945 by Fran Kelley, one of the few female record-company owners of the period. Kelley had a varied background, at first dabbling in poetry and painting, then going on to work as a radio station music librarian, a musical advisor to Stillman Pond Productions, and a highly respected organizer of jazz concerts in Los Angeles and San Diego. She was the sales manager for the Hollywood House of Music at the time she launched her record venture. *Billboard* gave her name as "Frank" on at least one occasion. *Down Beat* (which consistently misspelled her name "Kelly," as did many other publications) referred to her as "The Gal Platter Impresario."

Kelley originally named her company International Recordings, changed it briefly to Blutone, then settled on Fran-Tone before the initial release. The label had a starkly modern appearance, with a minimalist design and complete absence of capitalization. Recording began in October 1945, and the first Fran-Tone release appeared in *Billboard*'s advance list for December 1. It received a glowing review in the magazine the following month, which noted, "While dinking is for hot jazz fans, both sides spin plenty bright for the music [juke] boxes." Fran-Tone's short-lived Swingphonic Series was devoted to what *Billboard* termed "modernized" jazz. In a 1955 interview, Kelley recalled, "There were some things with unorthodox instrumentation. And we got good reviews."

Kelley organized and sponsored several benefit jazz concerts in the Los Angeles area, the first at the University of California's Royce Hall on April 12, 1946, with Herb Jeffries serving a master of ceremonies. Featured artists included the Nat (King) Cole and Red Callender trios, Benny Carter, Lester Young, and Charlie Parker's Orchestra with Miles Davis, most of whom were under contract to other labels so did not have the opportunity to record for Fran-Tone.

Down Beat in August 1946 mistakenly reported that Fran-Tone had just made its first release, apparently oblivious to the fact it had already announced the label's launch nine month earlier. However, the business appears to have gone dormant by the end of 1946. Recordings reportedly had been made for release on Fran-Tone in conjunction with Kelley's Swingposium Concert on June 24, 1946, but were not released. She sold eight of her unissued masters to Capitol Records in 1949.

Kelley remained active in the Los Angeles musical community. She later worked as a musical therapist at the Kabat-Kaiser Institute, lectured on jazz at the University of California, was a West Coast representative for *Metronome* magazine, and collaborated with Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn on a series of special projects in the late 1950s. Ellington praised her in his autobiography as "This great woman with all these talents [who] gave up running a radio station and record company in Los Angeles to pursue her spiritual quests in San Francisco."

FRANWIL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1956

Offices: 427 Orange Ave., West Haven, CT (1946–mid-1948); 12 Fountain St., New Haven, CT (from mid-1948)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—1650 Broadway (Suite 701), New York

Record Products: Franwil

Launched in late 1946 by William (Doc) Francis. Beginning in May 1950, the Serenade Recording Corporation (*q.v.*) gave its address as that of Franwil's recording studio, although the nature of the connection between the two companies, other than their use of the same studio, has not been discovered.

First advertised in *Billboard* in November 1946, Franwil records initially featured local New England talent. The early releases, which were marketed primarily for jukebox use, were dominated by singer Marilynne Towne, who was touted as "sultry" and "captivating" in the company's advertisements. Offerings were soon expanded to include other pop singers, an album of square dances by Massachusetts native Phil Green (who distributed the set himself and sold it to schools at a discount), and separate series devoted to spirituals and "international" fare, the latter consisting mainly of polkas. Later releases included several jazz sides by a Louis Metcalf combo and performances by The Ballads, a doo-wop group from Branford High School in New Haven. The company began producing 45-rpm pressings around 1951.

Francis launched a national distribution campaign in February 1956, hosting a get-together at which Connecticut disc jockeys were given free Franwil records. However, the company's last known advertisements appeared in the spring of that year.

FRATERNITY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1922 – c. 1925

Offices: W. Adams St., Plymouth, IN

Original-Master Source(s): Starr Piano Company (Gennett) studio, unknown other

Pressing: Starr Piano Company plant, possibly Scranton Button Company

Record Products: Fraternity

An outgrowth of the Fraternity Record House (which was founded in 1921), the Fraternity Record Company commissioned its own recordings of fraternity and college songs. The company was managed by Chester W. Cleveland and Stewart W. Robertson, with recording and production contracted to the Starr Piano Company (Gennett) and at least one unknown manufacturer.

Fraternity records were released in several "editions" from 1922 through 1924, and some issues featured a different fraternity's song on each side. Advertised in college publications and sold exclusively by mail order for \$2 each, they were unusually expensive at a time when major-label releases retailed for 75¢.

The 1922 recording are of uncertain origin and appear in both black and orange pressings, possibly made by the Scranton Button Company and/or Bridgeport Die & Machine Company. Confirmed releases in the 1923 and 1924 series are standard black-shellac pressings produced by Gennett, mostly from masters recorded for Fraternity's exclusive use. At some point, the Fraternity Record Company took over sales of the Aeolian-produced University Records (*q.v.*), to which it affixed stickers reading, "Successor to University Records," or "University Records Has Become Fraternity Record Co."

No new Fraternity releases have been confirmed after the mid-1920s, but the company continued to market records into the early 1930s. Its advertisement in the *Cornell Alumni News* for November 24, 1927, offered fraternity-related records "recorded by noted Victor-Brunswick artists," apparently referring to material on those companies' own labels.

Fraternity also continued to file copyrights on fraternity-related songs, the last known example of which was "My Chi Omega Sweetheart," which it copyrighted in January 1931.

FREEDOM RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1951

Offices: 1322 Oxford St., Houston (1948–1949); Main St., Houston (c. 1950, unconfirmed); 739 M & M Building, Houston (1950–1951)

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, Gold Star studio, other independent studios
Offices: Freedom

Founded by Solomon M. (Sol) Kahal and his wife, Gladys, with much of the initial funding provided by Houston jukebox distributor H. W. Daily. Sol Kahal at the time was loosely affiliated with Eddie Henry, the owner of Eddie's Records (Houston), who supplied some masters to Freedom. The company was registered with the state of Texas on December 30, 1948, and initially operated from the Kahal's Oxford Street home.

Freedom was launched as a race-record label, and the company's early advertising claimed strong sales in Harlem. The roster included Joe Houston, Big Joe Turner, L. C. Williams, and Goree Carter (the latter's "Rock Awhile," a regional hit for Freedom in 1949, is considered a seminal rock-and-roll recording by some pop-culture writers). Conrad "Connie" Johnson, a music instructor at Houston's Booker T. Washington High School, served as in-house accompanist. Sometimes masquerading as J. C. Conney, he reportedly employed students for his backing combo.

Kahal announced in March 1950 that the company was expanding into the pop and country-and-western markets. At the same time, he dispatched field manager Charles Scott on a cross-country trip to strengthen Freedom's distribution network and announced plans to add 45-rpm pressings. However, Freedom's last known release, by Joe Turner, appeared in October 1950.

The Freedom Recording Company was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1951 label directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies. The Freedom name was used beginning in the later 1950s for an unrelated label distributed by Hollywood-based Liberty Records.

FRENCH-AMERICAN PHONOGRAPH DISTRIBUTORS — See Pathé Frères Phonograph Company

THE FRIENDS OF RECORDED MUSIC (Discs)

Record Production: 1936 – c. 1947

Offices: 12 E. 22nd St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Universal Recording (New York), possibly other independent studios

Record Products: Friends of Recorded Music

The Friends of Recorded Music was a society that operated under the auspices of *The American Music Lover*, a magazine for classical music enthusiasts that was the predecessor of *The American Record Guide*. The first issue of the magazine, edited by Peter Hugh Reed, was published in May 1935. Its advisory board originally included Carl Engel, Lee Pattison, Carelton Sprague Smith, and Albert Stoessel.

The Friends of Recorded Music's annual membership dues of \$2.75 included a subscription to *American Music Lover* and a "permit" to purchase the society's records at a discount. The records were introduced in 1936 and originally retailed for \$2 each to the general public, or \$1.75 for society members. The first release (Boccherini's "String Quartet in A Major Op. 33," performed by the Kreiner Quartet) was reviewed by *The Gramophone* in England, which reported that the recording quality fell short of commercial standards. Despite ongoing complaints about some of the records' technical shortcomings (more so among British critics than American), they were highly regarded in the musical community for showcasing lesser-known classical works, particularly for the piano, that were not available on the major labels. The artist roster included the Kreiner Quartet, tenor William Hain, baritone Paul Engel, and pianists Arthur Loesser, Katherine Ruth Heyman, and Harrison Potter.

In September 1944, *The American Music Lover* was renamed *The Listener's Record Guide*. The new name survived for only one issue, replaced the following month by *The American Record Guide*. The Friends of Recorded Music discs were still being advertised as late as

1947, in *The Musical Quarterly*. Twenty-seven releases had been produced by then, but no new material was forthcoming, and the advertisements warned that some releases were no longer available.

FRISCO RECORDS — See Music, Inc.

FROLIC PRODUCTIONS — See FM Record Company

FRONTIER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: 396 Guilford St., Buffalo, New York

Pressing: Universal Plastics, Research Craft, possibly other independent plants

Record Products: Frontier

A country-and-western label owned and operated by singer, disc jockey, and barn-dance promoter Art Young. Young was working at radio station WWOL (Buffalo, New York) at the time he launched Frontier Records.

Frontier's initial release was advertised in August 1949. Young's artist roster included Dona Lee (who he married in 1949), Danny Austin, Rex Shea, and Doug Wingert. Most were recruited from radio stations in the Buffalo area. Only a few Frontier releases have been confirmed, although *Billboard* reported in October 1952 that Young was still issuing records. The Frontier name was reused in the early 1950s by an unrelated Denver label.

FUTURE MUSIC RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947

Offices: 333 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Record Products: Future Music

A short-lived pop label launched in the summer of 1947 by Pat L. O'Connor and H. C. Sweeney, in conjunction with their Future Music publishing operation. The mailing address was the same as Gold Seal Records', but it has not been determined how or if the companies were connected.

The initial Future Music release appeared in the August 1947 advance lists. Although *Billboard* reported that Zach Dante's Orchestra and Austin Little's Vocalites were to be featured, most offerings were by singer Thelma Gracen and the Gay Claridge Orchestra, the latter a self-professed imitator of the late Hal Kemp's band. The Claridge records received generally positive reviews, but *Billboard*'s Bob Bach noted, "One can't help wondering, if Kemp were alive today, would he have plugged along on so dated a style." Future Music's last confirmed releases appeared in September 1947, and no mention of the label has been found after the end of that year.

— G —

G.-B. RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921

Offices: 115 W. 32nd St., New York;

Record Products: G B Record

A very short-lived venture of Charles S. Gilpin and James Burris. Burris was a veteran songwriter whose works were widely recorded by Bert Williams, Bob Roberts, and many other stars, both Black and White. Gilpin was a distinguished stage actor who in 1920 created the title role in Eugene O'Neill's drama, "The Emperor Jones," to great critical acclaim. He later became an outspoken advocate for the rights of Black actors.

On May 21, 1921, Gilpin wrote to *The Chicago Defender*, "Have been doing a few things on the side and along with Jim Burris have formed the G.-B. Record Company (Gilpin-Burris), and our first record is ready for release this week. I am of the opinion that this record idea will prove to be a big success." Gilpin's announcement of G.-B.'s first (and apparently only) release was a bit premature. Coupling Gilpin's "Humorous Speech" and Burris' "'Tain't No Place for Me," the record was advertised as "just out" on July 16, 1921.

It was manufactured by the Arto Company and issued as G B Record 2001, copies of which are known to exist. Several months later, the coupling was assigned Arto catalog number 9102 (with Gilpin's side retitled "A Humorous Address to the Musicians") and was listed in Arto's own catalog as a November 1921 release. Gilpin in the meantime had departed for London, and no further G.-B. releases were announced.

G. GIACINO COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924–c. 1925

Offices: New York

Record Products: Splendor

A short-lived producer of records for the Italian immigrant market. Nothing has been discovered concerning Giacino or his record business. Splendor labels show a 1924 copyright date, although it does not appear that the copyright was formally registered. Splendor records used an 11-prefixed master series of unknown, apparently domestic, origin. Several selections feature cornetist Santi Tafarella as a soloist or with his sextet, and he also composed several titles that were recorded by himself and others for Splendor. He is known to have worked in the New York area, where he broadcast over radio station WOR in 1925.

G. I. RECORD COMPANY / G. I. RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 1674 Broadway, New York

Record Products: G. I.

A short-lived pop label launched in early 1946 by a group of former enlisted men under the management of band leader Justin Stone. *Billboard* reported that G. I.'s first session, by WOR singer Jimmy Foster with the Buddy Weed Trio, was held in March 1946. The company was last listed in *Billboard*'s May 1947 label directory. By the end of that year, Stone was directing children's records for the Rocking Horse label.

GAELIC (PHONOGRAPH) RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1921–1923

Offices: 40 W. 57th St., New York

Original-Master Sources: Own studio at above location; Jones Recording Laboratories

Pressing: Siemon Hard Rubber Company

Record Products: Gaelic Record Co.

The Gaelic Phonograph Record Company, which billed itself as "the only all-Irish phonograph record company," was registered as a Delaware corporation on December 9, 1921, claiming an initial capitalization of \$350,000. Officers were Hugh P. Fay (chief executive, who also served as head of sales and distribution for the Siemon Hard Rubber Company), Harold Suikert (vice-president and recording manager), Thomas F. Dwyer (secretary-treasurer), and Earle W. Jones (of Jones Recording Laboratories, who a month earlier had been elected a vice-president of the Cameo Record Corporation). Jones' name was omitted from *The Talking Machine World*'s announcement of Gaelic's formation, but it appeared in *The New York Times*' incorporation report.

The earliest masters were made for Gaelic by Earle W. Jones, whose studio had been taken over by Cameo in November 1921. In a 1955 interview, Jones recalled that the bagpipes and drums used on one session caused such severe vibration in the studio that he had to pack the recording lathe in sand. Pressing initially was contracted to the Siemon Hard Rubber Company, with which Jones was also affiliated. By March 1922 Gaelic reportedly was operating its own studio, coinciding with Jones' resignation from Cameo. Fay resigned without explanation in the same month, and his position was taken over by Dwyer.

Gaelic's first release list, comprising thirty-four records, was published in February 1922. The company's roster boasted some popular Irish-American performers who would go on to record for better-known labels, including Frank Quinn, Tom Ennis, and the Flanagan Brothers. However, the company did little to promote the records, and sales appear to have been meager.

Experiencing financial difficulties, Gaelic was placed in the hands of a creditors' committee in October 1922 and filed for bankruptcy on March 22, 1923, citing liabilities of \$23,220, with unknown assets. Fay and Suikert resurfaced on the West Coast in 1923, when they launched the California Record Manufacturing Company (*q.v.*).

GAIETY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – 1947

Offices: 6022 Wilshire Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Gaiety

A short-lived party-record label affiliated with, or possibly owned by, Lillian Uttal (known professionally as Diana Johns). Uttal had a checkered career that included a term as president of the Better Pictures League (Hollywood) in the late 1920s. In 1940 she married New York cosmetics manufacturer Isador Alter, and in the early 1940s worked as a fashion consultant, publicist, and occasional poet (several of her poems, including the uncharacteristic "God's World," were published by *The Miami News* in 1941). In a highly publicized 1944 case, she and Alter divorced after Alter charged her with "adultery [and] lewd and wanton conduct." Uttal went on to pursue a career as a nightclub performer and songwriter known for her mildly risqué lyrics.

No announcement has been found of Gaiety Record's launch. Known releases feature Uttal, as Diana Johns, performing her own "I Haven't the Courage to Strip," "Mazie the Cocksure," and similar fare. In April 1947, she sued for divorce after her second husband (millionaire Joseph Glade) publicly declared her frigid, which she claimed injured her career as "a creator of passionate love songs." She complained to the press that Glade's mother had given them a wedding dinner of pickles and salami to express her disapproval of the marriage.

Uttal was found dead of a sleeping-pill overdose on October 23, 1947, at the age of forty-four. Her suicide note read, "Dear Lord, forgive me as I never could make myself behave."

GALA RECORD COMPANY / GALA RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1939–1952

Offices: 350 5th Ave. (Empire State Building), New York (1943–1948); 2160 Broadway, New York (1948–1950); 605 W. 42nd St., New York (early 1950s)

Pressing: Bard Record Manufacturing Company (Pelham, NY, from later 1940s), other independent plant(s)

Record Products: Gala; JEL; Turf Derby/Motorboat Race

Launched in late 1939 by Ben Lane, who officially served as the company's sales manager but appears to have been largely responsible for the company's operations. J. J. Sperans was listed as the company's president in the 1940s. A certified public accountant, he maintained an office in the Empire State Building, which initially served as Gala's mailing address. The records were handled by numerous small regional distributors, including the Hawaii Music Company.

The Gala Record Company began as a somewhat shadowy entity specializing in novelty material, most notably the popular 1940 "Turf Derby"/"Motorboat Race," a multi-track gambling record. Credited to the Novelty Record Company Players, it originally was packaged as part of an elaborate boxed set that included a cloth game board and printed metal game pieces.

Other early offerings included recordings by vaudeville headliners Willie Howard, Belle Baker, and Joe E. Lewis, produced by Edward J. and Harry Lee Danziger. Originally pressed in small quantities and available only in album sets, the records were also sold individually beginning in 1943 by the Favorite Manufacturing Company (New York), a Gala distributor. Although Favorite's advertisements for the Howard and Baker singles were headlined "Favorite brings in the nickels with these favorites," *Billboard* cautioned that the records were not well-suited for jukebox use due to their "intimate" nature. In the same year, Gala began advertising mildly risqué titles by Dwight Fiske, some of which were dubbed from his 1930s Fiskana recordings.

Gala's somewhat disreputable image was bolstered by frequent changes of address, label design, and manufacturer and distributor credits. Its earliest pressings bore crude

labels devoid of any design, similar to other under-the-counter labels of the period. Some were reissues of recordings licensed from Schirmer and Rabson's (the latter was a Gala retailer and licensed its Music Box recording by Lee Wiley to Gala). But much of Gala's early output consisted of double-entendre party records by Fiske, "Naughty-Nice" Spivy (not to be confused with blues singer Victoria Spivey), Nan Blakstone, and Charley Drew. The records rarely delivered what their suggestive titles seemed to promise.

Lane reorganized the company in 1948 as the Gala Record Corporation, retaining his position as president. The move coincided with what appears to have been an effort to improve the company's image. The label underwent a major redesign, and Gala began to produce more mainstream fare, including a children's series. Dwight Fiske renegotiated a more favorable contract at that time, allowing him to void the agreement if no royalties were paid within a quarter. In 1949, Joe E. Lewis commissioned Gala to produce his short-lived JEL label. Gala LPs, compiled from previously released material, were introduced in the early 1950s.

Dwight Fiske sued Gala and Lane in August 1952 for unpaid royalties dating back to 1948. Although an injunction was granted by New York Supreme Court Justice Morris Gold, Gala and several of its distributors continued to sell the records. In November, Fiske returned to court seeking to have Gala, Lane, the Bard Record Manufacturing Company, and others tried for contempt. By that time, Gala was, or soon would be, bankrupt. The catalog was purchased by Jubilee Records in 1953.

GAMUT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1937 – 1939

Office: 1107 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Sources: Reeves Sound Studios

Pressing: Independent plants

Record Products: Gamut

Founded in June 1937 by Daniel Wolfert, a 23-year-old music-appreciation instructor at Brooklyn College, New York. Gamut Records specialized in recordings of esoteric classical works that were not available on the major labels.

Gamut had its roots in a classical-music society that Wolfert founded in November 1936, according to a review in *The Gramophone*. Like several other independent classical ventures of the period, Gamut was conceived as a subscription label, but the idea was dropped before the records were ready for market. Instead, they were sold by Rabson's, The Record Exchange (New York), and other shops specializing in small independent labels.

Gamut was first mentioned in August 1937 by columnist Martin McCall, who reviewed its first release, Bach's "Partita No. 6 in E Minor," performed on the harpsichord by Ernst Victor Wolff. *Time* magazine belatedly reported the label's launch on November 1, noting that Wolfert was entirely responsible for the selection of artists and repertoire. An early sales brochure stated that the label's recording program was "limited to no particular period—Catholicism rather than cultism is the attitude at Gamut. Works by old masters recorded in 'pure' form in the original instrumentation, modern music by 'advance guard' composers, and neglected compositions of the better-known composers will be represented." The artist roster included harpsichordists Wolff and Alice Ehlers, pianists Webster Aitken and Hazel Griggs (the latter presenting a "miniature library" of classical compositions for children), violinist Boris Schwarz, and Lehman Engel's Madrigal Singers.

Although Gamut was devoted exclusively to classical material, Wolfert (who was also interested in folk music and jazz) made at least one attempt to diversify. In the spring of 1939, he approached ethnomusicologist John Lomax with a proposal that Lomax make field recordings of some folk songs for commercial release as a Gamut album set. However, Lomax was preoccupied with his work for the Library of Congress at the time, and nothing came of the idea.

Most if not all Gamut masters were recorded by Reeves Sound Studios. A letter from Alan Lomax, dated April 8, 1939, terms Gamut a "subsidiary" of Reeves Sound Studios. Although a formal corporate relationship has not been confirmed, the operations were closely affiliated, and Hazzard Reeves advertised Gamut records in some of his General Records catalogs. The discs were pressed in small quantities, at first by Columbia, on high-

quality laminated stock, and later by an unknown plant using lower-quality solid stock that caused one critic to complain of "excessive grating and scratching."

The last known Gamut releases were announced in 1939, but some titles were still available as late as July 1940, according to that month's *Master Record Catalogue*. Hazard Reeves acquired Gamut's masters, some of which he reissued on his General label. In July 1946, the masters and rights to the Gamut trademark were acquired by Commodore Records as part of their purchase of Reeves' General Records. Commodore briefly revived the label as a reissue vehicle.

Wolfert resurfaced in 1946 as the co-founder, with Frank L. Kaltman, of Folkraft Records (*q.v.*).

GARTEN, MAURICIO (MAURICE) (Discs)

Aguila Recording Company / Tri-Color Recording Company

Record Production: c. 1945 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: 3442 Whittier Blvd., Los Angeles

Pressing: Research Craft (Tri-Color), probably other independent plant(s)

Record Products: Discos Aguila, Tri-Color

Mauricio (Maurice) Garten was a theatrical producer as well as one of the earliest independent producers of records for the Mexican-American market. His productions included Elisa Garcia Lopez's revue, "Fantasies of Mexico," which had its American premier at the Wilshire Ebell Theater (Los Angeles) in February 1947.

Garten's Discos Aguila label, launched in the mid-1940s, featured original recordings by Lidya Mendoza, Aurora Muñoz, and other American artists, along with some imported Mexican recordings. The label appears to have been discontinued in 1947–1948, coinciding with the introduction of the unrelated Aguila Discos label in Chicago.

The Tri-Color Record Company, Garten's second venture, probably was launched in the late summer or early autumn of 1947, based upon testimony given in his 1956 divorce case. It was definitely in operation by March 1948, when the *Santa Barbara [CA] News Press* reported that it had signed two local performers. *Billboard* belatedly mentioned the company in May 1948. Tri-Color records were handled locally by the Record Merchandising Company (Los Angeles) and reportedly were sold in Mexico as well. During the 1948 American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, Garten brought Alvarado Lopez and possibly other Mexican artists (who were not affected by the ban) across the border to record in Los Angeles.

Garten also dabbled briefly in conventional pop fare, recording singer Thomas Myers, who was billed as "The Youthful New American Crooner." Tri-Color appears to have survived into the early 1950s. There is no connection to the slightly later, New York-based Tri-Color label.

GEDDINS, ROBERT L. (BOB) (Discs)

Big Town Recordings / Down Town Recording, Inc. / Cava-Tone Recording

Record Production: 1945 – 1950s

Offices: 711 7th St., Oakland, CA (Big Town Recordings, at founding); 1523 8th St., Oakland (from c. 1947); 1511 Cypress St., Oakland (Down Town Recording, 1948–1949); 3254 San Pablo Ave., Oakland (Down Town Recording, 1950s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations

Pressing: Own plant—8th & Center Sts., Oakland, CA; some pressing contracted to Trilon and other outside plants

Record Products (78s): Big Town, Cava-Tone, Down Town; pressings for Trilon and other independent labels

Bob Geddins was a Black entrepreneur, musician, and songwriter whose compositions included "My Time After Awhile," "Haunted House," "Last Letter," and "Mercury Boogie." He launched Big Town Recordings in 1945, initially employing independent studios, including that of Pacific Records producer Don Hambly. According to an anecdotal report, Geddins decided to open his own studio after Hambly recorded the Rising Star Gospel Singers for Big Town, then appropriated the group for his own label.

Big Town was launched as a gospel label, but in 1946 Geddins began recording Bay Area blues artists. Among them were Ray Agee, Lowell Fulson, Roy Hawkins, Jimmy

McCracklin, and Koko Taylor, all of whom soon moved to other labels. He also leased recordings to competing labels, including Down Beat, Gilt-Edge, and Modern. At about the same time, Geddins began working part-time as a traveling salesman and talent scout for Trilon Records, which took over Big Town's distribution and overflow pressing.

Big Town failed in 1948, and Geddins' masters were seized by creditors and sold to Trilon. Geddins then went on to launch a string of other labels, mostly short-lived and cheaply produced, beginning with Down Town and Cava-Tone in 1948. He later turned to other occupations while continuing to dabble in record production on a small scale. In April 1953, the 4 Star label acquired the Big Town catalog, hired Geddins as an artists-and-repertoire manager, and briefly revived the Big Town label under his direction.

GEE BEE RECORDS

The impending launch of Lloyd G. Garrett's and John D. (Jack) Buckley's Gee Bee Records was announced in mid-January 1947, but the partners instead joined Bill Putnam's newly launched Vitacoustic venture (*q.v.*) in early March.

GEM RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1950

Office: 615 10th Ave., New York (1947–mid-1948); 457 W. 45th St. (mid-1948–early 1950); 34 Hillside Ave., New York (early 1950s)

Record Products: Gem [3]

Founded in late 1947 by Nat Cohn (president) and Paul McGrane (vice-president). McGrane was a pop songwriter whose hits included "Juke Box Saturday Night" and "Dolly with the Hole in Her Stocking." Cohn was a well-established distributor of jukeboxes and arcade games who founded the Modern Vending Company in 1930, and the subsidiary Modern Music Sales Corporation in 1936. The latter distributed Signature, Coast, Peerless, and other independent labels to jukebox operators during the 1940s. There was no connection to Joe Greene's Gem label of 1945–1946 (*see* Royal Record Company).

Gem's launch was reported by *Billboard* in January 1948, the same month in which *Cash Box* reviewed the company's first release. The records were marketed primarily to jukebox operators, to whom Cohn made a vague promise to "guarantee a maximum amount of plays per record." *Billboard* reported that the company had stockpiled thirty-six masters, said to be "mostly novelties," prior to the start of the second American Federation of Musicians recording ban in January 1948. Early offerings included Johnny Corvo's "If a Man Answers, Hang Up," Evelyn Parker's "Guys (Undress Me with Their Eyes)," and similar fare.

The Click Publishing Company (unrelated to Click Records) was launched as a Gem subsidiary in April 1948. In late June, Apollo Records took over the manufacturing and distribution of Gem records, and Gem's trade-press listings began to show Apollo's mailing address. Cohn and McGrane retained ownership of the company, with the latter continuing to manage artists and repertoire. In September, the pair took a road trip through the western states, during which Cohn became enamored of Arizona. Upon their return, he announced that he would be moving to a ranch in Tucson, although Gem's headquarters were to remain in New York.

In April 1950, *Billboard* reported that McGrane had launched a new venture, Clipper Records (*q.v.*), and stated that Gem Records was inactive. However, Gem reappeared in *Billboard*'s July 1950 directory, at the same address as Clipper. There were no further mentions of the company until its brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies and probably can be disregarded. The Gem name was used by Discovery Records for an unrelated label, beginning in 1953.

GENERAL PHONOGRAPH CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1919–1926

Offices: 25 W. 45th St., New York; 15 W. 18th St., New York (distribution)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — Union Square Hotel, New York; temporary Chicago studio at 216 N. Michigan Ave. (6/1923–early 1924); Consolidated Talking Machine Company Building, 227–229 W. Washington St. (from 3/1924); temporary studios in Atlanta, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Kansas City, New Orleans, St. Louis, and other cities.

Pressing: Own plants — Springfield, MA; Thomas St., Newark, NJ (sold 1/1920); independent plants on occasion

Foreign Affiliates: Carl Lindström A.G. (Berlin)

Record Products: Okeh, American Odeon Record, Nation's Forum (post-Columbia version); Lindström (children's); Naval Relief Fund, Sunshine [3], and other custom and private issues; Rational Rhythm (typewriter training records); pressings from imported Fonotipia and Odeon masters

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Odeon (international); Lyric Music House (Australia); Nacional (Brazil); Ariel, Parlophone (England); Apex, Phonola, Sun (Canada); Lindström and related labels (Germany)

Launched on October 1, 1919, the General Phonograph Corporation merged Otto Heineman's various companies, including the Otto Heineman Phonograph Supply Company (manufacturers of Okeh records), Meisselbach Manufacturing Company, International Insulating Corporation, and 98% of the capital stock of the Garford Manufacturing Company. Initial financing was in the form of \$1.5 million in first-mortgage, 7% serial gold notes, all of which were sold within a week. An initial public stock offering was made in June.

With Otto Heineman serving as president and general manager, and financial backing flowing from Berlin-based Carl Lindström A.G., General Phonograph was quickly recognized as one of the emerging industry leaders. In November 1920, Heineman secured the North American, Cuban, and Puerto Rican distribution rights to Lindström recordings (including material from the Beka, Favorite, Da Capo, Fonotipia, Lyraphon, Odeon, and Parlophon catalogs), which would provide the material for General Phonograph's extensive catalog of ethnic and foreign-language recordings. Fred Hager and Charles Hibbard retained their positions as Okeh's musical director and recording engineer, respectively.

The transition had no perceptible impact on Okeh's catalog, which so far had offered nothing to distinguish the label from its competitors. In November 1920, however, the company had an unexpected hit with Mamie Smith's recording of "Crazy Blues," the first recording by a Black artist in the blues idiom (although the composition itself was not a blues by any but the loosest definition of the term). The record was a strong seller, although the widely repeated claim that it sold a million or more copies is not supported by primary-source documentation and is almost certainly an exaggeration, having originated with Perry Bradford's self-aggrandizing and rather unreliable memoir. Nevertheless, the relative success of "Crazy Blues" revealed the strong demand for records made by and for Blacks, and Okeh quickly took the lead as a producer of those records. In the summer of 1921, Okeh introduced a separately numbered "race" series devoted exclusively to its growing roster of Black artists, under the general supervision of Clarence Williams.

General Phonograph's attempt to enter the classical market was far less successful. Initially it reissued material from Lindström's holdings, including some decade-old Odeon and Fonotipia recordings by notable operatic artists (including Frieda Hempel, John McCormack, Leo Slezak, and Riccardo Stracciari), many of whom had since signed exclusive contracts with other labels. Initially pressed by Okeh with Odeon and Fonotipia labels and distributed by the affiliated American Odeon Corporation, the records failed to interest consumers who could hear the same artists on newer recordings. Nothing was done to develop the series, which quietly perished in 1922. General Phonograph reentered the classical market in 1924, using more current Odeon material, but never made a serious effort to produce its own classical recordings.

Okeh focused instead on catering to under-served segments of the market. It unwittingly entered the country-music field in the summer of 1923, when Atlanta record dealer Polk Brockman persuaded a reluctant Ralph Peer to record Fiddlin' John Carson. Brockman agreed to cover production costs by purchasing five-hundred copies of the record. Anticipating only local sales, Okeh initially did not assign a catalog number to Carson's

record. However, demand proved so strong that by October, news of the "picturesque Southern mountaineer" was appearing in the trade papers, and the record was assigned a catalog number and placed in the general catalog. Carson recorded additional titles in March 1924, by which time Peer was actively seeking out other White country performers. In the interim, Brockman had recruited folk-song collector Bascom Lamar Lunsford, fiddler A. A. Gray, banjoist Land Norris, and harmonica soloist E. F. (Poss) Acree in anticipation of Peer's return to Atlanta.

Okeh also moved farther afield in its quest for race-series talent beginning in 1923. In June, an Okeh team recorded King Oliver's Jazz Band and Erskine Tate's Vendome Orchestra in a temporary Chicago studio, its first race-series recordings made outside of New York. In September, the team recorded Bennie Moten's Kansas City Orchestra in its home city, made a brief stop in Detroit, then returned to Chicago in October to make recordings by Sippie Wallace and several other blues singers, Jelly Roll Morton's Jazz Band, and as well as additional sides by the Oliver band.

The recording expeditions continued into the early 1930s, garnering Okeh an impressive roster of jazz, blues, gospel, and country music artists from around the nation. Ralph Peer's marathon recording tour in the spring of 1924, with stops in Chicago, New Orleans, and Atlanta, set the pace for later, even farther-ranging trips. Okeh's engineers, including Charles Hibbard, Peter Decker, and George Jeffers, eventually recorded in Annapolis, Maryland; Asheville, North Carolina; Dallas; Detroit; Kansas City; Minneapolis; San Antonio; St. Louis; St. Petersburg, Florida; and other cities that were often passed over by Okeh's competitors, achieving outstanding results in makeshift studios.

Okeh's local record auditions, held in advance of the recording tours, were newsworthy events. The company received applications from more than three-hundred aspiring recording artists in August 1925, in connection with an Old-Time Tune Convention the company sponsored in Asheville, North Carolina. Along with recommendations from local record dealers, the auditions proved invaluable in identifying and signing promising artists.

Fred Hager resigned as Okeh's musical director during the summer of 1923. He was briefly replaced by Arthur Bergh, formerly of the Independent Recording Laboratory, who in turn was replaced by Justin Ring (a longtime associate of Hager's) in the autumn of 1924. Charles Hibbard remained, and in May 1925 he announced he had perfected a new recording process that he claimed would revolutionize recording methods. *The Talking Machine World* for May 1925 reported that Otto Heineman, when asked if the new method was electrical, replied "with the suggestion that the new process is not electrical." Aural evidence supports Heineman's response. Branded Truetone, the process was being employed by late 1925, but with its oddly "boxy" tone and somewhat anemic bass response, it was clearly still an acoustic process, and a questionable improvement over Okeh's previous method.

By the autumn of 1926, Otto Heineman was negotiating the sale of General Phonograph to the Columbia Phonograph Company, which would enable Okeh to employ the Western Electric recording system under Columbia's license. The sale was announced in early October and was completed on the twenty-second of that month, after being approved by General Phonograph's shareholders. General Phonograph's Okeh and Odeon record divisions (the latter operating under license from Lindström) were consolidated and reorganized as the Okeh Phonograph Corporation, *q.v.* The new company would function as a largely autonomous Columbia subsidiary in which Heineman played an increasingly minor role.

Otto Heineman had diversified widely over the years, setting up companies to manufacture products ranging from phonograph needles and radios to home insulation and fishing reels. On April 1, 1927, he launched the General Phonograph Manufacturing Corporation, which carried on his former company's manufacture of phonograph parts and supplies, but was not involved in record production or sales. He continued to serve as its president until June 1928, when he resigned to devote his full attention to the Okeh Phonograph Corporation.

GENERAL RECORDS, INC. — See Reeves Sound Studios

GENNETT RECORDING LABORATORIES / GENNETT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1935 – 1948

Offices: Richmond, IN; 729 7th Ave., New York; 1344 S. Flower Ave., Los Angeles (Speedy-Q Sound Effects division)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — Richmond, IN; Joe Davis (Beacon)

Pressing: Own plant—S. 1st & A Sts., Richmond, IN

Record Products: Gennett [II], Iragen; Gennett Electrical Transcriptions, Gennett Sound Effects, Speedy-Q Transcriptions, and other special-use recordings; private and promotional records; transcriptions, air-checks

The Starr Piano Company's Gennett Records Division (*q.v.*) carried on with production of Champion and Superior records after discontinuing its Gennett label in 1930. In 1934, Starr Piano finally declared bankruptcy. At the end of that year it closed the unprofitable record division, and the Gennett ledgers confirm that all acoustic and many electric masters eventually were destroyed. After emerging from bankruptcy, Starr Piano dabbled in real estate while continuing to manufacture pianos, refrigerators, cabinets, and other consumer goods through 1949.

In 1935, Harry Gennett sold the Champion trademark and rights to some Gennett and Champion masters to Decca's Jack Kapp and used the proceeds to re-enter the record business as the Gennett Recording Laboratories. Although now a separate entity for legal and financial purposes, it continued to use the Starr Piano studio and pressing plant in Richmond, Indiana. Its main offerings were sound-effects recordings (produced by Gennett's son, Harry Jr.) and radio transcriptions, along with private recordings and at least one commercial label, the short-lived Iragen. During 1939–1940, Gennett licensed some vintage jazz and blues recordings (including some that Gennett had recorded for Paramount) to Eli Oberstein, who dubbed and reissued them on his Varsity label under colorful pseudonyms. By then, the faltering recording operation was being managed by Lee A. Butt and R. T. Connor in Richmond, and Thomas J. Valentino (erroneously listed as Joseph J. Balentino in *Variety*'s 1938 directory) in New York. The Starr Piano Company of California, a separate corporation, also offered transcription services in the late 1930s and early 1940s but did not make recordings for the consumer market.

Gennett's final documented commercial recording session was held in Richmond on November 9, 1940. The sound-effects division was spun off as a separate operation, still under Harry Jr.'s management, but with a new office in Los Angeles. The pressing plant remained in operation, for in-house as well as client jobs. A portion of the plant had already been leased to Decca Records on March 22, 1939. In 1940 Decca signed a royalty agreement under which it would reissue some vintage Gennett and Champion jazz recordings, but the project stalled for several years before finally materializing as the Brunswick Collectors Series in 1944. The Gennett plant also made pressings for Musicraft in the early 1940s. However, Decca was evicted in 1944 for failing to make minimum required payments, and service to Musicraft was suspended at about the same time.

With his pressing plant largely idled, Harry Gennett launched a revival of the Gennett label in September 1944, in partnership with music publisher and producer Joe Davis. Davis would serve as recording manager and exclusive sales distributor. He transferred his pressing work from the Scranton Record Company to the Gennett plant, loaned Harry Gennett \$15,000 (with Gennett's equipment posted as collateral), and supplied masters to the revived Gennett label under a royalty agreement. Arthur Connor, Gennett's veteran plant manager, was retained as general manager of the new venture.

The new Gennett discs were packaged in surplus 1920s Electrobeam sleeves, but any resemblance to the original Gennett products ended there. Using labels that bore little resemblance to the earlier Gennett designs, the earliest issues drew largely on Davis' Beacon masters, including some previously unissued sides by blues singer Gabriel Brown. The partnership reportedly was contentious from the start, and it was terminated by court order in July 1946. Davis was ordered to pay Gennett \$18,654, and Gennett was ordered to return Davis' pressings, masters, and metal parts. The dissolution marked the end of Harry Gennett Sr.'s involvement in record production.

Harry Gennett, Jr., continued to oversee the pressing plant (to which Decca Records

later returned) and the sound-effects and transcription business. Following Harry Sr.'s death in 1952, the company name was changed to Speedy-Q Transcriptions. The *Richmond Palladium-Item* reported in November 1956 that Gennett's sound-effects catalog numbered 375 recordings, for which orders "drift in occasionally."

GEORGIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889

Offices: 43 Walton St., Atlanta (1889–9/1890); Rooms 9–11 Capitol Block, Atlanta (from 9/1890, originally reported as Rooms 8–11)

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Georgia. The company was organized in Atlanta on March 11, 1889, and offices were opened in June of that year, in a leased private residence. President John L. Ingliss was also president of the Florida Phonograph Company. Frank E. Clarkson (formerly of the Metropolitan Phonograph Company in New York) was involved in Georgia Phonograph's founding and served as its superintendant until late February 1891, when he moved to the Louisiana Phonograph Company to serve as general manager. His position was taken by F. Wohlgemuth.

Georgia Phonograph freely demonstrated its machines at first. An official later admitted, "We made the social uses and amusement part of the instruments a little too prominent, which we soon found from experience did not pay." In 1890 the company began placing coin-operated phonographs in select locations. A surviving list of newly arrived recordings used on the machines does not include anything though to be the company's own recordings. Some if not all were obtained from the Columbia Phonograph Company, as confirmed by Georgia Phonograph's testimonial in an 1891 Columbia advertisement. In 1890 the company reported that United States Marine Band recordings (which at that time were being made exclusively by Columbia) were being featured on their coin-operated phonographs.

Clarkson made local headlines in May 1890 after he threatened to sue the Second Baptist Church of Atlanta over a "phonographic exhibition" it was planning to present without the consent of the Georgia Phonograph Company, which controlled the rights to such events. The show went on as scheduled, only to have it revealed that the "phonograph" in question was actually a large box in which was hidden an actor imitating a phonograph. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported that "a big crowd turned out to see Manager Clarkson 'sold.'" The company received more-favorable publicity in August of that year, when it placed a coin-operated phonograph in Jacobs' Drug Store "for the special benefit of ladies and children."

The *Atlanta Constitution* for February 20, 1890, reported that the proceedings of The Electric Club (of which Clarkson was a co-founder) has been recorded in the Georgia Phonograph Company's office. Thus far, however, no evidence has been found to suggest that Georgia Phonograph produced any original recordings for sale to the general public.

GILT-EDGE RECORD COMPANY / 4 STAR RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944– 1961

Offices: 500 North Western Ave., Hollywood, CA (to 1947); 210 N. Larchmont, Los Angeles (1947–5/1948); 305 S. Fair Oaks, Pasadena, CA (from 5/1948); 18 E. 41st St., New York (branch office, from 3/1945)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—Los Angeles

Pressing: Own plant—Los Angeles

Record Products: Gilt-Edge, 4 Star

The Gilt-Edge Record Company was launched in late 1944 as a trade name of Richard A. (Dick) Nelson, in partnership with Clifford McDonald. Nelson, who also operated a talent agency under the name of All Star Artists' Bureau, managed Gilt-Edge's artists and repertoire, while McDonald served as recording manager. During World War II, Nelson was also involved in a venture that allowed G.I.s to make instantaneous recordings they mail home.

The initial Gilt-Edge offering, released in late 1944, was Cecil Gant's "I Wonder," which had already been a modest hit for Leroy Hurte's small Bronze label. Crudely produced

and labeled, the record was criticized by *Billboard* for its poor technical quality but nevertheless became a hit for Gilt-Edge. More professionally produced Gilt-Edge releases, bearing redesigned labels, began to appear in 1945. At first the records were intended largely for the jukebox market, being distributed on the West Coast by Coinmatic Distributors. When first offered for general sale, the records retailed for \$1 each, but the price was soon reduced to 65¢.

Nelson and McDonald, in partnership with Don Pierce and William A. McCall (who had also been an investor in Gilt-Edge), took over the recently launched 4 Star label in the autumn of 1945. 4 Star had already released recordings by veteran crooner Gene Austin and country-and-western star "T" Texas Tyler, as well as some material for the Mexican-American market. The new organization operated as the 4 Star Record Company, with Pierce serving as administrative executive. It was unusual among small independent record companies of the period in that it handled all aspects of recording and production within its own facilities, which were also hired out to other labels, including Apollo. 4 Star became Nelson's flagship label, devoted largely to country-and-western material, while Gilt-Edge was relegated to a somewhat neglected rhythm-and-blues line.

In early 1946, Nelson was sued over irregularities in his contract with Cecil Gant, who by then had become Gilt-Edge's most prolific artist. The contract, which had not been approved by the American Federation of Musicians, gave Nelson the right to claim co-authorship of all of Gant's compositions and even granted him power of attorney over Gant's financial affairs. Having lost the case, Nelson transferred all of his artist contracts to Clifford McDonald and began making plans to dispose of his recording business.

Citing poor health, in May 1946 Nelson sold his controlling interest in Gilt-Edge, 4 Star, the All Star Artists' Bureau, the Consolidated Distributing Company, and four pressing plants to Clifford MacDonald and Don Pierce. By June, however, it was clear that the new owners lacked the funds that would be needed to continue record production. Nelson repurchased half of his stock and returned to the company in July, although only as a sales manager having no control over policies or operations. His attorney, Harvey Scribner, was added to the board of directors at about the same time. On November 16, 1946, William McCall finally acquired a controlling interest in 4 Star and launched the 4 Star Sales Company to publish and control copyrights on songs written by 4 Star artists. Nelson resigned a short time later.

In October 1950, the 4 Star Record Company announced that it was reviving Gilt-Edge as an active label, in response to what it termed "an amount of talent and material being submitted to us that is beyond the capacity of the 4 Star label to absorb." In its "Announcement of Policy," Gilt-Edge stated that artists would not be in interchanged between the two labels, and 4 Star would employ a different group of independent distributors. New "hillbilly" releases were to be made weekly, with occasional race and sacred releases. By February 1951, the company was reporting that its sales had doubled over the previous year, with the revived Gilt-Edge label accounting for much of that increase. An attempt by E. H. (Buddy) Morris to buy out the business in early 1953 was rebuffed.

McCall also launched a custom record-production service for aspiring artists in the early 1950s, some of whom (including Texas Bill Strength and Slim Willet) were subsequently signed for the 4 Star label. McCall went on to acquire many promising country-and-western artists, including Jimmy Dean, Hank Locklin, Roy Clark, Webb Pierce, and Carl Belew. However, many were soon driven away by McCall's notorious cheapness, his insistence that they record only songs published by 4 Star Sales, and his habit of taking co-composer credit for their songs under the pen-name "W. S. Stevenson."

In the early 1950s, 4 Star produced a series of multi-track 45-rpm EPs that occasionally included unissued material. Not compatible with jukeboxes, they were made available only to disc jockeys, for a small token payment. In 1953, McDonald implemented a cooperative arrangement to supply recordings by 4 Star artists to larger companies, including Decca and King. Under the initial deal with Decca, selected artists recorded four titles per session, two of which were retained by 4 Star and two of which were allocated to Decca, which paid McDonald a royalty on retail sales.

Country-music star Gene Autry purchased the 4 Star Sales Company from McCall for \$150,000 on June 1, 1960. Exactly a year later, he spun off and sold the recording operation, including artist contracts and several thousand masters. Joe Johnson was assigned to

manage the operation, which for a time continued to supply recordings to Decca and King. McCall later turned his attention to management of his mining interests, which included a 15,000-acre tract adjacent to Las Vegas, Nevada.

GLAD TIDINGS PUBLISHING COMPANY / NATIONAL MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1922 – 1928

Offices: 207 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago (Glad Tidings, early 1920s); 218 S. Wabash (National Music, late 1920s)

Original-Master Source(s): Marsh Laboratories

Record Products: Ideal Sacred Record

Glad Tidings was a publisher of religious music owned by or affiliated with Chicago evangelist Harry W. vom Bruch. It produced a single Ideal Sacred Records release, by baritone Fred A. Mills, in or around the summer of 1922, using masters commissioned from Marsh Laboratories. Nothing more was heard of the Ideal Sacred Records label until early 1928, when several more records were released, including two by Vom Bruch himself. Again using masters commissioned from Marsh Laboratories, they were credited to the National Music Company and were also released privately on Marsh's Electra label.

GLATFELTER RECORDING STUDIO / SKY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: 1302 W. Philadelphia St., York, PA

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Skate-Rhythm (unconfirmed), Sky

Owned and operated by Herbert James (Herb) Glatfelter, who billed himself as an "internationally famous organist with long and wide experience playing Hammond organ for shows, fairs, theaters, night clubs... ." The studio was housed in Glatfelter's duplex in York, Pennsylvania.

In March 1946, Glatfelter filed for copyright on a list of Skate-Rhythm Records, examples of which have not been located thus far. In early 1949 he launched Sky Records, featuring his own Hammond organ solos as well as selections by singer Wayne Thomas, Russ Nace's Orchestra, and possibly other local Pennsylvania performers. Glatfelter advertised the initial Sky releases in *Billboard* in April 1949, after which little more was heard of his label or studio. The records were sold by mail-order and by a few small retailers in Pennsylvania, New York, and surrounding states. Sky Records was last listed in *Billboard*'s March 1951 label directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies. The Sky name was used for an unrelated Mississippi label later in the 1950s.

GLO TONE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1948 – 1949

Offices: Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): United Broadcasting Studios

Record Products: Glo Tone

An obscure and short-lived operation, Glo Tone (shown in error as "Glory Tone" in Tom Lord's jazz discography) held a single recording session at the United Broadcasting Studios in late 1948 or early 1949, with Melvin Moore's Orchestra, the Original Calypso Boys, and Joe Williams. Only two issues have been confirmed by reliable sources. A Glo-Tone Recording Company (6228 N. Rhodes Avenue, Chicago) appears in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory, but the listing includes many defunct companies, and it is unclear whether these were the same operation.

GLOBE DISTRIBUTORS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 3522 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, CA

Record Products: Universal [3], Esquire

Headed by Harry J. Browne (president) and Gordon (Dutch) Niemann (vice-president), Globe distributed several small independent West Coast labels, as well as a large array of household appliances, in addition to producing its own record labels. Browne was listed

as manager of the Esquire Record Company (unrelated to the later Esquire jazz label) and Universal Records (unrelated to the Chicago company of the same name). Both companies appear to have been simply trade names of Globe, and all shared the same address.

Launch of the Universal [3] label was reported in June 1946. *Billboard* noted that Browne had originally wanted to name the label Paramount but decided against it for fear of being sued by Paramount Pictures, even though his use of the name on records reportedly had been approved by California's secretary of state. *Billboard* at that time reported that Universal had signed Saunders King and Jack McVea.

The Universal label had a minor West Coast hit with "Boogie Joys" in 1946, but otherwise seems to have attracted little attention. In early 1947 it was replaced by the Esquire label, presumably to avoid conflict with the recently launched, Chicago-based Universal [4] label. Esquire remained in production into 1947 or early 1948 before quietly disappearing.

GLOBE PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1896 – 1897

Offices: 16 W. 27th St., New York

Record Products: Globe cylinders

A short-lived venture involving baritone J. W. Myers, who was listed as the company's manager. One modern account states that baritone J. J. Fisher was also involved in some way with the company, with no further details or source cited. Myers announced in the November 1896 issue of *The Phonoscope*, "I am making my own records, and can guarantee each one first-class in every respect... ."

The same issue listed more than thirty vocal selections under Myers' brand. The cylinders retailed for \$1 each, or \$10 per dozen, with "special inducements" offered on lots of fifty or more records. Myers noted that his cylinders contained "no advertising announcements—merely the name of the song," but offered to add special announcements to order.

A second and apparently final Globe record list was published in the December 1896 *Phonoscope*, after which nothing more was reported concerning the company in that publication. By March 1898, Myers was operating as the J. W. Myers Standard Phonograph Record Company (*q.v.*). The Globe Phonograph Record Company, along with the Myers' Standard Phonograph, was officially dissolved in 1899.

GLOBE RECORD COMPANY [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1901 – 1902

Offices: 57 W. 26th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: The Burt Company (Milburn, NJ)

Record Products: Climax [1] (some reissued with Columbia labels)

Incorporated in New York on June 19, 1901, with \$10,000 in capital, the Globe Record Company operated as a subsidiary of The Burt Company, a molding plant that had recently begun pressing disc records. George Henry Burt was a manufacturer of poker chips and billiard balls, and in the late 1890s he began experimenting with shellac-based compounds for use in disc records. There are anecdotal reports that Burt began setting up his recording operation as early as March 1901. John C. English was hired away from the Universal Talking Machine Company (Zonophone) to serve as Globe's recording engineer. The records would be marketed under the Climax label.

Globe's own version of the Climax disc appeared only briefly. The records used stamped labels with raised type, but otherwise resemble early Zonophone discs. It has been suggested that the earliest Climax masters might have been made in the same studio as Zonophone's, a distinct possibility given John English's involvement with both companies. In a carry-over reflecting Columbia's and English's prior involvement with Zonophone, the reverse sides of some Climax pressings have a "Valiquet notch," a shallow indentation designed to accommodate a retractable pin on the Zonophone turntable.

In September 1901, Burt made a verbal agreement under which Columbia would market Globe's Climax discs with labels bearing the Columbia Phonograph Company imprint. The arrangement would allow Columbia to finally offer a disc record under its own name, albeit not of its own making. The records were 7" and 10" single-sided pressings with

gold-on-black paper labels reading, "G. R. Co., Mf'd Solely for Columbia Phonograph Co." The labels were sometimes applied over the earlier raised-text pressings, lending a rather slipshod appearance to the records. A few semi-flexible Climax pressings have been reported, which likely were prototypes. Thus far, no evidence has been that flexible Climax pressings were advertised or sold to the general public.

Columbia soon became delinquent in its account with Globe. The news reached Victor president Eldridge Johnson, who purchased the Globe Record Company from Burt on January 19, 1902, for \$10,000. As a part of the deal, Johnson agreed to turn over a portion of Victor's pressing work to Burt through July 1903. Victor then took possession of the Climax masters and marked them with a circled "VTM" logo to indicate their new ownership, although the recordings were never issued under a Victor label.

Columbia, deprived of a disc supplier, began immediate negotiations to purchase Globe from Eldridge Johnson. In February 1902 Johnson sold the company to Columbia president Edward Easton for his original \$10,000 purchase price, along with Easton's promise to abandon any pending patent-infringement suits against the Victor Talking Machine Company. Victor Emerson, Columbia's recording manager, took possession of the Globe masters and equipment on February 13, 1902, according to later court records. Johnson subsequently poached Globe recording engineer John English for Victor.

The final version of the Climax [1] label, produced under Columbia's ownership, was in silver on black and deleted the reference to Globe. During the summer of 1902, it was supplanted by the first Columbia Disc Record label. Some dealers were discounting surplus Climax-label records by late 1902, or giving them away with the purchase of a Columbia phonograph. In April 1903, the Siegel Cooper department store advertised 15,000 Climax discs for 19¢ (7") or 38¢ (10", reduced to 15¢ in May), with the teaser, "If we told you who made these fine records, you would be startled." By June, Simpson Crawford was remaindering the records for three for 25¢.

Columbia went on to remake many of the Globe selections, sometimes using different artists, but retaining the original Climax catalog/matrix numbers and simply appending higher take numbers to each successive remake. The Climax name was revived around 1914 for a Columbia-produced client label that had no connection to the long-defunct Globe Record Company.

GLOBE RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1951

Offices: 4716 (later 4714–4716) S. Hoover St., Los Angeles

Original-Master Source(s): Probably own studio; Audio Company of America, other independent studios

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Globe [3], Red Bird [2]

Founded in 1944 by E. L. Hearn, the owner of H & H Music Company, a Los Angeles jukebox supplier. Charles Wyatt served as sales manager. Distribution was handled by H & H as well as several other small distributors, primarily in the southern and midwestern states. An unrelated Globe Record Company, launched in New York in early 1946, and affiliated with the William Morris Agency, reissued recordings made in the Soviet Union but did not produce original recordings, and thus is beyond the scope of this work.

Initially an independent pressing operation serving mainly small local rhythm-and-blues labels, the Globe Record Company launched its Globe label during the summer of 1945. The earliest releases appeared in *Billboard's* August advance lists. Globe began as a race-record label, at first featuring blues singer Jimmy McCracklin, the Rising Star Gospel Singers, and other local artists. The records initially were marketed mainly to jukebox operators. Hearn took the unusual step of placing acetate demo recordings in his jukeboxes to determine their potential popularity, from which he gauged the number of pressings to order. Globe records were being widely distributed throughout the South and Midwest by late 1945.

Globe launched several new series in June 1946, including country-and-western (with Lee Alley & his Alley Cats, John Irby and his Teaxa Ranchers, and the Bar X Cowboys), Mexican, and Bohemian. Many of the recordings made for those series were produced in affiliation with the Crowe-Martin Distributing Company (Houston) during a two-month

Texas visit by Hearn. *Cash Box* reported that Crowe-Martin was "giving local jukebox fans exactly what they want, and pronto, by recording stuff right here in Houston and in the nearby village of San Antonio. Lydia Mendoza, famous Mexican recording artist of San Antonio, signed a contract with Crowe-Martin and went right to work turning out a bunch of Spanish hits."

Globe also produced or was affiliated with a short-lived version of the Red Bird label (unrelated to the better-known version produced by Red Bird Records), with which it shared several masters by Ralph Reynolds and his Dude Ranch Wranglers. The Globe Record Company was purchased in February 1951 by Max Urban, who scrapped all but the Mexican catalog.

GOLD MEDAL RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: 140 Boylston St., Boston

Record Products: Gold Medal

Launched by Aaron S. Bloom during the summer of 1948. The company appears to have been affiliated with Ben Bloom Music, a publishing operation whose titles appeared on many Gold Medal releases. The records initially were handled by small distributors in the western states.

Gold Medal's first release, announced in September 1948, was a novelty tune plugging the Sing-a-Tina, a sort of kazoo. Most subsequent releases were equally inconsequential pop fare by Boston- and New York-area nightclub singers, including Ness Coulon, Jack Gold, Pat Rainey, and Ray Dorey. The latter had a minor local hit in late 1948 with "Give Me Your Love for Christmas" for which Gold Medal placed an ad thanking sixteen disc jockeys by name (along with "hundreds" of unnamed others) for plugging the record.

Cash Box reported in May 1949 that Bloom had secured distribution for Gold Medal throughout much of the Midwest and East Coast. Negotiations were also said to be under way in several other states as well as England and Australia, which do not appear to have come to fruition. The company's last confirmed releases appeared in the autumn of 1949.

GOLD-RAIN RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: 17357 Birwood, Detroit

Record Products: Gold-Rain

A pop and novelty label possibly affiliated with Detroit band leader Franz Geisz, who was featured on most of its known releases. Gold-Rain's first offering, credited to Geisz and his Seven Wonders, was reviewed in January 1949 by *Billboard*, which characterized one side as a "bouncy instrumental polka" and the reverse as a "weepy waltz." The company last appeared in *Billboard*'s November 1951 label directory (which included many inactive or defunct labels), although it might have been inactive by then. A 1958 Gold-Rain release has been reported anecdotally, but thus far, a connection with this company has not been confirmed.

GOLD SEAL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 333 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Bachman Studio, United Broadcasting studios, probably other independent studios

Record Products: Gold Seal

Founded in August 1946 by Leonard Klein, formerly the director of United Broadcasting's recording division. Klein developed an unusual business model that relied heavily on recording American fare for export, while adapting promising foreign tunes for the U.S. market. After Gold Seal recordings proved to be popular in South Africa, Klein expanded his international distribution to Brazil in mid-1947, and then to other South American nations.

Most of Gold Seal's output consisted of jazz, race, and country-and-western material. The company's first two releases, by Red Mack and his All Stars, were advertised in the

U.S. in late August 1946. Two of Klein's early signings, announced in September 1946, were classically trained artists who, despite their backgrounds, made their livings mainly in the Chicago nightclubs — singer Arthur Lee Simpkins, and pianist Robert Crum. But Klein's most prolific artist appears to have been Kenny Jeager, a cocktail-lounge performer whose specialty was playing piano and organ simultaneously. The country-and-western catalog (assembled largely from purchased or leased masters) included Eddie Dean, Dale Evans, Merle Travis, and the Ranch Boys. Klein reportedly shipped 10,000 Ranch Boys discs to South Africa in late 1946.

Klein purchased 300 masters from the defunct Bel-Tone operation in October 1947, including material by pop artists Frankie Laine, Cliff Stone, and Artie Wayne. At the same time, he announced that studios in Argentina, Switzerland, and elsewhere had offered their services to him should his stockpile of masters run low during the impending American Federation of Musicians recording ban. In early 1948 he arranged for Musicana Ltd. to press Gold Seal discs in Canada, and reportedly was seeking arrangements in Europe, but operations were suspended later that year.

GOLD STAR RECORDS — See Quinn, William Russell (Bill)

GOLD TONE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1980s

Offices: 1924 W. 7th Ave., Hollywood, CA (from 1948); 1712 E. 22nd St., Los Angeles (from 1950s)

Record Products (78): Gold Tone

Launched in early 1948 by country-music singer and songwriter Jack Patton. Patton also owned Gold Tone Music (later, the Jack Patton Music Company), a publishing operation. From 1949 to 1965, Patton owned and operated Sunset Ranch in Broadalbin, New York, a dude ranch with dance hall where he was the star attraction.

In the late 1940s, Patton befriended songwriter Eden Ahbez (composer of the 1948 hit "Nature Boy"), who at the time was living with his pregnant wife in a sleeping bag in Laurel Canyon outside of Los Angeles and working as a dishwasher in a local vegetarian restaurant. Patton missed the opportunity to premier Ahbez's "Nature Boy," but Ahbez wrote or collaborated with Patton on several other songs that were introduced on Gold Tone.

Gold Tone's first release, credited to "Cowboy" Patton's Trio, appeared in the April 1948 advance lists and was dismissed by a *Billboard* reviewer as "dull nasal Patton piping." Patton shut down the label in 1949 but revived it in the spring of 1950, later adding 45-rpm pressings to the product line. He continued to market Gold Tone records into the 1980s, although new releases became increasingly infrequent. The final Gold Tone release was "Polish Cowboy Sings Again," an LP on which Patton reprised some of his earlier hits. In later years Patton owned a small chain of health-food stores and operated a hotel and spa in Palm Springs, California. At the time of his death on December 27, 1997, Patton was living in Nashville, where he had recently purchased a recording studio.

GOLDBAND RECORD COMPANY / GOLDBAND RECORDING STUDIO (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – Late 1980s

Offices: 830 Broad St., Lake Charles, LA (to c. 1947); 712 Front St., Lake Charles, (c. 1947–1951); 313 Church St., Lake Charles (from 1951)

Record Products (78): Goldband, Folk-Star; masters for Khoury's and other independent labels; custom recordings and transcriptions (from mid-1950s)

Owned and operated by Edward Wayne (Eddie) Shuler, a Texas native and owner of Eddie's Music House in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Shuler claimed to have made his first recordings in late 1945, in a New Orleans studio whose name he could not recall, but did not release them until 1946 for lack of funds. Many of Goldband's early masters were cut as acetates in the KAOK and KPLC studios in Lake Charles. Income from Shuler's radio repair business helped finance the start-up.

Shuler recalled that the Goldband label was originally intended only to promote his western-swing band, the All Star Reveliers. Catalog numbering began arbitrarily at 1011, which Schuler recalled was "just a number I decided was a good one." The initial release

had to be withdrawn because the master-processing company (which Shuler recalled as Soundcraft) deleted the last four bars of one selection. It was subsequently replaced by a correctly mastered version. Goldband soon gained a local following for its wide array of regional blues, gospel, and country-and-western artists, and particularly its recordings of important Cajun performers, including Iry LeJeune (misspelled "LeJune" on some labels) and Morris Le Blanc.

Initially, new releases appeared only sporadically and sales were largely local, with Shuler sometimes peddling records from the trunk of his car. *Billboard* did not list Goldband in its label directory until January 1948 and did not begin reviewing Goldband releases until 1950, by which time the label had shed its image as a small-time hobby operation. The companion Folk-Star label (not to be confused Rich-'R-Tone's unhyphenated Folk Star) was launched in or around 1949, with virtually no marketing support. Schuler recalled that he introduced Folk-Star to generate additional jukebox sales, claiming that operators limited the number of purchases they would make from any one label. Goldband and Folk-Star 45s were introduced in 1950, but LPs were not produced until the 1960s.

Shuler finally opened his own studio in the mid-1950s, where he continued to record southern musicians of all types for his own company (which by then was producing several other 45-rpm labels in addition to Goldband, again in an attempt to boost jukebox sales) as well as for others. Among them was thirteen-year-old Dolly Parton, whose first recording was released by Goldband in the spring of 1959. Shuler continued to produce new releases into the late 1980s, then began licensing his masters to various companies worldwide for reissue on CDs. In the spring of 1995, Schuler donated his Goldband business files, studio logs, and master tapes to the University of North Carolina. He died on July 23, 2005.

GOLDEN GATE RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: Record Room, Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco

Pressing: Oliver Record Company

Record Products: Golden Gate

A short-lived venture apparently connected with disc jockey Bill Baldwin, who was credited as its producer. The few known issues were pop tunes by Glen Hurlburt with the Greg McRitchie Orchestra and were distributed by United Music Sales (San Francisco). The earliest known mention of the company was in May 1947, and it was last listed in *Billboard's* January 1948 directory.

GOLDEN RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1921–1924

Offices: Walker Auditorium Building, 730 S. Grand Ave., Los Angeles (temporary 1921–1922); 1044 S. Hope St., Los Angeles (1922–1924)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Own plant; some pressing contracted to Starr Piano Company

Record Products: Golden; personal recordings

Founded by Theophilus Fitz, an affluent Los Angeles entrepreneur and self-styled champion of the fine arts. Fitz claimed that Los Angeles was "peculiarly suitable for the manufacture of phonograph records on account of atmospheric conditions." The company was incorporated in late November 1921 by Fitz, Mary A. Todd, A. B. Perdue, L. Goldman, and L. S. Moore, with a capital stock offering of \$200,000, of which only \$5 was subscribed at the time of incorporation. It was belatedly listed as a new business by *The Los Angeles Times* on January 29, 1922.

Golden was the second commercial record company to become operational on the West Coast, after Nordskog. Although Golden claimed to be the first (which was widely repeated in newspaper reports at the time), and was incorporated before Nordskog, Nordskog was already producing records by the time Golden's facilities opened.

From the start, Golden specialized in custom recording services. *The Los Angeles Times* reported that Golden's plan was "the making of records for anybody or any group of persons; to reproduce the spoken voice or song or instrumental music for individual and private use." Fitz was reported to have hired a highly experienced recording engineer from

a major New York company, although the details were not disclosed. *The Talking Machine World* reported, incorrectly, that the records would be "golden in color."

The Music Trade Review for December 24, 1921, reported that construction had begun on the Golden factory. *The Los Angeles Times* reported that the studio was expected to open on January 2, 1922. However, its opening was not announced until February 1, when members of the general public were invited to come in and make a record "for professional, student, or souvenir purposes." Although personal recordings comprised a significant portion of Golden's output, there were many commercial releases as well, for the most part employing Golden's own recordings by local or visiting talent. Only a handful of the local artists who recorded for Golden (most notably, band leader Jimmy Joy) went on to record for other labels or develop a national following.

Golden's recording activities were not limited to its studio. In March 1923, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that the company had recorded a harp ensemble in the Gamut Club and was making recordings "all over the state of California." The company operated its own pressing plant in the Los Angeles area but also contracted some of its pressing work to the Starr Piano Company plant in Richmond, Indiana.

Although Fitz's studio produced recordings of above-average technical quality, and reportedly did a good business in personal recordings, the Golden Record Company disappeared in mid-1924. No explanation was given, but by October of that year, Fitz was employed as recording engineer and general manager of the newly launched California Record (Manufacturing) Company, *q.v.*

GOOD TIME JAZZ (Discs)

Record Production: From 1949

Offices: 10614 Overland Place, Los Angeles (1949–1950); 707 N. Irving Blvd., Los Angeles (early 1950s); 8481 Melrose Place, Los Angeles (from c. 1952)

Original-Master Source(s): Radio Engineers (Los Angeles), other independent studios

Record Products (78s): Good Time Jazz, Lighthouse

Founded in the spring of 1949 by film producer and traditional-jazz enthusiast Lester Koenig. The Good Time Jazz label initially was a vehicle for the Firehouse Five Plus Two, a band whose unabashedly corny "dixieland" performances were often punctuated by sirens, bells, and other noise. The first recording session was held on May 13, 1949, and the initial release was announced in Floyd Levin's column in the *July Jazz Journal*.

Although the Firehouse group remained its main attraction, Good Time Jazz later expanded and refined its roster considerably to include Bunk Johnson, Willie (The Lion) Smith, and other veteran Black jazz musicians, as well as younger White traditionalists, including Bob Scobey and Lu Watters. LPs were introduced in 1950. Koenig, who was also a partner in Jazz Man Records, took over distribution of that label in early 1951, through his California Record Distributors. The following year, he purchased the Jazz Man masters for reissue on Good Time Jazz LPs and launched the subsidiary Lighthouse label.

Koenig died in November 1977. His son John continued to operate the company until 1983, when the catalog was acquired by Fantasy Records.

GOODY RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946–1948

Offices: 853 9th Ave., New York

Record Products: Goody, Gotham, Sarco

The Goody Record Corporation was launched in January 1946 by Sam Goody (*née* Samuel Gutowitz), whose Goody Record Corporation, Goody Record Distributing Company, and S-G Music publishing operation all occupied the same office. An anecdotal report that Ivin Ballen (who later purchased the business from Goody) was a founding partner has not been confirmed. The Gotham Recording Corporation (2 W. 46th St., New York), launched c. 1950, was an unrelated operation specializing in long-playing transcriptions and program production.

The Goody Record Corporation's earliest known releases appeared in early 1946, on the Goody label. It was joined in April by the Gotham label, which would quickly supplant Goody as the company's flagship brand. In July, *Cash Box* reported that investors were

interested in the new label, predicting "if Mr. Goody gives the nod, you can expect big things to start happening." With a fresh infusion of capital, the Goody Record Corporation was reorganized later that year as the Gotham Record Company, *q.v.*

GOSPEL RECORD COMPANY — See Savoy Record Company

GOSPEL RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949 – 1950

Offices: 2401 Arlerth St., Terre Haute, IN

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Gospel [2]; private recordings

A short-lived producer of White gospel records, probably launched in 1949. Gospel Recording had already produced several releases by January 1950, when it first advertised in *Billboard*. In March, the company announced it would be touring the South in search of distributors and pressing plants, and it invited performers to send audition discs or wire recordings. Beginning in mid-1949, the company also advertised that it could provide personal and custom recordings "professionally made at reasonable rates."

Gospel's artists, recruited mainly from area radio stations, included the Drifting Pioneers (WLW–Cincinnati) and Dixie Four (WIBC–Indianapolis). A May 1950 advertisement thanked WBOW's Sig Rouch ("The Blabber-Mouth of the Wabash Valley") and five other area disc jockeys for their support. Gospel also advertised "plenty of selections (without instrumental accompaniment) for the hundreds of thousands of 'Church of Christ' people who prefer this type of music." Selected titles were offered on 45 rpms beginning in early 1950.

The Gospel Recording Company last advertised in June 1950, still soliciting personal-recording work but no longer mentioning its own label. In August, the company was purchased by Gene Lowery, manager of the Dixie Four (*see* Lowery Enterprises). He offered to "sacrifice" Gospel's recording equipment for \$1,500, but no report of a taker has been found.

GOSPEL TRUMPET COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924 – c. 1927

Offices: E. 5th St., Anderson, IN

Original-Master Source(s): Columbia Phonograph Company, Starr Piano Company (Gennett)

Pressing: Columbia and Gennett plants

Record Products: Gospel Trumpet

An Anderson, Indiana, printing company that published the weekly *Gospel Trumpet* for the Church of God, along with other fundamentalist Christian material. It was the outgrowth of a religious paper started in 1881 by Daniel S. Warner, whose printing operation grew rapidly. In 1906 the company moved from West Virginia to a new plant in Anderson, Indiana. Doing business as the Gospel Trumpet Company, it had a considerable presence in Anderson, where it operated an auditorium and nursing home, and donated a two-acre lot for the construction of a private hospital. It also controlled the Anderson Bible Training School, which in June 1925 was segregated into separate institutions for White and Black students, the latter being relocated to Georgia.

Gospel Trumpet began marketing its own records in 1924, beginning with a series that was produced for the company by Columbia. Masters were made for Gospel Trumpet's exclusive use and were assigned master numbers within Columbia's Personal (91000) series. In early 1925, recording and pressing were taken over by the Starr Piano Company (Gennett). Several Gospel Trumpet sessions were held in Gennett's studio in Richmond, Indiana, from 1925 through May 1926, yielding an inordinately high percentage of unissued masters. The relatively few recordings that were released were assigned catalog numbers in Gennett's Personal (20100) series. The Gospel Trumpet Company appears to have settled its account with Gennett in mid-May 1927, at which time the unused masters either were discarded, or were marked "hold, not decided" in the Gennett matrix ledger.

By the mid-1950s, the Gospel Trumpet Company has been reorganized into separate divisions, comprising Gospel Trumpet (church supplies and publications), Triumphant Art

Publishers (small-publisher services), the Commercial Service Company (commercial printing), and Warner Press, Inc. (books and greeting cards). The latter currently operates a large printing plant in Anderson that specializes in religious publications.

GOTHAM RECORD COMPANY / CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946–1948

Offices: 853 9th Ave., New York

Record Products: Goody, Gotham, Sarco; pressing for Circle

Successor to the short-lived Goody Record Corporation (*q.v.*), which was launched in January 1946 by Sam Goody (*née* Samuel Gutowitz). Goody reorganized his company later that year as the Gotham Record Company.

From the start, Gotham specialized in jazz and blues, with an artist roster that included Earl Bostic, Dan Pickett, Sonny Terry, and John Lee Hooker. Goody was not averse to signing artists who were under contract to other labels and issuing their records pseudonymously, disguising Hooker as "Johnny Williams" and Champion Jack Dupree as "Meat Head Johnson." There were occasional excursions into pop fare, including an album of waltzes Dave Cheskin and his twenty-one piece orchestra that was released in August 1946, and an album of Jerome Kern tunes by "society pianist" Charlie Sherrill, issued in the same year.

Goody took over manufacturing and distribution of Rudi Blesh's Circle label and the Hollywood-based Sarco label in May 1946. Circle remained an independent operation, but Goody appears to have largely taken control of Sarco, to the extent that *Billboard* at one point termed it a "companion label" to Gotham. Some Sarco recordings were reissued on the Goody and Gotham labels.

By late 1946, Goody was seeking a buyer for the Gotham Record Company, including its masters and artist contracts. However, he insisted on retaining the local distribution rights, leading him to reject offers from Apollo and Sonora. In January 1948, he finally sold Gotham (including some Sarco masters) to Ivin Ballen, who moved the operation to his Philadelphia headquarters. The Gotham Record Company name remained in use, at first simply as a trade name. The Gotham Record Company was later incorporated as the Gotham Record Corporation, a subsidiary of the Ballen Record Company (*q.v.*).

The Gotham Recording Corporation (2 W. 46th St., New York), launched *c.* 1950, was an unrelated operation specializing in long-playing transcriptions and program production, and thus beyond the scope of this work.

THE GRAMOPHONE SHOP, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1934 – c. 1936

Offices: 18 E. 48th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): American Record Corporation, possibly other studios

Record Products: Gramophone Shop Varieties, Gramophone Shop Celebrity Series, Gramophone Shop L'Anthologie Sonore

Founded by J. F. Brogan and W. H. Tyler in 1928, The Gramophone Shop was originally located at 47 East 47th Street, New York. It specialized in domestic and imported recordings of classical fare on the major labels and advertised that "Early pressings are always the best. Our's are the first to be received in New York." A 1929 *Music Trade Review* article characterized the shop as "a permanent collecting place for those who [can] afford to buy the best things in records...conveniently located in a side street a few steps from 'millionaire's row' on Park Avenue, and therefore in a position to derive a dependable drop-in trade." In 1936 the store published the first edition of R. D. Darrell's *Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music*, one of earliest attempts at a comprehensive classical discography.

In 1934 The Gramophone Shop began to commission its own recordings, which were targeted to its affluent urban clientele. Issued under the Gramophone Shop Varieties label, the records were relatively expensive for the time, retailing for \$1 each in the store; mail-order service was provided for an additional fee. Masters were commissioned from the American Record Corporation and Columbia Phonograph Company (by then a division within ARC), as well as at least one unknown source, for label's exclusive use. The high-quality laminated pressings were made at the Columbia plant in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Despite a roster that included Beatrice Lillie, Alec Templeton, and other prominent stage and radio personalities, overall sales appear to have been weak, and the label was soon discontinued.

The Gramophone Shop Celebrity Series was manufactured for the store by the Gramophone Company in England, using His Master's Voice recordings by Maggie Teyte, Gabriella Gatti, Lorri Lail, and organist Finn Videro, among others. Approximately nine albums sets were released in the series, sales of which appear to have been even more meager than Varieties'. The shop also issued the French-produced L'Anthologie Sonore series in the U.S. An immense "thesaurus" of fourteenth- to eighteenth-century music, the recordings were made in Europe under the artistic direction of Curt Sachs. The U.S. edition bore the Gramophone Shop's labels and comprised at least 143 records, which could be purchased individually or in album sets.

GRAND CENTRAL MUSIC COMPANY – See Rego Records

GRAND RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1944

Offices: 1619 Broadway (Brill Building), New York

Original-Master Source(s): WOR studios

Pressing: Clark Phonograph Record Company

Record Products: Grand [1]

A short-lived venture of music publisher George Weiner, launched in conjunction with his Grand Music Company. W. F. Martens served as president of the recording operation. Grand's first recording sessions, by the Al Trace and Boyd Raeburn orchestras, were reported by *Billboard* in May 1944, and *Variety* noted that the records would be released around June 15. The Raeburn recording was finally advertised in July, as "soon to be released."

Mentions of the Grand label soon disappeared from the trade papers, but Weiner's name resurfaced in October 1944, when he assembled what was termed a "\$2 million syndicate" in a pointless attempt to purchase the Columbia Recording Corporation, which CBS had already expressed no interest in selling. In a bid to influence CBS, Weiner made band leader Harry James (one of Columbia's most popular artists) a partner in Grand Music. James rebuffed the attempt, and in March 1945 he severed his connections with Weiner.

The Grand Record Company was still listed in the 1945 *Record Retailing Yearbook*, but with no information given other than a mailing address. The Grand name was used for an unrelated label (distributed by Standard Phono) in the later 1940s, and for at least two other unrelated labels in the 1950s.

GREATER NEW YORK PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1898 – 1899

Offices: 61 W. 11th St., New York

Record Products: Possibly cylinders

Headed by J. Basant, the Greater New York Phonograph Company sold phonograph accessories and attachments, including linen-fiber recording diaphragms and an adjustable horn crane, as well as an assortment of remaindered merchandise. It is unclear whether the company produced its own cylinders, although in late 1898 it advertised what it claimed were original recordings by comedian Joseph Gannon (who later marketed his own records). Later advertisements offered unspecified "original" and "master" cylinders, but no catalog of those records has been found. The Greater New York Phonograph Company name was later used by an unrelated Columbia dealer.

GRECOL ENTERPRISES, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 301 Cherokee Building, Knoxville, TN

Record Products: Dixie [3], The Dixie Records

Incorporated in Knoxville, Tennessee, on March 17, 1949. In April 1949, Grecol Enterprises placed a want-ad in *Billboard* soliciting recordings it could reissue on a royalty basis. Some original recordings are known to have been issued on Grecol's Dixie label (which was

unrelated to Ohio-based Dixie Records) in 1949. The label styling varied, appearing as The Dixie Records or simply Dixie. Chuck Rogers, of Covered Wagon Records, supervised at least one Dixie recording session, according to a *Billboard* report. No mention of Grecol or the Dixie label has been found after 1949.

GRECOPHON RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1954

Offices: Gary, IN

Original-Master Source(s): Own masters (recorded by Universal Records, Chicago)

Record Products: Grecophon

Founded by Greek immigrant Skevos (Steve) Zembellas, the company's sole manager and owner. Grecophon is notable for its recordings of Greek island music by the Greek immigrant fishermen and sponge divers who settled in Tarpon Springs, Florida. In 1946 Zembellas began recording them in the basement of the Saint Nickolas Greek Orthodox Church in Tarpon Springs, using a Wilcox-Gay portable disc cutter. His earliest productions were privately made acetates that he sold locally, reportedly paying the performers \$1 per recording and selling copies for \$3.

Standard Phono's Tetos Demitriades agreed to release the Tarpon Springs recordings commercially, but reneged and failed to return the masters. Zembellas then went on to launch the Grecophon Record Company as a commercial venture in 1947, commissioning his masters from the Universal Records studio in Chicago. By then, an outbreak of the red tide had driven many Greek-Americans in Tarpon Springs to the area around Gary, Indiana, where Zembellas resumed recording their music, this time with the benefit of professional recording techniques.

Grecophon records were handled by a few specialty distributors and retailers, and could also be purchased directly by mail-order. George Katsaros' "Auto To Bradhi To Skotino" (Grecophon GR 11) reportedly was the label's best seller. However, Grecophon never achieved the sales and widespread distribution of some other Greek-American labels, such as Liberty, and in 1954 Zembellas closed the company. There is no known connection to the later Grecophon LP line.

GREEK NATIONAL OPERA RECORDS COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1922; 1924

Offices: 324 W. 42nd St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own masters (unknown studio, early 1920s; recorded by Pathé, 1924)

Pressing: Siemon Hard Rubber Company (early 1920s); Pathé (1924)

Record Products: Acropolis

The Greek National Opera Records Company advertised in the *Greek-American Monthly Illustrated National Herald* as early as October 1925, although their Acropolis records had been on the market for several years by that time, and its last new releases had appeared a year earlier. No documentation has been located concerning the company's ownership or management, other than its connection with the Greek National Opera Company, an organization that is still active today.

Early Acropolis releases use masters of unknown (possibly foreign) origin, pressed by the Siemon Hard Rubber Company, which closed in 1922. The second and more frequently encountered group of releases, comprising approximately thirty-five records, appeared in late 1924, in conjunction with the Greek National Opera Company's extensive U.S. tour. Recorded in Pathé's New York studio for the Greek National Opera Company's exclusive use, they feature Elias Ekonomidas, Artemis Kiparici, Nikos Moraithis, Michael Vlahopoulos, and other members of the company.

GREEK RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1922 – c. 1928

Offices: 1210 N. Clark St., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Marsh Laboratories

Pressing: New York Recording Laboratories

Record Products: Greek Record Company, Olympus Greek Record Company

Founded by Chicago musicians George C. Grétsis (sometime spelled Grachis) and Spyros Stamos in 1922. Grétsis and his father, who immigrated to the United States in 1907, owned a Chicago factory that manufactured Greek musical instruments. In 1918 Grétsis formed a local Greek musicians' union that was dissolved shortly before the Greek Record Company was launched in 1922. Stamos, a santouri and cymbalom virtuoso, and arranger for Lampe's Trianon Orchestra in Chicago, served as the company's general manager. Both recorded for the label on occasion, sometimes in accompanying roles.

The Greek Record Company used electrically recorded Marsh Laboratories masters that were commissioned for its exclusive use. A single master was cut in late 1922 but was not released until late 1923, when regular recording sessions for the label began. The label specialized in traditional Greek dances and songs, many of the latter performed by Marika Pappagika and "Ms. Amalía" (Amalía Bákas, *née* Mazaltov Matsa). The records appear to have been pressed in small quantities and were sold mainly by independent dealers in cities with large Greek immigrant communities, including Chicago, Detroit, New York, Salt Lake City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. There were also occasional issues of Turkish and Albanian material for the Arab and Eastern European immigrant communities.

The Greek Record Company's last known recording were made in the Marsh studio c. March 1928. The company produced approximately thirty-six issues, all but one of them on 12" discs, before disappearing in the late 1920s.

GREEN RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1930s

Offices and Master Source(s): Lyon & Healy Building (64 E. Jackson Blvd.), Chicago; Mather Tower, Chicago (from 3/1933)

Pressings: Pacific Coast Record Corporation

Record Products: Masters for Flexo; air-checks, radio transcriptions, custom and private recordings

Owned and operated by Bert Green, the Green Recording Studios offered a wide range of private and custom-recording services. Green also served as the midwestern sales representative and distributor for Jesse J. Warner's Pacific Coast Record Corporation (*see* Warner, Jesse J.), and offered custom pressing services, which he contracted to the Pacific Coast plant. In December 1931, *Broadcasting* magazine reported that Green was supplying masters to Warner's Flexo label.

Green's first studio was in the Lyon & Healy Building, a large multi-tenant building that housed other recording studios, none of which had any confirmed connection to Green. The studio's launch date is uncertain. Dates as early as 1928 have been cited anecdotally, although the company is not listed in any inspected Chicago directories for 1928–1930. The studio was definitely in operation by December 1930, when Green began soliciting "voices or instruments for recording," with the lure of a dollar test record. A month later he offered to record "any broadcast" for a dollar and up. The studio produced standard wax masters as well as instantaneous recordings on uncoated aluminum blanks.

By 1931, Green was specializing in the production of radio transcriptions and advertising spots for local clients that included Montgomery Ward, Swift & Company, and Quaker Oats. No reliable information has been found concerning the studio after Green moved to Chicago's Mather Tower in March 1933.

GREGORIAN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA (Discs)

Record Production: 1945–1946

Offices: 402–408 Madison Ave., Toledo, OH (at founding); 2130 Jefferson Ave., Toledo, OH

Record Products: Gregorian Institute; Catholic Hymns

Founded in 1945 by Dr. Clifford A. Bennett, who served as president and sales manager. The label was devoted exclusively to recordings of Gregorian chant and other early Catholic liturgical music.

In July 1945 it was reported that the Gregorian Institute had recorded 154 compositions, performed by various seminary and monastic choirs. Comprising forty-six discs, the recordings were said to constitute "the largest single collection of Catholic Church discography in the world." The Gregorian Institute also produced the apparently short-lived Catholic Hymns label for St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore.

The institute was first listed in the *Record Retailing Yearbook* for 1946, by which time its recording program appears to have been discontinued.

GREGORY RECORD COMPANY / BOBBY GREGORY RECORDS / CATHY-BOBBY GREGORY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949–Late 1950s

Offices: 1695 Broadway, New York (1949–early 1950s); 1215 3rd Ave., New York (early–mid 1950s); 804 45th Ave. N., Nashville, TN (mid–late 1950s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations

Record Products: Gregorian, Gregory (unconfirmed), Hillbilly

Founded in 1949 by country-music singer / musician and songwriter Bobby Gregory (leader of the Cactus Cowboys), who had already recorded for Apollo, Manor, M-G-M, and other labels. A prolific songwriter, Gregory celebrated publication of his one-thousandth tune in 1947. Most of his work was published by his wife Catherine's American Music Publishing Company, which operated at the same addresses as the record company.

The Gregory Record Company was first listed in the *Billboard* directory for October 1949, and its initial release on the Hillbilly label appeared in July 1950. The Hillbilly name came from the title of a musical comedy that Gregory reportedly was writing at the time. Additional Hillbilly releases, mostly by Gregory and the Cactus Cowboys, were advertised the following month in *Cash Box*. No reliable information has been located concerning the company's supposed Gregory label, which has been mentioned only anecdotally.

The Hillbilly label was joined in the summer of 1951 by Gregorian, which at first used the identical design, including Bobby Gregory's likeness. Extended-play 45s, introduced at about that time, used a very plain label, reflecting the addition of other artists to a roster that until then had comprised mainly Gregory and his Cactus Cowboys. The Hillbilly label was phased out on the early 1950s, and in the mid-1950s the publishing and recording operations were moved to Nashville, where the latter operated as Cathy-Bobby Gregory Records. The last known *Billboard* review of a Gregory release appeared in 1957.

GREY GULL RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1919 – 1930

Offices: 688 Tremont St., Boston (to 5/1919); 693 Tremont St., Boston (6/1919–10/1919); 295 Huntington Ave., Boston (10/1919–c. 1922); 135 Dorchester Ave., Boston (1922–1924); 598 Columbia Rd., Boston (1924–1926); 16 Macallen St., Boston (from 1926); 122 5th Ave., New York (1930)

Original-Master Source(s): Possibly own studio (Boston, 1919–1920); New York Recording Laboratories (1921–1922); Emerson Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Record Corporation (late 1923–c. 4/1926); own studios (20 E. 42nd St., New York, 4/1926–1929; 122 5th Ave., New York (1929–1930)

Pressing: Own plants—81 Wareham St., Boston (1919–4/1921) and Macallen St., Boston (4/1921–1922); New York Recording Laboratories (1922); Scranton Button Company (1922–early 1926); own plant at unknown location (early 1926–1930)

Record Products: Amco, Bingola, Globe [2], Grey Gull, Jewel [1], Madison [1], Mitchell, Nadsco, New Comfort, Onix, Phonolamp, Radiex, Sunrise [1], Supertone [2], Supreme [1], Van Dyke; Bingola (7"), Youngster (children's); Broderick, Golden Jubilee, other custom and private labels

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Bellbird (Australia); Celebrity, Curry's, Dominion, Goodson, Metropole, Phonycord, Piccadilly (England)

Grey Gull Records was founded by Theodore Lyman Shaw, a 1905 Harvard graduate and member of a prominent Boston family. In 1915 he founded the Shaw Advertising Company in Chicago, then moved the business to Boston in 1917. At the same time, he was also associated with Boston's Marcus Lucius Quinn Conservatory of Music.

Grey Gull Records, Inc., was chartered as a Massachusetts corporation on December 31, 1919, by which time it was already producing records on a small scale. In the *Fourth Report of the Harvard College Class of 1905* (published in early 1920, using data gathered the previous year), Shaw reported, "The company has now been on a small production basis

for about three months but has not progressed far enough to determine whether or not it will be a business success."

Grey Gull's first pressing plant, on Wareham Street in Boston, was managed by William Struckmann, a former supervisor at the Columbia's Bridgeport, Connecticut, plant. An early trade-press report suggested that Grey Gull was operating its own studio at the pressing plant, a distinct possibility given the relatively obscure performers who appear on some of those now-rare issues.

In May 1919, the still-unincorporated Grey Gull company advertised in *The Talking Machine World* that it had perfected its records, touting them as "the product of fourteen months of exacting laboratory research." The company also began soliciting independent distributors but cautioned that it could only "take on a few—not many—of the best." A few vertical-cut Grey Gull records appeared at about that time, bearing simple gray labels that depicted a phonograph reproducer turned to the vertical-cut position. The company secured the Plaza Music Company (New York) as its first distributor. For a time, the Charmel Trading Company (New York) handled exports.

Although Grey Gull's earliest advertisements promised that "quantity production is in sight," in June 1919 the company conceded that it would take another thirty days to supply its existing distributors. Shaw's belated trademark application was filed on January 19, 1920, and claimed use of the Grey Gull name on records since October 3, 1919, the latter date probably reflecting the approximate point at which the records became more generally available.

Large-scale production appears to have been under way by January 1920, when Grey Gull first began to advertise regularly. By then, a new scrollwork label design had been introduced, and the original vertical-cut releases had been discontinued. Two new series were offered in their place—standard lateral-cut (L-prefixed) and "Two-in-One" fine-groove vertical-cut (H-prefixed). The latter, advertised as "The queer new record that plays so long," contained two selections per side, with an extended playing time of approximately five minutes.

Ten new presses were added at the Boston pressing plant in December 1920. The dual-track discs had been discontinued a month earlier, and from that point onward, Grey Gull produced only standard lateral-cut recordings. The catalog was split into three main numerical series, which remained in use until the end: 1000s (popular instrumental and dance music), 2000s (popular vocal), and 4000s (standards, sacred, classical, and miscellaneous, later expanded to include country music).

Grey Gull at first claimed that its records were "recorded and manufactured complete in our own plant; we have no work done for us by outsiders." However, recordings from the Emerson and Paramount catalogs were occasionally used beginning in early 1921. Later that year, Grey Gull began commissioning its masters from the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount), as confirmed by numerous entries in band-manager Ed Kirkeby's session logs. The commissioned recordings were made for Grey Gull's exclusive use and were assigned numbers in Grey Gull's existing master-number sequence. The NYRL and Grey Gull master numbers occupied similar ranges at this point, which has led some discographers to confuse early NYRL-produced Grey Gull masters with Paramount recordings.

Early Grey Gull releases were aimed at the premium-priced record market and were sold by Gimbel Brothers and other major department stores. Retailing for 85¢ to \$1, the records were reasonably well produced. However, Grey Gull offered nothing exceptional in the way of artists or repertoire, relying largely on the same freelance bands and studio performers who could be heard on better-known (and often, less-expensive) labels. By the spring of 1921, some dealers were selling the records for as little as 65¢ each.

In early 1922, the New York Recording Laboratories took over full production of Grey Gull discs. The new series, which employed a greatly simplified label design, retailed for only 55¢, targeting the same budget-conscious consumers as Cameo and Regal. Advertisements stated that the records were made by "one of the large established manufacturers in a model plant" and attributed the low price to a simplified selling model "without costly furnishings and without the expense of demonstration; they are simply placed on the store counter, along with other merchandise, to be purchased by those who see and want them." Pressed largely from the same masters used on NYRL's Paramount

discs, and often employing artist pseudonyms, the records do not seem to have attracted much attention.

With sales stagnating, Grey Gull in 1922 was recast as a cut-rate brand, pressed by the Scranton Button Company using masters licensed from several sources. The strategy quickly proved to be successful. In October 1922 the company announced that 800 drug, variety, and music stores were handling Grey Gull records in Philadelphia alone. By year's end, Grey Gull claimed to have 6,000 outlets nationwide.

Scranton's Grey Gull pressings were made in soft, coarse material, and quality control was lax. With its conversion to a budget label, Grey Gull began using existing masters from outside companies. To disguise its sources, the company substituted control numbers for its suppliers' master numbers, with prefixes the only clue as to their source: X- for Emerson masters, Y- for Paramount, and Z- for Regal. Grey Gull began to employ artist pseudonyms on a regular basis, including the ubiquitous "Mr. 'X,'" which almost invariably was used as a disguise for Arthur Fields. The company introduced several other inexpensive labels between 1923 and 1925, including Globe, Nadsco, Radiex, and Supreme, all of which duplicated Grey Gull's couplings, catalog numbers, and (usually) artist pseudonyms.

In early 1924, Grey Gull began obtaining its masters almost exclusively from the Emerson Recording Laboratories. During this period, Emerson maintained dual master-numbering series (a 41000–42000 series for masters intended for issue on its own labels, and a 3100–3900 series for masters intended for Grey Gull and other client labels). Thus, different master numbers were assigned to identical titles, although in most cases, a different take was allocated to each label group. The original Grey Gull master-number sequence remained in sporadic use, mostly for renumbering masters licensed from other sources, and some Emerson material recorded as early as 1919 was also reissued. Emerson's successor, the Consolidated Record Corporation, continued to supply masters to Grey Gull into early 1926. Grey Gull appears to have retained some control over artists and repertoire during its association with Emerson and Consolidated. Although there was considerable duplication between the Emerson and Grey Gull catalogs from 1924 through early 1926, many Emerson-studio recordings made during that period were exclusive to Grey Gull and its affiliated label.

In the spring of 1926, Grey Gull reestablished itself as an independent producer. On April 24, the company moved into new offices, occupying the entire fifth floor of 20 East 42nd Street in New York. A new electrically equipped studio was opened at the same address, under the supervision of former Emerson recording director Paul Bolognese. The transition to electrical recording occurred at or around mx. 1940 (Grey Gull 1354), based upon research by Perry Armagnac and others. The company also opened its own pressing plant at about the same time, severing its reliance on the Scranton Button Company, although it would later return to Scranton. The company continued to maintain an informal relationship with the Consolidated Record Corporation, with which it occasionally traded masters in the later 1920s.

Along with those changes came new designs for the entire family of labels. Madison, a client label, was launched soon after the reorganization. Produced for the Madison Record Company (*q.v.*), it used Grey Gull masters but, unlike other Grey Gull products, used its own coupling and catalog numbers, as well as its own pseudonyms in many cases, and it would continue to operate following Grey Gull's closure. Grey Gull also launched a new promotional campaign and for several months sponsored the weekly "Grey Gull Musicale" on Boston radio station WEEI. Retailers of all sorts were encouraged to order directly from the company and were free to set their own prices, with 20¢ to 25¢ being the norm. Outlets ranged from record and furniture dealers to souvenir stands and gas stations.

From a technical standpoint, Grey Gull's electrical recordings were among the crudest produced in the later 1920s, with the earliest attempts often suffering from low volume. The engineers overcompensated in attempting to correct that problem, introducing significant distortion and an over-modulated groove that exacerbated the wear problem, issues the company never entirely resolved. Quality control was lax at best during the electrical period. The pressing plant used cheap, easily worn material that was sometimes contaminated with foreign matter, and labels and pressings were sometimes off-center. Grey Gull often remade titles with different artists, assigning different master numbers but failing to update the label copy accordingly. The use of incorrect labels or stampers

was not uncommon, resulting in discs with entirely different selections from what was shown on the labels. Pseudonym use was rampant by this time, often with little regard for consistency.

After establishing its own studio, Grey Gull relied heavily on Arthur Fields, John Ryan, Arthur Hall, and other inexpensive and readily available studio freelancers. Many dance selections were made by a small core of studio musicians comprising Mike Mosiello (trumpet), Andy Sannella (reeds and steel guitar) and Charlie Magnante (accordion), often with vocal choruses by the omnipresent Fields. Selections by the few major bands that recorded for Grey Gull in the later 1920s were often disguised or, in the case of Clarence Williams' Orchestra, simply issued anonymously.

Grey Gull's reputation for cheapness and questionable business practices apparently was well deserved. Singer John Ryan recalled that he and others had been unable to collect back-pay from the company in its waning days. Grey Gull sometimes retitled songs and listed false composer credits to avoid paying publishers' royalties (the hit tune "Titina," for example, became "Paprika" or "Sweet Little Girl" on some labels, with "David" substituted for the names of the actual composers). A more common practice was to fill reverse sides with outdated public domain tunes, or with cheap throw-away titles the company purchased outright from a group of New York songwriters that included Louis Alter, Joseph H. (Jo) Trent, and the team of Caddigan & Story. Trent was especially prolific, turning out more than seventy songs as works-for-hire that were registered with the copyright office in the name of Grey Gull Records, Inc. The titles of these works were sometimes copied from, or bore a very close resemblance to, titles of current hits — a practice that was not illegal, although it was certainly deceptive. Mediocre at best, these songs were rarely if ever published commercially or recorded by other companies.

The shoddiness of the product does not appear to have bothered a certain segment of the market. According to statistics published by Grey Gull in April 1929, its record sales grew rapidly in the later 1920s. The company claimed sales of 3.3 million records in 1925, 4.4 million in 1926, 5.3 million in 1927, and 8.6 million in 1928. But Grey Gull's profit-and-loss statement was not nearly so encouraging. With the records wholesaling for as little as 12¢, Grey Gull's margins were dangerously thin. The company admitted that it suffered losses in 1925 and 1926 and was barely profitable in 1927. In 1928 it reported a mere \$40,786 in profits on sales of \$1.3 million. At the same time, Grey Gull was offering first-time dealers fifty free Radiex records with the purchase of 150 records at 14½¢ each (for current titles) or 12½¢ each (for "old favorites"), enabling dealers to retail the records for as little as 20¢ each, but further reducing the company's profits.

Grey Gull seemed poised to make a recovery in 1929. Recording quality had improved somewhat, as did pressing quality after the company returned to Scranton. It was also employing better talent (including Vincent Lopez's Orchestra and the California Ramblers, although the latter appeared pseudonymously), and its 35¢ Van Dyke label, launched in August and well-advertised in the trade papers, was proving to be popular. Many masters were being exported to Australia and England for release on Goodson, Picadilly, and other inexpensive labels. A catch-all 7000 series had recently been recast as a race-record series, marking the company's first and last serious attempt to enter that market. Although the race series was quickly scuttled, Grey Gull went on to issue some excellent jazz recordings by Black performers in the general catalog during 1929–1930, including Clarence Williams' Orchestra, Cliff Jackson's Crazy Kats, Wilbur Sweatman, and several small bands associated with pianists Claude Austin, Porter Grainger, and J. C. Johnson. Unfortunately, most were issued pseudonymously or (most notably in Williams' case) anonymously.

By July 1929, Grey Gull had moved its office and studio to 122 Fifth Avenue in New York (its last known address), as confirmed in band manager Ed Kirkeby's payroll book. The address was that of a multi-tenant building that housed at least two other recording studios (the Sound Equipment Company and the Chromotone Film Studios), both of which offered disc-recording services, and neither of which appears to have had any connection to Grey Gull.

Despite its gains in 1929, Grey Gull's sales slumped following the October stock market crash, and the company began to curtail production in early 1930. Its last reliably documented recording session (as listed in Kirkeby's payroll book) was held on June 30, 1930, although anecdotal evidence suggests that recording might have continued until

approximately September. Signs that the company was failing had become apparent as early as April 1930, when Montgomery Ward began offering the records as 15¢ in-store specials. By year's end they were being remaindered in the Montgomery Ward catalog, at five for \$1.19. Following Grey Gull's closure, many dealers offered the records for as little as 10¢ each. Discographer Brian Rust reported that large quantities of surplus pressings were shipped to England in the early 1930s, where some were sold for the U.S. equivalent of 5¢ each in bulk lots. A few Grey Gull masters were reissued on the New York Recording Laboratories' Broadway label in late 1930 and early 1931, which has led some to state, incorrectly, that NYRL acquired Grey Gull's assets.

After Grey Gull suspended production in mid-to-late 1930, an unknown company continued to press previously issued Grey Gull masters under the Madison and (very briefly) Radiex and Van Dyke labels. New control numbers replaced the original Grey Gull master numbers on these pressings, and the label copy was sometimes changed, substituting different artist credits or false song titles ("Geraldine," for example, became "Boop-Oop-a-Doop" on a later Madison pressing). Some recordings also appeared in the late Madison series that had not appeared earlier on Grey Gull. Given the improved sound quality and late-1930 song titles, it is likely that these recordings were made by a different company, possibly Charles Hasin's Consolidated Studios.

Grey Gull finally filed for bankruptcy in September 1931, after having lain dormant for approximately a year. There were no takers for the masters, which spent the remainder of the decade in storage at the American Record Corporation's Scranton pressing plant. After CBS acquired ARC and sold the Scranton plant, the masters were moved to the Columbia vaults in Bridgeport, Connecticut, where several hundred were still in storage as late as 1953. However, a 2012 check of the Columbia holdings (now owned and managed by Sony Music) revealed that the masters no longer exist there.

Although Grey Gull Records, Inc., was not active after 1930, it remained a legal entity until March 31, 1934, when it was formally dissolved by an act of the General Court of Massachusetts.

GRIMES MUSIC PUBLISHERS / CLEF PUBLICATIONS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – Early 1950s

Offices: 250 S. Broad St., Philadelphia

Record Products: Clef [2], Co-Op, Hokem, Talent [2], Vod-Vil

David A. Grimes' Clef Publications and its better-known successor, Grimes Music Publishers, produced several labels to promote their songs in the late 1940s and early 1950s. (Grimes, who often employed the pseudonym David A. Hoffman, was not the same individual as electrical engineer David Grimes, whose radio company merged with the Cameo Record Corporation in 1925.)

Clef's impending launch was announced in August 1947, the same month in which jazz producer Norman Granz temporarily suspended production of his unrelated Clef label (see Clef Records, Inc.). Grimes' Clef label apparently had been abandoned by early 1949, when Granz reclaimed the name for a new jazz line. Grimes' Talent label was introduced in 1948, followed by Hokem (featuring comic and novelty material) in March 1950. The Vod-Vil label (another novelty line, using local Pennsylvania talent) was announced at the same time, but there were no further mentions in the trade papers until November 1951, when *Billboard* once again reported it as a new label.

GROOVY RECORDS — See S.W. Martin Distributors

GUILD RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1946

Offices: 417 5th Ave., New York (Boni B. Fox office, 1944–early 1945); 665 5th Ave., New York (early 1945–1946); 305 E. 63rd St., New York (American Glossite offices)

Pressing: American Glossite plant

Record Products: Guild

Founded in late 1944 by Boni B. Fox, whose brother Dave headed the New York chapter of the American Guild of Variety Artists. Jimmy Rich, the former musical director of radio

station WNEW (New York) was hired as Guild's recording and general manager in August 1945. Monroe Bablove served as sales manager. From the start, Guild was affiliated with the American Glossite Company, a manufacturer of molded plastic goods, and in May 1945 it was incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary of that company. (American Glossite later filed a trademark registration for phonograph records, but no evidence has been found that it produced its own label.)

Guild was one of several small companies singled out by *Billboard* for paying above union scale to attract top-flight musicians. The company also maintained what Fox touted as an "open-door policy" toward unknown artists, encouraging newcomers to have their talents evaluated. Those deemed promising were handed over to the artist development department, where they received personal coaching from Jimmy Rich. A radio and theater department arranged bookings for Guild artists who weren't otherwise represented by agents.

Documented Guild recording sessions began in January 1945, and the initial releases were on sale by March. The label specialized in jazz, and among their early offerings were the first Dizzy Gillespie recordings to be released under his name. Gillespie was also heard on Guild recordings by the Georgie Auld and Boyd Raeburn bands (the latter signed away by Ben Pollack's Jewel Records in October 1945). Although Guild records were well-advertised to distributors and dealers in *Billboard*, marketing to consumers appears to have been negligible.

A plan to record Ray McKinley and the Glenn Miller Army Air Force Band, under the auspices of the William Morris Agency, was scuttled in May 1945 by the U.S. War Department, which prohibited enlisted bands from making commercial recordings. A brief excursion into calypso at first seemed equally ill-fated. In October 1945, singer Sam Manning sued Guild Records and Gerald Clark, claiming that Clark's recording of "My Donkey Want Water" infringed his copyrighted song, "Hold 'Em." However, Clark requested a dismissal, which was granted, and in December Guild took a half-page ad in *Billboard* to promote a new batch of his calypso recordings.

On January 16, 1946, American Glossite sold Guild to the Jefferson-Travis Corporation (which had recently acquired Musicraft), reportedly for \$250,000. Boni Fox resigned as president of Guild at that time but agreed to stay on during the transition, as did Jimmy Rich and some other Guild staffers. The purchase included Guild's masters and pressing plant, which were gradually merged into the Musicraft operation.

GULF RECORD COMPANY, INC. — See Quinn, William Russell (Bill)

— H —

H & M LABORATORIES (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1922 – Early 1923

Offices: 249 W. 34th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Masters for Arto, Cameo, probably other labels

An independent studio briefly operated in the early 1920s by Harry L. Marker. Marker began his career as a Columbia recording engineer, and in December 1909 he embarked on an extended Asian recording expedition for that company. He had been employed by Emerson just before he opened his own studio in early 1922. Band manager Ed Kirkeby booked several Arto sessions at H & M Laboratories (which he also referred to as "Marker's laboratory" in his session logs) during 1922. Early Cameo sessions were held there as well, and in early 1923 Cameo purchased the studio.

HALLMARK PICTURES / HALLMARK PRODUCTIONS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950s

Offices: 184 N. South St., Wilmington, OH (to 12/31/1955); 9325 W. Olympic, Beverly Hills, CA (branch, from 1951)

Record Products: Hallmark, Kaybee

Founded in November 1948, as Hallmark Pictures, by Howard W. (Kroger) Babb and J. S. Jossey. The pair also owned Hollywood Productions and Hygienic Productions, the latter an outgrowth of their personal-hygiene business, which operated at the same Ohio address. There was no connection the Hallmark greeting-card company.

Babb was known for his tawdry, cheaply produced, but often quite popular exploitation films. His "Mom and Dad," a 1945 release about a pregnant teenager, was filmed in six days and had separate screenings for men and women because of its graphic content. It reportedly was one of the highest-grossing movies of the 1940s, although wildly varying estimates of the box-office take (ranging from \$16 million to more than \$100 million, depending upon the account) undermine the creditability of that claim.

Babb's Kaybee label was launched in 1949, in Wilmington, Ohio, to promote songs from his Hallmark and Hygienic films. Its main attraction was Ginger Prince, a six-year-old actor Babb was promoting. The Hallmark label, probably launched in 1950, followed the same model, with recordings by Prince, Arthur Lee Simpkins, and other Hallmark stars. Babb's distinctive "HP" trademark (which did triple duty for Hallmark Pictures, Hollywood Productions, and Hygienic Productions) appeared on both labels. Babb opened a new branch office in Beverly Hills in 1951 and reorganized Hallmark Pictures as Hallmark Productions, Inc.

In August 1953, the Pennsylvania Board of Censors banned "She Shoulda Said No," a sensationalized film about teenage marijuana use that Hallmark was distributing. Babb sued, and on September 22, 1954, Pennsylvania Common Pleas Court Judge Edwin O. Lewis ruled the ban unconstitutional. The ruling was upheld by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in March 1956. In the meantime, Babb was facing federal tax-evasion charges and other legal and financial problems. Needing to quickly vacate the Wilmington facility in December 1955, he mounted "The World's Most Sensational Bargain Sale," consisting almost entirely of healthcare and personal-hygiene products. But some "bonus kits" also contained surplus Hallmark records, including what were touted as "collector's item impossible-to-get" copies of Simpkins' "The Prince of Peace" (150 copies) and the Borton Sisters' "Peachy Keen" ("the last 750 records in existence").

Babb is not known to have had any further involvement in record production. His later career in motion pictures, which has been well documented elsewhere, is beyond the scope of this work. He died on January 28, 1980.

HAMP-TONE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 40 W. 46th St., New York; 1127 E. 10th St., Los Angeles

Pressing: Musicraft plant

Record Products: Hamp-Tone

A short-lived venture launched in February 1946 by Lionel and Gladys Hampton with financial backing from the Jefferson-Travis Corporation, the owner of Musicraft Records. Several recordings were made in September 1945, before the company was organized; the remainder were recorded in early 1946. In April 1946, before any of the recordings had been released, Hamp-Tone was acquired by Musicraft, which reorganized the company (retaining Gladys Hampton as president) and took over production and distribution. Lionel Hampton did not record for Hamp-Tone, being under contract to Decca at the time.

Gladys Hampton described the label as "intended to be a show-window for promising Negro talent of all types — hot jazz, folk music and spirituals as well as dramatic and classical entertainment." The first four Hamp-Tone records were advertised on May 25, 1946, for release on June 1. Hampton recruited an all-star roster that included Wynonie Harris, Roy Milton, and a pickup group credited as Hamp-Tone All Stars that included Arnett Cobb and Milton Buckner.

Chicago Defender editor Charles Browning helped to promote Hamp-Tone records personally, undertaking a cross-country tour during the autumn of 1946 to pitch them to

jukebox operators. The records were advertised in the *Defender*, *The Pittsburgh Courier*, and other Black-owned newspapers, as well as in *Billboard*. However, the latter questioned whether the venture would continue once the current supply of masters was exhausted. It did not, closing in late 1946.

Roy Milton's Hamp-Tone recordings were later reissued on his own label. The remaining Hamp-Tone masters were purchased in 1949 by Sam Lane of Los Angeles-based International Records. Gladys Hampton went on to launch other labels after 1950, including Glad.

HANDY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1922

Offices: 2573 8th Ave., New York

Record Products: No confirmed issues; some masters possibly used by other companies

The Handy Record Company was founded during the summer of 1922 by brothers W. C. and L. M. Handy as a record-producing offshoot of the Handy Brothers Company (successor to the Pace & Handy Music Company). By W. C. Handy's own account, his publishing business had suffered a severe setback during the recession of the early 1920s, but it had recently rallied with the publication of several minor hits.

On July 21, 1922, *Variety* reported that W. C. and L. M. Handy were planning to record some of their company's new songs on demonstration discs, as a rehearsal aid to musicians in lieu of sending out costly printed scores, but might also place some of the records on sale. According to *Variety*, Handy was "promised the cooperation of several of the record-producing companies," which were not named. Black Swan probably was not among them, in view of Harry Pace's acrimonious split with W. C. Handy the previous year.

The Handy Record Company filed for incorporation in September 1922, with a reported capitalization of \$25,000. An article in *The New York Age* for October 7 stated that the company was still in the planning stages and had not yet released any records. By then, W. C. Handy had begun to experience health problems that he claimed left him temporarily blind. Forced to curtail his activities, he apparently scuttled his record venture before it could issue any recordings.

Handy did not mention the record company in his autobiography, and it was forgotten until the 1960s, when jazz researcher Walter C. Allen identified a small group of masters, numbered in the low 100s with A- (instrumental) and B- (vocal) prefixes, that he suspected had been produced by or for Handy. Issued by Paramount and Grey Gull (and often misidentified in discographies as Paramount masters), the recordings all feature Handy Brothers titles, some performed by Handy's daughter, Katherine, and others by a pseudonymous group that does not sound unlike Handy's band of the period. Tempos are unusually slow, as might be expected of records that were intended as rehearsal aids. If these were indeed Handy's masters, the appearance of the first two titles in Paramount's August 1922 race-record list (credited to the probably fictitious Harlem Harmony Kings) suggests that the October 1922 *New York Age* report that the company was still in the planning stages was in error. Allen also suspected that some masters issued on C. H. Bourne's See Bee label might have been Handy's. As far as can be determined, Handy made no further attempts at record production.

HAPPINESS RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: Brill Building (1619 Broadway), New York

Record Products: Happiness

A short-lived venture launched in August 1949 by trumpeter Louis Prima, as an adjunct to his Enterprise Music Corporation. Kip Rosenfeld served as executive director and Pat Miller as arranger. Prima, who was under contract to RCA Victor at the time, did not record for the company. An October 1949 report stated that Happiness artists would receive royalties only.

Cash Box reported that Happiness would concentrate on pop initially, and later "delve into" the race market (which does not appear to have occurred). The first release (Ralph

Young's "Green as April" / "September in the Rain") was advertised in September 1949. The label's best-known star was singer Keeley Smith, Louis Prima's wife-to-be.

Rosenfeld resigned in late October to work as promotions manager for National and Jubilee, and *Billboard* reported several weeks later that Happiness was "defunct." However, additional Happiness releases were listed in February and March 1950, after which nothing more was heard of the label.

HARDING, ROGER (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1897

Offices and Master Source(s): 18 E. 22nd St., New York

Record Products: Cylinders

Singer and songwriter Roger Harding advertised his services as a freelance phonograph performer in various issues of *The Phonoscope*, which in July 1897 reported that he had opened a phonograph parlor in New York and was planning to sell original recordings.

Harding's first advertisement as a record producer appeared in *The Phonoscope* for August–September 1897, which probably was published a month or more after its cover date. Terming himself a "Manufacturer of musical records for the phonograph and graphophone," he claimed to sell "high-class original records only." In late 1897, Harding sold his facilities to the Excelsior Phonograph Company (*q.v.*), which retained him as general manager. However, Harding was soon recording for other companies while operating his own music-publishing business.

At the time of Harding's death in 1901, *The Music Trade Review* identified him only as "a singer for the Columbia Phonograph Company."

HARDMAN RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: 2434 E. 15th St., Tulsa, OK

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Hardman; pressings for independent labels

An independent master-processing and pressing plant owned by pianist and organist Glenn Hardman. Hardman was the musical director of radio station KTUL (Tulsa) at the time he launched his record company. Phillip Lawrence served as artists-and-repertoire manager for country music. Lewis Brown served as Hardman's recording engineer as well as manager of his single-unit pressing plant. Lawrence developed what he termed a "direct electronic" recording process in which vibrations were picked up directly from the piano's sounding board, and employed overdubbing so that Hardman could play organ and piano duets with himself.

The Hardman Record Company's launch was announced in *The Tulsa Tribune* on April 21, 1949. Hardman was already pressing records by then, based upon the accompanying photographs. "It started as a hobby," the *Tribune* noted. The first record, by Hardman himself, was released several days later. A *Billboard* reviewer described the record as "tinny," but conceded the record "might draw some coin in tavern juke." The artist roster consisted largely of Hardman and his wife Alice O'Connell, with a smattering of other local performers. Hardman boasted that the records were "recorded in Tulsa by Tulsa talent, and processed for Tulsans for Tulsans." Consequently, no significant demand for the records appears to have developed outside of the region.

The company closed in March 1950, at which time Hardman offered his recording and pressing equipment for sale to the highest bidder

HARGAIL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1943 – c. 1952

Offices: 72 5th Ave., New York (1943); 299 Madison Ave., New York (1943–late 1944); 130 W. 56th St., New York (from late 1944)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above addresses

Record Products: Hargail, H. N. Society Records

Hargail Records was launched in 1943 by Harold Newman as an adjunct to his publishing operation, Hargail Music Press. "Hargail" came from the first names of Newman and

composer Gail Kubik, whose "Suite for Three Recorders" was the first composition published by Hargail Music Press. Newman's first recording session were held Mary Howard's New York studio in 1942. He rejected the results and sued Howard for what he claimed was unsatisfactory work, in a case that was eventually settled out of court.

Hargail records were first mentioned in August 1942, by *Newsday*. The label initially specialized in classical compositions for the recorder but soon widened its musical horizons to include compositions by contemporary American composers that were not available on the major labels. Several early reviews praised the effort but complained of the records' low volume and intrusive surface noise. Initially, Hargail records were self-distributed. A few regional distributors, including Interstate Music Suppliers (New York) and J. F. Bard (Chicago), began handling them in the later 1940s.

In the spring of 1943, Newman approached Leonard Bernstein about publishing his "Sonata for Clarinet and Piano." Despite having received a competing offer from Warner Brothers, Bernstein decided to entrust publication and recording to Newman, writing to clarinetist David Oppenheim, "I personally trust the Hargail man more, and am especially attracted by the idea of an authentic recording, with you on the clarinet." The resulting recording, made by Oppenheim and Bernstein on November 23, 1943, was issued in the spring of 1944, with Bernstein's "Three Anniversaries" filling out the two-disc set. The first issued recordings of Bernstein performing his own works, the album received generally enthusiastic reviews. In the same year, Hargail issued the first recording by Lukas Foss, as pianist with violinist Edgar Ortenberg, in a previously unrecorded Hindemith violin sonata.

Newman made an unsuccessful attempt to enter the jazz market in 1945, with the short-lived H. N. [Hot Notes] Society label, under the supervision of Bill Simon. The few known releases, the earliest of which were advertised in July 1945, featured the Johnny Guarneri Quartet. The H. N. label was still listed by *Billboard* as late as January 1949 but apparently was no longer active by then.

Many Hargail classical recordings were licensed for release on Period LPs beginning in 1950. Newman appears to have discontinued the Hargail label in 1952, but he continued to head Hargail Music (which expanded into folk music for the recorder in the 1950s) until his death in August 1989. He was also active in promoting the recorder for use in elementary-school music programs.

HARLEM RECORDS, INC. — See Williams, J. Mayo (Ink)

HARMONIA RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1943 – 1955

Offices: 1328 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Source(s): International Recording Company, probably other independent studios

Record Products: Harmonia; Sonart (from 3/1948)

Founded in 1943 by Dr. Anthony Benis to produce records for the ethnic markets, particularly Polish. The company's first president was Alexander Spiro, who later launched the Spiro Record Corporation. Distribution was handled by the Harmonia Distributing & Publishing Company, of the same address, as well as Interstate Music Suppliers (New York) and other specialty jobbers.

Harmonia records were first advertised in the summer of 1943, primarily in New York and Pennsylvania, for 79¢ each. They were also heavily marketed to jukebox operators, for 49¢. Album sets were added to the lineup in the later 1940s. Eastern European polkas and waltzes dominated Harmonia's catalog, but the list later expanded to include Jewish, Russian, and Italian material, and, eventually, Latino dance numbers, children's records, and some mainstream pop offerings.

Harmonia purchased Sonart's masters in March 1948 and took over production and distribution of that label, paying Sonart's John Marsich a small royalty on sales. Three months later it took over distribution (but not production) of Milton and John Olekson's Amuke label, also on a royalty basis. Harmonia suspended operations in early 1955, at which time the rights to some of the more pop-oriented masters were sold to Eli Oberstein. In April of that year, manufacturing and distribution of the Harmonia and Sonart labels was taken over by the Bard Record Manufacturing Company, an independent pressing plant.

HARMONY RECORD COMPANY

Although some press releases and trade-paper reports of the period suggest that the Harmony Record Company (1925–1931) was an independent operation, it was simply a trade name of the Columbia Phonograph Company. The later Harmony Records (*q.v.*) was an unrelated joint venture of Eli Oberstein and Columbia Records' Edward Wallerstein.

HARMONY RECORDING LABORATORIES

This company was incorporated in Delaware in September 1921 by Howard Burns, A. A. Alles, and W. Crow, all from the Pittsburgh area. Its formation was reported in *The Talking Machine World*, but no further information has been discovered.

HARMONY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: 776 10th Ave., New York

Studio and Pressing: Columbia Records plant

Record Products: Harmony [3]

A short-lived joint venture between Eli Oberstein and Columbia Records' Edward Wallerstein. The Harmony label had been used earlier on two other Columbia-related products. The first Harmony label was marketed beginning in 1907 by the Great Northern Manufacturing Company (Chicago), which was taken over in 1911 by Thomas E. Johns, doing business as the Harmony Talking Machine Company. The records were simply relabeled Columbia pressings, with enlarged spindle holes, and were employed in various premium schemes. The second, launched in 1925 as a 50¢ Columbia side-line, was credited to the Harmony Record Company, which was nothing more than a trade name of the Columbia Phonograph Company.

The Oberstein–Wallerstein reincarnation of Harmony was announced in June 1949. It was an unlikely and ill-conceived venture from the start, teaming the highly respected Wallerstein with the notoriously shady Oberstein in an operation that would compete with their own companies' budget-priced labels. Columbia was to produce a maximum of sixteen new recordings per month especially for Harmony, using performers chosen by its pop artists-and-repertoire manager, Mannie Sacks. The remainder of the catalog would be culled from deleted Columbia and American Record Corporation material, some of it dating to the 1930s. Columbia agreed to press the discs to order for Oberstein, who would market and distribute them through his Wright Record Distribution Corporation.

Harmony records, retailing for 49¢ and bearing the original 1925 script logo, were introduced in August 1949. Within a few months, Oberstein was expressing his dissatisfaction with the arrangement, claiming that he had been promised full control over artists and repertoire, and that Columbia was slow to deliver pressings of time-sensitive titles. The situation escalated in November, after Pearl Bailey (whose "Hucklebuck" had been a good seller for Harmony) was promoted to the full-priced Columbia label, placing her off-limits to the budget line. After a reportedly infuriated Oberstein refused to pay for pressings already in his possession, Columbia suspended deliveries in late 1949, then discontinued production of the label entirely in early 1950.

The squabble landed in court later in 1950. Columbia sued Oberstein for \$60,000 for failure to pay for the Harmony pressings, and Oberstein counter-sued for \$75,000, charging Columbia with breach of contract. Columbia later revived the Harmony label yet again, without Oberstein's involvement, for an inexpensive LP line.

HARMS, KAISER & HAGEN (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1898 – Early 1900s

Offices and Master Source(s): 18 E. 22nd St., New York

Record Products: Harms, Kaiser & Hagen cylinders

A cylinder-record venture founded in May 1898 by John Kaiser and Henry J. Hagen, with financial backing from music publisher T. B. Harms. Kaiser and Hagen had first been involved in the recording business in the early 1890s, with the New York Phonograph Company. After serving as Hagen's assistant, Kaiser took a position with the United

States Phonograph Company, then went on to manage Gianni Bettini's recording department.

Fred Hager, who was just beginning his long career in the recording industry, served as the company's musical director and also recorded a series of well-received violin solos. In September 1898, one of his Harms, Kaiser & Hagen cylinders was awarded a gold medal for best violin recording in a contest sponsored by *The Phonoscope*, an honor that the company's advertisements heralded for many months afterwards.

Harms, Kaiser & Hagen took over the space formerly occupied by Roger Harding's cylinder operation and began advertising in the spring of 1898. It advertised "first-class 'original' records of distinguished artists; all records made on Edison blanks. We handle no duplicates." In addition to producing cylinder records, the company was a sales agent for Kaiser paper-fiber horns. It was still advertising in *The Phonoscope* in December 1899, which probably was published a month or more after its cover date.

HARRIS RECORD COMPANY / HARRIS RECORDING LABORATORIES (Discs)

Record Production: 1923 / From c. 1933

Office, Studio, and Pressing: Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles

Record Products: Triumph [2]; Readaphone, Talking Books [2], possibly other special-use labels

The Harris Record Company was the third commercial record manufacturer to operate in California, after Nordskog and Golden. Edward R. Harris, an English-born Canadian citizen residing in New Jersey, had been employed by the Emerson Phonograph Company before launching his own firm. For a time he was associated with recording engineer Earle W. Jones, with whom he filed a patent for recording on coated glass in 1916 that was not granted until 1923 (#1,461,849). His U.S. patent on flexible records (#1,413,984), filed in 1919 and granted in April 1922, specified a base of paper pulp or other fiber, either saturated or coated with a mixture of glue, dextrin, and shellac. A *Los Angeles Times* report estimated the value of his various patents at \$1.5 million, almost certainly an inflated figure given that they are not known to have been employed commercially.

The Harris Record Company was incorporated in Delaware on June 21, 1923, to manufacture phonographs and records, with \$250,000 in capitalization, but was not yet operational. On August 6, the *Los Angeles Times* announced that Harris had decided to locate the company in that city, at the behest of that city's Chamber of Commerce. According to the report, Harris was already recording in a studio on Santa Monica Boulevard, had opened a pressing plant with an astonishing capacity of 100,000 discs per day, and was planning to eventually employ nearly a thousand workers. The anonymous (and apparently rather gullible) *Times* reporter went on to predict that with Harris' arrival, Hollywood was "destined to become the musical metropolis as well as the film capital of the world."

Harris named his label Triumph and announced that he was negotiating contracts with unspecified "internationally prominent" performers in the Los Angeles area. However, the few known releases on his short-lived label featured mostly undistinguished pop material, using a mixture of Harris' locally recorded masters by some less-than-prominent artists, and some New York recordings licensed from the Banner-Regal catalog. Pressings were made in a standard shellac compound, not the flexible material that Harris had patented. The records received little marketing support. They were handled locally by the Hollywood-based Distributors' Syndicate but ever achieved national distribution.

The Harris Record Company suspended operations after releasing only a few Triumph records. Circumstantial evidence suggests that its assets might have been acquired by the Hollywood Record Company (*q.v.*). Harris remained an active inventor for many years, being most noted for his development of the low-speed recordings for the visually impaired. By 1933 he had launched the Harris Recording Laboratories in Los Angeles, with support from the Braille Institute of America, to produce the records. Initially marketed under the Readaphone name, they were soon renamed Talking Books.

HART-VAN RECORD RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1953; Early 1960s

Offices: 100 W. Calendar Ave., La Grange, IL

Record Products: Hart-Van

Launched in 1947 by Hal Hartmann, as an adjunct to the Hartmann & Van Horn Music Publishing Company. In June, *Billboard* reported that Hartmann was contemplating launching his own country-and-western label. His Hart-Van records were first advertised nationally in early 1948.

Hart-Van initially specialized in artists from the upper Midwest, including the Prairie Pioneers, Red Thompson, and Billy Whelan (the latter a Canadian citizen who performed in Chicago on occasion). Hartmann reported in 1949 that he might issue popular songs in both country and straightforward pop versions, but apparently he did not pursue the idea. In May 1950, Fred M. Oliver, of the Prairie Pioneers, sued Hartmann for failing to produce and sell the group's records as required by their March 1949 contract. In 1952 Hartmann signed Bill Nettles and his Dixie Blue Boys, one of the few nationally known acts to record for Hart-Van.

The Hart-Van label appears to have been discontinued by the end of 1953, although Hartmann's publishing business remained in operation. The label was revived in the early 1960s, by which time Hartmann had moved his publishing operation to Anaheim, California and was also producing Hi-Lee records. Although Hart-Van continued to specialize in country-and-western material, it also made some pop and rock-and-roll releases before vanishing around 1963.

THOMAS W. HATCH, PUBLISHER (Discs)

Record Production: 1922

Offices: Room 614, Monroe Building (104 S. Michigan), Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Marsh Laboratories

Record Products: Crown [2]

Thomas W. Hatch introduced the short-lived Crown [2] label in 1922, as an adjunct to his music-publishing business. It was unrelated to the Arto-produced Crown label of the same period, or to any of the later Crown labels.

Crown masters were made in Orlando Marsh's Chicago studio, for Hatch's exclusive use, and are among the earliest electrical recording to be issued commercially. Marsh discographer Richard Raichelson estimates that the recordings were made during May–July 1922, based upon circumstantial evidence. The records featured religious and concert fare by Chicago-area artists, including contralto Mina Hager, sopranos Ingrid Arnesen and Caroline Encell, boy soprano Anatole Francoise, and organist Hugh Porter. All known issues are 12" single-sided pressings, with large reverse-side labels listing available releases. Known catalog numbers begin at 1002 and extend to 1021, with some gaps that are unaccounted for.

HAVEN RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 716 Rockaway Ave., Brooklyn, NY (1946–early 1947); 94 Livonia Ave., Brooklyn (early–mid-1947)

Record Products: Haven

Launched in 1946 by brothers Robert (Bob) and Morton (Morty) Shad (*née* Shadinsky or Shadrinsky, depending upon the account). The Shads owned Record Haven, which claimed to be the world's largest mail-order record business; and Chester Record Distributors, at the same address, which initially was Haven's sole distributor.

Haven records were being advertised and distributed nationally by late 1946. The label was produced in several series, including Folk (actually rhythm-and-blues), Negro Spirituals, and a 52nd Street Jazz Series that featured *Esquire* magazine's poll winners. But according to a *Billboard* report, the Shads had no real ambitions for Haven. One of the brothers stated, "We don't expect to grow—we're satisfied." His expectations were met; Haven was last listed by *Billboard* in February 1947, at which point the label appears to have gone dormant.

In June 1947, the E. B. Marks publishing firm sued Morton Shad and Haven Records for unpaid royalties, one of four test cases brought by Marks to determine the effectiveness of suing both an offending company and its chief executive officer. Several months later, Haven Records was adjudged bankrupt. Its equipment and inventory were sold at auction on July 16, 1947, and Signature Records acquired its masters in 1948. The Haven name was later used for at least two unrelated labels, in the 1950s.

Bob Shad moved to National Records following Haven's closure, then in 1948 launched Castle Records [II], the first producer of the Sittin' In With label. Morty Shad was hired as Remington Records' manager of artists and repertoire in late 1948.

HAWAIIAN TRANSCRIPTION PRODUCTIONS (Discs)

Record Production: 1936 – early 1940s

Offices: Advertiser Building (Third Floor), King St., Honolulu, Hawaii Territory

Original-Master Sources: KGU studio at above address

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing (1937–early 1940s), Oliver Record Company (later 1940s)

Record Products: Hawaiian Transcriptions, Hawaiian Transcription Productions, HTP Records, KGU, Lei; custom and personal recordings

Hawaii's first native producer of records for the consumer market, Hawaiian Transcription Productions was launched in the spring of 1936 as a division of the Advertiser Publishing Company, Ltd. (publisher of *The Honolulu Advertiser*, and owner of Honolulu radio station KGU). The first commercial station in Hawaii, KGU was launched on May 11, 1922, and became an NBC affiliate in November 1931.

The recording and broadcast studios, both of which were managed by KGU sound engineer John Singer, were housed in the Advertiser Building, as separate facilities. The recording studio was equipped to make instantaneous recordings as well as standard wax masters. The company began advertising transcription production and personal recording services in April 1936. In August it signed an agreement allowing the American Record Corporation use of the studio for its Hawaiian recording sessions.

Hawaiian Transcriptions' earliest commercial release appears to have been an off-the-air dubbing of King Edward VIII's farewell address (advertised in January 1937 as being a "hard rubber processed long-life" disc) and an "inspirational address" delivered by evangelist Gipsy Smith at his last Hawaiian performance.

In March 1937, KGU began releasing commercial pressings of material transcribed from its broadcasts on an unbranded label credited to the Advertiser Publishing Company, featuring Johnny Almeida, Pua Haaheo, Hilo Hattie (Kalala Haili), the Waikiki Breakers, the Honolulu Police Glee Club, and other local performers. A mixture of traditional and more current material, the records bore colorful lithographed labels with a stylized lei border and were pressed by Allied Record Manufacturing in Los Angeles. Later releases appeared on labels of various designs crediting Hawaiian Transcriptions Productions, and increasingly featured such pop titles as "I Found Romance in Hawaii" and "He's an Old Hill Billy from Nawiliwili." Sales appears to have been limited mainly to the Hawaiian Islands, but several California dealers offered selected titles.

Commercial production was suspended in late 1941 or very early 1942, following the U.S. entry into World War II. After the war, many of Hawaiian Transcriptions' HT-prefixed masters were reissued on the KGU and Lei labels (the latter credited to Advertiser Publishing and marketed by the Lei Record Company, whose address was that of the 20th Century Company, a Honolulu radio dealer).

HAWTHORNE & SHEBLE (MANUFACTURING) COMPANY (Cylinders / Discs)

Record Production: Late 1890s (Cylinders); 1907 – 1909 (Discs)

Offices: 602 (later, 602–604 and 602–606) Chestnut St., Philadelphia; 43 Broad St., New York (branch office and show rooms, from 1899)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—241 W. 23rd St., New York

Pressing: Own plant—Howard & Spruce Sts., Bridgeport, CT. (phonograph and parts factories at the same address; and 107 Jefferson St., Mascher & Oxford Sts., and 1109–1121 N. Front St., Philadelphia)

Record Products: Star [2], Busy Bee, Harmony [1]; Clarion [1], Standard [2] ("Standard" Record (third-party paste-over))

Founded in Philadelphia in 1893, the firm of [Ellsworth A.] Hawthorne & [Horace] Sheble initially was a licensed Edison retailer. The company began manufacturing its own line of phonograph accessories in the late 1890s, specializing in horns. What might have been its most unusual order came from the federal government in the summer 1899 for two experimental 26-foot foghorns. In 1898 the company began producing a concert-cylinder phonograph and was sued for patent infringement by the American Graphophone Company (Columbia). The patterns were subsequently given to the competing National Phonograph Company (Edison) shortly before that relationship soured.

Hawthorne & Sheble soon ran afoul of Edison. By 1898 the company was advertising that it carried a full line of duplicated cylinder records. The company's "master" cylinders, in standard and concert (5" diameter) formats, were introduced in the summer of 1899. In the same year, Edison blacklisted Hawthorne & Sheble for violating several conditions of its dealer's agreement. The company was reorganized as the Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Company in April 1900, with capital of \$75,000 and all stock (90% of which was held by officers) fully subscribed. Its charter stated that the company would manufacture and sell phonographs and related supplies, as well as typewriters, sporting goods, and "general novelties."

Edison's response, in October 1900, was to file for an injunction preventing Hawthorne & Sheble from manufacturing goods that infringed National Phonograph's patents on "certain patented improvements" to the phonograph. A month later, Hawthorne & Sheble announced that it was closing its retail business and disposing of its remaining Edison merchandise at deep discounts. The Edison case was dismissed on May 2, 1901. By then, Hawthorne & Sheble was well-established as a manufacturer of after-market phonograph accessories, although it would be several more years before the company began producing complete machines of its own.

As manufacturers, Hawthorne & Sheble often operated with little regard for others' patents and licensing rights, although they were quick to defend their own. In the spring Edison sued the company for patent infringement again in 1901, in a poorly prepared case that was dismissed by District Judge J. B. McPherson (*Edison Phonograph Co. v. Hawthorne & Sheble Mfg. Co. et al.*, 108 F. 630). Hawthorne, often with the assistance of engineer Thomas Kraemer, attempted to circumvent Victor's Berliner patent by patenting various mechanical-feed devices designed to bypass Berliner's specification that the reproducer be propelled by the disc's groove. In 1907 Hawthorne & Sheble began manufacturing a line of phonographs with spring-loaded arms, claiming that the spring, rather than the record groove, propelled the reproducer and thus did not infringe Berliner — a ploy that impressed neither Victor's patent attorneys nor the courts.

Hawthorne's and Sheble's entry into the disc-record market came in 1904, when the partners joined forces with John O. Prescott as sales agents for the American Record Company (*q.v.*). John was the brother of Frederick Prescott, owner of the Berlin-based International Talking Machine Company, the producers of Odeon and other popular European labels. American Record's products violated U.S. patents, and in 1907 it suspended operations after losing a patent-infringement suit to Columbia. Its closure marked the end of Hawthorne's and Sheble's association with Prescott but did not affect the main Hawthorne & Sheble operation, which had remained a separate business.

Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing introduced its own Star disc records in early 1907. The name was taken from the Star Mills building in Philadelphia, which housed Hawthorne & Sheble's phonograph and parts factory (the company by then occupied 150,000 square feet of factory space in four separate Philadelphia buildings). Hawthorne

& Sheble filed a trademark application for the Star brand on February 15, 1907, the same month in which Star records were announced to the trade in *The Talking Machine World*. An initial listing of approximately 300 Star titles followed in March. A few early issues, which did not appear in the initial listing or any known catalog, used American Record Company masters. However, most of Star's output consisted of recordings legally licensed from Columbia, with new Star catalog-matrix numbers substituted for Columbia's. Hawthorne & Sheble also supplied pressings of some of the same material to Busy Bee and the earliest version of the Harmony label.

Star records were pressed in a new plant which, perhaps not coincidentally, was located in Columbia's hometown of Bridgeport, Connecticut. In nearly all cases, the original Columbia numbers, raised safety rings, and other identifying markings were fully effaced from newly made Star stampers, which Star's numbers substituted in a different typeface. Early labels, in purple or dark blue with a white title panel, depicted a five-pointed star, which was soon replaced by a six-pointed one. The final version, in red and gold on black, probably appeared in early 1909.

The Columbia-derived Star catalog eventually listed nearly 700 releases and included pressings from foreign as well as domestic Columbia masters, virtually all of which were issued without artist credits. Despite the removal of Columbia's identifying characteristics from the Star stampers, details were occasionally overlooked. The Columbia Quartet and Columbia Band were credited by name on a few Star labels, faintly audible remains of spoken announcements could be heard on some sides, and Columbia's handwritten "M"-series numbers were not always removed from the stampers. Toward the end of Star's production, there are confirmed examples of Columbia and Hawthorne & Sheble having pressed each other's records, which are easily distinguished because Columbia was producing laminated pressings by then, while Hawthorne & Sheble used only solid stock. The reason became apparent in July 1909, when it was revealed the Columbia had purchased and was combining operations with Hawthorne & Sheble's pressing plant.

By early 1909, Hawthorne & Sheble had introduced a floor-model internal-horn Star phonograph and was attempting to expand into Australia, India, and other overseas markets, but its progress was soon halted. In March of that year, the Victor Talking Machine Company sued the company for patent infringement (*Victor Talking Machine Co. v. Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Co.*, 168 F. 554) in a case involving the questionable Dennison "hollow arm" patent (#832,896) to which Victor owned rights. The case was dismissed on March 12 by Judge J. B. McPherson, who ruled that the Dennison patent void for lack of invention, but in April Victor sued again. This time the charge was far more serious, involving infringement of Victor's Berliner patent, the validity of which had recently been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. On May 22, 1909, at Victor's insistence, the U.S. Circuit Court served a restraining order prohibiting Hawthorne & Sheble from manufacturing or selling phonographs. The company issued a brief statement asserting that the restraining order "practically stops our business."

On July 2, 1909, the Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Company was adjudged involuntarily bankrupt. Ellsworth Hawthorne and James M. Rhoades were appointed receivers on June 11, 1909. Victor's attorneys returned to court later that year to request an accounting for profits, destruction of "infringing apparatus," and a permanent injunction (*Victor Talking Machine Co. v. Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Co.*, 173 F. 617). The lower court ruling against Victor was later affirmed on appeal (*Victor Talking Machine Co. v. Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Co.*, 178 F. 455).

A creditors' meeting was held on July 20, 1909, at which time it was agreed to sell the Bridgeport pressing plant to Columbia. A month later, Columbia announced that it had hired Horace Sheble to manage its entire Bridgeport plant, a position he would hold until May 1912. The Philadelphia phonograph-parts factory continued to operate for a time, under a trustee-supervised "temporary concern" overseen by former superintendent John H. Green. Hawthorne & Sheble continued to transact limited business for the benefit of its creditors until November 1909. But its inability to legally manufacture complete phonographs, the sale of its pressing plant to Columbia, and the decline in demand for horns (one of its major product lines) due to the increasing popularity of internal-horn machines, made it impossible to continue.

Ellsworth Hawthorne carried on alone for a time, in the guise of the Hawthorne

Manufacturing Company, Inc. Occupying a portion of Hawthorne & Sheble's former Bridgeport factory, it was a diversified business that manufactured Old Sol lights for bicycles and automobiles, repaired phonographs, shipped surplus Hawthorne & Sheble machines into Canada under the Clarion nameplate, and pasted Clarion labels onto outdated Columbia and Star records for sale in Canada and the U.S. During 1918 the company manufactured hand grenades for the federal government.

Hawthorne & Sheble's remaining assets were auctioned on April 11, 1910, at which time Macy's department store purchased the remaining inventory of Star records. The last confirmed reference to the company was on February 1, 1911, after representatives failed to appear in a case brought by the Dickinson Manufacture Company involving nonpayment for needle boxes and other goods.

HAWTHORNE, SHEBLE & PRESCOTT — See American Record Company

HEADLINE RECORD CORPORATION OF NEW YORK (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1948 – 1949

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Headline

The Headline Record Corporation had a single listing in *Billboard's* label directory, in January 1949, by which time the company apparently had been in operation for at least eight months (one of its releases by pop singer Bob Stewart had been favorably reviewed by *Cash Box* in April 1948). No reliable information has been found concerning Headline's ownership, operation, or output. The Headline name was also used in the 1950s for at least two unrelated labels.

HEART RECORDS, INC. — See Ringle, David (Dave)

GEORGE HEID PRODUCTIONS (Discs)

Record Production: 1940s – 1950s

Offices: 1005 Century Building, Pittsburgh (to late 1940s); William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh (from late 1940s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Corona [2]; transcriptions, custom and personal recordings

Owned and operated by George Heid, who resigned as program manager of radio station KDKA (Pittsburgh) in December 1941 to launch his company. Ray Boley, a staff announcer at station WLEU (Erie, Pennsylvania) joined the company at the same time, in an unknown capacity. The start-up was interrupted briefly after Heid was hospitalized with appendicitis in January 1942. Although members of Heid's staff were drafted during 1942–1943, he managed to continue operations on a small scale. In February 1945, he made free recordings for the mothers and wives of enlisted men at a special event hosted by the Boggs & Buhl department store.

George Heid Productions initially was a custom-recording and transcription studio serving area radio stations in particular. In April 1947 it hosted what was advertised as "the greatest array of district radio star in Pittsburgh' history" at the opening of that city's Union Bus Terminal. The company moved into new quarters in the William Penn Hotel (Pittsburgh) in the later 1940s and launched its Pop Record Division, which produced the Corona [2] label during the period covered by this work. With an artist roster that included the Four Echoes, Joe Negri Trio and other local performers, the label appears to have attracted little attention outside its home region. There was no connection to the Corona labels based in San Antonio [1] and New York [3] during this period.

Heid appears to have done little to develop Corona, instead devoting much of his time to broadcasting. In 1948 he purchased the Carlton Ide School of Announcing, which he recast as the George Heid School of Radio. In 1954 he provided studio services to Bigelow Records, a short-lived Pittsburgh venture that produced records for aspiring amateur songwriters for a flat fee of \$300 per side, which included singers, arrangements, and accompanists. Little more was reported concerning his company.

OTTO HEINEMAN PHONOGRAPH SUPPLY COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1918–1919

Offices: 45 Broadway, New York (1915–12/20/1915); 25 W. 45th St., New York (from 12/1915); numerous branch offices, including Chicago, Cincinnati, Seattle; Toronto

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (Union Square Hotel, New York)

Pressing: Own plant—Springfield, MA (main); auxiliary plants at Newark, NJ, and Elyria, OH

Record Products: Okeh

Foreign Affiliation: Carl Lindström A.G. (Berlin)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Phonola (Canada)

Incorporated in by Otto Heineman in November 1915, with a capitalization of \$75,000, initially to manufacture phonograph motors. A co-founder of Carl Lindström A.G. (Berlin), Heineman served as managing director of that company, overseeing the production of Odeon, Beka, Dacapo, Favorite, Fonotipia, and Lyrophon records in Europe. He first became involved in the American phonograph market in August 1909, when he incorporated the Carl Lindström Company in Yonkers, New York (along with his brother Adolph, and Paul Kretschmer) to deal in imported phonographs. The venture was quickly shut down by the Victor Talking Machine Company, which in September 1909 sought a preliminary injunction to prevent the sale of Lindström machines that infringed Victor's Berliner patent.

Heineman returned to New York in December 1914 to set up a dealership for Lindström phonograph motors, and reportedly to investigate the feasibility of marketing Odeon and other Lindström-owned labels in the U.S. In early 1915, he admitted, "We are not attempting to do much in America right now. The high wages, high prices of materials and the great difficulty of shipping goods from Germany, all due to the war, militates against our doing an export trade at present. However, there is a field, I am certain, for our lower-priced machines in America, and we hope to do considerable business with you after the war is over."

When the escalating conflict in Europe made safe passage back to Germany impossible, Heineman resigned himself to an indefinite stay in the U.S. With his access to German motors and capital severed, he formed the Otto Heineman Phonograph Supply Company and acquired a portion of the Garford Manufacturing Company's factory at Elyria, Ohio, which would manufacture phonograph motors under the Heineman brand name. Heineman's 1918 trademark application for "The Motor of Quality" claimed use of the slogan since September 1915, the last month in which Heineman advertised German Lindström motors in the U.S. Inventor Louis Valiquet, who had developed the early Zonophone phonographs, was made consulting engineer of the Elyria factory in July 1916.

The Heineman line was soon expanded to include reproducers, tone arms, and other phonograph parts that were marketed to assemblers of off-brand machines. At the same time, Heineman began to build an export business focused on South America, Australia, and eastern Asia. In early 1916 he took over distribution of the Parlograph, a dictating machine that soon vanished from the market. He was more successful with his 1917 acquisitions, which included the John M. Dean Company (a steel-needle manufacturer) and A. F. Meisselbach & Brother (a manufacturer of fishing reels as well as phonograph parts). He opened Canadian branch in Toronto in the same year.

In 1916 Heineman (who had yet to produce any records for the U.S. market) signed an agreement with the Lindström organization granting him American marketing rights to Odeon records. When the arrangement invalidated following the United States' declaration of war on Germany in 1917, Heineman decided to produce his own records in New York. A history of the company, published in *The Talking Machine World* in October 1919, confirms that Heineman purchased Charles Hibbard's studio (which had been used in the production of Rex and Imperial records) and retained Hibbard as his recording engineer and Fred Hager as his musical director. Both were working for their new employer by March 1918, when they appeared in a group photograph of Heineman and his staff.

Heineman chose the name Okeh for his new records. According to a dealers' promotional record, it was "a Choctaw Indian word meaning 'it is right,' and is used by Woodrow Wilson when okaying documents instead of the two letters, 'O.K.' used ordinarily by most people. It is a most appropriate name, as each and every record placed on the market is right." The unusual spelling was styled OKEH on early labels, highlighting Heineman's initials.

Heineman announced the impending launch of Okeh records to the trade in May 1918. They were officially unveiled at the National Music Show in New York during the first week of June 1918, and the initial offerings were released to dealers in July. The records were 10" vertical-cut discs (playable with either sapphire or steel stylus, according to early sleeves and advertising) bearing dark blue labels with an Indian-head trademark. The earliest pressings appear to have been made in at least two different plants, one of which might have been the Scranton Button Company (which was already pressing for Emerson). Heineman soon purchased the idled Domestic Talking Machine Company pressing plant in Springfield, Massachusetts, retaining Domestic's Thomas Kraemer (who was misidentified as "Charles Kramer" in *The Talking Machine World*) as plant manager. However, the widely varying physical characteristics of Okeh's vertical-cut discs suggest that Heineman continued to contract some pressing work to other plants.

Okeh's early catalog was patterned on that of other small companies, consisting largely of old standards and current pop tunes, performed by house ensembles and the usual studio freelancers of the day, most of whose names were not even mentioned in early advertisements and sales lists. The few notable exceptions included some seminal jazz by the Louisiana Five and New Orleans Jazz Band (the latter fronted by an uncredited Jimmy Durante as pianist) and a few classical snippets by cellist Vladimir Dubinsky, the Berkshire String Orchestra, and others of equal stature. Phonola, a companion Canadian label, was launched in August 1918 by J. C. Pott, Heineman's sales manager in Toronto. Pressed from Okeh masters, the records were sold only in Canada.

On October 1, 1919, Otto Heineman officially changed the name of his company to the General Phonograph Corporation, *q.v.*

HELLENIC PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1920s

Offices: 532 8th Ave., New York

Record Products: Alector

The Hellenic Phonograph Company placed small advertisements in the *Greek-American Monthly Illustrated National Herald* beginning in 1925, as a dealer in Victor and Columbia records, but made no mention of its own label at that time. The company filed a trademark registration on March 3, 1927, claiming use of the Alector name on records and piano rolls since February of that year. The few confirmed Alector releases feature traditional Greek music, pressed from unmarked masters of unknown origin. It is not known if there was any connection to the later Alector Records, Ltd. (also of New York), which issued Greek material on a new version of the Alector label in the early 1950s.

HERTZ RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1965

Offices: 38 Halsey St., Newark, NJ

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products (78s): Masters for Coleman, probably other small independent labels

Owned and operated by Sanford Hertz, a composer and accordionist. Hertz made headlines in 1946 when a recording of his "Air Battle" (a composition for accordion with "the noise of pursuit ships, the Morse code, bombs being released from bomb-bay doors, machine-gun bullets and power dives") reportedly sold 20,000 copies in England in one week. Physicians there pronounced it useful in treating air-raid shock. Hertz at that time was said to have composed six symphonies, only one of which had been published.

Hertz's recording studio was in operation by late 1947, when it hosted a session for the Coleman Recording Company. The majority of Hertz's commercial output (including his own Cordé label) was made after the period covered by this work. Hertz was later employed by the Magnus Organ Company, for which he traveled extensively as a demonstrator into the 1970s. He also continued to operate his studio, which finally closed in 1965.

HERZOG RECORDING COMPANY / RADIO ARTIST RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1951

Offices and Master Source(s): 811 Race St., Cincinnati, OH

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products (78s): Radio Artist Records; masters for King, M-G-M, and other commercial labels; radio transcriptions, private recordings

Launched in 1945 by Earl T. (Bucky) Herzog. Partners in the company included his brother Charles (who was also a part-owner of the Jimmy Skinner Record Shop in Cincinnati) and H. G. Weiss (a former employee of RCA's sound-equipment division). Initially operating in Earl Herzog's home, the studio provided transcription services to nearby Cincinnati radio station WLW, where Herzog had worked as an engineer. The studio's first major contract was for production of "The WLW Buccaneers."

In May 1946 Herzog moved into a new suite on Race Street in Cincinnati that housed two studios. *The Cincinnati Inquirer* reported that Herzog and Weiss "designed their own recording equipment, obtaining complete freedom from vibration." In addition to custom and commercial recording, Herzog now offered script-writing, film-strip production, and program-production services. The new studios belatedly attracted the attention of *Billboard* magazine, which mistakenly reported that Herzog's was a new company. The studio was used on occasion by several commercial labels, most notably King (which booked many sessions there during 1945–1946) and M-G-M (which had Hank Williams record "Lovesick Blues" and some other notable titles there in 1948 and 1949).

Herzog launched his Radio Artist Records label in May 1947. Advertised as "Your Radio Friends on Records," it used Herzog's own H-prefixed masters and featured Jimmy Skinner and other country-and-western artists from WLW. The label had a minor local jukebox hit with singer Dolly Good's "Missouri Waltz," a copy of which was sent to President Harry Truman as a birthday gift (the president's response, if any, was not reported). Six months after it launch, it was reported that Radio Artist had released fourteen records so far.

Radio Artists' last confirmed releases appeared in late 1950. Charles Herzog died in March 1951, and the following summer, Earl Herzog sold the studio to Cincinnati radio station WSAI. William T. Stoddard acquired a controlling interest in the studio in November 1955. Herzog went on to launch the Audiocraft Recording Corporation in Cincinnati in the late 1960s. He died on December 6, 1986.

HIGH TIME RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1951; revived 1955

Offices: 1514½ 7th St., Santa Monica, CA (Clock Publishing, 1947–c. 1951); 6425 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA (from 1955)

Record Products: High Time

Launched during the summer of 1949 by Gloria Coombs as an adjunct to her Clock Publishing Company, which shared an office address and worked mainly with amateur songwriters. Coombs had been marginally involved in the entertainment field for several years (in 1946 she and her sister copyrighted a three-act comedy, "The Friday Brides") before launching Clock Publishing in 1947. *Billboard* made the questionable claim that Clock was the first publicly held music publisher, which remains to be confirmed.

Clock Publishing was making audition records as early as 1947 that were intended solely to plug its tunes. It did not begin producing records for the general consumer market until June 1949, when it launched High Time Records. Coombs served as president of the new company, with Johnny Henderson, Jimmy Greer, and Eddie De Sure serving in unspecified executive capacities.

High Time Records was an extension of Clock's song-plugging activities, with *Billboard* reporting that the label would specialize in the publisher's original tunes performed by little-known artists. The High Time label originally featured pop and country-and-western material. A blue-label series for religious material, light classics, and old standards, was added in 1950. *The San Bernardino County Sun* reviewed one High Time release favorably in November 1949 (Jimmy Harris' "Would It Be Surprising?"), but the label apparently attracted little attention elsewhere.

In June 1951, *Billboard* reported that capital from an unnamed South American source was being "poured" into Clock Publishing to expand the High Time operation. That was

contradicted by a later report stating that High Time had been inactive since 1950. By the end of 1951, Coombs had turned her attention to other ventures, including the production of amateur-talent shows at Santa Monica's Del Mar Beach Club and Club Deauville. Coombs reactivated High Time in April 1955, as a rhythm-and-blues and country-and-western label.

HI-LITE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 1938 Market St., Philadelphia

Record Products: Hi-Lite

A jazz label launched in 1947, of uncertain ownership. Trademark applications for the Hi-Lite brand were filed belatedly on April 6, 1948, and were not published until July 1949.

Hi-Lite was recording in Philadelphia by December 1, 1947, when it held a session with the Al Steele band. Its first releases appeared in the advance lists later that month. The company's last regular appearance in the *Billboard* label directory was in January 1949. Its brief reappearance in the July 1951 and March 1952 directories (both of which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Hi-Lite name was used for an unrelated Vermont-based label in the 1950s.

HIT RECORD COMPANY — See Tanner Manufacturing and Distributing

H. K. S. PUBLISHING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1924–1925

Offices: Hillsdale, MI (P.O. box number only; no street address listed)

Original-Master Source(s): Starr Piano Company, Rodeheaver Laboratories

Record Products: H. K. S.

Primarily a producer of Ku Klux Klan–related sheet music and recordings, although several pop releases are also known on its H. K. S. label. Two H. K. S. records were advertised as "Now Ready" in *The Fiery Cross* for January 2, 1925, but it is likely that there were earlier releases. H. K. S. records retailed for \$1.05 each and were sold by mail-order, with accompanying sheet music available for an additional charge. They were pressed by the Starr Piano Company, using masters recorded in the Gennett and Rodeheaver studios that are not known to have appeared on other labels.

HOLIDAY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: 353 E. 32nd St., New York

Pressing: Eastern Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Holiday [2]

Launched in September 1948 by Nelson Lewis, formerly the sales manager of Moses Asch's Disc Corporation of America. George J. Ehrlinger, of the Eastern Record Manufacturing Company, provided the financial backing. Ehrlinger had taken control of Disc following Moses Asch's October 1948 bankruptcy and reportedly had access to approximately 600 of Asch's masters, some of them purchased from Asch, and the balance consisting of masters retained by the Clark pressing plant after Asch defaulted to that company.

The initial Holiday releases were advertised in October 1948. Lewis stated that Holiday would "aim for a mass rather than a cultist sale." However, its catalog consisted largely of recordings from Asch's Disc operation (using previously unissued alternate takes in some cases), with an emphasis on folk music and jazz. The label does not appear to have attracted much "mass," and only a small portion of the Asch masters Ehrlinger brought to the operation were used. Lewis signed a new recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians in July or August 1949, but then scuttled the label at the end of the year, turning his attention to his new distributing company.

There was no connection to the Holiday labels produced by Palda [1] or Holiday Records of Hollywood [3], which operated during the same period, nor to several other similarly named companies that operated during the 1950s.

HOLIDAY RECORDS (OF HOLLYWOOD) (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: 1520 Gower, Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Holiday [3]

Owned and operated by Al Gannaway, Hal Levy, Larry Neill, and Bill Oakie. The company was first mentioned in early September 1949, in a *Cash Box* teaser that withheld the owners' names. *Billboard* published a more detailed account later that month, confirming that distribution would be handled by Mercury Records. There was no connection to the New York-based Holiday Record Company, which operated during the same period, nor to the Philadelphia-based Holiday Records, a Palda affiliate.

The first Holiday release, which received a passing mention in *Billboard* in September 1949, was Don Barry and Dana Gibson's "Mr. Sears and Mr. Roebuck," a Gilbert-Gannaway-Oakie composition. Subsequent offerings were similar pop fare. The company name was changed to Holiday Records of Hollywood in the early 1950s, presumably to avoid confusion with other similarly named operations.

HOLLYWOOD ENTERPRISES, INC. — See Warner, Jesse J.

HOLLYWOOD FLEXO RECORD COMPANY — See Warner, Jesse J.

HOLLYWOOD HOUSE OF MUSIC — See Ammor Record Company / Ammor Record Corporation

HOLLYWOOD INTERNATIONAL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1949

Offices: 985 Menlo Ave., Los Angeles

Record Products: H. I. R.

Launched in July 1946 by Ben Ellison, following his resignation from Exclusive Records. Ellison, who had served as a U.S.O. director during World War II, also worked as a developer of youth activities for Los Angeles County and arranged free concerts for low-income children.

A 1946 *Cash Box* profile of Ellison reported that he believed a market existed for classical music on jukeboxes, although he likely was referring to semi-classical material and higher-quality show tunes. "The finer music of Victor Herbert, Rudolph Friml, the Hammersteins, and others," he wrote, "could be as popular with our young people as the records with a beat," he wrote. "There is no doubt that we should try to do something about it in the automatic music industry." His campaign was unsuccessful.

Hollywood International's label slogan was "Music of the World," but most of its repertoire was decidedly American. Its advertising slogan ("An Attraction for the Bobby-Soxers and Sophisticates") was more accurate. The company's first recording session, held on August 18, 1946, was devoted to Alexander Laszlo's "Hollywood Concerto," with the composer at the piano. He was accompanied by a seventy-five piece orchestra conducted by Constantin Bakaleinikioff, reprising their August 10 performance at the Hollywood Bowl. There were also pop releases, many featuring Ellison's own compositions performed by local artists, or by Ellison himself on occasion, usually backed by Nick Pelico's Orchestra. Among Ellison's pop singers was Jimmie Dodd, later of "Mickey Mouse Club" fame.

References to Hollywood International disappear in the later 1940s. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

HOLLYWOOD (PHONOGRAPH) RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924 – 1926

Offices and Master Source(s): 6725–55 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Pressing: Los Angeles area

Record Products: Hollywood [1], Silver Screen; Sunset [1], possibly Geisha (after mid-1925); personal recordings

Launched in late 1924 by P. A. Harris, the Hollywood Record Company might have taken over the assets of the Harris Record Company (*q.v.*), the short-lived producer of the Triumph

[2] label. There was no connection to the Hollywood Phonograph Company, a manufacturer of phonographs and radios (but not records) that operated during the same period.

The company's namesake label was Hollywood, which was used for commercial releases as well as personal recordings, and relied largely on regional talent. Distribution of the Hollywood label initially was limited to the West Coast. The company attempted to expand its market in late 1925, soliciting dealers as far away as Denver, but little seems to have come of the effort.

Borrowing from the Edison Tone Test concept, Hollywood made headlines in November 1924, when the company took equipment to radio station KHJ's studio to record child singer Titania during the course of a broadcast. They then challenged listeners to tell the difference between a playback of their recording and the live performance. It was not reported whether the equipment employed in the test was electrical, but electrical recordings of reasonably good quality began to appear on the company's commercial labels in mid-to-late 1925.

Hollywood Record appears to have taken over the Sunset Record Company operation in mid-1925. A July 1925 stock offering stated that Hollywood was "supplying one of the largest chain store organizations in the world with low-priced records," almost certainly referring to the Sunset label, a 35¢ line sold exclusively by S. H. Kress Company's dime-stores and affiliates. Named for Kress' flagship store on Sunset Boulevard, the records were sold exclusively on the West Coast and in Hawaii. Accurately advertised by Kress as "Made in Hollywood," Sunset records relied on local and visiting talent, including some California dance bands that did not record for other labels. There was some duplication between the Sunset and Hollywood catalogs.

In addition to popular fare, there were also Sunset releases for the Latino and Asian markets. The Sunset Record Company registered the Geisha trademark for use on records in 1925, presumably for the large Japanese-American market in California, but thus far, a specimen has not been reliably reported. Sunset also offered personal recording services, presumably using Hollywood's facilities, based upon the aural and physical characteristics of inspected specimens.

Silver Screen, the final label known to have been produced by Hollywood, was introduced at in 1926. Labeled "Made in Movieland," the records included reissues of Hollywood and Sunset recordings, along with some material that is not known to have appeared on either of those labels. There are anecdotal reports that Silver Screen records were sold in movie theater lobbies.

On October 2, 1925, music publishers Shapiro, Bernstein & Company filed suit against the S. H. Kress Company and Hollywood Phonograph Record Company for copyright infringement in the recording and marketing of two of its titles. The damages awarded were negligible, but on December 1, 1925, a bankruptcy petition was filed for the Hollywood Phonograph Record Company, citing debts of \$49,012 and assets of \$26,800.

The Hollywood Record Company continued to operate under bankruptcy protection, and new Sunset releases appeared on a fairly regular basis. One one occasion in early 1926, the company took portable equipment to the Universal Pictures studio to make private recordings of actor Rudolph Schildkraut during the filming of "His People," at the request of Universal president Carl Laemmle. However, any hopes for a recovery were dashed in June 1926, when Kress dropped the Sunset label in favor of Romeo, a Cameo Record Corporation product. The company's last issued recordings probably were made that month.

The last known mention of the Hollywood Phonograph Record Company is a listing in the 1927 Los Angeles phone directory. An unrelated Hollywood label, probably produced in the late 1920s or early 1930s and pressed by Columbia's West Coast plant, was made solely for broadcast use and thus is beyond the scope of this work. The Hollywood name was used again in 1936–1937 for an unrelated American Record Corporation client label.

HOLLYWOOD RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1930s – 1945

Offices and Master Source(s): Cinema Building (1731 N. Highland Ave.), Hollywood, CA; 5513 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA (branch, from 1941)

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Vogue [1]; private and special-use recordings, transcriptions

Primarily a producer of transcriptions and special-use recordings, headed by John Hirsch, who initially doubled as president and recording engineer. Jack Preston served as associate recording engineer beginning in the early 1940s. The Hollywood Recording Company owes inclusion here to its short-lived Vogue label, which was unrelated to the later picture discs of the same name. Two Vogue issues have been reported by reliable sources, both by Carl Omeron, a Los Angeles concert tenor who was active from the late 1920s into the 1930s.

By 1938 the Hollywood Recording Company was offering radio transcriptions and program-production services, air-checks, and custom and commercial recording services. Mention of commercial recording services was dropped in the company's 1940 *Radio Annual* listings. The company was last listed in *Billboard's* and *Variety's* 1944 annual directories.

HOLLYWOOD RECORDS (1950s) — See Dolphin's of Hollywood

HOLLYWOOD RHYTHMS RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Mailing Address: Culver City, CA (PO box number only; no street address given)

Record Products: Hollywood Rhythms

Of unknown ownership, Hollywood Rhythms was releasing records by April 1947. The label featured pop fare by locally available artists and is not known to have been advertised (other than an incidental mention in one music-publishers' advertisement) or distributed nationally. The company's last regular listing in *Billboard's* label directory was in January 1949. Its brief reappearance in the July 1951 and March 1952 *Billboard* directories (both of which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

HOLLYWOOD SPECIALTY RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1936 – c. 1937

Offices: 1509 N. Vine St., Hollywood, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Radio Transcription Company of America

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Racy Records

An early producer of adult "party" records, launched at approximately the same time as the Novelty Record Company (*q.v.*), with which it shared some masters. Its own masters were recorded by the Radio Transcription Company of America, which operated at the same address.

The Racy Records label was introduced in 1936 and initially was intended only for jukebox use, with the same selection pressed on both sides. Later pressings for the consumer market had a different selection on each side. The label design was changed at an unknown date to depict a fully nude model, although the material was never more than mildly risqué. The redesigned label was also used by the obscure Paradise Platters, about which no substantive information has been found. Unlike many later party records, Racy Records featured some reasonably well-known artists, including Bud Averill, Eddie Beal, Rudy Sooter, and the Basin Street Boys. Its masters were later widely pirated, often in dubbed form and lacking any artist credits, by obscure "party" record producers

HOLLYWOOD STAR RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: 6525 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Hollywood Star Records

A short-lived spoken-word label owned and operated by George Pale. Pale served as president, and Howard Helmick as vice president, with Universal Studios' radio director Eugene O'Brien coordinating artist activities. The company's launch was announced by

Billboard in January 1948. In May, the magazine reported that Pale was visiting New York to set up distribution deals.

To skirt the American Federation of Musicians' second recording ban, the company issued interviews with John Wayne, Bill Elliott, and other movie stars, who were not bound by the ban. The records were 8" flexible laminated picture discs with the stars' photos and facsimile autographs. A free demonstration record featured short excerpts by multiple stars.

Hollywood Star Records was last listed in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory. The company's reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Hollywood Star name was used again in the 1950s for an unrelated rhythm-and-blues label owned by Charles (Cholly) Williams.

WINSTON HOLMES MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924 – 1929

Offices: 1636 E. 18th St., Kansas City, MO; 1704 E. 18th St., Kansas City (later 1920s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Meritt

A Black entertainer, songwriter, and music-store owner, Winston Holmes operated a studio in his Kansas City store, where he offered custom recording services. His output for the consumer market was limited to occasional releases on the Meritt label, which Holmes designed himself, and which made its debut in March 1925. Holmes managed Bennie Moten's Orchestra for a time, but no documentary evidence has been found to support the anecdotal claim that Moten's Okeh recordings were made in Holmes' store. They were definitely not recorded in his studio, based upon their aural characteristics.

Holmes' widow claimed that the first Meritt release was "Family Prayer" (#2200), which is not known to exist. The first confirmed release (#2201) was Lottie Beaman Kimbrough's "City of the Dead" and "Cabbage Head Blues" (the latter with husband Sylvester Kimbrough), accompanied by Paul Banks' Kansas City Trio. *The Chicago Defender* for January 10, 1925, reported that Holmes had already made the recordings, suggesting that the session probably occurred in November or December 1924, after Kimbrough had departed the Paramount label. Kimbrough's first name was given as Lena on the Meritt labels, and Holmes' publicity photo, supposedly taken at the recording session, was thoroughly deceptive. It substituted Kimbrough's more photogenic sister, Estella, for the singer, and showed Holmes holding a saxophone, an instrument he is not known to have played.

By January 1927 Holmes was advertising his in-store electrical recording studio, a photograph of which appeared on his advertising calendar. Although the later Meritt masters were indeed electrically recorded, the sound quality was primitive. Holmes apparently had no interest in developing Meritt beyond a local, over-the-counter label. He did little advertising for the records and reportedly ordered only four-hundred pressings at a time. Seven Meritt catalog numbers are known to have been allocated during the label's five-year lifespan, two of which have not been confirmed as issued. The five known issues consist of jazz, blues, and gospel material by Kansas City performers and include the first issued recordings by Hattie McDaniel, Rev. J. C. Burnett, and George E. Lee's Orchestra, all of whom were later signed by larger labels. According to Mrs. Holmes, the company's most popular record was "The Downfall of Nebuchanezzar" by Rev. Burnett, the least-rare of the Meritt releases. Holmes sued Burnett for breach of contract after the reverend defected to Columbia, but lost his case.

Meritt made its last release in 1929, and the Winston Holmes Music Company closed a short time later. Holmes died on December 6, 1946. In later years, Mrs. Holmes reported that a collector she trusted had stolen some unissued Meritt masters from her. Thus far, no evidence has been found to suggest that they still exist, or what they might have contained.

HOLMES ROYAL RECORDS COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1950s

Offices: 1119 S. 10th St., Wilmington, NC

Record Products: Holmes Royal

The Holmes Royal Records Company first appeared in *Billboard*'s June 1948 directory, and four releases were listed by October. Thus far, no reliable information has been found concerning its ownership or operation, although at least fifteen distributors were listed for the company in 1948. There is no known connection to Los Angeles-based Holmes Recordings, which was launched in the 1950s.

Holmes Royal's initial release (Bobby Blake's "Although I Know You Love Another" / "It's Too Late to Say You're Through") was dismissed by a *Billboard* reviewer in October 1948 as "completely unprofessional" and was given a "poor" rating on the magazine's popularity chart. *Billboard* continued to list distributors for the Holmes Royal as late as July 1955, but no evidence has been found that the label was still active at that point.

HOLYOKE PLASTICS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1940– Early 1960s

Offices: 177 Sargent St., Holyoke, MA

Record Products: Hit of the Week [2], Imp (children's)

A plastics-molding company incorporated on November 14, 1940, by Eliot P. Brooks, George D. Whitmore, and Daniel E. Burbank, Jr. The company took over a portion of the vacant Holyoke Silk Hosiery Company plant in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Harry V. Shearer served as president, William C. Cary as vice-president and general manager, and Philip W. Simons as treasurer.

On April 5, 1941, it was reported that Holyoke was about to begin producing low-cost records, with Nathaniel Shilkret serving as musical and recording director (Shilkret made no mention of the company in his autobiography). The company purchased rights to the abandoned Hit of the Week brand and partnered with the New York-based S-M News Company, which planned to distribute the records to news stands. The records were plastic-surfaced, like the original Hit of the Week discs, but were more rigid double-sided pressings, with standard paper labels.

Shilkret, it was reported, would select "only orchestras which have demonstrated success with young audiences, playing the new hit tunes." Holyoke had already made its first recordings at the time of the April 5 announcement, beginning with sessions by the Tommy Reynolds and Leighton Noble orchestras. Distribution began the week of May 5.

Holyoke suspended operations in the autumn of 1942, with an unnamed official citing "other priorities" and difficulties imposed by wartime restrictions. In November 1942 its assets were taken over by the Connecticut Valley Plastics Corporation, which retained the Holyoke Plastics name. Hit of the Week was discontinued, but Holyoke later produced children's 78s and offered custom pressing services into the early 1960s. In 1962 the company defaulted on a Small Business Administration loan. Its property was seized by the federal government and sold at public auction on April 17, 1963.

HOT RECORD SOCIETY / H. R. S. RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1937 – 1949

Offices: 303 5th Ave., New York (to early 1948); 2060 1st Ave., New York (Empire Records, 1948–1949); 827 7th Ave., New York (H. R. S. Record Shop)

Original-Master Sources: Decca, Reeves Sound Studios

Pressing: American Record Corporation, Decca Records, Empire Record Company

Record Products: Hot Record Society, Hot Record Society Originals, H. R. S.

Founded in 1937 by Stephen W. (Steve) Smith, the Hot Record Society catered to traditional-jazz enthusiasts. The society published *The Rag*, an early jazz journal, in addition to producing its own record label. Smith enlisted John Hammond, Marshall Stearns, Charles Edward Smith, Wilder Hobson, William Russell, Charles Delaunay, and Hughes Panassie, among others, to serve as his advisory committee. The names were all well-known in jazz circles, and Smith proved to be a capable publicist, engaging in an ongoing, occasionally raucous debate with supporters of the rival U.H.C.A. label.

The first Hot Record Society releases were announced in May 1937, in a bulletin that boasted the organization would be "leaving the corn to the hillbillies." Initially, the records were available only to club members, whose \$6 annual dues included the price of the discs, plus an occasional special "Dividend Record." The subscription model was later dropped, and the records were sold to the general public through the H. R. S Record Shop and other specialty dealers.

The earliest H. R. S. releases were devoted entirely to reissues of vintage material obtained primarily from the American Record Corporation (Columbia, Okeh, later Brunswick-Vocalion, *et al.*) and Decca Records (pre-ARC Brunswick-Vocalion, plus Champion and Gennett by way of Harry Gennett, and Earl Hines' Q. R. S. sides by way of Herman De Vry). There was also a smattering of material from the defunct Crown and Pathé labels. Although a few ARC-produced releases were pressed from original stampers, most employed dubbings that were assigned new masters numbers in ARC's own series. Nearly all of the reissues from other sources were made from dubbed masters.

During the summer of 1938, production shifted to Decca Records, which produced the first original recordings for H. R. S., beginning with a session by Pee Wee Russell's Rhythmakers on August 31. Decca also supplied several masters it had licensed from the Swing label in France. The Decca connection was severed after a year, and H. R. S. went largely dormant. In May 1944, Steve Smith left H. R. S. to work as Keynote Records' recording supervisor. Keynote acquired the pressing rights to H. R. S.'s original recordings in the process but did nothing to develop the label.

Production of new H. R. S. recordings resumed in 1945. Sessions were held in Hazard Reeves' studio, beginning with a July 19 date by Brick Fleagle's Orchestra. Aside from repackaging the Earl Hines Q. R. S. reissues, H. R. S. was now featuring mostly original recordings, employing groups fronted by Harry Carney, Buck Clayton, J. C. Higginbotham, Russell Procope, Rex Stewart, Dickie Wells, and Trummy Young, among others.

Jack Caidin took over the manufacturing and distribution of H. R. S. records in late December 1947 and purchased Steve Smith's Onyx Publishers at the same time. Thereafter, H. R. S. was operated as a division of Caidin's Empire Record Corporation (*q.v.*). Caidin immediately reduced the records' list price to 75¢ from \$1, but no new releases were made under his ownership. He employed some H. R. S. masters as bargaining chips, agreeing to lease them to Aladdin Records if Aladdin agreed to use his plant for its East Coast pressing work.

Caidin finally secured national distribution for H. R. S. records in June 1948, through Boston-based State Record Distributors, but otherwise did nothing to develop the label. Production appears to have been discontinued by the end of 1949. The masters to which Caidin held rights (comprising the original recordings, but not the reissued material) were finally sold outright in April 1956, to Eli Oberstein's Record Corporation of America.

HOT ROD RECORD COMPANY — See Tanner Manufacturing and Distributing

HOUSTON RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 218½ Velasco, Houston, TX

Record Products: Houston

Owned and operated by Dan James Mechura. The company made its first appearance in the October 1949 *Billboard* directory of country-music record producers (which gave Mechura's name as "J. D."), after which nothing more was reported in the trade papers. Mechura went on to launch the somewhat better-known Allstar label in 1953.

MARY HOWARD RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1942 – c. Late 1950s

Offices: 37 E. 49th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Pressing: New York Record Company (Brooklyn)

Record Products: Mary Howard Recordings, MHR; masters for New Music Recordings and possibly other independent labels; radio transcriptions, air-checks, custom and private recording

Mary Shipman Howard was the first American woman to own and operate a modern recording studio. A trained musician, she began experimenting with a portable recording machine in the late 1930s. After failing to find employment as a recording engineer, in 1940 she accepted a secretary's position in the National Broadcasting Company's New York engineering department. When the draft began taking a toll on NBC's male staff during World War II, Howard was tapped to replace a departing engineer. Initially, she was assigned to supervise (but not actively participate in) recording sessions for RCA Victor. There, she recalled, "I didn't do anything except sit with my eyes falling out of my head, and my ears dropping off. It was fascinating."

In the meantime, Howard had opened her own private studio nearby, as a part-time venture offering private recording services, although she apparently had not yet fully mastered her craft. In 1942, composer and recorder virtuoso and Hargail label owner Harold Newman withheld payment to her, citing unsatisfactory work. The case was later settled out of court.

The Newman incident aside, Howard was soon attracting a small but select clientele, including composer-pianist Charles Ives, who visited the studio several times in 1943 to make recordings for his personal use. In late 1945 or early 1946, Mary Howard Recordings became a full-time operation, with the assistance of Joyce Fraser. The studio quickly gained a reputation among musicians for high-quality work. During the later 1940s, Howard's staff grew to include Donald Plunkett (chief engineer), Bob Dixon (production manager), Betty Jane Keiuls (sales and promotions manager), and Joseph Roberts (publicity consultant).

One of Howard's early clients was The Nassoons, an *a capella* group from Harvard University, for which she produced a three-disc album in 1947. Although custom recording was her primary focus, Howard briefly produced her own Mary Howard Recordings and MHR labels for the general consumer market, on a small scale. The initial offerings (one album each by the Herman Chittison Trio and Ethel Waters, and one single each by Dale Belmont and Walter "Foots" Thomas) were announced by *Billboard* in July 1947, as July and August release. The records were distributed locally by Wesley Smith (New York), but little advertising was done, and sales appear to have been meager.

Howard's studio occasionally produced masters for other labels, including the reactivated New Music Recordings in 1948. A feature article in *Audio Record* for February of that year reported that the studio was "waiting patiently for the [American Federation of Musicians' recording] ban to be lifted so they can 'get going' again." However, commercial activity appears to have dwindled following the end of the recording ban, and no mention has been found of Howard's own labels after 1948. Her Ethel Waters masters were later sold to Mercury.

Mary Howard was one of the first small-studios operators to adopt tape mastering. She also implemented strict quality-control procedures throughout the company and required that her employees have a working knowledge of the entire production process. In her 1948 *Audio Record* interview, Howard lamented "a prevalence in large organizations for specialization — cutting technicians, studio technicians, maintenance, etc. — which often results in poor recording because of lack of interest or information in all phases of the recording operation. If interest and enthusiasm were carried all the way through the recording organization, and management, perhaps time might be found to raise the general recording standards in America."

Howard's studio continued to offer custom recording services and produce limited-edition, privately issued pressings (including LPs) into the 1950s. It was last listed by *Radio Annual* in 1956, as a transcription producer

HOWARD RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 2007 W. Division St., Chicago

Record Products: Howard

A short-lived venture named for, and possibly owned by, pop singer Howard Slavin. The self-styled "G.I.'s favorite vocalist" had been featured on the Army Air Force's "Flying Time" broadcasts during World War II and was touring the theater circuits at the time he launched his company. Howard Records announced its first three releases (all by Slavin) in June 1946, in a full-page *Billboard* advertisement. After such a well-promoted start, little more of heard of the label, and Howard Records was last listed in *Billboard*'s February 1947 directory.

HUB RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1948

Offices: 565 5th Ave. (Steinway Hall), New York

Record Products: Hub

A race-record operation launched in the spring of 1945 by Ben Bart (best known as the manager of the Ink Spots) and Harry Lenetska, both of whom had recently left the Gale Agency to form the Universal Attractions booking agency. *Billboard* reported that Bart, who had handled most of Gale's Black bands, took several "not-so-well known Negro orks [orchestras]" with him.

Billboard reported that Hub's first session was booked for May 8, 1945, with Tab Smith, whose first name was mistakenly given as "Taft." One of Hub's best sellers was the Ravens (another vocal group managed by Burt), whose first releases in the late summer of 1946 received considerable attention and strong reviews. Hub records initially were distributed by Apollo, but in January 1947 Bart announced that he was severing that relationship in favor of using of a network of independent regional distributors.

By early 1947, attorney Jack Pearl had become affiliated with Hub Records, which he represented in March (along with King and Mercury) in an attempt to organize an association of independent record manufacturers. By that time, Bart appears to have been concentrating on building his booking agency, at the expense of the recording operation. Hub closed in 1948, and the Ravens (still under Bart's management) were transferred to National Records. Hub's masters were parceled out to King Records (which acquired six Ravens sides, including four unissued titles, in 1948, and some Tab Smith sides in 1951) and Mercury (which acquired another group of Smith sides in 1951). The Hub name was used for an unrelated Hollywood label in the early 1950s.

HUCKSTERS RECORDING COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 8210½ Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA (to mid-1947); 5424 Franklin Ave., Hollywood (from mid-1947)

Record Products: Hucksters

A cooperative venture, launched by talent agents Jack Beekman and Danny Winkler in late 1946, reportedly for \$180 in cash. All interest-holders in the company, which included several popular band leaders and vocalists, were required to contribute their talent or labor. Beekman, on the other hand, occupied what a *Cash Box* columnist described as "elaborate offices in Beverly Hills" and appears to have participated only marginally involved in Huckster's operation.

Early Hucksters issues featured pop singer Artie Wayne, who was managed by Beekman. The initial release, announced in October 1946 and using masters from the defunct Bel-Tone operation, at first was peddled directly by the interest-holders, apparently with little marketing support and no national distribution in place. After sales of the record reportedly reached 30,000 copies within its first month, distribution was turned over to the Jack Gutschall Distributing Company. Sears Roebuck was among the retailers said to be handling Hucksters records.

In 1947 production and distribution were taken over by United Artist Records, a cooperative venture that issued Hucksters recordings under its own United Artist label.

The arrangement was not a success. With sales declining under United Artist's management, Chicago attorney Oscar Salenger intervened. In November 1947 he "reactivated" the Hucksters label (to use *Billboard's* term), severed the United Artist connection, and spent \$22,500 to acquire a controlling interest in the company. The roster was expanded to include Nick Lucas (who was managed by Beekman), Henny Youngman, and Lillian Lane.

Salenger's attempt to revive Hucksters was unsuccessful, and the company closed in June 1948. Capitol Records purchased Artie Wayne's Huckster masters, then in February 1949 took over Nick Lucas' Hucksters contract, at Beekman's request.

HULA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – Present

Offices: 808 Ahuna St., Honolulu

Record Products: Hula

Founded in 1947 by Donald McDiarmid, Sr. A native of California, McDiarmid came to Hawaii in the 1930s to join the Harry Owens Royal Hawaiian Hotel Orchestra. He launched Hula Records in 1947, but the company soon failed. His son, Donald McDiarmid, Jr., revived the Hula label in the early 1950s.

Hula's successful second incarnation featured native Hawaiian performers and issued the first commercial recordings by Don Ho, who (as a member of Don & the Hawaiians) was identified only by his first name on early releases. LP albums, introduced in the 1950s, were notable for McDiarmid's insistence on preserving and documenting Hawaiian music correctly, with liner notes that included Hawaiian-language lyrics and translations, artist biographies, and background information on the songs.

Donald "Flip" McDiarmid III took over management of the company following his father's retirement. Members of the McDiarmid family continue to manage Hula Records, which is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Hawaii Calls, Inc. Hula claims to own the world's largest catalog of Hawaiian music.

HUMOR RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1952

Offices: 2060 1st Ave., New York

Record Products: Humor

A "party" record operation, incorporated in New York on December 4, 1947. Humor is best known for its six-part "International Crepitation Contest," a farting routine was later widely reissued, legally or otherwise. The only other Humor releases confirmed thus far are reissues of long-deleted Hollywood Hot Shots material. In May 1950, Sam Margolis, of General Record Distributors (Chicago), was indicted by a federal grand jury for having received discs from Humor, as part of a nationwide crackdown on distribution of "obscene" records. The Humor Record Company was dissolved on April 15, 1952.

HUNTING, RUSSELL (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1894–1896

Offices: 45 Clinton Place, New York (1896–1897)

Record Products: Cylinders

An actor who became famous for his "Michael Casey" comedy routines, Russell Hunting advertised in 1896 that he was devoting his "entire time, energy and facilities to originating and manufacturing talking records for talking machines" and could supply "a meritable record at a reasonable price."

Hunting's regular cylinders retailed for 80¢ each, but as would later be revealed, he also did a brisk clandestine trade in what the press termed "vile" titles, for which he charged \$1.50. The uncredited records began surfacing around 1894, when the first arrests were made of saloon keepers who were found to have them on their coin-operated phonographs. They soon came to the attention of Anthony Comstock, of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, whose investigators found them to be widely distributed.

After a fruitless cross-country pursuit, Comstock finally traced the records to Hunting's New York operation. An undercover agent was dispatched to Clinton Place, where Hunting sold him a what one newspaper called "a particularly obscene song," then offered to make

"another equally objectionable record [and] still worse productions." Hunting also disclosed that he had recently sent fifty of the cylinders to saloon owners in Coney Island.

Comstock's lengthy investigation was ridiculed by the *New York World*, but on June 25, 1896, Hunting and an associate, Charles M. Carson, were arrested. The charge was violating a section of the New York penal code prohibiting the sale of "objectionable articles." Carson was let go with a fine, but Hunting was sentenced to serve three months in prison.

Hunting subsequently closed his own operation and worked briefly for the Universal Phonograph Company. He went on to have a long and distinguished career in the recording industry, serving as first editor of *The Phonoscope* (an early trade publication), recording prolifically, and holding management and executive positions with Edison Bell, Columbia, and Pathé during an extended stay in England. In 1914 he returned briefly to the U.S. to manage the start-up of Pathé's New York recording studio, then returned permanently in 1920, serving as Pathé's chief recording and technical director into the late 1920s.

HY-TONE RECORDING COMPANY / HY-TONE MANUFACTURING & DISTRIBUTING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 1214 Blue Island Ave., Chicago (1946–2/1947); 1521 W. Walton St. (2/1947–1/1948); 118 E. 30th St., Chicago (c. 1949–1952); 1611 S. Wabash (distribution, from 1/1947)

Original-Master Source(s): Chicago Recording Studios, United Broadcasting Studios, probably other independent studios

Pressing: Mercury Records (Chicago), unknown independent pressing plant(s)

Record Products: Hy-Tone

An outgrowth of band leader Freddie Williams' short-lived Melody Lane Recording Company (*q.v.*), the Hy-Tone Recording Company was an equal partnership between Williams and Nathan Rothner. The latter was president of the City-Wide Amusement Company (Chicago), a distributor of jukeboxes and other coin-operated devices.

Hy-Tone's impending launch was announced on January 11, 1946, and the company became operational on or around March 30. The partners planned to pre-test material before release — Williams by demonstrating the records in his two retail stores, and Rothner by placing samples on his company's jukeboxes

The initial Hy-Tone releases were reissues of the Melody Lane recordings, retaining the original catalog numbers and continuing to credit the Melody Lane Recording Company as manufacturer. The first recording sessions for the reorganized company probably were held in May of that year. Like its predecessor, Hy-Tone was aimed at the race-record market and specialized in Chicago-area jazz and blues talent, with an artist roster that included Jo Jo Adams, Big Bill Martin, Memphis Slim, Sunnyland Slim, "Crown Prince" Charlie Waterford, and pioneering electric guitarist Floyd Smith.

In January 1947, the company was renamed the Hy-Tone Manufacturing and Distributing Company. Although Williams remained a partner, Rothner assumed increasing control of Hy-Tone's operations, introducing a gospel series, taking over management of artists and repertoire, and supervising the recording sessions after Williams' performing obligations forced him to limit his involvement with the company.

The last known Hy-Tone session was held in December 1947, and no new releases appeared after March 1948. In December 1948, Memphis Slim's Hy-Tone recordings were leased to King Records, which decided to remake several of them due to Hy-Tone's inferior audio quality. The Hy-Tone Manufacturing and Distributing Company continued to operate into 1952, as a distributor. Rothner, who returned to his jukebox business, recalled burning unsold Hy-Tone discs after the company closed.

IDEAL RECORD SALES / IDEAL RECORDS, INC. (Discs)**Record Production:** 1949**Offices:** New York**Record Products (78s):** Ideal [3]

A short-lived venture launched in early-to-mid 1949 by Rafael (Ralph) Pérez and Esteban (Steven) Rodríguez to produce records for the Mexican-American market. Perez, who was employed as an artists-and-repertoire representative for Decca's Latin American division at the time, bought out Rodríguez in June 1949 and launched Ansonia Records (*q.v.*) after closing Ideal. There was no connection to the better-known Texas-based Ideal Records (*see next entry*), which also produced records for the Mexican-American market during this period.

IDEAL RECORDS (Discs)**Record Production:** 1946–1980s**Offices:** Alice, TX (at founding); San Benito, TX (PO box number only, late 1940s–1950s); 119 S. Sam Houston Blvd., San Benito (from 1950s)**Pressing:** Universal Plastics, other independent pressing plants**Record Products (78s):** Ideal [2], Discos Ideal

A pioneering producer of recordings for the Mexican-American market, Ideal Records was launched in 1946 by jukebox operator Armando Marroquín, in partnership with record distributor Paco Betancourt. Distribution initially was handled by Betancourt's Rio Grande Music Company in San Benito, Texas.

Marroquín began recording local Hispanic artists, initially on a portable acetate cutter, in the mid-1940s. In 1946 he opened a makeshift studio in his home in Alice, Texas, and arranged to have his recordings mastered and pressed in Los Angeles. The earliest sessions involved Carmen y Laura (a female duet, one member of which was Marroquín's wife) and veteran accordionist Narciso Martínez (who had recorded prolifically for RCA's Bluebird label in the 1930s). Marroquín eschewed artist contracts, paying performers a flat fee on a piecework basis (reportedly as little as \$2.50 per title), with no provision for royalties. In late 1951, Bettancourt was sued for copyright infringement by Benito Muniz, whose "Las Delicias Polka," in slightly altered form, had been issued on Ideal without permission or payment.

Ideal's artist roster also included El Conjunto Bernal, Valerio Longoria, and Tony de la Rosa, and Alberto (Beto) Villa. Many of Ideal's early artists performed in fairly traditional styles, but Longoria and Villa struck out in new directions that would prove to be highly influential. In Longoria's hands, vocals came to the forefront in *conjunto* music for the first time, and he added drums to the ensemble. Villas went even further in updating the traditional *conjunto* band, adding other nontraditional instruments and integrating elements from commercial dance music. Both men proved to be key figures in the birth of the Tejano music movement in the late 1940s.

Ideal records were soon being distributed in California and Mexico, and for a time a Mexican plant also handled some of the pressing. However, sales declined in the 1950s as competing labels emerged, offering artists better pay and wider exposure than Ideal could provide. During the 1960s, Ideal lost many of its artists to the Falcon label.

Marroquín left Ideal in 1960 to launch the Nopal label, which failed to attract much attention. Following the split, Betancourt opened his own studio in San Benito and continued to distribute Ideal records through Rio Grande Music into the 1980s. The Ideal masters were purchased in 1990 by Arhoolie Records' Chris Strachwitz.

IMMORTAL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1941

Offices: Prince Edward Hotel, Long Beach, New York

Record Products: Immortal

Most Immortal issues are reissues from the World's Greatest Music label (*q.v.*). The company is included here only because several of its releases have not been traced to other sources and possibly could be exclusive to the label.

IMPERIAL RECORD COMPANY [I]

Launched in 1910 by George Emerson (Victor Emerson's brother, formerly of the American Graphophone Company) and I. H. Whitman (formerly of the Cameraphone Company, an early producer of sound films), Imperial planned to produce a 15¢ "unbreakable" cylinder. Although *The Talking Machine World* reported that a studio and plant were in operation in October 1910, no records are known to have been advertised or sold.

IMPERIAL RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1941

Offices: 2 W. 46th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): World Transcription studios

Pressing: Scranton Record Company

Record Products: Elite [1]

Launched in late 1941 by Eli Oberstein, following the bankruptcy of his United States Record Corporation (*q.v.*) and failure of the Viking label (*see* Nu-Phonic Corporation). According to *Variety*, Oberstein had planned to name the label Imperial but switched to Elite at the last minute, after discovering that Imperial was already in use by another company in Florida (that location being incorrect; the company in question was actually comedian Ray Bourbon's Hollywood-based Imperial Records). Oberstein promised the records would be the cheapest on the market, at 25¢ each.

The company's first recording session, by Blue Barron's Orchestra, was held on November 11, with initial releases scheduled for the end of that month. But when the records went on sale, they retailed for 35¢ (the same as Bluebird and other budget labels), not 25¢ as Oberstein had originally promised. Only a few Elite releases had been made under the Imperial Record Company imprint when, in late December, it was announced that Imperial had merged with Albert E. Middleman's Classic Record Company (*q.v.*), the name of which appeared on later Elite labels.

IMPERIAL RECORD COMPANY, INC. [III] (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1964

Offices: 137–139 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles (1946–1950); 6425 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA (from 1950); 10th Ave. & 47th St. (New York branch, from late 1948)

Record Products: Imperial [4], Discos Imperiales, Imperial Folk Music; Colony (unconfirmed)

Incorporated in Los Angeles on June 29, 1946, by Louis Robert (Lou) Chudd (*née* Chudnofsky) in partnership with Max Feirtag, whom Chudd would later buy out. Distribution initially was handled by Chudd's Holiday Distributing Company, which operated at the same address as Imperial.

Born to Russian Jewish immigrants in Toronto, Canada, Chudd was raised in Harlem. In 1934 he was hired as an advertising salesman by NBC in New York, where he promoted Benny Goodman, Xavier Cugat, and other popular band leaders before moving to NBC's Los Angeles office. During World War II he worked as a producer for the U. S. Office of War Information, and in 1943 he was granted American citizenship.

In 1945 Chudd launched Crown Records (*q.v.*), a short-lived jazz label based in New York, which he reportedly sold before forming Imperial. At first, Imperial records were marketed largely to the local Black, Latino, and Asian markets. During Imperial's earliest days, Chudd toured the southwestern states, Mexico, and Central America to promote his Discos Imperiales records, which he sometimes peddled from the trunk of his car. In the spring of 1946, he and Feirtag set up the Holiday Distributing Company (Los Angeles) to

distribute them, along with several small independent labels. By late 1947, Chudd had introduced his own IM-prefixed master series, replacing the original, haphazard system. Imperial occasionally licensed masters from other companies, including Black and White, on which it often substituted its own master numbers.

In January 1947, Chudd launched the rhythm-and-blues series for which Imperial would come to be known, beginning with Dick Lewis' "Hurricane Boogie"/"8 O'Clock Stomp." Initially, Chudd turned over much of the series' management to band leader Dave Bartholomew in New Orleans. Among Bartholomew's discoveries was Fats Domino, whose breakthrough came in late 1949 with "The Fat Man." The record made the *Billboard* and *Cash Box* charts in January 1950, giving Imperial its first sizable hit and establishing the label as an emerging leader in rhythm-and-blues and what would become known as rock-and-roll. Although Imperial was best-known for its involvement with the latter, it continued to offer a diverse catalog that included jazz, country-and-western, gospel, ethnic, pop, and children's records.

Chudd expanded his operation into other countries in the later 1940s. During the American Federation of Musicians' 1948 recording ban, he kept Imperial's Latino releases flowing by bringing non-union Mexican performers to Los Angeles, and he announced plans to make additional recordings in Mexico City and Havana. In May 1949, he signed a reciprocal licensing agreement with Colombian record producer Antonio Fuentes, initially selecting forty masters that Universal Plastics pressed for U. S. release. A Canadian pressing and distribution deal was signed with Charles Darwyn's Toronto-based Monogram Records/Ambassador Music Company conglomerate in early 1949.

Imperial received some unwelcome attention in the spring of 1949, when Chudd mishandled reports that an Imperial square-dance album was also available on the obscure new Colony label, using different artist credits. *Billboard* reported that the recordings and album notes were identical, and that Colony's office was next door to Imperial's, although different owners were listed. The incident might have passed quietly had Chudd not so vehemently denied any connection to Colony and disputed *Billboard's* finding that the identical masters were used. Chudd's reasons for denying involvement with Colony remain unknown, but a connection apparently did exist. In 1951, Colony (still under the same ownership) resurfaced with some rhythm-and-blues releases pressed from Imperial masters, on which some of the selections were retitled.

Chudd and Bartholomew parted ways following a disagreement in late 1950. The latter's departure had little apparent impact on Imperial, which continued to produce numerous hits throughout the 1950s and early 1960s and boasted an artist roster that included Domino (who stayed with the label until 1963), Roy Brown, Chris Kenner, Smiley Lewis, Smokey Hogg, T-Bone Walker, Lightnin' Hopkins, Slim Whitman, and Ricky Nelson (the latter spirited away from Verve records, which had failed to offer him a contract). Chudd purchased the Aladdin catalog in 1961, and the New Orleans-based Minit label in 1963. A year later, he sold Imperial to Liberty Records. Imperial's later history is beyond the scope of this work.

IMPERIAL RECORDS [I] (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1937 – Early 1940s

Offices: Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Imperial [3]

A "party" label launched c. 1937 by Ray Bourbon. A female impersonator and notorious alcoholic, Bourbon worked in vaudeville before moving to New York's gay night-club circuit in late 1930. By 1931 he was appearing in West Coast nightspots that showcased female impersonators and openly gay performers in material that went far beyond what could be safely presented in the mainstream venues at that time. The Los Angeles police raided Bourbon's "Boys Will Be Girls" revue in 1932. Brunswick rejected Bourbon in 1929, but he went on to record four fairly sedate sides for the Liberty Music Shop label in 1936.

Bourbon's Imperial label, probably launched soon after the Liberty Music Shop records were released, featured mildly risqué material by Bourbon and (on a few recordings) comedienne Ava Williams. After Eli Oberstein launched his Imperial Record Company in 1942, Bourbon placed a notice in *Billboard* claiming the Imperial brand was his (although

it appears to have been inactive by then), and Oberstein changed the name of his new label from Imperial to Elite. In 1946 Bourbon launched New Bourbon Records (*q.v.*).

IMPERIAL RECORDS (INC.) [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 32 W. Randolph St., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Universal Recording (Chicago)

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Imperial [5]

A short-lived operation launched during the early summer of 1946 by Chicago talent agent James A. Roberts, in partnership with Hyman Schaeffer. A resident of Dayton, Ohio, Schaeffer served as president. The address given for Imperial was that of Roberts' agency. There was no connection to the Los Angeles-based Imperial [4] label, which was launched at approximately the same time.

On June 29, 1946, *Billboard* reported that Imperial's recording and engineering would be handled by the Universal Recording studios in Chicago, and pressing would be handled by Allied Record Manufacturing in Los Angeles. According to the report, four sides had already been recorded for the label by Henry Brandon's Orchestra, but no other artists had yet been signed. Nothing more was reported concerning the company, which last appeared in *Billboard's* label directory in February 1947.

IMPERIAL TALKING MACHINE COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1917 – 1918

Offices: 35–37 W. 31st St., New York; 9 Vandever Ave., Wilmington, DE

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (35 W. 31st St., New York)

Pressing Plant and Factory: 9 Vandever Ave., Wilmington, DE; Newark, NJ (reported but not confirmed)

Record Products: Imperial [2], Rex [1]

Successor to the bankrupt Rex Talking Machine Corporation (*q.v.*), the Imperial Talking Machine Company was incorporated by several local investors in Wilmington, Delaware, on March 21, 1917. Rex had been ordered to liquidate in early 1917, and its assets were purchased by David J. Reinhardt, representing banker James B. Stephens and other Rex stockholders. Imperial's initial capitalization was reported to be \$2 million.

Officers included Stephens (president), former Rex president Philip Wohlstetter (vice-president and general manager), and former Rex secretary Philip E. Haessler (who retained that position with the new company). Gaetano Merola served as musical director, and Rex's Charles Hibbard and Fred Hager stayed on as recording engineer and house conductor, respectively. In May 1917, *The Talking Machine World* reported that ground had been broken for a new pressing plant in Newark, New Jersey. The existing Vandever Avenue plant in Wilmington was closed for the day on June 5, to allow eligible employees to register for work in the new plant.

Doing business as the Imperial Talking Machine Company, the new owners made what appears to have been a seamless transition. Although the company continued to produce and market the Rex label for a time, it launched Imperial as its new flagship brand in May 1917. For several months, new releases appeared simultaneously on Rex and Imperial, using identical couplings and catalog numbers. New Rex-label releases declined steadily after August 1917, but Imperial continued to sell existing Rex pressings until the end.

Many Imperial records were simply reissues from the Rex catalog (including material that Rex had earlier reissued from Keen-O-Phone), but original recordings were also made, extending Rex's original master- and catalog-numbering series. Imperial claimed a catalog of more than 2,000 selections, a feat made possible by the company's inheritance of a five-year accumulation of Rex and Keen-O-Phone masters.

Imperial suspended production in December 1917. New releases, probably already in production at the time the factory closed, were last advertised in February 1918. A portion of the factory equipment was auctioned in March, at which time Wohlstetter announced that he planned to store the remainder as the "nucleus" of a new plant. However, he died suddenly on April 3, 1918, and there would be no corporate successor to Imperial.

Imperial's remaining equipment and unsold inventory were sold at auction on March 8, 1918. The factory building was taken over by Du Pont, which converted it to the production of materials for the war effort. Hibbard and Hager apparently had taken over the studio some months earlier and were operating independently as the Perma Recording Laboratory by the time Imperial suspended production. Their studio was subsequently acquired by Otto Heineman, who hired both men in preparation for the early 1918 launch of his Okeh label. Hager, who claimed to have retained possession of the masters, recalled having sold them to an unnamed party in the 1930s. They are no longer known to exist.

Imperial's failure forced at least one of its distributors into bankruptcy and left others with a glut of unsold Rex and Imperial merchandise. The company's remaining assets, including the pressing-plant equipment, were sold at public auction on January 15, 1920. Babson Brothers and others were still offering bulk lots of surplus Imperial and Rex records in 1921, for as little as 20¢ per disc.

IMPRESARIO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – 1949

Offices: 210 5th Ave. (Suite 1102), New York

Record Products: Impresario

Affiliated with the Washington Music Bazaar (New York), of the same address. Impresario Records appeared in various *Billboard* label directories from February 1947 through January 1949, but no reliable information has been located concerning the company's ownership, operation, or output.

INDEPENDENT RECORD COMPANY — See Oberstein, Eli

INDEPENDENT RECORDING LABORATORY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1922 – 1929

Offices: 102–104 W. 38th St., New York (through 1923); 55 W. 16th St., New York (from 1/1924)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above addresses

Pressing: Affiliated with Scranton Button Company (*q.v.*)

Record Products: Masters for the Arto–Bell group, Plaza–Regal group, custom and private labels

The Independent Recording Laboratory was the primary supplier of masters to the Regal Record Company–Plaza Music Company labels (Regal, Banner *et al.*) as well as an occasional supplier to the Arto Company and other small producers. It was incorporated in New York in December 1922, with a capitalization of only \$5,000, by A. J. Baum, B. A. McGuire, and B. Strauss. Baum (formerly of the New York Recording Laboratories) served as studio manager, Arthur Bergh (formerly of Emerson) as musical director, and Fred Ochs (formerly of Columbia) as recording engineer. Independent Recording was closely affiliated with the Scranton Button Company, to which it sent most of its pressing work, and through which it sometimes licensed its Regal-group masters to other companies.

Independent Recording's advertisement in the 1923 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory* proclaimed it to be "The best equipped and efficient — low cost — laboratory in the industry," with "low cost," at least, being a truthful description. The company actively solicited work from independent labels. *The Talking Machine World* for February 1923 reported that IRL had "bookings for recordings for practically the whole of every working day." Band manager Ed Kirkeby's session logs confirm that IRL was recording for the Arto Company by then, and that it continued to supply masters to the Bell Record Corporation (Arto's successor) after Arto suspended operations in April 1923.

IRL's main customer, however, was the Regal Record Company, the producer of a group of dime-store and client labels that included Banner, Domino, Oriole, and Regal. Regal was allocated its own block of master numbers in late 1922 or very early 1923. Beginning at #5001, it would become the longest-running contiguous master-number series in the American recording industry, eventually being taken over by the American Record Corporation in 1929, and then by the Columbia Record Corporation ten years later, before finally being retired in the 1940s.

Arthur Bergh left IRL in September 1923 to join the General Phonograph Corporation (Okeh) staff. He was replaced by Adrian Schubert, whose orchestra served as Regal's default house band. They recorded a tremendous number of mostly undistinguished sides for the Regal-group labels, a substantial proportion of which were issued under pseudonyms, through the late 1920s.

The Regal Record Company purchased the International Recording Laboratory outright in 1924 and merged it with the Regal-Plaza operation, although the IRL trade-name remained in use for several more years. Regal made a sly reference to the connection by adding a spoken introduction to one version of Vernon Dalhart's "Mr. Radio Man," referring to a fictitious "Station IRL, broadcasting from 55 West 16th Street, New York."

Electrical recording, employing a primitive system of unknown manufacture, was implemented in late 1925, probably beginning with master #6305 ("Let Us Waltz as We Say Goodbye," by Nathan Glantz's Orchestra, recorded on November 23). Acoustic and electric sessions were intermixed throughout December, but by January 1926, all sessions were electric. The first Banner and Regal releases from IRL's electrically recorded masters were announced in March 1926. Early efforts were marred by distortion, but recording quality improved somewhat as the 1920s progressed, most noticeably after the London-based Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Company purchased a part-interest in the Regal Record Company in 1927.

In 1929 the Independent Recording Laboratory studio was absorbed by the newly formed American Record Corporation, as a part of Regal's holdings.

INDEPENDENT RECORD RELEASING ASSOCIATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 811 N. Fairfax, Hollywood, CA

Pressing: Enterprise Records and Mirror Records plants

Record Products: IRRA

Launched in February 1947 by band leader and former Atomic Records president Lyle Griffin, after leaving that company. IRRA's modest roster included Griffin's band and its vocalist, one "Miss Dana." The company was still making new releases as late the spring of 1948, but it last appeared in the *Billboard* directory in January 1949. This was not the same organization as Nat Saland's Independent Releasing Association, which dealt primarily with motion pictures.

INDESTRUCTIBLE PHONOGRAPHIC RECORD COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1906 – 1917

Offices: 226–236 Hamilton St., Albany, NY

Original-Master Source(s): 352 Livingston St., Brooklyn, NY

Pressing: Albany, New York; possibly different location after 2/1911

Record Products: Indestructible, Lakeside, and Oxford cylinders; Dictaphone training cylinders; International Phonographic Language School (language-instruction cylinders)

The first commercially successful manufacturer of celluloid cylinders on a large scale, Indestructible arose from the remains of the Lambert Company, which filed for bankruptcy in January 1906. Brian Philpot, acting as court-appointed trustee for the defunct Lambert Company, retained control of the Lambert, Philpot, and Messer patents in the United States, which for some years blocked Edison from producing celluloid cylinders.

Following the Lambert bankruptcy, the Indestructible Phonograph Record Company was organized in Maine to manufacture unbreakable cylinders, but initially it lacked the patent protection necessary to commence production. Little more was heard of the company until June 15, 1906, when it filed a certificate of organization in Augusta, Maine. Among its incorporators were George J. Snowden and I. L. Fairbanks, the latter serving as president and treasurer. Acting on behalf of the company, Snowden paid Brian Philpot \$25,000 for worldwide control (excluding Great Britain) of the various Lambert Company patents.

Described by the trade papers as "a wealthy oil man and capitalist of Oil City, Pennsylvania," Snowden was a partner in the firm of Snowden & McSweeney, which owned a string of oil wells and was involved in the development of Mexican mineral claims. His lack of experience in the phonograph industry did not prevent Snowden from quickly

taking control of the stalled Maine venture. He immediately announced plans to reorganize the company (which was renamed the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company), and to issue \$1 million in capital stock.

On June 19, 1907, it was belatedly declared that the original Maine company had ceased to transact business. In the meantime, the company had opened an office in New York and a factory in Albany while still registered as a Maine corporation, and Brian Philpot had been retained as technical advisor. He provided the first news of Indestructible's plans to the press, telling a reporter as early as September 1906 that the company expected to have products on the market by the autumn of 1907.

The work of assembling a staff soon began in earnest. Philpot and Frederick W. Matthews were put to work developing improvements to the Lambert-Messer cylinder. The warpage problem that had plagued the Lambert cylinder was solved by the addition of cardboard liners and metal end-caps, on which Philpot and Matthews filed a patent application in September 1907. A recording studio was opened in Brooklyn, under Matthews' management. Joseph Lacalle—a prominent New York composer and conductor, and manager of the Spanish Theater Company—was hired as musical director. By April 1907, Indestructible had completed work on its Albany factory and hired Hayden F. Gaines as its first sales manager. The Indestructible Phonographic Record Company was re-incorporated in October 1907. Among the new incorporators was Henry McSweeney, Snowden's partner in the oil-and-mineral business. Like Snowden, McSweeney had no experience in the phonograph or recording industries.

The first Indestructible cylinders were released in November, in conjunction with a national advertising campaign in the major magazines. The main catalog number series began at 640 (perhaps to avoid duplicating some earlier Lambert numbers), but a few lower-numbered cylinders inexplicably appeared in the initial catalog.

Indestructible concentrated on the production of low-cost cylinders for the popular market, leaving the production of phonographs and premium-priced records to others. Its sole product was a durable, well-recorded cylinder that retailed for 35¢. Like other records of the day, the retail price was firmly fixed, and no dealer discounting was allowed. The emphasis was on current hit tunes and comic sketches, along with the usual old "standard" titles. Aside from band renditions of popular overtures and the occasional operatic aria sung in English, there was no attempt to develop a classical catalog or acquire high-priced celebrity artists.

The Music Trade Review contains an intriguing report stating that one Professor Starr gave tribal recordings he made in Africa to Indestructible, but the company is not known to have issued them commercially. Two apparent attempts at foreign-language series are known (Bohemian and Spanish), but very few releases have been confirmed in those series, which presumably were short-lived. Indestructible also re-pressed many recordings made by the English Lambert company, some of which were renumbered in Indestructible's own numerical series.

Unlike Lambert, Indestructible was a well-organized, well-financed operation that marketed its products aggressively and soon developed a strong national distribution network. The records quickly caught the attention of Thomas Edison, who had the company infiltrated by industrial spy Joseph F. McCoy.

In contrast, the Columbia Phonograph Company found a way to turn Indestructible's success to its advantage. Columbia in 1908 was experiencing steady growth in discs sales while its cylinder sales stagnated. The company was finding cylinder production to be an increasing financial burden, although it was unwilling to abandon the cylinder business entirely. The solution came in the summer of 1908, when Columbia began negotiations with Snowden to purchase the Indestructible Phonographic Company in order to market Indestructible cylinders under the Columbia brand.

On September 25, 1908, Columbia purchased the assets of the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company, as well as marketing rights to the Indestructible cylinders. Snowden, Matthews, Lacalle and other Indestructible personnel retained their jobs, and the company continued its recording and manufacturing activities independently of Columbia. The studio remained in operation, with Indestructible managers apparently continuing to make their own decisions in matters of artists and repertoire. The alliance proved beneficial for both parties, allowing Columbia to continue selling cylinders under its own brand without

the need to actually manufacture them, while generating increased sales for Indestructible. In addition, the new ownership as provided an added layer of legal protection for Indestructible, which was now covered by Columbia's patents.

When the first Columbia Indestructible cylinders reached the market, the Columbia brand was identified only on the boxes, initially by a small strip pasted over the Indestructible labels. As with all Indestructible products, no trademark or brand name ever appeared on the records themselves. The reason for that omission remains unknown, but it would prove to be a cost-saver, eliminating the need to set up separate pressing runs for each of the brands the company supplied. In 1908 Indestructible became supplier by default to Sears, Roebuck & Company (whose Oxford cylinders had been manufactured by Columbia since the late 1890s). It later provided cylinders to Montgomery Ward, which was left without a supplier for its Lakeside brand after the U-S Everlasting line was discontinued in 1913. After some delays, a four-minute Indestructible cylinder was introduced in January 1910, at a time when dealer and consumer frustration with Edison's flawed four-minute wax Amberol was reaching its peak.

Indestructible never manufactured phonographs, despite sporadic announcements that a machine was in development. At one point, it was reported that Indestructible had purchased rights to a wooden-diaphragm reproducer manufactured by the Norcross Phonograph Company, which it planned to manufacture. Little more was heard of the plan, but in 1909 the company began advertising a \$3 aftermarket reproducer, patented by Australian inventor Richard Bartholomew Smith, that was designed to play celluloid cylinders on Columbia and Edison machines. On March 1, 1910, Columbia announced it had begun shipping a new combination two/four-minute Indestructible reproducer equipped with a diamond stylus.

The Indestructible Phonographic Record Company was reincorporated in November 1910, by Matthews, Philpot, and R. W. Wheeler, with capitalization of \$50,000. Snowden and McSweeney retained their financial stake in the company. According to Edison's industrial spy, Joseph McCoy, Indestructible's Albany pressing plant was sold the U.S. Phonograph Company in February 1911. Although that sale has not been confirmed, the decline in quality that becomes increasingly apparent in later pressings suggests a change of manufacturing venue.

In April 1911, Indestructible purchased the failing Sapphire Record and Talking Machine Company. It marketed Sapphire's surplus Princess phonographs and discs at deep discounts through late 1912, but it did not continue production of the line and is not known to have made any effort to enter the disc market at that time.

Indestructible had resumed marketing cylinders under its own name following the 1910 reincorporation, while continuing to supply Columbia. The connection was finally severed on May 14, 1912, when Columbia announced it was discontinuing sales of Indestructible cylinders and would remainder its inventory at a deep discount. Joseph Lacalle left Indestructible for Columbia in October 1913.

Production of new Indestructible releases, which apparently were suspended after the split, resumed in late 1912 or very early 1913. To help fill its early 1913 catalog, Indestructible reissued recordings obtained from the failing U-S Everlasting operation. Two-minute cylinders, which Indestructible had discontinued at the end of 1911, were reintroduced in early 1914 to fill the sales void created by Edison's abandonment of the two-minute format. The company continued to release new two-minute selections into late 1917 or very early 1918, but on a greatly reduced scale, and they appear to have sold poorly.

The Indestructible Phonographic Record Company's demise came in 1917. A year earlier, the music publishing firm of Leo Feist, with support from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), had launched a campaign to collect unpaid mechanical-reproduction royalties from the record companies. Having scored a decisive victory over its first target (the Operaphone Manufacturing Company) in April 1917, Feist next sued Indestructible owners Snowden and McSweeney. The suit, which was filed in Indianapolis against the obscure Snowden Brothers and Company rather than against Indestructible *per se*, sought damages and an injunction preventing Snowden and McSweeney from producing and selling records of copyrighted Feist songs until past-due royalties were paid. The pair appear to have taken their leave of Indestructible a short time later, and on May 21, Feist abandoned the lawsuit.

By the end of June 1917, the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company had vanished from the scene. Indestructible cylinders, however, had not. Their production was taken over by the newly formed Federal Record Corporation (*q.v.*), chartered in Albany to manufacture phonographs and musical instruments. The incorporation papers did not mention records, although Federal would go on to launch its own disc label in 1919. The incorporators were listed as J. P. O'Brien, William H. Hastings, and Frederick Goldie. James Snowden, George Snowden, and Henry McSweeney stayed on to manage Federal. George Snowden died in 1921, leaving an estate that reportedly took attorneys several years to untangle.

Still lacking any brand name on the pressings, Federal's Indestructible cylinders were virtually indistinguishable from the earlier product. With Federal focused on its new disc business, however, the Indestructible cylinder line received little attention and virtually no marketing support. Some cylinders were issued with incorrect artist credits, and quality control (which had been declining for some time) became even more lax under Federal's ownership. Even so, the company continued to release new Indestructible cylinders into 1921. There was no formal announcement of a final release, but song titles suggest that the last new Indestructible releases appeared in the early summer of 1921. The remaining inventory was destroyed in a 1922 fire at the Federal plant.

INDIGO RECORDINGS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – 1947

Offices: 4372½ Melrose, Los Angeles

Record Products: Indigo

A short-lived label of unknown ownership, Indigo was briefly marketed as a race and country-and-western line. The two initial releases, both featuring singer Carolyn Richards, were advertised in June 1946 by Regal Record Distributing (Los Angeles). Indigo Recordings last appeared in *Billboard's* label directory in February 1947.

"INK," INC. — See Williams, J. Mayo (Ink)

INTERNATIONAL PHONOGRAPH AND RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1928 – 1930

Offices: El Paso, TX

Original-Master Source(s): Starr Piano Company (Gennett)

Record Products: Universal [1] (Discos Electricos Universal)

Launched in 1928 by Isadore, Abe, and Henry Elion, of the Elion Brothers Furniture Company (an El Paso home-furnishings store founded in 1922) to produce records for the Mexican-American market. The Elions, doing business as the International Phonograph and Record Company, made a belated trademark filing for the Universal brand on January 1, 1930, claiming use of on records since July 15, 1928 (the date of the company's earliest documented recording session).

The International Phonograph and Record Company was first listed in *The El Paso Evening Post's* buyers' guide in October 1928. Its Universal label was the first domestically produced label intended exclusively for the Mexican-American market. The Elions dispatched El Paso-area performers to the Gennett studio in Richmond, Indiana, on several occasions during 1928–1929. The first Universal session was held there in July 1928, but the bulk of the recordings were made from August through November 1929. All were commissioned for the Elion's exclusive use. The Gennett ledgers show that the company originally billed the Elions \$58 per master for the August 1929 sessions, but accepted payment of \$30 each (the company's usual charge for such services). Charges for later masters varied widely.

The Elions also commissioned many recordings of Latino-style dance numbers (mostly performed by Nathan Glantz's and Jack Stillman's commercial dance orchestras, and often issued pseudonymously) from Gennett's New York studio in Long Island City, New York. New York sessions for the Elions continued through April 1930, but the Universal label appears to have been discontinued by the end of that year.

An unrelated Universal label was produced in Mexico beginning in the 1940s.

INTERNATIONAL RECORD COLLECTORS' CLUB (Discs)

Record Production: 1932 – 1960s

Offices: Bridgeport, CT

Record Products: International Record Collectors' Club (originally as a co-brand on Victor, Columbia, and Odeon labels)

Launched in late 1931 by William H. Seltsam, who is best-known as the compiler of the *Metropolitan Opera Annals*. Although the International Record Collectors Club catalog consisted mainly of historical operatic recordings licensed from other companies (comprising either reissues, or first issues of previously unpublished recordings), it was later expanded to include some original recordings.

Seltsam initially contracted with RCA to produce new, specially labeled pressings from the original Victor Talking Machine Company and Gramophone Company (His Master's Voice) stampers. He announced the launch of what would become the International Record Collectors' Club on November 21, 1931, on a modest typewritten card. The venture was originally named the Historical-Record-of-the-Month Club, but by the time the first records appeared in March 1932, the name had been changed to International Record Collectors' Club. Although Seltsam had originally planned to reissue recordings by both instrumentalists and vocalists, he decided to concentrate on the latter.

The first IRCC release coupled two previously unpublished recordings by Geraldine Farrar, who authorized their release, autographed the first pressing run, and came to be a strong supporter of the venture. Superbly pressed by RCA, using special white or silver labels (in bat-wing design for acoustic recordings and scroll for electric), the early releases were true limited editions, with each copy individually numbered and, when possible, autographed by the artists. Seltsam also set new standards in documentation, listing recording dates, original master numbers, and other discographic details on the labels. The early IRCC releases were direct pressings from the original Victor and Gramophone Company stampers, when available. Dubbings from shellac pressings were resorted to only if the metal parts had deteriorated or been destroyed, and they were identified as such on the labels, usually with the dubbing date shown.

In November 1933, Seltsam announced that IRCC would issue an original modern recording by contemporary American composer Henry Cowell. It was a brief deviation from the label's mission, and Seltsam quickly shifted his focus back to reissuing historical recordings. He later turned to additional sources for his historic material, including Columbia (which supplied a mixture of dubbings and original-master pressings) and dubbings from Edison cylinders. Before World War II, he also marketed pressings obtained from the Lindström company in Berlin, bearing standard Odeon labels to which IRCC stickers were applied. For a time, IRCC also marketed selected issues from Robert Vincent's National Vocabulary. In 1937, William Speckin launched the competing Historic Record Society, which was copied from the IRCC model but relied to a much greater extent on dubbed masters. As purely a reissue label, it is beyond the scope of this work.

In 1939, IRCC released its dubbings from some of the legendary Mapleson cylinders. Recorded by Lionel Mapleson during live performances at the Metropolitan Opera House between 1901 and 1903, and of greatly varying quality, the cylinders were discovered in the mid-1930s. The most notable offerings were dubbings of two short excerpts from *L'Africaine* and *Siegfried* by Jean de Reszke, who had never appeared on a commercially issued recording. The records drew praise for IRCC's initiative, but condemnation (particularly in England) for the poor quality of the transfers. Seltsam responded, "IRCC has done its best. Let the re-recordings sing or scream for themselves."

Beginning in the late 1930s, Seltsam occasionally produced original recordings by prominent vocalists for IRCC, including selections by Florence Easton, Marion Telva (accompanied by Geraldine Farrar at the piano), and Emma Eames (commenting on her recordings, from a February 1939 WQXR broadcast). IRCC's last original release in 78-rpm format comprised two sides by Frederick Jagel, recorded at a January 1948 Town Hall concert.

By then, Seltsam was no longer drawing on the major labels. The transition can be seen in the adoption of a plain new label design, the use of dubbed material from defunct sources such as Edison and Pathé, and the suppression in many cases of

original-issue attributions. IRCC went on to issue LPs, mostly compiled from previous 78-rpm releases, some of which have since been made available in CD format. Seltsam continued to operate IRCC into the late 1960s. He died in December 1968.

INTERNATIONAL RECORD COMPANY [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1904 – 1907

Offices: Washington St., Auburn, NY (1904–1909); Yonkers, NY (1904 only); New York City (sales office, 1904–1907)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—152 E. 23rd St., New York (1904–10/1907); Auburn factory (probably not used, from 11/1907)

Pressing: Auburn Button Works (40–42 Washington St., Auburn, NY)

Record Products: Excelsior [1], International [1] (International Record); Apollo [1], Boston Symphony Record, The Buckeye, Central, Clear Tone [1], Clico, Eagle [1] (gray label), Faultless Concert Record, Kalamazoo, Lyric [1], Mozart [1], National [1], New York Grand Opera Record, Nightingale Parlor Grand, Ormsby Disc, Philharmonic [1], Siegel-Cooper, Square Deal [1], Symphony [1], Talk-O-Phone (c. 1907), Vim; unbranded or rubber-stamped generic labels, including Champion [1], Pike's Talking Machine Co., Star [1]

The International Record Company was incorporated in late July 1904, with a meager capitalization of \$1,000, by John Matthews, Orville La Dow (given in error as "McDow" in the *Music Trade Review* announcement), and William C. Dodge. The articles of incorporation stated the company's purpose was "dealing in talking machines"; records were not mentioned at the time. There was no connection to Frederick Prescott's Berlin-based International Talking Machine Company.

Prior to Eldridge Johnson's purchase of the Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Company (manufacturers of Zonophone records), La Dow had overseen the production of Zonophone discs at a New York branch of the Auburn Button Works that had been established to handle that account. Under Johnson's ownership, the Auburn connection was terminated, leaving Auburn without a customer for its New York plant. As a result, La Dow created the International Record Company to make up for the loss, employing the Auburn Button Works as its pressing plant and taking over Zonophone's former studio space on 23rd Street. The company was chartered as a separate business from Auburn Button, probably to protect Auburn in the likely event of litigation, since IRC's records infringed Victor's and Columbia's patents.

Excelsior, IRC's first and best-known label, was introduced in early 1905. The company's Lyric and Mozart labels appeared later that year, followed by the ornate International Record label, which replaced Excelsior in 1906. The earliest IRC pressings were 9" discs, a holdover from Auburn's previous work for Zonophone, but they were quickly phased out in favor of standard 10" discs. The pressings rarely showed any numbers or any other identifying marks.

Signor G. Peluso, whose recording career had begun on brown-wax cylinders in the mid-1890s, served as the house conductor. IRC made no attempt to produce a classical catalog, aside from a few popular snippets. It employed virtually no celebrity artists, its roster being made up almost entirely of the house orchestra and the usual New York-area studio freelancers. The company succeeded by pricing its records substantially lower than those of its competitors. Retailing for 40¢ each, the records were 20¢ cheaper than standard Columbia and Victor discs. The company also offered more liberal dealer discounts than its competitors, and unlike Columbia and Victor records (which were available only to licensed jobbers and dealers, under highly restrictive terms), IRC products could be purchased in wholesale lots by anyone with cash in hand.

In November 1905, the New York plant was closed, and pressing operations were moved to the main plant in Auburn, while IRC's studio remained in New York. The company had undergone a reorganization by then, with Auburn president Carlton H. Woodruff replacing La Dow as IRC's general manager.

In addition to its own labels, IRC was a prolific producer of mail-order and department store labels. Its custom-label service was widely promoted by traveling salesmen O. A. T. Bradley and P. B. R. Bradley, who are believed to have been the brothers of Talk-O-Phone co-founder W. V. Z. P. Bradley. Many of IRC's custom labels bore elaborate designs and referred to a vague "New Process," for which no patent filings or other details have been

discovered. The company even offered unbranded generic-label pressings on which retailers could rubber-stamp their own brand names. Unlike Excelsior, IRC's client labels never named the manufacturer. Clients were free to set their own retail prices, which some set at or above premium levels, even though the identical records could be had very inexpensively on IRC's own labels.

The International Record Company placed its last *Talking Machine World* advertisement in October 1906. In 1907 the American Graphophone Company (Columbia) brought suit against IRC for infringement of their Jones patent (*American Graphophone Co. v. International Record Co.*, 155 F. 427). International retained the services of attorney Waldo G. Morse, who in 1906 had been unsuccessful in defending the American Record Company against similar charges by Columbia. Morse failed again in this case, with Judge Lacombe observing that his case relied mainly upon "affidavits and an abandoned [patent] application."

After several delays, a preliminary injunction was granted on June 11, 1907, the last month in which the International Record Company is known to have advertised. The studio was officially closed in October (although it probably had been inactive for some months by then), and the equipment was moved to the factory at Auburn. There are no reports of any further recordings having been made following the move.

Morse filed a motion for dissolution of the injunction with the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in October 1908. The injunction was briefly lifted, but production does not seem to have resumed, and a temporary restraining order was issued on November 23, 1908, pending appeal. After two delays, motion for a decree came up on June 11, 1909, at which time Morse offered a new defense, claiming that IRC's records were made by process that did not infringe the Jones patent. He was given an additional month to prove his claim, which he failed to do. The appeal was finally heard in July 1909, and the injunction was allowed to stand. No legal action was brought against the Auburn Button Works (*q.v.*).

INTERNATIONAL RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1949

Offices: 27-19 Jackson Ave., Long Island City, NY (1945–early 1947); 32–58 62nd St., Woodside, Long Island, NY (Phonograph Records, Inc., from early 1947)

Pressing: Phonograph Records, Inc.; possibly other independent plants

Record Products: American Record, Disque International, International [2]

Owned and operated by William B. Feldstein, the International Record Company [II] was first mentioned in 1945, in several distributors' advertisements. Manufacturing was taken over by Phonograph Records, Inc., in early 1947.

The American Record label, copyrighted in 1945, featured pop and Latino-pop material. The International Record label was copyrighted the following year. It initially featured Jewish, Irish, and traditional and Latino-pop fare, but in 1947 it released an album by Sylvan Shulman's New Friends of Rhythm that was marketed to "longhairs and hipsters." The undated Disque International label (which used the same design as International Records) featured ethnic and light-classical material, some of it possibly from imported masters. Inernational Record's artist roster included Enny De Vries (who reportedly held a financial stake in the company), Maxine Sullivan, Frances Faye, Cantor Savel Kwartin, the Don Byas Quartet, Vincent Lopez's Orchestra, and other well-known names. International's excerpts from the short-lived Broadway production "Carib Song" was touted by *Billboard* in June 1946 as "one of the most interesting albums to hit the market in months."

In June 1947, the E. B. Marks publishing firm sued Feldstein, De Vries, and the International Record Company for unpaid royalties, as one of four test cases brought by Marks to determine the effectiveness of suing both an offending company and its executive officers. Little more was reported concerning the International Record Company, although it was still advertising as late as 1949.

INTERNATIONAL RECORDING COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – Late 1940s

Offices: 1780 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios

Pressing: Own plants (Des Moines, IA; Norwalk, CT)

Record Products: Flint; masters for numerous small independent labels

An independent studio and record-manufacturing company founded by radio producer Chick Vincent (who also served as chairman of the board) and managed by John W. (Jack) Mangan. There was no connection to International Recording Studios, Inc., a Hollywood transcription producer that operated during the same period. Mangan's Flint Records later operated from the International Recording Company's offices.

International Recording opened expanded facilities in February 1947, at which time it claimed to be the largest independent studio in the East, providing services to more than thirty labels, including Bullet, Continental, Dana, De Luxe, King, Manor, Savoy, and Vitacoustic. The company operated its own pressing plants, in Des Moines, Iowa, and Norwalk, Connecticut (the latter purchased from Musicraft), for which it claimed a combined monthly capacity of nearly a half-million discs. International's advertising promised delivery of finished records within ten days of order.

In early January 1948, a fire in the International studio destroyed masters reportedly belonging to more than seventy labels. Many of those labels had been stockpiling masters in advance of the second American Federation of Musicians' ban, and *Cash Box* reported that most of the firms affected were not insured for the loss of masters. Many petitioned the American Federation of Musicians for permission to remake the recordings despite the ban, which was denied.

INTERNATIONAL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1952

Offices: 1205 La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles

Record Products: International [3], Hamp-Tone International

Launched in 1949 by Sam Lane after acquiring most of the Hamp-Tone catalog. Marketing and distribution was handled by K & M Distributors (Los Angeles), which targeted the records primarily to jukebox operators. In addition to reissuing Hamp-Tone material, International Records produced some original recordings. In early 1950 the company had a modest jukebox hit with pianist Al Winter's "Central Avenue Blues."

Lane resigned in the spring of 1950 to accept a position as Selective Records' manager of artists and repertoire. International Records suspended operations in mid-1951. In the meantime, Lane had opened his own Hollywood studio, following the failure of Selective Records, and was placing artists he discovered with other labels, including Columbia and Modern. In May 1952, he revived International Records and hired Sam McCoy (a former rhythm-and-blues manager for Mercury Records) to handle artists and repertoire. Blues singers Jimmy Huff and Little David (David Wylie) were signed, but the venture does not appear to have been long-lived.

INTERNATIONAL RECORDS AGENCY (Discs)

Record Production: 1937–1938

Offices: Richmond Hill, NY

Studio and Pressing: Gennett plant

Record Products: Iragen

Founded by Al Franck, the International Records Agency began business in the early 1930s as an importer of European classical records on labels not generally handled by other U.S. distributors. One of its earliest catalogs, issued in late 1932, listed selections from seventy foreign labels.

Franck (who was described by a *New York Times* reviewer as an "indefatigable hunter of exciting discs") launched the Iragen label in 1937. At the time, he made it clear that his label would serve primarily as a reissue vehicle for recordings he personally found to be interesting. Iragen discs were sold to the general public, albeit in very small quantities, for \$1.50, double the price of major-label releases.

The initial Iragen offerings, listed in July 1937, were 12" classical recordings from an unknown source and might have been original to Iragen. Following their release, Franck declared that "I.R.A. does not desire its records to be hailed as the product of another commercial venture. If it issues additional records, it will be only if and when it has something or finds somebody deserving widespread recognition."

At least seven more Iragen issues were to come, but they did not use original material. Reflecting Franck's eclectic tastes, six were reissues of out-of-print Gennett recordings, a hodgepodge ranging from Polish folk songs to two 1928 sides by Buzzington's Rustic Revelers. A seventh used Rodeheaver Record Company masters that probably were in Gennett's possession as a result of their having pressed for Rodeheaver in the 1920s.

Franck continued to operate as an importer and distributor into the 1950s. The Iragen label appears to have been his only attempt at commercial record production.

INTRO RECORDS — See Aladdin Records

IOWA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Founded: 1889

Offices: Metropolitan Block, Sioux City, IA (to 5/1892); 5th & Jackson Sts., Sioux City (from 5/1892)

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Iowa. Sales in Iowa originally were to have been handled by the Nebraska Phonograph Company, which was first organized in November 1888 but apparently failed to launch at that time. A reorganized Nebraska Phonograph was formed on January 31, 1889. At that time it abandoned the Iowa sales territory, which was subsequently reallocated to the newly formed Iowa Phonograph Company.

Iowa Phonograph's officers included W. P. Manley (president), C. J. Brackenbush (vice-president), Whitfield Stinson (secretary), and G. A. Beach (general manager). Among its directors was Erastus A. Benson, who had been a director of the short-lived Central Nebraska Phonograph Company and was also serving as president of the reorganized Nebraska Phonograph Company. Interviewed by a reporter for *The Sioux City Journal*, Benson expounded at length on the phonograph's business uses but mentioned its potential as a entertainment device only in passing, noting that "songs of the finest singers and musical productions" could be had.

In July 1889, Beach secured permission to record members of the well-known Bostonians troupe (including Jesse Bartlett Davis, H. C. Barnabee, and Marie Stone) during their performance of "The Bohemian Girl" at the Peavey Grand in Sioux City. When the results proved barely audible without the aid of ear-tubes, additional recordings of the troupe were taken in the company's offices, with mixed results. A reporter for *The Sioux City Journal* concluded, "It is very doubtful if the phonograph will become an important factor in the musical world until it has reached a greater degree of perfection...[it] talks plainly enough but does not as yet sing or whistle becomingly."

A month later, the recently arrived Walter S. Gray gave a private phonograph exhibition to three *Journal* reporters at which he played cylinders by local performers, as well as by Beach himself. "The instrumental work sounded somewhat 'choppy'...metallic and strident," one reporter observed. "The phonograph...imparts to singing a 'machiney' flavor."

In late May 1890, the Iowa Phonograph Company was said to have "hardly got a start," having provoked local business owners by placing some unreliable machines in their offices. However, the company's entertainment business was faring better. In August 1890, it was reported that the company was looking into the possibility of making and distributing recordings of the bands that were to perform at that year's Corn Palace festivities.

In February 1893, Beach employed his son Charles (who reportedly was embroiled in a scandalous affair with one of the Beach household's servants) to record tenor solos for Iowa Phonograph. A month later, Beach was replaced as general manager by Whitfield Stinson. The company appears to have gone dormant by the end of 1893, although its corporate charter was not officially cancelled until 1909.

ISLAND MUSIC AND RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1951

Offices: 2339 Franklin St., Toledo, OH

Record Products: Island

Owned and operated by country-music singer Roy Smith, who was broadcasting over Toledo radio station WSPD at the time. Island's first five releases were on sale by April 1949, and twenty records had been released by June, all featuring country-and-western fare by little-known artists. Little more was heard concerning the Island label after mid-1949. The company last appeared in *Billboard's* label directory in July 1951 (which listed many inactive or defunct companies), by which time it might have been inactive.

ISRAEL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. Late 1950s

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York; 781 Broadway, New York (Israel Music Foundation)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (Tel Aviv, Israel)

Pressing: Unknown U.S. plant(s)

Record Products: Israel

Founded in June 1948 by Oscar Regen, a New York hat manufacturer and United Jewish Appeal executive, to record and promote Jewish music, particularly the work of Israeli musicians and composers. Beginning in 1949, the company served as the commercial recording arm of the non-profit Israel Music Foundation. Hans J. Sachs served as recording director, and Davora Lapson (who was also associated with Folkraft Records) served as consultant on many of the folk-dance recordings.

Although references to the Israel Music Foundation appeared in the press as early as July 1948, the organization was not formally chartered until January 1949. Headed by Regen, its stated purpose was to build "a musical bridge between Israel and the rest of the world—the United States in particular." In addition to its recording program, the IMF sponsored an exchange scholarship fund for American and Israeli music students and worked closely with the Music and Arts Committee of the Zionist Organization of America. Board members included Gladys Swarthout, Deems Taylor, and Lawrence Tibbett.

Israel Record's repertoire ranged from traditional songs and dances (sometimes in modern adaptations) to opera, religious music, and classical works by contemporary Jewish composers. The company recorded in Israel exclusively, employing resident and visiting artists (in 1949 it flew New Yorker Regina Chomska to its Tel Aviv studio). Israel's artist roster included Elyakum's Israel Folk Dance Orchestra, Yosefa Shocken, Paolo Gorin, Abraham Vilkomirsky and other members of the Palestine National Opera, the Tel Aviv Chamber Orchestra, and the Israel Folk Symphony under the direction of Marc Lavry. The latter's recorded performance was criticized by a *Commentary* reviewer in 1949 for being "so much of one particular color that it tires the listener to hear too much of it at a time."

In October 1949, Regen announced the impending introduction of Israel LPs, the earliest of which were compiled from previously issued recordings and released in early 1950. Israel LPs and 45s were still available in the late 1950s.

ITALIANSTYLE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

A New York-based producer of records for the Italian immigrant market in the 1920s. Inspected discs were pressed by Pathé, but Italiansyle appears to have used mostly imported masters of unknown origin, and as such is beyond the scope of this work.

IVORY RECORDING COMPANY / IVORY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1951

Offices: 117 W. 48th St., New York; 1650 Broadway (Suite 301), New York (sales)

Record Products: Ivory, Salvation

Owned and operated by Dagmar Van Haur, launched Ivory after leaving her position at Dial Records (as secretary or sales manager, depending upon the account, the latter being far more likely). Before joining Dial, Van Haur had worked as a press agent for the Hicks

advertising agency in New York. Also an aspiring songwriter, she copyrighted several of her compositions during the 1940s.

The Ivory Recording Company's formation was announced by *Billboard* and *Cash Box* in July 1949, the same month in which the company signed a recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians that enabled it to record with union musicians. The initial releases were in production by then, and Van Haur had already set up national distribution through Cosnat (New York) and other distributors. There was no connection to Ivory Joe Hunter's "Ivory" Recordings, which had produced a single personal release in 1945 (*see next entry*).

Marketed mainly to jukebox operators, Ivory was a middle-of-road race-record label that favored ballads and close-harmony numbers. It was joined in the autumn of 1949 by the Salvation label, a subsidiary Black gospel line. Salvation's roster included Isabel Powell, the former wife of Congressman Adam Clayton Powell.

The Ivory Record Company was reorganized in January 1950, as Ivory Records. The company reportedly signed some new talent at that time, including Peggy Thomas, Leslie Scott, the Do Ray Me Trio, the Rhythm Kings, and Harold Connor, but little more was reported in the trade papers. It last appeared in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) but probably was inactive by then.

"IVORY" RECORDINGS

A personal label made for singer Ivory Joe Hunter c. mid-1945. A single record was produced, by Hunter with Johnny Moore's Three Blazes, which was later issued commercially by Exclusive. Hunter's next involvement with commercial recording began in August 1945, with the Pacific Record Company.

— J —

J. O. B. RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1974

Offices: 4008 S. Ellis Ave., Chicago (1949–1953); 1117 W. 59th St., Chicago (from late 1953)

Original-Master Source(s): United Broadcasting Studios (Chicago, 1949–1950), Modern Recording Studios (Chicago, from 1950), other independent studios

Record Products (78): J. O. B. (also styled JOB), Ruler

Launched in July 1949 by James Burke Oden (*a.k.a.* St. Louis Jimmy) and Joe Brown, following the failure of their short-lived Opera Records venture. J. O. B. initially operated at the same residential address given for Opera. Styling of the J. O. B. name was inconsistent, with the periods coming and going at various times. There was no connection to the short-lived Job label produced in 1950 by Ray Bartlett (*q.v.*).

Like its predecessor, J. O. B. was intended for the race-record market. Its first recording session, by Oden and Sunnyland Slim (Albert Luandrew) was held on August 26, 1949. It yielded twelve titles, two of which appeared on J. O. B.'s initial release. A month later, all of the masters were sold to Apollo (which substituted its own master numbers), and the operation went dormant.

Recording resumed under Brown's supervision in 1950, at Chicago's Modern Recording Studios, which Brown used for many of his early-1950s sessions. In addition to Sunnyland Slim (who would become a J. O. B. mainstay), Brown began to build a roster that included Eddy Boyd, Floyd Jones, J. B. Lenoir, Baby Face Leroy, Snooky Pryor, and Johnny Shines. In the early 1950s he licensed some masters to Chess, Nashboro, and other independent labels, sometimes bypassing issue on his own label (as was the case with some J. B. Hutto and Freddie Hall recordings that never appeared on J. O. B.). Although Brown produced most of his own material, he licensed several masters from Mayo Williams' Ebony label during 1953–1954.

J. O. B. Records did not appear in *Billboard*'s label directory until March 1952. In October 1953, the same publication briefly noted that Brown was "assuming personal supervision" of the label. However, the company never developed beyond a small-scale operation that was hampered by weak marketing and spotty distribution. Brown owned or invested in other labels beginning in the mid-1950s, including Fury, Abco, and Ruler, none of them

successful. In 1958, he and Vince (Bud) Brandom launched a short-lived revival of the Oriole Records Company.

New J. O. B. releases became increasingly sporadic in the 1960s, and recording was discontinued in 1966. Brown revived J. O. B. in 1971, but its last session was held in early 1972. In the meantime, Brown had been selling off his masters, and he finally closed the business in 1974. He died on February 7, 1976.

JADE RECORD COMPANY — See Castle Records, Inc. [III]

JAMBOREE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1949

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York (1945–1948); 314 W. 52nd St., New York (1949)

Record Products: Jamboree [1]

A jazz label launched in early 1945 by Morton (Morty) Kline, who served as production director. Former vaudeville headliner Ruth Royce served as vice-president and treasurer. President L. Miller appears to have had little involvement in operations. The records initially were self-distributed and retailed for \$1, considerably more than major-label releases at that time.

Jamboree styled its early recordings as "Sessions in Jam." Its first session, by Don Byas' All Star Quintet, was held on January 23, 1945, and the results were released on March 5. *Billboard* did not review the initial releases until September, praising Byas' tenor saxophone work but warning that the records had "no jukebox appeal." The company went on to release sides by the Dave Tough Quintet and Horace Henderson's Orchestra in 1945, then went largely dormant until July 1947, when it briefly resurfaced with two new releases by the Willie Anderson Trio.

After another two-year hiatus, Jamboree was reactivated in June 1949 by Roger Becker, a former sales manager for Bibletone Records, who announced that Jamboree would continue as a race label. A new series appeared briefly under Becker's management, numbered in the 1000s (replacing the original 500 series), but it appears to have been Jamboree's last.

The Jamboree name was later used by several unrelated companies, one of which (Tennessee Records) operated during the period covered by this work.

JAY-DAR RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1944 – 1945

Offices: 54 W. Randolph St., Chicago

Record Products: Jay-Dar

Jay-Dar Recording was affiliated with Columbia Music Publishers, beyond which little is known of the company. Officials in 1945 included Joseph D. Romano (president and sales manager), who was associated with the American Legion Band of Joliet, Illinois. Eileen Hilton served as secretary, and Elmer H. Romano as treasurer.

JAY-GEE RECORD COMPANY, INC. — See JUBILEE RECORDS COMPANY, INC.

JAZZ-DISC RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 82 E. Dixon Ave., Dayton, OH

Record Products: Jazz-Disc

A short-lived venture associated with the Dixieland Rhythm Kings, which jazz critic George Avakian described as "a spirited semi-pro group from Dayton, Ohio, which makes up in spirit what it lacks in finesse." The band appeared on the label's only confirmed releases, the first of which was reviewed by *Record Changer* magazine in April 1950. Jazz-Disc appears to have been discontinued after several releases, and in 1951 the Dixieland Rhythm Kings moved to Knickerbocker, a short-lived label produced for the Clef Music Shop (Columbus, Ohio).

JAZZ INFORMATION RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1943–1946

Offices: New York (PO box number only, no street address listed; mailing address c/o Commodore Records, 415 Lexington Ave., New York)

Record Products: Jazz Information

Conceived in 1942 as an adjunct to *Jazz Information*, a pioneering weekly magazine for jazz-record enthusiasts founded in 1939 and edited by Eugene Williams. Some Bunk Johnson recordings, made in New Orleans in 1942, were to have been the label's first releases, but because of wartime shellac shortages, they did not appear until January 1944. In the interim, *Jazz Information* released a few limited-edition reissues, for its subscribers only, of late 1920s and early 1930s Paramount recordings, using masters dubbed from commercial pressings. *Jazz Information*'s non-subscriber releases were handled by the Commodore Music Shop, which was still selling the records in late 1946. The label last appeared in *Billboard*'s February 1947 directory.

JAZZ LTD. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948–1949, 1952–1968

Offices: 11 E. Grand St. (1948–1960) and 162 E. Grand St. (from 1960), Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): United Broadcasting studio

Record Products: Jazz Ltd.

Launched in late 1948 by jazz clarinetist Bill Reinhardt and his wife, Ruth Sato Reinhardt, who owned the Jazz Ltd. club in Chicago. The Reinhardts, who favored traditional New Orleans-style jazz, were best known for having booked clarinetist Sidney Bechet into their club during 1947–1948.

The dates of Jazz Ltd.'s first two sessions, held in Chicago's United Broadcasting studio, have been widely debated, with estimates ranging from August 1948 for the initial session (featuring Bechet) to February 1949 for the second (featuring cornetists Doc Evans and Mugsy Spanier). *Down Beat* reported on January 28 that four recordings had already been made, but it did not specify which. Recordings from the two sessions, totaling eight titles, were released in March 1949, in a four-disc album set that featured cover art by Bob Engle. Produced in a limited edition of 1,000, the album reportedly sold out within several weeks. Three of the records were later re-pressed and distributed individually by Egmont Sonderling's Swing-Master Record Corporation. In July 1950, the Reinhardts licensed the masters to Regal Records, which released the first of what would be many LP reissues of those recordings.

The Jazz Ltd. label resurfaced in 1952, when the Reinhardts produced a "Tribute to Jazz Ltd." LP by their house band (from masters recorded in late 1951), which could be purchased only at their club. Later that year, they leased the 1949 masters to Atlantic (Regal having ended operations), which reissued them in EP and LP form. Other privately issued, limited-edition Jazz Ltd. LPs followed at irregular intervals, the last of which appeared in 1964. The label resurfaced briefly in 1967, with a 45-rpm EP reissue of four 1940s recordings; and again in 1968, on a standard 45 by the house band. The club was finally closed in 1972, after many years of declining attendance. Delmark acquired the Jazz Ltd. masters in 1992.

JAZZ MAN RECORD SHOP (Discs)

Record Production: From 1941

Offices: 1221 Vine St., Hollywood, CA (early 1940s–1944); 6331 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood (1944); 6240 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood (from 1945)

Original-Master Source(s): Capitol, C. P. MacGregor, Picto Sound Studios, Radio Recorders, KFRC-San Francisco studio, KOL-Seattle studio, probably others

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing, The Bishop Presses, other independent plants

Record Products: Jazz Man, Crescent [2]

Founded by jazz enthusiast Dave Stuart in 1939, the Jazz Man Record Shop became popular in the 1940s with musicians, writers, record collectors, and various hangers-on (including Igor Stravinsky, who was said to frequent the store, although he never purchased anything).

Stuart launched the Jazz Man label in partnership with Lester Koenig, initially as an outlet for recordings by Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band, representing the White branch

of the 1940s New Orleans revivalist movement. Watters' band first recorded for Stuart on December 19, 1941, at the Picto Sound Studios in San Francisco, and Stuart would continue to do most of his recording in independent studios. Marili Morden, who would later assume the presidency of the company, initially managed distribution and marketing.

In 1942, Jazz Man released Stuart's first records by veteran jazz trumpeter Bunk Johnson, recorded on a Presto portable machine on June 11, 1942, in Grunewald's Music Store in New Orleans (one report from the period erroneously stated the recording were made in the Jazz Man record shop in Santa Monica). The sound quality was so poor that initially there were doubts whether the recordings should be issued, but engineers were able to salvage them to some extent. Stuart later recorded Johnson under more favorable conditions at the WSBM studio in New Orleans, and elsewhere.

Stuart also obtained Jelly Roll Morton's private 1938 acetates, which he dubbed and issued on Jazz Man in 1943, and he made new recordings by Kid Ory and other New Orleans veterans during 1944–1945. However, the label's early focus remained largely on young White West Coast traditionalists who attempted to emulate the older Black musicians' style. A *Chicago Tribune* reviewer wrote of several Turk Murphy sides in 1948, "They are fun because they return you to a well-loved time and a well-loved style, and do it exceedingly well."

Early Jazz Man releases used white labels with the trademark in red or blue, which listed the shop's address as 6331 Santa Monica Boulevard, Hollywood. Later issues, in silver on green (or occasionally other colors), reflected the store's change of ownership and subsequent move to Santa Monica Boulevard. Distribution at that time was largely limited to mail-order and specialty shops.

Nesuhi Ertegun (the brother of Atlantic Records founder Ahmet Ertegun) joined the Jazz Man staff in the summer of 1943. Ertegun and Morden took over management of the Jazz Man recording operation in the later 1940s (by which time they were married), before finally purchasing the business outright, at which time Morden took over as president. Koenig went on to launch Good Time Jazz, which featured similar material.

In 1951, the Erteguns sued Moses Asch after his Folkways label reissued Jazz Man material without permission. The Ertegun's decision to forgo a trial in favor of an out-of-court settlement was criticized in the trade papers as a missed opportunity to set a legal precedent against bootlegging. At about the same time, Koenig took over distribution of Jazz Man records through his California Record Distributors, then purchased the label from the Erteguns in 1952.

The Jazz Man label was discontinued at the end of 1954. Portions of its catalog were reissued on Good Time Jazz LPs, and many of its masters were also licensed to other U.S. and foreign labels over the years. The Jazz Man Record Shop remained in business, under a succession of owners and with occasional changes of address, until 1984.

JAZZOLGY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1949

Offices: 20 Scotland Rd., Elizabeth, NJ (1949–early 1951); 131 S. Woodland, Englewood, NJ (from early 1951)

Record Products (78s): Jazzology

Owned and operated by George H. Buck, Jr., a fan of traditional New Orleans–style jazz. *Billboard* briefly mentioned the company's launch on November 5, 1949. Pressed on vinyl, the records initially were sold only in album sets, which at nearly \$2 per disc were unusually expensive for the period. LPs, mostly compiled from previously issued recordings, were introduced in late 1950.

Jazzology's first release, a multi-disc album by a Tony Parenti–Wild Bill Davison group, was reviewed in January 1950 by *The Record Changer's* Bucklin Moore, who found the records to be generally agreeable but complained that the predictable arrangements "get to be pretty damned tiresome." Robert L. Thompson, writing in the same publication, was more pointed in his criticism of a slightly later Jazzology "all-star" release: "Line 'em up; tell 'em 'play!'—and you get something like this. A romping good performance, but nothing really remarkable... The album notes are naive."

Rights to the Jazzology catalog are currently held by the George H. Buck, Jr. Foundation, which continues to market the Jazzology and American Music labels in CD format.

JEDLICKA, ED – See Laborator Ed. Jedlicka

JEL RECORDS, INC. — See Gala Record Company

JET RECORDS

Formation of this Brooklyn-based label by Sam Green and George Schneider was announced in November 1950, after they purchased eight calypso masters from Renico Simmons' Trinidad-based Humming Bird label. Jet's first original releases appeared after the period covered by this work. During the mid-to-late 1950s, the Jet name was used by at least four other unrelated labels (one in Houston, one in Indianapolis, and two in California).

JEWEL RECORD COMPANY [I]

A trade name of the Plaza Music Company and successor American Record Corporation, used during 1927–1931. Although Jewel produced no recordings of its own, a few early issues use masters that are not known to have appeared on other labels and might have been recorded for Jewel's exclusive use.

JEWEL RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1951

Offices: 1514-1520 Crossroads of the World, Los Angeles (at founding); 9307-17 Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA (mid-1940s); 7620 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles (to early 1949); 1111 N. El Centro Ave., Los Angeles (early 1949–1951)

Pressing: Alco Research and Engineering plant (Los Angeles)

Record Products: Jewel [3], Scoop [3]

Launched in June 1945 by talent agent and band leader Ben Pollack, in partnership with L. C. Papworth and Ernest G. Wetterhahn. The partners' trademark application claimed use of the Jewel name on records since July 12, 1945. At one point, trumpeter Harry James attempted to invest in Jewel. However, James already held an exclusive and highly lucrative contract with Columbia, and his motives became the subject of much speculation in the trade papers. James' legal advisor discouraged the idea, and ultimately he was turned down by Pollack.

The Jewel Record Company's formation was reported in July 1945 by *Billboard*, which noted that Kay Starr and Bob Graham had already signed exclusive contracts. After a slow start, Pollack bought out Papworth and Wetterhahn in January 1946 and assumed full control of Jewel. The company's listing in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook* shows the Metro Record Company and 20th Century Record Company as trade names of Jewel Record. Nothing has been discovered concerning these companies, which have no known connection to other, similarly named labels or companies. Pollack also operated Crossroads Music, an affiliated music-publishing business, during this period.

Jewel records were produced in several series, including Album, Diamond, Gold Note, Jade, Onyx, Ruby, Sapphire, and Yiddish. Labels underwent major redesigns on at least two occasions. The initial releases, advertised in October 1945, featured Starr, Graham, and Betty Bradley in what were described as "danceable vocals." In the same month, Pollack signed Boyd Raeburn's Orchestra, Jewel's first "name" band, taking it away from Guild. Raeburn's Jewel recordings, in addition to reportedly selling very well, received high praise from the critics. *Billboard* lauded his 1946 Jewel album set as "some of the most original material to come out of a dance band in our time." However, Pollack failed in his attempt to sell the masters to Decca, and later, Columbia.

Pollack offered Jewel recording contracts only to artists with whom he held management contracts. Mel Tormé (one of the most promising singers he managed, already being billed as "the singer with the velvet-fog voice") declined, signing instead with Decca. In early 1946, Lamplighter Records' Ted Yerxa attempted to sign away Kay Starr while she was still under contract to Jewel. At Yerxa's urging, Starr sued Pollack, claiming she had received only \$100 per side and that Pollack had done nothing to promote her records. After the suit was settled out of court, Pollack sued Yerxa, claiming that he had induced Starr to commit a breach of contract. Ultimately, Starr's Lamplighter contract was voided, and Pollack continued to sell her Jewel recordings.

In March 1946 Pollack announced that he would begin selling Jewel records in drug stores, malt shops, and grocery stores, using an unnamed firm to handle placement. He quickly abandoned the idea after some large retail record dealers threatened to boycott the line if he proceeded with his plan.

Pollack signed a distribution agreement with Black and White Records' Paul Reiner in August 1947, under which Pollack would serve as Black and White's general manager and oversee its artists-and-repertoire department. Production of the Jewel label was to continue, with Reiner holding an option to buy out Jewel, and the catalogs were merged to some extent. The arrangement unraveled in October 1948, with Reiner and Pollack parting ways amicably, and Jewel resuming operation as an independent label under Pollack's full control. In the same month, Jewel had a minor hit with Dan Grissom's "Recess In Heaven," which was almost immediately sold to Columbia.

In March 1949, Pollack set up his own company to handle national distribution of Jewel as well as Highway, Kem, Tech-Art, and other small independent labels. A month later, Scoop (unrelated to two slightly earlier labels of the same name) was launched as a Jewel subsidiary for the race-record market, with distribution handled by other companies. Its initial releases, in June, featured Von Streeter and his Wig Poppers. In August, Decca's Coral subsidiary purchased Streeter's Scoop recordings, which had received enthusiastic reviews in *Billboard*, and the label appears to have been discontinued by the end of 1949. Scoop's brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 label directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

Pollack returned to the bandstand with his own orchestra in late 1949, but he remained marginally involved in Jewel's operation for a time. In May 1951 he sold the company, including 150 masters, to Savoy's Herman Lubinsky, who discontinued the Jewel label. Pollack served briefly as Lubinsky's West Coast artists-and-repertoire manager after the sale.

JIM BECK RECORDS / JIM BECK RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1956

Offices: 3529 Mockingbird Ln., Dallas

Original-Master Sources: Own studios — Main St., Dallas (late 1940s); 1101 Ross Ave., Dallas (1950s)

Record Products: Dude; masters numerous labels after the period covered by this work

James Albert (Jim) Beck was an independent talent scout and recording engineer whose Dallas studio became a gathering place for local country-and-western artists in the 1940s. There was no connection to the Minneapolis-based Beck Recording Studios, a transcription company headed by Joseph H. Beck that is beyond the scope of this work.

Beck launched his Dude label in 1947, as a country-and-western line. The records were distributed by Nashville-based Bulleit Enterprises (Bullet Records), which also handled publication of the original songs appearing on Dude. He appears to have discontinued the label in 1949 or early 1950, focusing instead on locating and recording talent for other companies. His best-known discovery was Lefty Frizzell, for whom he secured a Columbia contract in 1950. Frizzell's success brought Beck to the attention of Columbia artists-and-repertoire manager Don Law, who used Beck's studio for many sessions by Frizzell, Ray Price, Marty Robbins, Billy Walker, and other Columbia artists. Beck also recorded masters for Bullet, Decca, Imperial, and other labels in the early-to-mid 1950s, always specializing in country and rockabilly material.

Beck died on May 3, 1956, at the age of thirty-nine, after accidentally inhaling toxic fumes while cleaning his recording equipment. By that time, Jimmy Rollins was serving as chief technician, and he continued to operate the studio for a few months following Beck's death.

JOCO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1956

Offices: 406 S. Division St., Northfield, MN

Original-Master Sources: United Broadcasting (Chicago), probably other independent studios

Record Products Art Floral Record Shop; Joco, Joco-Western

Launched in 1949, initially as a vehicle for Doc Evans' dixieland-style jazz band. The company's earliest issues, on the obscure Art Floral Record Shop label, were sold

individually and had limited distribution. Art Floral was soon phased out in favor of the Joco label, which marketed the same recordings nationally, packaged in album sets.

Several "Jazz Heritage" albums by Evans' band, all devoted to traditional jazz, were released during 1949–1950 and were later transferred to 45s. Some of Evans' masters were also reissued on the Chicago-based Dublin's label. The earliest Joco albums featured notes by John Lucas, of Carleton College in Northfield. Joco later expanded its roster and added a country-and-western series, Joco-Western. The records were still being sold in 1956, although it is not clear whether any new releases were being made by then. The catalog was later acquired by Jazzology.

JOHN BAVA RECORDS — See Cozy Record Company

JOHNSON, ELDRIDGE R. — See Victor and Victor Predecessor Companies

JONES, EARLE W. (Discs)

Jones (Central) Recording Laboratories / Standard Records, Inc. / E.W. Jones Research Laboratories / Jones Sound Products

Record Production: c. 1916 – 1921; Early 1930s

Offices: 104 6th Ave., New York (1920s); 729 7th Ave., New York (by 1930)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios—104 and 662 6th Ave., New York (confirmed); 76 Court St., Brooklyn, NY; and Madison Ave. & 59th St., New York (both per Jones; unconfirmed); 540 12th Ave., New York (by 1930)

Pressing: Arto Company (early 1920s); Siemon Hard Rubber Company (from 7/1921); probably other independent plants

Record Products: Masters for Apollo [3], Arto and related labels, Cleartone and related labels, Harmograph (brown label), Lyric [3] and related labels, Maloof, Mandel, Meteor [1]; probably other minor labels (early 1920s); custom recordings (1930s)

Earle W. Jones was a prolific supplier of masters to many independent labels in the early 1920s, and was also involved in the launch of the Cameo Record Corporation in 1922.

In August 1916, Jones and Edward R. Harris filed a U. S. patent (#1,461,849) on a process for recording masters on coated glass, which they referred to as "phonoautograms," the term first used six decades earlier for Leon Scott's phonographic tracings. The masters could then be copied to film, from which a photographically sensitized copper stamper could be produced. It was not a new idea (Emile Berliner made experimental recordings using a similar process in the early 1890s), and the patent was not approved until late 1923. There is no evidence that Jones ever used the process commercially.

Jones did not produce any recordings for his own use, but he recorded masters for many minor labels. The Jones Central Recording Laboratories ("Central" was soon dropped) were first listed in the 1917 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory*, with a note that the company "manufactures records in any quantity." Jones' first known advertisement, in the April 1917 edition of *TMW*, claimed that he was already producing vertical-cut records for "a number of well-known companies" while expanding his facilities to take on new business. At that time he claimed to operate studios in New York and Brooklyn (although in a 1955 interview he seemed to suggest they were rented) and to have an orchestra and "the leading popular artists now making records" at his disposal. Jones encouraged clients to submit their lists of desired titles to which he would match the appropriate artists and accompaniments, make the recordings, and then deliver finished masters, stampers, and pressings to the client.

By early 1920, Jones was producing lateral-cut masters for which he employed numerous blocks of matrix numbers, some of which contain only a few known recordings. The largest and most widely circulated block was the 41000 series (not to be confused with Emerson's identically numbered series of the same period), which appeared on labels marketed by the Arto Company, Clarion Record Company, and Lyraphone Company, among others. The series was begun before July 1920, as proven by the existence of several 41000-series recordings by Billy Murray, who became exclusive to Victor in that month.

In July 1921 Jones entered into a reciprocal agreement with the Siemon Hard Rubber Company (an independent pressing plant) under which would provide masters to Siemon's custom-label clients. A typical result was the formation of the Gaelic Record Company, a

joint venture for which Jones made the recordings and Siemon made the pressings. Such arrangements were to be short lived, however. Later that year, the Jones Recording Laboratories were acquired by the newly formed Cameo Record Corporation. Jones was awarded a vice-presidency and put in charge of the Cameo studio, securing Cameo as a Siemon pressing customer in the process.

Jones moved his recording equipment to the new Cameo studio in the autumn of 1921, but in March 1922 he left the company for reasons that went unexplained in the trade press. Jones' 1955 interview contains some easily disproved fabrications in regard to his tenure with the Cameo Record Corporation, including false claims that personally founded the company, and that he implemented electrical recording there in 1923.

Following his departure from Cameo, Jones resumed business as Standard Records, Inc., a master-brokering agency unrelated to the earlier Standard Talking Machine Company of Chicago. This company seems to have been the source of the mediocre, S- prefixed masters (not be confused with similarly prefixed Okeh master numbers) that appeared on Bell, Cleartone, and other minor labels during 1922–1923. Most were old Jones Laboratories masters (sometimes renumbered) that he had recorded for Arto, Lyric [3], and other defunct labels, along with some material from Criterion Laboratories and other sources that have yet to be identified.

Jones returned to Cameo in 1923 as a recording engineer (but no longer holding an executive position), then resigned on July 1, 1924, to pursue "important plans in the industry." A short time later, he was listed as an incorporator of the Moon Record Corporation, which was chartered in Albany, New York, to produce records and phonographs. What, if anything, Moon produced has not been discovered.

By 1930, Jones was again operating his own studio, as E. W. Jones Research Laboratories, which specialized in the production of sound films but is not known to have produced any recordings for the consumer market. In 1931 he acquired the patent of Hobart Simpson and Thomas Burhans (#1,928,935) for use in production of 16-mm sound-on-film motion pictures. Reorganized as Jones Research Sound Products, the company relocated and briefly produced film soundtrack recordings. After that venture, there is little evidence of Jones' activities until 1949, when he reappeared in the Patent Office records with a filing on an improved electrical recording head.

JOY RECORDS — See Murray Singer Records

JUBILEE RECORDS COMPANY, INC. / JAY-GEE RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1970

Offices: 764 10th Ave., New York (1946–1950); 315 W. 47th St. (Cosnat Distributing, early 1950s; and 7/1959–1970); 1650 Broadway (mid-1950s); 318 W. 48th St. (from late 1950s); 220–224 W. 42nd St., New York (Natural Records, 1948)

Record Products (78s): Jubilee, [It's a] Natural, Hush-Hush (from 1950); Kiddie Time (children's, from late 1949)

Jubilee Records was the successor to Quality Records (*q.v.*), which had introduced the Jubilee label in the spring of 1946. Max Silverman and Ahmet Ertegun departed Quality soon after its launch, leaving Herb Abramson in control of the Jubilee label. In 1947, Abramson (who was attending dental school at the time) sold his share in the company to Jerry Blaine and invested the proceeds in Atlantic Records.

Blaine moved his newly acquired operation to New York and renamed it the Jubilee Records Company. Initially sharing office space with Blaine's Cosnat Distributing Company, the company was first listed in *Radio & Television Retailing's* September 1947 directory. Its earliest star attraction was the Orioles, a vocal group managed by Sid De May. The Orioles' first session, held under Blaine's auspices in July 1948, resulted in the only known release on De May's Natural label (also known as "It's a Natural," as styled on the label, and advertised in both forms). Manufactured by Jubilee and distributed by Cosnat, the record quickly became a national hit. In October, Blaine took over management of the Orioles, transferred their recordings and contract to Jubilee, and scuttled the Natural label after making De May a partner.

The Orioles' Jubilee releases, which consistently charted in the *Billboard* and *Cash Box* best-seller lists, were so successful that in July 1950 Blaine presented the group a new

Cadillac along with a \$50,000 royalty check covering their 1949 sales. Not long after, Blaine redesigned the Jubilee label and began shifting its primary focus from Black gospel to doo-wop and rhythm-and-blues. Jubilee had an unexpected hit in the spring of 1949 with its reissue of two sides by the Master Keys, which Blaine had purchased from the Twentieth Century label. The record sold so well that Blaine offered a \$500 reward in an unsuccessful attempt to locate and sign the group, whose whereabouts were unknown.

In the early 1950s, Blaine launched the Jay-Gee Record Company to take over the production of Jubilee and other labels he had acquired. Josie, a subsidiary label, was added to the Jay-Gee line-up in 1954, in part to tap the emerging rock-and-roll market. Dana Records was acquired in the same year. Jay-Gee was reorganized during the summer of 1959 as a division of Cosnat, to whose offices it returned after having occupied its own premises for some time. Managed by Jerry Blaine's brother Steve, Jay-Gee controlled production of Dana, Gold Eagle, Port, Todd, and other minor labels, in addition to Jubilee and Josie.

Jay-Gee discontinued production at the end of 1969, and in May 1970 the company's masters, studio, and music-publishing subsidiary were sold to Steve Blaine's newly formed JDM Record Corporation. The Jubilee catalog subsequently passed through a succession of owners, including the Viewlex Corporation (Buddha Records), Roulette, Rhino Records, Electric and Musical Industries, and Time Warner. Rights are currently held by Warner Music (North America) and Electric and Musical Industries (all other regions).

JUGOSLAVIA JEWELRY AND PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924

Offices: Milwaukee (main office), Detroit (branch office)

Original-Master Source(s): Starr Piano Company (Gennett)

Pressing: Starr Piano Company

Record Products: Jugoslavia

The Jugoslavia Jewelry & Phonograph Company was incorporated in Wisconsin on August 12, 1924, by K. G. Mainich, D. M. Mikaljevich, and M. Arsenovich, to deal in "jewelry, wholesale and retail." No mention was made of records in the company's incorporation filing, but it commissioned thirty-four recordings from Gennett's studio in Richmond, Indiana, from July 7 through July 24, 1924. All were by Vasa Bukvich and the Yugoslavian Tamburitza Orchestra of Indiana Harbor, Indiana. The company was still operating in 1928, when it sought approval for a stock offering, but it does not appear to have issued any additional records.

JUKE BOX RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944–1947

Offices: 2304 W. 7th St., Los Angeles (United Record Co., 1944–1945); 7 W. 46th St., New York

Pressing: Own East and West Coast plants

Record Products: Juke Box, Sterling

Founded in early 1944 by Arthur N. (Art) Rupe (*née* Goldberg), in partnership with Benjamin O. Siegel, after Rupe lost most of his investment in the Premier Record Company. Early Juke Box labels credited production to the United Record Company, which was listed as the records' manufacturer in the 1945 *Record Retailing Yearbook*. The records (which at \$1.05 each were considerably more expensive than the major-label releases) were handled by J. F. Bard, Jack Gutshall, and other distributors specializing in small independent labels.

Juke Box's initial release (The Sepia Tones' "Boogie #1" / "When He Comes Home to Me") appeared in the spring of 1944, on a white label that apparently was used only briefly. The latter title was replaced by "Sophisticated Blues" on later pressings with Juke Box's standard black label. During 1944–1946, Juke Box had several minor jukebox hits by the Sepia Tones, Roy Milton and his Solid Serenaders, and Marion Abernathy (masquerading as "The Blues Woman"). The latter's "Voo-It! Voo-It!" was advertised as "a colossal collector of coins" (referring to its jukebox take) and was later licensed by Rupe's Specialty Records. Juke Box also played a large role in resurrecting the career of veteran blues singer Alberta Hunter,

despite the qualms of a *Cash Box* reviewer who wrote that her style was "great stuff for personal appearance work, but how it [will] go on wax is something else."

In August 1945, Rupe and Siegel signed a partnership agreement with Pittsburgh producer Albert E. Middleman (formerly of Hit Records), creating Sterling Records (*q.v.*). Juke Box remained in operation as a division of Sterling, with Middleman taking over the position of president. However, relations between Rupe and Middleman became increasingly contentious, and the partnership was dissolved after Rupe demanded a formal audit of Sterling Records' books.

One year later, Rupe sold his interest in the Juke Box Record Company to Middleman, while retaining the rights to his masters, and used the proceeds to launch Specialty Records (*q.v.*). Middleman continued to market Juke Box records, which were advertised alongside Sterling, until August 1947.

JUMP RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1132 Tamarind Ave., Hollywood, CA (1944–1945); 810 Rollin St., S. Pasadena, CA (1945–mid-1947); 1009 N. Wilton Place, Hollywood (from mid-1947)

Original-Master Sources: Radio Recorders, other independent studios

Pressing: Independent plant(s) (1944–c. 4/1946); The Bishop Presses (from c. 4/1946)

Record Products: Jump, Corax

Launched in early 1944 by Clive Acker and Ed Kocher, owners of The Turntable (*q.v.*) and The Bishop Presses (an independent pressing plant). Acker and Kocher did not file for copyright on the Jump name until August 8 of that year. The Jump label was devoted exclusively to jazz, particularly traditional material by White West Coast musicians. The obscure Corax label, which inexplicably was not licensed for jukebox use, was used for country-and-western releases.

Session Records' Phil Featheringill purchased Jump from Acker and Kocher in March 1947, with The Bishop Presses retaining the manufacturing rights. The Jump label quickly supplanted Session, which Featheringill discontinued at year's end. In addition to its own recordings, including some previously unissued Session masters, Jump occasionally issued material it licensed from Tempo (England) and other outside sources. LPs were introduced shortly before the label was discontinued in the early 1950s.

In April 1954, Featheringill sold his entire catalog, including unissued masters, to Pax Records. Many of his recordings have since been widely reissued, legally or otherwise, in LP and CD formats.

JUPITER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1950

Offices: 808 S. Vermont, Los Angeles (5/1946–1948); 425 S. Western Ave, Los Angeles (1948–1949)

Record Products: Jupiter

The recording division of Jupiter Publishing Company, which operated at the same address. Jupiter Records was launched in the spring of 1946, to plug the publishing division's songs. It joined the Phonograph Record Manufacturers Association (a group of independent West Coast companies) in June 1947.

The records were first mentioned in May 1946, in a Jupiter Publishing advertisement. The initial releases, by Red Mack's Orchestra, were dismissed by a *Billboard* reviewer as "little to excite the musical world," "pallid," and "harmonically dull." His advice was to "forget about these." Nothing more was reported on Jupiter Records in the trade papers, although the company continued to appear in *Billboard*'s directories as late as January 1949. A Jupiter Records listed in *Billboard*'s July 1950 directory, with only a Los Angeles post-office box number given, has not been confirmed as the same company. Jupiter Records' brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

K. C. RECORD COMPANY — See White Church Recording Company

KANGAROO RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: Los Angeles

Record Products: Kangaroo

A very short-lived label launched in the spring of 1949 by Black actor, singer, and composer Clarence Muse. Columnist Erskine Johnson, who reported the company's launch in late March 1949, stated that its slogan was "They Jump," although it does not appear on any inspected labels. Kangaroo's first release was "Muse Awhile," by Muse with Dusty Brooks and the Four Tones (the title coming from Muse's Muse-A-While Ranch in Perris, California). The venture, which did not advertise nationally and was not covered by the trade papers, disappeared after several releases.

KANSAS CITY TALKING MACHINE COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: Late 1890s

Offices: 45 Armour Building, Kansas City, MO (1897–1898); 425 Delaware St., Kansas City (from 1898)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Cylinders

The Kansas City Talking Machine Company advertised itself as "The Largest Original Record Manufacturers in the World," undoubtedly an exaggeration. Founded by Frank H. Woodbury, the company began advertising locally in early 1897, as a Columbia dealer. By mid-year it was advertising from the Midwest to Texas and Arizona.

Kansas City Talking Machine advertised "warranted original" cylinders for 50¢ each, half the usual price at that time, leading *The Phonoscope's* editor to speculate that they might be pirated copies. In 1897 he admonished the company's owners, "If you are still selling original Sousa's Bands at fifty cents, you should insist on keeping up this good work, because you deserve credit for losing twenty-five or fifty cents on each record, for the good of the cause... Furthermore, if you imagine that you are selling original Gilmore or Sousa Band records at fifty cents each, and advertise same, conscientiously believe they are originals, you have been misled, the same as the public are who read your circular."

However, Kansas City Talking Machine did make some original recordings, probably beginning in 1898. Its roster included Hattie Nevada (composer of "The Letter Edged in Black" and other popular ballads), May C. Hyers, Arthur Gladstone, Morris Manley, and other regional artists, most of whom are not known to have recorded for other companies. Nevada's recording of "The Letter Edged in Black" appears to have been exceptionally popular, based upon press coverage it received. The company also published and marketed sheet music by Nevada and other local songwriters.

The Kansas City Talking Machine Company probably did not produce any original recordings after 1899 or early 1900, based upon issued song titles. It remained in business until approximately 1910, continuing to publish sheet music and running premium schemes for local businesses, in which cheap phonographs were given away with the purchase of a certain number of records. Although primarily a Columbia dealer in later years, for a time the company also sold Lambert cylinders and American Record Company (Hawthorne, Sheble & Prescott) discs.

KANSAS PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: Early 1890s

Offices: 111 W. 9th St., Topeka, KS; Rooms 5 and 7, Stormont Building, Topeka (show rooms, 1889); 114 S. 5th St., Topeka (show rooms, from c. 1890); Wichita, KS (branch office)

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Kansas and New Mexico. The company was organized on November 15, 1888, by George E. Tewksbury (who was also a co-incorporator of the Nebraska Phonograph Company, which had been formed a week earlier), H. P. Dillon,

P. I. Bonbrake, R. R. Gemmel, A. B. Pool, and Hamilton S. Wickes. Tewksbury served as president until 1892, then as general manager after Simon S. Ott (also of Nebraska Phonograph) assumed the presidency. A Wichita branch office was opened in the spring of 1889.

The Kansas City Phonograph Company held nightly exhibitions during the week of February 11, 1889 (prior to opening its show-rooms to the general public) at which it staged demonstrations for stenographers, lawyers, and teachers. Like the other North American licensees, Kansas Phonograph at first supplied the machines only on lease and marketed them primarily for business use. In March 1890, the company reportedly returned two rail-car loads of unwanted phonographs to the Edison factory in New Jersey for replacement with newer models.

Kansas Phonograph's managers initially seem to have had little interest in the entertainment field, but in December 1891, *The Phonogram* reported that the company had patented a coin-operated phonograph, which it was placing successfully with unnamed Eastern phonograph companies. A month later, Tewksbury opened the first coin-operated phonograph parlor in Kansas. Located at 117 E. Douglas Avenue in Wichita, it was managed by what the *Wichita Daily Eagle* described as "a polite young man who will make it pleasant for his patrons." Based upon a listing of the artists who could be heard on the machines, Kansas Phonograph probably was stocking them with Columbia cylinders.

The company confirmed at the June 1892 National Phonograph Association meeting that it was also making original recordings. *The Phonogram* for June 1893 made a passing reference to Kansas Phonograph's recording activities, reporting, "Topeka now gives us through the phonograph the airs of its famous musicians." Thus far, no catalog or other listing of the company's original offerings has been found.

Tewksbury and Ott left Kansas Phonograph at the start of 1893 and moved to New Jersey to launch the United States Phonograph Company (*q.v.*). The Kansas Phonograph Company was still doing business in the late 1890s (although probably no longer producing original recordings), as an Edison distributor and retailer.

KALIPHON PHONOGRAPH RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1940s

Offices: New York

Record Products: Kaliphon, Kaliphone

Launched c. 1943 by violinist Nick Doneff following his split with Aydin Asllan (*q.v.*). Kaliphon offered the same sort of Armenian, Greek, Turkish, and Sephardic fare as Asllan's Metropolitan and Me Re labels. Kalifon used its own masters, including some by Doneff, as well as some from unknown (possibly foreign) sources. The label name was changed to Kaliphone in the later 1940s.

KAPPA RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1948 – 1951

Offices: 1028 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles (1948–mid-1949); 932 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles (mid-1949–c. 1951); 940 Serrano Ave., Los Angeles (1951)

Record Products: Kappa

Launched in late 1948 by Ray Krasue and Jim McDonald, who advertised their initial releases in early 1949. Kappa featured a mixture of pop, novelties, and cocktail-lounge and Dixieland-style jazz (the latter by Sharkey Bonano and his Kings of Dixieland, which recorded eight titles for Kappa in New Orleans during June 1949). No mention of Kappa Records has been found after mid-1951.

KARPATIA RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924 – 1925

Offices: Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): New York Recording Laboratories, possibly Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories

Record Products: Karpathia

A short-lived ethnic label of unknown ownership, specializing in German material. The few confirmed issues use masters made by the New York Recording Laboratories,

apparently for Karpathia's exclusive use, between November 1924 and November 1925. Some pressings from Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories masters have been reported anecdotally.

JOHN KEATING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1940s

Offices: 614 Studio Building, Portland, OR; Seattle (from mid-1940s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Masters for Morrison, probably other small independent labels

John Keating advertised "all types transcriptions, recording, and pressings" in the early 1940s. John Kneass served as the studio's first production manager. By the mid-1940s, the company had opened a studio in Seattle, where its primary commercial client was the Morrison label (see Morrison Music Company).

KEEN-O-PHONE COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1913–1914

Offices: 40 Market St., 136–138 S. 4th St., and 227 Broad St. (retail headquarters), Philadelphia; 1261 Broadway (New York branch office, from 9/1913). Incorporated in Wilmington, DE.

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — 1202 (later, 1209) Walnut St., Philadelphia

Pressing Plant and Factory: Frankford, PA

Record Products: Keen-O-Phone

The Keen-O-Phone Company was the corporate descendent of the Keen Talking Machine Company, a Philadelphia phonograph and record retailer. Morris Keen (shown in error as Monroe Keen in at least one early report) filed several phonograph-related patents beginning in 1905, the year in which he is believed to have launched his first company. He was sued at least twice for selling records below list price, in 1905 by the Universal Talking Machine Company (Zonophone), and in 1906 by the Victor Talking Machine Company. The Keen Talking Machine Company suspended operation in the latter year, and its charter was finally voided in 1909, after having failed to pay taxes for three years.

In November 1906, Morris Keen launched the Keen-O-Phone Company in partnership with Gustave Lyon. *The Talking Machine World* for February 1908 reported that the company has been reorganized by Keen, Lyon, and Alfred Gordon, as a Delaware corporation operating in Philadelphia. The 1908 Delaware state auditor's report showed that the company paid \$50 in state taxes for the year.

Keen-O-Phone initially marketed an external-horn, mechanical-feed phonograph for lateral-cut records that employed a traveling turntable with fixed reproducer. Based upon a patented design that Thomas Kraemer had earlier assigned to Hawthorne & Sheble, it was quickly taken off the market under threat from Victor. The company then turned to the production of universal phonographs, which were equipped with sapphire and diamond points for vertical-cut discs, as well as a steel-needle attachment for lateral-cuts. Many of the cabinet designs were novel, including an open-sided model that exposed the works. Several models with horns built into the lid were patented in 1910 and 1911. The most expensive models were housed in high-quality cabinets manufactured for Keen-O-Phone by the Pooley Cabinet Company in Philadelphia.

Victor sued Keen-O-Phone repeatedly for various patent infringements, real or imagined, related to the design of its internal-horn phonographs. It prevailed at least once, in a 1913 decision covering the horn-in-lid design. In 1911, Keen-O-Phone expanded into the musical-instrument field when it acquired the Bauer Company, manufacturer of the popular S. S. Stewart line of banjos, mandolins, and other stringed instruments. Keen-O-Phone's capitalization was doubled to \$1 million in the autumn of 1912, after a group of prominent Philadelphia businessmen agreed to invest in the company.

The first indication that Keen-O-Phone was preparing to introduce its own records was a March 1912 report that the company had secured Fred Hager as its musical director "to handle the talent and recording end of the business." At about the same time, Louis von der Mehden noted in his diary that a disc-cutting machine was being tested in the U. S. Phonograph Company's cylinder studio by Charles Hibbard, who was hired as Keen-O-Phone's recording engineer a short time later.

In April 1912, Keen-O-Phone sales manager Emil Bauer confirmed that record production was progressing steadily and a catalog was being prepared. However, little more was heard about record production until the autumn, at which time the company projected an initial release in mid-November. Ultimately, unspecified problems delayed the records' debut until April 9, 1913, when the company finally announced that it was ready to begin deliveries.

Some early researchers incorrectly assumed that Keen-O-Phone purchased the assets of the Boston Talking Machine Company (Phono-Cut), based upon the introduction of Keen-O-Phone records shortly after Phono-Cut curtailed production, as well as Fred Hager's employment by both companies. But in fact, the Phono-Cut masters were acquired by the Starr Piano Company, not Keen-O-Phone. A thorough comparison of the Phono-Cut's and Keen-O-Phone's output, begun by George Blacker and members of the *Record Research* group in the 1970s, and still ongoing, has failed to reveal any instances of Phono-Cut recordings having been reissued by Keen-O-Phone.

All known Keen-O-Phone releases used the company's own masters, in sapphire-ball vertical-cut format. The artist roster was projected to include some Boston Symphony Orchestra musicians who had recorded for Phono-Cut, which proved not to be the case. However, there was a modest classical and operatic catalog that included recordings by Ellen Beach Yaw (on a premium-priced gold label that was used for only a handful of issues), Eva Leoni, Ferruccio Giannini, and others of equal stature, interspersed with some less-distinguished fare. The popular catalog was dominated by various house ensembles under Fred Hager's direction and the usual New York studio freelancers.

The Keen-O-Phone Company was reorganized during the summer of 1913. In August, Alexander R. Querns was elected to replace Morris Keen as president of the company. Keen and Lyon retained their seats on the board, which added five new members at that time. Charles Hibbard departed in October 1913, to oversee what would be the Phono-Cut studio's final days, but he soon returned.

Keen-O-Phone reported excellent sales for the 1913 Christmas sales and was planning to introduce a new line of phonographs in early 1914, probably as a result of the Pooley Cabinet Company's recent bankruptcy. However, a month later it was announced that Keen-O-Phone's factory and patents had been leased by the newly organized Rex Talking Machine Company (*q.v.*). Keen-O-Phone's Broad Street store remained open through the spring of 1914, but it was reported that there was "practically no stock with the exception of a few cheap machines which it is offering at very small figures."

The transition marked the end of Keen-O-Phone record production, although much of its catalog would continue to be offered under the new Rex label. In April 1914, Pooley sold its remaining 4,000 Keen-O-Phone machines to Gimbel Brothers' New York department store, which remaindered them at half-price. A former Keen-O-Phone sales representative later observed that Keen "failed to realize that "'making' is one thing, and 'creating a market' another... the factory kept turning out these superb instruments with no real market developed."

KELTIC RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1920s

Offices: New York

Record Products: Keltic

A short-lived venture that according to its single known advertisement was "organized to revive and perpetuate traditional Irish singing and dance music; also the martial or fighting songs of Ireland." Thus far, no reliable information has been discovered concerning the company's ownership or master source.

KEM RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1961

Offices: 1107 N. El Centro Ave., Hollywood, CA (1949–early 1952); 1111 N. El Centro Ave. (from early 1952)

Record Products: Kem

Launched in the spring of 1949 by Bill Richards, a former West Coast artists-and-repertoire manager for Columbia. Kem records initially were marketed by Ben Pollack's Jewel Records operation, and later were handled by a network of regional distributors.

The initial Kem release, coupling Wingy Manone's tongue-in-cheek renditions of "Riders in the Sky" and "Round Square Dance," was announced in late May 1949 and set the tone for Kem's catalog, which favored pop, novelty, and corny dixieland-style material. LPs and 45s were introduced in the early 1950s, and the label survived into the early 1960s under Richards' ownership.

KENTUCKY PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Founded: 1889

Offices: 246 5th St., Louisville, KY

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Kentucky. The company was incorporated by J. W. Gaulbert, Charles R. Long, J. B. Sisted, John H. Sutcliffe, W. R. Ray, and W. B. Haldeman, on March 27, 1889, with an initial capital stock offering of \$400,000. However, formal notice of incorporation was delayed until April 24, pending transfer of license from the North American Phonograph Company. (*The Phonogram* erroneously reported the company's date of organization as April 6, 1889.)

The Louisville *Courier-Journal* for April 3, 1889, reported that efforts to launch the company had been "successful beyond expectation," with nearly all of the initial stock offering subscribed. Long served as temporary president and Sutcliffe as temporary secretary. Permanent officers, elected at a stockholders' meeting on April 18, included H. V. Loving (president), L. Leonard (vice-president), and Oscar Fenlay (secretary-treasurer). One-hundred phonographs were ordered for immediate delivery at that time.

J. Campbell Scott, Kentucky Phonograph's general manager, reported that a number of machines the company placed with local businesses for dictation purposes were "giving good satisfaction," but admitted that they were "not as simple as they should be to become generally used in business." In late September 1889, he traveled to New York to inspect an improved Columbia Graphophone, which he pronounced "as simple and as near perfection as I imagine a 'talking machine' can be gotten."

Scott staged an open-air phonograph demonstration at a Louisville benefit on August 3, 1889, featuring original recordings by Mamie Sweet (a Louisville resident noted for playing two pianos at once) and a recitation by Mariande Clarke (the organizer of the event). By mid-1890 Kentucky Phonograph was becoming increasingly active in the entertainment field. In May the company announced it would record "the most renowned orators, statesmen, tragedians, and musicians," although if such recordings were made, the details have long-since been lost. In July it received several coin-operated Edison phonographs, two of which were immediately placed in Louisville saloons. A January 1891 *Phonogram* article reported that the company "goes in almost entirely for Negro business — plantation dialogues, with banjo solos interspersed, and scenes on the levee." Thus far, no catalog of original Kentucky Phonograph cylinders has been found.

The Phonogram for November–December 1891 reported that "for many months the company labored under difficulties," wasting a large amount of capital before the election of new executive officers. In late 1891, those included R. C. Kinkead (president) and George W. Grant (secretary and treasurer), with Leonard retaining the vice-presidency. The company was said to have stabilized, but little more was heard of or its officers until October 1892, when Grant and a female companion were arrested for adultery.

KEYBOARD RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1952

Offices: Wallace, ID (PO box number only; no street address listed)

Record Products: Keyboard

Of unknown ownership, launched in the summer of 1950. The company was first listed by *Billboard* in July 1950. Despite its name, the company did not specialize in keyboard recordings. Its small output consisted of pop and country-and-western fare by regional artists, including Charlie Ryan (later of "Hot Rod Lincoln" fame), yodeler Betty Jo Starr, Waterhole Johnny Stern, Idaho (Tiny) Stokes, and Bill Winkle. The latter's "To Be Mine" / "Just Travelin'" was the first Keyboard release reviewed by *Billboard*, which rated Winkle as

"vibrant" but complained about the "really fuzzy recording." The last confirmed Keyboard releases appeared in February 1952.

KEYNOTE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1940–1948; revived 1955

Offices: 522 5th Ave., New York; 1469 N. Vine, Hollywood, CA

Original-Master Source(s): WOR Studios (New York), other independent studios

Pressing: Own plant — Compton, CA (1946–1947); various independent plants (1940–1946); Mercury Records (1947–1948)

Record Products: Keynote, Keynote Manuscript

Founded by Eric Bernay (*née* Bernstein) in 1940. Owner of The Music Room, a New York record store, Bernay was also a political activist who for a time edited *The Masses*, a pro-Marxist publication, and owner of the Progressive Bookshop in New York.

When introduced in 1940, the Keynote label specialized in folk, ethnic, and esoteric fare that the major labels had largely overlooked or avoided. In its early years, the label often rattled conservatives and paranoiacs with a catalog that included guerilla marching songs, leftist "folk" tunes by the Almanac Singers, pro-union songs by cast members of "Pins and Needles," a rendition of the Soviet national anthem and an album of "Songs of New China" sung by Paul Robeson (the latter accompanied by the Chinese Chorus under the direction of Liu Liang-Mo), and imported recordings by the Red Army Chorus and members of the Unity Theatre of London.

In the wake of the post-World War II "red scare," Keynote began to distance itself from politically charged material. Harry Lim, a native of Java who had been making jazz recordings on his own for several years, was brought in to develop Keynote's new jazz catalog, which by the later 1940s had largely supplanted the earlier, more controversial material. In 1946, *Billboard* identified Keynote as one of several independent labels that was attracting top-flight sidemen from the major orchestras by paying them substantially more than union scale.

Bernay placed a full-page advertisement in the 1945 *Record Retailing Yearbook* to expound on his label's mission. "We believed that a record is an ageless thing, and we decided to limit our efforts to recording only those melodies which we felt had a reason for permanency," he wrote. "That was our policy six years ago —and today it still is. In the future, we will dedicate ourselves to continue the production of records in keeping with our general business philosophy — to record only those melodies which we feel warrant a place in history. We hope in this way to produce timeless, rather than timely records."

By the spring of 1945, the company admitted that it could not keep up with orders, with six times more records on back-order than it could produce. The problem persisted into the spring of 1946, when a new \$300,000 stock issue was floated to finance a long-overdue expansion that included the purchase of the General Records pressing plant (unrelated to Hazzard Reeves' company of the same name). Keynote built an additional pressing plant in Compton, California, and at the same time opened a new Hollywood office headed by Milt Ebbins, manager of the Count Basie and Billy Eckstine bands.

A reorganization of Keynote's board of directors in June 1946 saw the installation of Lee J. Cobb, Paul Robeson, and John Hammond, among others. Hammond resigned from Columbia on July 18 to assume the vice-presidency of Keynote. *Billboard* reported, "The Keynote set-up is expected to be more to Hammond's liking than Columbia, where his views on artists and repertoire didn't always coincide with those of the frankly commercial-minded hierarchy." Hammond soon discovered that the company was in a dire financial position, which he blamed on Bernay's decision to build what had proven to be an unprofitable pressing plant in California. In April 1947 Hammond purchased the plant and immediately it sold to Mercury Records. Increasingly at odds with the new board, Bernay resigned from Keynote in March 1947. He sold most of his interest in the company to Hammond, who replaced him as president.

Hammond expanded Keynote's operations significantly, bolstered by proceeds from an additional \$300,000 stock issue. One of his first acts was to hire band leader Charlie Barnet to assist in developing Keynote's pop catalog, an area Bernay had largely ignored in focusing on "timeless" repertoire. Hammond also put Keynote into the distribution

business, handling the Record Guild of America's children's records and other non-competing lines.

Hammond's launch of the Keynote Manuscript label in June 1947 marked the company's first significant involvement in the classical market. Mitch Miller (at that time a CBS staff musician) was brought in to head the new classical department, which produced some notable recordings. Among them was Stravinsky's "Dumbarton Oaks Concerto," conducted by the composer, and two oboe concerti performed by Miller. The recordings were made from live performances, eliminating the costs of rehearsal and studio time. The records were offered in a choice of vinyl or less-expensive shellac pressings.

In late 1947, Hammond was instrumental in licensing approximately 10,000 foreign masters from the Gramophone Works National Corporation of Czechoslovakia, only to discover after closing the deal that the same recordings had already been licensed by Vox, through Polydor. Hammond shrugged off the blunder, declaring that Keynote had planned to use only a few of the recordings. In January 1948, he arranged the sale of Keynote's classical catalog (including rights to the foreign masters) to Mercury Records, then accepted a vice-president's position with that company. His move sparked rumors of a possible buy-out by Mercury, which proved to be correct. In late February, Keynote stockholders tentatively approved the sale of all assets to Mercury, including a large inventory of unsold Keynote pressings and all masters other than those personally owned or controlled by Bernay.

Following the sale, Bernay entered into a partnership with Eddie Laguna to revive the latter's Sunset label (*see* Sunset Recording Company). The Keynote label was revived by Bernay and Lim in June 1955 but produced no new material. The Keynote trademark is currently controlled by Polygram Records.

KEYSTONE RECORDING COMPANY — *See* Raven Recording Company

KEYSTONE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1950s

Offices: 63 E. Third Ave., Collegeville, PA (1948); 1415 Locust St., Philadelphia (from 1949)

Record Products (78s): Keystone

Launched in late 1948 by Edward R. Wilson, in partnership with Earl Brand, following the collapse of Wilson's Tune-Disk Records (*q.v.*). The address first given was that of Wilson's Tune Shop Music Publishers, but the company soon relocated to Philadelphia. There was no connection to the earlier Keystone Recording Company, which was also based in Philadelphia (*see* Raven Recording Company).

Unlike Wilson's Tune-Disk venture, Keystone made no effort to work with outside publishers, instead recording titles that Tune-Shop controlled or owned outright. The label, which made its initial releases in April 1949, relied on local radio performers, including Wayne Cody, Billy Hayes, Smiley Williams, and Bill Haley (the latter of "Rock Around the Clock" fame, who at the time he signed with Keystone in March 1950 was working as a country-and-western disc jockey at station WPWA in Chester, Pennsylvania).

Keystone was last mentioned by *Billboard* in October 1952, which stated that the company was still recording. The Keystone name was used again in the late 1950s and early 1960s by a Philadelphia company operating at a different Locust Street address. Its connection to Wilson, if any, is not known.

KHOURY'S RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1966

Offices: 328 Railroad Ave., Lake Charles, LA

Record Products: Khoury's, Lyric [5]

Launched in 1950 by George Khoury, a Turkish-American entrepreneur who operated a record store and jukebox supply business in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Khoury is rumored to have financed the earlier Oklahoma Tornado Recording Company (*q.v.*).

The Khoury's and Lyric labels were launched simultaneously in 1950. There was occasional overlapping of material between the two. Catalog numbering was sometimes erratic, with unaccounted-for gaps in the numerical sequence and some catalog numbers reused on different recordings. Khoury initially specialized in Cajun material by local

artists (many of whom had previously recorded for the O. T. label), including Virgel Bozman and Nathan Abshire.

As demand for Cajun records began to decline in the mid-1950s, Khoury turned increasingly to country-and-western material, with a smattering of rhythm-and-blues. When that failed to spark sales, he called back some of his original Cajun artists, but the records failed to attract much attention. Khoury had a string of minor local rhythm-and-blues hits in the later 1950s, beginning with "Matilda" by Cookie and the Cupcakes, but new issues became increasingly sporadic after 1959. The company closed in 1966.

KING JAZZ, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1948

Offices: 140 W. 42nd St., New York

Record Products: King Jazz

Launched in 1945 by Chicago jazz clarinetist Milton (Mezz) Mezzrow, who served as president and sales manager. John Van Beuren and Harry M. Houck served as vice-president and secretary-treasurer, respectively.

King Jazz advertised that it was founded "with the purpose of recording authentic American jazz music by the best artists in the blues and New Orleans tradition." The label, however, was largely a vehicle for Mezzrow himself, who along with Sidney Bechet was present on all releases.

The first King Jazz recording sessions were held in New York in July 1945, and the results were reviewed in the January 1946 issue of *Record Changer*, from pre-release test acetates. The records were first advertised in February, although the company stated it was not yet accepting orders. They were finally placed on sale in May 1946 with the company handling its own distribution, a decision that likely accounted in part for the label's limited sales. King Jazz's final recording session was held in Chicago on December 20, 1947, the results of which were issued only overseas. The domestic operation closed in mid-1948.

King Jazz, Ltd. (London) produced the records for British distribution, using the same label design but different catalog numbers. The King Jazz masters, including previously unissued material, were later licensed by various foreign labels, including Royal Jazz (France), Storyville (Denmark), and Vogue (France).

KING RECORD COMPANY / KING RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1943–1968

Offices: 1351 Central Ave., Cincinnati (to 10/1944); 1540 Brewster St., Cincinnati (from 10/1944)

Original-Master Sources: Own studio (Brewster St. plant); E. T. Herzog Studio (Cincinnati), International Recording Company (New York), KXLA studios (Pasadena, CA), Wurlitzer Music Center (Cincinnati), Universal Recorders (Hollywood), many other independent studios

Pressing: Own plant (Royal Plastics Company, Cincinnati); Superior Recording (Los Angeles), other independent plants

Record Products (78s): King, Federal [2], Glory, Queen; De Luxe [2] (hyphenated on most King pressings), De-Luxe Tex-Mex

The first major independent country-and-western label, King was founded by Sydney (Syd) Nathan, who recognized Cincinnati as a natural hub for regional country-music (and later, rhythm-and-blues) performers. Having failed in several earlier ventures, including a stint as a professional wrestling promoter, he opened Syd's Record Shop on Central Avenue in 1942. The store dealt largely in used jukebox records, including a good selection of country music that attracted a large clientele from the surrounding area. Among them were Louis M. (Grandpa) Jones and Merle Travis, both of whom Nathan recorded in September 1943 in a Dayton, Ohio, studio.

Nathan launched King Records the following November with two Jones–Travis duets ("The Steppin' Out Kind"/"You'll Be Lonesome Too") and two Travis solos ("When Mussolini Laid his Pistol Down"/"Two-Time Annie"). Because of a contractual conflict, the records were issued pseudonymously, with the duet sides credited to the Sheppard Brothers, and Travis' solos credited to Bob McCarthy. Despite the aliases and a very small pressing run (a portion of which was defective), the records attracted enough attention

locally that Nathan held a second session, in January 1944, with Jones and the Delmore Brothers. However, the operation stalled at that point.

By the summer of 1944, Nathan had secured sufficient funding to relaunch King on a national scale. Unlike other small producers who were largely dependent on outside services, Nathan was determined to own and control all aspects of recording, production, and marketing. In October, he rented a vacant icehouse on Brewster Street, where he installed his own plating and pressing plant, under the direction Stephan J. Shaw, a former manager with C. P. MacGregor. However, Nathan continued to employ independent studios as needed, even after opening his own. The records were wholesaled to dealers directly from the factory, bypassing distributors.

Cincinnati radio station WLW (which hosted "Boone County Jamboree" and "Midwestern Hayride") and others in the region proved to be a reliable source of talent for Nathan. His early roster also featured a mixture of new and veteran radio and recording artists, including Bill and Cliff Carlisle, Cowboy Copas, Hankshaw Hawkins, Homer and Jethro, Mainer's Mountaineers, Minnie Pearl, Moon Mullican, and Hank Penny. Much of King's early exposure came through local jukebox play, and from plugs by disc jockeys at stations WINZ and WLW in Cincinnati. The exposure helped to compensate for Nathan's notoriously stingy pay rates. Grandpa Jones recalled, "[Nathan] made all the money, and I didn't. But he didn't cheat me out of the publicity. The records helped me."

Outspoken and often abrasive, Nathan was an enthusiastic promoter of country music, proclaiming, "The so-called hillbilly music has found its place in American music. It is American music." For a time, the company published *Record Roundup*, a free monthly magazine devoted exclusively to country-and-western recordings. In October 1944, Nathan declared that King would produce "hillbilly records exclusively," but added that he was planning to produce "a small catalog of sepiia and hot jazz discs" under another, as-yet unnamed label. Although Nathan had already recorded two titles by the Chubby Jackson Sextet, nothing more was heard of the proposed series until September 1945, when the Queen label was launched as King's race-record subsidiary. The initial offerings featured Jackson (including a reissue of his 1944 King sides), Bull Moose Jackson, Slim Gaillard, and Walter Brown, the latter two having been recorded in New York.

The Queen label was scuttled in July 1947, ending with an Earl Bostic release on Queen 4174, after which the race division was folded into King's main operation. In August, Queen's place was taken by a new King blue-label series that continued Queen's numerical series, beginning with another Bostic release. Many of the Queen titles were reissued on King in the later 1940s, retaining their original numbers.

By mid-1947, King was a fully self-contained operation with its own studio, manufacturing facilities, and warehouse under one roof in the Brewster Street building. Later that year, Robert Scherman (whose experience thus far had been largely in the pop field) was hired away from his Atlas venture to serve as King's recording director in Hollywood and New York. Sales and distribution were handled through a chain of widely dispersed branch offices whose staffers also scouted local talent for the label. Jim Wilson, who joined the King staff in 1949, recalled, "Theoretically, you could walk into King Records in the morning, record, then walk out of there with a dee-jay copy in your hand to take to the radio stations." Nathan traveled extensively to record his artists wherever they might be available. In April 1950 alone, he oversaw sessions with Hank Penny in Hollywood; Moon Mullican in Odessa, Texas; and Paul Howard, in Shreveport, Louisiana, before returning to Cincinnati for sessions with Grandpa Jones and the York Brothers.

The King Record Company underwent a reorganization and name change, to King Records, Inc., in 1948. Early that year, Nathan purchased a 51% interest in De Luxe Records from David and Jules Braun and acquired the manufacturing and distribution rights to the De Luxe label in a deal that would prove unsatisfactory for both parties. The redesigned labels, now with a hyphen added to De-Luxe, included a new Tex-Mex series for the Hispanic market. At about the same time, Nathan's pressing plant was spun off as a fully owned subsidiary under the management of Howard Kessell, doing business as Royal Plastics, and the Lois Music Company (reportedly named for one of Nathan's love interests) was formed to control the copyrights of compositions by King artists.

Like most other producers, Nathan stockpiled a large number of masters in late 1947, in anticipation of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, with uneven

results. In early 1949, when regular recording operations resumed, Nathan admitted, "We recorded as much as two years or more in advance, trusting that luck and a small amount of foresight might carry us through... We knew that because of hasty decisions and hastily recorded sides, quite a lot of it would not be up to the standard expected by the retail customers and jukebox operators. We did the best we could under the conditions."

Nathan accelerated his push into the race market during the AFM ban, leasing sixty pre-ban masters from the Sensation label in June 1948. In the later 1940s, he added Lonnie Johnson, Ivory Joe Hunter, Memphis Slim, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, and other stars (some of them now well past their primes) to the roster. Promotional manager Bill Fields told *The Pittsburgh Courier* in May 1949, "Our platters are never labeled 'race,' 'sepia,' or 'ebony.' The only way the public has of knowing whether a 'blue' label artist is White or Negro is in magazine ads, where the photo is used." (However, the "sepia" designation did appear in some of King's late-1940s advertisements.) Fields went on to note, "From the ground up, the King (and now De Luxe) Record Company is a purely democratic one... Negroes, Jews, Chinese — in fact, all racial and religious groups — work side by side. Just recently...a Negro was added to the A. and R. staff. This Negro will direct the recording activities of both Negro and white units."

Fields apparently was referring to Henry Glover, a Black trumpeter, arranger, and songwriter who worked effectively in many genres, sometimes producing rhythm-and-blues versions of country-and-western titles, and vice-versa. Glover recalled, "In many ways, [Nathan] was a remarkably open-minded man. He perceived this wonderful notion of American music as not being segregated into different styles, but one big cross-ethnic whole. He did that because it was a way to make money."

Nathan launched a separate pop division during the spring of 1949 under the direction of Dewey Bergman. The black-label pop series debuted in April with Louise Carlyle's "Pal-ing Around with You." A June 1949 advertisement listed Carlyle, Al Grant, Tony Mottola, Vincent Lopez, Johnny Long, Carroll Lucas, and Leon Meriam as King's "Lucky 7 Pop Artists, who will keep nickels popping into your machines." But other than the Johnny Long releases, King's pop series was not a notable success at the start. Its image was tarnished a bit in September 1949, when the *Los Angeles Tribune* mistakenly reported that King would record amateur songs and provide twenty-five free copies of the sheet music along with the records, apparently confusing Nathan's company with the short-lived and unrelated King Records Hollywood (*q.v.*).

Bergman resigned from King in late 1949, and Nathan took over control of the pop line, announcing the launch of a "huge" promotional effort in April 1950. Some slower-selling artists were dropped at that time, and several new ones were signed (including vocalist Bob Vincent, from the Al Trace orchestra), but mainstream pop recordings would never be a strong area for King.

In the meantime, Nathan's relationship with David and Jules Braun was deteriorating. On August 6, 1949, it was reported that the Brauns were negotiating a split with Nathan, whom they accused of mishandling and failing to properly market their De Luxe label. Increasingly distrustful of Nathan, the Brauns had recently launched their new Regal Record Company without his involvement, taking some De Luxe artists with them. Nathan responded with a lawsuit in December 1949, demanding an accounting of the property and goodwill lost as a result of the Braun's "appropriation" of De Luxe artists. The Brauns countered by seeking an injunction to prohibit King Records, Royal Plastics, and Nathan from having any further involvement with De Luxe, and filed suit for \$280,000 in damages. The standoff was not resolved until early 1951, when Nathan bought out the Brauns and reorganized De Luxe as a fully owned King subsidiary.

While the legal battle over De Luxe was playing out, Nathan launched Federal Records as another King subsidiary. Its formation was announced on October 28, 1950, at which time *Billboard* reported that Ralph Bass had severed relations with Savoy Records and would serve as Federal's manager of artists and repertoire (thus disproving some modern writers' contention that Bass was not employed by Federal until 1951). On the same date, it was reported that Nathan had purchased 165 Miracle masters that the Internal Revenue Service had seized, some of which were to be reissued on Federal.

King began advertising Federal records in mid-December 1950, touting "the exceptional talents of Ralph Bass and his unique approach to artists and recordings." The first Federal

releases reached distributors in January 1951 and were divided into a Hillbilly Series (initially comprising reissues of some slower-selling King titles) and a Rhythm, Blues and Spirituals Series (at first drawn largely from the Miracle masters, but soon featuring original recordings produced by Bass under a royalty arrangement with King).

With cash reserves strained by the company's legal costs and rapid expansion, Nathan claimed that King lacked the funds needed to make the transition to LPs. In early 1949, he declared that he was content to "sit by and await the outcome...we are only in the ten-inch field and most of our records are used in jukeboxes." However, the company was producing 45s by the early 1950s, and LPs were finally introduced in early 1952. Country music remained King's primary focus during the early 1950s, but as the decade progressed, it was eclipsed by successes in the rhythm-and-blues market, most notably Federal's 1956 signing of James Brown. By the time Brown was transferred to the King label in 1960, the company was releasing relatively little country material.

Nathan died on March 5, 1968, following which King vice-president Hal Neely exercised his option to purchase the company. In November of that year, King Records and its Lois Music and Royal Plastics subsidiaries were acquired in a complicated transaction by Nashville start-up Starday Records to form Starday-King Records. The Brewster Street building was granted National Historic Landmark status in 2016, thwarting an attempt by the property's owner to demolish the structure.

KING RECORDS HOLLYWOOD

This appears to have been a 1949 vanity label. A single issue has been confirmed, by Art Wengel & his Ragtime Cowboys. It owes its inclusion here solely to the likelihood that the *Los Angeles Tribune* confused it with the Cincinnati-based King label when it erroneously reported that the latter was recording amateur songs and providing free sheet music along with the discs (*see previous entry*).

KISMET RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: From c. 1938

Offices: Unknown New York address (1938–1943); 227 E. 14th St., New York (from 1943)

Original-Master Source(s): Own masters (recorded by Arts Recording Company and others)

Record Products: Kismet

Launched c. 1938 by songwriter and musician Dimitri Kornienko and his wife Anna, originally to market recordings by Dimitri's folk-dance ensemble. Dimitri, who composed "Bosporus" and several other minor hits, had recorded for Victor and Okeh as early as 1929. Following Dimitri's death in 1943, Anna opened the Kismet Record Shop on E. 24th Street in New York (where it remained into the 1990s) and expanded the recording operation. The records were distributed by Sid Blume's Favorite Manufacturing Company, a New York operation catering to small independent labels.

The initial Kismet releases, which might have been made as early as 1938–1939, were almost entirely by the Kornienko Ensemble under the direction of Dimitri Kornienko, using masters made for the label by the Arts Recording Company. Selected records by the group were later packaged in an album set, titled simply "Oriental." Under Anna Kornienko's management, Kismet's repertoire was broadened to include folk dances from many nations (including some American square dances), Gypsy songs, and other ethnic material. Many of the later Kismet releases used recordings licensed from British, German, and Soviet sources. Aside from the occasional brief review or small classified advertisement in *Billboard*, Kismet records were rarely mentioned in the trade papers.

LPs were produced beginning in the early 1950s, but sales declined during the post-World War II "red scare" and never fully recovered. However, the Kismet Record Shop remained in business. In 1979 Russian musicologist Rudolph Fuchs (*née* Rudolf Solovyev, *a.k.a.* Ruvim Rublev), who had recently arrived in the United States, joined its staff. Fuchs purchased the store several years later and operated it until the late 1990s, when he returned to Russia.

KRANTZ RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 2109 (and 2113, from mid-1948) S. 7th St., Philadelphia

Record Products: Krantz; Pal, Applause (possibly distribution only)

Launched in 1947 by David Krantz, owner of the Krantz Record and Radio Shop, and president at that time of the Philadelphia Retail Record Dealers' Association. By the early summer of 1948, his recording operation had expanded into an adjacent building and secured several distributors.

Krantz specialized in recordings by local novelty string bands with a roster that included the Kensington, Delaware County, and Uptown groups, all fixtures at the Philadelphia Mummers parades. His label had a jukebox hit in late 1947 with the Uptown String Band's "I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover," which received so much local play that Mercury purchased the master in January 1948 and re-released the record nationally. However, Krantz seems to have increasingly ignored his recording operation as his retail business became entangled in legal problems largely of his own making.

In early 1949 Krantz antagonized some CBS sales executives by publicly opposing the launch of the LP, very nearly losing his supply of Columbia products in the process. On May 11, two Philadelphia radio and television distributors sued Krantz and other retailers for \$285,000 for allegedly boycotting their products (a suit that was finally settled in 1951, for \$1,500), to which Krantz responded with an unsuccessful countersuit accusing the distributors of monopolistic practices. In June 1949, Krantz was one of eight Philadelphia record-store owners arrested and charged by the Justice Department with conspiracy to fix record prices. He and the others were released on bail, and nothing further was reported concerning the matter.

By then, it appears that production of Krantz records had been discontinued. Krantz also distributed the Applause and Pal labels, but his degree of involvement with their production, if any, is not known.

KU KLUX KLAN–AFFILIATED COMPANIES AND PRODUCERS (Discs)

Record Production: 1920s

The Ku Klux Klan Music Company, *The American*, George N. Sanford, W. R. Rhinehart, and other Klan-affiliated businesses and individuals marketed their own record labels during the 1920s. Although these were privately produced labels, some were advertised in *The Fiery Cross* and other Klan-affiliated publications and were readily available by mail-order. Two companies that produced Klan-related records (H. K. S. Publishing and James D. Vaughan) also issued non-Klan material, and thus merit their own entries. As a group, the Klan recordings are mediocre productions, often employing apparently amateur performers (many of whom were anonymous) and plagiarized melodies. Thomas Edison, after auditioning a Gennett-produced KKK recording on July 24, 1924, commented "Don't bother with this trash."

Many of the early Klan masters were numbered in a special K- prefixed series, a few of which were recorded in Homer Rodeheaver's Chicago studio. In February 1924, the K-series was taken over by the Starr Piano Company (Gennett), which quickly became the largest manufacturer of Klan labels, beginning with 100%, 100% American, and KKK. These brands were sold by mail order through *The American*, a pro-Klan publisher based in Indianapolis.

According to the Gennett matrix ledger, the K- series also included some non-Klan recordings made by or for members of the Gennett family, along with several trained-canary records, none of which were issued. The K- series was soon abandoned, and later Klan-label recordings were numbered within the regular Gennett master series (or were assigned 85000-series control numbers when masters were obtained from outside sources). Many were assigned catalog numbers in Gennett's 20000 "Personal" series, and none ever appeared in Gennett's own catalogs or advertising.

Despite the approval of Gennett management, the decision to produce Klan labels was not embraced by all employees. Clayton Jackson (the assistant sales manager who booked the first Klan session) recalled that when recording engineer Ezra (Wick) Wickemeyer was informed of the situation, "Ezra said he was going up the hill, going home, and to hell with

it." Nevertheless, Gennett soon expanded its production of Klan-related records, which came to include such short-lived labels as All American, Imperial Quintette, Jubilee Gospel Singers, Our Song, and Wake Up. Gennett's production of Klan-affiliated labels continued into the later 1920s, and some late issues were electrically recorded.

Gennett also produced the Hitch and Vaughan labels, which although not Klan labels *per se*, issued some pro-Klan recordings. Harry F. Windles (*q.v.*) is also known to have made Klan-related recordings during the 1920s. None of the major record companies had any known involvement with Klan-affiliated labels.

LEO KUPANA'I STUDIO — See Bell Record Company, Ltd.

K-W RECORD CORPORATION — See Folkraft Records

— L —

LA BONITA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices 7717 Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles

Record Products: La Bonita

An apparently short-lived venture about which no substantial information has been discovered. The company received a passing mention in *Billboard* in December 1947, when it recorded singer Cece Blake. La Bonita's first three releases appeared in the February 1948 advance lists, after which nothing more was reported in the trade papers. La Bonita last appeared in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory.

LA MARR RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945

Offices 6233 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Possibly Eccles Disc Recording Corp.

Record Products: La Marr's Star Records

One of the few female-owned recording ventures of the period, the La Marr Record Company was launched in mid-1945 by songwriter Baline La Marr (*née* B. L. Bowlin), who previously had managed the West Coast office of A-1 Records of America. Masters might have been recorded by the Eccles Disc Recording studio, which operated at the same address. At the end of 1945, La Marr sold her record business to Melody Moderne (*q.v.*), which took over her masters and artist contracts and then scuttled the La Marr label.

LABORATOR ED. JEDLICKA (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1903 – 1904

Offices: 1359 Ave. A, New York

Original-Master Source(s): Probably own studio

Record Products: Jedlicka Ceske Recordy

The first independent American producer of ethnic recordings, Eduard (Ed) Jedlicka filed a U.S. label registration for his Jedlicka Ceske Recordy cylinders on March 23, 1903. Born in Bohemia, Jedlicka is believed to have arrived in New York in 1901, and in 1910 he became a U.S. citizen. Billing himself as "The Only Originator of Czech Records," he produced a substantial number of brown-wax cylinders in the early 1900s.

Sold in boxes adorned by Jedlicka's name and likeness, the records were briefly advertised in several foreign-language newspapers beginning in 1903. Forty-eight vocal cylinders, comprising mostly Czech folk songs and excerpts from Czech operettas, survive at the Library of Congress, and additional specimens are held by the University of Iowa Libraries. Gaps in those catalog numbers suggest that many more issues remain to be discovered. Catalog numbers as high as 510 have been reported, which is deceptive; Jedlicka, like most early cylinder producer, employed a block-numbering system in which each block was allocated a group of catalog numbers in advance, many of which were never actually used. In addition to his own performances, Jedlicka made a number of original recordings by cornet virtuoso Bohumir Kryl.

Jedlicka's business never advanced beyond a cottage industry and, having failed to make the transition to molded-cylinder production, it appears to have suspended operations in 1904. Jedlicka and his brother later operated a successful retail business handling the Victor, Columbia, and Brunswick lines, but he does not appear to have had any further involvement in record production.

LABORATORY ASSOCIATION, THE

The Laboratory Association, under John O. Prescott's management, took over the inactive American Record Company (Hawthorne, Sheble & Prescott) studio at 241 W. 23rd Street, New York, in early 1907. *The Music Trade Review* reported in March that no "official statement in explanation thereof" had been offered, and no evidence has been found that The Laboratory Association produced any commercially issued recordings. By July 1907, Prescott had departed, and Horace Sheble confirmed in a letter to *The Talking Machine World* that the studio was now owned by the Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Company. However, it apparently was not used by Hawthorne & Sheble (which obtained most of its Star Records masters from Columbia) for more than a brief period. In September 1909 the studio was leased to the Sonora Phonograph Company.

THE LAMBERT COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1900–1905

Offices: 12 Sherman St., Chicago (1900–1901); 316 New York Life Building, Chicago (1901); Milwaukee Ave. and Carpenter St., Chicago (from 10/1901); 26 Euston Building NW, London (foreign sales)
Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—New York (confirmed), Chicago (unconfirmed); foreign masters obtained from Edison Bell

Pressing Plant: 110–112 S. Jefferson St., Chicago

Record Products: Lambert Indestructible Record (cylinders); International Phonographic Language School (language-instruction cylinders)

The Lambert Company was named for (but not owned or managed by) Thomas B. Lambert, a Chicago inventor who developed a process for producing copper-plated masters from which celluloid cylinders could be molded.

Other inventors had already experimented with or produced celluloid cylinders on a limited scale, and numerous patents on similar processes were filed after Lambert's in the early 1900s, by Ademor N. Petit (who assigned some of his patents to the International Phonograph and Indestructible Record Company, Ltd., in England), Frank Capps (who assigned his to Columbia), among others. However, The Lambert Company was the first to successfully manufacture and market celluloid cylinders in the United States on a regular commercial basis.

Lambert filed a patent application for a method of molding cylinders from "softened material such as cellulose" on August 14, 1899 (#645,920). *The Phonoscope* for December 1899 (which probably was published a month or more after its cover date) reported that Lambert had been in New York, exhibiting what apparently were prototype cylinders. Lambert, the report noted, "stated that if the party who recorded his last will and testament on the wax cylinder would send it to him he would reproduce it free of charge on one of his indestructible blanks, thereby insuring it against breakage."

Lambert's patent was approved on March 20, 1900, and The Lambert Company was chartered six days later to manufacture celluloid cylinders. Lambert assigned three-fifths of his patent to Brian F. Philpot (who, with his brother Albert was an investor in the company) and Joseph Powell. By his own account, Lambert played only an advisory role in the company that bore his name. In 1903, he testified that The Lambert Company had been named without his knowledge or consent, and he denied holding any financial stake in the company.

The company reportedly was marketing records by the summer of 1900, and they were being advertised nationally, on a modest scale, by 1901. The earliest Lambert cylinders were molded in plain white celluloid with the Lambert name and patent stamped across the grooves in ink. Fitted with wooden wedges to hold them to the mandrel, they had a rather homemade appearance. Orange-tinted cylinders appeared briefly, superseded in 1901 by the fuchsine-dyed pink cylinders that modern collectors most often associate with the Lambert brand.

Lambert manufactured standard two-minute cylinders (initially in "standard-speed" and "high-speed" versions) as well as concert-style (5" diameter) cylinders. According to Thomas Lambert's 1903 testimony, the company accepted returns of thousands of its old cylinders in exchange for new. Some of these returns appear to have been reused as blanks, with new material pressed over the old. Specimens of re-pressed cylinders have been reported on which faint traces of the original recordings can be heard.

Lambert severed relations with the company in or around May 1902 and left for England with the Philpot brothers to develop celluloid cylinders for Edison Bell. Ironically, the Lambert cylinder underwent steady improvement in the United States following their departure. In July 1902, Lambert Company employee William F. Messer was granted U. S. patent #705,772 for an improved molding process that permitted the use of thinner celluloid. Although Lambert's 1900 patent date continued to appear on the records for a time, those manufactured from approximately mid-1902 onward employed the Messer patent, the date of which did not appear on the records until the end of that year.

The distinctive pink celluloid was replaced by less eye-catching (but also less noisy) black celluloid "ebony" cylinders in mid-to-late 1903. By then, the company was supplementing its catalog with imported recordings from Edison Bell. Lambert cylinders were awarded a bronze medal at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition.

Offsetting those advances was a combination of weak marketing, spotty distribution, and lax quality control. In addition, legal challenges from Edison's National Phonograph Company had begun taking a toll. In the end, the Lambert Company trumped Edison in the courts, but by then its financial reserves had been drained. The company was largely dormant by the end of 1905.

The Lambert Company filed for bankruptcy in January 1906. Brian Philpot, acting as court-appointed trustee for the company, retained control of the Lambert, Philpot, and Messer patents in the United States, effectively blocking Edison from pursuing production of celluloid cylinders. In August 1906, he sold the Lambert Company's assets and patents, under court order. The buyer was George J. Snowden, who was acting on behalf of a newly formed venture, the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company (*q.v.*). During February–March 1907, the remains of Lambert's Chicago facility were dismantled under the supervision of William Messer, who had recently joined the Indestructible staff. Aside from some language-instruction recordings, none of the Lambert masters would be used by Indestructible.

In 1911 Thomas Edison acquired the defunct British Lambert Company's rights to the Lambert and Messer patents, finally allowing him to legally produce celluloid cylinders.

LAMB'S RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: From mid-1940s

Offices: 507 Union St., Schenectady, NY

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Lamb; private and custom recordings

Founded in the mid-1940s by Carl Lamb, who was primarily a provider of private recording services. Lamb's most notable client was composer-pianist Robert Crum, who recorded several of his compositions that were inspired by the physicist Irving Langmuir, to whom he presented copies.

Lamb's commercial label was devoted to less interesting fare, consisting of pop, light jazz, and commercialized country-and-western material by generally obscure performers. The label had a minor local hit with the Western Ace's cover version of "Cool Water" in the autumn of 1948 but otherwise went unnoticed by the trade papers. There were large gaps in Lamb's catalog numbers, giving the impression that the label was far more active than probably was the case. Reliably reported catalog numbers run from 10-105 through 10-177, although only a small fraction of those numbers are confirmed as having been used. No mention of the Lamb label has been found after late 1948.

LAMPLIGHTER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: RFD #1, Pacific Palisades, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Broadcast Recorders (Los Angeles), C. P. MacGregor, other independent studios

Pressing: Unspecified East Coast plant

Record Products: Lamplighter

Founded by writer and jazz enthusiast Ted Yerxa, whose "Lamplighter" column appeared in *The Los Angeles Daily News*. Yerxa made the first recordings for his Lamplighter label in December 1945, and news of its impending launch was released on January 26, 1946. National distribution was to be handled by the Jack Gutshall Distributing Company. In June 1946 *Billboard* reported that Yerxa had purchased the former Broadcast Recorders studio, which he would use to record his own masters as well as air-checks for the CBS network. In August, however, the same publication reported that Charles Cooper was the present owner of that studio, with no mention of Yerxa.

Yerxa hosted a weekly jam-session broadcast from the Streets of Paris cocktail lounge in Los Angeles, and he persuaded some of the participating musicians to record for his new label, which *Billboard* reported would feature "only ad libbed stuff, nothing rehearsed." The January 26 report claimed that Yerxa had already cut 28 sides with Barney Bigard, Willie (The Lion) Smith, Zutty Singleton, and other veteran jazz musicians. A three-disc album honoring the late Charlie Ventura included off-the-air "jam session" recordings by his band members.

Yerxa's attempt to sign singer Kay Starr away from Ben Pollack's Jewel Record Company resulted in a string of lawsuits and counter-suits. Initially, Starr sued to void her Jewel contract, resulting in a lawsuit that was settled out of court. Pollack then sued Yerxa, claiming that he had induced Starr to commit a breach of contract. Ultimately, Starr's Lamplighter contract was voided, although the legal squabbling over her Lamplighter masters would continue into the late 1940s.

The final blow to Yerxa came on April 22, 1947, when Musicians' Local 47 requested that the American Federation of Musicians cancel Lamplighter's recording license after receiving complaints from musicians who had not been paid. Although the back-pay amounted to only \$488, Yerxa appears to have suspended operations a short time later, and Lamplighter was placed in bankruptcy by the end of the year.

In April 1948, Coast Records acquired the pressing and sales rights to 200 mostly unissued Lamplighter masters, prompting Kay Starr to seek an injunction preventing Yerxa from including her recordings in the sale. Along with approximately 150 other Lamplighter masters, they finally were auctioned by order of the Los Angeles Bankruptcy Court on March 14, 1949. The winner was Crystalette Records' C. W. Coleman, who reissued many of the recordings before parceling them out to other companies.

LARIAT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1945 – 1946

Offices: 308-310 N. Verdugo Rd., Glendale, CA

Record Products: Lariat

A short-lived country-and-western label operated by Clifford Gilpin Snyder, who appeared on his Lariat releases as Cliffie Stone and Cliffie Stonehead. The company was first listed in the *Record Retailing Yearbook* for 1946, the same year in which Snyder closed Lariat and moved to Capitol Records as a manager of artists and repertoire. He is credited with signing Tennessee Ernie Ford, Hank Thompson, and other stars for Capitol. There is no connection to a later Lariat label, launched in Hollywood in 1952 by the Lariat Music Company, nor to several other labels that have since used the name.

LARK RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 310 E. Thompson St., Philadelphia

Record Products: Lark

A short-lived gospel label launched on July 1, 1947 by Philadelphia candy manufacturers Louis and Victor Segal. The address given for Lark was that of Louis Segal & Company, a long-established candy factory that continued to operate for many years after Lark's demise. Neither of the Segals is known to have had any experience in the music or record businesses at the time Lark began operation, aside from the appearance of their names as co-composers on several titles that were recorded by Lark.

In September 1947, *Billboard* gave a favorable review to Lark's initial release, by the Glenwood Quartet, but warned jukebox operators that there was "no coin appeal in this cutting." The trade papers mentioned little else concerning Lark, which last appeared in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory.

The Lark Record Company is currently listed as an active Pennsylvania business owned by Victor Segal. However, the company has no registered address on file, and no information concerning its current activities, if any, has been found. The Lark name was also used for several unrelated labels beginning in the 1950s.

LASSO RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1948 - 1949

Offices: Austin, TX

Pressing: Research Craft, possibly other independent plants

Record Products: Lasso, Uptown [1]

Founded by KVET program director Fred M. Caldwell, who listed himself as the company's owner and producer. Lasso was operating by March 1948, when the *Taylor Daily Press* (Taylor, Texas) published a photograph of Caldwell presenting a pressing of the initial Lasso release to the Melody Masters, a string band from Dessau, Texas. The article reported the Caldwell intended to release one new record every month.

The Lasso Record Company briefly produced two labels. Lasso, the earlier of the two, was reserved for country-and-western material and featured local acts, including Dolores and the Bluebonnet Boys, Buck Roberts and the Rhythmairs, and Hub Sutter and the Galvestonians. The initial, rather generic label design was later replaced by a more decorative one with a braided-rope motif.

Lasso's Uptown label specialized in jazz and rhythm-and-blues. Its offerings included two records by Albert Lavada Durst, one of the earliest Black disc jockeys, issued under the alias of "Cool Papa Smith." Caldwell's version of Uptown was unrelated to the Newark, New Jersey-based label of the same name, which operated during the same period (*see* Uptown Records).

Lasso appears to have discontinued production in 1949, after having produced only a handful of releases on each of its labels.

LATIN AMERICAN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – 1950

Offices: 17169 Van Buren, Detroit (to mid-1947); 15414 Wyoming, Detroit (mid-1947–mid-1948); 15319 Vaughan, Detroit (from late 1948)

Pressing: Diccha Industries

Record Products: Latin American

Latin American Records specialized in Latino-influenced dance music, primarily for the mainstream pop market. The company first advertised nationally in February 1947, but sales were largely local until April 1947, when Diccha Industries (*q.v.*) began national distribution of the label.

Latin American's main attraction was Don Pablo's Orchestra, a fixture at Detroit's Palm Beach Cafe. Some of the orchestra's Latin American recordings also appeared on Diccha's Vargo label. Recording was suspended in January 1948 due to the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, and does not appear to have resumed after the ban ended. Don Pablo's move to Rondo Records in early 1949 coincided with Latin

American's demise. The company was last listed by *Billboard* in July 1950, although no new releases are known to have been announced after Don Pablo's departure.

LAUDERDALE, JACK (Discs)

Downbeat Recording Company / Swing Beat Records / Swing Time Record Company

Record Production: 1946 – 1954

Offices: 524 E. 5th St., Los Angeles (1946–1950); 3427 S. San Pedro St., Los Angeles (1950–8/1953); Chicago (unknown address, 8/1953–1954)

Pressing: Specialty Records plant (Los Angeles)

Record Products: Down Beat, Flame, Swing Beat, Swing Time

An Black songwriter and entrepreneur, Jack Lauderdale launched the Downbeat Recording Company in 1946. Lauderdale was inconsistent in his branding, styling the company "Downbeat" but the label "Down Beat." Reportedly under pressure from *DownBeat* magazine, with which he was not connected, Lauderdale changed the name of his company and label to Swing Beat in October 1949. The name was changed again in March 1950, to Swing Time. Despite the name changes, all three labels used the identical pictorial trademark. A reorganization was completed in May 1950, at which time Franklin Kort was hired from Exclusive Records to work as Lauderdale's sales manager.

Lauderdale's first recording session was held in late 1946, and Down Beat records were on the market by early 1947. Much of Lauderdale's catalog comprised reissues from other labels. Among the early releases were several sides by the Five Soul Stirrers acquired from Leroy Hurte's failing Bronze label. Masters were also licensed from the Big Town and Trilon labels during 1947–1949. In late 1950 Lauderdale purchased 85 masters (including material by Charles Brown and Mabel Scott) from the defunct Exclusive label, as well as 83 masters from Supreme Records, including material by Jimmy Witherspoon, Percy Mayfield, and Floyd Dixon.

Lauderdale's most notable signing was Ray Charles, who made his first commercial recordings for Down Beat in the company of guitarist Gossie McKee and bassist Milton Garred (comprising The McSon Trio, who were erroneously credited on the labels as "The Maxin Trio"). The session was produced by Lloyd Glenn, who had recently been hired as Lauderdale's house director and artists-and-repertoire manager. Ray Charles' subsequent recordings for Lauderdale, issued on Swing Beat and Swing Time, appeared under his own name and consistently made *Billboard's* rhythm-and-blues charts. Lauderdale's largest-selling title, however, was Jay McShann's 1949 "Hot Biscuits," which reportedly sold 250,000 copies. Based on the *Cash Box* regional charts, Swing Time records had a particularly strong following in Detroit in the early 1950s.

Swing Time 45s were introduced in February 1951. In 1952 Lauderdale sold Ray Charles' contract to Atlantic Records. His short-lived Flame label ("Toast of the East Coast") was launched in early 1953, and in August of that year he moved his office to Chicago. A month later he began selling off Swing Time masters to various other labels, including Lucky and Hollywood. Swing Time was bankrupt by the end of that year but continued to operate for a short time, releasing its final singles in early 1954. After a year of inactivity, Swing Time's assets were purchased in January 1955 by Don Pierce, of Hollywood Records.

LAURENT RECORDS, LTD. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 750 Post St., San Francisco; Hollywood, CA (per labels, no address given)

Pressing: Trilon Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Laurent Ltd.

Launched in the summer of 1946 by Frank Laurent, assisted by Raymond W. Gorum (general manager), and Marsha Sieberg (executive secretary). Laurent was a San Francisco entrepreneur whose businesses included a music-publishing house, artist-management agency, hotel, and garage.

The Laurent label specialized in jazz and rhythm-and-blues. Its first signing was a group of Duke Ellington's musicians under the direction of Russell Procope, and the roster soon expanded to include George Bledsoe, Pee Wee Crayton, Que Martyn, and Eddie Young. The records were manufactured for Laurent by Trilon, which probably also handled some

distribution. Frank Laurent reportedly planned to open offices and plants on both coasts, but little more was reported concerning his record operation after early 1947.

LEDA RECORDS COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949 – 1950

Offices: 4452 Overbrook Ave., Philadelphia

Record Products: Leda

An obscure operation about which no substantial information has yet been found. Two Leda releases appeared in *Billboard's* November 1949 advance lists, in an 11- prefixed catalog series. A single new releases in an L- prefixed series was listed in January 1950, after which mentions of the company vanished from the trade papers. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many defunct or inactive companies) probably can be disregarded.

LEE & ROTH ENTERPRISES (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1945

Offices: 1697 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Stan-Lee

A pop label launched in 1944 by songwriters Seymour Lee (secretary-treasurer) and David Roth (president and sales manager), whose compositions were featured. Stan-Lee's artist roster included Sid Garry, Bernice Beyers, Ruth Gibbs, and the Freddy Johnson Choir. *Billboard* reported that the label "goes in strongly for cocktail combos." In March 1945, the same publication reported that Stan-Lee had "a heavy load of unreleased discs held up by lack of production facilities." The operation appears to have closed later that year, after having attracted little attention.

CARL LEE ARTS — See Fargo Records

LEE SALES COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: 733 11th Ave., New York

Record Products: Candy, Lee

Launched in late 1948 by Ed Levy and Herb Zebley, owners of the Major Distributing Company (New York). There is no known connection to the Hollywood-based Lee Records, an independent pressing plant that opened in the mid-1940s.

The company's Candy and Lee labels were intended primarily for jukebox use. Candy's first offering (Johnny Lane's "My Adorable One" / "Hello, Mr. Snowman") was released in January 1949 and received an enthusiastic review in *Cash Box* as "Sleeper of the Week." Candy's most distinctive releases were four titles by Cozy Cole's Cuboppers (Cubop being a fusion of Cuban dance music and be-bop), also released in 1949. The company sold some to Signature Records in the same year.

The company did virtually no advertising until early 1950, when Lee was recast as a blues, gospel, and calypso label. Advertised as "The fastest-growing hot label in the country," it launched a new series that featured the Shadows (a vocal group that Levy managed), the Sons of Heaven, and Prince Aubrey's Famous Calypso Troubadours.

The Lee Sales Company closed in late 1950, after Levy was called to active duty with the Army. At that time, the remaining masters, including unissued material, were sold to Bob Shad's Sittin' In With label.

LEEDS & CATLIN COMPANY (Cylinders and Discs)

Record Production: 1899 – 1909

Offices: 53 E. 11th St., New York; 10th & 73rd, New York (factory office, 2/1903–10/1905); Middletown, CT (factory office, from 10/1905)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—53 E. 11th St., New York

Pressing: Own plants—New York (to late 1905); Middletown, CT (from 10/1905)

Record Products: Banner [1], Busy Bee, Century [1], Concert [1], D & R (red label), Duquesne, Eagle [1] (full-color label), Imperial [1], Leeds Record, Indestructible Disc Record, Nassau, National [2], Oxford, Peerless [3], Royal [1], Silver Star [1], Sir Henri, Sun [1], Symphony [1], Talk-O-Phone, 20th Century [1]; Leeds & Catlin and Radium cylinders

Following the failure of Walcutt & Leeds (*q.v.*), the Leeds & Catlin Company was incorporated in New York on June 15, 1899. (The incorporation was reported in the April 1899 edition of *The Phonoscope*, which was published several months after its stated cover date; the actual incorporation date is confirmed in *The New York Times* for June 16.) The incorporators were Edward Leeds and L. Reade Catlin, whose charter stated that the company would manufacture and sell phonographs, with no mention of records. Among the company's earliest investors was Ira D. Sankey, who recorded many of his gospel hymns on Leeds cylinders at the turn of the century.

The new company retained Walcutt & Leeds' cylinder studio at 53 East 11th Street, New York, where it would remain until the end. Veteran phonograph singer Dan W Quinn recalled it was "rather a small plant, but they did a land-office business for a long while." However, Edward Leeds soon turned his attention to the newly emerging disc market. He found an ally in the Toledo-based Ohio Talking Machine Company (*q.v.*), which began manufacturing disc phonographs and records in Toledo in 1902. By 1903, when it published its last known brown-wax cylinder catalog, Leeds & Catlin was preparing to manufacture discs. They would be marketed by Ohio Talking Machine, which apparently was having little success with its own Monogram disc records.

Ignoring the crucial Berliner and Jones patents held by Victor and Columbia, Leeds readied its 7" foil-label discs for sale in late 1903. But the company had no sooner produced its first stampers, imprinted with the Ohio Talking Machine Company's name, than the Toledo firm was reorganized as the Talk-O-Phone Company.

Seven-inch Leeds records were being advertised in New York by early December 1903. The earliest labels bore the imprint of the defunct Ohio Talking Machine Company, but the stampers were soon reworked to show the Talk-O-Phone Company's name. The records were visually distinctive. Instead of plain paper labels, they bore imitation gold-foil labels pressed into a florid, deeply sculpted bas-relief, with the title and artist information in sharply raised lettering. Metallic green labels were also used on some pressings.

Leeds' 7" series seems to have been very short-lived. By early 1904, the company was producing 10" discs that retailed for 75¢ each (25¢ less than comparable material on Victor and Columbia), or \$9 per dozen. The early pressings were crude even by the lax standards of the day, often marred by irregular playing surfaces and dull shellac that was sometimes contaminated with bits of foreign matter. Early pressings had a thick outer rim with a deeply sunken playing area, resulting in a very thin pressing that was easily cracked. The pressing quality eventually improved, however, and the records were reasonably well recorded from start. They offered popular material by many of the same studio performers Victor and Columbia employed, at a more affordable price. The Talk-O-Phone Company imprint was removed after that company introduced its own discs in December 1904. Talk-O-Phone subsequently remaindered its inventory of approximately one-million co-branded Leeds foil-label discs for 50¢ each.

The opening salvo in what would be a protracted legal assault on Leeds & Catlin came in the spring of 1904, just a few months after Leeds began advertising its discs. The American Graphophone Company (Columbia) accused the company of infringing its Jones patent #688,739, which covered lateral-cut disc recording in wax and a method for electroplating the resulting master. Hearings began in U.S. District Court in New York on May 16, 1904, and continued into mid-summer. Louis Hicks (who would represent Leeds & Catlin in this and other patent-infringement cases that followed) filed a demurrer in which he argued, among other things, that the Jones patent was void for lack of invention, an assertion that Judge Platt dismissed as "obviously futile." Leeds was given ten days to respond, a deadline the company let pass.

Leeds was summoned back to court on August 14, 1905. By then, Hicks had changed his strategy, claiming that Columbia had no formal title to the Jones patent and therefore had no legal capacity to sue. To their dismay, the Columbia attorneys were indeed unable to produce the original patent assignment, as required by law. Judge Hazel refused to allow a certified copy to be entered as evidence, and Columbia's plea was dismissed.

Columbia's highly publicized loss came just as Leeds & Catlin was undertaking a major expansion. In September 1905, Leeds opened a new pressing plant in the former Worcester Cycle Company factory in Middletown, Connecticut, replacing its original New York City plant. Three months later, the company announced it had installed fifty additional presses to accommodate the ever-increasing demand for its records. By the end of 1905, the plant was said to have an annual capacity of 150 million discs, which reportedly could be doubled without the need for additional equipment using an unspecified process supposedly patented by Edward Leeds.

The Middletown plant acquisition coincided with the phasing-out of foil-label Leeds discs. The company had been offering two lines of conventional paper-labeled discs (the \$1 Imperial and somewhat less expensive Concert) since mid-1905. In December 1905, Leeds sparked a price war when it reduced Imperial prices to 60¢. The price cut coincided with the end of Leeds' foil-label discs, the last of which were released in early 1906. The foil-label discs were soon being remaindered by various jobbers, including the Clinton-Close Company (Toledo, Ohio), which in February 1906 advertised its stock of 50,000 Leeds foil-label discs for 12½¢ each.

With the foil-labeled discs discontinued, Imperial was repositioned as Leeds' flagship brand. The Imperial labels never credited Leeds & Catlin (nor did any subsequent Leeds products), although no secret was made of the connection in the company's advertising. In a 1907 notice to its dealers, bristling with accusations and questionable legal claims, Leeds & Catlin declared, "The Imperial is a product of our factory, and we are proud of it."

Loring Leeds, who by then was largely responsible for the company's operation, promoted Imperial records aggressively, demonstrating them on extended coast-to-coast tours and even venturing into Mexico on sales calls. In October 1906 *The Talking Machine World* reported that he was selling Imperial records "by the carload" in Salt Lake City. Among Leeds' sales gimmicks was a list of extra-loud records, purportedly made by a special process, for "outdoor use." Auditioned specimens, however, are not markedly louder than Leeds' usual output.

December 1905 brought an announcement that Leeds cylinder production would "follow shortly" and would be "rich in grand opera masters." Rumors to that effect had been circulating since early in the year, when a prototype label for a new Leeds cylinder box came to the attention of Thomas Edison. The label (a copy of which survives at the Edison National Historic Site) claimed that the records were manufactured for the New York Phonograph Company under authority of the long-defunct North American Phonograph Company, which had once controlled Thomas Edison's phonograph patents. It was an absurdly twisted claim, with no legal merit, but it raised sufficient concern among Edison executives that an attorney was sent to Leeds & Catlin's offices to investigate. There, it was learned that the company had not yet resumed cylinder production, but was planning to do so.

No cylinders were immediately forthcoming, but reports of Leeds' re-entry into the cylinder business continued to appear regularly. In January 1906, the company claimed that its new cylinder records would be on the market by February 1. In the same month, *The Talking Machine World* reported that Leeds could now manufacture celluloid cylinders for special orders of "sufficient size, [although] no firm carries it in stock, so far as can be ascertained, as the results...are said to have been not wholly satisfactory." In May, however, the company admitted that its cylinder factory had yet to become operational. In the end, Leeds would not re-enter the cylinder market until January 1907, when it introduced the short-lived Radium brand.

Despite earlier announcements that the company had already produced 200 cylinder masters, only fifteen recordings appeared in the first (and apparently last) Radium list, comprising ordinary popular fare by the usual studio freelancers. Gaps in the catalog numbers (which ran from 101 through 128) suggest production problems. No further Radium releases are known to have been advertised, and the venture appears to have been

quickly wound-down. The only other known mention of Radium cylinders is a June 1907 British announcement that Leeds had promised standard and "extra-length" cylinders to Gilbert & Kimpton in London. Nothing further was heard of that idea.

In February 1906, *The Talking Machine World* reported that Leeds had received an order for one-million Imperial discs for export. The customer was unnamed but probably was Cooks, Ltd. (London), which began advertising Concert and Imperial records in April of that year. It reportedly was an exclusive arrangement, but in December Cooks' made Gilbert Kimpton & Company the sole British controllers for the Imperial line, under the management of their junior partner, W. H. Glendinning.

Glendinning quickly inserted himself into Leeds & Catlin's affairs from afar, announcing in January 1907 that he had arranged for the company to record several British artists in the United States. Ian Colquhoun and Tom Child were accompanied on their voyage by Glendinning, who it was said would "make arrangements whereby the sales of these records will be materially increased throughout Great Britain." Although Glendinning pronounced himself "very much pleased" with the resulting records, American consumers did not share his enthusiasm. *TMW* later reported that Leeds was "greatly disappointed with the demand for what they were led to believe were destined to be great sellers." Further attempts by Glendinning to place British artists with Leeds (reportedly including several British opera singers) were brushed off, as was his proposal to open an Imperial studio and pressing plant in England under Edward Leeds' supervision. Nevertheless, Gilbert Kimpton & Company remained one of Leeds' largest customers.

Leeds' involvement with foreign companies was not over, however. In May 1906, the company advertised that a new, premium-priced classical and operatic line of Imperial records was "nearly ready for the trade." Although Leeds boasted that the records had been made "for us," they were in fact reissues of material already released in Europe by Schallplatten Fabrik "Favorite" GmbH (Hannover, Germany) on its Favorite label. The more expensive red-label Imperial Grand Opera Records, retailing for \$1.50, featured eminent singers from some of the best European houses, but most were unfamiliar to American audiences, and sales appear to have been negligible. A \$1 black-label series was a hodgepodge of band selections, light classics, and ethnic material. The records went on sale in England in 1907, a futile effort since the same recordings were already available there, on the original Favorite label, for considerably less. Although a financial failure in both countries, these were Leeds & Catlin's only legally produced recordings. In 1907, Judge Lacombe ruled that Leeds' "making of duplicate copies of fully finished commercial foreign records" was not an infringement.

The British and Grand Opera debacles aside, Leeds & Catlin was rapidly gaining market share, and in early 1906 the Victor Talking Machine Company joined the legal assault. In April, Judge Hazel, of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, sustained the portion of Victor's Berliner patent relating to the propulsion of the stylus by the record groove. Victor's request for a temporary restraining order was granted but then vacated after Leeds attorney Louis Hicks claimed to have new evidence invalidating the Berliner patent. Hurried preparation of that material, he argued, would impose an undue hardship.

Leeds' supposed new evidence, offered up as proof that Berliner's patent was invalid because it had been anticipated by the work of Bell and Tainter in the United States and Werner Suess in Canada, was presented in due course, prompting Victor's attorneys to request an additional delay. On April 26, Judge Townsend (United States Circuit court of Appeals) upheld the validity of the Berliner patent and granted a preliminary injunction, which was stayed pending a final hearing. At the same time, Hicks attempted to distance Leeds & Catlin from co-defendant Talk-O-Phone, asserting that Leeds' only connection to Talk-O-Phone had been as a customer for its phonographs.

As the Victor case churned its way through the courts, members of the Leeds family seem to have remained on reasonably friendly terms with executives of other record companies. In May 1906, Loring Leeds joined the newly formed Talking Machine Traveling Men's Association, where he regularly came in contact with representatives of Columbia, Hawthorne & Sheble, Zon-O-Phone, and other major producers, with only Victor being conspicuously absent. In December of the same year, Edward Leeds joined the Musical Copyright League, an organization that lobbied to have phonograph records exempted from the proposed new copyright law.

The Victor case was taken up again in the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, on October 11, 1906. The following day, Judge Wallace affirmed the decision in favor of Victor and granted a preliminary injunction. Victor immediately released a statement informing the trade, "We expect to at once proceed to enforce our rights by preliminary injunction against all infringers, including all manufacturers of infringing machines and records who have not taken a license from us, and dealers in such infringing goods."

Leeds' response was to ignore the injunction, resulting in a contempt of court charge. At the same time, Leeds advertised that it would market an automatic-feed phonograph. The announcement marked a turning point in the company's strategic efforts to bypass the Berliner patent. An automatic feed, in theory at least, would skirt Berliner's specification that the record's groove propel the stylus. Reflecting that shift, the company began affixing labels to the reverse sides of their discs stating that the records were sold for use only on automatic-feed machines, or as replacements for worn-out or broken records.

On January 5, 1907, Judge Lacombe (Circuit Court of the United States, Southern District of New York) fined Leeds \$1,000 for disobeying the injunction order. Lacombe expressed skepticism over the sudden appearance of the automatic-feed labels, and he dismissed the notion that the "replacement" clause provided any protection to Leeds under the company's right of repair. However, Leeds was granted a stay and the fine was suspended, pending yet another appeal. The companies continued to snipe at one another during the interim, each making lengthy legal statements in the trade papers.

In the meantime, the American Graphophone Company (Columbia) was preparing to rejoin the legal assault on Leeds & Catlin. On February 15, 1907, Columbia attorney C. L. A. Massie requested that Leeds be enjoined from infringing Columbia's Jones patent, which covered lateral-cut recordings in wax. Judge Lacombe refused to grant an injunction, declaring on March 25, "Irrespective of any other point presented on this motion, there is too much dispute as to the process by which defendants' discs were produced to warrant the granting of a preliminary injunction on affidavits." Request for injunction was again denied on June 11, without leave to renew, and the case was ordered to go to hearing on its merits.

In preparation for the hearings, Leeds attorney Louis Hicks wrote to Alexander Graham Bell, requesting a copy of a lecture Bell had delivered to the Fortnightly Club in May 1888, in which he had outlined a method of electroplating sound recordings made on "wax or wax-like" discs. Hicks hoped to further bolster his contention that the Jones patent was anticipated by earlier work, and thus was invalid, by obtaining the corroborating testimony of a universally respected scientist. Graham supplied Hicks a copy of his *Volta Laboratory Description* of October 20, 1881, containing the particulars of the process, but no evidence has been found that he granted Hicks' request for a meeting or otherwise offered him any support.

In late April 1907, the Victor case reached the United States Circuit Court of Appeals. Having been unsuccessful in attempting to invalidate the Berliner patent, attorney Hicks instead focused on Leeds' right to sell records for use on non-infringing mechanical-feed machines, or as replacements for damaged discs under the "repair doctrine." On May 2, 1907, Judges Coxe and Hough, with Judge Wallace dissenting, sustained the lower court's decision in favor of Victor. The mechanical-feed machine was dismissed as "either as a curiosity or a pretense." Concerning right of repair, the judges wrote that Leeds' sale of records "is no more repairing [a] machine than is one repairing a stereopticon by changing the pictures therein to suit the whim of the person gazing through it."

A final appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court was already in preparation. Papers had been filed on April 6, 1907, and attorneys Hicks and Pettit made a preliminary appearance before the Court on April 14. Edward Leeds seemed particularly buoyed by Judge Wallace's dissenting opinion. On May 28, the Supreme Court agreed to review the validity of the Berliner patent as well as Judge Lacombe's contempt order. Arguments were originally scheduled for the Fall 1908 term, and the outcome was considered to be far from assured. In early 1908, *The Talking Machine World* reported that German and other foreign manufacturers were "prepared to spring in" to the American market if the Supreme Court refused to sustain Berliner's patent.

While the cases proceeded, record production continued as usual. Loring Leeds reported "demand coming from all parts of the globe — South Africa, Russia, India, China, Japan,

Philippine Islands, Mexico, South and Central America, England, France, every state in the union." During the summer of 1907 the company took the first orders for the new mechanical-feed phonographs and hired Charles E. Brown as Western sales manager and Frederic D. Wood (formerly of the American Record Company) as full-time house conductor. In March 1908, Loring Leeds reported an order for 250,000 records from an unspecified Chicago company, most likely O'Neill-James (the marketers of Busy Bee products).

Advertisements began to appear for Leeds & Catlin's new Sun label in September 1907. In October it was reported that Sun would replace Imperial as Leeds' flagship brand. The first known Sun catalog, published in the same month, included numerous reissues from Imperial and continued that label's catalog-numbering series. Reports hinted that Imperial would be discontinued, as no new releases had been advertised on that label for several months. However, Leeds continued to produce new Imperial releases of selected numbers for export to England. Imperial records from that point forward appeared regularly in the British trade-journal advance lists, but not in their American counterparts. Large quantities of Imperial discs continued to be shipped to England, where surplus inventory was still being sold off as late as 1910.

Final arguments in the Columbia lawsuit, charging infringement of the Jones patent, were heard on June 1–3, 1908 by Judge Hough (United States Circuit Court, Southern District of New York). After a long delay, the judge handed Leeds & Catlin a rare victory on August 24, invalidating the Jones patent as having been anticipated by Charles Adams-Randall's 1889 British patents. Columbia announced that it would appeal.

Edward Leeds did not live to hear the initial outcome of the Columbia case. He died following a short illness at his summer home near North Long Branch, New Jersey, on August 12, 1908, at the age of forty-three. He had labored nearly to the end to skirt Berliner's patent; eight months before his death, he and George Rumpf had filed a patent application on a phonograph with a stationary reproducer mounted above a laterally tracking turntable. His position was filled by Frank P. Byrne, a Detroit banker. Increasingly, the company was slipping from the family's control, with Loring Leeds now the sole family member remaining on the board of directors.

During the summer of 1908, Walter L. Eckhardt was installed as Leeds' new general manager and given a seat on the board of directors. Among other duties, he was assigned to develop and market Leeds' new double-sided Peerless discs. Eckhardt's arrival coincided with the disappearance from *TMW* of advertisements for Leeds' single-sided Sun records, suggesting that the company was already planning its transition to double-sided pressings. The records were to retail for 65¢, the same as Columbia's newly introduced Double Discs. The Peerless name quite likely was suggested by Eckhardt, whose Manufacturers' Outlet Company (89 Chambers Street, New York) was already marketing a line of household appliances under the Peerless brand. Peerless phonographs, marketed by Manufacturers' Outlet but not manufactured by Leeds, were first mentioned in *TMW* in September 1908, but Peerless records are not known to have been advertised until February 1909, when Leeds placed a full-page advertisement in *TMW* and published their March advance list. By then, the catalog numbers (which began at #101) had reached #189, suggesting that the records had already been on the market for several months.

Eckhardt's arrival marked a shift in Leeds' corporate structure and marketing arrangements. In February 1909, his Manufacturers' Outlet Company took over distribution of the entire Leeds & Catlin line, and arrangements were made to move into larger offices. *TMW* reported that Eckhardt had booked a 100,000-disc order from an unnamed Chicago company, most likely D & R. During a well-covered social event at New York's Knickerbocker Hotel, Eckhardt publicly offered a recording contract to baritone Antonio Scotti (one of Victor's most prestigious Red Seal artists), which Scotti politely declined.

In the meantime, the anticipated autumn 1908 Supreme Court hearing continued to be delayed. While they waited, Victor officials filed a new lawsuit against Leeds & Catlin, this time charging the company with infringing its patented process for attaching paper labels to discs. Finally, on January 14, 1909, Petit and Hicks were allowed to argue their cases before the Supreme Court justices, but the court adjourned ten days later without having issued a ruling.

Despite Eckhardt's best efforts, the protracted litigation was taking a toll on Leeds & Catlin. In March 1909, the company ran its last list of Peerless records in *TMW*, for April

release. The 1908 ruling favoring Leeds in the Columbia case had been reversed on appeal, and on April 14, 1909, the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, New York City, unanimously upheld the validity of Columbia's Jones patent for a second time. In rejecting Leeds' argument that the Jones patent was anticipated by the Adams-Randall patent, the judges wrote, "We are unable to see that Adams-Randall's contribution to the art advanced it a single step." Three days later, Judge Lacombe granted a decree for a perpetual injunction, an accounting of Leeds & Catlin's profits accruing under their infringement, and an accounting of damages the American Graphophone and Columbia Phonograph companies had sustained as a result of the infringement.

Finally, on April 19, 1909, the Supreme Court announced its decision in the Victor case, upholding Leeds' \$1,000 fine in the 1907 contempt case, striking down the company's claim to right of repair and replacement, and withholding judgment on the mechanical-feed issue. But most importantly, it decisively upheld the validity of Victor's Berliner patent. A preliminary injunction was granted, effectively signalling the end for Leeds & Catlin. In a lengthy statement to the trade, Victor president Eldridge Johnson declared, "Around every successful enterprise stand, in a crowded circle like wolves surrounding a herd of buffalo on the plains, certain envious ones who hope, by some lucky circumstance, to share in the reward due to others... To imitate goods that others have developed at a great cost, for the purpose of saving a certain percentage of overhead expense by dispensing with a department of engineering, development and design, appeals strongly to men who do not understand the talking machine business and its future...."

Bolstered by such a decisive ruling, Victor went on to successfully sue other infringing manufacturers, including Duplex and Sonora. Nor were dealers in infringing merchandise safe from Victor's attorneys. On May 29, 1909, the company filed suit against R. H. Macy & Company for selling Leeds-produced Nassau records, submitting "a formidable document two inches thick" in support of its case, according to *TMW*. A restraining order was granted immediately, sending a clear and highly publicized warning to others in the trade. On June 19, Judge Lacombe wrote, "What defendants may do with the infringing discs they now own is a question to be dealt with when it arises." He went on to opine that infringement would be unlikely if the records were shipped abroad, provided they were sold only after their arrival offshore.

The Supreme Court decision and the Macy's case had an immediate chilling effect on the sale of Leeds' remaining inventory. One attorney noted, "Numerous records had been previously sold [to dealers] and the purchasers would not pay for them now for fear of being involved in litigation. The stock on hand was largely of the same kind, and is practically valueless, as it cannot be disposed of."

On June 21, 1909, the Leeds & Catlin Company was petitioned into bankruptcy by attorney Leonard Bronner, on behalf of several creditors. Theodore Taft was appointed as receiver the following day. Among the creditors was the O'Neill-James Company, the marketer of Busy Bee discs (many of which were manufactured by Leeds), which filed a claim for \$35,000.

On August 10, 1909, most of Leeds & Catlin's property in its New York office and studio was sold at public auction. Among the items listed for sale were Talk-O-Phone, Leeds, Imperial, Sun, Nassau, Concert, Symphony, and Sir Henri discs; cylinder and disc masters; one disc and four cylinder recording machines; and, ironically, a Victor phonograph. The sale realized only \$2,400, less than 75% of appraised value. However, the articles sold represented only a small portion of the company's assets. Still to be sold were the factory and equipment in Middletown, Connecticut, along with unspecified patents reportedly valued at \$1.5 million. "The patents," *TMW* noted, "have caused some inquiry as to their nature, as they are comparatively unknown in the trade." The contents of the Middletown plant were finally auctioned on February 10, 1910, but not before a Victor attorney addressed the crowd, reiterating the Supreme Court ruling in detail.

Receivership terminated on February 28, 1910, with bond holders receiving only a small percentage of face value. However, issues surrounding the bankruptcy continued to surface. Columbia obtained a final ruling on damages in April 1910, under which Leeds & Catlin was held accountable for \$81,250.85 in damages for infringement of the Jones patent. As part of an earlier settlement with the Talk-O-Phone Company, Columbia had received a quantity of empty Talk-O-Phone cases, which it outfitted with its own works for several

client machines in 1910. Columbia also allowed jobbers to exchange their now-unsalable Leeds & Catlin pressings for Columbia records. In an unfortunate miscalculation, Columbia then sold the discs to the Simpson-Crawford Company, relabeled as Sir Henri records, leading Victor to sue Columbia for the sale of infringing products.

Columbia was not the only company to be left with unsalable infringing discs following Leeds & Catlin's demise. A flourishing black-market developed as jobbers and retailers attempted to dispose of their devalued Leeds inventory. Victor was especially vigilant in ferreting them out, at one point even employing private detectives to follow individuals suspected of dealing in the infringing records. Victor filed its final lawsuit against what remained of the Leeds & Catlin Company in June 1910, seeking a ruling from the U.S. Circuit Court that they could use in possible future cases of patent infringement. Judge Hand declined to hear the case.

For a short time it was rumored that Loring Leeds might resume record production, but the forced sale of Leeds & Catlin's Middletown real estate in October 1912 put an end to the speculation. The company's remaining equipment and furnishings were not disposed of until September 23, 1914, when they were auctioned to recover the cost of storage.

Loring Leeds went on to work as manager of the Boston Talking Machine Company, the ill-fated manufacturer of Phono-Cut records. He played a key role in designing the company's plant but resigned his position for unexplained reasons on September 9, 1913, stating that he had "no future plans" other than to relax at his New Jersey home. He resurfaced several months later as sales manager of Pathé's New York office. In 1917 he attempted to revive the Leeds brand, launching the Leeds Phonograph Record Company in New York. The incorporation notice stated that the company was to "manufacture and deal in phonograph records" and other merchandise, but no records are known to have been produced.

LEEDS & COMPANY

Offices: 47 S. Illinois St., Indianapolis

Organized in the early 1890s as the Indiana sales agent for Edison phonographs. By the summer of 1891, the company was soliciting phonograph exhibitors in the local newspapers, and it continued to do so on a regular basis for the next year. In November 1891, Leeds & Company was licensed by the North American Phonograph Company to deal in Edison and Columbia goods throughout Indiana. The company, which was also a sales agent for Smith typewriters, placed its last known advertisements in early 1893. Thus far, no catalog or other evidence has been found that the company produced original recordings for sales to the general public.

LEI RECORD COMPANY — See Advertiser Publishing Company, Ltd.

LESLIE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 2091 Broadway, New York; 419 W. 48th St., New York (Leslie Distributors, late 1948); 725 (later 750) 10th Ave., New York (Leslie Distributors, from 1949)

Original-Master Source(s): Decca studio (New York), probably others

Record Products: Leslie

Leslie was a short-lived pop label remembered primarily for having issued Tony Bennett's first recordings. There are conflicting reports regarding its ownership, with Bennett crediting Sy Leslie, *Billboard* crediting Nat Debin (Lena Horne's former manager), and several online articles that lack source documentation crediting George Simon (who composed some material featured on the label and produced Leslie's Tony Bennett session). The records were marketed by the Leslie Distributors Corporation, a separate business owned by Leonard Smith and Lou Boorstein, which operated at a different address than Leslie Records and handled numerous other labels.

Leslie's catalog numbering inexplicably began at #918, assuming that *Billboard* was correct in reporting that number as the label's first release. Advertised in June 1949, it was the two-part "Brooklyn Dodgers Jump," a novelty selection composed by Simon and

performed by Dodgers team members Ralph Branca, Carl Furillo, and Erv Palica. A *Cash Box* reviewer urged jukebox operators to "latch on to the disc—but pronto!"

The Dodgers record was followed by Tony Bennett's first release (#919), with Bennett masquerading as "Joe Bari," a name he sometimes used in radio work. In his autobiography, Bennett recalled that the session was held at Decca's New York studio under George Simon's supervision. The record "went absolutely nowhere," Bennett admitted, "but it was still a kick for me to have a record of my own." Anecdotal reports that no copies survive apparently stem from Bennett's recollection that his only copy "crumbled" in later years. In fact, multiple copies are known to still exist.

Leslie Records last appeared in *Billboard*'s July 1950 label directory. The name was also used in 1949 for a gospel release on an unrelated single-issue label of unknown origin.

LEWIS RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 1833 S St. NW (#22), Washington, DC

Record Products: Lewis

A very short-lived Washington, DC, operation of uncertain ownership. Paul O. Richardson is credited as proprietor in one modern work, with no source cited. The company advertised only once in *Billboard*, in September 1950. From a known numerical range of 102 through 121, ten releases have been reported by reliable sources thus far, including titles by the Mellonaires, Mary Johnson Davis and her Gospel Singers, the Silver Leaf Gospel Singers, and Elder C. S. Williams. The company reappeared, at a different Washington address, in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory, which includes many inactive or defunct companies.

LIBERTY MUSIC SHOP(S) (Discs)

Record Production: 1933 – 1942; Early 1950s

Offices: 10 E. 59th St. (and later, 450, 795, and 797 Madison Ave.), New York

Original-Master Source(s): American Record Corporation, World Broadcasting studios

Record Products: Liberty Music Shop(s), Special Recordings; personal recordings

Originally a Victor dealer, the Liberty Music Shop soon expanded its offerings to include a wide range of labels. The store began commissioning its own recordings in 1933, which initially were labeled as Personal or Special Records. Many label designs appeared during the label's early years, with little consistency in the use of "Shop" *vs.* "Shops." By 1936, the label had adopted its distinctive blue-on-white design, sometimes with the artists pictured, credited to the Liberty Music Shop (singular). The store was sufficiently well known that in 1940 it was able to convince Johnny Mercer to change the name of his new record company from Liberty to Capitol, under threat of litigation.

Liberty Music Shop records were marketed to what *Billboard* characterized as "the plush record-buying trade." Its catalog included cocktail-lounge pianists, salon orchestras, White "chamber jazz" groups, Broadway show tunes, and comic monologues. The artist roster featured Lucienne Boyer, Gracie Fields, Greta Keller, Beatrice Lillie, Ethel Merman, Ethel Waters, and Lee Wiley. There was also mildly risqué material by Dwight Fiske, Bruz Fletcher, Ray Bourbon, and others, some of which later found its way (legally or otherwise) onto obscure party-record labels.

Liberty Music Shop commissioned its masters from several suppliers, and recordings that appeared on its label generally were made for its exclusive use. The earliest documented Liberty Music Shop session, by Marion Chase, was held in the American Record Corporation's New York studio on June 5, 1933. Subsequent ARC sessions were held in its New York and Los Angeles studios. Masters were numbered within ARC's standard series, usually with the addition of a P-, BP-, or WP- prefix, the "P" indicating a private recording. Masters were also commissioned from ARC's Columbia division beginning in May 1934, numbered in their 170000 custom series. A few imported Columbia masters were used as well. Occasional Liberty Music Shop sessions were held in the Decca studios as early as 1936.

Production shifted to Columbia in 1939, following the sale of ARC to CBS (Columbia), but Liberty Music Shops also began employing other studios at that time. Decca sessions resumed in February 1939, followed by sporadic sessions in the RCA Victor, Reeves

(General), and World Broadcasting studios. A few late issues show no master numbers on the labels or in the pressings. No new recordings appear to have been made for the label after late 1941 or early 1942.

The Liberty Music Shop label was revived briefly in the early 1950s for a series of LPs that were openly disclosed as dubbings from previously issued 78s. They were announced to the trade on December 9, 1951, and they appear to have marked the end of the Liberty Music Shops label.

LIBERTY PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

The Liberty Phonograph Company (1836 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland) advertised a new line of lateral-cut discs in the February 1919 *Talking Machine World*. Financed by J. H. Smith and L. J. Mueller, and affiliated with Frederick W. Matthews (formerly of the Indestructible Phonographic record Company), the company claimed to have a New York studio at 16–18 W. 39th Street. *TMW* reported in June 1919 that "splendid progress" was being made, with the first Liberty release slated for August. Advertisements claimed the records were not "for people who like the cheap, tawdry, the commonplace." The marketing campaign continued into December 1919. It appears likely that some masters were recorded ("See Old Man Moon Smile" was advertised as having been recorded for Liberty), but no Liberty records are known to have been released. In February 1920, *TMW* reported that Liberty had been succeeded by the Arrow Phonograph Corporation, *q.v.*

LIBERTY RECORD COMPANY [I] / BLAZON RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945–1947

Offices: 4269 Tujunga, N. Hollywood, CA

Pressing: Berger Enterprises

Record Products: Liberty [1]; Blazon

The Hollywood-based Liberty Record Company was launched in late 1945 by Zeke Clements, a "Grand Ole Opry" star who was also the voice of Bashful in Walt Disney's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." The records were manufactured by Berger Enterprises and distributed locally by K & M Distributing Company. There was no connection to Nikos Sevastopoulos' company of the same name, nor to the later Liberty Records, Inc. (launched in 1955) or other similarly named companies.

Liberty's artist roster, consisting entirely of country-music artists, included Clements, Paul Howard's Arkansas Cotton Pickers, and John Daniels' Gospel Quartet. The first release probably appeared in January 1946. A second group of releases was advertised as being available on February 15, but follow-up advertisements suggest that they did not begin shipping until mid-March.

In September 1946, Clements changed his label name to Blazon in response to a complaint from Nikos Sevastopoulos of the unrelated Liberty Record Company (*see next entry*), although the Liberty name continued to appear in Clements' advertising through the end of the year. The Liberty recordings were reissued on Blazon under their original catalog numbers, but few if any new Blazon issues were forthcoming. In 1947, Clements closed the business and sold his masters to Black and White Records, which reissued a number of them.

Clements went on to sign a one-year contract with Bullet in 1948, then moved to M-G-M Records in 1949, in addition to operating a publishing business, Blazon Music.

LIBERTY RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: Mid-1940s – 1960s

Offices: 301 W. 41st St., New York, NY.; 2458 Broadway, New York (1960s)

Record Products: Liberty [2], Vembo's Records – Liberty

A producer of recordings for the Greek-American market, the New York-based Liberty Record Company was founded by Nikos (Nick) Sevastopoulos in the mid-1940s. There was no connection to Zeke Clements' company of the same name, nor to the later Liberty Records, Inc. (launched in 1955) or other similarly named companies. Sevastopoulos was also the co-owner, with John Christodoulou, of Liberty Bell Motion Pictures, a short-lived movie production company that was incorporated in New York in October 1950.

Sevastopoulos' Liberty label was devoted exclusively to traditional and contemporary Greek fare. Its artists included Athens-based singer and actress Sofia Vembo, some of whose recordings were issued with a "Vembo's Records" logo added to the standard Liberty label. Liberty used a mixture of imported and domestic masters. The latter apparently were recorded for Liberty's exclusive use and employed a mixture of local and visiting foreign artists. Liberty LPs were introduced in 1949, and records were still being sold as late as the mid-1960s.

LIBERTY RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: Henry, VA

Record Products: Liberty [3]

A short-lived country-and-western venture founded in mid-1949 by Dee Stone (whose name was given in *Billboard* as "Dee Stand"), allegedly in partnership with Ted Prillaman. The first Liberty release was announced in mid-September 1949 and was reviewed three months later in *Billboard*, which dismissed it as "twangy harmony and rhythmic guitar plunking." Liberty closed after several releases, and in May 1950 Stone launched the more successful Mutual Records, *q.v.* Liberty Records' brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS — DIVISION OF MUSIC (Discs)

Record Production: From 1941

Offices: 101 Independence Ave. SE, Washington, DC

Original-Master Sources: Own studio (Washington, DC); numerous temporary field locations

Record Products (78s): The Library of Congress—Division of Music

The Library of Congress' Division of Music has a long history of collecting, commissioning, and producing recordings for academic purposes, the best-known examples of which are John and Alan Lomax's extensive field recordings of American vernacular music, and Alan Lomax's 1938 sessions with Jelly Roll Morton. A permanent recording studio was finally opened in the library in 1940, funded by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation, but much of the work continued to be carried out using portable recording equipment in far-flung locations.

Although these recordings were not made with commercial release in mind, the Friends of Music in the Library of Congress (founded in 1928 by Carl Engel, chief of the library's music division at the time) began to produce and sell special limited-edition pressings in 1941, at first dubbed largely from the Lomax's material. Designated for non-commercial use, the records were sold by subscription to members only. At first pressed in shellac, and later in vinyl, the records were packaged in well-produced album sets that included detailed program notes. LPs were introduced in the early 1950s.

These and other Library of Congress recordings have since been dubbed and released commercially by various companies, beginning in 1947 with Circle Records' elaborately packaged release of the 1938 Jelly Roll Morton recordings (which unfortunately were dubbed at an obviously incorrect speed). The most notable example in relatively recent times is Rounder Records' extensive CD series drawn from Alan Lomax's recordings, including speed-corrected transfers of the Morton series.

In 1986, the Library of Congress acquired rights to the entire Folkways catalog, portions of which have since been reissued on CDs.

LIFE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1953

Offices: Garrick Theater Building (64 W. Randolph St.), Chicago

Record Products: Life [2]; custom and personal recordings; audition acetates

Owned and operated by William W. Maloney, as an adjunct to his Chicago Music publishing house. The first trade-paper mention of the Life Record Company was a small teaser advertisement in *Cash Box* for July 30, 1949, the same month in which the company signed a recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians that enabled it to employ

union musicians. There was no connection to the New York-based Life Records, which operated during the same period (*see next entry*).

Life's first release (by Three Kings and a Queen, a cocktail-lounge combo from Michigan) was advertised in *Billboard* in August 1948, after which the operation appears to have gone dormant for a time. The label was reactivated in early 1950, at which time it was reported that A. T. Maras was in charge of recording activities, and that Life was planning to add 45-rpm pressings to its product line. In 1952 the company announced plans to add LPs, secured a St. Louis distributor, and announced a royalty deal with RCA Victor involving some old Russ Case recordings.

Despite that flurry of activity, the Life Record Company failed to attract much attention nationally. It was last mentioned in January 1953 by *Billboard*, which reported that it had recently signed John Wyskowski's Polish Polka Band of Omaha, Nebraska.

LIFE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices: 241 Centre St., New York

Record Products: Life [1]

Life Records' launch was announced in June 1948 by *Billboard*, which reported that the company would specialize in folk, spiritual, race, and novelty items. Life's labels and single known national advertisement sported the slogan, "It's Always a Great Life." There was no connection to the Chicago-based Life label, which was produced during the same period (*see previous entry*). No details concerning ownership have been located thus far.

Life's first release, a dance-tempo adaptation of "Casey at the Bat" that Life Records registered for copyright on April 19, 1948, was inexplicably numbered 52822. Life's third release (the Four Moods' recording of "Have You?") was produced as a fund-raiser for the Sister Elizabeth Kenny Foundation. No mention of the company has been found after 1948.

HARRY LIM RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Offices: 185 Ave. C, New York

Record Products: HL

A short-lived modern-jazz label operated by Harry Lim. A native of Java, Lim worked as an independent producer before joining the staff of Keynote Records. In October 1949, *Billboard* reported that he had launched his own HL label. HL's initial offering, by the Al Haig Sextet, was released in November and received a positive review in *Billboard*, but Lim appears to have suspended production in 1950. The records were briefly distributed by the N. Lewis Company (New York).

LINA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Office: 1712 Madison Ave., New York

Record Products: Lina

Launched in early 1949 by Murray Shapiro, to specialize in Latino and Latino-pop fare for the domestic and foreign markets. *Billboard* reported that approximately half of Lina's output was exported. Composer Leopoldo Gonzalez managed Lina's artists and repertoire.

The initial recording sessions were held in Cuba and Puerto Rico, under Shapiro's and Gonzalez's supervision. One of the company's earliest foreign signings was band leader Perez Prado, "the Cuban Kenton," who was quickly lured away by RCA Victor. Domestic recording sessions, employing Reinaldo Henriques, Johnny Lopez, and other Cuban and Puerto Rican artists working in the New York area, began in August 1949. Current tunes were featured, along with occasional offerings of traditional material, most notably Doroteo's renditions of Puerto Rican folk tunes.

In January 1950, Lina began producing 10" plastic pressings with six minutes of playing time, retailing for \$1 and containing two selection per side. The move was made to help importers save on duty and shipping costs, but rendered the records unsuitable for jukebox use. The company also produced a line of children's records.

Shapiro sold Lina to Sidney Siegel's Seeco Records in July 1950, including masters and artist contracts. Siegel immediately began phasing out the Lina label, giving dealers twenty-five free Lina discs with the purchase of a hundred Seecos.

LINCOLN, BENJAMIN (Discs)

Record Production: 1939–1940

Offices: 1232 N. Van Buren St., Milwaukee (1939–1940); 709 E. Juneau Ave., Apt. 804, Milwaukee (1943)

Record Products: Collector's Item

A small independent producer, Benjamin Lincoln specialized in recordings by Midwestern jazz musicians, which he sold directly to consumers for \$1 each, plus shipping costs. Lincoln's Collector's Item label was launched in mid-1939 to provide an outlet for what he termed "comparatively unknown jazz musicians, whose efforts would be appreciated by record collectors and whose ability has not been brought to their attention through recordings." There is no connection to the later Collectors Item, Inc.

The few known releases show 1939 and 1940 recording dates on the labels. The first Collector's Item release, by Chicago pianist Mel Henke, was advertised locally in October 1939. It was reviewed in the same month by *Jazz Information* magazine, which lauded the effort but complained of the record's poor technical quality. Later releases included sides by veteran jazz cornetist Wild Bill Davison. Sales appear to have been meager, and production was discontinued within a year of the label's introduction. Lincoln was still selling the records, by mail-order from his apartment, in early 1943.

LINCOLN RECORD CORPORATION

Although its advertising suggested this was an actual company, Lincoln was simply a trade name of the Cameo Record Corporation, *q.v.*

LINCOLN RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1953

Offices: 8 W. 40th St., New York (1950–mid-1951); 1420 Walnut St., Philadelphia (mid-1950–1953)

Pressing: Own plants—Long Island, NY; Northampton, MA; Waterbury, CT

Record Products: Lincoln [2]; Bob-O-Link [2], Teddy Bear (children's)

Launched in the spring of 1948 by George Rosette (president) and John Bromley, Jr., initially as a producer of children's records. Robert Lawrence (who conducted the "Metropolitan Opera Quiz" in conjunction with the Met's broadcasts) served as musical director. In 1949, Enoch Light was hired as Lincoln's manager of artists and repertoire and occasional salesman. He was later credited with getting the records into chain stores.

Lincoln's earliest offering were 8" plastic Teddy Bear records, followed in April 1949 by the cheaper 7" Bob-O-Link line (of no relation A. L. Gilbert's earlier children's label of the same name). The company's first releases for the pop market were lightweight vinylite discs retailing for only 39¢ (27¢ to jukebox operators), making them the cheapest vinyl 78s on the market at that time. The price was quickly raised to 49¢. Announced in September 1949, the initial offerings featured public-domain songs "reported to have sold over a million sheet-music copies back when Grandma was a girl," in newly recorded versions by Enoch Light's Orchestra. Among them was Irving Berlin's "Stop! Stop! Stop!," which was heavily advertised as "never before recorded," although it had been widely recorded by the major companies in 1911–1912.

A *Billboard* reviewer predicted that one of Lincoln's early pop releases "should fracture 'em in the Midwest," but otherwise the records appear to have gone largely unnoticed. In March 1950, Lincoln relaunched its pop series as a standard 79¢ line, pressed in heavier vinyl and promoted by a half-page advertisement in *Billboard*.

On October 1, 1949, Lincoln Records served public notice that it had filed a lawsuit against the Synthetic Plastics Corporation, the producers of Peter Pan and other children's records. At issue was an alleged infringement of Jackson O. Kleber's patent #2,346,760, covering an improved method of pressing thin plastic discs, on which Lincoln claimed to hold an exclusive license. Despite Lincoln's demand for an injunction and immediate accounting for profits and damages, nothing more was reported concerning the case, and both companies continued to operate as usual. Lincoln 45s, pressed in various colors, were introduced in the spring of 1950.

An anecdotal report that Lincoln's catalog was acquired by Essex Records in late 1953 has not been confirmed. Production of Lincoln records appears to have ended at about that time.

LINDEN RECORDINGS / LINDEN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: Northern Life Tower, Seattle (to c. 1951); 2417 2nd Ave., Seattle (pressing plant); 824 E. Pike St., Seattle (from c. 1951)

Original-Master Source(s): Western Recording Studios, KOL studio (Seattle), probably others

Pressing: Own plant — 824 E. Pike St., Seattle

Record Products: Linden, Clipper Capers, Down Beat (unconfirmed); custom recordings

Founded in 1946 by Adolph Frederik Linden. Linden's colorful past included a stay in the Walla Walla State Penitentiary after he was convicted of grand larceny. Paroled in 1938, he began to dabble in custom recording, finally launching the Western Recording Studios (*q.v.*) in 1943. He also launched but later sold the Linden Vinylite Company, a Seattle pressing plant noted for its transparent red-vinyl pressings. Adolph's son Jimmy oversaw Linden's recording sessions, which generally were contracted to independent studios in the Seattle area.

Linden's first release was "The Darktown Strutter's Ball" / "Alexander's Ragtime Band" by Norm Bobrow and the Gay Jones Trio, an undistinguished item that set the tone for much of what was to follow. Linden records were marketed mainly to jukebox operators, with claims the vinylite pressings could withstand up to a thousand plays. Local talent was featured, but Linden also produced recordings by Rev. F. F. Billups and his Kansas City Gospel Singers, Gosta Cederberg's Folkdance Orchestra (from foreign masters), and others from outside the Seattle area. It also issued the last commercial recordings by Theo Karle, a renowned concert tenor who had been a mainstay of the Brunswick catalog in the early 1920s. Jimmy Linden is believed to have produced the Maxin Trio's "I Love You, I Love You" / "Confession Blues," Ray Charles' first issued recordings, but they never appeared on the Linden label, having been recorded for Down Beat.

Among Linden's special releases was its 1948 "Vote Against Initiative Thirteen." Its label urged defeat of the Washington Private Alcohol Sales Ban Initiative, a failed measure that would have banned the sale of alcohol by any party other than the state of Washington. In 1949, Linden launched the Clipper Capers label to showcase stars of the local KING-TV program of the same name. Comedian Stan Boreson's "He's a Scandinavian Hot Shot" was a local hit for Linden. Advertising copy for the record read, "Meet the morons who are responsible...Stan sings the whole mess. His voice is so rich, the darn thing ought to retire." There were also square-dance and religious series.

Linden added 45 rpms to the product line in the early 1950s. Jimmy Linden left to work for Boeing 1953, after which it appears that few if any new releases were announced. Adolph Linden finally closed the business in 1954.

LINDENBERG RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. Late 1930s

Offices: 2484 E. Main St., Bexley, Columbus, OH

Record Products: Lindenberg

A short-lived label produced by or for Theodore Lindenberg. Often described by the press as a "Renaissance man," Lindenberg graduated from Cornell University and served in various capacities with M. C. Lilley & Company (which his family owned), but his passion was audio engineering. While still employed by Lilley, he and his son, Theodore Jr., opened the Bexley Theatre on October 22, 1935. A single auditorium split in two, the theater employed the patented Lindenberg Sound System, a dual-projection system using a single film. The theater was also known for its automatic water fountains, which were activated by a selenium "electric eyes."

William Manley served as recording engineer of Lindenberg's record operation. The Lindenberg label probably was introduced in the late 1930s, based upon song titles on the few known releases and the presence of the Ad Mueller Orchestra, a band from Oberlin, Ohio, that was active in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The records appear to have been distributed only locally, and probably in very small quantities. Theodore Lindenberg died

in July 1941. Theodore, Jr. (who was employed by Lindenberg Records in an unknown capacity) was later associated with Musicraft Records.

LINDWOOD RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 1938 Market St., Philadelphia

Record Products: Lindwood

Owned and operated by Irwin Medway, Lindwood Recording advertised its initial releases in September 1947. *Billboard* belatedly reported it as a new company in February 1948.

Lindwood was one of several labels that attempted to capitalize on the novelty string-band fad of the late 1940s, but apparently it was unable to compete with better-advertised and more widely distributed labels, most notably Palda, that featured the same sort of material. The few known releases were by the Quaker City String Band under the direction of John Mayer, a featured attraction at the Philadelphia Mummers' Parades. "Beer Barrel Polka," its first release, was still being advertised by local dealers in late 1948. Lindwood last appeared in *Billboard's* label directory in January 1949.

LISSEN RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 255 W. 43rd St. New York

Record Products: Lissen, Lis'n

Launched in early 1947 by Henry C. Brown, with Frederick E. Loewus serving as vice-president. Elaine Cohen was hired in October as manager of publicity and promotion. Lissen records were marketed primarily to jukebox operators, who the company attempted to entice with free title strips, menu holders, coasters, and cocktail mixers.

Lissen's first release, a multi-disc album by comedian Morey Amsterdam, was advertised in May 1947. The label's main pop star was Jimmy Foster, who was sent on the road in late 1947 to promote his records. *Cash Box* reported that Foster had appeared before a "huge throng of teenagers" at a fashion show in Philadelphia, on the first stop in what was planned to be a long series of tours.

Cash Box reported in November 1947 that the label name was being changed to Lis'n. The colorful new label design was a radical departure from Lissen's, although the company name remained unchanged on the Lis'n labels. The catalog was soon expanded to include jazz, folk, and rhythm-and-blues material, including recordings by Creole George Guesnon, Sammy Heyward, and the Lee Norman Orchestra. In February 1948, Brown purchased a group of Art Hodes' masters from American Jazz's defunct Jazz Record label and announced plans to produce a "History of Jazz" album combining music with spoken narrative. However, little more was reported concerning that project, or Lissen Records, in the trade papers.

LITTLE WONDER RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1914–1923

Offices: Strand Building (Broadway & 47th St., New York) (1914–1916); 2036 Woolworth Building, New York (1917–1923)

Original-Master Source(s): Columbia Graphophone Company

Pressing: Columbia Graphophone Company

Record Products: Little Wonder

Originally joint venture between music publisher Henry Waterson and the Columbia Graphophone Company. Waterson (president of the music publishing company of Waterson, Berlin & Snyder) initially was the exclusive sales agent for the company. His trademark application of December 5, 1914, claimed use of the Little Wonder trademark on records since September 1 of that year.

Contrary to several published reports, Waterson did not conceive of or develop the Little Wonder record. Court records disclose that the records were largely the creation of Victor Emerson, Columbia's chief recording engineer. Emerson testified that he personally offered to negotiate an exclusive sales agency for Waterson with Columbia in July 1914

(*Emerson Phonograph Co., Inc., v. Waterson*, 183 A.D. 386, 170 N.Y.S. 776). According to Emerson's testimony, Waterson "simply went crazy" over the sample records.

Waterson signed a contract with Columbia on August 13, 1914. Under its terms, he would select the titles to be recorded; was responsible for paying the full cost of production, including artists' fees; and was required to purchase 50,000 records per week, to start. The success of the venture largely hinged on Waterson's ability to negotiate royalties of ½¢ per record on copyrighted compositions, 1½¢ less than the fee mandated by the Copyright Act of 1909; at the standard 2¢ royalty per copyrighted title, the 10¢ Little Wonder disc would have incurred a loss on every sale. Although he apparently convinced a few publishers to accept the reduced rate, he had to rely heavily upon his own company's compositions. Victor Emerson later testified that some Columbia artists agreed to waive their recording fees for the first few Little Wonder recordings, to help the venture get started.

Little Wonder's recording files have not survived, but researchers Tim Brooks and Merle Sprinzen estimate that recording sessions began on or around September 10, 1914, based upon documented recording dates of the same titles (in many cases by the same artists) for Columbia. Little Wonders' arrival was first reported in the October 1914 issues of *The Talking Machine World* and *Music Trade Review*.

The 5½" single-sided Little Wonder records wholesaled for 7¢ each and retailed for 10¢. Woolworth's, Kresge's, McCrory's, and the Charles Williams Stores were among its largest dealers, but the records were handled by many other dime stores, department stores, and mail-order companies. Sears, Roebuck & Company prominently featured Little Wonder records in its catalogs from early 1915 through the autumn of 1921.

The records proved to be wildly popular at first; Waterson testified that 20 million copies had been sold by mid-1916. Little Wonder' success spurred many competitors to enter the market with their own miniature discs, including Victor Emerson himself, who left Columbia in early 1915 to launch his own company. A consortium of other music publishers attempted to launch a competing Little Wonder-type disc in the same year, but the venture collapsed before anything was produced.

Despite its diminutive appearance, Little Wonder was not a children's label. Its wide-ranging repertoire mirrored the Columbia catalog and ran the gamut from the latest song-and-dance hits and comic monologues to marches, hymns, and necessarily abbreviated operatic arias. Virtually all issues were anonymous. Most of the records featured studio freelancers, relying heavily on Henry Burr and members of his Peerless Quartet, Sam Ash, Arthur Collins and Byron G. Harlan, and studio instrumental groups under the direction of Charles A. Prince. Among the few stage personalities who performed anonymously on Little Wonder were Al Jolson (on a single release, #20), Rhoda Bernard, Maurice Burkhardt, Frank Crumit, and Wilbur Sweatman's Original Jazz Band.

Little Wonder masters were not dubbed from Columbia masters, as was alleged in some early published works. All were recorded by Columbia especially for issue on Little Wonder. The performers on Little Wonder were not always the same as on the corresponding Columbia releases, if such existed (there are instances of titles issued on Little Wonder that did not appear on Columbia). Given the loss of the Little Wonder files, it is impossible to ascertain which Little Wonders were recorded on the same dates as their Columbia counterparts.

In 1916, Waterson was sued by Victor Emerson (by then, president of the Emerson Phonograph Company), who had negotiated exclusive sales rights for Waterson in return for one-half of the net profits from sales of Little Wonder records. Waterson had not paid Emerson, and the initial verdict was returned in Emerson's favor, involving a settlement of \$46,486.59. Although Waterson appealed the verdict, which would eventually be overturned in 1918, he seems to have distanced himself from the Little Wonder operation following the initial ruling. In or around mid-1916, Columbia took over control of Little Wonder from Waterson. The first Little Wonder paper label was introduced at about that time, and some changes in staff occurred. The company went through a succession of managers, ending with Helen A. McKillop, who replaced B. W. Jennings in late 1919.

By 1917 Little Wonder catalogs no longer gave Waterson's Strand Building address (Broadway & 47th Street, New York), but instead listed the Woolworth Building, the site of Columbia's corporate headquarters. Further evidence of the Columbia takeover appeared in a 1919 news release in which Columbia made reference to its "Little Wonder Record

Division." However, Waterson apparently retained some degree of influence over the label. An entry in band manager Ed Kirkeby's session log states that his California Ramblers recorded several Little Wonder sides "for Waterson" in 1922.

Little Wonder's sales declined steadily after 1917. Sear's dropped the line after its Fall–Winter 1921 catalog. Although there seems to have been no public announcement of the label's demise, song titles suggest that the final Little Wonder records were released in the summer of 1923. By the end of that year, Little Wonder discs were being remaindered for as little as 6¢ each by novelty, mail-order, and premium-scheme companies.

Columbia made a short-lived attempt to market Little Wonder records in Italy, under the Piccola Meraviglia label, in the early 1920s. A catalog, reported by Brooks and Sprinzen, includes American material from the Little Wonder catalog, along with a group of operatic recordings that apparently were made exclusively for Italian distribution. Some Little Wonder discs were also relabeled by an unknown party as Mother Goose records, which were marketed to children. Other Columbia-produced 5½" discs were numbered within the Little Wonder series, including the Harper-Columbia children's records, a highly abbreviated speech by Warren G. Harding issued by Nation's Forum (*q.v.*), and two 1930 private recordings made for actor William S. Hart), but they were not a part of the Little Wonder catalog.

LLOYD'S NOVELTY AND CURIO SHOP (Discs)

Record Production: c. Late 1940s – Early 1950s

Offices: 616 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC; 1003 U St. NW, Washington (branch store)

Pressing: Probably Paragon Enterprises

Record Products (78): Lloyd's [1]

Lloyd's Novelty and Curio Shop briefly marketed its own label, devoted entirely to Black gospel groups. Its artist roster, which included the Silvertones, Golden Echoes, Heavenly Gates of Baltimore, Willing Workers, and other relatively obscure groups, appears to have been drawn from the Baltimore-Washington area. There was no connection to the Lloyds label (no apostrophe), which Bess Berman launched in 1953 (*see* Apollo Records).

The records appear to have been pressed by Paragon Enterprises, a small plant located in northwest Washington, D.C., according to researcher Jay Bruder. There are substantial gaps in Lloyd's L-500 series catalog numbers, with only two issues confirmed within a known range of 521–564. The L-1000 series is better documented, with six issues confirmed within a known range of 1000–1007. Lloyd's self-distributed the records locally and offered free delivery on purchases of three or more records.

LONDON GRAMOPHONE CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: From 1947

Offices: 16 W. 22nd St., NY (1947–2/1950); 521–539 W. 25th St., New York (from 2/1950)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios; Universal Recording (Chicago) and other independent studios

Pressing: Decca Ltd. plant (Southampton, England, at founding); Universal Plastics (Los Angeles) and other independent U.S. plants

Record Products (78): London; Beltona, Rex (imported pressings)

Foreign Affiliation: Decca Record Company, Ltd. (1–3 Brixton Rd., London)

Created as the U.S. outlet for the Decca Record Company, Ltd., the London Gramophone Corporation's impending launch was announced on October 4, 1947. *Billboard* reported that Decca's Edward R. (Ted) Lewis was in New York at the time, but was reluctant to discuss details of the new venture. Early reports correctly noted that the new London label was not connected in any way with U.S. Decca, which by then was operating independently of its English namesake. English Decca's U.S. trademark filing claimed that its "Full Frequency Range Recording" (FFRR) logo had been in use in England since approximately May 1, 1946, and "in commerce between foreign nations and the United States" since October 1947.

Salvador (Toots or Tutti) Camarata served as London's first manager of artists and repertoire, traveling regularly between the United States and England. Initially, pressings were exported to the U.S. from Decca's Southampton plant. London's earliest offerings, featuring Gracie Fields, Vera Lynn, the Ambrose and Mantovani orchestras, and other

British stars, were released in the U.S. on November 15, 1947, to good reviews. London also marketed exported pressings on the Beltona and Rex labels beginning in early 1948, specializing in Irish and Scottish material, respectively.

The London label received a boost in 1948 from the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, as British artists were not bound by the ban and thus were free to record the latest hit tunes for U.S. consumption. At the start of the ban in January 1948, *Billboard* reported that London officials were coordinating with U.S. music publishers to ensure a steady supply of new releases for the American market. The collaboration yielded such hits as Gracie Fields' "Now Is the Hour," the demand for which was so strong that six tons of the pressings were dispatched by air to New York's La Guardia Field in mid-January 1948. At the same time, London made an unsuccessful attempt to enter the country-and-western market using British performers, a move that *Billboard* dismissed as a "curious wrinkle...since hillbillies are virtually non-existent in England."

In June 1948, London announced the launch of a subscription service to provide background music to offices, factories, and radio stations, employing 10" high-fidelity discs originally recorded for the British Broadcasting Corporation's "Music While You Work" program. Charges were based upon number of employees (for offices and factories) or coverage area (for radio stations). There appears to have been little demand for the service.

London suffered a setback during a New York truckers' strike in September 1948. *Cash Box* reported that more than 250,000 London pressings that had recently arrived by sea had been loaded onto trucks that were barred from making deliveries, or were sitting in warehouses with no means to deliver them. As a result of that experience, London officials began drawing up plans to press in U.S. plants.

Although U.S. and English Decca were fully separate companies by that time, U.S. Decca held American distribution rights to English Decca's increasingly popular line of FFRR (Full Frequency Range Recordings) classical records, an arrangement that Lewis was determined to dismantle. In June 1949, an agreement was reached under which the American rights to Decca FFRR recordings were transferred to London Records, which was also granted the right to sign, record, and sell recordings by American artists in the U.S. (see Decca Records). In August, a new department was created to handle London's race and country-and-western recordings by American artists, under the management of Mercury Records co-founder Berle Adams.

London's imported classical recordings commanded premium prices, initially retailing for \$2.10 per 12" 78-rpm disc. Despite the new provision allowing the recording and marketing of American artists, London's early popular catalog was still largely dependent upon recordings by British artists, including the immensely popular Mantovani Orchestra, whose London records provided the sonic backdrop to countless 1950s cocktail parties.

London FFRR releases were a particular favorite of early audiophiles, many of whom seemed less interested in musical content than in technical specifications. Although London introduced LPs in 1949, and 45s in January 1950, it remained an enthusiastic supporter of the 78. In April 1950 the company initiated its "Shellac Is Not Dead" campaign by announcing twelve new 78-rpm album sets and twenty new 78-rpm singles, while releasing only two 45s and one LP in the same period. The campaign was soon abandoned, although London continued to market superbly recorded and pressed 78s into the late 1950s.

The London label was also used in England to release material licensed from various American companies. The label's later history, which included several changes in ownership and a major role in launching the "British invasion" of the 1960s, is beyond the scope of this work. Control of the London catalog was split in 2017 between Warner Music Group and Because Music.

LONE STAR MUSIC COMPANY

In September 1945, *Billboard* announced that country-music artist Jack Kenney was launching his own label "dealing strictly in western and hillbilly tunes," in association with Lone Star Music Publishers of Hollywood, California. Two releases reportedly were scheduled, but Kenney signed an exclusive contract with Spotlight records two months later, after which no further mention of the company has been found. There is no connection to the Dallas-based Lone Star label (see next entry).

LONE STAR PUBLISHING AND RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. Mid-1950s

Offices: 2210 Pacific Ave., Dallas

Record Products: Lone Star

Launched in mid-1947, Lone Star Publishing began as a vanity operation for aspiring songwriters, who assigned their compositions to the company in return for a recording agreement. There is no apparent connection to an earlier Lone Star venture, based in Hollywood and headed by Jack Kenney (*see* Lone Star Music Publishers).

According to a September 1947 Associated Press story, Lone Star had "a policy of helping Texas song writers get their tunes on wax...the Lone Star Publishing and Recording Company says it is following pure Texas philosophy — if a man is good, the rest doesn't matter."

Lone Star records were in production by October 1947, when *Billboard* reported that the company had signed Hugh Fowler's Continental Orchestra, Terry Lee, and Art Linder, all of Dallas radio station KRLD. Not all songs were composed by Texans, despite the AP report. An early release featured "Minnesota Moon" by one Margaret Myers Lawrence of Nashwauk, Minnesota. A reviewer for the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, after noting that the lyrics were so unoriginal that there was no danger in quoting them without permission, went on to report that Mrs. Myers was a member of League of Minnesota Poets, "which presumably gives her an inside track on the real Upper Midwest spirit."

Plans to produce Lone Star LPs were announced in late 1949. The company was still listed in *Billboard's* label directories as late as 1955. The Lone Star name was later used for at least two unrelated labels.

LORELEI RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. Mid to late 1940s

Offices: 45–10 53rd St., Woodside, NY

Record Products: Lorelei

A producer of foreign-language records headed by Henry P. Backs, who served as president and sales manager. Doris Mulvaney and Dolly Backs were listed as secretary and treasurer, respectively. The company was listed in the 1945 and 1946 *Recording Retailing* yearbooks, which gave no information other than an address. Thus far, no advertising or details of the company's operation have been discovered.

LOUISIANA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, LTD. (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1891 – c. 1894

Offices: Rooms 26 and 27, Equitable Building (128 Gravier St.), New Orleans (1891–1894); 109 Baronne St., New Orleans (studio, storage, and workshops, from 1891); 130 Canal St., New Orleans (1894); 722 Canal St. (from 1895)

Record Products: Cylinders

Owned and operated by H. Lee Sellers and Hugh R. and Thomas Conyngton (founders of the Texas Phonograph Company), the Louisiana Phonograph Company was incorporated on March 7, 1891. It was the last local sub-company to be licensed by the North American Phonograph Company, with sales territory comprising Louisiana and Mississippi. Louisiana Phonograph subsequently assigned the latter territory to the Mississippi State Phonograph Agency (reorganized in mid-1892 as Conyngton, Sellers & Conyngton), which operated at the same address.

Frank E. Clarkson, a co-founder of the Georgia Phonograph Company, was hired as Louisiana Phonograph's general manager in late February 1895. He was preparing to move his family to New Orleans when he died suddenly on March 25. In the reorganization that followed, Thomas Conyngton took over as general manager, with Sellers serving as vice-president and H. T. Howard as president.

According to *The Phonogram*, active operations commenced immediately following Louisiana Phonograph's incorporation. Sellers had already demonstrated Edison's phonograph to a select audience at Tulane University, on January 26, 1891, and the company's sales room soon became a local attraction. *The Phonogram* reported, "The novelty

of hearing a machine talk, and the endless variety of amusement afforded, keep the room crowded from morning till night."

Louisiana Phonograph did a profitable business in coin-operated phonographs, placing them in only the most lucrative locations, and charging proprietors a fee if machines placed in their establishments failed to generate satisfactory revenue. Thomas Conyngton boasted that the first machine the company placed, in Eugene May's Palace Drug Store on the corner of Canal and Chartres streets, took in \$1,420.80 (amounting to 28,400 plays at a nickel each) during its first three months of operation.

Louisiana Phonograph began marketing original cylinder recordings in 1891, which were advertised nationally. A January 1892 profile of the company reported that it had "taken a very large amount of local music." It was the first company to record native New Orleans performers, including Paoletti's Southern Band and Louis Vasnier. The latter, a local singer, banjoist, and comedian, was among the earliest Creole artists (although possibly not the first, as has sometimes been claimed) to make commercial recordings. His "Brudder Rasmus Sermons" were prominently advertised in the early 1890s as "very popular amongst both whites and blacks," "good for the blues," and "among the most profitable of exhibition records." However, samples of Vasnier's records sent to Thomas Edison in 1892 apparently failed to interest the inventor. Sellers' solicitation letter to Edison has survived, but no evidence has been found that he responded. In addition to its original recordings, the company also marketed cylinder records obtained from northern suppliers.

The Louisiana Phonograph Company was represented at the September 1893 national convention of regional phonograph companies, held in Chicago, but no further references to the company have been found, other than listings in the New Orleans city directories. In 1894 the address given for the company was that of Hugh Conyngton's Canal Street residence; by 1895 it was sharing office space with the brothers' real-estate and securities-exchange businesses. In late 1896, control of the Louisiana Phonograph Company reportedly was taken over by T. Mauro. Reorganized as the Louisiana Phonograph and Kinetoscope Agency, the company probably did not survive beyond 1897.

LOWERY ENTERPRISES / LOWERY-NEWMAN ENTERPRISES, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1952

Offices: Indianapolis

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: RCA plant (Indianapolis)

Record Products: Hoosier, Dixie Four, Gospel [2]

Launched in August 1950 by Gene Lowery, doing business as Lowery Enterprises, following his purchase of the Gospel Recording Company, *q.v.* Lowery was manager of the Dixie Four, which had recorded for the Gospel label before Lowery took it over.

Lowery continued to produce the Gospel label but also introduced Hoosier for secular fare, specializing in country-style music. He recruited his talent from local radio stations, beginning with "Cousin" Chickie Hopkins (WIBC–Indianapolis). *Billboard* reported in early September that Lowery was planning to scout for talent in the South. However, nothing further was reported on the trip, and the Hoosier label disappeared after approximately seven releases. The company was later reorganized as Lowery-Newman Enterprises, Inc., which continued to produce the Gospel and Dixie Four labels into the early 1950s.

LUCKY MUSIC CORPORATION — See Stapleton Industries

LUCKY 7 RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1950

Offices: 1201 Chenevert St., Houston

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, possibly other independent studio(s)

Record Products: Lucky 7

No reliable information has been found concerning Lucky 7's ownership. Two series were produced — a 1000 series for country-and-western material (featuring Woody Carter and his Hoedown Boys and Dickie McBride's Ranch Hands, the latter as "Jimmy Prince and his All Stars"), and a 5000 series for race records (featuring the Milton Willis

Combo, Bill Johnson, and Elmore Nixon). The company's last regular *Billboard* listing was in the July 1950 directory; its brief reappearance in the March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Lucky 7 name was used in the later 1950s for an unrelated Shreveport, Louisiana, label credited to Bayou Record Productions.

LYRAPHONE COMPANY OF AMERICA (Discs)

Record Production: 1917–1921

Offices: Washington, D.C. (1915; incorporated in Delaware); 220 5th Ave., New York (1916–early 1917); 12–14 W. 37th St., New York (1917–7/1919); 117 Mechanic St., Newark, NJ (7/1919–4/1921); 704 S. 11th St., Newark (from 5/1921); 624 S. Michigan Blvd., Chicago (sales office and warehouse only).

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — 12–14 W. 37th St., New York

Pressing: Own plants at 31–45 Steuben St., Brooklyn, NY (through 1920); Woodward Ave., Newark, NJ (from 1920); unspecified Canadian location (from mid-1920)

Record Products: Lyric [3]; Concert [3], Manophone, Phantasie Concert Record

The Lyraphone Company of America was incorporated in Delaware in 1915 and initially had its office in Washington, D.C. Two U.S. Patent Office filings point to the autumn of 1915 as the start of operations. The first, filed by Lyraphone vice-president Mark J. Samuels and assigned to the company on October 27, 1915, was a design patent for a phonograph case. It was followed by Lyraphone's trademark filing of January 6, 1916, which claimed use of the Lyric name on phonographs (with no mention of records) since October 10, 1915.

By early 1916, the company had moved its office to New York. Lyraphone's distinctive Lyric phonograph — an inexpensive table-top model housed in a round, stamped-metal base, which was offered by mail order a free trial basis — was first advertised in the spring of 1916.

In early 1917, the company launched the Academy of Phonograph Trial Recording, a ten-week course that coached artists hoping to secure recording contracts. It was the creation of Lyraphone general manager Thomas Quinlan, and its address was that of the Lyraphone studio. A March 1917 *Musical Courier* report on the academy suggests that a recording studio was already operational by that time, as students were to be given finished records of their voices upon completion of the course. No mention has been found of how many, if any, enrollees were awarded recording contracts.

The initial Lyric releases were finally announced in July 1917, at which time the Lyraphone Company was undergoing reorganization. Deliveries did not begin until late August or early September. On September 28, 1917, the company made a second filing on the Lyric trademark, claiming use on records since April 15 of that year. Corporate officers at that time included Samuels (president), Quinlan (managing director), Jacques M. Kohner (general manager, and later, sales manager), and Francis J. Tuckfield (assistant manager). All had experience in the recording industry. Quinlan had managed Columbia's operatic and classical department for a time, Tuckfield had also been a Columbia employee, and Kohner had previously worked as the Majestic Record Corporation's sales manager. J. Louis von der Mehden, Jr., a former house conductor for the U. S. Phonograph Company and Pathé, and a well-known composer, musician, and conductor, was employed as Lyraphone's first musical director.

Thomas Quinlan discussed the first Lyric records in an August 1917 interview in *The Talking Machine World*. According to Quinlan, the company at that time was "prepared to send out a preliminary catalog containing 600 selections in all languages" (pared down from the original, highly suspect claim of 1,000), but subsequent advertising suggests a much smaller initial offering. Although Lyric operated its own studio, it also licensed recordings from the Pathé catalog. They were transcribed from the Pathé cylinder masters (sometimes using alternate takes) in the same fine-groove format as Lyric's own masters, and thus bear no physical resemblance to the corresponding Pathé discs. They were often further disguised by the use of artist pseudonyms. Lyric's cluttered label design was explained in detail by an unnamed company representative, who concluded by declaring that every element "obviously has its reason for being."

From the start, Lyric offered a substantial foreign-language catalog. During the summer of 1919, Samuels spent two months in Europe attempting to secure European performers,

apparently without much success except for the Sistine Chapel Quartet, which recorded for the company in New York during its highly publicized visit to the United States. The Sistine Chapel Quartet recordings were released with considerable fanfare in the autumn of 1919, but (like most vertical-cut Lyric records) seem to have been weak sellers, if the small number of surviving specimens is any indication.

Lateral-cut Lyric records, including parallel versions of the Sistine offerings, were announced in November 1919, in a double-page *Talking Machine World* spread that listed both the lateral- and vertical-cut versions. Vertical-cut production was discontinued in early 1920. The lateral-cut discs (with orange-and-gray labels) and the last of the vertical cuts (now bearing much-simplified blue labels) sported Lyric's kitten-and-disc trademark along with the slogan "Never Scratches," which Lyraphone had registered as a trademark in September 1917 but had not used at that time.

Lyraphone appears to have contracted some or possibly all of its lateral recording work to the Jones Recording Laboratories. Many of the lateral masters show Jones' irregular cutting pattern and master numbers in known or suspected series associated with his studio. Jacques Kohner apparently held rights to the Lyraphone masters. After Kohner left the company in May 1921 to organize the Clarion Record Company, the masters began appearing on Cardinal, Clarion, Cleartone, and other labels with which he was associated, often showing Earle W. Jones' telltale handwritten "J" in the wax.

The last known trade-press mention of Lyric records appeared in *The Music Trade Review* for May 14, 1921. On October 24 of that year, the Lyraphone Company was placed in receivership by order of the District Court of the Northern District of New Jersey. Shortly before that event, U.S. Senator Charles Dick (the father of Carl P. Dick, Lyraphone's treasurer at the time) had signed two notes agreeing to pay Marx & Rawolle, Inc., for shellac delivered to Lyraphone, then had defaulted on the obligations. Lyraphone officials blamed the company's bankruptcy on Senator Dick's failure to honor his financial obligations and later sued him. In November 1923, a New Jersey court granted an attachment of \$14,500 against the property of the senator's wife in connection with the Lyraphone case.

The Lyraphone Company was reorganized under the direction of receivers Mark Samuels and Joseph L. Smith, but little more was heard of the company, which is not known to have produced any further recordings.

LYRIC PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1898 – c. 1900

Offices and Master Source(s): 114 W. 34th St., New York (to 12/1898; 8/1899–1900); 1270 Broadway (12/1898–4/1899); 57 W. 28th St., New York (4/1899–8/1899)

Record Products: Lyric cylinders

Soprano Estella Mann is widely credited in modern works with founding and operating the Lyric Phonograph Company, apparently based on a notice in the March 1898 *Phonoscope* that she had "lately opened a record-making plant." Although it does appear that Mann founded and owned Lyric Phonograph, reports in *The Phonoscope* confirm that the company was managed by John Havens. Lyric also employed Mann's brother William for a time, but he left to take a railroad job after reportedly finding the phonograph business "entirely too slow for his calibre." Mann, who studied voice at the Cincinnati College of Music, recorded for several other companies in addition to her own.

Lyric's first known advertisements appeared in February 1898. The company at first specialized in recordings by Mann and the Original Lyric Trio (of which she and Havens were members, along with William F. Hooley) but soon added other artists to the roster, including singers John Simonds, A. D. Madeira, and Harry B. Norman. In October 1898, Lyric announced a new line of church-organ recordings by Oscar Elmore, which were considered quite novel at the time. The company also advertised "special records made to order at short notice."

Lyric reportedly opened a branch in San Francisco during the summer of 1898. In early 1899 the company moved to larger New York quarters and reported that it was making "new immense volume records" using a special recording diaphragm. However, the company reported slow sales that summer. Havens resigned as manager at the end of the summer, and the company returned to its original, smaller quarters.

The Phonoscope for August 1899 opined, "Miss Estella L. Mann deserves credit for the manner which she has clung to her business as many difficulties have confronted her in the past. This lady possesses a nerve which is seldom seen in the opposite sex. We are confident of her success in the future." However, in November 1899 *The Phonoscope* reported that production was being hampered by a shortage of blanks, and the operation appears to have wound-down the following year owing to financial difficulties. Mann later performed with the Mantelli Grand Opera Company and Sousa's Band, and toured with various vaudeville and comic opera companies, according to her brother William. She died at his home on August 24, 1947.

— M —

M AND C RECORD — See New Republic Records

MacGREGOR, C. P. (Discs)

MacGregor and Ingram Recording Laboratories / MacGregor and Sollie Recording Laboratories / MacGregor and Sollie, Inc. / MacGregor and Sollie Broadcasting System / MacGregor and Sollie Productions / MacGregor and Sollie Transcription Studios / MacGregor Transcription Studios / MacGregor Records

Record Production: From 1929

Offices: San Francisco (MacGregor and Ingram, 1930–1931); 865 Mission St., San Francisco (MacGregor and Sollie, 1932–mid-1936); 729 S. Western Ave., Hollywood, CA (from mid-1936)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations

Pressing: Columbia (Los Angeles plant, early 1930s); Allied Record Manufacturing (from 1933)

Record Products (78s): MacGregor; masters for Ammor, Capitol (early 1940s), American Record Corporation labels (1930s), Columbia (1930s), Decca (1934), Dial, Exner, Jazz Man, Liberty (1940s), and other independent labels; transcriptions and special-use recordings under several variations of the MacGregor and Sollie and C. P. Macgregor name; C. P. MacGregor Musical Library subscription service

A major West Coast producer of transcriptions, special-use, and custom recordings, Charles P. MacGregor also recorded masters for many commercial labels. Born in Canada, MacGregor immigrated to the United States in or around 1919. In 1924 he was hired by Brunswick-Balke-Collender as a district manager, covering California and Hawaii. He resigned from Brunswick in 1929 to launch the MacGregor and Ingram Recording Laboratories in San Francisco.

In 1931 the company was reorganized as the MacGregor and Sollie Recording Laboratories, with MacGregor serving as president and S. A. Sollie (an experienced radio engineer who invested in the business) as vice-president. The company provided production support and transcriptions for numerous radio series. MacGregor and Sollie made news in November 1932 when the studio transcribed a Johnny Noble broadcast that originated in Honolulu over radio station KGMB—reportedly the first instance of a Hawaiian broadcast having been picked up for reproduction on records. The studio also recorded for Decca Records before that company acquired its own West Coast studio, and issued the last record by aging counter-tenor Richard J. Jose as a special "souvenir recording." The MacGregor and Sollie Broadcasting System, launched in 1934, provided pre-recorded programming to member radio stations that were not affiliated with the major networks, including several in Mexico.

MacGregor opened a new studio in Hollywood in mid-1936. Sollie resigned in March 1937, for unspecified reasons, and MacGregor purchased his financial stake in the company. Aside from a name change, to C. P. MacGregor Transcription Studios, business continued as usual, with M. J. Mara serving as general manager and Stephan J. Shaw as studio manager. Within the year, MacGregor was advertising a basic musical library of 500 selections, with an additional 40 titles to be issued monthly.

MacGregor often sold studio time to commercial record producers, including Columbia, the American Record Corporation, Capitol, and various small producers during the period covered by this work. Pressing services initially were provided through Allied Record Manufacturing. The MacGregor studio was also used by the Army's Special Service Division during World War II.

MacGregor's business was adversely affected by the first American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, and he was one of the first record producers to capitulate to the AFM's terms. Having signed an agreement with the AFM on October 20, 1943, he soon resumed recording with union musicians. By then, however, rifts had begun to develop among staff members, and Shaw resigned in 1944 to work for King Records. In September of that year, MacGregor agreed to make Capitol Records its sole commercial client. The deal was severed within three months, after Capitol made unexpectedly high demands on studio time. MacGregor's relationship with companies to which he licensed his recordings was damaged in 1945, when he attempted to impose a 1¢-per-side royalty on sales of records pressed from masters recorded in his studio.

As early as 1941, C. P. MacGregor had personally served as host, producer, and director for the "Hollywood Theater of Stars," and much of his work from the mid-1940s onwards involved the production of syndicated radio programs. In September 1945, his company reported that it was gearing up to supply recorded programming to twenty-one nations.

MacGregor finally launched his eponymous commercial label early 1950. An attempt to link it to a proposed record-radio-television venture failed, and the MacGregor label was discontinued in 1952, after having attracted little attention among consumers. A 1956 attempt to launch a commercial LP line also appears to have failed. In the later 1950s, MacGregor leased some of his recordings for reissue on Tops and other discount-store LP labels. The practice was challenged by several performers, including country-music singer Jimmy Wakely, whose 1959 lawsuit was decided in MacGregor's favor on the grounds that Wakely had sold his masters to MacGregor without reservations.

C. P. MacGregor was last heard on radio in the 1960s, as the host of Armed Forces Radio's "Heartbeat Theater." He died in December 1968, after which control of the business passed to his wife.

MACKSOUND, A. J. (Discs)

Record Production: 1920s

Offices: 88 (later, 77 and 89) Washington St., New York

Original-Master Sources: Probably Independent Record Laboratory; unknown other(s)

Pressing: Scranton Button Company

Record Products: Macksoud

A. J. Macksoud originally was an importer of Gramophone Company, Odeon, and Baidaphone records, specializing in Arabic and other Middle Eastern material. His store, which occupied several different Washington Street addresses over the years, was located in New York's Little Syria neighborhood. At one point it shared a building with the Son of the Sheik Restaurant.

According to *The Talking Machine World*, Macksoud began importing records around 1904. In June 1922, he filed a formal protest with the U.S. Treasury Department after having been charged customs duty on a shipment of broken records. Macksoud's claim was denied after he refused to surrender the records as required by law.

Macksoud's own masters appear to have been made by the Independent Recording Laboratory, based upon aural and physical characteristics, although not numbered within Independent's usual Plaza-Regal matrix series. Other masters, including most if not all of the 12" recordings, are from unknown sources, possibly foreign.

MACY ASSOCIATES — See Wright Record Company

MACY'S RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1951

Offices: 1913 Leeland, Houston, TX

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, probably other independent studios

Record Products: Macy's; Revel (unconfirmed)

The recording subsidiary of Macy's Record Distributing Company, which at the time claimed to be the largest independent record wholesaler in Texas. Both companies were owned by the husband-and-wife team of C. D. Henry and Macy Lela Henry. Macy's Record Distributing manager Steve Poncio (misspelled "Roncio" in *Billboard's* initial directory listing) oversaw artists and repertoire. Macy's local session were held in Houston's Audio

Company of America studio. The company appears to have had some connection with Art Gunn's very short-lived Revel label, whose ACA session was held while Gunn was under contract to Macy's. There was no connection to the Macy's department store.

The launch of Macy's records was announced in June 1949, with production projected to begin in July. Marketed as "The Queen of Hits," Macy's initially featured locally available country-and-western performers, including Jim Reeves, who made his first recordings for the label. There was also a somewhat smaller race-record list, numbered in a separate 500 series, that featured Lester Williams (whose "Winter Time Blues" was a minor regional hit), Smokey Hogg, Clarence Garlow, and Hubert Robinson, as well as a smattering of Cajun artists. The Henrys eventually secured distributors in Atlanta, Nashville, and New Orleans, but the Macy's label failed to attract national attention. They discontinued production during the summer of 1951, after losing several popular artists to larger labels.

MADISON RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Offices: 22 Customs House Square, Boston

Record Products: Madison

This was an actual company, not a Grey Gull subsidiary as has been claimed elsewhere. Most Madison records are Grey Gull products, sometimes employing false master numbers. However, the Madison Record Company continued to operate following Grey Gull's closure, and some of its late releases used masters from an unknown source that appear to have been made for its exclusive use. Charles Hasin's Consolidated Studio appears to be a likely source, but documentary evidence is lacking (*see* Consolidated Recording Corporation entry).

MAESTRO MUSIC COMPANY / MAESTRO RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – c. 1949

Offices: 1515 N. Vine St., Hollywood, CA (1944–6/1946); 2511 Mayberry Ave., Los Angeles (from 6/1946)

Pressing: Tri-Plastics Company (Los Angeles), Musicraft plants

Record Products: Maestro Music

The Maestro Music label was launched in September 1944 by Arthur Schwartz and band leader Freddy Martin, as an adjunct to their Maestro Music publishing house. Both operations were fully owned by Martin, who had a profit-sharing agreement with Schwartz. Lou Bring, formerly of the NBC Blue Network, served as musical director.

Maestro Music records were marketed primarily to jukebox operators. The initial releases, announced in late October 1944, were to include two sides by Freddy Martin's Orchestra, although Martin was under exclusive contract to RCA Victor at the time. When RCA demanded the release be halted, Martin countered that the company had granted him permission to make the recordings due to his impending induction into the Army, a claim that RCA officials denied.

In the end, Martin was not inducted, and RCA enforced its contract. Prohibited from recording for his own label, Martin signed some other well-known artists, including Georgia Gibbs (accompanied anonymously by Martin's band members on Maestro Music's first release), Sonny Dunham, Dale Evans, and Rudy Vallee. In announcing the label's launch, *Billboard* reported, "no unknowns will be used." The labels credited the artists in oversized type and featured their portraits and facsimile autographs.

In March 1945, a portion of Maestro's pressing business was turned over to Musicraft after Schwartz was put in charge of that company's West Coast recording activities and associated publishing firms. Several weeks later, it was revealed that Musicraft had purchased an interest in Maestro, in a move that had no apparent effect on the company's operations. Schwartz finally split with Martin in June 1946, reportedly fearing that he would take a loss should Martin sell the company outright. Martin reorganized as the Maestro Record Company and kept the label in production on his own for a time, although little if any new material appeared. Later pressings were cheaply produced by an unknown plant, substituting a very plain label design that dispensed with the artist photos and facsimile autographs.

Martin went on to launch the Ambassador label, which in 1947 was taken over by Enterprise Records. The Maestro name was later used for an unrelated Chicago label that specialized in accordion recordings.

MAGNOLIA RECORDS COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1951

Offices: 14155 Magnolia Blvd., Van Nuys, CA; 100 Park Ave., New York (Horace Heidt Agency office)

Pressing: RCA Custom Products (Indianapolis), probably others

Record Products: Horace Heidt Presents, Magnolia [2]

Launched in early 1949, after two earlier false starts, by band leader and talent scout Horace Heidt. Heidt was well-known for his traveling amateur-talent contests, under the auspices of his Youth Opportunity Program, the winners of which were given the opportunity to compete on Heidt's national radio show. Heidt reportedly was motivated to launch his own label by the major labels' refusal to sign pianist Frankie Carle and other promising contest winners.

By the time that Heidt first considered launching a recording operation, the contest was being professionally managed by his newly formed General Publicity Service, Inc., with weekly radio broadcasts over the NBC network sponsored by the Philip Morris tobacco company. *Billboard* critic Jerry Franken took a dim view of the program, writing, in late 1947, "The amateur show has been one of the oldest gaffs in show business. Its actual contributions in the way of talent have been limited and in most cases it has smacked of exploitation of star-smitten schmoes. This program is no exception." Nevertheless, it proved to be tremendously popular.

Heidt announced the launch of his Magnolia Records Company in July 1948, which was to record some of his amateur contest winners. However, nothing more was heard of the project until January 1949, when *Billboard* reported that Heidt had "virtually closed" a production deal with producer Eli Oberstein but would proceed with or without him. Negotiations broke down a month later, after Oberstein and Heidt's attorney were unable to resolve their differences. Heidt began operations on his own, with Bill Turner overseeing production and Frank Reeves managing sales. Initially, Heidt's records were sold directly to retailers, but by mid-1949 they were also being handled by distributors in the U.S. and Canada. LPs were introduced in late 1949, followed by 45s in January 1950.

The Horace Heidt label finally made its debut in late March 1949, with a release by singer Melissa Smith that caused a *Cash Box* reviewer to comment, "her pipes pitch prettily." Heidt's band initially served only as an accompanying unit, often anonymously, but in December 1949 *Billboard* announced that it was to be featured in its own right. The label's largest hit was also one of the most ridiculed recordings of the period, accordionist Dick Contino's "Lady of Spain." Heidt's roster was later expanded to include some professional artists outside of his circle, particularly after former Majestic Records executive Lee Savin joined the company as general manager in January 1950.

Heidt's Magnolia label was introduced as a side-line in February 1949. Labels on releases by his contest winners displayed the legend, "A Philip Morris Star." Among them was comedian Johnny Standley. His two-part "It's in the Book" was later acquired by Capitol Records, for which it became a hit. Heidt closed his recording business in July 1951, retaining his masters while selling off the remaining pressings for scrap. He was later investigated for some alleged financial irregularities in regard to his Youth Opportunity Program.

MAIN STEM MUSIC SHOP (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1693 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Dart, Futurama, Main Stem

A small retail operation owned by Arthur Bangel, the Main Stem Music Shop is known to have produced at least three independent labels in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Advertising was minimal for all three, and distribution initially was limited to the New York area.

The Main Stem label was introduced in April 1949, with the slogan, "Everything in Jazz." Early offerings included bop titles credited to Moe Koffman's Main Stemmers. Futurama followed that summer, specializing in jazz and rhythm-and-blues. Releases included piano solos by Errol Garner and several sides by a band fronted by Woody Herman sideman

Serge Chaloff, the latter supervised by Leonard Feather. Dart, specializing in country-and-western material, was launched in September 1949. The initial release (Sally and Marvin Clark's "The Game of Broken Hearts") was promoted by disc jockey Don Larkin (WAAT–Newark, New Jersey), who plugged the side so often that it caught the attention of *Cash Box* magazine. However, advertising claims that the record was "sweeping the country" and sold 100,000 copies in three weeks were almost certainly exaggerated, given the label's limited exposure and spotty distribution.

Dart was discontinued in 1950, and the name was later used by unrelated labels in Illinois, Louisiana, and Ohio. Futurama and Main Stem records were still listed in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies), although both probably were inactive by then.

MAIN STREET RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – c. 1950

Offices: Brill Building (1619 Broadway), New York

Original-Master Source(s): Possibly Lang-Worth studio

Record Products: Main Street

Of unknown ownership, Main Street Records was one of several obscure, apparently unrelated record companies headquartered in New York's Brill Building in the later 1940s. The label appears to have been affiliated with Bob Miller Enterprises, Inc. (owned by veteran country-music singer, songwriter, and publisher Bob Miller), which also had offices in the Brill Building and managed several of the artists who recorded for Main Street.

Main Street was first mentioned in the 1944 *Billboard Music Year Book*, which reported that Eddie Smith, Julie-B Allen (a yodeler with the Swingbillys), and the Buchanan Brothers (Lester and Chester, a country-and-western duo from Georgia who were given a special picture label) were recording for the label. All were managed by Bob Miller and were also making Lang-Worth transcriptions at the time. Main Street's output was primarily country-and-western, with a smaller pop series that included excerpts from the pro-union film, "Sing a Song of Labor." The company last advertised in *Billboard* in April 1950, after which no mention of its has been found in the trade papers.

MAJESTIC PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, INC. / MAJESTIC RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1915 – 1917

Offices: 247–253 W. 19th St., New York (Majestic Phonograph); 37–39 E. 28th St. (Majestic Record)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Majestic [1]

The Majestic Phonograph Company was incorporated in New York state on November 24, 1915, by Robert T. Russell, Christopher W. Mitchell, and Thomas C. Patterson, Jr. The incorporation filing stated that the company would manufacture records and phonographs, but that it was also involved in printing, lithographic, and photographic businesses, and was dealing in works of art, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, and books. There was no connection to the Chicago-based Majestic Talking Machine Company.

Henry Hotelling, an electroplater employed by Majestic, began making stampers in May 1916. First advertised in *The Talking Machine World* for July 1916, along with an adaptor to play them (but with no titles or artists yet listed), the earliest Majestic records were 7" fine-groove (165 line-per-inch) discs, with etched labels, that retailed for 25¢ each. However, it appears that regular shipments did not begin until September, when an advertisement in *TMW* claimed "large quantities available for immediate delivery." A Majestic advertisement in the October edition of *TMW* listed fifty releases.

In September 1916, Majestic reported the impending introduction of fine-groove 9" discs, with 4½ minutes of playing time per side. Retailing for 50¢, they made their first appearance in *TMW*'s November advance lists, at which time the company announced it would begin issuing sixty new titles monthly.

Jacques Kohnner became involved with the label during the summer 1916, when David Green, Richard V. Schoenfeld, and Jerome C. Reis formed the Majestic Record Corporation to act as exclusive sales agent for Majestic records. Kohnner served as sales manager for the new business, the original address of which was that of Green's residence at 109 East 88th Street, New York.

Incorporated on September 22, 1916, the Majestic Record Corporation was granted the exclusive sales agency for Majestic records in the United States, Hawaii Territory, and Canada beginning on October 5, 1916. Under terms of the agreement, Majestic Record would pay Majestic Phonograph 12½¢ each for 7" records and 22½¢ each for 9" records, which it would then wholesale to distributors for 14½¢ and 26½¢, respectively. The contract required minimum daily sales of 6,000 records and allowed Majestic Phonograph to cancel if that level was not maintained.

In an August 1916 *TMW* advertisement, Majestic Phonograph boasted that "The demand for a lower priced record is even greater than it was a year ago. Probably the greatest factor in bringing about this change will be the Majestic record." However, data uncovered by researcher Glenn Longwell reveal that only 20,450 Majestic records were sold in November 1916, and 31,144 in December, falling far short of the contracted minimum. Majestic Record blamed the shortfall on Majestic Phonograph's inability to fill orders. In response, a Majestic Phonograph official (in a letter reported by Longwell) blamed production delays on problems with making stampers and "improper recording of singers, band and orchestra music, etc., which necessitated remaking a considerable amount of music."

After a prolonged dispute, Majestic Phonograph stopped supplying discs to Majestic Record in late 1916 and began selling the records on its own. In response, Majestic Record obtained an injunction on January 15, 1917, that prevented Majestic Phonograph from selling, delivering, or soliciting sales of the records. The final Majestic releases were advertised in that month's *Talking Machine World*.

TMW's trade directory for February 1917 reported that Majestic records were now being marketed by the King Talking Machine Company (11 West 25th Street, New York), an obscure firm that also handled Harrolla phonographs. A month later, that company declared that it was the exclusive jobber for Majestic records. By that time, production of Majestic records appears to have ended. On August 21, 1917, a petition in bankruptcy was filed against the Majestic Record Company by three creditors, and a receiver was appointed. Assets at the time were said to be \$1,000, and liabilities about \$6,000.

MAJESTIC RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1948

Offices: 29 W. 57th St., New York (to 7/15/1947); 16–18 E. 40th St., New York (from 7/15/1947)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — New York (former Transcriptions Inc. studio); Reeves Sound Studios, probably other independent studios

Pressing: Own plants — Burbank, CA (to 12/1947); Newark, NJ (former New Jersey Plastics plant); Elgin, IL

Record Products: Majestic [3]

A subsidiary of the Majestic Radio and Television Corporation, Majestic Records was launched in early 1945. The first mention of Majestic label's impending introduction was an October 1943 filing informing the Securities and Exchange Commission that the company intended to manufacture disc records.

Little more was heard of the venture until November 1944, when Majestic Radio and Television announced that a new recording division was being launched and would be headed by former New York City mayor James J. (Jimmie) Walker. At that time, it was disclosed that Eli Oberstein would serve as executive vice-president and general manager, having sold his Classic Record Company (the makers of Hit records), Transcriptions Inc. studio, and New Jersey Plastics pressing plant to Majestic in a deal that was negotiated in part by Ben Selvin. Under terms of the sale, Oberstein was guaranteed two years' salaried employment as manager of artists-and-repertoire, as well as royalties on all record sales. Among the early hires were sales manager Parker H. Erickson and recording engineer Robert (Bob) Fine. A plan to name the new label Majestic-Hit, pushed by Oberstein as a bow to his previous label, was dropped before production began.

The first Majestic releases were advertised in April 1945 and continued Hit's 7100 catalog-numbering sequence. There was some overlap in the 7120–7140 range, in which many issues appeared on both labels (some of Hit's better-selling earlier releases were also reissued with Majestic labels). Masters at first continued Hit's T-prefixed numerical series. The early Majestic catalog featured many of Hit's former artists, including the Three Suns and the Louis Prima, Jerry Wald, and Cootie Williams orchestras. The 1945 *Record Retailing*

Yearbook reported that although Majestic's initial production had been limited to pop material, it planned to add classical, semi-classical, race, and "hillbilly" fare.

Majestic was among the most widely distributed of the post-war independent labels, being handled by more than seventy distributors at one point. In addition, the company cultivated cordial relations with members of the jukebox industry. In one well-publicized stunt, Louis Prima and a photographer were dispatched to present the first pressing of "Vout Cowboy" (which had recently been chosen *Cash Box's* "Disc of the Week") to Bill Wolfe of M. S. Wolfe Distributing, a large supplier of discs to jukebox operators. Majestic records were also heavily promoted to disc jockeys, who were provided with specially prepared scripts plugging new and forthcoming releases.

Among Bob Fine's contributions while with Majestic was the use of overdubbing on a regular basis. Overdubbing had been used occasionally in the past (one of the most successful early examples having been Lawrence Tibbett's 1930 self-duet for Victor), but Fine perfected and popularized the process as a commercial production technique. Majestic sales manager Lee Savin recalled that Fine first experimented with overdubbing after an ailing Ray McKinley was unable to sing at one of his band's sessions, requiring that the vocal chorus be added after the fact. According to Savin, the technique was quickly taken up by Mercury Records as well, which at that time was using the Majestic studio.

Majestic records were handled by former Hit distributors and retailers, in addition to Majestic Radio and Television's extensive dealer network, and initially they sold well. The label had a unexpected major hit in mid-1946 with Eddy Howard's "To Each His Own." Demand reportedly was so strong that New York distributors initially were unable to obtain copies, and the retail price had to be raised by 25¢ to cover overflow-pressing costs at outside plants. Howard would become one Majestic's best-selling singers, reportedly earning royalties of nearly \$27,000 in March 1947 alone.

On June 1, 1945, Ben Selvin moved from Muzak to Majestic, to serve as Walker's assistant. Several months after arriving, Selvin sued Oberstein for \$75,000, the unpaid commission Selvin claimed he was due for his part in brokering the Classic Record Company sale. Selvin was given responsibility for selecting the titles to be recorded, which until then had been Oberstein's domain. Unnamed Majestic officials speculated that a disgruntled Oberstein would "probably leave the company sometime in the near future," which he did. Selvin withdrew his suit soon after Oberstein's resignation. Oberstein subsequently sued Majestic for the balance of salary due him under his two-year contract and finally collected \$12,000 from Majestic in May 1947.

Walker died on November 18, 1946. His position (which appears to have been largely honorary) remained vacant, and what duties he had were assigned to other Majestic executives. The company's second-quarter 1946 report showed a \$365,000 profit for the radio and television division, but a \$108,000 loss for the record subsidiary, after having shown a profit in the first quarter.

In September 1946, *Cash Box* falsely reported that John Hammond (who was vice-president of Keynote Records at the time) had been hired as Majestic's recording director. However, Riley Shepard was hired as Majestic's "hillbilly music director" in January 1947, a move that initially resulted only in what *Billboard* described as "spasmodic releases on folk artists." Although he signed Bradley Kincaid, Dewey Price, and several other well-known artists in early 1947, Shepard failed to establish Majestic as a significant presence in the country-and-western market.

Selvin began paring the Majestic artist roster in April 1947, in what appears to have been a unilateral move that had not been cleared by his superiors. A month later it was announced that he would be replaced by Dave Shelley and Lee Sabin, who would share duties as artists-and-repertoire managers. Selvin agreed to serve out the remainder of his Majestic contract, which expired on August 30, although *Variety* reported, "he won't apply himself especially to the job in the interim."

Selvin's departure marked the beginning of a widespread shake-up among Majestic personnel that continued well into the autumn of 1947. Among those lost was Bob Fine, who moved to the recently revamped Reeves Sound Studios. Some popular artists were lost as well. Louis Prima did not renew his Majestic contract in June 1947, citing "poor exploitation and very poor distribution" of his records. Later that year, Ray McKinley breached his contract to record for RCA Victor, touching off a legal battle that ended after

the American Federation of Musicians sided with McKinley and declared his Majestic contract void. In the meantime, it was reported that artists-and-repertoire manager Paul Baron had departed to scout talent in Europe.

By the end of 1947, E. Arthur Tracey had resigned as president of Majestic Radio and Television, although he retained his position as chairman of the board (a later attempt to unseat Tracey, who was suspected of stock fraud, was unsuccessful). His resignation coincided with the public disclosure that Majestic was working out a payment plan with the Harry Fox Agency to settle claims for approximately \$100,000 in unpaid publishers' royalties. It was also revealed that the company was delinquent in payments to numerous creditors. Tracey's replacement was Parker H. Ericksen, who decided in December 1947 to close the Burbank pressing plant and consolidate manufacturing at Majestic's Illinois and New Jersey facilities. Although a healthy increase in record sales was reported at the end of 1947, it was not sufficient to offset the company's mounting debt.

On February 6, 1948, both Majestic divisions filed a Chapter 11 petition in Chicago, requesting an extension of time in which to pay off more than seventy creditors. The request was granted, allowing Majestic Records (which had temporarily closed its pressing plants) to reorganize and continue operating under court supervision. The Newark pressing plant was reopened in early March; a *Cash Box* report that it had shut down again at the end of the month, due to lack of demand for the discs, was retracted a week later. However, the New York office was closed, with *Variety* reporting that the "one or two people remaining to handle loose ends" had been moved to the Reeves Sound Studios' offices. In April 1948, Majestic officials petitioned to change the reorganization proceedings from Chapter 11 to Chapter 10, in anticipation of filing for bankruptcy.

In the meantime, an attorney for Majestic Records had been in discussions with Jack Kapp and Milton Rackmil concerning a possible takeover of the label by Decca Records. In late April, Rackmil firmly denied that Decca had made an offer, citing a large number of questionable stipulations and provisos on the part of Majestic, as well as Decca's reluctance to become entangled in the company's contract and credit problems.

In June 1948, U.S. District Court Judge Philip Sullivan approved a switch from Chapter 11 to Chapter 10 bankruptcy, clearing the way for a sale of Majestic Record's assets. After rejecting sealed bids from various parties, ranging from Decca and Mercury to singer Phil Regan, Sullivan ordered that the company's assets be sold at public auction on October 15, 1948. The purchaser was Mercury Records, with a winning bid of \$142,000 for all assets, including approximately 1,900 masters, some of which were immediately scheduled for re-release on the Mercury label. Within several weeks of the sale, one distributor was remaindering surplus Majestic discs for 15¢ each, or seven for a dollar.

The Majestic label made a brief reappearance in late 1950, when it was relaunched by Gordon Burdge after the recording license for his ABC-Eagle operation was revoked. Using the same Majestic trademark, but showing an address at 2559 W. Pico Boulevard in Hollywood, the few known examples are simply surplus ABC-Eagle records with the altered Majestic labels pasted over the originals.

In 1950 the parent Majestic Radio & Television Corporation was acquired by the Wilcox-Gay Corporation, which marketed radios and televisions under the Majestic name into the late 1950s.

MAJOR RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – c. 1950

Offices: 170 N. 23rd St., Miami, FL

Record Products: Major

Affiliated with the Taran Distributing Company, Inc. (Miami, Florida), a distributor of small independent labels that operated at the same address. Major was first listed by *Billboard* in January 1947 but otherwise had virtually no presence in the trade papers. There appears to have been an affiliation with Jeb Records (launched in 1951), which reissued some Major recordings by Pete Congiardo and Dan Belloc and employed the latter as its musical director.

Two unrelated Major labels were in operation at about the same time, one of them a Van Nuys, California, label about which no substantive information has been found. The other, based in New York, was owned by Thomas J. Valentino (a sales representative for

Gennett custom-recording services) and produced only sound-effects and background-music recordings.

MALONE, IDESSA (Discs)

Idessa Malone Distributors / Idessa Malone Enterprises / Staff Record Company

Record Production: 1947 – 1951

Offices: 606 (later 604–608) E. Vernor Highway, Detroit (Idessa Malone Distributors); 6400 S. Cottage Grove (Room 101), Chicago (branch sales office); 89 Orchestra Place, Detroit (Idessa Malone Enterprises, from 1949)

Record Products: Dessa, Staff

One of the few Black female record producers of the pre-LP era, Idessa Malone began distributing Roy Milton's records in 1946. By 1948 her distribution company was handling a large line of independent jazz, rhythm-and-blues, and gospel labels, including Crystal Tone, Dial, Gotham, Metro, and Religious Recordings.

Doing business as the Staff Record Company, Malone launched her Staff label in November 1947 to specialize in jump and rhythm-and-blues records. The roster included one Johnny Williams, a disguise for both John Lee Hooker and Baby Boy Warren. Although not widely advertised, Staff records were sometimes reviewed in *The Detroit Free Press* and other area papers. Malone also licensed some Staff masters to Bullet, Federal, Gotham, and Swing Time.

Staff was reorganized and refinanced in November 1948. Malone brought in Walter C. Willis, Walton A. Lewis, and Paul Alexander to take over operations so that she could focus exclusively on her distribution business. The company had a hit in early 1949 with Red Miller's "Bewildered." Malone presented Miller a gold-plated copy of the record, although her claim that it sold a million copies is questionable (she made that claim on February 2, but a February 17 newspaper report stated the record so far had sold 500,000 copies—still an impressive figure, if correct).

In January 1949, Malone took over the inventory of the short-lived Champion Record Company. A month later, she left Staff following a disagreement with the new partners, but retained a financial stake in the business. No longer directly involved with Staff's operation, Malone launched Idessa Malone Enterprises to produce Dessa records, a gospel label. The company was listed on the New York Stock Exchange in February 1949, under the name of Dessa Records, and released its first records in April. Dessa Records functioned as a co-op, with artists required to pay their own recording costs. In return, they were granted full ownership of their masters, which they agreed to lease to Dessa in return for 50% of any profits on sales.

The Dessa venture closed in October 1949, after Decca Records complained that the brand name was too similar to its own. Malone then reclaimed control of Staff Records and Midwest Distributors. Staff Records was reorganized, with Maurice King brought in as musical director, and its focus shifted largely to blues and gospel material. A further reorganization followed in July 1950, by which time Malone was featured as a disc jockey on radio station CKLW (Detroit). The Staff Record Company was last listed in *Billboard's* manufacturer directory in July 1951.

In 1953 Malone moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where she scouted talent for other labels, ran a small custom-recording operation, organized the Modern Jazz Club in nearby Derbytown, and worked as a sales representative for Carmen Murphy House of Beauty cosmetics. She later moved back to Detroit, where she continued making custom recordings well into the 1960s. In later years she specialized in recording church choirs, declaring, "Religious music is my major."

MALOOF PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1920–1925

Offices: 92 Washington St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Gennett and unknown studio(s)

Record Products: Maloof, Maloof Record De Luxe Orientale, Music of the Orient, Orient

Founded in 1920 by Syrian-born composer and musician Alexander Maloof, who first recorded for Victor in 1913, as a piano soloist. Maloof's labels specialized in Arabic material for the immigrant markets. He was featured on many of his labels' instrumental offerings,

as a pianist or the director of various small ensembles. His labels also offered a substantial number of ethnic vocal recordings, many of them by Selim Doumani.

The earliest Maloof labels show a 1920 copyright. It was not formally registered, nor was a 1922 copyright claim that appears on some labels. Early master numbers are in a three-digit M-prefixed series of unknown origin, some of which show master-broker Earle W. Jones' characteristic handwritten "J." Some early pressings appear to have been made by the Siemon Hard Rubber Company, with which Jones was affiliated.

By late 1922 production of the label had shifted to the Starr Piano Company (Gennett), which recorded 10" and 12" masters for Maloof. At least one early Gennett issue used the same "J" masters that previously had been pressed by Siemon. Most, however, were Gennett recordings made especially for Maloof, some of which were also issued on the Music of the Orient label. Gennett continued to produce Maloof records until he discontinued the series in 1925.

Maloof and his associates continued to record prolifically at the Gennett studio in the late 1920s. A handful of the recordings appeared in the standard Gennett catalog, but most were produced and marketed as personal issues, at Maloof's own expense. He made his last recordings at Gennett's New York studio in the spring of 1932, consisting mainly of organ solos and accompaniments. Two of his unissued organ solos, recorded on June 30 of that year and intended for Gennett's Chapel label, were the last Gennett recordings made in New York.

Maloof resurfaced in the 1940s with his Orient label (unrelated to the Japanese import label of the same name), which was credited to the Maloof Music Company of Englewood, New Jersey.

MANHATTAN MUSIC CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – Early 1950s

Offices: 170 W. 10th St., New York

Record Products: Manhattan [2]

Primarily a publishing operation, the Manhattan Music Corporation also produced the Manhattan label for Nick's Tavern, a New York jazz club owned by Nick Rongetti. Recording sessions began in the spring of 1945. Production was credited to Samuel S. Sanford, a New York socialite who was going through a highly publicized divorce at the time.

Featuring Mugsy Spanier, Miff Mole, Pee Wee Russell, and other White traditional-jazz musicians, the records at first were sold in primitively printed and packaged three-disc album sets. Individually numbered and autographed, they were limited editions that could be purchased only by mail order. The company bypassed World War II-era shellac rationing in the U.S. by pressing at an unnamed Canadian plant. Black and White Records later took over manufacturing and distribution, introducing more-professional looking packaging and doing away with limited editions. Manhattan LPs, compiled from previously released material, were introduced in the early 1950s.

There is no connection to Julian Miller's St. Louis-based Manhattan label (which released the local novelty hit "More Beer!" in 1948 and was never heard from again), nor to Abner Greenburg's Manhattan label of the 1950s.

MANHATTAN RECORDING LABORATORIES (Discs)

Record Production: 1922

Offices: 48 W. 39th St., New York

Record Products: Possibly masters for Panhellenion, Arto, and unidentified labels

This company's April 1922 advertisement claimed it was recording for five unnamed companies, as well as offering personal recording services, in a new studio at 48 W. 39th St., New York. The address was the same as that listed in band manager Ed Kirkeby's session logs for the Panhellenion Phonograph Company's studio; however, the address was that of a large multi-tenant office building, so it not certain these studios were one and the same. The Manhattan Recording Laboratories last advertised in January 1923.

MANOR RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1949

Offices: 313 W. 57th St., New York (main office); 5 Pomona Ave., Newark, NJ (Clark Phonograph Record Company plant, to 1/1946)

Original-Master Source(s): Empire Broadcasting, International Recording Company, World Transcriptions, other independent studios

Pressing: Clark Phonograph Record Company; Enterprise Records (for West Coast distribution, from 3/1947); probably others

Record Products: Manor, Regis

Founded in December 1944 by Irving Berman (the owner of Regis Record Company, and a manager of the Clark Phonograph Record Company pressing plant), in partnership with Clark Phonograph owners George and Mildred Clark. The Clarks held a 50% interest in Manor, and their company was credited as Manor's producer on early labels. Berman's Regis label, launched in late 1942, remained in operation as a separate business, but some masters were exchanged between the two companies.

Berman bought out the Clarks' share in Manor in January 1946, at which point the original corporation was dissolved. Berman retained control of the reorganized company, with Sam Lehrer serving as treasurer and Julius Schiff as general sales manager. Its first new releases were advertised in early May 1946, just one week after the last major Regis advertisement appeared in *Billboard*.

Many Regis releases and artists, including top-seller Savannah Churchill, were transferred to Manor. Like Regis, Manor concentrated largely on the race-record market. It had a particularly strong gospel roster that included the Dixie Hummingbirds, Kings of Harmony of Alabama, Silver Echo Quartet, and Ernestine Washington. Its jazz roster included groups fronted by Dizzy Gillespie (who made his first records as a band leader for Manor), Paul Bascomb, Big Sid Catlett, Erroll Garner, and Tiny Bradshaw. There were also occasional pop, calypso, country-and-western, and ethnic releases, although little appears to have been done to develop or promote those categories.

Berman merged Regis with Manor in 1947 and consolidated operations at the latter's offices. Admitting that the Manor label had never been marketed very effectively, Berman dispatched Lehrer and Schiff on a month-long goodwill tour in the spring of 1947, hoping to strengthen relations with distributors, and announced plans for a national advertising campaign. The result was a jump in sales, particularly for Savannah Churchill and the Four Tunes, whose Manor records began to make the *Billboard* race-record charts with some regularity. *Cash Box* magazine proclaimed Churchill's "I Want to Be Loved" the best race release of 1947.

Although the Regis Record Company name remained in use into 1949, production of Regis records was handled by Manor after the merger. By the spring of 1948, however, Berman appears to have been preoccupied with other ventures, including the launch of an appliance company that sold Laundrall washing machines. In October of that year, he sold twelve Manor masters to Columbia, including titles by Churchill and the Four Tunes, at the start of that label's renewed push into the rhythm-and-blues market.

Berman briefly lost his American Federation of Musicians' recording license in 1949, following a dispute over alleged violations of his contract with the Four Tunes (who had since moved to RCA-Victor), along with failure to pay royalties to the group and to publisher Sam Fox. Manor suspended operations a short time later, but Berman resurfaced later in the year with his new American Record Company [II], producer of the Arco label.

MARATONE RECORDS — See Melmore, Inc.

MARGO RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1940s – Early 1950s

Offices: 138 W. 83rd St., New York (early 1950s)

Record Products: Margo

A Latino label, probably launched in the late 1940s and originally of unknown ownership. Estaban and Jaime Taronjou purchased the company in December 1949 and imported some of their masters from Cuba. Margo does not appear to have advertised nationally, and it

received virtually no coverage in the trade papers. It was last listed in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies

MAR-KEE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 49 W. 55th St., New York

Record Products: Mar-Kee

Launched in the summer of 1947 by Lawrence Jones, Mar-Kee catered primarily to jukebox operators. The company's formation was announced in July, and its initial releases, all featuring the Milt Page Trio and singer Leon Becker, were advertised later that month in *Cash Box*. No mention of Mar-Kee has been found after early 1948. The Mar-Kee name was used in the 1950s by an unrelated California label.

MARS RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 1960 S. Santa Fe Ave., Hollywood, CA (1946–early 1947); 4215 S. Vermont, Los Angeles (from early 1947)

Record Products: Mars

Launched c. August 1946 by W. M. Hammond and Arthur P. Hall. The company was first mentioned by *Billboard* and *Cash Box* in September. Mars specialized in Hammond organ recordings. Its initial release, announced in October 1946, was a multi-disc album credited to Jake Hammond (a pseudonym for W. M. Hammond, as revealed in a U.S. copyright registration).

Mars records, which could also be purchased individually for jukebox use, were handled by K&M Distributors and Jack Gutshall. The latter reportedly was enthusiastic over the first album, but *Billboard* dismissed it as "a rather drab platter package, both inside and out" and suggested that those in the market for organ records had better choices. Later pressings were credited to the Master Artists Recording Studios, about which no information has been found. The Mars name was later used for several unrelated labels.

MARSH LABORATORIES, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1921–1937

Offices: 10 S. La Salle St., Chicago (Chicago Recording Laboratories, 1920); 208 S. La Salle St., Chicago (Marsh Laboratories, 2/1922–late 1922); Kimball Building, 306 S. Wabash (Room 625, late 1922–9/1924; Room 222, early 1931–9/1937); Lyon & Healy Building (Suites 707–710), 78 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago (9/1924–early 1931)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — 1333 W. Argyle St., Chicago (to c. late 1922); Kimball Building, Chicago; Lyon & Healy Building, Chicago

Pressing: New York Recording Laboratories (1920s); Columbia, Allied Record Manufacturing, possibly others (1930s)

Record Products: Autograph [1]; numerous client labels, including Chicago Gospel Tabernacle Records, Crown [2], Golden Rule, Greek Record Company, Ideal Sacred Record, Messiah Sacred Records, Ogren & Uhe Artist Series, Rialto [2]; contract recording for Paramount and related labels; numerous private and promotional issues and branded and unbranded radio transcriptions, including Crenshaw Brothers and Electra

Orlando Riverius Marsh was the first to produce electrical sound recordings on a regular commercial basis, beginning in late 1921. Anecdotal accounts have Marsh operating an experimental recording laboratory at Chicago's Essanay film studios as early as 1914, and circumstantial evidence suggests that he and Essanay president George K. Spoor might have collaborated on an experimental sound-synchronization system at about that time. However, the first documentary evidence that Marsh was making recordings at Essanay is an undated test pressing, discovered by collector John R. T. Davies, on which Spoor sings "Bells of Shandon." The handwritten label states, "Recorded in the open air 12 ft distance. In the yard of the Essanay Co. Marsh."

Orlando Marsh's first independent venture was the Chicago Recording Laboratories, incorporated on November 16, 1920. Its charter stated that the company was to research, develop, manufacture, and sell phonographs, records, motion picture equipment and film, and related items, but an electrical recording process was not mentioned specifically. So far

as is known, the Chicago Recording Laboratories produced nothing for the consumer market. It appears to have closed after having failed to file an annual report in early 1921.

Marsh probably launched his Autograph label (for which no trademark registration has been located) in late 1921, based upon the song titles on several early specimens. The original Autograph label credited only Orlando R. Marsh as manufacturer. After approximately one-hundred masters, the Marsh Laboratories name was substituted, reflecting the company's incorporation on February 17, 1922. The incorporation filing confirms that George Spoor was a member of Marsh's board of directors. Harve G. Bagerow, the owner of a Chicago insurance agency, served as president, a title that appears to have been largely honorary. Thomas B. Lambert, who two decades earlier had developed the first commercially viable celluloid cylinders, served as secretary.

Like its predecessor, Marsh Laboratories was chartered to develop, manufacture, buy, sell, and lease sound recordings, but this time, electrical systems, devices, and processes were mentioned. Marsh employed an electrical recording process from the beginning, which he never patented. It was fairly primitive, employing a simple double-button carbon microphone. His recordings were highly flawed, exhibiting limited frequency response, marked distortion, and low volume levels, but they were unmistakably electrical.

Marsh Laboratories originally was a custom recording service catering to locals (amateur and professional alike) who paid to have their records made. The records were pressed in small runs under the Autograph label (or if preferred, under custom-designed labels for an extra charge). The finished records were turned over to the client, who was responsible for their marketing and sale. Marsh himself did not become involved in sales or marketing until early 1925, when he issued his first and only known catalog of commercial Autograph releases for the general retail market.

Marsh's first known client was publisher Thomas W. Hatch, for whom he produced the Crown [2] label during the spring and summer 1922. The recordings are believed to have been made by Marsh at the Essanay studio, and aside from some clearly audible hum, they are technically superior to many of Marsh's later recordings. Other early custom-label clients included George C. Grétsis and Spyros Stamos (Greek Record Company) and the Schooler Record Company (Messiah Sacred Records).

Marsh moved to the Kimball Building in late 1922, where he opened his own studio, ending his affiliation with Essanay. A January 1923 *Billboard* article featured a photograph taken in Marsh's new studio, picturing a large bowl-shaped device that served to focus sound on the microphone. A 1924 photograph, taken during a Jesse Crawford recording session in the Chicago Theatre, shows Marsh employing an antiquated trumpet-style phonograph horn that apparently served the same purpose.

In May 1924, *The Talking Machine Journal* announced the launch of a commercial version of the Autograph label. Unlike much of Autograph's output thus far, the commercial releases were to employ well-known professional artists. Numbered in a 600 series for general releases, and a 4000 series for Jesse Crawford's pipe-organ solos, they were intended for sale through regular retail outlets. A 5000 series was added in early 1925 for Milton Charles' organ solos, and there were several anomalous releases not numbered in any of those series, some of which used one side's master number as the catalog number.

Marsh had already developed a reputation for his recordings of the pipe-organ, an instrument that the acoustic process struggled to reproduce. An unnumbered April 1923 Autograph record by Pietro Yon, playing the Kimball Hall organ, had somehow drawn the attention of a *Time* magazine reporter, who gave it a brief mention and pronounced the reproduction "excellent." For his initial entry into the commercial market, Marsh featured solos by organist Crawford, recorded in the Chicago Theater using what passed for a mobile unit at the time. Although the Crawford records retailed for \$1.50 (twice the price of major-label releases), they were surprisingly strong sellers, and the masters were later licensed by Paramount, Gennett, and others, which reissued them in more affordable versions. Tivoli Theater organist Milton Charles was recruited as a replacement after Crawford signed with Victor (which was still recording acoustically) in late 1924.

The first and only known catalog of commercial Autograph releases was published in March 1925, covering recordings made through late December 1924 or, possibly, early January 1925. In addition to Crawford's records (and a note that Milton Charles' were forthcoming), there were some notable jazz offerings by King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton,

and Merritt Brunies' Friar's Inn, among others; current pop tunes by Willard Robison, Joe Thomas' Sax-O-Tette, novelty guitarist Jack Penewell, and several local radio stars; and an unnumbered 12" release by operatic tenor Mario Rubini. New 600-series releases continued to appear into the summer of 1925, at which point Marsh appears to have abandoned the production of Autograph records for the consumer market.

With his business expanding, Marsh moved to a suite in the Lyon & Healy Building during the week of September 21, 1924. Mayo Williams, who later supervised Marsh's Paramount sessions there, recalled that the studio was quite small (although undoubtedly larger than the thirty square feet Williams claimed) and heavily padded. Williams declared that Marsh "had no microphones but recorded into a horn" (apparently not realizing the horn was attached to a microphone), probably giving rise to the mistaken notion, seen in some modern works, that Marsh made acoustic recordings. Researcher Richard Raichelson has not found any confirmed instances of Marsh having recorded acoustically.

Marsh finally began advertising his records as electrically recorded in January 1925, at about the time rumors began circulating that Columbia and Victor were experimenting with an electrical process. The notation was added to the Autograph label that spring, and Marsh was soon proclaiming himself "The Originator of Electrical Recording." On March 11, 1925, he hosted a Recording Artists' Ball in Chicago's Trianon Ballroom, where he demonstrated his recording process to an audience of five-thousand, every member of which received a free Autograph record by Dell Lampe's Trianon Orchestra.

Marsh began licensing Autograph masters to Paramount and other labels in early 1924, at first only sporadically. With the mid-1926 closure of the Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories, he took over the Paramount sessions, at first using disjointed blocks of master numbers, a confusing situation for modern discographers that is made worse by Paramount's substitution of "control" numbers on some of those masters.

In late 1926, Marsh sold a controlling interest in his operation to a group of outside investors. Largely a figurehead, Harve Bagerow retained his title as president for a time, but Marsh remained in charge of daily operations. The other investors' identities were not reported and have not been discovered, but circumstantial evidence suggests that the New York Recording Laboratories (which had been pressing for Marsh) had a hand in the reorganization. NYRL took over the Autograph label, which it briefly produced as a reissue vehicle for the pipe-organ records before scuttling it entirely.

In September 1927, Marsh inaugurated a new 20000 master series that was allocated exclusively to NYRL's Paramount sessions. By then, a marked improvement could be heard in the sound quality of Marsh Laboratories' recordings, although they still left much to be desired from a technical standpoint. Earlier that year, Marsh had introduced the Electra label. It served much the same purpose as the discontinued Autograph, although a commercial series was never produced. Electra's early output consisted largely of recordings made for local amateur and semi-professional clients, with a substantial amount of ethnic material, but in early 1928, Marsh secured a one-year contract to produce transcriptions for Correll & Gosden's immensely popular "Amos 'n' Andy" program. Originally broadcast live from Chicago, the show had recently gone into national syndication, requiring the use of transcriptions. These were pressed as 12" Electra-labeled discs from late April 1928 through late March 1929, accounting for much of Marsh's output during that period. However, the contract was not renewed, and on March 26, 1929, production shifted to the better-equipped Brunswick-Balke-Collender studios.

Marsh suffered another significant loss in June 1929, when the New York Recording Laboratories began splitting its Paramount recording sessions between Marsh Laboratories and the Gennett studio in Richmond, Indiana. Once NYRL's own studio became operational in November, both suppliers were dropped. Marsh's final confirmed recording for Paramount was Freddie Brown's "Whip It to a Jelly" (mx. 21474), probably recorded in late October 1929.

Following the loss of the Paramount and "Amos 'n' Andy" accounts, Marsh concentrated on production of private recordings, promotional and custom labels, and radio transcriptions for some lesser-known programs. Standard charges, according to a June 1931 flyer, were \$50 per side for 10" masters and \$55 for 12". The package included "studio facilities (rehearsals, balance, timing, and play-backs), recording master, furnishing copper master, mother, stamper, and one sample pressing." Additional pressings cost 75¢ each

for small runs, or 50¢ each in lots of one-hundred or more, with pressing handled by Columbia (and later, by Allied Record Manufacturing, which took over Columbia's Los Angeles pressing plant).

Marsh also dabbled in film production in the late 1920s, including brief associations with Maurice Wetzel's Musicolor film venture (1928) and Utah Telo-Screen Productions (1929). The latter opened a Chicago studio in May 1929, at Argyle and Sheridan, which Marsh set up and was to manage; however, little more was reported on the venture. A 1930 *Variety* report that Warner Brothers was eyeing an unspecified Marsh facility for its Chicago production branch might have referred to the Telo-Screen studio, rather than to the small, scantily equipped Marsh Laboratories studio.

By the early 1930s, Marsh was concentrating largely on radio transcriptions. His largest transcription clients in the early 1930s were the producers of the "Louie's Hungry Five" program (c. 1930–1932) and the Allied Broadcast Circuit (c. 1932–1933). Although Marsh advertised that he could produce 16", 33¹/₃-rpm transcriptions (which were quickly becoming the industry standard), no specimens have been reliably reported thus far. The studio also began advertising instantaneous personal-recording recording services in 1935.

By the mid-1930s, Orlando Marsh's health was beginning to deteriorate, and C. B. Robinson took over as studio manager. Marsh announced his retirement in August 1937, following an extended illness. On September 13, 1937, Marsh Laboratories was reorganized as the Chicago Recording Studios, Inc. (q.v.). The Marsh Laboratories name remained in use for a time, last appearing in a 1938 *Radio Annual* listing. Marsh died on September 8, 1938, at the age of fifty-seven, and Marsh Laboratories was officially dissolved by court order on May 8, 1939.

MARSHALL, CHARLES (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1889 – Early 1890s

Offices: New York; Jersey City, NJ (studio and factory)

Record Products: Cylinders

Charles Marshall was an independent recording engineer who supplied cylinders to the Metropolitan Phonograph Company of New York under contract. *The Phonogram* for March 1891 claimed that Marshall had produced approximately 30,000 cylinders (referring to total output, not individual titles) over the past two years. Marshall, who stressed the importance of effective spoken introductions in the *Phonogram* article, personally announced each selection.

In addition to his work for the Metropolitan Phonograph Company, Marshall sold some of his recordings privately, including items by members of the Patti Opera Company. Cappa's Seventh Regiment Band was a regular visitor to Marshall's studio, where for some time it completed a three-hour session each week. Marshall also produced a popular series of chimes recordings (some of which were marketed by Metropolitan Phonograph), made on phonographs he positioned in the steeples of New York's Grace and St. Thomas churches during the winter of 1889–1890.

MARSHALL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 17 W. Main St., Richmond, VA

Record Products: Allen [2], Marshall

Launched by Leon Gray in early 1949, in affiliation with Richmond-based Allen Record Distributors. The few known releases were devoted to rhythm-and-blues and gospel material by regional artists.

The company's first advertisement gave its label's name as Marshall, which appears to have been interchangeable with the Allen label. Its first release (the Four Jacks' "I Challenge Your Kiss"), announced in May 1949, briefly appeared in *Billboard's* list of most-played jukebox race records as an Allen-label release, but was later advertised on the Marshall label under the same catalog number. No mention of the company has been found after late 1949. The Allen name was also used for an unrelated label, produced by Peter Doraine, in the early 1950s.

S. W. MARTIN DISTRIBUTING COMPANY (Discs) — *See also* Crowe-Martin Distributing Company

Record Production: c. 1950 – 1951

Offices: 1228 E. Commerce St., San Antonio, TX

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, other independent studios

Record Products: Groovy, Martin

A major Texas record distributor, S. W. (Buster) Martin was the owner of the S. W. Martin Distributing Company (San Antonio) and co-owner of the Crowe-Martin Distributing Company (Houston). The former briefly produced and distributed the Groovy and Martin labels in the early 1950s, and the latter produced CroMart.

Groovy, a country-and-western label, was introduced in 1950. The initial releases were credited to Buster Martin's Bronco Busters with steel-guitarist Herbie Remington and vocalist Lucky Carlisle. Four Groovy masters are listed in the Audio Company of America's files, which appear to have been ACA's total output for the label.

No notice has been found of the Martin label's launch. Apparently very short-lived, it offered a mixture of pop and country titles by little-known artists, from masters of unknown origin. Neither label received any significant coverage in the trade papers, and they were not advertised nationally.

MARVEL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: Chicago

Record Products: Marvel [1]

An obscure Chicago company, which used Trilon masters on at least one release. There is a suspected connection to Chester A. Scales, who might also have been involved with the equally obscure Planet Record Company. Marvel's masters (like Planet's) were sold to Egmont Sonderling's Swing-Master Record Corporation in 1949. There is no connection to a Tulsa label of the same name and period, whose known output appears to have been a single personal release.

MARVEL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1950s

Offices: 852 Elm St., Manchester, NH

Record Products: Marvel [2]

Launched in late 1948 by James Nicholas (Jimmy) Parks (*née* Psarakis). Parks, who had previously worked as a song-plugger with Lewis Music (New York), was vice-president of Tri-State Music Distributors, which distributed the records and had offices at the same address as Marvel.

Cash Box announced in November 1948 that Parks was planning to "reissue" the Marvel label, the meaning of which is unclear. It might have referred to an earlier New England-area Marvel label, announced in April 1947 as "the first all-Boston disk," which appears to produced only a single special release.

Early Marvel releases featured Ted Herbert (a singer and band leader working in Hampton Beach, New Hampshire at the time), the Pat Sands Orchestra, Judy Tremaine, and other regional acts. London Records purchased at least three of Herbert's Marvel masters in 1949, beginning in September with "Take Your Finger Out of Your Mouth." Parks went on to work for London as a freelance producer in 1950, after which new Marvel releases appeared only sporadically.

Marvel Records vanished from the trade papers entirely after 1953, when Parks became the American representative of W & G Record Processing Company Private Ltd. (Melbourne, Australia). The last confirmed Marvel release was made in 1957, at about the time Parks was promoted to executive vice-president of W & G's American operations. Parks continued to work with the W & G Group and International Jaspar Music Group, in various executive capacities, into the mid-1970s, in addition to managing the Seekers and other artists. The Marvel name was later used for several unrelated labels.

BATT MASIAN COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 545 Gorge Rd., Cliffside Park, NJ

Record Products: Batt Masian, Mecca; other ethnic labels reported but not confirmed

Launched c. 1947 by band leader Batt Masian (*née* Batmavian), who began his musical career playing high-school proms in the mid-1930s. The Batt Masian label was devoted to ethnic Armenian material, while Mecca (not to be confused with the later Nashville and Seattle labels of that name) specialized in novelty and pop dance numbers for the jukebox trade. There was also an apparently short-lived Batt Massian children's series featuring rhymes in Armenian, with musical accompaniment. The company was first mentioned in *Billboard* in May 1947, and last mentioned in March 1949.

MASTER RECORD COMPANY / SWING-MASTER RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1950

Offices: 301 E. Erie St., Chicago (Master); 154 E. Erie St., Chicago (Swing-Master)

Original-Master Source(s): United Broadcasting studios, other independent studios

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Master [2], C & G, Old Swing-Master

The Master Record Company was launched in the summer of 1946 as the pressing-plant subsidiary of Egmont Sonderling's United Broadcasting Company. The company advertised full-service record production, in conjunction with the United Broadcasting studios, for independent labels. There was no connection to similarly named ventures operated by Irving Mills and Raymond Scott (*see* Master Records [I] and [II], respectively).

Earlier in 1946, Sonderling stated that he had no plans to launch his own label, but by early 1947 his plant was producing Master. A rhythm-and-blues line, its artist roster included Jack Cooley, Sonny Thompson, and Memphis Slim with the House Rockers. Two of Cooley's Master sides were also issued on the obscure C & G label. The Master label survived until March 1950, although its release schedule was highly sporadic.

In January 1949, Sonderling launched the Swing-Master Record Corporation (*q.v.*) as a Master Record Company subsidiary, using the same production facilities but with a different office address. Sonderling was only marginally involved with the operation of Swing-Master, which was managed by former Mercury Records executive Leonard Davis. The label was named in honor of Chicago disc jockey Al Benson (*née* Arthur Leaner, *a.k.a.* "The Old Swing Master"), who was said to have no financial stake in the venture.

Although Swing-Master produced a few original recordings, much of its output comprised material obtained from outside sources. Many of the early releases came from previously unissued Vitacoustic masters that had been stockpiled at Master's pressing plant in advance of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, and on which Sonderling claimed a lien following Vitacoustic's Chapter 11 filing. Other confirmed sources included Sunbeam (by way of Vitacoustic, which had acquired the label), Marvel, Planet, Rhumboogie, Trilon, and other struggling or defunct labels. Master also re-pressed and distributed three of the four Jazz Ltd. records, which previously had been available only in an album set.

There was a partial merger between the Master Records and Art Sheridan's Armour Plastics pressing plants in March 1950, followed in July by Armour's takeover of Master's plating plant. Leonard Davis had departed Swing-Master a month earlier, at which time *Billboard* stated that the company had closed. Sonderling disputed the report, claiming that new sides by Kitty Stevenson and T-Bone Walker were in preparation, but if so, they were never released. Sonderling subsequently exited the record business to concentrate on broadcast work. Al Benson went on to launch the Parrot and Blue Lake labels in the early 1950s.

MASTER RECORDS (INC.) [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1936 – 1940

Offices: 1776 Broadway, New York; 6425 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA (Mills Music offices)

Original-Master Source(s): Brunswick–American Record Corporation studios

Pressing: American Record Corporation and Columbia plants

Record Products: Master [1], Variety [2]

Launched in late 1936 by music publisher and talent agent Irving Mills, in affiliation with the American Record Corporation. Master Records specialized in jazz and big-band recordings, by artists who Mills managed, that were of high musical quality but somewhat limited commercial appeal. The artist roster included Cab Calloway, Raymond Scott, and Mills' Blue Rhythm Band, and pickup groups from the Duke Ellington band.

A powerful figure in the popular-music industry, Mills had worked in entertainment since his teens, beginning as a page at New York's Friars Club and progressing to song-plugging before launching a small music publishing firm with his brother Jack in the early 1920s. By 1936, when Mills turned down a \$750,000 buyout offer from Twentieth-Century Fox, his publishing company was said to own the world's largest collection of copyrighted songs. Mills also managed a lucrative artist-management business. In the late 1920s he began supplying musicians to budget-label producers for generic dance-band sessions that sometimes included members of Ben Pollack's Orchestra (which he managed), the results of which were released under a bewildering array of pseudonyms. Although Mills handled performers of all sorts, he had a particular affinity for Black jazz musicians, telling a reporter for *The New York Age* in 1930, "The Negro is the rightful exponent of jazz, and its development and exploitation has been the basis on which all white musicians have built their experiments." He played a major role in developing Duke Ellington's orchestra and bringing it to national stardom, garnering an audience for Ellington to transcend racial boundaries. By the early 1930s, he held a 50% stake in Ellington's band, as well as a 33% stake in the newly formed Cab Calloway Orchestra, and held management contracts with numerous other bands and singers.

In December 1935, Mills signed a one-year, \$50,000 contract to supply the American Record Corporation with 120 recordings by his artists, including Calloway, Ellington, and the Blue Rhythm Band. Taking the idea a step farther in the summer of 1936, Mills proposed launching an independent jazz-oriented label to Edwin (Squirrel) Ashcraft and Helen Oakley, of Chicago's Rhythm Club. Oakley returned to New York with Mills, and they began to lay the groundwork for what would become Master Records, Inc. After some initial negotiations with Decca Records, Mills instead turned to Herbert Yates' Consolidated Film Industries (owner of the American Record Corporation, with which he had been loosely associated for many years). By the end of the year, the trade papers were hinting that a Mills–ARC deal was imminent and that the records were soon to be on the market.

Mills chose Los Angeles for his initial recording sessions, coinciding with Duke Ellington's Hollywood visit. During four days in December 1936, Mills recorded the Ellington band and its members in various configurations, as well as two solos by Ellington himself. The remaining sessions were devoted to Ben Pollack's Orchestra, Dude Skiles and his Vine Street Boys, and the Five Jones Boys (the latter a vocal group patterned on the popular Mills Brothers).

By early 1937, Mills and Yates had finalized an agreement. Mills would serve as managing director of Master Records, Inc., while Helen Oakley would handle artist relations and general office management. Although Yates held a financial stake in Master Records, and would be responsible for paying its artists, Mills was to operate independently in matters of artists, repertoire, and marketing. The American Record Corporation's role would be limited to pressing the records and providing Mills his own studio space in the company's headquarters at 1776 Broadway. Mills insisted on handling his own marketing and distribution, a decision that hobbled his new venture from the start.

Terms of the agreement favored Mills over the American Record Corporation. He planned to produce two labels — Master at 75¢, and *Variety* at 35¢ — that had the potential to compete with ARC's full-price and dime-store lines. It would also deprive ARC and its Brunswick division of some popular artists. One of Mills' first actions after signing the deal was to transfer the artists he managed, including Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway, from Brunswick and the ARC labels to his own. In addition, Mills was granted rights to record artists who

were under contract to Consolidated Radio Artists (another CFI subsidiary), who until then had recorded only for the ARC labels. ARC would receive a portion of royalties on sales, and revenue from leasing studio space and pressing the records.

Mills' new ARC-equipped studio went into service on February 11, 1937. The inaugural session was by Lucky Millinder with the Blue Rhythm Band, a popular Ellington sound-alike that Mills transferred from ARC's Columbia division. In keeping with his labels' strict segregation from the ARC line, Mills' recordings were assigned their own M-prefixed master-number series. By March 31, 1937, one day before the new labels were set to make their debut, the ARC ledgers show that Mills had already recorded 345 masters.

Billboard announced the labels' launch on February 27, reporting that more than twenty artists had already been signed. Mills aggressively courted the press in advance of the initial releases. On March 12, he and Oakley (with Duke Ellington's band supplying the entertainment) hosted a gala housewarming party in the new studio for 500 reporters, entertainers, and executives. Two days later, with press coverage provided by *Life* magazine, Mills hosted a marathon all-star jam session in the studio that included Ellington, Benny Goodman, Chick Webb, Joe Bushkin, Artie Shaw, and Count Basie, most of whom were under contract to other companies and would never record for Master.

The initial Master and Variety offerings, comprising two-hundred titles, were officially released on April 1, 1937. Calloway, Ellington, and various combos spun out of the Ellington orchestra were the star attractions, but there was also an emphasis on a new sort of jazz-classical hybrid — what the press and critics termed "new music" or "salon jazz" — by the likes of the Hudson-DeLange Orchestra and Raymond Scott Quintet. Despite Mills' and Oakley's best efforts to recruit fresh talent and promote new musical styles, some undistinguished pop singers and dance orchestras managed to find their way onto the roster. Mills was one of the first record producers to comply with new union regulations requiring that recording companies log the names of all union musicians present at recording sessions. Master's band-personnel listings did not appear on the labels, but the company made them available to reviewers upon request.

Mills had signaled his intent to enter the British market even before his first American releases went on sale. Once Master was up and running, he sailed to London aboard the *Queen Mary* in June 1937 to seek out a foreign production partner. He departed on a high note; reviews had been good, and Paramount Pictures was making a promotional film in the Master studio, starring Ellington's orchestra and documenting the production and pressing of Master records. But after a month in Europe, Mills had no takers.

Frustrated in his attempt to secure European distribution, Mills returned to the United States in mid-July, only to find that sales had stalled in his absence. Master's poor performance fueled a growing rift between Mills and Yates, which by early autumn had begun to attract the attention of the trade papers. Citing "the extreme difficulty of selling the costlier platter," *Billboard* reported that Yates was adamant the Master label be dropped. Mills in turn blamed low sales of both labels on ARC's inadequate distribution facilities, and Yates' preferential treatment of his own labels. A compromise eventually was reached under which Mills would suspend new Master releases while continuing to produce the cheaper Variety label, but the peace would be short-lived.

Facing continued pressure from Yates, Mills decided to abandon both labels. On October 23, 1937, *Billboard* reported that "differences and grievances" between Mills and Yates had been resolved, with their agreement to withdraw both Master and Variety from the market on November 1. In all, Mills had issued 139 Master and approximately 171 Variety records within a span of seven months.

The value of Mills' catalog was not lost on Yates, who negotiated to have the masters transferred to ARC's Brunswick division, where they were allocated to the full-price Brunswick label, and the Variety recordings to the less expensive Vocalion. All reissued recordings were to bear the credit "Produced by Master Records" on their labels. Master Records, Inc., would survive for two more years, but only as a production subsidiary of ARC, with Mills retaining his artist contracts and continuing to produce new recordings for release on Brunswick and Vocalion. The final Master sessions were held in December 1939. By then, ownership of ARC had passed to CBS's new Columbia Records division, which took over Mills' masters. It continued to offer selected items Mills items on its Columbia and Okeh labels well into the next decade.

MASTER RECORDS [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 147 W. 46th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Commissioned from Blue Note studio (Chicago)

Record Products: Master [4]

A short-lived, limited-edition label launched by composer and band leader Raymond Scott in 1949. There was no connection to Irving Mills' earlier Master label (*see previous entry*), for which Scott's band had made its first commercial recordings in 1937. In a press release announcing Master's launch, Scott wrote, "The whole process of recording is supervised by myself, and I'm selling the sides myself. Actually, I'd like to be able to sell the sides...only to people I feel will appreciate them."

Although credited to and sold by the Universal Recording Company, the recordings were made at Blue Note's Chicago studio. The label was devoted entirely to Scott's compositions, performed by his recently re-formed quintet. The records were advertised as possessing "Originality...*but* with Tunefulness. Virtuosity...*with* Beautiful Sound. Inventiveness...*without* Undue Strangeness. Fury...*but Always* with Good Taste." The initial release was "Dedicatory Piece to the Crew and Passengers of the First Experimental Rocket Express to the Moon," which was described on the label as "An instrumental fantasy depicting the excitement of traveling at 25,000 mph in an atomic-powered rocket—and the terrifying experiences encountered on the moon."

Ten limited-edition vinylite releases, sold in individualized sleeves, or packaged as a complete set (the optional album costing an additional \$2), were announced before the venture was discontinued.

MASTERPIECE COMPANY — *See Musicraft Records*

MASTERTONE RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1950

Offices: 6513 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA (1946); 4812 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles (1946–c. 1949); 8853 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA (c. 1949–1950)

Record Products: Mastertone

Launched by Larry Ross during the late spring of 1946. Ross had ambitious plans to produce pop, novelty, race, folk, classical, and children's material, not all of which were realized. The company instituted a three-tiered pricing structure beginning at 50¢. Mastertone records were intended for the jukebox trade, and separate catalog numbers were assigned to each side, prefixed or suffixed by a series indicator (GW-1 being the first side issued in the Personality Series, 75-1 the first side in the 75¢ Originality Series, etc.).

Mastertone's initial releases, by Don Brassfield and his Swing Sextet, were first advertised in June 1946. In September the company issued two sides by disc jockey Bill Anson, whose "Hollywood Bandstand" aired over radio station KWFB. Anson plugged the record aggressively on his show, leading *Billboard* to report that Mastertone felt "they haven't anything to lose in the deal...since he is on one of the most powerful stations in town and kids will flock to retail stores for the recording after hearing it on Anson's program." The company made news again in November when it licensed the Page Cavanaugh Trio's masters from the recently inactivated Encore label and rushed pressings to market just ahead of the popular group's first RCA Victor releases.

The last known Mastertone releases appeared in the December 1950 advance lists. The Mastertone name was used several years later for an unrelated Iowa label.

MAUNAY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1953; 1961

Offices: 513 NW Nevada St., Portales, NM

Pressing: 4 Star, Research Craft, possibly other independent plants

Record Products: Maunay

A sporadic country-and-western venture launched by disc jockey Maunay George (KENM–Portales, New Mexico) during the summer of 1949. Five known releases were made between August 1949 and December 1953, all but one of which (by Oran Cummins and the Roving

Cowboys) featured Maunay's wife, Evelyn. An August 1951 article in *Country Music Roundup* mentioned the Maunay Recording Studio, but no information has been found concerning that facility. The Maunay label was briefly revived in 1961, in 45-rpm format.

MAYESH PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY — See Electro-Vox Recording Studios

MAYFAIR RECORD & RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1952

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York

Pressing: Mayfair Plastic Industries (New York)

Record Products: Bang; Mayfair, Mayfair Rec-O-Card, Once Upon a Time (all children's); pressings for independent labels

Launched in July 1946 by Hugo Peretti and Herbert Plattner. Although primarily a manufacturer of vinylite children's records, Mayfair also produced Bang, an adult "party" label. The company's trademark application claimed use of the Bang trademark since November 25, 1947. The label was discontinued in 1949.

Plattner's affiliated Mayfair Plastic Industries offered custom pressing services to independent labels beginning in 1948. In June 1949, Mayfair Plastic was acquired by the Abbey Record Corporation, which agreed to press for Plattner at a discount in lieu of a cash purchase. In July 1950, Peretti and Plattner turned over the manufacturing and production of Mayfair children's records to Caravan Records but retained control of the script-writing and recording portions of the business. They continued to operate as Mayfair Record & Recording into early 1952. Both were also affiliated with Synthetic Plastics, the producers of Peter Pan and other children's records, in the early 1950s. Peretti went on to work as an artists-and-repertoire manager for Mercury Records, and later, for RCA Victor.

MAYHAMS AND CO-ED RECORDS — See Sorority Fraternity Records and Publications

MECCA RECORDS — See Batt Masian Company

MELBEN RECORDS

A short-lived speculative ploy devised by Bob Jacobs, owner of a Coney Island arcade and jukebox business. Jacobs planned to record unpublished songs and give away the records to other jukebox operators, hoping to generate enough play that he could pitch the songs to music publishers. Melben's first (and possibly only) release prompted the comment "isn't much," along with a complaint about surface noise, from a *Billboard* critic in August 1948.

MELFORD RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1950

Offices: 760 10th Ave., New York (1947–early 1950); 520 W. 50th St., New York (1950)

Record Products: Melford

A pop label launched in the spring of 1947. Aside from Morris J. Zucker (vice-president), Melford's owners and staff members have not been identified. The company received a passing mention in May 1947 by *Cash Box*, which erroneously gave its name as Meltone. Melford first appeared in *Billboard*'s label directory in January 1948.

Melford records were released sporadically over a four-year span. Its first two releases, by pop singer and songwriter Phil Rose, were reviewed in July 1947 by *Billboard*, which found the backing band more impressive than the singer and noted, "nothing here for the nickel needling" (i.e., no jukebox potential). After a long hiatus, Melford resurfaced in 1949 as a rhythm-and-blues label, with a roster that included Roosevelt Wardell, the Paupers, and the Ray Chambers Trio (whose "Mississippi Blues" was rated "good filler material" by *Cash Box*). A gospel series was added in the spring of 1950, beginning with the Angel Voices' "I've Got an Interest Over There," which was advertised as a "sock spiritual." Melford had a minor jukebox hit at about the same time with Johnny Sparrow's "Sparrow's Flight," but the company appears to have suspended record production by the end of the year. The Melford name was used for one or more apparently unrelated labels during the early-to-mid 1950s.

MELLO-STRAIN RECORDS, LTD. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1950

Offices: 1658 Broadway (Room 426; later, Room 304), New York

Record Products: Mello-Strain, Atlantis

Launched in early 1946 by trumpeter-vocalist Al Bandini, who performed on many Mello-Strain releases, usually in an accompanying role. Others on the roster included Dean Hudson and the WINS Mello-Strain Recording Orchestra. The first releases appeared in *Billboard's* March 1946 advance lists. Aside from occasional mentions in advertisements for Bandini's personal appearances, the label received no marketing support. Only nineteen releases Mello-Strain had appeared by the time the label was last listed in July 1950, at which point it was replaced by the short-lived Atlantis label. The company's brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 manufacturers' directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

MELLOW MUSIC SHOP / MELLOW RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1941 – 1943, 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 13217 E. Jefferson, Detroit (from 1939); 965 Dickerson Ave., Detroit (from early 1940s)

Original-Master Source(s): Universal Recording (Detroit)

Record Products: Hot Wax, Mellow

Owned and operated by Edward Kiely, who opened the first of his two record stores in 1939. A second store was added in the early 1940s. His Hot Wax and Mellow records were distributed by the Buhl Sons Company (Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Toledo), primarily for jukebox use.

Kiely launched the Hot Wax label in 1941 to specialize in country-and-western material by local performers. Its initial release was a reissue of the York Brothers' "Hamtramck Mama," which had been a regional hit for the Detroit-based Universal label thanks in part to the highly publicized outrage it had sparked among some Hamtramck officials and residents. The title remained so popular that Kiely followed it up with "Hollywood Mama," a reworking of the original by the Silver Sage Buckaroos.

In September 1942, *Billboard* reported that Kiely had launched the Mellow Record Company as a sole proprietorship, having already "published some of his own records" (apparently referring to the Hot Wax releases). The Mellow Record Company's address was that of Kiely's Dickerson Avenue store, and the Mellow label soon supplanted Hot Wax. The York Brothers, after a short stint with Decca, returned to Kiely and became a mainstay of the Mellow catalog, which like its predecessor specialized in country-and-western fare. Others on Kiely's roster, mostly recruited from local radio stations, included Billy Casteel, Forest Rye & his Red River Blue Yodelers, and Eveline Haire & her Swingtime Cowgirls (whose records were described as "Western blues").

Production was suspended in 1943, probably as a result of the first American Federation of Musicians recording ban. There was an attempt to revive the Mellow label in early 1946, and in August *Billboard* reported "quantity pressing soon." However, little more was heard of Mellow, which last appeared in *Billboard's* label directory for February 1947. The Mellow Music Shop continued to operate into the early 1950s, then was sold by Kiely's wife in the spring of 1954.

MELLOW RECORD COMPANY — See Mellow Music Shop

MEL-MAR RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949

Offices: 43-28 41st St., Long Island City, NY

Record Products: Mel-Mar

Owned by Martin Keoshaian, whose U.S. trademark application of July 27, 1949, claimed use of the Mel-Mar name on records since December 24, 1948. The few known releases feature Armenian folk tunes. There is no apparent connection to the unhyphenated, Philadelphia-based Melmar (unhyphenated) label of the early 1950s.

MELMORE, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 2059 19th St., Detroit

Pressing: Own plant at above address

Record Products: Maratone

Founded in the mid-1940s as an independent pressing plant. Principals at the time included William J. Basharrah (who also owned the Detroit-based Arden Recording Company, *q.v.*) and band leader Glenn Moore. Its short-lived Maratone label was launched in July 1947, the same month in which Arden moved his office to the Melmore pressing plant.

The Melmore plant was sold to Glenn Moore and Loy L. Salinger in March 1948. The operation was reorganized as the American Record Pressing Company, which confined its activities to pressing for other companies. *Billboard* reported in February 1949 that the Maratone label was "inactive at present," and confirmed in December that it had "definitely folded." James and Joseph Siracuse, of United Sound Studio, purchased the Melmore plant in early 1950.

MELODISC RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1947

Offices: 6625 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles (1945–1947); 7119 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA (pressing plant office)

Pressing: Own plant—Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Melodisc [2]

Launched in the spring of 1945 by Daniel O'Brien (president) and Bob Goodman (sales manager), Melodisc specialized in jazz and rhythm-and-blues records. The first releases were advertised in early June 1945 and were distributed by J. F. Bard, Paul Reiner's Music Distributing Company, and other companies specializing in small independent labels. Melodisc also operated its own pressing plant, which accepted contract work.

Melodisc's roster included the Slim Gaillard Quartet. Two of Gaillard's August 1946 releases (from Bee-Bee-Bee masters that had been sold to Melodisc without the authorization of Bee-Bee-Bee's owner) were dismissed by *Billboard* as offering "little that hasn't been heard before." The pressing plant was destroyed by fire in November of that year. O'Brien and Goodman were able to resume production in early 1947, but the plant had been only partially insured, and the company does not appear to have survived the year. The Melodisc name was used in the later 1940s for an unrelated British jazz label.

MELODY LANE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 323-B E. 55th St., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Chicago Recording Laboratories

Record Products: Melody Lane Record Shop

A short-lived race-record venture launched in early 1946 by band leader Freddie Williams. Sales were handled by the Melody Lane Record Shop in Chicago, which had no known connection to similarly named businesses in other cities.

Williams' Melody Lane Record Shop label was produced by the Chicago Recording Laboratories, the successor to Marsh Laboratories. The first releases, featuring Memphis Slim, Jo Jo Adams, and Williams' orchestra, were recorded during January and February 1946 and were on the market by March. A month later, the company was taken over by jukebox distributor Nathan Rothner, who reorganized it as the Hy-Tone Recording Company, *q.v.* The Melody Lane recordings were reissued on Hy-Tone under their original catalog numbers.

MELODY MODERNE, INC. / MEMO RECORDS CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: Record production: 1945 – c. 1949

Offices: 1345 Francisco St., Berkeley, CA (1944–mid-1945); 6233 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA (from late 1945)

Original-Master Source(s): Probably Eccles Disc Recording Corp. (from late 1945)

Record Products: Memo, La Marr's Star Records

A California music publisher headed by L. M. (Lee) Ryer, Melody Moderne was launched in 1942 to publish and promote works by unknown but promising songwriters. According to a *Billboard* report, the company made its first recordings in the same year but was unable to release them due to the American Federation of Musicians' recording ban and wartime shellac rationing.

Melody Moderne finally entered the record market in October 1945 with its Memo label, for which G. W. Russell handled sales. The first four releases were by Dusty Brooks and his Four Tones. Initially marketed to jukebox operators, Memo was produced in race and pop (65¢) and country-and-western (55¢) series. Once Memo records were made available for retail sale, the price was raised to 75¢. The records had only local distribution at first.

In late 1945, Ryer took over the masters of A-1 Records of America and the La Marr Record Company, and apparently moved in to La Marr's premises at 6233 Hollywood Boulevard, which was also the address of the Eccles Disc Recording Corporation. He transferred La Marr's artists to Memo and continued to produce the La Marr's Star label for a short time, then discontinued it in January 1946 to concentrate exclusively on Memo. By then, Noel Marchant was serving as recording supervisor, and Ryer was soliciting national distributors for the label.

In early 1946, Ryer began distributing Memo records through K & M Distributors (Los Angeles). The relationship did not begin well, with K & M forced to accept returns of a large number of defective Memo pressings. However, the situation was soon rectified, and Ryer was able to place Memo records with seventeen additional distributors within a year. Memo by then had signed singer Bonnie Baker and was concentrating on developing its country-and-western catalog. Singing-cowboy movie star Curt Barrett was hired as Memo's western-music manager in April 1946, after Melody Moderne took over publication of his songs. Barrett's signings included the Esquire Trio, which a *Cash Box* reviewer described as "sophisticated hillbilly [with] a little bit of that Tennessee twang."

In late April 1947, Memo retail prices were reduced to 50¢ after Ryer severed relations with all of his distributors in favor of direct-to-dealer sales. Pressings on "Memolite," an unknown proprietary substance touted as "shock resisting" (but not unbreakable, as Memo's advertisements admitted) were introduced in March 1948. Production of Memo records appears to have ended by early 1949. Some pressings were later sold with a Hammitt label pasted over the Memo originals. The Memo name was later used for an unrelated label.

MELODY RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: Philadelphia

Record Products: Melody [2]

Launched in early 1947 by Philadelphia attorney Abraham Levin. *Billboard* reported on April 5 that Levin had applied for a corporate charter and planned to produce transcriptions as well as commercial recordings. Levin did not advertise nationally, and distribution of his Melody label appears to have been mostly local.

Melody's main stars were George (Bon Bon) Tunnell and the Four Keys (credited as simply The Keys on Melody labels), who were signed from producer Joe Davis following the closure of his record company in late 1948. (A December 1948 *Billboard* report that Tunnell had instead signed with Philadelphia-based Public Records was quickly retracted.) No mention of the company has been found in the trade papers after 1948.

MELODY TRAIL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1952

Offices: 1031 Beach Ave., Lancaster, CA

Record Products: Melody Trail

Owned and operated by songwriter Ray Parker, Melody Trail specialized in country-and-western material, largely by artists recruited from West Coast radio stations. The company's formation was announced by *Billboard* in June 1948, the same month in which its first release was listed. Parker was also involved with several music-publishing operations, including Valley Hill Music Company, which he founded in January 1950; and Melody Trail Music, which he and Rich-R'-Tone's Jim Stanton launched in September 1951. The Melody Trail label appears to have been discontinued in early 1952.

MELOTONE RECORDING STUDIO

Owned and operated by Mera and Lola Weinstock, Melotone Recording (New York) attracted considerable attention in the 1940s for its unintentionally comical private recordings by socialite Florence Foster Jenkins. The studio is not known to have supplied any commercial labels, and thus is beyond the scope of this work. There was no connection to the earlier Melotone label, a Brunswick product.

MELROSE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1948

Offices: 601 E. 19th St. South, Brooklyn, NY

Original-Master Source(s): WOR Studios (New York)

Record Products: Melrose

Founded in by 1945 by Melvin Rose, Melrose initially specialized in 12" jazz releases. The company's earliest offerings, by Buck Clayton's Quintet, were advertised in the *Record Changer* for August 1945. A second group of releases, by Bobby Hackett and Hot Lips Page, were announced on February 2, 1946, in a large *Billboard* advertisement. *Billboard* gave the records favorable reviews the following month, but Rose did little more advertising after their release.

By then, Rose had negotiated an arrangement with distributor and music publisher Irving R. Gwartz under which Gwartz would guarantee sales of a specified number of Melrose records, and in return would be given significant control over artists and repertoire (the latter to be supplied largely by one of Gwartz's three publishing companies). The relationship seems to have marked a turning point in Melrose's output, which began to include more pop-oriented material following Rose's signing of The Three Bars in April 1946.

Melrose Records was still listed in *Billboard*'s January 1948 company directory, although it appears to have been inactive by then. In the late 1940s, Rose disposed of his masters piecemeal to several companies, including Blue Note, Capitol, and Dial.

MELTZER, SAMUEL (SAM) (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1950s

Offices: 737 Fox St., Bronx, New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (unconfirmed); Chicago Recording Studios, probably other independent studios

Record Products (78): Blue Ace, Century [2], Hot Jazz Club of America

Known primarily as a producer of bootleg traditional-jazz reissues, Sam Meltzer (the manager of Portem Distributing) owes his inclusion here to some original recordings that were issued on his Century label.

Meltzer's Century Record Company first advertised in *The Record Changer* for August 1946. Retailing for \$1.05 each and initially sold only by mail-order, early Century releases were dubbed reissues of long-abandoned material from the Gennett and Paramount catalogs. As his operation expanded, however, Meltzer began to produce bootleg reissues of vintage Brunswick-Vocalion, Columbia, and Victor recordings, claiming that he had been rebuffed in his efforts to license the material legally. In November 1949, he was sued by Harrison G. Smith, who charged that Meltzer had appropriated three of his 1929 compositions.

In January 1947 Meltzer added the Hot Jazz Club of America label, which showed no manufacturer credit and was also devoted to bootleg reissues. Pressed in limited editions and initially sold only to "club members," it was a more expensive label than Century, at \$1.50 plus shipping, although it featured the same sort of material. Blue Ace, also showing no manufacturer credit, and the most clandestine of Meltzer's bootleg labels, made an inconspicuous debut in the late 1940s. By that time, Meltzer had closed his mail-order business and was selling all of his lines through specialty shops.

Meltzer did release some original recordings on Century beginning in June 1948, including selections by groups under the nominal direction of Mutt Carey and Punch Miller, and a series of live recordings made a year earlier at New York's Bohemia Club by Lennie Tristano and Chubby Jackson and his Knights. There was also a group of recordings from vintage piano rolls by Jelly Roll Morton, Fats Waller, and James P. Johnson, among others, as well as a few legitimate reissues of some early 1940s Signature recordings that Meltzer licensed from Bob Thiele. In the early 1950s it was rumored that Meltzer had begun paying licensing fees on a regular basis, probably explaining the marked decline in the number of his releases.

MEMO RECORDS CORPORATION — See Melody Moderne

MEMPHIS RECORDING SERVICE / PHILLIPS RECORDING SERVICE (Discs)

Record Production: Founded 1950

Offices: 706 Union Ave., Memphis

Original-Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products (78): (It's The) Phillips; commercial recording services for independent labels; custom recordings

Forerunner of the legendary Sun Records, the Memphis Recording Service was opened by Sam Phillips on January 3, 1950, in a remodeled building previously occupied by an auto-parts company. Phillips, an engineer with Memphis radio station WREC, had begun recording local performers in the station's studio in the late 1940s.

Marion Keisker, who worked with Phillips at WREC, served as his assistant at Memphis Recording Service, initially splitting her time between the radio and recording studios, and bringing in some of Phillips' early commercial accounts. Phillips catered to anyone who could pay his modest fees (\$2 for a single-sided acetate, \$3 for double-sided), as was reflected in his slogan, "We Record Anything, Anywhere, Anytime."

Sam Phillips' first label, undertaken in partnership with WHBQ radio announcer Dewey Phillips (to whom he was not related) was named "(It's The) Phillips." Credited to the Phillips Recording Service, the label vanished after a single known release in August 1950. However, the quality of Phillips' work and his studio's strategic location quickly caught the attention of several small independent record companies.

During his first two years of operation, Phillips supplied demos and finished masters to the 4 Star, Bullet, Chess, Gilt-Edge, Modern, RPM, and Trumpet labels, among others, including the first issued recordings by B. B. King. Inexperienced and overly trusting, Phillips failed to secure a contract with King, who the Bihari brothers quickly signed for their newly launched RPM label. Phillips was paid a modest flat fee for the King masters, but not the royalties he had been expecting.

Phillips' second label, Sun Records, has become the stuff of legend for its seminal rockabilly and rock-and-roll recordings. Launched in March 1953, after an abortive attempt fourteen months earlier, it is beyond the scope of this work.

MERCER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1952

Offices: 1775 Broadway, New York

Record Products (78): Mercer

Launched during the summer of 1950 by Duke Ellington's son, Mercer. Jazz critic and producer Leonard Feather was hired as the label's general manager and recording director in late September 1950. National distribution was handled by Prestige Records' Bob Weinstock.

Mercer was intended primarily as a jazz label, but its most heavily advertised release was

Al Hibbler's cover of "White Christmas" which the company claimed would "sell in any location — white or colored." Duke Ellington clearly had some influence over the operation. In October 1950, he arranged an exclusive Mercer contract for Jimmy McPhail, a singing physical education instructor who had recently caught Ellington's attention at an amateur-talent contest. In the early 1950s, Mercer acquired a group of masters from the defunct Sunrise Record Corporation. Leonard Feather resigned from Mercer Records in February 1952, and production appears to have been discontinued a short time later.

MERCURY RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1962

Offices: 839 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios; Universal Recorders, many other independent studios

Record Products (78): Mercury; Jazz at the Philharmonic, Popular [2], Silvertone Record Club; Blue Ribbon (children's)

The Mercury Record Corporation was launched in Chicago in 1945 by Irving Green (a plastics expert and jazz enthusiast) and Berle Adams (a Chicago booking agent), in partnership with Ray Greenberg and Arthur Talmadge. There was no connection to Jack Brinkley's Mercury Recording Studio, a Chicago custom recording and transcription service that was renamed the Brinkley Recording Company following Mercury Records' launch.

Early recordings were made for Mercury at the Majestic Records studio, by recording engineer Robert (Bob) Fine. Mercury operated its own pressing plants, in Chicago and St. Louis, employing high-speed, highly automated equipment designed by Green that could be operated by relatively unskilled workers. Together, Mercury's plants were said to be capable of producing 700,000 discs per week, giving Mercury a faster turnaround time than even the large companies could offer. To absorb the excess production, in August 1946 Mercury began selling records through Western Tire & Auto's 7,000-store chain, packaged in two-disc folders that gave only the artists' names so that individual store owners could customize the albums with discs of their choice. For a time in 1946, single discs were packaged in special individualized envelopes with artists' photographs and facsimile autographs on the front and biographies on the back.

Adams' enthusiasm for jazz and blues was reflected in the early Mercury catalog, which featured Albert Ammons, Buddy Rich, Jay McShann, Sippie Wallace, and Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, among others. However, the focus quickly shifted to the mainstream popular market with the hiring of promoters Tiny Hill and Jimmy Hilliard, who signed Vic Damone, Patti Page, Frankie Laine, and other popular singers. Laine's "That's My Desire" was Mercury's first major hit, spending all of 1947 on the pop charts and reportedly selling more than a million copies. *Variety* reported in June 1946 that Mercury's original investors were refusing to part with any of their holdings to allow its artists to buy into the company.

Mercury was one of the earliest companies to overdub on tape, a process it first employed in 1947 on Patti Page's self-duet of "Confess." The company also occasionally overdubbed or otherwise altered recordings it leased or purchased from other independent labels. In 1948, it had the instrumental backing to "Nature Boy" recorded in England, then had John Maurenz overdub the vocal in the U.S., thus skirting the American Federation of Musicians' recording ban.

Mercury initially relied heavily on jukebox and radio play for exposure, but soon proved to be adept at more imaginative marketing techniques. In 1946 the company hired the diminutive Eddie Gaedel, who was described as "just a little fellow three feet seven inches tall, but what a personality!" Outfitted with a winged hat, Gaedel was dispatched to impersonate the trademark "Mercury Man" at retail outlets and promotional events. His first task, in June of that year, was to give away 150 records nightly at Chicago's College Inn during a stay by the Buddy Rich orchestra.

A year later, Mercury commissioned Vogue Records to produce special picture records that were given to disc jockeys as advance copies. In 1950 the company curried favor with jukebox operators by giving away generous quantities of free records with purchases, and in at least one case (the Harmonicats' "Hey, Keesideetch") offered a money-back guarantee if an operator didn't agree it was "a most outstanding moneymaking record." The company also experimented with television promotion. It made headlines in June 1949, when John

Hammond made a surprise appearance on Art Ford's live show, where he presented a Mercury recording contract to an unsuspecting Richard Hayes.

Mercury aggressively pursued mergers and acquisitions in the later 1940s. The first came about through Green's acquaintance with Keynote's John Hammond, who sold Keynote's California pressing plant to Mercury in April 1947. In January 1948, Hammond sold Keynote's classical catalog to Mercury and then accepted a position as Mercury's vice-president in charge of classical recordings. The move sparked rumors of an impending takeover of Keynote Records, which proved to be correct. In late February, Keynote stockholders tentatively approved the sale of all assets to Mercury, including all masters other than those personally owned or controlled by Keynote founder Eric Bernay. Some early Mercury Classics pressings from Keynote masters were packaged in surplus Keynote albums.

Hammond continued to pursue material from outside sources, licensing masters from Exclusive and the French Blue Star label later in 1948. On October 15 of that year, Mercury was the winning bidder for the assets of the bankrupt Majestic Records, finally besting Capitol and King during a grueling three-hour auction. For \$142,000, Mercury acquired approximately 1,900 masters from Majestic, as well as its studios and pressing plants, and options on its artists (which, as was reported in the case of Eddie Howard, were not exercised unless Mercury saw evidence of satisfactory sales). After selecting the most promising Majestic masters for its own use, Mercury offered the leftovers for sale or lease to other companies, beginning in April 1949 with a group of 500 masters. At the end of 1949, Mercury arranged to have its discs pressed for Canadian distribution by Al Siegel's plant in New Market, Ontario, which was recast as the Mercury Recording Company of Canada.

Contrary to others in the industry, Hammond predicted that 1949 would be just a "fair year," but Mercury did quite well. In January 1949, *Billboard* reported that the company had signed Big Bill Broonzy and Johnny Hartman in a push to expand its race-record department. Producer Norman Granz joined the Mercury staff a short time later, turning over manufacturing and distribution of his Jazz at the Philharmonic label to the company. During his brief tenure, Granz played a major role in building Mercury's jazz division. He resigned in July 1950 but agreed to let Mercury continue manufacturing and distributing his JATP recordings until August 1, 1953.

Hammond launched a new classical division in late 1948, overseen by music critic David Hall, with Bob Fine serving as chief recording engineer. The new classical catalog was to be drawn from a mixture of original domestic and imported recordings, the latter licensed from Tono (Denmark), Blue Star (France), and Bayerischer Rundfunk (Germany), among other sources. However, much of the credit for developing Mercury's classical division belongs to Wilma Cozart, a former orchestra administrator who joined the Mercury staff in 1950. Rather than continue to rely heavily upon imported classical recordings, Cozart was determined to build a strong roster of American orchestras and conductors. With the support of Irving Green (who she eventually married, in 1957), Cozart signed the Chicago, Minneapolis, and Detroit symphony orchestras. In 1952, Eastman School of Music director Howard Hanson signed an exclusive Mercury contract to record the works of American composers.

Green announced the impending arrival of classical LPs in January 1949, and production began on April 1. Mercury's early domestically recorded classical LPs were engineered by Bob Fine using the Reeves-Fairchild process, which was said to offer finer grooving and wider frequency response than the standard LP process. The recordings, which were of exceptionally high technical quality, came to be branded "Living Presence," borrowing a phrase that *New York Times* critic Howard Taubman had used to describe the company's first classical LP release.

Mercury's light-classical offerings were augmented in March 1950, when the company licensed the complete Silvertone Record Club catalog from Sears, Roebuck & Company. The agreement permitted use of the material on Mercury LPs and 45s (but not 78s), for a four-year period beginning May 1, 1950. David Hall handled reprocessing of the classical recordings for LP reissue, while Joe Carlton oversaw transfer of the more pop-oriented material to 45s.

In 1955, Bob Fine introduced a three-channel stereo technique, and he later pioneered the use of 35-mm magnetic film masters, which offered better resolution and a wider frequency range, with lower noise and more resistance to print-through, than conventional magnetic recording tape. For location recordings, Mercury outfitted a mobile studio with equipment identical to that used in the final mastering, ensuring sonic consistency from the initial recording through the finished product.

In 1962, Mercury Records was sold to the Consolidated Electronics Industries Corporation (Conelco), an affiliate of Philips that was reorganized in 1969 as the North American Philips Corporation. The label's later history is beyond the scope of this work.

MERIT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 1184 Elizabeth Ave., Newark, NJ

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Merit

A short-lived venture announced by Fred Mendelsohn in late June 1949, after he resigned from Regent Records. The company signed a recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians a month later, enabling it to record with union musicians. Mendelsohn stated that he had already made his first Merit recordings, which were ready for immediate release. The label, according to Mendelsohn, would place "heavy emphasis" on race releases, along with some pop and novelty material. Its first release, by the Bailey Brothers (a duo consisting of a Hammond organ soloist and bones player), was in the latter category. A *Cash Box* reviewer recommended it for jukebox "filler material."

Merit's end came two months later, after Mendelsohn launched the Regal Record Corporation (*q.v.*) in partnership with brothers David and Julius (Jules) Braun, who had recently lost control of their De Luxe label to King Records. The Merit masters (reportedly comprising approximately forty titles, most of which had not yet been issued) were taken over by Regal. The Merit name was used for at least two unrelated labels in the 1950s.

MERO RECORDS — See Metro Records [II] / Mero Records, Inc.

MERTONE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 1005 N. 6th Ave., Pensacola, FL

Record Products: Mertone

A short-lived venture of singer Wally Mercer, who was featured on the few known Mertone releases. The company was first listed by *Billboard* in May 1947, and its first confirmed release appeared in the November advance lists. In June 1949, Mercer placed an advertisement in *Billboard* thanking disc jockey Ed Lake (WEAR–Pensacola) for plugging "If You Don't Mean Business Baby." Mertone was last listed by *Billboard* in its June 1950 directory. Its brief reappearance in the March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. By then, Mercer had signed with Dot Records and does not seem to have had any further involvement with record production.

METRO RECORDS [I] — See Rapoport, Maurice A.

METRO RECORDS (INC.) [III] / MERO RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1950

Offices: 1650 and 1697 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Metro [3], Mero

Unrelated to the Hollywood-based Metro Records (*see* Rapoport, Maurice A.), this company produced a line of inexpensive pop records sold by Woolworth's, Kresge's, and other chain stores. In late May 1948, it was reported that the label name was to be changed to Mero (sometimes styled "Me-Ro") in response to pressure from Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The official date for the change was given as July 1, but the company was already advertising under its new name by mid-June, with Apollo handling distribution. The original logo and label design were retained, the only change being deletion of the "t" in "Metro." By

late 1949, the company had been incorporated and had revived the Metro label for a new pop series.

Metro Record's output, which some writers have confused with Maurice Rapoport's label of the same name, is easily distinguished from Rapoport's by its M-prefixed catalog numbers and entirely different label designs. The records featured what one *Billboard* reviewer characterized as "inconsequential" pop fare. Several releases were dismissed by *Cash Box* as "filler" items. The company's last known release appeared in February 1949. The Metro name was again used briefly in early 1950, but its connection with this company, if any, has not been determined.

METROPOLITAN PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1889 – 1890

Offices: 257 5th Ave., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Charles Marshall studio

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in the counties of New York, Westchester, Richmond, Queens, Suffolk, and Kings, in New York State. Three-thousand shares of capital stock, with par value of \$100, were offered for sale on September 27, 1888. The company was incorporated on October 4, 1888, with nominal capital stock of \$1 million, and was licensed by North American Phonograph on October 12

President Charles A. Cheever was also an officer of the Automatic Phonograph Exhibition Company and, with the Cahoon Syndicate, was involved in the formation of several other North American Phonograph sub-companies. Other executives at various times included J. P. Williams (secretary, later replaced by Felix Gottschalk), E. E. Lewis, and Frank E. Clarkson. Among Metropolitan Phonograph's earliest exhibitors was Victor Emerson, who in April 1889 was granted the territory comprising Westchester County and a portion of New York City north of the Harlem River.

In late May 1890, Cheever reported that during the company's first eight months of operation, it had done little other than exhibit and place Columbia graphophones, most of which proved unreliable and had to be recalled. Cheever reported better results with the Edison phonograph, although he noted that acceptance was slow due to its complicated operation. At the same time, he disclosed that a consolidation with the New York Phonograph Company was being considered. On June 25, 1890, stockholders of the New York Phonograph Company met to consider the consolidation to which Cheever had alluded. The merger was finalized on August 15, 1890, under the New York Phonograph Company name. Although inactive after that point, the Metropolitan Phonograph Company was not formally dissolved until 1902.

A March 1891 *Phonogram* article (published after Metropolitan Phonograph's closure) reported that the company had marketed original recordings for eighteen months, which were supplied by independent recording engineer Charles Marshall. The *New York Sun* reported on a particularly strenuous 1889 field-recording session, when Marshall, brothers M. C. and M. J. Sullivan (both of whom worked for Edison companies), and ten Metropolitan Phonograph employees succeeded "after a great deal of labor" in positioning two phonographs in the belfry of New York's Grace Church to record the chimes on New Year's Eve. The resulting cylinder, a copy of which was sent to Thomas Edison, was popular with the company's exhibitors, and *The Phonogram* rated it "one of the company's best-known records."

METROPOLITAN RECORD COMPANY [I] (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1920s

Offices: New York

Record Products: Metro [1], Shannon

A short-lived label of unknown ownership, specializing in traditional Irish music. In addition to what appear to have been original recordings, releases are known that use material from the Grey Gull, Lyric [3], and Paramount catalogs. Metro's roster included

Michael Coleman, Adele Gordon, and other Irish-American artists, some of whom went on to record for the major labels.

A single specimen of the Shannon label, duplicating a Metro issue, has been confirmed. A later Metro label, produced by the New York Recording Laboratories for Irish piper Tom Ennis, appears to have been a private issue.

METROPOLITAN RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 - Early 1950s

Offices: 1466 Whipple Walk, Camden, NJ

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—Philadelphia (reported but not confirmed)

Record Products: Metropolitan [3]

Launched in June 1947 by songwriter and music publisher George (Bing) Shopa and country-music performer Russ Hendricks. Shopa was a graduate of the Temple University School of Music (Philadelphia) and had conducted a local dance orchestra before moving into the country-and-western field. With his wife, Frances, he owned Shopa Music Publications, whose songs were featured on several Metropolitan releases. Metropolitan usually was identified as a Philadelphia label in the trade papers, although its mailing address was that of Shopa's office in Camden, New Jersey.

Metropolitan's initial release ("Texas Lil"/"Mississippi Moonlight," by the Sons of the Range) was reviewed by *Billboard* in July 1947, which rated the first title "rousing and rhythmic" and recommended the record for jukebox use. The group was fronted by Hendricks, who was disguised as "Cowboy Russ," although the *Billboard* reviewer identified him by name. Other artists were recruited primarily from radio stations in Philadelphia and southern New Jersey. The Metropolitan label appears to have been inactive from late 1948 through October 1949, when it was briefly revived for a special Christmas release. Its reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 manufacturers' directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

METROTONE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 - 1950

Offices: 635 Fulton St., Brooklyn, NY (at founding); 712 Crown St., Brooklyn, NY

Record Products: Metrotone

Launched in January 1947 by Carl Le Bow, with Jack Kampe serving as publicist. Metrotone records were marketed largely to jukebox operators and disc jockeys. Distributors included the Hit Record Distributing Company (Cincinnati).

Early releases, the first of which were announced in May 1947, were dismissed by a *Billboard* reviewer as "fairish" and "not distinctive." After that unremarkable start, Metrotone had a minor hit during the summer of 1948 with Jack Emerson's "Hair of Gold," which *Billboard* at first reported erroneously on the non-existent Hit Record Company label. It made *Billboard's* list of most-played disc-jockey records, correctly credited to Metrotone, in late August. By then, the company was claiming sales of 200,000 copies. Emerson had a follow-up hit with "Cornbelt Symphony," but in late 1948 he negotiated a release from his contract and joined Murray Singer in launching Pix Records. *Billboard* reported on December 4 that Emerson had served a summons and complaint against Metrotone for an accounting and royalties earned, then retracted the story a week later.

Jack Kampe resigned from Metrotone at the end of 1948, and singer Johnny Eager secured a release from his Metrotone contract in May 1949. By that time, Le Bow had opened Fran Lee Music, a separate publishing house and artist-management agency. He continued to operate the latter as a side-line into the 1950s.

In December 1949, the Harry Fox Agency, representing seven music publishers, brought suit against Metrotone for at least \$13,000 in unpaid royalties. Metrotone allegedly failed to supply full sales statements to Fox and appears to have suspended operation a short time later. It was last listed in *Billboard's* May 1950 manufacturer directory. In September of that year, Le Bow was hired by Apollo Records (initially as a sales manager, later promoted to artists-and-repertoire manager), then moved on to De Luxe (1953), King (1954), and Bethlehem (1957). During the spring of 1958 he launched Allison Enterprises, which produced the low-priced Aamco and Allison LP lines, then moved to the newly formed Gerald Records in 1962.

M-G-M RECORDS, INC. / LOEW'S, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: From 1946

Offices: 701 7th Ave., New York (1946–late 1950s); 1540 Broadway, New York (from late 1950s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—Loew's International Building, Hollywood, CA; many independent studios

Pressing: Own plants—West Orange and Bloomfield, NJ; Quality Records, Ltd. (Canada, from late 1940s); Superior Recording (Los Angeles), other independent plants

Record Products (78): M-G-M

Launched in 1946 as a division of Loew's, Inc., the owners of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer films. An earlier Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer label, produced in the late 1920s for sale in Loew's Theater lobbies, was purely a Columbia product, using that company's budget-label (Harmony/Velvet Tone) masters.

Loew's first investigated the feasibility of launching an M-G-M record division in the early 1940s. In February 1942, *Variety* reported that M-G-M vice-president Louis B. Mayer had been assessing the state of the recording industry on the recommendation of band leader Tommy Dorsey (who was rumored to be seeking a financial stake in the operation), and that Loew's president Nicholas B. Schenck was contemplating investing \$500,000 in a Hollywood recording operation. On January 28, Harry Link (general manager of music Leo Feist, the publisher of many songs used in M-G-M films) delivered an invitation to producer Eli Oberstein, asking him to join the staff. However, the venture failed to launch, and little more was heard of the idea until 1945, when M-G-M treasurer David Bernstein made an unsuccessful attempt to purchase the WOR Feature label.

On June 4, 1945, it was reported that M-G-M had begun creation of a record division, *Billboard* followed-up five days later, announcing that M-G-M had "thrown its money-laden hat into the recording ring." At that time, it was confirmed that Frank Walker would resign from RCA Victor on July 1 and move to M-G-M, in an unspecified capacity, on or around August 1. Another Victor veteran, Joseph Pasternack, would come along with Walker, as a producer. Harry Link was dispatched to Hollywood to identify songs in yet-to-be released movies that had the potential to be hit records. *Billboard* reported, incorrectly, that M-G-M probably would name its new label Lion.

As early as mid-1945, there were trade-paper reports that M-G-M was refusing to allow its film stars sign contracts with outside record companies. The question soon arose of whether its new division would operate as a full-fledged record company, or would merely produce records exploiting M-G-M films. *Billboard* concluded "probably both" (correctly, as it would turn out), while raising warnings of potential contractual conflicts, which did indeed become an issue. In September 1946, the studio announced that its new label would feature many of its film stars, including some who were currently under contract to other labels. In response, *Billboard* reported, some artists were being pressured by their current labels into prematurely signing contract renewals with their current labels, under threat of having their future releases curtailed or even cancelled.

Frank Walker announced the signing of Columbia's Kate Smith as M-G-M's first artist on June 29, 1946, while denying rumors that he was attempting to lure Frank Sinatra from Columbia as well. In August, *Billboard* reported that Walker had recently visited Hollywood to sign other artists, whose name he refused to disclose. Walker did state, however, that the company's initial sessions would be devoted to old standards, with no plans for recording current pop tunes "for some time beyond September."

A pressing plant was purchased in Bloomfield, New Jersey, in June 1946, and recording sessions began in September. The record division's executive lineup had been finalized by then, comprising Walker (general manager, answering to a committee of Loew's vice-presidents), Jesse Kaye (Hollywood artists-and-repertoire manager), Harry Meyerson (New York artists-and-repertoire manager), Macklin Marrow (classical artists-and-repertoire manager), and Wally Early (sales manager).

Cash Box magazine interviewed Walker in August 1946, at which time it reported, incorrectly, that M-G-M records would reach dealers on January 1, 1947. Walker, it reported, was "extremely vague as to the plans being hatched by the small, compact staff currently organizing for the label" and was concerned about the state of the company's production facilities. Elsewhere, it was reported that the pressing plant would require complete remodeling. By December 1946, 125 new presses had been installed, with a projected annual

capacity of 40 million discs, and production finally got under way. A rumored purchase of the Vogue pressing plant never materialized.

A trademark application was filed on January 17, 1947, for the use of M-G-M's lion trademark on records. By then, plans to call the label Lion had been dropped in favor of the more recognizable M-G-M, although M-G-M would later use the Lion name for some LP and EP issues. The advertising firm of Donahue & Coe began planning an aggressive national advertising campaign for the new records, and an affiliated music-publishing division was set up under the management of veteran songwriter Abe Olman, severing the affiliation with Feist.

In the same month, Walker announced that M-G-M was finally readying the first records for release and that marketing would begin in early March. The artist roster, officially unveiled with some fanfare in February, included Blue Barron, Lionel Barrymore, Jimmy Dorsey, Jimmy Durante, Ziggy Elman, Helen Forrest, Slim Gaillard, Gene Kelly, the Korn Kobblers, Lauritz Melchior, Sy Oliver, Raymond Scott, Kate Smith, and Keenan Wynn, among other famous names. M-G-M's initial offerings released on schedule, to generally favorable reviews.

The movie connection was obvious from the start. Promotional shorts for the records were shown at M-G-M screenings, and the initial releases included an album of songs from the film "Till the Clouds Roll By." Walker and his artists-and-repertoire managers concentrated on building a diverse catalog, allaying fears that the label would be just a marketing gimmick for M-G-M films. The result was the occasional contractual conflict, as had been predicted. One of the most highly publicized arose when Musicraft Records refused to loan Mel Tormé to M-G-M Records to record selections from the film "Good News," in which Tormé had appeared.

Company officials declared M-G-M's first full year of operation a success, with fifteen-to twenty-million discs pressed, one a certified million-seller (Art Mooney's "I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover"), and arrangements under way to press on the West Coast. Worldwide distribution had been secured in August 1947 through an agreement with London-based Electric and Musical Industries. At Walker's insistence, the M-G-M name and lion trademark appeared on foreign pressings, at a time when other American record companies were content to have their material issued under foreign brands. Walker recalled in a 1959 interview, "He was a nice old lion, and he meant a great deal in terms of foreign profits both for pictures and for records."

In addition to producing its own recordings, M-G-M was soon licensing or purchasing masters from other labels. However, the company tended to proceed cautiously when acquiring outside material, preferring not to act until a recording clearly demonstrated strong sales potential. An unusual slip-up occurred in September 1948, when a large number of mostly outdated masters were purchased from producer Joe Davis, only a handful of which were deemed suitable for issue on M-G-M.

Reflecting Walker's background (which included scouting country-music artists for Columbia as early as 1924), M-G-M proved to be particularly strong in the country-and-western field, with a roster that included Bob Wills, Arthur (Guitar Boogie) Smith, Jerry Irby, Sheb Wooley, Marvin Rainwater, and other nationally known stars. Walker's most important acquisition was Hank Williams, who had yet to achieve stardom at the time Walker signed him away from the Sterling label. Williams' initial M-G-M offerings in the spring of 1948 attracted nationwide attention, and in July 1949 *Billboard* singled out his "Lovesick Blues" as the most-played jukebox record and best retail seller in the "Folk" category, a position it held for many months. M-G-M's Ebony Series was less notable. Targeted at race-record market, it relied largely upon the Five Red Caps, Slim Gaillard, Joe Turner, and other Black artists with proven crossover appeal to White consumers, but broke no new ground.

M-G-M reduced its list price to 60¢ from 75¢ in April 1949, in response to a similar move by Columbia. Walker assured the public that M-G-M would not "sacrifice either technical or artistic quality with the change in price," adding, "We can go on turning out the hits and best sellers that have zoomed our label to the top in such a short time without taking the public's purse." At the same time, a spokesman stated that the company had no immediate plans to begin producing LPs.

The Metrolite trademark was registered on September 3, 1948, with use on records

erroneously claimed since August 12. A break-resistant material, the original formulation proved too expensive to employ in M-G-M's 60¢ pop line. Walker recalled that months of research and development, supervised by plant manager Arnold L. Pipper, were required to produce an "unbreakable" formula suitable for use in lower-priced records. The initial Metrolite pressings finally reached dealers on October 21, 1949, by which time 45s and LPs were being added to Capitol's line.

A children's-record department, under the direction of Betty Martin, made its debut in the spring of 1950, with a picture-book album based on M-G-M's "Tom and Jerry" cartoon characters. *Disk Data*, M-G-M's gossip magazine for record reviewers, began publication at about the same time.

By early 1950, M-G-M was attracting attention with its pioneering original-cast soundtrack albums. M-G-M launched its first multimedia promotion on May 16, 1950, coinciding with the New York premier of its film, "Annie Get Your Gun." During a three-day teaser campaign, New York disc jockeys were contacted by "Annie," first by telegram, then by telephone, and then personally by a model bearing a free copy of the album, which reportedly was played "then and there, with normally scheduled items for the day deleted." A plug followed on Ted Steele's television program. Later that year, stand-ins for Judy Garland and Gene Kelly "danced their way up and down Broadway," stopping before each of the street's many record shops to dance to "Summer Stock" selections "piped onto the sidewalk by loud-speaker," according to a *Cash Box* report.

Rumors that Walker would quit the company, possibly bringing an end to the operation, were quashed when he renewed his contract in August 1950. In the same month, he announced the launch of a classical music division, which was slated to begin operation in the fall. In addition to reissuing material acquired from Musicraft (a deal that was later nullified for non-payment on M-G-M's part), the division was to make its own domestic and foreign recordings, the latter in conjunction with Electric and Musical Industries in England. The first offerings, under the Popular Classics banner, were released on October 20 and featured Lawrence Melchior, pianist George Copeland, and the Royal Opera House Orchestra (Covent Gardens, London) directed by Warwick Braithwaite. Extended works were to be issued as LPs and 45s only. The Lion label, a pop LP and 45-rpm side-line, was launched in late 1952.

In May 1956, Frank Walker was promoted to vice-president of the parent Loew's, Inc., but he also continued to manage the record division until his resignation at the end of December 1957. His successor was Arnold Maxin, who resigned as artists-and-repertoire manager of Columbia's Epic and Okeh labels to accept the position. After taking what he termed "my first vacation since I started in the record business forty years ago," Walker resumed work as a consultant to Loew's, Inc., in early 1958. At the same time, the M-G-M pressing plant was spun off as an independent operation. M-G-M Records' later history is beyond the scope of this work.

MICHIGAN PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1888 – Early 1890s

Offices: Mechanics' Block, Griswold St., Detroit (at founding); 15 and 17 Detroit Opera House Building (from late 1888)

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Michigan. *The Detroit Free Press* for October 6, 1888, reported that Michigan Phonograph had already been organized. *The Phonogram* gave the organization date as October 10. However, the *Free Press'* claim is supported by a report in the same publication that the company exhibited Edison's improved phonograph for the first time in Michigan on September 27. Those said to be "largely" interested at the time included C. C. Brown (or Bowen, in other reports), Levi L. Barbour, and A. H. Wilkinson. By 1891, officers included George S. Davis (president, replaced by Brown or Bowen in 1892) and C. W. Swift (secretary and treasurer). W. H. Freeman served as general manager. The company also operated the Phonograph Typewriter School in its Detroit Opera House headquarters, which trained typists to transcribe from dictation cylinders.

Michigan Phonograph produced original recordings for entertainment purposes. On December 4, 1888, a company representative recorded whistling virtuoso Alice Shaw at

J. H. Hahn's Conservatory of Music, with piano accompaniment. The cylinders were played for the public that evening in the company's Detroit Opera House office. The company also made original recordings by Schremser's Fourth Michigan Regiment Band of Detroit, which were offered for sale nationally. Customers included the Georgia Phonograph Company, which in July 1890 placed several of the band's titles on its coin-operated phonographs. In the same month, *The Detroit Free Press* reported that "Helena Waltz," which the band had recorded "some time ago," was now its best-selling title.

MIDA RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1318 5th Ave., New York

Record Products: Mida

Produced by Miguel Inglada as an adjunct to his Mida Record Shop, the Mida label specialized in recordings for the Latino market. Inglada's trademark registration claimed use of the Mida name on labels beginning May 15, 1947. The label used a mixture of domestic and imported masters, some of the latter recorded in Cuba. Mida was last listed in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies. There is no known connection to the Miami-based Mida label of the later 1950s, which was primarily a rhythm-and-blues and rock-and-roll label.

MIDGET MUSIC, INC. / MIDGET MUSIC PRODUCTIONS / FIDELITY RECORDS [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1946– c. 1948

Offices: Jacksonville, TX

Record Products: Midget, Fidelity [1], Acetone,

Midget Music was a publishing operation headed by songwriter Vernon L. Barbay. It was registered as a Delaware corporation (but never operated there) on September 27, 1946. It entered the record business in November 1946 with the short-lived Midget label, which was unrelated to a children's label of the same name. Its first record (as well as its first published composition) was "Violets for Christmas," issued for the 1946 holiday season. The company began soliciting distributors on the West Coast during the summer of 1947.

Fidelity Records was formed as a Midget Music subsidiary in early 1947, and its first releases were announced in June of that year. Two versions of the label design exist with different pictorial trademarks, one with the logo "Faithful to the Sound" and the other with "Faithful to the Echo." The obscure Acetone label probably was introduced in the same year. Featuring country-and-western material, it appears to have suspended operations by late 1948. The Fidelity name was later used for an unrelated label acquired by Art Rupe in 1951 (see Specialty Records).

MIDWEST RECORDING COMPANY — See Allender Record Distributors

MILLER & HAGEN — See Phonograph Record and Supply Company

BOB MILLER ENTERPRISES — See Main Street Records

MILLER, J. D. (Discs)

Fais-Do-Do Records / Feature Records, et al.

Record Production: 1946 – 1990s

Offices: 218 N. Parkerson Ave., Crowley, LA

Original-Master Source(s): Cosimo Matassa studio (New Orleans, 1946), probably other independent studios (1940s); own studio—Crowley, LA (from late 1940s)

Record Products (78): Cajun Classics, Fais-Do-Do, Feature

A pioneering Louisiana record producer, J. D. Miller founded that state's second record company (see Louisiana Phonograph Company for information concerning the first) and was a key figure in promoting local music and musicians. The mailing address given for Miller's recording operation was the same as that of his M & S Electric Company in Crowley, Louisiana.

Miller launched the Fais-Do-Do label in 1946 to showcase Cajun music, which was barely represented on records at the time. For his first session, he traveled to New Orleans to record Happy Fats in a rented studio. A fixture on radio station KVOL, Happy Fats would be a Miller mainstay for many years, even recording for Miller's Reb label in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Miller launched Feature Records in 1947. Primarily a Cajun and country-and-western label (with the latter predominating), it had a local hit with "The War Widow Waltz" by Lee Sonnier. By the early 1950s, Miller's roster included Doc Guidry, Bill Hutto, Doug Kershaw, Jimmy C. Newman, Al Terry, Dottie Vincent, and other regional talent.

Miller closed Feature Records in 1955 and concentrated on supplying masters to other labels, eventually assembling an impressive client list that included Decca, Dot, and Excello. He returned to producing his own labels in 1958, beginning with Rocko (a mixed pop, country, blues, and rock-and-roll label) and Zynn (primarily a Cajun and zydeco label). Fais-Do-Do was revived in the early 1960s, followed by Cajun Classics (which had earlier appeared briefly in 78-rpm form) and Kajun. In 1966 he launched the blatantly racist Reb label, whose offerings included "Who Likes a Nigger?" and "NAACP Jig-a-Boo Gemini."

In 1967, Miller took a job in local government and turned over management of his music store and newly renovated Master-Trak Studio to his son Mark. Miller, who later returned to record production, died on March 23, 1996, at the age of 73.

MILLER PUBLICATIONS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1949

Offices: 706 Chestnut St., St. Louis

Pressing: King Records

Record Products: Manhattan [3], Prom

Owned and operated by Julian H. Miller, who used the trade names Manhattan Records and Prom Records (the latter unrelated to the early 1950s Newark-based Prom label) for his small recording operation.

Manhattan began (and possibly ended) in the autumn of 1948 with a promotional record for the novelty tune "More Beer!," which *Billboard* reported had been "cooked up at a private party" by Miller and a group of friends. Initially sold only locally, the record was later picked up by Leslie Distributors, and the song was widely covered on other labels. Miller's obscure Prom label was a locally distributed pop line that appeared around the same time as Manhattan. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard's* July 1951 directory (which included many inactive or defunct labels) probably can be disregarded.

ROY MILTON RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 3438 ½ 6th Ave., Los Angeles

Record Products: Roy Milton; Ace [2], Honky Tonk

A short-lived race-record company owned and operated by performer Roy Milton. The company was granted a recording license by the American Federation of Musicians' Local 47 in July 1946.

Advertised as "The Picture Label," Roy Milton records were distinguished by their bold, customized cartoon labels (a different one for each title), which were commissioned from future comic-book artist William Alexander. In addition to the Roy Milton label, the company marketed several short-lived brands that also featured Alexander's label art. The records were handled by small independent distributors, including Idessa Malone

After Roy Milton signed with Specialty Records in February 1947, his labels and masters were taken over by the Day Distributing Company's War Perkins and William Reed, who continued production as the Miltone Recording Company (*see next entry*).

MILTONE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1952

Offices: 709 E. 29th St., Los Angeles (Day Distributing office); 3938½ 6th Ave., Los Angeles (Foto)

Pressing: Los Angeles

Record Products: Milton, Ace [2], Clear Tone [2], Foto, Roy Milton Record Company Hot Classic Series, Special [2], Spiritual

Launched by Forrest (War) Perkins and William Reed in February 1947, to take over production of the Roy Milton labels after Milton signed with Specialty Records (*see previous entry*). A subsidiary of Perkins and Reed's Day Distributing Company, the Milton Record Company continued to use Roy Milton Record Company as a trade name into the later 1940s.

The first Milton releases were advertised in late May 1947. The original Roy Milton catalog-number series (which had ended in the low 100s) was replaced by a 200 series for the race-record releases, which remained the label's primary focus. The catalog was later expanded to include pop, country-and-western, and Hebrew series. Milton race-series releases at first continued to feature the individualized William Alexander cartoons that had appeared on its predecessor's labels. However, the practice was phased out, and was finally discontinued entirely in the later 1940s. Late Milton-produced reissues of the original Roy Milton Record Company releases substituted a plain label design, with a small photo of Milton, for the original cartoon labels. Milton and Day were also affiliated with the short-lived Clear Tone label (introduced in early 1947, and scuttled after only two releases by the Gene Morris Quintet with Charlie Mingus) and Foto (introduced in 1948, using cartoon labels reminiscent of the earlier Milton issues).

In January 1948, Milton sued Perkins for illegally selling recordings of his band that had been dubbed from air-checks. Later that year, Perkins and Reed signed a distribution agreement with De Luxe Records that resulted in some master swapping, and Milton came to rely increasingly on De Luxe material. In May 1950, Ivin Ballen purchased 300 Milton masters for his Gotham operation, probably marking the end of the Milton Record Company as an active producer. The company was still listed in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies), at the Day Distributing Company's address, but it does not appear to have been releasing new material by then.

MILWAUKEE SOUND SERVICE (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1940s – c. Early 1950

Offices: 3245 N. 24th St., Milwaukee; 2408 N. 40th St., Milwaukee (Dupor Distributing)

Record Products: Starline; custom recordings

Of unknown ownership, Milwaukee Sound Service is known to have been operating by 1949, based upon dates on some test acetates. Its Starline label, touted as "The Voice of Milwaukee," featured pop tunes and polkas by obscure, presumably local, artists. The earliest confirmed release appeared in *Billboard's* July 1950 advance lists, although the label might have been launched earlier. The records were distributed locally by the Dupor Distributing Company. Starline last appeared in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

MINNESOTA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889

Offices: Stillman Block, Minneapolis (temporary, 1/1889); 108-109-110 Rochester Block, Minneapolis (from 1/30/1889); St. Paul, MN (branch office)

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Minnesota. Articles of incorporation were filed in Milwaukee on January 3, 1889, by T. B. Walker (president), Charles H. Chadbourne (vice-president), Seymour Van Cleve (secretary), F. Seymour, and A. G. Postlethwaite. The initial capital stock offering was \$312,500, which was advertised relentlessly in the local newspapers, although bids reportedly never surpassed half of the asking price.

The Minnesota Phonograph Company officially became operational on January 21, 1889. It had begun exhibiting machines a week earlier, in a room in the West Hotel. *The*

Saint Paul Globe reported that a local church singer was allowed to record his voice, with results he found greatly disconcerting, and also alluded to a recording by "some learned brother of New York." In June 1889, the company placed two phonographs on-stage in an attempt to record portions of a Minneapolis music festival featuring Gilmore's Band. The company also exhibited unspecified musical recordings at the Minnesota State Fair in September. However, no evidence has been found thus far to suggest that Minnesota Phonograph produced original recordings for sale to the general public.

Chadbourn succeeded Walker as president in 1891. The company's last annual meeting was held on December 7, 1892. In that year's report to North American Phonograph's board of directors, Thomas Lombard reported that Minnesota Phonograph had done little business, although he considered the company's sales territory to be one of the most valuable outside of Chicago. The company was not present at the 1893 National Phonograph Association meeting, by which time it probably was inactive.

There was no known connection to a later Minnesota Phonograph Company, headquartered in St. Paul, which dealt in Edison products in the early 1900s.

MIRA RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947

Offices: Mission, TX

Record Products: Mira

Mira was a short-lived company launched in 1947 by Arnaldo Villareal Ramírez. A radio announcer in Reynosa, Texas, at the time, Ramírez would go on to become one of the most successful early producers of records for the Mexican-American market (*see* Falcon Record Company).

MIRACLE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946– 1950

Offices: 107 E. 47th St., Chicago (1946–5/1947); 500 E. 63rd St. St., Chicago (from 5/1947)

Original-Master Source(s): Bachman Studio, possibly other small independent studios (1946–1947); United Broadcasting Studio (primary supplier, from 1946)

Record Products: Miracle, Miracle Sunrise Series

Founded in the summer of 1946 by Lee J. Egalnick and Lewis (Lew) Simpkins. Egalnick served as president, and Simpkins managed artists and repertoire. Egalnick had been a race-record distributor before he launched Miracle, and he chose to target that market with his new label. The L & L Agency was established at the same time to book personal appearances for the label's artists. Miracle initially shared an address with Simpkins' S & S bookstore, which offered personal-recording services. Some early Miracle labels state that the records were manufactured for (but not by) the S & S Recording Studio.

Miracle's initial release in August 1946 was celebrated by a gala launch party, after which little more was heard of the label until late November, when advertisements began to appear in *Billboard*. By May 1947 the company had moved to a new address and was making most of its recordings in Chicago's United Broadcasting studio. At about the same time, Miracle began sponsoring a weekly fifteen-minute spot by disc jockey Al Benson over radio station WGES. Notable early signings included blues singers Memphis Slim and the Floyd Hunt Quartet with vocalist Gladys Palmer. As a soloist, the latter would go on to become one of Miracle's most popular artists.

Like other companies, Miracle began stockpiling masters in late 1947, in advance of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban. Two of them that did not involve union musicians (Memphis Slim's "Messin' Around," and Sonny Thompson's two-part "Long Gone") were released during the ban and became national hits. "Long Gone" reportedly sold 200,000 copies and spent more than thirty weeks on *Billboard*'s rhythm-and-blues charts. Miracle was rumored to have made a significant number of recordings while the AFM ban was still in effect. Officially, however, the company resumed recording after the ban was lifted at the end of 1948, albeit on a more modest scale than previously.

The cost of stockpiling so many masters in a short period (many of which were never released) proved to be a financial strain. To worsen matters, in early 1948 it was discovered

that Miracle records were being counterfeited. An investigation traced the pressings to Millner Record Sales, a St. Louis distributor. An injunction was issued, but counterfeiting continued to be a problem for Modern.

Egalnick and Simkins acquired control of the Sunrise catalog in March 1948 (*see* Sunrise Record Corporation), and they transferred a few recordings to a new Miracle Sunrise Series label. After an unhappy one-year relationship, control of Sunrise was returned to its founder in April 1949. Miracle expanded its gospel roster in 1949, culminating in its August signing of Robert Anderson, whose Miracle releases failed to arouse much interest. With sales lagging in general, the company temporarily suspended recording following an October 1949 session by Memphis Slim. Recording resumed in early 1950, but only sixteen of the new masters are known to have been released before the company suspended operations.

A January 1950 lawsuit, brought by the Shapiro-Bernstein publishing firm over Sonny Thompson's alleged infringement of a Jimmy Yancey tune in "Long Gone," proved to be an ongoing distraction. Although the case eventually was decided in Miracle's favor, with Shapiro-Bernstein ordered to pay Miracle's court costs, the publisher appealed repeatedly before finally conceding. In the meantime, Sonny Thompson had signed with King records, and United Broadcasting had severed relations with Miracle.

The final Miracle release, by blues singer Johnny Temple, using masters from an unknown studio, appeared in the spring of 1950. By then, Egalnick and Simkins had begun disposing of masters, beginning with the sale of twelve Sonny Thompson recordings to Signature, and ten by Memphis Slim to Old Swing-Master (from which some found their way to Master). Egalnick left the company in May 1950, and Simkins closed the business a month later. Within a few weeks, both were back in business as partners in Premium Records, *q.v.*

Miracle's remaining masters and approximately 50,000 unsold pressings were subsequently seized by the Internal Revenue Service, which in October 1950 sold them to King Records for \$4,700.

MIRROR RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – Late 1940s

Offices: 1585 Broadway, NY; 810 Rollin St., S. Pasadena, CA

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Mirror; pressings for IRRRA, possibly other small labels

Mirror was briefly mentioned as a new label by *Billboard* in August 1946 and was listed in that year's *Record Retailing Yearbook*, with no details given. An anecdotal report that the company was owned by Atomic Records president Lyle Griffin has not been confirmed. Mirror (which shared a New York mailing address with Jump Records and several other apparently unrelated record labels and studios) operated its own pressing plant, which was sometimes used by the Independent Record Releasing Association. There was no connection to the Mirror Record Corporation, a New York company that manufactured blank recording discs.

Mirror specialized in jazz recordings, with a roster that included Pee Wee Hunt and the Marvin Ash Trio with vocalist Dottie O'Brien. Its earliest confirmed session, by a Hunt group, was held in Hollywood in July 1946, the results of which were reviewed by *Cash Box* in October. Mirror was still listed by *Billboard* as late as January 1949, although it appears to have been inactive by then. Some of its masters were later acquired by FM Records and Regent.

MISSOURI PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: Early 1890s

Offices: 416 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN (at founding); Exposition Building, St. Louis (by 1890)

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Missouri, Arkansas, and Indian Territory (the latter given in error as "Indiana" in at least one early account). Missouri Phonograph was organized on March 2, 1889, with articles of incorporation filed in Minneapolis, Minnesota,

where the company was originally headquartered. The initial capital stock offering was said to be \$625,000. Incorporators, who were scattered across Wisconsin, Iowa, and South Dakota, included John C., Guy L., and George A. Wood; Rochelle and Alvina M. Henderson; W. J. Warren, Johia W. Moore, and Alice A. Taylor. Major A. W. Clancy served first as vice-president, in 1890, then as president from 1891.

By 1890 the company had settled in St. Louis, where John C. Wood served as general manager. In January 1891, *The Daily Arkansas Gazette* reported that Wood had placed "quite a number" of phonographs in Little Rock. At the end of that year, *The Phonogram* proclaimed Missouri Phonograph "one of the most progressive and flourishing" of the North American sub-companies.

In the autumn of 1890, the Missouri Phonograph Company demonstrated original recordings by local artists, including what were described as "the best colored quartettes." Unfortunately, the artists were not named, and no catalog or other listing of Missouri Phonograph recordings has been found thus far. The company also purchased Columbia cylinders for use on their coin-operated machines, based upon their testimonial in an 1891 Columbia advertisement.

MODERN MUSIC COMPANY / MODERN MUSIC RECORDS / MODERN RECORD COMPANY / MODERN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945

Offices: 115 S. San Pedro St., Los Angeles (1945); 673½ S. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles (1945–early 1947); 686 N. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles (early 1947–c. 7/1950); 244 N. Canon Drive, Beverly Hills, CA (c. 7/1950–c. 1952); 257 N. Robertson Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA (c. 1953–1954); 9317 W. Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA (from c. 1955); New York (sales offices, from 1/1948)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — Los Angeles; Universal Recorders, probably other independent studios

Pressing: Own plants (Los Angeles); Allied Record Manufacturing (1940s) and other independent plants; Superior Recording (Los Angeles, acquired 1962)

Record Products (78s): Modern, Modern Music, Rhythm and Blues, RPM; Colonial [2]

Founded in March 1945 by brothers Jules, Saul, and Joe Bihari, who at the time were servicing jukeboxes in Los Angeles. Florette Bihari served as advertising manager.

Joe Bihari recalled that the brothers decided to produce their own records after being unable to obtain enough pressings from the major distributors to supply their machines. Their records, initially credited to the Modern Music Company on the labels, were marketed largely for jukebox use. A 1948 *Cash Box* profile of Saul Bihari reported, "The first thought and final theme of a recording session at the Modern Records plant in Hollywood is based and built completely around the juke box operator." The company was one of the first to accommodate jukebox operators by making single discs available to them from what were otherwise album-only releases.

The Biharis (who initially called their enterprise Modern Music Records) had an immediate hit with "Swingin' the Boogie" by Hadda Brooks, who they discovered performing in a local dance studio. Brooks would become one of the label's best-selling artists, and on the strength of her early releases, the Biharis were soon able to secure national distribution through Black and White Records, Jack Gutshall, and others. By 1947, the Biharis were operating their own Modern Music Distributing Company.

The Biharis purchased ARA's former Los Angeles pressing plant in 1947, and arranged for the Ballen Record Company (Gotham) to handle their East Coast pressing. In August of that year, Modern was one of several California-based labels that began shipping its records to the East Coast on Flying Tiger Airlines, rather than using ground transportation. The company also began servicing other small independent labels in the later 1940s, offering distribution through Modern Distributing as well as recording and pressing services through its American Record Manufacturing Company subsidiary, which launched in July 1948.

The Modern Music Records name was shortened to Modern Records in the spring of 1947, perhaps to avoid confusion with Nathan Cohn's unrelated Modern Music Service Company. In October, Jules Bihari arranged to issue a portion of jazz promoter Gene Norman's live recordings, comprising more than 150 masters, not all of which could be used because some of the musicians were under contract to other labels. Those cleared to

appear on Modern included Errol Garner, Red Norvo, Charlie Shavers, Willie (The Lion) Smith, and Slam Stewart. In all, it was estimated that the material would provide Modern with at least fifteen two-disc albums, which Bihari planned to promote to the "collector trade." In mid-1948, the company dropped its retail price from \$1.05 to 75¢ per record, bringing it in line with the major labels.

Modern announced that it was expanding into the country-and-western market in March 1948, with a group of recordings it had made in Texas, Louisiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Five releases were to be made monthly, with a roster headed by Jimmy Dolan. However, the race-record market remained Modern's primary focus. By the late 1940s its roster included Pee Wee Crayton, John Lee Hooker, and other nationally famous stars.

In mid-1950, the Biharis entered into an agreement with Sam Phillips, of the Memphis Recording Service, giving them the right of first refusal on any of Phillips' demo recordings. Among those they accepted were the first sides by B. B. King who, having not been signed to a contract by Phillips, was quickly taken over by the Biharis. Feeling betrayed, Phillips largely severed relations with the Biharis and began sending his most promising material to other labels.

Like many of their contemporaries, the Biharis sometimes attached their names to their artists' compositions in order to collect a portion of the royalties, sometime using pseudonyms that included Jules Taub, Joe Josea, and Sam Ling (disguising Jules, Joe, and Saul Bihari, respectively). In the later 1940s they were sued for breach of contract and failure to pay royalties by several of their former artists, including Jerry Brent and Hadda Brooks.

Colonial Records, Inc., was launched in early 1949 as a Modern subsidiary, specializing primarily in pop, gospel, and country-and-western material. Its mailing address was that of Modern's Robertson Boulevard pressing plant. Although produced by Jules and Joe Bihari, with sales and promotion handled by brother Lester, Colonial was chartered as a separate company and used a different group of distributors than Modern. There was no connection to the Boston-based Colonial label (which launched at approximately the same time but quickly disappeared), nor to Orville Campbell's slightly later Colonial label based in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

The Biharis launched the subsidiary RPM Records in July 1950, primarily as a rhythm-and-blues label. Operating from Modern's main office, was simply a Bihari trade name, not a separate company. The label, which acquired a few masters from Rhythm Recordings and other failing or defunct labels, survived into the late 1950s.

Thus far, Joe Bihari had been Modern's primary talent scout, but in 1951 he hired Ike Turner to assist him on his southern scouting trips. Turner was given a Buick Roadmaster and new suit, in addition to a salary and expense account, and soon proved his worth. Among his signings were Howlin' Wolf, Baby Face Turner, and Elmore James, many of whom were recorded in makeshift studios in Tennessee and Mississippi. Bihari recalled recording in a rented room at the Greyhound Bus station in Clarksdale, Mississippi, from which he claimed to have been ejected by police and forcibly escorted to the state line in response to a complaint concerning his hiring of Black performers.

Modern LPs were first announced in the late summer of 1949, at which time Jules Bihari stated that he had no immediate plans to produce 45s. However, it appears that just the opposite occurred, with 45s launched toward the end of 1949, and the first LPs (cobbled together from previous 78-rpm releases) finally announced in October 1950. In an effort to expand the LP line quickly, Modern entered into a master-exchange deal with Jazz Disques (Paris), which already had similar arrangements with Apollo, Blue Note, Dial, and other American labels. Some light-classical releases were also promised on LPs. Rhythm and Blues, another subsidiary that shared its address with Modern, was launched in 1953.

Modern went on to sign many stars in the 1950s, including Richard Berry, Z. Z. Hill, Etta James, Lowell Fulson, Mary Love, Johnny "Guitar" Watson, and the team of Ike and Tina Turner. However, sales declined in the early 1960s, and in 1967 Saul Bihari launched a new company, Crown/Kent Records. The Modern catalog was licensed to Ace Records for European distribution in 1979, before finally being sold in 1982.

MODERN RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1939 – 1940

Offices: New York

Original-Master Source(s): Musicraft studio

Record Products: TAC Records

Producer of a short-lived label made for the left-wing Theater Arts Committee (New York). The TAC label's first release, announced in February 1939, was Earl Robinson's "Abe Lincoln" and "Joe Hill," performed by Michael Loring and the TAC Singers, with Robinson at the piano. The recordings were dismissed by a *Time* magazine reviewer as "two crusty proletarian items."

Later releases included "Pickett Line Priscilla" and Hazel Scott's 1940 "The Yanks Aren't Coming" and "Mene, Mene," both from the controversial theatrical production "Pins and Needles." The records were sold by a few specialty dealers, including Abbe's Music & Photo Supplies in Chicago and the Progressive Bookshop in New York (the latter operated by Keynote Records owner Eric Bernay, which offered copies of the first release "autographed by Maestro Michael Loring").

MODERN RECORDING STUDIO (Discs)

Record Production: 1940s – 1950s

Offices and Studio: 55 W. Wacker Dr., Chicago

Record Products: Masters for independent labels; transcriptions; audition and custom recordings

A transcription and custom-recording service owned and operated by Edwin M. Webb, the Modern Recording Studio also supplied a few masters to J.O.B., Seymour, and probably other small commercial labels from the late 1940s into the 1950s.

MONARCH RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946–c. 1950

Offices: 44 Court St., Brooklyn, NY

Pressing: Own plant (New Jersey)

Record Products: Monarch [2]

Launched by Howard Styne at the age of twenty, with his \$100,000 inheritance, Monarch Records was advertising by March 1946. Its quirky early catalog included the 1946 children's album, "Sketches of Fala" (stories about Franklin Roosevelt's dog), and a 1947 dramatization of Eleanor Roosevelt's book, *Bobby and Betty in Washington*. Franklin Roosevelt reportedly reviewed and made a few changes to the "Fala" stories shortly before his death. Styne auctioned one copy of the "Fala" album, autographed by Eleanor Roosevelt (and stolen from Styne but soon recovered) to benefit the Warm Springs Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

In February 1947 it was reported that Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen had agreed to record a religious album for Monarch. However, most Monarch releases featured undistinguished pop fare by obscure local artists. In at least one case, Styne offered a Monarch recording contract to the winner of a New Jersey amateur singing contest.

Style (a Julliard graduate who aspired to be a Broadway playwright and producer) declared in 1947, "I want to turn this business over to someone else, and then I'll get serious about music," and he did just that. On June 26, *Billboard* reported that Monarch was selling out, "lock, stock, and barrel," to an undisclosed buyer. Artist contracts had been terminated prior to the sale, and it was reported that all staff were expected to be laid off and the company rebuilt under new management. By January 1948 the reorganized company had resumed operations at the same address, but little more was reported concerning its operation or output.

There is no known connection to the Linden, New Jersey-based Monarch Record Company, which launched in 1952.

MONDI RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 - c. 1951

Offices: 1619 Jericho Turnpike, New Hyde Park, NY

Record Products: Mond

Launched in September 1950 by entertainer Vince (Blue) Mond, who was featured on some releases. Billed as "The Original One-Man Band," Mond had been discovered on Major Bowes' "Original Amateur Hour," and he had previously recorded for Atlantic. Other Mond artists included singer Ray Heartherton and Tony Colucci's Top Tones. Mond Records first advertised in *Billboard* in early October 1950 and produced approximately eight releases. Reviews of its later offerings were generally poor, and the final release appeared in December 1951.

MONROE, JOHN (Cylinders)

Record Production: Late 1890s

Offices and Master Source(s): 245½ Morrison St. (later 132¼ 1st St.), Portland, OR

Record Products: Cylinders

John Monroe advertised original cylinder records, "made one at a time, every word guaranteed to be clear and distinct," during 1897–1899. His first advertisement appeared in *The Phonoscope* for March 1897, which probably was published a month or more after its stated cover date. In an October 1898 letter to *The Phonoscope*'s editor, Monroe boasted of recording selections that were not available from other record producers. His slogan was "A little spice now and then is relished by the wisest men."

Monroe's apparently was a one-man operation. *The Phonoscope* for May 1899 reported that he had recovered from a recent illness, during which he claimed to have "made over a hundred dollars' worth of records while lying in bed," and was now prepared to fill all orders promptly. In the same year, Monroe reported that he had sold records to customers in the West Indies and South America. However, he admitted that his business was not as good as the previous year's.

As a side-line, Monroe presented Saturday-night phonographic concerts at local theaters during 1899–1900, employing what he advertised as "the Edison Concertagraph, marvel of the age" (apparently an Edison Concert phonograph, based upon one published description).

MONTANA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: Possibly 1889

Offices: Grandon Block (6th Ave. and Warren St.), Helena, MT

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Montana. The company was organized in Helena on May 10, 1889, but it initially seems to have attracted little attention from the local press. By 1891, Montana Phonograph's officers included E. D. Edgerton (president), Donnell Davenport (vice-president), and A. R. Gales (general manager), with G. W. Walters serving as superintendant. Among its directors was Erastus A. Benson, who was also a director of the Chicago Central, Iowa, and Nebraska Phonograph companies.

The *Helena Independent Record* for November 22, 1889, reported that Montana Phonograph would have a machine present to record a concert that evening by Liberati's Band at Ming's Opera House. However, nothing further was reported concerning the recordings. Little was heard of Montana Phonograph after 1892. Although not represented at the 1893 National Phonograph Association meeting, the company was still advertising "a large stock of the very finest musical records" as late as August of that year. It is not known if any of those were original recordings.

MONTILLA RECORDS — See Discos Cafamo

MOOD RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 1415 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH (1950–mid-1951); 1303 Prospect Ave., Cleveland (from mid-1951)

Record Products: Mood

Launched in early 1950 by Cleveland record distributor Bob Politi, in partnership with Merle Roberts. Harry Schneider served as technical advisor. Mood's known output consisted of undistinguished pop fare by little-known artists, including Jan Haliday, Al Knapp, Jackie Lind, the Debonaires, and the Eleanor Healy Choral Singers. The company was last listed by *Billboard* in July 1951, at about the time that it moved to new quarters. There is no known connection to George Badoian's later Mood label.

MOORE & LAYNE APPLIANCE COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. Late 1940s – 1950

Offices: 305 Summers St., Charleston, WV

Record Products: M & L Sacred Records

A West Virginia appliance dealer and record distributor, Moore & Layne briefly marketed its own M & L Sacred Records, credited simply to "Moore's" on the labels. The artist roster included the Gate City Four, Jubileers Quartet, and Stamps Baxter Guiding Light Quartet, from masters of unknown origin. No mention of the company has been found in the trade papers aside from a January 1948 distributors' listing for Moore & Layne, and an April 1950 mention in *Billboard* that the Shining Light Quartet's "Need More Love" was getting "top reaction" on radio station WKPA (Charleston, West Virginia).

MORRIS-LEE RECORDS

Launched in 1944, primarily to produce "plug" records for aspiring songwriters and publishers. Thus far, no evidence has been found that Morris-Lee records were intended for regular retail sale. The company is included here because several of its masters are known to have been bought by commercial producers (most notably, the Porky Freeman Trio's "Boogie Woogie on Strings," which was a minor hit for ARA in 1945). Morris-Lee, which received virtually no coverage in the trade papers, was later renamed Circle of Hits and was still was operating in the early 1960s.

MORRISON MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – Late 1950s

Offices: 4th Ave. and Bell St., Seattle (reported but not confirmed)

Original-Master Source(s): John Keating Studio (Seattle, to 1954); own studios — 1025 1st Ave. W., Seattle (1954–c. 1956); 6309 Woodlawn Ave., Seattle (from c. 1956)

Pressing: Own plant (11 Clay St., Seattle)

Record Products: Morrison; masters and pressing for Vega and other small labels

Founded in 1947 by Howell Oakdeane (Morrie) Morrison. There is no connection to the Morrison Recording Laboratories of Batavia, Illinois, a custom-record producer that operated during the same period.

Morrison was a Seattle dance instructor who at various times had also directed a marimba band, worked in theater production in San Francisco, and toured with a small-time vaudeville troupe during the Depression. Morrison's wife, Alice, wrote several popular songs in the 1920s, and was actively involved in her husband's recording operation.

Morrison initially produced dance records on his eponymous label, which he sold to his students. Within a short time, the Morrisons were also offering to set customers' lyrics to music, from which they would produce a Morrison record for an additional fee. The earliest sessions were held in the John Keating studio and reportedly engineered by Lyle Thompson. By the early 1950s, Morrison was also recording local professional artists, including Curly Hayes & his Hayseeds, Clyde Wesche & his Western Rangers, and the Art Mineo, Frankie Roth, and Jackie Souders orchestras. In late 1950, Morrison began distributing his eccentric assortment of recordings nationally through Vega Records, a company with which he had briefly been affiliated.

In or around 1954, the Morrisons purchased a Seattle mansion (reportedly the site of

the former Japanese Consulate), where they opened their own recording studio. Operating as the Morrison Music Company, Electronic Recorders and Associates, the company was a one-stop shop for aspiring amateur songwriters and performers, offering complete music-publishing, recording, pressing, and distribution services. In a mid-1950s advertisement, Morrison offered to "Print Your Music, Record Your Songs, Press Your Records — Complete Service and Nation Wide Distribution."

Morrison discs were distinguished by their swirled, multicolored vinyl pressings, often in strikingly bright hues. In addition to the standard releases, it was possible to order custom couplings. Morrie Morrison's *Dance Book: A Journey in the Land of Terpsichore*, published in 1955, included plugs for the discs, keyed to the appropriate dances. Morrison later phased out record production in favor of films and pre-recorded tapes for his dancing lessons. Alice Morrison died in 1978, followed by Morrie in 1984.

MOTIF RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Offices: 250 Huntington Ave., Boston; New York (branch office, from 8/1949)

Record Products: Motif

Launched in March 1949 by Reuben Moulds (who had previously been associated with Crystal-Tone) and Charles Richmond (a Boston businessman with no known record-industry experience), in conjunction with their Motif Music publishing operation. A New York branch office, managed by Nelson Lewis, was opened in August of that year to handle record distribution. The Motif label specialized in rhythm-and-blues and modern jazz material. It immediately attracted attention with its first release, Fat Man Robinson's "Lavender Coffin," promising jukebox operators that "money will drip like honey," then largely faded from notice. The company was last listed by *Billboard* in July 1950.

MOVIETONE MUSIC CORPORATION

This was the New York-based distributor of Fox Movietone records (1933–1936), which were pressed by the American Record Corporation and RCA Victor from their existing masters. Its only known original productions were some movie exploitation discs incorporating excerpts from Twentieth Century Fox soundtracks.

MUSIC APPRECIATION PROJECTS, INC. — See World's Greatest Music

MUSETTE PUBLISHERS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1939 – Late 1940s

Offices: 565 5th Ave. (Steinway Hall), New York; 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York (from late 1940)

Record Products: Musette; Jack and Jill Story Book Records, Musicomics (children's)

Launched in the late 1930s, Musette Publishers was headed by Arthur Zinkin, who commuted between New York and his farm in New Palestine, Indiana. Its initial releases, consisting of children's albums written by Madge Tucker (director of children's programming for the NBC radio network) and narrated by Milton Cross, were first advertised in the autumn of 1940. John Henry Alderton (producer of Music You Enjoy records) is believed to have been involved with the production of Musette's children's records. Most of Musette's records for the children's market were meant to accompany illustrated books.

Although primarily a producer of children's records, Musette briefly marketed a standard pop series, produced for the company by Eli Oberstein's United States Record Corporation, during 1939–1940. The masters were numbered in USRC's regular Varsity/Royale series but apparently were recorded for Musette's exclusive use. In late 1940, Musette issued an album of songs composed and sung by Mana Zucca, who until then had recorded only as a pianist.

MUSIC ART RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1948

Offices: 251 Hoffman Blvd., East Orange, NJ (1946); RKO Building, Newark, NJ (from early 1947)

Record Products: Music Art

Music Art was listed as a new company by *Billboard* in March 1946, with no further details given. No reliable information concerning its ownership or operation has been found. The few known Music Art releases (the last of which appeared in *Billboard*'s August 1948 advance lists) consist of pop material by the Four Top Hatters (a New Jersey vocal quartet) and other local artists.

MUSIC ENTERPRISES, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1952

Offices: 1621 Broadway, Indianapolis (1949–1950); 3439 College Ave., Indianapolis (from 1950)

Record Products: Dunn, Franklin [2], Opportunity

Operated by Paul Franklin, pianist and musical director of radio station WXLW (Indianapolis), whose compositions were featured on some of the company's releases. The business was registered with the state of Indiana on May 17, 1949, as a "domestic miscellaneous entity." Its launch was announced locally on June 17, and nationally in *Billboard*'s June 25 issue. Officers at the time included James H. Lawson, Jr. (president) and Ruth Henderson (treasurer). Franklin held no official corporate title, being listed only as "composer."

Music Enterprises' first confirmed release, on the Dunn label, featured an adaptation of an old "Two Black Crows" comedy routine, backed by one of Franklin's tunes. The Franklin and Opportunity labels were listed as Music Enterprises products during 1950–1951, but no reliable information has been located concerning their operation or output. Music Enterprises was last listed in *Billboard*'s July 1951 and March 1952 directories, both of which included many inactive or defunct companies. The company was not formally declared inactive until January 1, 1970.

MUSIC FOR SOCIETY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1950

Offices: 1585 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Music for Society

No reliable information has been found concerning Music for Society's ownership or operation. Its first two records were advertised in November 1945. Nothing further was released until June 1946, when an instrumental version of "Sweetheart Jingles" was advertised in conjunction with a contest for best lyrics.

Music for Society featured bland pop fare that a *Billboard* reviewer dismissed in August 1946 as "the brand of music featured at the blue-blood teas and favored by the doting matrons who seek no frills or fuss in their dance rhythms." An unnamed company representative replied a month later that the records "are not for the 400 set, but are aimed at society generally." No new releases are known after 1946, although the company's name appeared sporadically in *Billboard*'s label directory through July 1950.

MUSIC, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – Early 1950s

Offices: 811 S. Boston, Tulsa, OK; 702 7th Ave., New York (branch); 91st & Delaware, Tulsa (Conley Corp., 1978 revival)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Frisco, Okla, Rhythm Club, Skyline; transcriptions, custom labels

Owned and operated by Tulsa pianist-turned-entrepreneur Ed Conley, who provided custom recording and pressing services in addition to producing his own labels.

Music, Inc., was first mentioned in the *Tulsa Daily World* for February 24, 1946, which reported that for his first release, Conley "wrote the music, played it, recorded it, made the album and distributes the finished product." *Billboard* belatedly announced the company's launch in early April 1946, noting that it would produce the Okla and Rhythm

Club labels (the former reported by *Billboard* in error as Oklahoma Records). Country musician Al Clauser reportedly was a partner in firm. He and his Oklahomans appeared on Okla's initial releases and were given a contract to record several new releases each month, in addition to a library of transcriptions.

Okla, which issued only a handful of records, is notable mainly for having released Patti Page's first recordings, as a vocalist with Clauser's Oklahomans. The even more obscure Rhythm Club label, which showed a New York address and appears to have been intended for a more urban audience, featured Conley's own piano solos. In 1947 Conley's short-lived Frisco label was launched in partnership with jazz musician Ernie Fields, who appeared on many of the releases. Frisco was soon replaced by Conley's own Skyline label, which retained Frisco's basic design but substituted the Tulsa skyline for that of San Francisco. In 1948, Skyline reissued Okla's Clauser–Page sides with top billing given to Patti Page, who by then had been signed by Mercury Records and recast as a pop singer.

In 1951, Conley and Music, Inc., were featured in *Resourceful Oklahoma* magazine, which reported that Conley had developed a unique plastic pressing material incorporating pecan-hull flour. The Skyline label was still in production at that point, and Conley was also producing custom labels on request, the article reported. In the same year, the Conley Corporation was launched to manufacture plumbing components of corrosion-resistant resin. Conley abandoned record production until 1978, when he briefly revived the Skyline label, which released LPs of his piano solos. The Conley Corporation remains in business in Tulsa as a manufacturer of pipes and fittings.

MUSIC MART RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1948

Offices: 510 15th St., Oakland, CA

Record Products: Music Mart

Launched in mid-1946 as the recording division of Music Mart, a record and sheet-music retailer based in Oakland, California. The Music Mart label received a passing mention in *Billboard* in August 1946, and its first two releases were advertised the following month. In November, Music Mart advertised that it was discontinuing sheet-music sales to concentrate on its own publications and record label.

Music Mart did little advertising for its own records, and distribution appears to have been mostly local. The recording operation was last listed by *Billboard* in its May 1947 label directory. However, it was still active as late as September 1948, when *Billboard* reported that the company had purchased a group of masters from Chick Denk and his Lonesome Valley Cowboys. No significant information has been found after that date, and by the early 1950s the Music Mart name was being used for an unrelated New York label.

MUSIC OF THE ORIENT COMPANY — See Maloof Phonograph Company

MUSIC YOU ENJOY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1939 – 1952

Offices: 420 Lexington Ave., New York

Record Products: A Best Loved Famous Music Presentation, Erno Rapee Melody Land; Caravan, Kiddie Records, Little Masters, Listen-Look Record and Picture Book, Melody Land Record Book, Pied Piper, Pixie, Toy Time (all children's); probably others

Founded in 1939 by John Henry (Harry) Alderton, Jr. Officers included Alderton (president), Wilder Gutterson (treasurer,) and D. J. Randall (secretary), and D. O. Brickner serving as sales manager. The company filed a copyright registration on March 2, 1940, for the slogan, "Have you called for your first record yet?"

The company's first label bore the clumsy name, A Best Loved Famous Music Presentation. An inexpensive light-classical line, it was produced for Alderton by the Columbia Recording Corporation. Following the World's Greatest Music model, the records were promoted and distributed by a newspaper — in this case, Hearst's *Journal American* (New York). Alderton hired musicologist Sigmund Spaeth to oversee production of the series, although the extent of his actual involvement is uncertain. Labels credited unnamed "World Renowned Artists" under Spaeth's direction, but Columbia's recording files reveal that the performers were

actually members of the CBS Orchestra, a studio ensemble conducted by Howard Barlow. Some of the recordings were later dubbed and reissued (still credited to Spaeth) on Little Masters, a children's label.

In May 1940, *Time* magazine reported that 250,000 Best Loved records had already been sold. Unlike World's Greatest Music, which produced only multi-disc sets devoted to extended works, Best Loved Famous Music Presentations focused on shorter compositions that could be contained on single discs, which retailed for 59¢ each. The Publishers Service Company (distributor of the World's Greatest Music records) quickly sued Alderton for \$250,000 for copying its concept. Alderton brushed off the allegation, maintaining "[it's] just as if Henry Ford tried to sue Walter Chrysler for putting a rival car on the market," but distribution of his label appears to have been suspended a short time later.

Alderton then moved into the burgeoning children's record market. He is believed to have been involved with the production of Musette's children's series as early as 1940 (but not with Musette's standard series, which was produced by the United States Record Corporation). His own Pied Piper label, introduced in seven-inch format in the early 1940s, was eventually joined by several other children's lines, all of which were distributed by Barth-Feiberg, Inc. (New York). Ten-inch Pied Piper pressings were added in 1949.

In November 1946, *Cash Box* reported that Music You Enjoy had acquired the manufacturing rights to a paper-thin flexible plastic disc, but nothing further was reported concerning the product. Alderton died in May 1949, and production continued under different management into 1952.

MUSICAL PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY

Founded: 1898

Offices: 57 W. 24th St., New York

Record Products: Cylinders

Launched in early 1898 by Stephen W. Giles, with G. M. Van Horn serving as general manager. The Musical Phonograph Record Company reserved advertising space in the March 1898 *Phonoscope* that went unused. Its only known advertisement (touting "original records [made by] the most celebrated artists") appeared in the following month's *Phonoscope*, which reported that the company had merged with the Excelsior Phonograph Company. It is not known whether the Musical Phonograph Record Company made its own recordings, nor whether any of its products reached the market before the merger with Excelsior took place.

MUSICART RECORDS — See Art Service Music

MUSICRAFT RECORDS / MUSICRAFT (RECORDING) CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1936–1950

Offices: 45 W. 45th St., New York (from 1936); 10 W. 47th St., New York (from 1938); 40 W. 46th St. and 242 W. 55th St., New York (mid-1940s); 245 E. 23rd St., New York (from 1947)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios—New York, Los Angeles

Pressing: Own plants—Warren St., Phillipsburg, NJ (from late 1941); Ossining, New York (from 9/1946); Norwalk, CT (former Guild Records plant, 1946–1948); contracted to outside plants on occasion, including Scranton Record Company (1940–c. 1941), Starr Piano Company (to mid-1944), Olympic Record Corporation (Los Angeles, from mid-1940s; purchased 1/1948), Sonora (1947–1948), and Perfection Plastics Products (Los Angeles, from 1949).

Record Products: Musicraft; Guild (from 1946), Hamp-Tone (subsidiary, 1946), Masterpiece, Musicraft Party Records, Night Life in New York, Philharmonic [2], Service Stores Music Lovers Club; masters for New Music Quarterly, Party Record Co., Red Robin (children's), TAC Records, and other independent labels; custom and private labels; transcriptions and air-checks; other special-use recordings; Duralite recording blanks

Founded in late 1936, Musicraft Records advertised its initial releases in February 1937. At the time of its founding, Musicraft was headed by former attorney Milton L. Rein and music teacher Henry Cohen. Herman Adler, recently arrived from Germany, was hired as the company's musical researcher. Musicraft initially was a subsidiary of the Jefferson Travis Radio Corporation (incorporated in 1937 to design and manufacture two-way radios), and for several years its studio produced air-checks as a side-line.

The company experienced difficulty engaging distributors in its early years and so encouraged customers to purchase the records directly by mail order. In November 1937, *Time* reported that Musicraft's monthly record sales had quadrupled since its founding. A radio transcription division, under the management of Duane M. Davis, was opened in the late 1930s.

Musicraft initially specialized in high-quality, premium-priced recordings of esoteric classical fare that had received little or no exposure on the major labels. The 1938 Musicraft catalog listed more than forty releases, including many multi-disc sets, nearly all of them devoted to classical material. Musicraft's 1941 releases by the Manuel & Williamson Harpsichord Ensemble, which included the first commercial recordings of several Bach and Vivaldi concerti, were typical of the label's early output, which earned high praise from the critics but sold in only minuscule quantities.

Notable early non-classical releases included the original Mercury Production cast recording of Marc Blitzstein's "The Cradle Will Rock" and The Revuers' "The Girl with Two Left Feet," with Leonard Bernstein as accompanist on his first commercially issued recordings. (In a letter to Bernstein concerning The Revuers' March 1940 session, cast member Betty Comden referred to Musicraft as "that unmentionable recording outfit.") There was also a small catalog of American folk songs and spirituals, which included performances by Carl Sandburg, Leadbelly, and the Hampton Institute Quartet.

Musicraft initially contracted its pressing to the Gennett Records plant, and it eventually agreed to finance improvements to that portion of the plant in which its discs were pressed. The Scranton Record Company also made some pressing for Musicraft in the early 1940s, but in late 1941 Musicraft opened its own pressing plant, and its relationships with Starr and Scranton were soon severed. By the mid-1940s the Olympic Record Corporation (a wholly owned Musicraft subsidiary, unrelated to the similarly named 1920s company) was handling Musicraft's pressing on the West Coast.

In late 1940, Musicraft acquired some of Eli Oberstein's Varsity and Royale masters, which the company used to enter the cheap-record market. The initial Oberstein-derived product was the Masterpiece label, offering inexpensive and mostly anonymous classical and operatic releases that were pressed by Scranton and sold in drugstores and other unlikely outlets. Other Oberstein material was reissued on Musicraft's Red Robin label, a children's line that was numbered in the same series as Masterpiece. Later Masterpiece releases used material from a variety of domestic and foreign sources, usually disguised by false master numbers. Some of the material was later recycled on Service Stores Music Lovers Club and similar cheap labels.

By the early 1940s, Musicraft products were being handled by several major distributors, including J. F. Bard in the Midwest. The company claimed to have sold six-million classical records in 1941, but production plummeted in 1942 as the result of wartime shellac shortages and difficulty in obtaining new recordings during the American Federation of Musicians' recording ban. On August 10, 1942, Musicraft Records licensed its masters and turned over record production to the newly organized Musicraft Corporation, of which Paul Puner served as president and Oliver Sabin as vice-president. After filing for bankruptcy in October 1942, the original Musicraft Records was reorganized in February 1942 as a Musicraft Corporation subsidiary, selling albums, record racks, and recording blanks, and other accessories.

Puner's first acquisition for Musicraft was the Party Record Company. The company's mildly suggestive "adult" records had gone largely unnoticed as the product of a small niche operation, but Musicraft's continued production of the label caught the attention of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. A summons was served in 1944, but Puner was acquitted of obscenity charges.

The Musicraft Corporation continued to operate into early 1944, when the Gennett plant suspended pressing services for delinquent payment. In November 1945, the Jefferson Travis Corporation acquired Musicraft's stock. Puner was retained as president for the time being, taking the opportunity in the 1945 *Record Retailing Yearbook* to rail against the coming of tape recording and long-playing records.

Musicraft was again reorganized, during the spring of 1946, the result of which was its re-incorporation in New York on May 11 as Musicraft Records, Inc. Peter Hilton, a New York advertising executive, replaced Paul Puner as president. Puner stayed on as manager

of the classical music department for a time, but no longer had any significant influence on the company's overall operations. Under Hilton's management, Musicraft in January 1946 purchased Guild Records' trademark, masters, and pressing plant, which were gradually merged into the Musicraft operation. The company made trade-paper headlines a month later, when it signed a two-year agreement with band leader Artie Shaw after what *Variety* described as "weeks of dickering" that concluded with Shaw agreeing to accept partial compensation in the form of stock. Musicraft made unprecedented concessions, giving Shaw complete control over title selection, requiring his written approval before releasing any recording, and mandating reversion of rights to Shaw for any recordings not issued within a specified time after expiration of his contract. As part of the deal, Musicraft acquired some masters that Shaw had recorded independently prior to signing with the company, which were used for his initial releases.

In May 1946, Musicraft took over Gladys Hampton's fledgling Hamp-Tone Records, which it reorganized as a subsidiary. In the same month, the company lured Duke Ellington with an exclusive three-year contract guaranteeing Ellington a minimum annual income of \$75,000, with a cash advance for each approved title. Concerns were expressed over the pressing plant's ability to keep up with the anticipated demand for Ellington's and Shaw's records. However, they proved not be particularly strong sellers, and Ellington left Musicraft at the end of his first year with the company.

By 1946, Musicraft records were being handled by more than two-dozen distributors, including agencies in Hawaii, Cuba, and Canada. That summer, Musicraft expanded its presence in the pop market with its signing of Sarah Vaughan and Mel Tormé. In August, Hilton signed an agreement with Electric & Musical Industries (London) under which EMI would press Musicraft material for distribution in thirty-eight nations. Initially, there was no provision for reciprocity. In June 1948, however, a tentative agreement was announced under which EMI would supply Musicraft with British-made masters on demand. Musicraft made a belated effort to break into the jukebox market in the autumn of 1946, initially just in the New York area.

On October 22, 1946, the Emerson Radio Corporation acquired the Jefferson Travis Corporation's radio- and record-related assets, including Musicraft Records, which was reorganized as the Musicraft Recording Corporation. Rumors of a merger with Apollo Records in January 1947 proved to be unfounded, but a major personnel change was confirmed on May 28, when the new Musicraft Recording Corporation was merged with the old Musicraft Records, Inc. Former Decca executive Jack Meyerson replaced Peter Hilton as president of the newly reorganized company. Paul Puner finally resigned in November 1947, to launch his own Allegro label.

During the summer of 1948, Meyerson announced that Musicraft was preparing to produce children's and classical LPs "based on the microgroove principle." He declined to supply further details, other than to note that the records would comprise a mixture of new material and reissues from the existing catalog. However, Musicraft's record sales continued to disappoint, and production was suspended in the autumn of 1948. In early December, Musicraft Records and its subsidiaries filed a petition for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The company's two pressing plants (the Musicraft Manufacturing Company in Ossining, and the Olympic Recording Company subsidiary in Los Angeles) were offered for sale in February 1949.

Meyerson brushed off the plant sales as inconsequential to Musicraft's continued operations and announced that the company was preparing some new releases by Mel Tormé and Sarah Vaughan. But Musicraft had already forfeited its contract with Tormé, to whom it owed \$18,000 in back royalties, and Vaughan was now demanding that Musicraft release her from her contract. When her request was ignored, she filed a motion in bankruptcy court in March 1949 demanding that Musicraft either fulfill the terms of her contract (requiring the company to resume recording her and pay \$10,000 in back royalties) or abandon it. The latter course was taken.

By the summer of 1949, Musicraft was in receivership. The marketing and distributing arms continued to operate into 1950 under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. Among the proposals made to Musicraft's creditors was an offer to buy 200,000 discs for 2¢ each, which apparently was rejected. Eventually, Musicraft's masters were licensed to M-G-M, an agreement that was later nullified for non-payment on M-G-M's part. The masters were

then purchased by Eli Oberstein, who dubbed some of them for reissue on inexpensive Allegro and Royale LPs. After decades of inactivity, Musicraft Records, Inc., was dissolved by proclamation on December 28, 1994.

MUTUAL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: Basset, VA; Chillicothe, IL, and Lancaster, CA (distribution)

Record Products: Mutual

A country-and-western label launched in May 1950 by country-music fiddler by Dee Stone, as successor to his short-lived Liberty Recording Company.

Stone initially signed East Coast artists and distributed Mutual Records locally, but he was soon also using Midwestern talent and distributing in Illinois and Nebraska. By the end of 1950, Ray Parker's California-based Valley Music Company was handling West Coast distribution (an anecdotal report that Parker was a co-owner of Mutual Records has not been confirmed). Parker recruited many of his artists from West Coast and Midwestern radio stations, the last of whom appear to have been Fred Thornton (KFRE–Fresno, California) and Johnny Haynes (WJPF–Herrin, Illinois). *Billboard* briefly noted their signings in July 1951 but reported nothing further concerning the company.

MUZAK (TRANSCRIPTIONS), INC. / MUZAK CORPORATION / ASSOCIATED MUSIC PUBLISHERS RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1934

Offices: North American Building, New York (to early 1938); 229 4th Ave., New York (from early 1938); 151 W. 46th St., New York (Muzak, from early 1940s); 151 W. 46th St., New York (Associated Program Service division); 25 W. 45th St. (Associated Music Publishers); branch offices in Cleveland and elsewhere

Original-Master Source(s): Electrical Research Products (1934–mid-1936), World Broadcasting studios (mid-1936–4/1938); Associated Music Publishers studio (1938–1942); 151 W. 46th St., New York (transcription division, from 1942)

Pressing: Own plants — New York (to 8/1949), Elizabethtown, Kentucky (from 8/1949)

Record Products: Masters for Beacon, Capitol, Majestic [3], Silvertone Record Club, and other commercial labels; Associated and Muzak transcriptions; custom pressings

Although primarily a transcription producer, Muzak and its Associated Music Publishers Recording Studios also provided recording services for commercial labels in the 1940s.

Muzak had its roots in Major General George Owen Squier "wired wireless" system. The inventor of telephone carrier multiplexing, he developed a method of delivering radio broadcasts over telephone or electric lines to customers in their homes. Rights to Squier's system were acquired by the North American Company, a major utilities provider, which formed Wired Radio, Inc., as a subsidiary to deliver music via wired radios on a subscription basis. The company applied for a permit from the Federal Radio Commission on January 5, 1928, requesting several short-wave bands as a temporary expedient while it built-out its wired network. While waiting for FRC approval, Squier tested a small network using telephone lines in Freeport, Illinois.

The impending national roll-out of Squier's network was finally announced in March 1929, with service slated to begin on an experimental basis, starting with Cleveland, in May. Subscription costs ranged from \$2 to \$5 per month, the latter including rental of a radio specially modified to receive both wired and wireless broadcasts. However, the ready availability of free wireless broadcasts, coupled with the onset of the Great Depression undermined demand for the service.

Development languished until 1934, when Wired Radio (now headed by Wadill Catchings) began to test an ad-free subscription service via rented wired receivers, naming the new venture Muzak. To supply the tremendous amount of material required, Muzak launched its own recording program in affiliation with Associated Music Publishers (also a North American Company subsidiary). Regular recording sessions began in December 1934 and for the first few years were held at independent studios, including Electrical Research Products and World Broadcasting, under the supervision of Ben Selvin. They were often marathon affairs. At one of the most grueling, on December 28, 1934, Joe Venuti's Orchestra recorded thirty-two selections for use on Associated transcriptions.

Following the conclusion of a successful a large-scale test in Cleveland in February 1935, Muzak began commercial development of its subscription service in earnest. By August of that year the company had solidified its affiliation with Associated Music Publishers, signed a royalty agreement with the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), and was producing transcribed programs on a regular basis. The initial offering comprised three main program groups, designated Class A (jazz, dance, and popular vocal), Class B (light classics and standards), and Class C (a hybrid channel offering news, lectures, church services, and occasional instrumental selections).

Muzak officials initially declared that the company would not distribute its material in transcription form. They then reversed themselves in October 1935, allowing sales of the discs to radio stations outside of the company's very limited wired-service areas. Unlike the later "elevator music" for which Muzak is best known, the early programs featured current hits performed by well-known bands and vocalists, most of whom were also under contract to the commercial recording companies. In October 1935, *Variety* reported, "Practically all the top dance combos in the country have made recordings for Muzak." Although that was an exaggeration, Muzak's recording program at the time was among the most active in the nation. In late 1937, it was reported that Muzak owned a library of 7,500 recordings.

In December 1937, Catchings began to negotiate the sale of Muzak to Warner Brothers Pictures, of which he was a board member. The sale, which included Muzak's Associated Music Publishers affiliate, was finalized on April 1, 1938. On April 5, the Associated Music Publishers Recording Studios were funded to serve as Muzak's recording division, ending the company's reliance on independent studios. The two-story air-conditioned studio suite was managed by Gordon Jones and used equipment licensed from Electrical Research Products, Jones' former employer. With so much studio capacity available, the company began offering custom recording services in the late 1930s and eventually produced masters for Beacon, Capitol, and other commercial labels. Muzak occasionally booked other companies' facilities for sessions outside of New York, including Victor Damon's Kansas City studio. The New York studios were sold to RCA Victor in 1951, for use by its Custom Record division.

In February 1941, it was announced that advertising executive William Benton had bought into Associated Music Publishers and would take an active role in managing its various operations, including Muzak. Ben Selvin was promoted to vice-president of program recording at the same time. He resigned from Muzak on June 1, 1945, to take a job with the newly launched Majestic Records.

Muzak originally operated its own pressing plant in New York, which was known for high-quality work. After the plant was unable to obtain sufficient quantities of plastic from the Bakelite Corporation in 1946, Muzak developed its own formulation, which at first was dyed cherry red. In June 1949, the company announced that it was closing the New York plant and would be moving all manufacturing facilities to Elizabethtown, Kentucky. *Billboard* at that time reported that Muzak had been handling contract plating and pressing work for several unspecified independent labels (one of which was Sears Roebuck's Silvertone Record Club).

Benton expanded his control of Associated Music Publishers and Muzak substantially before disposing of his interests in the later 1940s. Muzak's subsequent development of programmed background music, and its later expansion into prefabricated playlists for radio stations, are beyond the scope of this work.

In 1981 Muzak was sold to the Westinghouse Corporation, the first in a succession of new owners who attempted to modernize the operation. Those efforts ultimately failed, and on February 10, 2009, Muzak Holdings LLC filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. A reorganization plan was approved by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court on January 12, 2010. In March 2011, Mood Media purchased Muzak Holdings for \$345 million. The company retired the Muzak brand on February 5, 2013.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR MUSIC APPRECIATION — See *World's Greatest Music*

NATIONAL FILM AND RECORDING COMPANY / CORPORATION — See *Richard Bradley and Associates*

NATIONAL GRAMOPHONE COMPANY — See *Berliner, Emile*

NATIONAL GRAMOPHONE CORPORATION — See *Universal Talking Machine (Manufacturing) Company*

NATIONAL RADIO RECORDING / MAGNOLIA RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1940s – c. 1950s

Offices: 424 Godchaux Building, New Orleans

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Record Products: Magnolia [1], Raymac; private and custom recordings

Primarily a custom-recording service, National Radio Recording advertised that it had a studio vocalist and pianist on staff. The company also produced at least two short-lived commercial labels in the late 1940s. Magnolia, credited to the Magnolia Recording Company (New Orleans), reportedly operated between July and September 1947 and released titles by Pinky Vidakovich and his Cajuns and Jelly Elliot and his Singing Cowboys. The even shorter-lived Raymac label, credited to National Radio Recording, made a single known release by Walter (Fatz) Pichon.

NATIONAL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1930s

Offices: Probably New York

Record Products: National [6]

An apparently short-lived company specializing in Greek music, of unknown ownership. The few confirmed issues, which are electrically recorded, appear to be original to the company. Labels cite a June 1930 patent, with no number shown.

NATIONAL RECORDS COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1950

Offices: 1841 Broadway, New York

Pressing: Own plants — Phillipsburg, NJ (from 1944); Chicago (from early 1945)

Record Products: National [7]; pressings for independent labels

Founded in 1944 by Albert B. (Al) Green, his son Irving (who departed after a year to launch Mercury Records), and A. M. Cary, who initially served as president. Subsidiaries included National Disc Sales (distribution) and National Music Publishing, both of which were listed at the same Broadway address as the record company; and National Record Pressing, which also provided services to other labels. Production was briefly suspended at the New Jersey plant in July 1945, after it was damaged by a severe storm.

National's first releases were announced in the summer of 1940. Initially there were country-and-western, race, and pop series, retailing for 75¢, and a jazz series retailing for \$1. A calypso series was added in mid-1945, with initial releases by Sam Manning's Serenaders and Muriel Gaines. A children's series was added in late 1946, and a 60¢ budget line was announced at the same time, although little more was heard of it.

National's early artist roster included Joe Turner, Pete Johnson, Emmett Berry, Billy Eckstine, Don Byas' Swing Seven with Dizzy Gillespie, Hank D'Amico, and Al Trace. Its most prolific country-and-western star was Republic Picture's Dick Thomas, who stockpiled some masters for National before enlisting in the Army in February 1945. A push to expand the country-and-western catalog in 1947 resulted in the signing of some generally obscure East Coast performers who failed to attract much attention.

National apparently had difficulties retaining artists-and-repertoire managers. In February 1946, Emile Cote joined the company in that capacity but was soon replaced by

Herb Abramson, who resigned the following November to join the launch of Atlantic Records. His replacement was Seva Foullon, from United Masters. Foullon was succeeded in July 1948 by Lee Magid, who just a month earlier had been hired to handle National's disc-jockey promotions. Magid was replaced in February 1949 by Hy Siegel, from Apollo Records, who also took over the sales manager's slot. He departed after a month.

During the summer of 1946, a rumor circulated that Cosmo Records was planning to buy out National. It proved to be untrue, although the two companies did develop a working relationship, with National pressing for Cosmo, and Cosmo's distributors handling National records beginning in August 1946. National survived Cosmo's demise in early 1947 and went on to have several hits that year, most notably the Ravens' "Ol' Man River," the demand for which reportedly forced around-the-clock production at National's Phillipsburg pressing plant. Dusty Fletcher's "Open the Door, Richard," another hit, sparked a legal battle between National's music-publishing subsidiary (the copyright holder on Fletcher's version of the song, which he claimed to have originated as part of his vaudeville act) and Leeds Music (the copyright holder on the McVea-Clark-Howell version, which Leeds claimed Fletcher had appropriated).

Robert (Bob) Shad joined the National staff in 1947. The company spent December of that year stockpiling masters in advance of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, including sessions with a dozen newly signed artists. At the start of the ban, Green announced that he had sufficient unissued material on hand to weather a three-to-five-year strike. But as other companies that stockpiled masters would later discover, many of the songs were too outdated to be of much commercial value by the time the ban ended a year later.

Plastic pressings replaced shellac during the late summer of 1949. LPs followed in the autumn, beginning with an album of previously released Billy Eckstine recordings, for which jazz critic Leonard Feather wrote the liner notes. In February 1950, National took the unusual step of co-releasing its recording of Eileen Barton's "If I Knew You Were Coming, I'd Have Baked a Cake" on Mercury. (*Billboard* was quick to point that National president Al Green was the father of Mercury president Irving Green.) The record proved to be an exceptionally strong seller, although much more so on Mercury than on National.

Barton subsequently moved to Decca's Coral subsidiary, after buying out the balance of her National contract, and Billy Eckstine left for M-G-M Records at about the same time. In early 1951, National lost the Ravens, one of its most popular vocal groups, to Columbia. National sued the group, claiming it still owed the company an unspecified number of recordings under its expired contract, but lost its case. By then, National had suspended recording, and was leasing some of its masters to Savoy. In September 1953, Al Green finally turned the National masters over to Jubilee's Jerry Blaine, who issued some previously unreleased titles. Joseph Leahy's National Records, launched in 1957, is of no relation to Green's company.

THE NATIONAL VOCARIUM (Discs)

Record Production: 1939–1943

Offices: 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York (at founding); 610 5th Ave., New York (1940s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: General Records, RCA Victor

Record Products: The National Vociarium; transcriptions, custom recordings

Founded by Robert Vincent, who dedicated The National Vociarium to "the perpetuation of the living voice." A childhood friend of Thomas Edison's son Charles, Vincent apprenticed at the Edison laboratories in the 1920s. In 1935 he opened his own studio in New York, where he specialized in restoring historic recordings. He began transcribing cylinders electrically in 1938, using a system developed by sound engineer William Savory. Among the first items he transferred were C. R. Johnstone's private cylinder recordings of prominent Victorian-era public figures (see Bell Recording Corporation).

Vincent launched The National Vociarium as a commercial venture in 1939, the same year in which the label design was copyrighted. At about the same time, he began to offer script-production, radio transcription, and custom recording services.

Most National Vociarium releases employed Vincent's dubbings from private and commercially issued recordings, ranging from the 1890s to the late 1930s, by important

historical figures. Among the voices heard on National Vocarium transfers were those of P. T. Barnum, Sarah Bernhardt, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Joseph Jefferson, Admiral Peary, James Whitcomb Riley, and George Bernard Shaw. The most recent recording was a 1936 speech by Amelia Earhart. Many releases included newly recorded introductory comments. Pressing initially was handled by Hazard Reeves' General Records.

The New York Times reported that the records were intended primarily for schools, universities, and libraries. However, they were also carried by several specialty record shops, and selected issues were marketed by the International Record Collectors' Club. Some were also issued concurrently on Reeves' General Voices from History label. RCA Victor's custom-record division took over pressing after General suspended operations.

In 1943 Vincent enlisted in the U.S. Army, where he directed V-Disc production for several years. He also served as a subcontractor for V-Disc pressing work (which he generally turned over to the Clark Phonograph Company) until 1947. The National Vocarium remained in business during Vincent's absence but did not produce any new issues. Many of Vincent's dubbings were later reissued (often without credit or apparent authorization) in LP compilations of historic voice recordings.

THE NATION'S FORUM (Discs)

Record Production: 1918 – 1920

Offices: St. Louis, MO, and Washington, DC (1918–1919); 33 W. 42nd St., New York (from mid-1919)

Original-Master Source(s): Columbia Graphophone Company

Pressing: Columbia Graphophone Company

Record Products: Nation's Forum

A society headed by St. Louis attorney Guy Golterman, The Nation's Forum was launched to preserve "the utterances of contemporaneous public men in a historical library by means of an intensified phonographic process." Golterman announced formation of the group in St. Louis on January 3, 1918, with the encouragement of George Creel, of the U. S. State Department Committee on Public Information. Initially, the records were to be used in conjunction with the Liberty Loan campaigns and other war-related activities.

Golterman originally planned to open recording studios in New York, Chicago, and one or two other unnamed American cities, as well as in London and Paris. In the end, however, recording and manufacturing were contracted to the Columbia Graphophone Company, which made most of the recordings in its New York studio. All but the first release consisted of studio re-creations of previously delivered speeches, abridged to fit on one side of a record.

Nation's Forum's first release was General J. J. Pershing's very brief message, "From the Battlefields of France," a 10" disc released in June 1918. Despite what its title suggests, the recording was made in Columbia's London studio. Newspapers reported that the master was shipped to an undisclosed American port aboard a "heavily convoyed" steamer, and backup sub-masters were hidden away in England and France. Coupled with Ambassador James W. Gerard's stern warning to potentially disloyal German-Americans, and supported by a nationwide advertising campaign during the summer of 1918, the record was a national best-seller. Columbia boasted that "its sale will be limited only by the shipments from the Columbia factory."

The rest of Nation's Forum's output from 1918 through 1919 was not intended for sale to the general public, having been pressed in limited numbers for distribution by political and special-interest groups. "Eventually," one newspaper predicted, "the records will find their way along with others into voters' homes." Unlike the Pershing issue, they are rarely encountered today.

Nation's Forum records were reintroduced to the general public in September 1919, when a new series was announced in connection with the 1920 presidential campaign, produced with the cooperation of the Democratic and Republican national committees. However, the announcement was premature, and little more was heard of the series until March 1920, when *The Talking Machine World* finally reported that the first of the new series was "now ready." Two releases, one pro-Republican and one pro-Democrat, were to be offered monthly. Retailing for \$2 each, the 12" discs were given redesigned purple labels onto which photographs of the speakers were pasted (a later black-label version dispensed with the photos). The reverse sides were filled out with military-band selections

from the Columbia catalog. Selected releases were listed briefly in the Columbia catalog, and some Nation's Forum pressings in this series are known with standard Columbia labels on the musical sides.

Among the speakers who re-created their speeches for Nation's Forum were Champ Clark, Calvin Coolidge, Homer S. Cummings (chairman of the Democratic National Committee), Warren G. Harding, Will H. Hays (chairman of the Republican National Committee, and later president of the Association of Motion Picture Producers), Henry Cabot Lodge, A. Mitchell Palmer, John D. Rockefeller, Franklin D. Roosevelt (as governor of New York, in his first commercially published recording), and Leonard Wood. Harding was by far the most prolific of Nation's Forum's speakers, with eight recordings to his credit, not all of which were issued. A 5½" Nation's Forum disc, containing a highly abridged version of Harding's "Americanism" speech, was recently discovered. It was assigned Little Wonder catalog number 1337 but was not listed in either the Nation's Forum or Little Wonder catalogs. It is not known to have been advertised, but likely was the record that one newspaper report said would be sold nationally beginning on July 4, 1920.

Nation's Forum made only one known foray into foreign politics, with the release of three specially labeled sides by Eamon De Valera, a leading figure in the Irish nationalist movement. The society donated 25¢ from the sale of each copy to the American Association for the Recognition of the Republic of Ireland. Plans to record sermons, lectures, business talks, and foreign leaders, announced at the time of Nation's Forum founding in 1918, were never realized.

The last Nation's Forum recordings were made in the late summer of 1920, and the society was dismantled following the November elections. A different Nation's Forum label was used in mid-1921 on an unrelated private issue made by Okeh for baritone George Potter.

The Library of Congress, in researching its 1997 Nation's Forum online presentation, unearthed documentation for fifty-nine Nation's Forum recordings in the Columbia files. More than one take was used for some releases, a standard practice for Columbia at the time. Many recordings made for Nation's Forum were not released; however, some metal parts survived and were used in the 1990s to make pressings for the library's use.

A NATURAL HIT! RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 408–10 Gladys Ave., Los Angeles (1947)

Record Products: A Natural Hit!

Launched in 1947 by jazz pianist and composer John Erby, in partnership with John Costa, Jr., as a jazz and rhythm-and-blues label.

A Natural Hit!'s initial release was announced in March 1947. Erby's small artist roster included his wife, veteran cabaret-blues singer Monette Moore, whose first release was dismissed by a *Billboard* reviewer as "old-hat." Five Natural Hit! releases have been reliably reported, the last of which appeared in 1949. According to Erby, the company closed because of distribution problems. It last appeared in *Billboard*'s July 1951 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

NATURAL RECORDS — See Jubilee Records Company / Jay-Gee Record Company

NEALE MUSIC — See Wrightman, Neale

NEBRASKA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Founded: 1888

Offices: 305 S. 16th St., Omaha, NE

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in eastern Nebraska. Its sales territory was later extended to cover the entire state.

Articles of incorporation were filed in Omaha on November 3, 1888, by George E. Tewksbury and Simon S. Ott (both of whom would soon be involved with the Kansas

Phonograph Company as well), Frank Murphy, J. O. Phillippi, Frank Drake, and Hamilton S. Wickes, with territory said to comprise all of Nebraska, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming. The *Nebraska State Journal* gave Tewksbury's name as "Tewksling" and referred to the venture as the "Nebraska and Iowa Phonograph Company" in error. Operations were set to commence on November 15, 1888, but the company apparently failed to launch at that time.

New articles of incorporation were filed for a reorganized Nebraska Phonograph Company on January 31, 1889, with territory now comprising only the eastern portion of Nebraska. Incorporators were Tewksbury and Ott (the only members of the original venture), Erastus A. Benson (director of the Central Nebraska Phonograph Company), George F. Wright (also of Central Nebraska Phonograph), and George B. Holt. Benson, one of the company's major shareholders, served as president. In or around June 1891, Nebraska Phonograph absorbed the Central Nebraska Phonograph Company, which controlled sales in the western portion of the state. The company's charter was not cancelled until 1909.

Although Nebraska Phonograph is known to have made musical recordings for exhibition purposes, no evidence has been found to suggest that the records were intended for sale to the general public.

NEW BOURBON RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. Late 1940s

Offices: Hollywood, CA (P.O. box number only)

Record Products: New Bourbon

A short-lived "party" label produced by comedian and female impersonator Ray Bourbon. The few known releases are the same sort of mildly risqué fare featured on Bourbon's earlier Imperial records (*see* Imperial Records [I]). The company was first listed in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook*, but it did not advertise openly and appears to have gone dormant by the late 1940s.

Bourbon's behavior became increasingly bizarre in later years. In 1956 he claimed to have undergone a sex-change operation in Mexico, during the course of which his surgeon supposedly found uterine tissue. The tale gained him some brief publicity but otherwise did nothing to revive his failing career. On February 21, 1970, Bourbon was convicted as an accomplice to murder, following a botched attempt to retrieve his dogs from a kennel by force. He was sentenced to ninety-nine years in prison in Big Spring, Texas, where he died in July 1971.

NEW ENGLAND PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1890 – 1901

Offices: Gardiner, ME (at founding); 657 Washington St. (5/1889– c. 1896); 95 Summer St., Boston (from c. 1896)

Record Products: New England cylinders

The New England Phonograph Company was incorporated in Maine on October 4, 1888 (mistakenly reported as October 12 in *The Phonogram*), with a capital stock offering of \$2 million that reportedly was fully subscribed by 1890. On October 12, 1888, it was licensed by Jesse H. Lippincott to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs, as a sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, in all of New England. Lippincott was the company's largest initial private investor, holding 4,000 shares, all but 300 of which he had sold by 1891.

The company reportedly did not commence active operations until early May 1889, when its offices were moved to Boston from Gardiner, Maine. By 1890, Gen. A. P. Martin was listed as president, A. Foster Higgins as vice-president, Charles E. Powers as secretary (and later that year, treasurer), and George L. Rogers as general manager (later replaced by August N. Sampson). Other than Rogers, all officers were residing in Boston or New York by then. Col. L. E. Evans, later said to have been instrumental in the company's organization, did not appear on the shareholders' list until 1892.

By mid-1890, New England Phonograph had opened agencies in Portland, Maine, and Providence, Rhode Island, and was planning to do so at other locations in those states.

New Hampshire was also being considered, but August Sampson reported that the company did "not expect to do much" in Vermont.

In May 1890, Sampson stated that New England Phonograph initially had worked "not very energetically" to place machines with businesses, preferring to wait until more reliable models became available. It was more energetic in the entertainment field, placing more than fifty coin-operated phonographs throughout the region in 1890. *The Phonogram* for June–July 1891 reported that the company had "invaded all the beaches with the melodious music produced by the phonograph." The company also maintained an exhibition department that staged public phonograph concerts, under Sampson's management. (*The Phonogram* initially credited F. A. Ashcroft as department manager, in error, then later corrected its report.)

The New England Phonograph Company made original cylinder recordings, possibly as early as 1890. *The Phonogram* for April 1891 reported that the cast of "Ship Ahoy," from Boston's Park Theatre, had recorded selections from the show that caused "a great deal of attraction" when played in the theater lobby. The company repeated that feat in the autumn of 1892, in the same theater, with its recordings of selections from the Rice Prize Company's production of "1492."

The Phonogram for November–December 1891 opined that New England Phonograph was making "what are considered the best musical records offered to the public." The artist roster at that time included Richard J. Jose, Will F. Denny, J. W. Myers, Clarence Coldrin, Russell Hunting, the Bison City Quartet, and Baldwin's Cadet Band. Hunting's "Casey" routines proved so popular that they were soon being copied by competitors. An April 1892 advertisement warned that genuine "Casey" records "can only be obtained of this company, although some other companies advertise them."

In July 1892, New England Phonograph advertised that it had "a large variety of miscellaneous records which cannot be cataloged...many of which are very unique, and admirably adapted to private collections." There are anecdotal reports that some of those special offerings consisted of risqué material considered not suitable for public distribution, but reliable documentation is lacking. In addition, the company stocked records produced by what were termed "sister companies," presumably referring to some other North American Phonograph sub-companies.

New England Phonograph's recording studio was managed for a time by Calvin G. Child, who moved from there to the Ohio Phonograph Company in late 1896. *The Phonoscope* for November 1896 reported that the company was experimenting with a new method for recording the Baldwin Cadet Band, and the resulting records were prominently advertised the following month.

An American Graphophone Company patent-infringement suit against New England Phonograph was dismissed on June 19, 1896. The company appears to have been reorganized by then, under August Sampson's general management. Evans departed in late 1898 to form the Continental Phonograph and Record Company. At about the same time, an apparently foreign-based con artist using the alias "F. P. Moore" began accepting orders under the name of the New England Phonograph Company. The scam was foiled after being discovered by officials of the actual New England Phonograph Company, which arranged to have his mail confiscated.

The New England Phonograph Company appears to have suspended its own record production by late 1899 or early 1900. It ceased doing business in 1902.

NEW JAZZ RECORD COMPANY / PRESTIGE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1949

Offices: 782 8th Ave., New York (New Jazz); 446 W. 50th St. (Prestige)

Original-Master Source(s): Harry Smith studios (New York) and other independent studios

Record Products (78s): New Jazz, Prestige, Birdland

Launched in early 1949 by Bob Weinstock, the New Jazz Record Company held its first sessions in March of that year. The records were devoted exclusively to modern jazz, with an artist roster that included Stan Getz, Terry Gibbs, Al Haig, Lee Konitz, Jay Jay Johnson, Lennie Tristano, and Kai Winding. Weinstock also licensed recordings from Esquire (England), Metronome (Sweden), and other foreign sources. Distribution was handled by Central Record Sales (Detroit) beginning in July 1949.

In early 1949, Weinstock entered into a partnership with Morris Levy, owner of New York's Birdland nightclub, to produce the Birdland label. Despite the presence of Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt, and some other notable names, the venture collapsed after a few releases. Weinstock took possession of the masters, which he used to launch Prestige Records (*q.v.*) in late 1950. Although Prestige soon became Weinstock's priority, he continued to produce New Jazz (albeit with new labels using the Prestige design) into late 1951. Prestige also distributed Mercer Ellington's Mercer label.

The later history of Prestige is beyond the scope of this work. In 1971 its catalog was sold to Fantasy Records, which in 2004 was acquired by Concord Records.

NEW JERSEY PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Founded: 1889

Offices: 758 Broad St., Newark, NJ (1889–1892); 87–89 Orange St., Newark, NJ (1892)

Record Products: New Jersey cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in New Jersey. The company was organized on February 19, 1889, at which time officers included George G. Frelinghuysen (president), N. M. Butler (vice-president), and William L. Smith (general manager). Smith was replaced by Victor H. Emerson (who also served as recording engineer) in 1892.

The New Jersey Phonograph Company was not particularly successful in promoting its machines for business use. In May 1890, William Smith reported that the company was encountering opposition from stenographers, and that many business leases were not being renewed. "I am among those who believe the machines have come to stay," Smith said, "and when the public get ready for them, they will take them."

New Jersey Phonograph was more successful in the entertainment field. It was listed by *The Phonogram* for June–July 1891 as being active in "the securing of musical selections," and the company confirmed in June 1892 that it was making its own recordings. *The Phonogram* for December 1892 devoted a full page to portraits of New Jersey Phonograph recording artists, who included Will F. Denny, George J. Gaskin, John P. Hogan, Russell Hunting, Len Spencer, and George Washington Johnson.

In February 1893 the New Jersey Phonograph Company was reorganized as the United States Phonograph Company (*q.v.*), although it continued to advertise under the New Jersey name well into the year.

NEW MUSIC QUARTERLY RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1933–1942; 1948

Offices: New York

Original-Master Source(s): Capital Sound Studios, Reeves Sound Studios, Mary Howard Recordings, Musicraft, probably other independent studios

Record Products: New Music Quarterly Recordings, New Music Recordings

Founded in late 1933 by former Yaddo associate Henry Cowell, as an adjunct to his journal, *New Music Quarterly*. Produced with the cooperation of Cowell's League of American Composers, New Music Quarterly was the first label devoted exclusively to the works of contemporary American composers.

The New Music Quarterly label's impending launch was announced in December 1933. A year earlier, Cowell had considered contracting production to Odeon in Germany, then balked at the advance payment Odeon demanded. By the time production commenced, he had settled on the Capital Sound Studios (an independent New York studio unrelated to the later Capitol Records), which held the first NMQ sessions on December 1, 1933. The initial releases, comprising Ruth Crawford's "Andante for String Quartet" and three songs by Adolph Weiss, were announced in January 1934. In late 1934, recording was taken over by the Reeves Sound Studios.

New Music Quarterly records were sold primarily by annual subscription. For \$6.50, subscribers received one year's "volume," consisting of four releases. Individual discs could also be purchased by non-subscribers for \$2 each. NMQ claimed that its releases were the first commercially issued recordings of the works they contained. Among the early offerings were performances by violinist Ruth Crawford Seeger; composer and flutist Lamar

Stringfield; and composer Aaron Copland, as piano accompanist to soprano Ethel Luening. Leonard Bernstein's first issued solo recording (David Diamond's "Prelude and Fugue, No. 3") was made for NMQ in January 1941, after several rounds of sometimes-contentious correspondence between Bernstein and the composer.

Critical response to the NMQ records was mixed. There were many complaints concerning the recording's technical shortcomings. From a musical standpoint, critics generally applauded the effort but sometimes looked askance at the results, a reaction that was shared by some foreign listeners. A 1936 review of Siegmeister and Gold's "Strange Funeral in Braddock" that appeared in the British publication *Gramophone* read in part, "'Advanced' American music is no different from 'advanced' European music. Indeed, it isn't 'Advanced American' at all; it's just 'advanced' (which word I use in kindly preference to 'extremist' — my own private word for all this striving stuff)".

Cowell's involvement with *New Music Quarterly* ended abruptly on May 22, 1936, when he was arrested and jailed in California on what were euphemistically termed "moral charges." An acknowledged bisexual, Cowell entered a not-guilty plea on June 3, only to reverse himself three weeks later. Potentially facing a lengthy prison term, Cowell divested his interests in the journal and record label, turning management over to Wallingford Riegger and Otto Luening. Recording operations were transferred to the Musicraft studio, and distribution of the records was taken over by the Bennington College Cooperative Store, which did virtually nothing to market them to the general public.

Regular quarterly releases were discontinued in February 1940, and the label's name was shortened accordingly, to New Music Recordings. At the same time, distribution was shifted to the American Music Center (New York), and an unsuccessful attempt was made to sell the label to Columbia Records. Cowell was released from prison in May of that year, after which recording operations were moved yet again, first to the Champion Recording Corporation, and later to the Advertisers Recording Service. Production of New Music Recordings was finally suspended in late 1942.

The New Music label was revived briefly in 1948. By then, the parent journal had been renamed *New Music Edition*, but the label name remained unchanged. Its final release consisted of two 10" discs containing excerpts from a New York concert by flutist René LeRoy, recorded in the Mary Howard studios. These, as well as reissues of earlier recordings, were issued as plastic pressings made by the Clark Phonograph Record Company. Clark eventually turned over the New Music masters in its possession to Theodore Presser Music. In 1977 they were licensed to Composers Recordings, Inc., which reissued some of them on LPs.

NEW ORLEANS BANDWAGON (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1952

Offices: New Orleans

Original-Master Source(s): Dubbed from air-checks

Pressing: Research Craft, possibly other independent plants

Record Products: New Orleans Bandwagon

A traditional-jazz label launched in 1950 by New Orleans disc jockey Roger Wolfe. Recordings were taken from air-checks of Wolfe's "Dixieland Jambake" and "New Orleans Bandwagon" broadcasts over radio station WDSU. The initial releases, comprising recordings made by an Armand Hug group in October 1949, appeared in late 1950.

Wolfe's artist roster was a mixture of older Black and younger White performers, ranging from Oscar (Papa) Celestin's Tuxedo Jazz Band (which had first recorded in 1925, for Okeh) and pianist Armand Hug to the Dukes of Dixieland (who made their first recordings for Wolfe in 1951). The records attracted little attention from the press, aside from Hug's "Breezin' Along" and "Fascinatin' Rag," which a *Record Changer* reviewer dismissed as "a new montage of clichés." New releases appear to have slowed by late 1951. Much of Wolfe's material was later repackaged in LP form by other small U.S. and foreign labels.

NEW ORLEANS RECORD SHOP (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Offices: 439 Baronne St., New Orleans

Record Products: New Orleans

The New Orleans Record Shop briefly produced its own jazz label in the late 1940s. Its first two releases, comprising four May 1949 sides by Johnny Wiggs and his New Orleans Music, were advertised in August of that year with the tag line, "Hear how they play in New Orleans today." *Record Changer* reviewer George Avakian noted, "The boys in the band are good enough, although the history books won't have to be rewritten as a result of these sides."

The New Orleans Record Shop was last listed by *Billboard* in its July 1950 label directory. The records were still available as late as 1952 from the New Orleans Jazz Club, operating at the same address as the record shop.

NEW RECORD COMPANY — See Electric Recording Laboratories

NEW REPUBLIC RECORDS

Record Production: c. 1921 – 1922

Offices: New York

Original-Master Source(s): Jones Recording Laboratories, possibly other independent studios

Pressing: Siemon Hard Rubber Company plant

Record Products: New Republic, New Republic Special Release

The most prolific of the early-1920s independent labels specializing in traditional Irish music, although of unknown ownership. New Republic's roster included Michael Coleman, Thomas Gannon, John McKenna, James Morrison, the Flanagan Brothers, and other popular Irish-American performers, many of whom would go on to record for larger labels. There was a substantial number of offerings in the main series, which retailed for a standard 75¢ each. There was also an unnumbered \$1 series and several offerings on a modified New Republic Special Release label. Some labels have the notation, "M and C Record," the meaning of which has not yet been discovered.

NEW YORK PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1890 – 1901

Offices: 257 5th Ave., New York (1890–late 1892); Pulitzer Building, New York (temporary auxiliary office, 1891); Edison Building (44 Broad St., New York, from late 1892); 140 Nassau St., New York (1900s)

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs. On February 6, 1889, North American Phonograph granted an exclusive sale territory to John P. Haines comprising all portions of New York state not already controlled by the Metropolitan Phonograph Company. Three days later, Haines transferred his rights to the newly formed New York Phonograph Company, of which he would serve as president.

In late May 1890, Metropolitan Phonograph's Charles Cheever disclosed that a merger of his company with the New York Phonograph Company was being considered. A consolidation agreement was reached between the two companies on June 24. They were formally merged on August 15, as the New York Phonograph Company, with sales territory covering all of New York state. Consolidated operations began the following month.

John Haines (who at that time was president of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals but had no experience in the phonograph business) was retained as president of the newly merged company. Other officers included John D. Cheever (vice-president), who was described as "a millionaire three times over, better known perhaps as a horseman, society leader, and athlete than as a successful merchant and manufacturer"; and Richard Townley Haines (secretary-treasurer), who was said to be "a very wealthy man about town." The latter reportedly was "busily at work" buying up phonograph-related patents, the details of which were not disclosed. Directors included at least two other millionaires and the vice-president of a railroad.

The Phonogram for June–July 1891 listed New York Phonograph as one of the companies active in "the securing of musical selections." Its earliest known catalog did not credit artists by name, but by the latter half of 1891 the company was advertising what are believed to have been original recordings by Gilmore's Band, Edward Clarence, Russell Hunting, J. W. Myers, Joseph Natus, and other early recording artists. The studio was housed in the company's Fifth Avenue office and was said to be quite busy. *The Phonogram* for March–April 1893 reported that a representative of Smith Brothers sent ten pounds of cough drops to the studio as "a remedy for the tickling in the throat produced by continued singing."

According to an 1891 report, New York Phonograph's instrumentalists generally were paid not less than \$5 per performance, and singers could earn \$10 and up. Certain artists could be paid as much as \$25, if their reputations were thought to justify the cost. Male singers predominated; an unnamed company representative explained, "Very few lady vocalists of the class we aim to have like the publicity of getting their voices turned into a bar room [on coin-operated phonographs]... Men don't seem to care, though." In 1893, however, the company touted its offerings by Ella Thiebault, "although it was thought that the high and delicate notes of a woman's voice could not be distinctly recorded." Some recordings apparently had only limited production; for a time, the company offered discounted box-lots of assorted cylinders, of its choice, that it did not produce in sufficient quantities to keep in regular stock.

New York Phonograph rented a large number of coin-operated phonographs to saloons, arcades, and other public venues, and it also maintained what it described as a "well-trained corps of exhibitors" who could be hired to give public or private phonograph concerts. George B. Lull, who oversaw the coin-machine business, was also managing the company's recording department by early 1893. In April of that year, *The Phonogram* reported that Lull had been experimenting with the placement of performers in the studio, and that Richard Haines had "secured" a new recording diaphragm. As a result, the magazine reported, "the grating sounds that formerly issued from the wax cylinders...are no longer observed." For a time, the studio was also used by Dr. G. A. Leach, who was experimenting with a "phonographic cure" for deafness.

New York Phonograph continued to operate despite having been served a cease-and-desist notice in 1894. Following the receiver's sale of North American Phonograph to Thomas Edison in 1896, New York Phonograph contended that Edison was bound to honor all of North American's rights and obligations, including its exclusive New York sales license. On January 21, 1901, New York Phonograph filed a bill of complaint to prohibit Edison's National Phonograph Company from selling Edison products in New York. A ruling in New York Phonograph's favor was finally handed down on January 5, 1905. However, a stay was issued on May 2.

At about the same time, the company's name surfaced in connection with Leeds & Catlin's attempt to re-enter the cylinder market. A prototype Leeds & Catlin cylinder label (a copy of which survives at the Edison National Historic Site), listing New York Phonograph as sales agent and North American Phonograph as licensor, was discovered in the spring of 1905 and was turned over to Edison officials, who promptly dispatched an investigator to Leeds' Connecticut headquarters and contested the validity of the license. The case eventually went to trial.

New York Phonograph persisted in its case against Edison. National Phonograph was enjoined on March 26, 1906, at which time New York Phonograph issued a notice warning all dealers of its exclusive New York sales rights. Edison contested the action and urged its New York dealers to carry on business as usual, with assurances that it would back them in any legal action brought by New York Phonograph. By then, there appears to have been a complete change in New York Phonograph's management. Most notable was the presence of secretary James L. Andem, formerly of the Edison Phonograph Company of Ohio, which earlier had employed the same tactics and arguments against Edison.

New York Phonograph kept up its harassment, suing Edison's licensed New York dealers and distributors, and successfully charging that National Phonograph had infringed two patents to which it claimed rights under the old North American agreement. As a result, Edison was forced to make several minor changes to his phonographs and cylinders to avoid any appearance of infringement.

The turning point for Edison finally came on June 5, 1908, when a favorable ruling in a

New York Phonograph lawsuit against an Edison dealer was reversed by a unanimous decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York. The decision set a precedent that resulted in the dropping of several hundred similar suits against Edison's dealers and distributors. The court decisively rejected New York Phonograph's contention that the National Phonograph Company was the corporate successor to the North American Phonograph Company, asserting that nothing in the receiver's sale of the latter to Edison required that Edison assume its obligations or honor its licences. Little more was heard of the New York Phonograph Company following the ruling.

NEW YORK PHONOGRAPH RECORDING COMPANY

Primarily a personal and custom recording service during the mid-to-late 1920s, based in Springdale, Connecticut. The appearance of catalog numbers on some of the company's labels suggests the records were intended for sale to the general public, but thus far, no catalogs, sales lists, or advertising has been found. The company traveled widely with portable electrical equipment in the later 1920s, particularly in the Midwest, and their visits were often publicized in the local newspapers. Vanity recordings by local amateur or semi-professional artists are known to have been made in Hamtramck, Michigan; Indianapolis; Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania; Dayton, Ohio; and St. Louis, among other locations. The company appears to have suspended operations in 1929.

NEW YORK RECORDING LABORATORIES (Discs)

Record Production: 1917–1932

Offices: Paramount Building, Port Washington, WI; 1219 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC (branch sales office, later 1920s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — 1140 Broadway, New York (1917–1926) and Falls Rd., Grafton, WI (c. 11/1929–1932); temporary studio (Chicago, 1923); commissioned masters from Marsh Laboratories, Rodeheaver Laboratories, Starr Piano Company (Gennett)

Pressing: Own plant — Falls Rd., Grafton, WI

Record Products (including BD&M pressings from NYRL masters): Baldwin [1], Belvedere [1], Blue Bird, Broadway [1], Carnival [1], Chautauqua, Claxtonola, The Cook, Famous [1], Harmograph (blue label), Herwin, Hudson [1], Joy [1], Karpathia, Lonesome Ace, Mermaid, Metropolitan [1] (prototype), Music Box [1], National [3, 4], Paramount [1], Paramount Black Swan Record, Pennington, Polonia, Puritan, Stamps, Triangle, Vaughan (black label), Witness of God; Bob-O-Link [1], Gobbly Wobblyn (children's); Harlem [1] (paste-over strip on Broadway), other private and promotional issues; pressing for Marsh Laboratories and others

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Aeroplane, Angelus, Austral, Clifford, Embassy, Lyric, Summit (Australia); Edison Bell Winner, Imperial (England); Maxsa, Perfectaphone (France); Acme, Kalliope (Germany); Usiba (Poland); Star (Sweden); probably others on occasion

A subsidiary of the Wisconsin Chair Company of Port Washington, Wisconsin, the New York Recording Laboratories have achieved near-mythical status as the producer of Paramount records, on which appear some of the rarest and most sought-after jazz and blues recordings of the 1920s and early 1930s.

Articles of incorporation were filed in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin, on July 2, 1917, by Wisconsin Chair executives Fred A. Dennett, J. R. Dennett, J. W. Bostwick, Edward J. Barrett, and Otto E. Moesser. The initial capitalization was \$10,000. During the course of a 1936 trial (*Wisconsin Chair Co. v. I. G. Ely Co.*), it was incorrectly stated that NYRL "was not at any time a corporation, a partnership, or an individual," an error that also appears in some modern writings. However, NYRL did eventually forfeit its corporate status.

Fred Dennett, a machinist who had earlier been involved in the formation of the Milwaukee Harvester Company, acquired a defunct Port Washington door manufacturer and incorporated it as the Wisconsin Chair Company on October 10, 1888. By 1917, the company employed 2,500 workers at sites in Port Washington, Grafton, and Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The main factory complex in Port Washington consisted of 330,000 square feet of floor space covering a five-acre site, which included its own railroad spur and a dock on Lake Michigan.

Dennett entered the phonograph and business after having manufactured phonograph cabinets for other companies for several years. In December 1916, Dennett sold his cabinet factory in New London, Wisconsin, to Thomas A. Edison, Inc., for \$50,000. (At least one modern writer has claimed that Edison then assisted Dennett in setting up a recording

operation, which has no basis in fact whatsoever.) At about the same time, Dennett's Lake Side Crafts Company (a Sheboygan-based furniture manufacturer he had launched in 1911) was renamed the United Phonographs Corporation and converted to production of complete phonographs.

In 1917, United Phonographs and the newly formed New York Recording Laboratories were restructured as Wisconsin Chair subsidiaries under the management of O. E. Moesser, with NYRL tasked with launching record production and UPC responsible for manufacturing phonographs, the latter marketed under the Paramount, Puritan, and Vista brands. A master-plating and pressing plant was housed in a converted textile mill in Grafton, Wisconsin, which Wisconsin Chair leased to NYRL. Lacking a local studio (as it would until late 1929), the company initially made all of its recordings in New York.

The United Phonographs Corporation, not the New York Recording Laboratories, filed the first Paramount trademark application. UPC's Patent Office filing of November 5, 1917, claimed use of the Paramount trademark on records and phonographs beginning October 20, 1917. However, Paramount record labels credited NYRL from the start, while United Phonograph's name appeared only on the companion Puritan label. The early Paramount and Puritan record catalogs were virtually identical.

NYRL was authorized to do business in the state of New York in August or early September 1917. Its New York offices and studio were housed at 1140 Broadway, with R. P. Winne serving as general manager and A. J. Baum as studio manager. Walter B. Rogers (formerly of Victor and Paroquette) was hired as musical director in September 1918, a position he held for approximately a year before moving to Brunswick. The company's East Coast sales representative at that time was Frederick W. Matthews, a former executive of the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company.

The exact date on which Paramount and Puritan records were introduced has not been discovered. Sales, which probably began in the autumn of 1917, initially appear to have been limited to the upper Midwest, as suggested by a statement made by sales manager M. A. Supper. On March 15, 1918, he told a *Talking Machine World* reporter, "While we have been shipping records to some extent for some little time, we can now say we are ready for the market in the larger sense of the term." On February 3, 1919, Supper was promoted from sales manager to general manager of NYRL, overseeing the Port Washington and New York facilities.

Paramount records did not begin appearing in *TMW*'s advance lists until April 1918, by which time there were already forty-six releases in the popular series and more than a dozen in various others. The earliest issues were 9" vertical-cut discs. From the start, Paramount served as the flagship label, with the less well-advertised Puritan label using the same couplings and catalog numbers. Although Paramount came to be known for its race records in the 1920s, its early catalog consisted of undistinguished pop, standard, and light classical fare, much of it performed by the usual New York dance orchestras and freelance studio singers of the period. Lateral-cut discs were introduced in the summer of 1919 and soon supplanted the vertical-cut line.

The New York Recording Laboratories struggled financially from the start. In 1920, all NYRL and UPC stock was assigned to Wisconsin Chair, as collateral on a bond issue intended to keep the subsidiaries afloat. The following year, the stock was transferred to Wisconsin Chair for \$1 per share, at which point "New York Recording Laboratories" became simply a trade name of the Wisconsin Chair Company. On July 15, 1925, after failing to file an annual tax report on behalf of NYRL, John Bostwick wrote the Wisconsin Secretary of State, "The New York Recording Laboratories is entirely inoperative and has no assets whatsoever, neither has it any liabilities. All the assets and liabilities were taken over by the Wisconsin Chair Company and while the corporation has not been dissolved, it is entirely dormant." Consequently, NYRL's corporate status was forfeited on January 1, 1926, although labels and advertising continued to show the company as Paramount's producer.

In April 1921, the company reported that expansion of its New York facilities made it possible "to consider the acceptance of additional laboratory [*i.e.*, recording] work." By that summer, NYRL was advertising its recording, plating, and pressing services to independent labels. Clients who recorded in the NYRL studio, as documented in band manager Ed Kirkeby's session logs, included Grey Gull and The Arto Company, which

booked sessions there during 1921–1923. Unfortunately, NYRL's recording files have not survived, and the studio's early clients usually assigned their own master numbers, eliminating the possibility of identifying all of NYRL's client-label output, except in those rare instances where outside documentation (like Kirkeby's) has survived.

Research by Alex van der Tuuk and others have revealed the harsh working conditions at NYRL's Grafton pressing plant. The equipment was primitive, and employees (many of them first-generation immigrants) were paid meager wages to work long shifts in stifling temperatures, a not uncommon condition in other pressing plants at the time. Although the plant had its own plating facilities, the Bridgeport Die and Machine Company and National Metals Depositing Corporation also did some plating for the East Coast client labels. Record labels were printed in Milwaukee, by the Forester Label Works.

A 1921 U.S. Board of Tax Appeals filing (*O.E. Moesser, Petitioner, v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Respondent*) states that NYRL operated a Chicago recording studio in 1918. However, no evidence has yet been found of NYRL's having held recording sessions in Chicago prior to 1923. In December 1922, New York studio manager Baum moved to the newly opened Independent Recording Laboratory and was replaced by Arthur E. Satherley, a Wisconsin Chair manager who had overseen installation of the NYRL pressing plant in Grafton. Satherley's new hires in New York included recording engineer Al Hausmann and musical director Charles A. Prince, both of whom were recruited from Columbia. By then, NYRL was licensing its Paramount masters for use on Bridgeport Die & Machine's own version of the Puritan label, as well as on many client labels.

NYRL introduced the Paramount Race Series in August 1922 to compete with Okeh and Black Swan. The announcement marked a turning point for NYRL, which so far had offered mostly ordinary popular and light classical fare, without little to distinguish itself from its competitors. In June 1923, the company dispatched some New York studio personnel to an unknown Chicago location to record local Black talent. The *Chicago Defender* reported that the New York team would make another Chicago visit during the week of September 29, 1923.

The results of those trips were so successful that NYRL began to shift its focus from New York to Chicago, where Mayo Williams (who would go on to successfully manage Brunswick's and Decca's race-record divisions) served in an unofficial capacity as Race Series manager and talent scout. By December 1923, NYRL was recording regularly in Chicago, holding its sessions in the Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories studio (as confirmed by pianist and band leader Lovie Austin in a 1950s interview). Sessions were moved to Marsh Laboratories in 1926, following the closure of the Rodeheaver studio (which never converted to electrical recording). Mayo Williams stated that several other independent studios were used occasionally during that period, but he was unable to recall their names. The result was inconsistent technical quality, disjointed and seemingly random blocks of master numbers, the substitution of control numbers for true master numbers in some cases.

On April 7, 1924, it was reported that the New York Recording Laboratories had made final arrangements for the purchase of Black Swan's assets from Harry Pace. NYRL took over the Black Swan trademark and masters on May 17, 1924, marking Black Swan's end as an independent label. Approximately one-hundred hybrid Paramount–Black Swan records were released, comprising reissues of outdated Black Swan material, before the series was scuttled. Two years later, NYRL acquired the Autograph label from Marsh Laboratories, only to abandon it after reissuing a few pipe-organ records.

Paramount rapidly strengthened its position in the race-record market. Its venture into the country music market, begun in 1924, was pursued far less aggressively. Interest in the urban female blues singers had begun to wane by time of the Black Swan acquisition, and Paramount increasingly concentrated on securing rural Southern artists, scoring notable successes with Papa Charlie Jackson, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Blind Blake. Mayo Williams worked closely with freelance Southern talent scouts, including Henry Speir in Jackson, Mississippi, who sent promising performers to Paramount as well as other labels. In the later 1920, NYRL employees Henry Stephany, Harry Charles, Arthur Laibly, and Arthur Satherley assumed increasing importance as Paramount talent scouts.

Under Satherley's direction, NYRL's New York studio continued to supply most of Paramount's mainstream popular material through the mid-1920s. Output from New York

began to decline in 1924, however, and the studio was closed in 1926. Paramount's popular (20000) series remained in production into the early 1930s, but after early 1926 it drew primarily on masters licensed from the Regal Record Company (Banner-Regal) and successor American Record Corporation, which were usually assigned control numbers in place of the true matrix numbers. Regal-ARC recorded a few masters for NYRL's exclusive use (some of which were assigned false master numbers in Paramount's own series), but most issues from that source simply drew on the same masters as Banner, Domino, Regal, and related labels.

Following the closure of the New York studio, Satherley was transferred back to Port Washington, where he was actively involved in the race-record business until departing in 1928 to manage the newly launched Q. R. S. label. NYRL reissued some Q. R. S. masters after the labels' demise in 1929 and occasionally swapped masters with the Crown Record Company during 1930–1931. NYRL masters were also pressed under many foreign labels beginning in the mid-1920s.

Paramount labels printed before 1925 state "This Record Is Made Entirely in Our Own Laboratories in New York City and Grafton, Wisconsin." Even at that early date, the claim was not always true. It was finally removed in 1925–1926, reflecting NYRL's total reliance on independent studios following the closure of its New York facility. The period from 1927 through late 1929 was relatively stable, with all Chicago sessions booked being booked at Marsh Laboratories, and the Plaza-Regal group supplying most of the outside material (primarily in the pop field, with a smattering of country music) from its own catalog. However, the relationship with Marsh ended in early 1929, after NYRL finally decided to equip its own studio in Grafton. In the interim, from March through October or November 1929, NYRL contracted most of its recording sessions to the Starr Piano Company (Gennett) studios in Richmond, Indiana. The masters were numbered in the regular Gennett matrix series, and some were also released on Gennett, Champion, and other Starr Piano Company labels. It has been claimed that masters from an unknown Milwaukee studio were also used during this period, but details and documentary proof are lacking.

NYRL's new electrically equipped studio was in operation at the Grafton factory site by the autumn of 1929, on the second floor of an antiquated frame structure adjacent to the pressing plant. Little Brother Montgomery characterized the studio as "a little poky room" in a 1970s interview, and band leader Sig Heller recalled it was so heavily padded that "a note was gone as soon as it was played." According to several published histories, the installation was handled by an unnamed company from Madison, Wisconsin, supposedly under the direction of one Mr. Fertington, but further details have not been discovered. Henry Speir was brought from Mississippi in an attempt to improve the acoustics, but by all accounts the Grafton studio remained a fairly primitive facility.

A new matrix series was introduced to coincide with the opening of the Grafton studio, beginning with A-1. It has been alleged that matrices A-1 and A-2 were actually made in an unknown Milwaukee studio, but proof is lacking. They were followed by L-3, the beginning of the confirmed Grafton matrix series, and all subsequent masters were L-prefixed. There were some notable signings for the race series during this period, including Son House, Skip James, Tommy Johnson, and the Mississippi Sheiks, but sales fell precipitously in the early Depression years. NYRL was kept afloat largely by its contract to produce the cut-rate Broadway label for Montgomery Ward.

In 1931 the company fired recording director Arthur Laibly and replaced him with Henry Stephany, who seems to have made a renewed effort to recruit new talent in the deep South. Late in that year the company reportedly offered to sell its masters to Gennett, which itself was in a weak financial condition. No agreement was reached.

The Grafton studio continued to operate through July 1932. Many of the later sessions were devoted to local White performers, such as the Sig Heller and Romy Gosz orchestras, or were private recordings by school groups and local semi-professionals. The last Paramount race record (the Mississippi Sheik's "She's Crazy 'Bout Her Lovin'"/ "Tell Her to Do Right," on Paramount 13156) was released at the end of 1932. In all, Paramount had produced nearly 1,200 race-record issues over the course of a decade. The last new Paramount records in the standard catalog were released in August 1932. The New York Recording Laboratories remained in business through December 1933, operating with a skeleton staff and no products to offer. Wisconsin Chair itself continued to manufacture

furniture and radio cabinets until its closure in September 1954, but had no further involvement with records.

Although Paramount had for a time been the acknowledged leader in the race-record field, and had advertised widely in *The Chicago Defender* and other Black-owned newspapers, it failed to develop an effective distribution and sales network. The Artophone Company of St. Louis and the Illinois Musical Supply Company of Chicago were NYRL's major wholesalers, but the company relied heavily on traveling salesmen and mail-order business throughout the rural South and Midwest. A 1923 *Defender* advertisement soliciting door-to-door salesmen admitted, "There are thousands of localities where we have no dealers." Artophone's Herbert S. Schiele noted that when it came to retailing Paramount records "there wasn't any standard place," and recalled that the records were sold in shoe-shine parlors, general stores, candy shops, and plantation commissaries. Artophone stopped distributing Paramount records in 1929, a move that probably contributed significantly to the label's declining sales.

The Paramount label made a short-lived comeback in 1933 under the management of Brunswick Record Corporation producer Jack Kapp. He leased 100 metal stampers from NYRL, which he arranged for the American Record Corporation to press under the Paramount label. ARC received its first shipment of Paramount stampers on November 3, 1933, and the revived Paramount label was launched in early 1934. A handful of blues sides (comprising a mixture of reissues from NYRL and ARC recordings, along with some newly recorded ARC masters) were released in a new 9000 series. ARC suspended production of the revived Paramount label later that year, after Kapp moved to Decca.

Many imaginative (and groundless) stories have circulated concerning the final disposition of NYRL's masters. However, research by Alex van der Tuuk has revealed that the metal parts were moved from the Grafton plant to Wisconsin Chair's Factory No. 2 in Port Washington in 1933. They remained there until 1942, reportedly suffering widespread vandalism and theft before finally being donated to a wartime scrap drive. Nevertheless, efforts persist to locate the "lost" Paramount masters. A scuba diver was even dispatched to the bottom of the Milwaukee River at the Grafton pressing plant site on an episode of "The History Detectives" (PBS). He found nothing of value.

John Steiner (*q.v.*), a Chicago collector and independent record producer, purchased the remaining New York Recording Laboratories assets, other than real estate, from the Wisconsin Chair Company in the 1940s and relaunched the Paramount label.

NEWARK RECORDING LABORATORY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 – 1923

Offices and Master Source(s): 15 W. Park St., Newark, NJ

Pressing: Arto Company

Record Products: Supreme; masters for Arto (one confirmed instance) and independent labels (reported but not confirmed); private and custom recordings

Founded in late 1921 by Arto Company president George Howlett Davis, who was listed as Newark Recording's sole owner and general manager. Clarence Hayes, a former Edison employee, was hired as acting manager in March or April 1922. The Newark Recording Laboratory advertised custom and commercial recording services "at exceedingly low prices." *The Talking Machine World* for January 1922 reported that Davis had contracts to record for several unnamed companies.

The 1923 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory* identified Newark Recording as the manufacturer of Supreme, which was primarily a private vanity label, although some issues were assigned catalog numbers and are known to have been advertised and sold by small retailers. Newark likely was the source of some masters used by Davis' Arto and Bell labels that have not been conclusively traced to other sources. However, the single confirmed instance is a talk by insurance executive C. F. Shallcross, which was issued by Arto as a promotional special under several different custom labels. A photograph taken at Shallcross's recording session appeared in *The Music Trade Review* for March 1922.

The Newark Recording Laboratory was last mentioned by TMW in 1923. No trace of the company has been found after the spring of that year, coinciding with the closure of Davis' Arto operation.

NIGHT MUSIC RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: Boston (1946); 6400 Bartlett St., Pittsburgh (1947–1948)

Record Products: Night Music

Launched in Boston in 1946 by Herbert Russcol, originally to showcase previously unrecorded classical compositions. A Boston native and graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, Russcol played French horn with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in the mid-1940s. By early 1947 he was operating Night Music in a Pittsburgh apartment, from which he and wife Margalit Banal were evicted in March.

The earliest known Night Music recordings were Poulenc's "Sonata for Trumpet, Trombone, and French Horn" (June 18, 1946, with George Mager, trumpet; Jacob Raichman, trombone; and Willem Valkenier, French horn) and Hugo Kauder's "Sonata for English Horn and Piano" (October 1, 1946, with Louis Speyer, English horn, and Erwin Bodky, piano), the latter produced for the Kauder Society.

Banal's involvement with the pro-Israeli causes resulted in Night Music's best-known release, the album "Haganah: Songs of the Jewish Underground," performed by Dov Arres. Commissioned by the Habonim Labor Zionist Youth, it was a distinct departure from Russcol's earlier releases, and it appears to have marked the end of the Night Music venture. Russcol made little effort to market or distribute Night Music records nationally, and aside from the "Haganah" album, sales appear to have been meager.

Beginning in 1948, Banal and Russcol split their time between Israel and the United States. In 1958, he opened the Herbert R. Russcol Records Studio in Tel-Aviv. He went on to a successful career as an author with works that included *Guide to Low-Priced Classical Records* (1969), *Philharmonic* (1971, with Banal, a fictionalized treatment of the Boston Symphony Orchestra), *The Liberation of Sound: An Introduction to Electronic Music* (1972), and *Hunting Season: A Docu-Drama Based on Historical Fact* (1988).

NORCROSS PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1897–1899

Offices and Master Source(s): New Zealand Building, Broadway & 37th St., New York (to c. 1903); 662 6th Ave., New York (from c. 1906)

Record Products: Norcross cylinders

Owned and operated by Isaac W. Norcross (erroneously referred to as "T. W." or "I. N" in some issues of *The Talking Machine World*). The Norcross Phonograph Company began marketing its own cylinder records in the summer of 1897, initially placing small classified advertisements for "master records" at \$1 each.

Norcross employed a recorder of his own design, which at first used Edison diaphragms. He later experimented with a linen diaphragm from an outside supplier, and in early 1899 he claimed to have developed a recording diaphragm capable of making recordings that rivaled the 5" concert-type cylinders in volume. Norcross was also a partner in the American Jewel Company, which sold sapphire recording and reproducing styli and cylinder-shaving knives.

Norcross initially offered cylinders in two grades — High Standard (retailing for \$1 each, or \$10 per dozen) and Exhibition Masters (retailing for \$2). The latter were said to be "capable of entertaining an audience of 5,000 or more." In early 1898 the price of High Standard cylinders was reduced to \$8 per dozen, or 60¢ each if purchased in barrel lots, and Norcross' business expanded rapidly. In April 1898 *The Phonoscope* predicted, "If the Norcross Phonograph Company do not stop renting extra rooms it will be only a matter of time when they will occupy the entire New Zealand Building." Prices were raised to their original level later in the year.

By 1899 Norcross was shipping records to England, Australia, China, and South America. His star attraction was Signor G. Peluso's Metropolitan Band, which recorded more than two-hundred selections for the company. The records were so successful that Norcross later warned he had exclusive rights to the Metropolitan Band name, a claim that was ignored by several of his competitors. He also issued the earliest known recordings by baritone Frank C. Stanley, who would go on to become one of the most prolific studio recording artists of the early 1900s.

In the late summer of 1899, Norcross was hired to manage Edison's newly opened New York studio, at which point he stopped advertising his own cylinders. The *Annual Report of the Factory Inspectors of the State of New York* for the year ended November 30, 1899, showed only three employees still working for Norcross Phonograph. The company was officially dissolved in 1900.

Norcross resurfaced as an independent businessman in 1903, with a new store that handled the Edison and Columbia lines as well as his reproducer. He then moved to San Francisco, where he was associated with Edison dealer Peter Bacigalupi for a time. Back in New York by early 1907, he went on to patent a number of phonograph-related devices, including a phonograph-slide projector combination (a half-interest in which he sold to Ellsworth Hawthorne, of Hawthorne & Sheble), "Vulcanoid" diaphragms (said to perform well in all climates), and composite wood-cotton tissue diaphragms (which he licensed to the Indestructible Phonographic record Company in 1908 for use in their after-market cylinder reproducers). His former New York studio was the site of early recording sessions for the U. S. Phonograph Company, *q.v.*

NORDSKOG PHONOGRAPH RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921–1922

Offices: 1685 Ocean Ave., Santa Monica, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (Santa Monica Blvd.)

Pressing: Arto Company (1921–1922); own plant, Santa Monica Blvd. (from 1922)

Record Products: Nordskog, Sunshine [1]; personal recordings

Andrae (Arne) Nordskog launched the first commercial West Coast recording company in late 1921, and his record labels correctly proclaimed Nordskog products to be "First on the Pacific Coast." (Although Theophilus Fitz's competing Golden Record Company was incorporated two months earlier than Nordskog, and also claimed to be the first West Coast record company, Nordskog was already recording by the time Golden's studio opened in late January 1922.) The Nordskog Phonograph Recording Company was not incorporated until February 1922, by which time it had been in operation for several months. The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce belatedly listed it as a new business in March of that year.

Andrae Nordskog was a concert tenor who had performed with the Seattle Standard Grand Opera Company as early as 1914. By the late 'teens he had settled in Santa Monica, California, where he operated the Nordskog Music and Fine Arts Studios. During 1920–1921 he served as general manager for a series of concerts at the newly constructed Hollywood Bowl. Nordskog originally intended to record the celebrities who performed at the Bowl, but there were few takers aside from the Cherniavsky Trio, Charles Wakefield Cadman, and a handful of others. By late 1921, however, Nordskog was making personal recordings of his students and a few local performers (including himself) and preparing to launch his label commercially.

Colorful anecdotal accounts of recording sessions held in Nordskog's living room lack any supporting documentation. From the start, Nordskog operated a studio at his Santa Monica Boulevard storefront address, with Arthur T. Drengsten serving as recording engineer. It was equipped with a home-built recording machine assembled by Nordskog's father-in-law and business partner, Frank S. Lockwood, who adapted a standard phonograph reproducer to serve as the cutting head. The equipment (which is now in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution) produced recordings of reasonably good quality.

The Talking Machine World for February 1922 reported that Nordskog's studio had been "in full swing at Santa Monica for some weeks" and had recorded the Cherniavosky Trio. It also noted that Nordkog's personal recording service was proving popular, and that a second studio would be opened in Los Angeles (which is not known to have occurred). Two months later, *TMW* reported that Nordskog's first commercial records were expected to be released in the near future, while "personal recordings have already been made in large numbers."

With no pressing plants yet operating on the West Coast, Nordskog at first shipped his masters to the Arto plant in Orange, New Jersey, reportedly losing some to rough handling along the way. He also licensed a few Arto masters for release on Nordskog, but there does not appear to have been a reciprocal agreement. By the time Nordskog opened his own

pressing plant in 1922, Arto was in receivership, and he reportedly was unable to recover his masters from the company following its collapse in 1923.

During the late spring of 1922, Nordskog entered into a partnership with John and Reb Spikes to produce Sunshine, the first West Coast race-record (*see* Spikes Brothers Phonograph Company). Sunshine made three historically important releases before a quarrel between Nordskog and the Spikes brothers put an end to the operation.

Nordskog's involvement with Sunshine has often overshadowed his company's other achievements. Eva Tanguay, the aging but still provocative vaudeville sensation, made her only commercial recording for Nordskog while on tour in May 1922, for which a member of the Nordskog family claimed she was paid \$1,000. The Gold Label series offered classical fare by notable (if not always widely known) West Coast concert artists. The company also issued the first recordings by several California dance bands that later achieved national fame on the major labels, including those of Earl Burtnett, Abe Lyman, and Herb Wiedoeft.

Weak sales and the cost of equipping the Santa Monica pressing plant led Nordskog to file for bankruptcy in late 1922. Record production was suspended, but during the summer of that year, Nordskog discussed moving the business to Fullerton, California, with the support of that city's Chamber of Commerce. In addition to the recording operation, Nordskog proposed the addition of a "mammoth radio station capable of broadcasting to far distant points," which would broadcast Nordskog recording artists and be housed in a new building "unique in architecture." Nothing came of it.

On December 30, 1922, the Yale Corporation announced the formation of a new Nordskog recording company (a partnership between Andrae Nordskog and father-in-law Frank Lockwood), which it claimed had been producing records for one-and-a-half months. The report stated that the company had been capitalized at \$100,000, with a board of directors and general manager already in place. In February 1923, Nordskog suggested to the Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce that he might move the business there "provided a suitable factory site were provided," which Nordskog would rent from the city, and conditional upon Redondo Beach providing \$20,000 in funding to purchase the necessary equipment. Nothing further was heard of venture, which is not known to have produced any records, despite what the Yale Corporation claimed. Andrae Nordkog apparently made no further attempts to revive his record business until 1951. He continued to perform on occasion, and in 1924 made his entry into local politics as head of the newly formed Los Angeles Traffic Commission.

Nordskog later reinvented himself as a civic crusader, running in 1932 as the Liberty Party's vice-presidential candidate. He also published *The Gridiron*, a Los Angeles weekly specializing in exposés of governmental waste and corruption. He revived his label in 1951, which was briefly produced in 78-rpm and LP form as a reissue vehicle. He died in Los Angeles on February 12, 1962. Some of the original Nordskog masters survive in the possession of a family member, who did not respond to a request concerning details of the recordings.

NORTH-AMERICAN RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1952

Offices: 100 E. Ohio St., Chicago

Record Products: North-American, Tone-E

Launched in July 1949 by George Tasker, formerly of Universal Recording Studios (Chicago), and a co-founder of Vitacoustic Records.

Tasker's initial releases, by Red Nichols and his Five Pennies (who Tasker was managing at the time), appeared on the North-American label in late 1949. Tone-E was mentioned as a new label by *Billboard* in May 1950, with no details given. In September, Tasker complained of being cheated by a distributor who had ordered 300 copies of a Tone-E release (comprising 200 billable copies, with the remainder to be given away as disc jockey copies), then returned all but twelve of the billable copies while keeping the free records.

New releases continued into at least 1951. North-American Recording was still listed in *Billboard*'s March 1952 label directory (which included a large number of inactive or defunct companies), although it is not certain that the company was still operating by then. Tasker went on to launch the Archer label in late 1952 or early 1953.

NORTHWEST RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1940s

Offices: 9405 Aurora Ave., Seattle

Record Products: Evergreen; custom recordings

Affiliated with the Federal Old Line Insurance Company (Seattle), which in the 1940s sponsored sing-along radio broadcasts and published the accompanying song books. Northwest Recording's only known commercial label was Evergreen, which perished in 1948 after having made only a handful of releases. Its artists included "Cherokee" Jack Henley, whose masters were returned to him after Evergreen suspended operations. In July 1948, *Billboard* reported that Henley was "dickering" with several other labels over a possible purchase of the remaining Evergreen masters.

NOTARY RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Notary

A short-lived pop label launched in the spring of 1950 by Pierre Gaudet (president), Dave Ferber, and Bill Martin (formerly of Uptown Records). Notary's advertising touted "Tunes and treatment designed for maximum play in each of the nation's 450,000 jukeboxes." The records were handled by small distributors in New York, the Mid-Atlantic states, and upper Midwest.

Notary's initial release, which finally appeared in April 1950 after several weeks of teasers ads in *Billboard* and *Cash Box*, was an inconsequential pop item credited to one Gene Marvey, with the Bob Harter Singers and Billy Martin's Orchestra. Notary's last known release appeared in July 1950, after which nothing more was reported on the company.

NOVELTY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1936 – Late 1930s

Offices: 1016 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, CA; 1481 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles (Novelty Record Distributors)

Original-Master Sources: Associated Cinema Studios, probably other independent studios

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Hot Shots from Hollywood, Hollywood Hot Shots, Torchies from Hollywood

An early producer of adult "party" records, launched at approximately the same time as Hollywood Specialty Recordings (*q.v.*), with which it shared some masters. The records were distributed by Novelty Record Distributors (Hollywood and Los Angeles).

Hot Shots from Hollywood was a jukebox brand introduced in August 1936 by J. C. McClelland, with the same selection pressed on both sides. It was superseded in late 1936 or early 1937 by the Hollywood Hot Shots label, which was produced in jukebox and general consumer versions, the latter with a different selection (usually a conventional pop tune) on the reverse side. Unlike later party-record labels, both versions of Hot Shots featured popular mainstream performers who received label credit, including Cleo Brown, John (Candy) Candido, Cliff (Ukulele Ike) Edwards, and Ben Light's Surf Club Boys. Some of the material later was reissued on the Good-Humor label, which at \$2 per disc does not appear to have been a good seller. Some East Coast pressings of Ray Bourbon's Imperial party records also credit the Novelty Record Company, with no address given.

A New York-based Novelty Record Company (no address given) is credited on some early Gala pressings but has no apparent connection to the Los Angeles company.

NUMELODY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: 207 N. 9th St., Richmond, IN

Record Products: Numelody

Launched in July 1948 by singer-songwriter Don Teeters. Its business address was that of Teeter's residence in a Richmond, Indiana, boarding house. Numelody Records was

affiliated with Teeters' Numelody Song Company, a publishing operation he founded in Toledo, Ohio, in 1943, and later moved to Indianapolis.

The Richmond *Palladium-Item* for August 1, 1948, reported that Teeters "has formed his own recording company to market songs which he has composed and sung." Pressing was to be contracted to an unnamed West Coast plant. Teeters was featured on the initial Numelody release, which a *Billboard* reviewer dismissed as a "dull warbling-with-yodeling hill item." The records retailed for 45¢ each and appear to have been advertised only in the Richmond area. The venture does not appear to have survived beyond early 1949.

NU-PHONIC CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1941

Offices: New York

Record Products: Viking

A short-lived joint venture of the Curtis Publishing Company and producer Eli Oberstein, launched in early 1941. Described on the sleeves as "flexible, durable, unbreakable, lightweight," Viking discs were cheaply produced 25¢ plastic pressings with fiber cores that were advertised as "Two Hits – Two Bits" (a slogan the Crown Record Company originated a decade earlier). Initial reports stated that a new record would be released every other week.

Recording apparently was under way by January 1941, when it was reported that the first release would be Jack Teagarden's "Frenesi," coupled with "Here's My Heart." Viking records were supposed to go on sale during the first week of February 1941, but their debut was delayed for unexplained reasons. Advance copies were being reviewed by late March, and the records finally went on sale to the public on April 1, 1941.

Viking records were intended primarily for news-stand sales, but were also sold in drugstores, bookstores, and discount chain stores. In February 1941, Curtis claimed it had already secured distribution at 40,000 news stands, and expected that number to increase to 68,000. Distributors included Myer J. Reiser, of Greater Boston Distributors, who had handled Hit of the Week records (which were based on similar marketing model) a decade earlier. According to Reiser, Viking records were placed on consignment, and any unsold copies were transferred to other locations.

Although Teagarden and some of Oberstein's other Varsity artists appeared on Viking, the recordings were not numbered in Varsity's master series and are not known to have appeared on other labels. Only a few releases reached dealers before Curtis Publishing withdrew its backing in mid-1941. Oberstein went on to launch the Imperial Record Company later that year.

NUTMEG RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1924–1925; 1927–1929

Offices: 551–553 5th Ave., New York; PO box numbers in Stamford, CT (1924–1925) and Springdale, CT (1927–1929)

Original-Master Source(s): Consolidated Record Company

Record Products: Clover [1], Marathon, Sterling [2]

Incorporated in Stamford, Connecticut on September 28, 1924, by William G. Morris, H. Marguerite Stadler, and Margaret Manseau. The company was chartered to "invest and deal in patents, patent rights, options, and trademarks," with no mention made of record production at the time.

The Nutmeg Record Corporation originally marketed the Clover label during 1924–1925. All known issues from that period used material from the Grey Gull–Emerson Recording Laboratories catalog, or from affiliated suppliers. In late 1927, however, the company moved to Springdale, Connecticut, and introduced 7" discs under the Marathon label that used masters recorded for the company's exclusive use by the Consolidated Record Corporation (the successor to Emerson Recording Laboratories).

Nutmeg's trademark application claimed use of the Marathon brand on records since November 15, 1927. Touted as "marvelous musical miniatures," Marathon records were patterned after the inexpensive small-diameter discs that were popular in Great Britain at the time. The records employed a finer, more closely spaced groove than standard 78s,

which allowed nearly three minutes of playing time (the equivalent of an ordinary 10" disc) on a 7" pressing. In addition to the regular commercial releases, a few single-sided Marathon personal and advertising records are known.

Aural evidence refutes the claim, made in one dance-band discography, that the 7" masters were dubbed from 10" originals. Synchronized aural comparisons made by members of the *Record Research* group and others have proved conclusively that same-title issues on 7" Marathon and 10" Emerson discs have obvious differences, and that a different take was made for each format. Consolidated continued to make recordings for Marathon after it ended production of the Emerson label, using master numbers in what had been the Emerson 31000 series.

With Marathon records having failed to attract much attention, Nutmeg vice-president B. W. Bunker announced a new sales plan in December 1928 under which the price was reduced to six records for a dollar. Dealers were offered special display materials and incentives, but to no avail. The last known Marathon advertisement appeared in February 1929, coinciding with the demise of the Consolidated Record Corporation.

Nutmeg also produced the short-lived Sterling label (unrelated to the Compo Company's Canadian label of the same name and period) in the later 1920s, probably commissioning the masters from Consolidated. Only two releases are known, comprising readings of "The Raven" and "The Courtship of Miles Standish" by actor and theatrical manager Albert S. Howson, coupled with Milt Gross' burlesque versions of the same titles as performed by dialect comedians Mac Rutchik and Lennie Whitcup. The Sterling label might have been produced for Gross, who received primary billing (ahead of the artists) on both releases.

NU-VOUGUE COMPANY — See *Singer, Murray*

— O —

O. T. RECORDING COMPANY — See *Oklahoma Tornado Recording Company*

OBERSTEIN, ELLIOT EVERETT (ELI) — See *Classic Record Company; Imperial Record Company; United States Record Corporation*

O'BYRNE DE WITT, ELLEN (Discs)

E. O'Byrne De Witt & Son / James O'Byrne De Witt & Company, Inc.

Record Production: 1925–Late 1920s; 1940s

Offices: 1398 3rd Ave., New York (to late 1920s); Dudley Terminal Building, 51 Warren St., Boston (1926–1927); 1360 3rd Ave., New York (Irish Music House, late 1920s; Roxbury, MA (1940s)

Original-Master Source(s): Starr Piano Company (1920s); unknown studio (1940s)

Record Products: E. O'Byrne De Witt & Son (1920s), O'Byrne De Witt Irish Record (1920s), The Sinn Fein Music House (1920s); The Irish Music House (James O'Byrne De Witt only, late 1920s); O'Byrne DeWitt Records (1940s)

The O'Byrne De Witt Music House was founded around 1910 by Ellen O'Byrne De Witt (an Irish immigrant, who managed the company) and her husband Justus De Witt (a Dutch immigrant, who handled the store's financial matters), originally to deal in phonographs and musical instruments. The De Witt's first known interaction with the recording industry came in September 1916, when Justus secured a Columbia date for the team of Eddie Herborn and John Wheeler, with the provision that the De Witts purchase five-hundred copies of the record. In the early 1920s the company began pasting its own labels onto Emerson pressings.

Ellen O'Byrne De Witt and her son James began to issue original recordings in 1925, when they commissioned the Starr Piano Company (Gennett) to produce their new house label. Numbered in a 1000 series, the label credited E. O'Byrne De Witt & Son, "The 'Sinn Fein' Music House." Many releases were reissues of existing Gennett recordings, along with some material from the defunct New Republic label, but several recordings appeared exclusively on her label.

Following Ellen O'Byrne De Witt's death on December 24, 1926, her sons Justus and

James took over the business, which was renamed E. O'Byrne De Witt's Sons. In 1927 they introduced a redesigned and renamed label, the O'Byrne De Witt Irish Record. The last confirmed issues used Gennett masters that their mother had commissioned shortly before her death. These apparently were sold only in the De Witt's New York store; by then, according to an article in *The Talking Machine World* for February 1927, the Boston branch was selling Victor records exclusively.

In the late 1920s, Justus De Witt moved to Roxbury, Massachusetts, where he launched the Irish Music House label. Apparently a short-lived venture, also produced by Gennett, it used material that was exclusive to the label. The De Witt brothers re-entered the record business in the 1940s with the short-lived O'Byrne De Witt Records label. Justus would go on to launch the more successful Copley Records (*q.v.*) in the late 1940s.

THOS. O'DOWD (Discs)

Record Production: 1921–1922

Offices: New York

Original-Master Source(s): Jones Recording Laboratories

Record Products: O'Dowd, Famous Songs of Irish Freedom

A short-lived eponymous venture specializing in Irish music. The earliest known mention of O'Dowd records appeared on May 25, 1921, in an advertisement for a Paterson, New Jersey, department store. The records retailed for \$1 each.

Thomas O'Dowd was featured on many releases, as artist and/or composer. Others on the O'Dowd roster included John Finnegan, James Morrison, and James O'Neill, who would go on to record for larger labels. O'Dowd records were still being advertised in 1922, after which no trace of the label has been found. Some O'Dowd recordings also appeared on the obscure Famous Songs of Irish Freedom label.

OHIO PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1890 – 1896

Offices: 220 Walnut St., Cincinnati (1888–early 1889); St. Paul Building, 27 W. 4th St., Cincinnati (from early 1889); 163 Elm St., Cincinnati (mid-1894); 427 Vine St., Cincinnati; 122 Euclid Ave., Cleveland (branch office)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — Cincinnati

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in the state of Ohio. A certificate of incorporation was filed on November 30, 1888, by James L. Andem, J. W. Dawson, George Moerlin, Frank Overbeck, and W. J. Overbeck. (Newspapers sometimes stumbled over Andem's name; he is referred to as Amden, Anderson, and even Adams in various reports.)

The Ohio Phonograph Company was headquartered in Cincinnati, under Andem's management. Arthur E. Smith managed the Cleveland branch office before resigning in the spring of 1892. In September 1892, Andem published the first detailed phonograph operators' manual, a sixty-four page *Practical Guide to the Use of the Edison Phonograph*.

The company opened coin-operated phonograph arcades in Cleveland and Cincinnati in September and November 1890, respectively. Each housed ten to twelve machines, with a single selection on each, and titles were changed each morning. *The Phonogram* reported, "On Saturdays and Sundays these exhibition parlors are crowded, and oftentimes quite an effort must be made before one can get possession of the coveted hearing-tubes when a cabinet contains a popular selection... Attached to the side of each machine is a napkin and holder to enable parties to cleanse the hearing tubes before listening, in case they desire to do so."

Many selections in the Ohio Phonograph catalog were likely obtained from the North American Phonograph and New Jersey Phonograph/United States Phonograph companies. However, there are reliable reports from the period that Ohio Phonograph also made and marketed its own recordings. It recorded and demonstrated a "choice selection of airs" by Cincinnati baritone Tim Sullivan in February 1891. Four months later, Andem reported that the company had "hired a gentleman from an adjoining territory [Kentucky] to sing a number of banjo songs." A December 1891 advertisement suggested that Dan Kelly's

"Pat Brady" comic recordings were original, which was later confirmed by a *Phonogram* report declaring that "Mr. Kelly spends his spare time in making records for the Ohio Phonograph Company." *The Phonoscope* for November 1896 reported that Ohio Phonograph was making "some very fine band records."

The *Edison Phonographic News* for July–August 1896 confirmed that Ohio Phonograph was operating a studio in Cincinnati, "which, although in the heart of the city, affords perfect quietness." It was briefly managed by Calvin G. Child, who left the company in late 1896 to work for Emile Berliner and would later be a key figure in the formation of the Victor Talking Machine Company.

In January 1894, J. W. Dawson filed suit against Andem, charging that he had consistently elected a board of directors "subservient to his will," had been "extravagant in his management" of the company, and had appointed himself agent of a rival company handling graphophones. The company's sales for 1893 were said to be \$6,244 less than in the previous year, while expenses were \$4,953 more. On January 11, 1897, Ohio Phonograph was placed in the hands of a receiver, although its liabilities were said to be "trifling."

Andem reorganized the Ohio Phonograph Company in the spring of 1897 as the Edison Phonograph Company of Ohio (*q.v.*), a large regional concern that had no connection to Thomas Edison's companies and was eventually ordered to stop using the Edison name. The artists recording for Andem at that time, as listed in *The Phonoscope* for May 1897, appear to have been local performers. Andem went on to serve as secretary of the New York Phonograph Company during the period in which that company was engaged in a prolonged (and ultimately fruitless) legal battle with Edison's National Phonograph Company.

Another Ohio Phonograph Company, based in Columbus and operated by H. H. Meyers (who sold it to F. A. Drake in 1899) appears to have been unrelated to Andem's operation and is not known to have produced original recordings.

OHIO TALKING MACHINE COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1903

Offices and Factory: 35 Bond St., Toledo, OH

Original-Master Source(s): Probably own studio (Toledo)

Record Products: Monogram; Leeds Records (marketing only; *see* Leeds & Catlin Company)

Successor to the obscure Toledo Talking Machine Company (which is not known to have produced anything), the Ohio Talking Machine Company was incorporated on December 27, 1901. Details were reported during the first week of 1902, with its incorporators listed as Clem V. Wagner, L. M. Williamson, G. R. Aylsworth, K. Green, and M. O. Topliff. None appears to have taken any active role in the company's operation. *The Music Trade Review* reported, "There is good Toledo capital back of the enterprise, the personnel of which will not be made known for the present, as business reasons render it advisable not to make known all of the details."

It was soon disclosed that the financial backers were Winant Van Zant Pearce Bradley and Albert L. Irish. Bradley had patented some minor disc-reproducer improvements in 1902. He allegedly was involved in record-pirating activity early in the century. No details have been verified concerning Bradley's earliest pirating activities, but he later sold pirated Victor and Fonotopia recordings through his Continental Record Company before being enjoined by the courts. Irish was a Midwestern banker with a somewhat shady reputation and no experience in the phonograph or recording businesses.

Ohio Talking Machine's phonographs were marketed under the Talk-O-Phone brand. Bradley registered the name as a trademark on June 10, 1902, claiming use on phonographs (with no mention of records) since January 1, 1902. A month earlier, he had registered the Monogram name for use on records, claiming use since January 2. No documentary evidence has been found that Monogram records were on the market that early, but they were being advertised in the Toledo newspapers by the summer of 1902.

There is convincing evidence that the Monogram recordings were made in Toledo. An aerial view of the Talk-O-Phone facility shows a building marked "Laboratory," the usual term for a recording studio at the time. None of the artists employed is known to have been active in the New York area, but Strobel's Band, which made a number of Monogram discs, was a well-known Toledo organization conducted by W. H. Scotten.

In December 1902, Strobel sued Ohio Talking Machine for \$11,700, which he claimed he was due for having furnished musicians to record for the company.

Shortly after its founding, the Ohio Talking Machine Company was sued by the American Graphophone Company (Columbia) for infringement of its Bell-Tainter patent, but Columbia's request for a temporary injunction was dismissed by the U.S. Circuit Court in Cleveland on May 22, 1902. A temporary injunction was finally granted on January 10, 1903, and Ohio Talking Machine was assessed \$1,139. The injunction was made permanent on March 20, at which time it was ruled that the previous payment was sufficient to settle Columbia's claims. In late October 1903, *The Music Trade Review* reported that the Ohio Talking Machine Company would "soon cease to exist," and that its place would be taken by a new corporation, to be called the Talk-O-Phone Company.

Ohio Talking Machine had planned to market the earliest Leeds & Catlin discs for use on its machines, and a large quantity of Leeds discs were pressed showing the Ohio Talking Machine Company imprint shortly before Ohio Talking Machine was reorganized as the Talk-O-Phone Company, *q.v.*

OKEH PHONOGRAPH CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1926–1933

Offices: 25 W. 45th St., New York (1926–1929); Gotham National Bank Building, 1819 Broadway at Columbus Circle, New York (combined Columbia–Okeh offices, from 1929)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios—Union Square Hotel, New York (to 4/1/1927); Tiffany Building, 15 Union Square, New York (from 4/1/1927); Consolidated Talking Machine Company Building, 227–229 W. Washington St., Chicago; temporary locations in Atlanta, Cleveland, Dallas, Detroit, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Memphis, New Orleans, San Antonio, St. Louis, and other cities.

Pressing: Columbia Phonograph Company

Foreign Affiliate: Columbia International, Ltd. (England); Carl Lindström A.G. (Germany)

Record Products: Okeh, Odeon (ONY- series), Parlophone (PNY- series); Odeon (pressings from imported masters)

In the autumn of 1926, Otto Heineman negotiated the sale of his General Phonograph Corporation (*q.v.*) to Columbia, which would allow Okeh to employ the Western Electric recording system under Columbia's license. The sale was announced in early October and was completed on the twenty-second of that month, following approval by General Phonograph's shareholders.

General Phonograph's Okeh and Odeon record divisions (the latter under license from Lindström) were reorganized as the Okeh Phonograph Corporation, which operated as a largely autonomous Columbia subsidiary. Heineman was retained as president and general manager, and Charles Hibbard stayed on for a time as technical director. Thomas G. (Tommy) Rockwell was transferred from Columbia's Chicago sales office to serve as Okeh's New York studio manager and occasional talent scout. Heineman's various other businesses, including the production of phonograph parts and radios, was carried on independently by the General Industries Corporation, for which the Okeh Phonograph Corporation served as a holding company.

Western Electric recording equipment was installed in Okeh's studios by the end of 1926, first in Chicago, and then in New York. Okeh's earliest Western Electric masters were marked with a small "O-E" in the wax, which was soon replaced by the circled-W logo that Columbia used to indicate Western Electric recordings.

Although now a Columbia subsidiary, Okeh operated more-or-less autonomously into the early 1930s. The company maintained its own master-number series, made its own decisions in matters of artists and repertoire, operated its own studios (which were occasionally booked for Columbia sessions), and produced its own catalog and marketing materials. Only the manufacturing was taken over by Columbia, which provided superior laminated pressings.

Okeh continued to aggressively pursue the race-record and country-music markets. Its recording teams traveled widely, with Tommy Rockwell taking over many of Ralph Peer's former duties, while Polk Brockman, along with H. C. Speir and other freelance talent scouts, scoured the South and Midwest for promising artists. Although Okeh continued to maintain separate race and country-music catalogs, the boundaries were not always rigid. Selected records by Black artists with cross-over appeal, including Louis Armstrong

and Clarence Williams, were advertised alongside pop releases for the White market, while some titles by White jazz and country-music artists were released in the race series, under pseudonyms. The country-music series included titles by Black and even Mexican musicians, again suitably disguised.

Okeh retained its strong presence in the foreign-language field with its Odeon series, which was drawn almost entirely from imported masters licensed from the Lindström organization. In 1929, however, the company introduced domestic versions of Odeon and its sister label, Parlophone, that featured current popular material, which were given ONY- and PNY-prefixed catalog numbers, respectively. Unlike the Lindström-derived issues, they used alternate Okeh's own masters (sometimes employing alternate takes), or masters recorded by Okeh for the labels' exclusive use. The ONY and PNY series were discontinued in 1931, after sales proved disappointing.

Columbia's management slowly began chipping away at Okeh's autonomy in the late 1920s. The Columbia and Okeh offices were consolidated in 1929, and recording personnel from each division began traveling as a team, sharing equipment and temporary studios. Artists usually were not shared on these trips, with Columbia's artists completing their sessions before Okeh's were allowed to begin. The new policy was the first sign of what would become Columbia's increasing control over its Okeh subsidiary. Master swapping between Columbia and Okeh began in late 1930 or early 1931, presaging Okeh's end as an independent entity. By mid-1931, the barriers had largely broken down between Okeh, Columbia, and the Columbia budget labels, with widespread swapping of masters among the three divisions. It was not uncommon for a single recording to appear on all three divisions' labels, with different master numbers and artist credits or pseudonyms allocated to each label.

On January 16, 1932, the Columbia Phonograph Company and its Okeh subsidiary were sold to the Grigsby-Grunow Company, manufacturers of Majestic radios and refrigerators. Recording activity declined sharply, and in June 1932, a temporary halt was ordered to new Okeh releases. By February 1934, Grigsby-Grunow and Columbia were bankrupt. On April 16, 1934, Grigsby-Grunow's receivers sold their majority interest in the Columbia Phonograph Company and its Okeh division to Sacro Enterprises, Inc., a shell corporation that had been hastily set up by Consolidated Film Industries' Herbert Yates to facilitate the purchase. The Columbia Phonograph Company was merged into Yates' American Record Corporation, but its Okeh division was slated for elimination.

Okeh Phonograph's last sessions were held in November 1934, and the Okeh label was discontinued in early 1935. It would resurface five years later, as the Columbia Recording Corporation's new budget-priced line.

OKLAHOMA TORNADO RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 349-A Rt. 1, Westlake, LA

Record Products: O. T.

Launched in early 1949 by John Harvey (Virgel) Bozman, a country-music singer and guitarist who liked to refer to himself as "The Arkansas Sinatra." According to an anecdotal account, Bozman's short-lived venture was largely financed by George Khoury, a record dealer in Lake Charles, Louisiana, who would soon launch his own Khoury's label. Bozman reportedly peddled O.T. records out of the back of a hearse.

Bozman and his backup band, Orville (Bennie) Hess' Oklahoma Tornadoes, had earlier worked as house musicians for Bill Quinn's Gold Star Records, and they were used on many O.T. releases as well. O.T.'s artist roster also included Cajun musicians Harry Choates (attempting unsuccessfully to follow up on his Gold Star hit recording of "Jole Blon" with the derivative "Jole Blon's Gone"), Cleo Harves, Jerry Barlow, and Nathan Abshire and his Pine Grove Boys.

Recording had been suspended by the end of 1949, after approximately fourteen O.T. releases. Bennie Hess and Gold Star's James Bryant briefly took over distribution of the label, which they redesigned and moved to San Antonio, but no new releases appear to have been produced. Bozman went on to launch the equally short-lived Hot Rod label in partnership with Bob Tanner (*see* Tanner Manufacturing and Distributing).

OLD DOMINION PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Founded: 1889

Offices: Rooms 8 and 9, Masonic Temple, Roanoke, VA; Norfolk (branch office, from 9/1890)

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. A phonograph exhibition was held in Alexandria, Virginia, on May 25, 1889 in an attempt to secure stock subscriptions.

After a considerable delay, the Old Dominion Phonograph Company was granted a charter in Roanoke on November 1, 1889, with J. H. McGilvra serving as president as well as a director. Among the company's other directors was Charles Cheever. An officer of the Automatic Phonograph Exhibition Company, Cheever was also a member of the Cahoone Syndicate and was involved in the formation of several other North American Phonograph sub-companies. Guy L. Bunch, of Raleigh, North Carolina, was listed in 1890 as the company's resident manager and, along with Robert S. Boswell, was responsible for overseeing its public exhibitions. There also appears to have been a large number of hangers-on, many of them owners of their own businesses, whose official duties with the company were not specified.

Old Dominion reportedly received its first shipment of goods from North American Phonograph in early December 1889. The company is known to have recorded its own cylinders for exhibition purposes, including some by the Third Artillery Band of Washington, D.C., in August 1889, that were demonstrated privately. Thus far, however, no catalog or other evidence has been found to suggest that the company produced original recordings for sale to the general public.

OLD TIMER RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 3707 N. 7th St., Phoenix, AZ

Record Products: Old Timer

Launched in late 1949 by Clay Ramsey. Old Timer's mailing address was that of Ramsey's Phoenix appliance and record store, which marketed Old Timer records locally. Labels show a 1950 copyright date, which does not appear to have been formally registered. Old Timer first advertised in *Billboard* in February 1950, listing fourteen titles. At that time, the records were also being sold by mail order, with distributor inquiries invited. The label specialized in folk, round, and square dance recordings by callers and musicians working in the Phoenix area, including the Jerry Jaka Trio, Johnny Schultz, Vernon Harris, Johnny Melton, and Ramsey himself.

OLIVER RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – Early 1950s

Offices: 5538 Foothill Blvd., Oakland, CA (1940s); 4926 E. 12th St., Oakland (Early 1950s)

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Oliver, Gru-V-Tone, Ollie-T; masters and pressings for many independent and custom labels

An independent pressing plant owned and operated by Oliver T. (Ollie) Hunt, the Oliver Record Company briefly produced its own labels in the late 1940s. Hunt's pressing clients were primarily small California start-ups and custom labels, including the obscure Accordia, Fentone, Golden Gate, Harmony Music, and Scotty's Radio labels. The company also took over pressing for the Honolulu-based Advertiser Publishing Company (*q.v.*) after World War II and handled distribution for Neale Wrightman and other West Coast record producers.

Oliver operated its own studio, producing the O- and OR- prefixed masters that appear on many small independent West Coast labels in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Hunt's own Oliver label was launched in 1947. The few known releases, aside from several reissues of Advertiser Publishing's Hawaiian Transcription recordings, were devoted to traditional folk dances. The Oliver label last appeared in *Billboard's* label directory in January 1949. Hunt's obscure and apparently short-lived Ollie-T and Gru-V-Tone labels,

which specialized in rhythm-and-blues, are believed to have been produced at about the same time. There are anecdotal reports that Hunt owned or was affiliated with the Oclave label in the early 1950s, which have not been confirmed. He went on to produce the Trilyte label in the mid-1950s.

OLYMPIC DISC RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1921

Offices: 1662–1666 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Source(s): 156 Meadow St., Long Island City, NY

Pressing: Creek & Meadow Sts., Long Island City, NY

Record Products: Olympic

Launched in early 1921 as a subsidiary of the Remington Phonograph Corporation, a phonograph-manufacturing operation that was incorporated in New York on January 22 of that year. Philo E. Remington (grandson of the founder of the Remington firearms company) apparently had planned to produce records prior to Olympic's creation. On July 20, 1920, he filed a trademark application for the Reminola brand, falsely claiming use on records since May 5, 1920. No Reminola records are known to have been produced.

The Olympic Disc Record Corporation's formation was announced in *The Talking Machine World* for March 1921. Its officers included Remington (president) and former Aeolian Company executive James S. Holmes (vice-president and general manager). John Fletcher, whose idled Operaphone Company facility would serve as Olympic's pressing plant and studio, was appointed secretary but acted unofficially as general manager. Remington Phonograph, which held a controlling interest in Olympic, would distribute the records, but recording, production, and marketing were entrusted to Fletcher and his staff.

Although Olympic records were marketed as premium-priced products, recording and pressing quality were mediocre, and the artist roster was dominated by the usual New York dance orchestras and freelance studio singers. The only notable exception was an operatic series with special labels containing brief explanatory text. It offered familiar arias by Henrietta Wakefield, Regina Vicarino, and other respected (if not-quite-stellar) artists but was discontinued after ten releases, all but two of which were single-sided. Despite strong marketing and good coverage by the trade papers, the operatic records appears to have sold poorly.

By late 1921, the parent Remington Phonograph Company was failing. On December 1, Remington and Olympic were placed in receivership on the complaint of vice-president Holmes, who contended that it was impossible to proceed with business unless additional capital could be raised. In addition, Holmes disclosed that a number of legal actions against Remington and Olympic were likely. Later testimony revealed that Remington Phonograph lost money from the start, despite rosy statements to its investors.

On December 9, 1921, the Olympic Disc Record Corporation filed a petition in bankruptcy. The last releases under its imprint appeared in the same month. A meeting of Remington stockholders held on January 30, 1922, "broke into disorder...without taking any definite action," according to a *New York Times* report. "The confusion that followed became so great," the *Times* reported, "that the manager of the hotel...threatened to call the police." A proposal that stockholders invest still more money in a reorganization was shouted down.

The Olympic and Remington operations were quickly dismantled. Fletcher escaped the collapse unscathed, other than what would be a temporary loss of his label, but the Remington officers did not fare as well. An investigation of the Remington Phonograph Company revealed that of the \$1 million allegedly collected on stock sales, only \$440,000 had been entered in Remington's books. On June 1, 1922, Philo Remington and five other Remington Phonograph officers were ordered held on \$5,000 bond each, pending arraignment on charges of stock fraud.

Louis Jersawit, the receiver for both companies, gave notice in *The New York Times* on March 3, 1922, that all property and assets were to be auctioned on March 25. Olympic's assets, including its studio and pressing plant, were purchased by John Fletcher in partnership with Michael Naughton (an associate of Fletcher's since his Operaphone days) and Black Swan's Harry Pace. Operating as the Fletcher Record Company (*q.v.*), the new venture initially served only as the production facility for Black Swan records. However,

after regaining control of his studio and plant, Fletcher soon revived the Olympic label, with no better results than previously.

OLYMPIC RECORDING COMPANY — See Musicraft Corporation

OPAL RECORDS — See Atwood–Herscher Publications

OPERA DISC COMPANY

Supplied by Deutsche Grammophon's Polyphonwerke division from 1920 through 1923, the Opera Disc Company (New York) offered an extensive catalog of unauthorized pressings from Victor Talking Machine Company and Gramophone Company masters that had been seized by the German government in 1914 as spoils of war. Courts ordered the operation closed in Great Britain in 1922, and in the United States in March 1923. The company produced no original recordings and thus is beyond the scope of this work.

OPERA RECORD COMPANY / OPERA RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1949; 1951

Offices: 1145 Weaver St., Houston (1948–1949); 711 Rochow St., Houston (1951); Los Angeles (1951)

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, probably other independent studios

Record Products: Opera [1]

Founded in late 1947, as the Opera Record Company, by Orville (Bennie) Hess and James Bryant. Hess at the time was a singer with the Oklahoma Tornadoes, a group headed John Harvey (Virgel) Bozman, who liked to refer to himself as "The Arkansas Sinatra."

Members of the Oklahoma Tornadoes formed the core of Opera's artist roster. Hess himself was under contract to Black and White Records at the time, so he used the pseudonym "George Harrison" for his initial Opera release. In 1948, Hess signed with Mercury Records, while continuing to run Opera. He issued a bootlegged version his second Mercury release, bringing a quick end to his career with that label.

Although early labels carried the logo "Hits of the Hillbillies," Opera also featured Cajun fare, with an artist roster that included fiddlers Charlie Broussard and Floyd LeBlanc (the latter a member of the Oklahoma Tornadoes) and accordionist Iry Lejeune.

The Opera Record Company went largely dormant in 1949, after Bozman left to launch his Oklahoma Tornado Record Company (*q.v.*). B. W. Leisy revived the Opera label in 1951, doing business as the Opera Recording Company. The redesigned labels list Houston and Los Angeles locations. Many releases were reissues of the 1940s recordings, retaining the original catalog numbers. The last known Opera release appeared in March 1951.

Hess went on to launch a string of short-lived labels, including Jet (1953), Spade (1956), and Major (1958). He formed his own music-publishing company in the 1960s, owned a hunting resort in Texas, and operated Showay Productions (Nashville) during the 1970s and early 1980s. He died in Houston on November 22, 1984.

OPERA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 4008 S. Ellis Ave., Chicago

Record Products: Opera [2]

A Black-owned company founded in late 1947 by Joe Brown, a small-time Chicago entrepreneur, in partnership with blues artist James Burke Oden (*a.k.a.* St. Louis Jimmy). Opera Records operated from a residence on Chicago's South Side.

Despite the label's name, its few known releases featured jazz and blues and were intended for the race-record market. The artist roster included Oden, a King Kolax combo, Sunnyland Slim (disguised as "Delta Joe," from Hy-Tone masters), and nightclub singer Byllye Williams. Brown sold the latter's masters in late 1948 to Savoy Records, which changed the spelling of her first name to "Billye." Opera appears to have become inactive by late 1948. In August 1949, Brown and Oden launched the better-known J. O. B. Records (*q.v.*).

OPERAPHONE MANUFACTURING CORPORATION / OPERAPHONE COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1914 – 1921

Offices: Degnon Terminal Building, Long Island City, NY (factory, 1915–1917); 2 Rector St., New York (1915–1/1916); 200 5th Ave., New York (2/1916–4/1917); Depew Building, 489 5th Ave., New York (4/1917–1918); Creek & Meadows Sts., Long Island City, New York (4/1918–4/1921); 752 Insurance Exchange, Jackson Blvd., Chicago (branch, 1916–1917)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—Unknown New York location (1914–10/1916); Degnon Terminal Building, Long Island City (from 10/1916, possibly not used)

Pressing: Own plant—156 Meadow St., Long Island City, NY

Record Products: All-Star, Cadillac [1], Crescent [1] (c. 1916–1917), Domestic (c. 1916–1917), Elginola, Empire [1], Jolley, Manophone, Operaphone, Puritone [1], World [1]

The Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation was incorporated in New York on November 28, 1914, with a capitalization of \$100,000, by E. F. Gerner, Michael Naughton, and John Fletcher. Naughton would also be involved in later ventures with Fletcher, who served as general manager and spokesman for the new company. He began his musical career as a member of the Edison studio band in or around 1900 and later recorded for Victor as a cornetist with Sousa's Band before joining the New York Symphony Orchestra. By his own account, Fletcher was fascinated by recording technology and by the early 1910s had decided to set aside his musical career to work in the recording field. He eventually was granted a U.S. patent (#1,269,696) on a method for making fine-groove vertical-cut recordings that he would employ in his earliest Operaphone discs.

On February 21, 1915, *The New York Times* reported that the Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation had leased two floors of the Degnon Terminal Building in Long Island City and was expecting to commence operations by March 1. Fletcher claimed use of the Operaphone trademark beginning on the same date, in a trademark application that he belatedly filed on September 13, 1919. In a 1918 interview with *The Talking Machine World*, Fletcher stated that he was "planning to devote more time to...the recording of the entire symphonic repertoire," a plan that never materialized. Despite its name and Fletcher's lofty ambitions, the Operaphone label primarily featured undistinguished popular fare by the house orchestra and the usual New York studio freelancers, with a smattering of old standards and light classics.

Although Operaphone's masters employed approximately the same groove pitch as the Edison Diamond Disc, the soft shellac pressings could not withstand the weight of the Edison reproducer, and Operaphone wisely avoided recommending their use on Edison phonographs. The earliest issues were 7" fine-groove, steel-needle type vertical-cut discs with paint-filled embossed labels.

This short-lived series was soon abandoned in favor of fine-groove 8" pressings, which provided a standard three-minute playing time. The new series also used paint-filled embossed labels for a time, as well as an etched label that employed a frosted effect similar to that of the Edison Diamond Disc. Paper-labeled 8" Operaphone discs, retailing for 35¢ each, were announced in *The Talking Machine World* for August 1916. Operaphone sometimes coupled jarringly dissimilar selections, a practice that had failed for Columbia several years earlier, but soon acknowledged its error. In the September 1916 edition of *The Talking Machine World*, the company promised to make more appropriate couplings on future releases.

The same *TMW* report claimed that "since the first of the year, the demand for Operaphone records has increased at a rapid rate, with the result that the output of the company's plant in Long Island City has been trebled in that time." Some of that increase was probably attributable to Operaphone's production of several client labels, which included All Star and early versions of Crescent and Domestic. The records were also exported to Canada, where the 8" discs were sold for 50¢ each by the Canadian Phonograph Company (103 Yonge Street, Toronto).

Operaphone had the dubious distinction of being the first record company to be sued for failure to pay mechanical reproduction royalties under the Copyright Act of 1909. The lawsuit, brought by the music publishing firm of Leo Feist, was decided in Feist's favor in October 1916, with Operaphone directed to pay all royalties plus some modest court costs. At about the same time, the Lyrophone Company of America sued Operaphone over its use of the fine-groove vertical cut, which it also employed. Operaphone, which had recently

moved its studio to the Long Island City pressing plant, appears to have suspended operations by year's end. In a 1918 *TMW* interview, Fletcher stated that he had produced two-hundred of the 8" releases before abandoning the effort, which he admitted "incurred tremendous expenses with returns that were hardly commensurate."

The Operaphone Manufacturing Company was reorganized in 1918 as the Operaphone Company, Inc., of Long Island City. The new name reflected the company's exit from manufacturing, including the production of original recordings. From the start, the reorganized company was closely affiliated with the Pathé Frères Phonograph Company, which supplied it with masters. The 1922 edition of *Moody's Industrials* listed the Operaphone Company (which by then had been liquidated) as a Pathé subsidiary, a relationship that had never disclosed to the trade press or general public.

Pathé initially supplied Operaphone with 10" steel-needle vertical-cut masters transcribed pantographically from its cylinder masters, duplicating material on its own label. Numbered in a 5000 series, the new discs were first exhibited at the National Music Show in New York in June 1918, and *The Music Trade Review* wrote that they were "a distinct improvement over the former Operaphone products." In fact, they were Pathé products, and the redesigned labels carried Pathé's characteristic warning, "U.S. Consumption Only." A lavishly designed catalog was published in August, and the records were well advertised, but despite such flourishes, this Operaphone series was discontinued within a year.

In late 1918 or early 1919, Operaphone licensed George T. Smallwood's universal-cut patent #639,452. Although the patent was about to expire, the Smallwood cut was employed in the final Operaphone series. Introduced in July 1919, the records were again pressed from transcribed Pathé masters, duplicating material on Pathé's own vertical-cut releases. Several label colors and catalog series were used, including 21100 (popular vocal), 31100 (popular instrumental), 41100 (standard vocal), 51100 (standard instrumental), 61100 (Hawaiian), 71100 (religious), and 81100 (classical). A special Polish series, numbered in the 200s, substituted the Polish eagle for the usual "Music for Everyone" trademark on the labels.

As was the case with many universal-cut products, the Pathé-produced Operaphone releases were of mediocre technical quality and were prone to premature wear. Most used artist pseudonyms, lessening their appeal to consumers. However, a comparison of *Talking Machine World* advance-release listings reveals that in some cases, Operaphone records were released a month or more before the corresponding Pathé-label issues, in an unusual reversal of normal client-label procedure.

In late 1920, Pathé began supplying Operaphone with standard lateral-cut masters (which it had begun producing for the impending launch of its own *Actuelle* lateral-cut discs), although the labels were not changed to reflect the transition. The last new Operaphone releases were advertised in January 1921, the same month in which Pathé entered the lateral-cut market. Operaphone placed a small advertisement in the February 1921 *Talking Machine World*, but a month later, the publication reported that the company was "winding up its affairs and will shortly withdraw from the record field." By then, some dealers were already remaindering Operaphone records for as little as 25¢ each.

Fletcher arranged to sell the idled Operaphone pressing plant to his new venture, the Olympic Disc Record Corporation (*q.v.*). The Operaphone Company, although inactive after March 1921, was not officially dismantled until the end of the year. Receivers, including Pathé president E. A. Widmann, were appointed on December 9, 1921, and the company's affairs were quickly wound-up. By then, the name was being used by the Operaphone Phonograph Company (Kansas City, Missouri), an unrelated retail operation.

OPPORTUNITY RECORDS — See Music Enterprises, Inc.

OPUS RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices: 165 Broadway, New York

Pressing: Songcraft plant

Record Products: Opus

An apparently short-lived venture launched in early-to-mid 1948 by songwriter Bernard (Bernie) Bierman. Not to be confused with a 1940s football coach of the same name, Bierman

graduated from Brooklyn Law School and passed the New York bar in 1930, then turned to music as a full-time profession after being discharged from the army in 1945. He collaborated on several hits, often with Jack Manus, including "Midnight Masquerade" and "Vanity." Songwriter and arranger Bobby Kroll was informally associated with the label, based upon a mention in *Billboard*.

A handful of Opus releases appeared during the summer of 1948, during the second American Federation of Musicians recording ban, all featuring pop material. The second group of releases used pre-ban Esquire masters by the Chittison Trio, with Eadie Lang's vocals overdubbed by Opus. In October, Bierman suffered a heart attack that left him confined for a time to his home in Charlotte, North Carolina, which might have marked the end of his Opus venture. The Opus name was later used for an unrelated LP label by Wally Woolsey's Parade Records (New York).

Bierman retired from music in 1952 to run the family painting and decorating business. He returned to writing and performing in 1986, when he launched a CD company. He co-composed "Cuban Mambo," which was featured in Woody Allen's film, "Crimes and Misdemeanors." Bierman was made an honorary member of the Friars Club in 2005, and he continued to write and perform through 2009. He died on November 5, 2012, at the age of 104.

ORA NELLE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947

Offices: 831 Maxwell St., Chicago

Record Products: Ora Nelle

A short-lived venture of Bernard Abrams, owner of the Maxwell Radio and Record Shop in Chicago. Abrams recorded local blues singers in his store, on acetates using a portable recording machine.

Although only two Ora Nelle releases are confirmed (by Little Walter with Othum Brown, and Johnny "Man" Young with Johnny Williams), Abrams cut additional acetates that he never released, including titles by Sleepy John Estes and Johnny Temple. Williams, Young, Little Walter, and Willie McNeal (*a.k.a.* Boll Weevil) are all believed to have made their first recordings for Abrams. Ora Nelle records had no virtually no marketing or distribution outside of Abrams' store, but the Little Walter release was reissued by Chance in 1952.

George Paulus, a Chicago record collector, purchased Abrams' acetates in 1969, which were dubbed for release on LPs, and later, CDs. Abrams continued to operate his store into the early 1980s and died in 1997.

ORCHID RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 1814 Pennsylvania Ave., Baltimore

Record Products: Orchid [2]

A short-lived race-record label of unknown ownership. The mailing address was that of a Baltimore row-house, the bottom floor of which was occupied by a liquor store at the time. Orchid's only *Billboard* advertisement touted the label as "A New 'Hot' Race Line for 1950." There is no confirmed connection to the earlier, Los Angeles-based Orchid label (*see next entry*).

Orchid's first four releases were advertised in April 1950. Its small roster included Sonny Jones (a North Carolina blues singer, misspelled "Sunny" on the labels), Rev. M. E. Holmes (a Baltimore preacher and broadcaster), and Brother Shadrach Winstead. The company was last listed in *Billboard*'s July 1951 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

The Orchid name was used for an unrelated country-and-western label in the early 1950s, and for an imprint of Gone Records beginning in the mid-1950s.

ORCHID RECORDS AND PUBLICATIONS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Orchid [1]

A short-lived pop label managed by Virgil Phemister, an aspiring amateur songwriter from Indiana. Orchid's first release (Scat Man Crothers' rendition of Phemister's "Shuffleboard Blues") appeared in August 1949. In December, a *Billboard* reviewer complained that Crothers' second Orchid release was "handled with little spirit." The trade papers reported nothing further on the company. In 1950 the Orchid name was used for an unrelated Baltimore label (*see previous entry*).

ORIOLE RECORDS CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1951; 1959

Offices: 2134 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago (from 1950); 1323 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago (late 1950s)

Pressing (78s): RCA Victor plant

Record Products: Oriole [2]

Launched in the summer of 1950 by a group of Chicago jukebox operators headed by Vincent (Bud) Bandom (sometimes misspelled Brandon in the trade papers). Bandom served as the company's first president, and Boyce Smith as artists-and-repertoire manager. Oriole Records initially was affiliated with Fredericks Music, a publisher with offices at the same South Wabash Avenue address. There was no connection to the American Record Corporation's earlier Oriole label, despite the very similar pictorial trademark.

Bandom told a *Cash Box* reporter, "We believe that every jukebox operator...will agree that when records are produced by operators for operators, they are getting the kind of records that they have always wanted." Oriole's initial offering (Danny O' Neil's "Emma Lou"/"When Lola Plays the Pianola") was released in July 1950 to test the label's acceptance by jukebox operators. *Cash Box* rated it "frankly corny," but distributor Jimmy Martin reported sales of 10,000 copies within a few weeks, and a follow-up release by O'Neil was advertised in August. In the same month, Bandom announced that Oriole was expanding its artist roster and would begin supplying free stickers and title strips to jukebox operators.

Oriole suspended operation in 1951, after eighteen releases. The label was briefly revived in 1959, in 45-rpm form, employing the original trademark and crediting Fredericks Music and Bandom Music on various titles.

ORPHEUM RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1918–c. 1920

Offices: New York

Record Products: Orpheum

Incorporated in 1918 by Andrew Poulos, Kyriaki Yiortzi Antonopoulos (Poulos' wife, listed as K. Poulos), and M. A. Stathopoulos. Orpheum was the first Greek-owned and operated American record company. Its formation, with an initial capitalization of \$10,000, was announced in *The Music Trade Review* for June 1, 1918. Kyriaki Yiortzi Antonopoulos (known professionally as Madame Coula), was a well-known Greek-American entertainer who had already recorded for Columbia's ethnic series and would be featured on some Orpheum releases.

The earliest Orpheum issues were vertical-cut recordings. The pressings, which appear to have been made by Pathé, show crudely handwritten three-digit master numbers that have not been traced to other sources and might have been exclusive to Orpheum.

The Orpheum Record Company appears to have suspended operations by early 1920, when Poulos and Antonopoulos founded the better-known Panhellenion Phonograph Record Company (*q.v.*). However, the Orpheum label remained in production, presumably under Poulos and Antonopoulos' management. Later Orpheum issues were pressed by the Siemon Hard Rubber Company, and possibly another plant, using a mixture of Jones Recording Laboratories masters and recordings from an unknown (probably foreign) source. They feature some of the same recordings as the Panhellenion label, as well as some recordings imported from Constantinople.

ORPHEUS RECORD AND TRANSCRIPTION COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1948

Offices: 1585 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Orpheus

Headed by R. C. Douglas, the Orpheus Record and Transcription Company released its first commercial recordings in mid-June 1945, on 12" discs containing two selections per side. Being incompatible with jukeboxes, the records instead were promoted mainly to disc jockeys. The series appears to have been quickly discontinued

Nothing more was heard of the company until late 1947, when it re-entered the market with standard 10" single-selection pressings. The first releases, by Bill Clement and his Orchestra, were made available to distributors during the last week of December, at which time *Billboard* erroneously reported that Orpheus was a new Philadelphia label. Unlike the earlier Orpheus series, these were intended primarily for jukebox use, although they were also advertised to the general public on a small scale. A few releases were still being advertised as late as June 1948. The Orpheus name was also used in the 1950s for an unrelated Los Angeles label.

— P —

PACE PHONOGRAPH CORPORATION / BLACK SWAN RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921–1923

Offices: 257 W. 138th St., New York (early 1921); 2289 7th Ave., New York (from 10/1921).

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios—New York (through c.3/1922); 156 Meadow St., Long Island City, NY; many other masters from Olympic

Pressing: New York Recording Laboratories, possibly other plants (through c. 3/1922); own plant—Meadow & Creek Sts., Long Island City, NY (from c. 4/1922)

Record Products: Black Swan

Founded in December 1920 by Harry H. Pace, the Pace Phonograph Corporation was the second Black-owned and operated record company (preceded only by George W. Broome's short-lived venture), and the first to succeed commercially, if only briefly.

A 1903 graduate of Atlanta University, Pace initially worked in banking, but his interest turned increasingly to music. He and W. C. Handy collaborated on their first song in 1907, and in 1912 the pair formed the Pace & Handy Music Company in Memphis. The company had its first major hit in 1914, with the publication of Handy's "St. Louis Blues," and in 1918 it relocated to New York. Pace resigned in late 1920 to launch what would become Black Swan, taking some key personnel with him. Handy recalled, "With Pace went a large number of our employees, persons especially trained for the requirements of our business and therefore hard to replace. Still more confusion and anguish grew out of the fact people did not generally know that I had no stake in the Black Swan record company."

On December 27, 1920, Pace wrote to W. E. B. Du Bois that he had formed a corporation to manufacture phonograph records. He held open the possibility of involving others, telling Du Bois, "I made the capital stock elastic enough so as to take others into it if the idea met very favorable consideration." The letter makes clear that it was Du Bois who suggested the name "Black Swan," in honor of the pioneering African-American diva, Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield. Pace reported to Du Bois that he had already made test recordings by Ford Dabney's Orchestra and was hoping to do the same with operatic soprano Florence Cole-Talbert and a very young Marian Anderson.

Pace invited Du Bois to join the new company's board and provide whatever funding he could. The Pace Phonograph Corporation was formally chartered as a Delaware corporation in January 1921. The officers at the time of incorporation were Pace (president and treasurer) and D. L. Haynes (secretary). Directors, in addition to Du Bois, included Levi C. Brown, T. K. Gibson, William Lewis, John E. Nail, and Emmett J. Scott. Pace and Du Bois found eager investors not only in Harlem, but in Arkansas, Georgia, Ohio, and other far-flung locations. Among them was comedian Bert Williams, who according to an advertisement in *The Crisis*, "put thousands of dollars into the making of Black Swan records."

Harry Pace's residence at 257 West 138th Street served as Black Swan's first office. Among

the employees Pace took from Pace & Handy Music was Fletcher Hamilton Henderson, Jr., a young pianist from Georgia who Handy had recently hired as a song demonstrator. He was made recording director and house accompanist, although Pace later disclosed he felt that Henderson was not fully qualified. William Grant Still, one of W. C. Handy's staff arrangers, also made the move.

The studio in which Pace initially recorded remains a subject of debate. The location is not mentioned in any of Pace's or Du Bois' known correspondence, nor is there any suggestion in those letters that Pace was operating his own studio or had hired a recording engineer. A *New York Age* article from June 1921 confirms that Pace did not yet have his own studio, reporting that the company was "planning to establish its own laboratory [*i.e.*, studio] in the near future." If any of Pace's pre-production tests have survived, they have not been located for inspection. However, most of the early issued masters appear to have been made for Pace by the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount), based upon physical and aural characteristics.

Black Swan records were in production by the early spring of 1921, with initial releases planned for May. Pressing was to be handled by John Fletcher's Olympic Disc Record Corporation plant in Long Island City. Newly incorporated, Olympic commenced operations in March 1921, the same month in which the earliest issued Black Swan recordings are believed to have been made. Like Black Swan, Olympic advertised its first records as May releases, and their physical characteristics were identical with those of the earliest Black Swan pressings, confirming Harry Pace's recollection that they were pressed in what he termed the "Remington factory" (the Remington Phonograph Company being Olympic's parent corporation).

From the start, Pace found himself torn between two disparate markets within the African-American community — a relatively small, affluent group that championed what it saw as culture and refinement (mirroring Pace's own background and musical preferences), and a larger working-class group with a growing appetite for jazz and blues records. In August 1921, Pace told *The Talking Machine World*, "While it is true that we will feature to a great extent 'blue' numbers of the type that are in current favor, we will also release many numbers of a higher standard." In his attempts to present Black Swan as a respectable operation to potential investors, Pace understandably erred on the side of caution his choice of artists and repertoire.

The first three Black Swan records were announced as ready for delivery on May 4, 1921. Pace's preference for "numbers of a 'higher standard'" was immediately apparent. For the inaugural release (#2001), he chose two old concert pieces, "At Dawning" and "Thank God for a Garden," sung by soprano Revella Hughes, with violin, cello, and piano accompaniment. There followed two equally straightforward sides by concert baritone Carroll C. Clark, then two blues-inflected pop tunes by vaudevillian Katie Crippen. The company sold a modest 10,300 records during its first month of sales, according to a report in *The Crisis*.

The Black press (particularly *The Chicago Defender*) cast Pace's attempt to launch Black Swan as nothing less than a struggle between good and evil. The venture had barely been launched when the *Defender* proclaimed that "a great uproar was caused among White phonograph record companies who resented the idea of having a Race company enter what they felt was an exclusive field." If there was an uproar, it went unreported in trade journals like *The Talking Machine World*, which covered Black Swan to the same extent as the other small startups of the period, was supportive in its reporting on the company, and readily accepted its advertising.

One of the *Defender's* most absurd claims, flying in the face of well-established fact, was that Remington Phonograph had purchased the Olympic pressing plant for the sole purpose of denying service to Pace, ignoring the fact that the plant had indeed pressed for Pace. What actually caused Pace to move his pressing business was a surge in orders. In a note to Du Bois, mailed on June 24, 1921, from Port Washington, Wisconsin (NYRL's headquarters), Pace reported, "I am here arranging for an increased fall and winter production together with a line of Black Swan Phonographs." The NYRL plant, although geographically remote, had the capacity for large-scale record production that Olympic lacked, and it was actively courting new customers.

The initial Black Swan releases were received politely enough, and Carroll Clark's first

offering appears to have been a relatively good seller, based upon the large number of surviving copies. But the earliest releases failed to generate the sort of excitement that would be needed to bring national attention to Black Swan. The situation changed with Pace's signing of Ethel Waters in April 1921. Already a veteran of the Southern vaudeville circuits, Waters was attracting a strong following at Edmond's Cellar in Harlem.

Waters had already recorded two titles for Criterion Laboratories, an independent studio that supplied several small labels, but there had been no immediate takers (Cardinal eventually released them in September 1921), and Waters decided to visit Pace. Her first Black Swan release ("Down Home Blues"/"Oh Daddy") was released in July 1921 and became a sizable hit. In October, Pace signed Waters to an exclusive Black Swan contract that reportedly made her the highest-paid Black recording artist at the time. In November, she was sent on an extended tour as the star of the Black Swan Troubadours, eventually playing in twenty-one states.

Thanks largely to Waters' records, Black Swan developed a small following among White customers, including some stage and film stars. It was widely reported that actress Marilyn Miller had presented a "large selection" of Black Swan records to Jack Pickford (Mary's brother) on their wedding day. *The Dallas Express* reported, "It is now becoming quite a fad with many stars of the theatrical profession, who have found something different in these all-Colored records, to have them sent to their friends in various parts of the country."

Pace, however, failed to capitalize on that momentum. He placed no advertising in the White consumer publications and made little effort to court the important trade publications. His advertisements in *The Talking Machine World*, which did not begin running until August 1921, often appeared to be halfhearted efforts, sometimes simply listing a few artists' names, or dwelling on past hits rather than fresh releases.

Trixie Smith, Pace's next star, was signed in January 1922, shortly after she took first place at the Fifteenth Regiment Blues Contest in Harlem. With Waters and Smith on his roster, Pace found it easier to attract new singers. However, the oft-repeated tale that he auditioned Bessie Smith, and rejected her after she stopped to spit in the midst of her test recording, is apocryphal. It appears to have originated in the 1940s with W. C. Handy, who was prone to spinning colorful tales and is unlikely to have been present at the alleged session, given his strained relationship with Pace.

With demand for Black Swan records growing, distribution proved to be a stumbling block. Pace was unable to obtain national distribution through the major jobbers. Although racial prejudice was no doubt a factor, small White-owned startups had experienced the same problem for many years. In Pace's case, however, the major distributors' lack of interest probably was compounded by Black Swan's focus on a still-unproven market.

Pace countered by recruiting small retailers and enterprising individuals to sell the records wherever and however they could. In June 1921, he hired Paul Robeson (then a student at Rutgers) as a part-time salesman, although he failed to record him. That autumn, Pace hired C. Udell Turpin, a Columbia University business school graduate, as his sales manager. Turpin brought along several professional salesmen from a previous venture, but he continued to build Pace's network of small retailers and individual salespeople as well, advertising in *The Crisis*, "We want men and women with a backbone and a desire to earn \$100 a week...men and women who don't care what \$20 a week people think."

In March 1922, Pace published a Black Swan distributor map in *The Crisis* that looked impressive at first glance, with all forty-eight states covered to varying degrees. The heaviest concentrations were east of the Mississippi, but nearly every state had a distributor or jobber, and at least a few retail dealers. However, the largest number of dots on the map represented "agents," those independent salespeople who peddled the records door-to-door, on street corners, or wherever else they could.

In January 1922, *The New York Age* perhaps unintentionally revealed the company's financial fragility when it reported that Black Swan had made a profit of slightly more than \$3,300 on sales of \$104,628.74 in 1921. Although the reporter seemed impressed by the latter figure, it was minuscule by industry standards of the day. Given that Black Swan records initially retailed for \$1 (reduced to 85¢ late in the year), and normal wholesale rates were 50% of list price, Black Swan's 1921 sales probably amounted to between a quarter- and a half-million records, depending upon the ratio of wholesale to direct retail sales. In the same year, Victor sold nearly fifty-five million records.

April 1922 saw Harry Pace's attempt to cast Black Swan as a contender in the classical field with the introduction of the Red Label series, an obvious play on Victor's prestigious Red Seals. Victor, which for years had taken legal action against competitors' use of red labels on classical records, does not appear to have threatened any such action in Black Swan's case, casting further doubt on the *Defender's* claims that the White recording establishment was out to destroy Pace.

The Red Label listing included operatic arias by Florence Cole-Talbert and Antoinette Garnes, and concert selections by Hattie King Reavis. In December 1922, Pace tried to secure concert tenor Roland Hayes for Black Swan, only to be informed by Hayes that he was under contract to Aeolian in England. The series sputtered along until being discontinued in May 1923, marking the end of Pace's involvement in the classical market.

In April 1922, Pace, in partnership with John Fletcher and Michael Naughton, purchased the trademark, masters, and facilities of Fletcher's defunct Olympic venture. The Fletcher Record Company, Inc., was chartered in New York on May 26, 1922. With Fletcher as president and Pace as vice president and treasurer, it was the first American record company to have a racially mixed executive team, a situation that received only a passing mention in the trade papers. The company initially served as the new studio and pressing plant for Black Swan records, the labels of which continued to credit the Pace Phonograph Corporation. Following the acquisition, Pace reported, "We are now issuing ten numbers a month instead of three.... We do our own recording, plating, pressing, as well as printing of every description, in the above plant." However, the operation soon proved to be unprofitable. Pace Phonograph's financial report of November 8, 1922, noted, "The factory has been a severe drain on our cash."

Fletcher revived his Olympic label later that year, with an all-White artist roster. Pace had already reissued some older Olympic recordings on Black Swan, under pseudonyms, breaking his pledge to use only Black artists. By July 1922, so much outside material was being released under the Black Swan label that the catalog was split into ten separately numbered series. Of those, only the 14000 race series (replacing the original 2000s) and 7100 operatic series remained pure Pace productions, reserved exclusively for Black artists. The remainder (which included Hawaiian, novelty, sacred, novelty, and classical series) were made up almost entirely of pseudonymous reissues from Fletcher's Olympic catalog. In an ironic twist, the nation's first race-record label was now producing its own racially segregated catalog, while continuing the claim that it employed only Black talent.

The aliases employed by Black Swan for Olympics' White artists were obviously contrived to suggest Black performers. Various Harry Yerkes groups became "Joe Brown's Alabama Band" or "Sammy Swift's Jazz Band," Rudy Wiedoeft's Californians became "Haynes' Harlem Syncopators," and novelty whistler Margaret McKee was renamed "Bessie Johnson." Recordings by Irving Weiss' Ritz-Carlton Orchestra, Fred Van Eps' Quartet, and Wiedoeft's Palace Trio were released as "Ethel Waters' Jazz Masters" while Waters was on tour and likely unaware of the subterfuge. Some Olympic recordings by conventional White dance bands were credited to "Henderson's Dance Orchestra" or "Henderson's Novelty Orchestra," with no first name given but obviously meant to imply Fletcher Henderson's involvement, even after Henderson had left the company.

At least one newspaper was taken in. A reporter for the *Defender* praised the Baltimore Blues Orchestra, "a new musical organization...doing exclusive recording for Black Swan records," unaware that name was simply a disguise for several White dance bands from the Olympic roster. Whether record buyers suspected a ruse went unreported, but Black Swan sales began to stall.

Pace reported sales of only 256,202 Black Swan records for fiscal year 1922. In his November 1922 financial statement, he disclosed that Black Swan had experienced "the greatest slump since we began business" during July. The slump persisted into early October, by which time Pace seemed resigned to average monthly sales of only 25,000 records. "I am trying to devise some sales plan whereby this figure can be greatly increased," he wrote to Du Bois, "but regret to say that I have not yet hit upon it." In the same month, Pace set up a dummy collection agency to handle delinquent accounts. Although it netted only \$544 in its first month, he seemed pleased with that figure and reported that the operation was "still pulling them in."

Pace advertised a new stock issue in October 1922, promising a "certain" 6% return in three years, plus 6% dividends." The stock would soon be virtually worthless, and no dividends were forthcoming. On January 20, 1923, the Pace Phonograph Corporation was reorganized as the Black Swan Record Company. The change marked the end of Pace's entanglement with John Fletcher, who would file for bankruptcy in December 1923. With the Fletcher connection severed, Pace returned to the New York Recording Laboratories for his pressings, using the Bridgeport Die & Machine Company in Connecticut to handle the occasional overflow. A new three-color label design and the release of a new catalog in May 1923 apparently did little to boost sales.

The problems at Black Swan had not gone unnoticed by Pace's artists. Alberta Hunter had been the first star of any magnitude to leave the label. Reportedly unhappy with Pace's lackluster marketing efforts, she signed with Paramount in July 1922. Fletcher Henderson departed in November 1922 and was replaced as recording manager by William Grant Still. Pace, who had not been satisfied with Henderson's work, predicted that "Still will bring wider experience and more technical musical knowledge than Henderson has had, and I believe will greatly improve the work of the records," which did not prove to be the case. The major artist exodus occurred after reorganization, beginning with Trixie Smith's defection to Paramount in March 1923.

Smith was followed in short order by Josie Miles, Julia Moody, Lena Wilson, and others, many of whom subsequently signed on as freelance artists with music-publisher and talent-broker Joe Davis. In the meantime, Ethel Waters had begun touring on her own, and when the Black Swan Troubadours embarked on their 1923 tour, Josie Miles took her place. Waters quit the label in June, after returning from a transcontinental tour to discover that the business was barely operating.

The Black Swan office hosted a second-anniversary celebration during the first week of June 1923, but only a handful of new Black Swan releases were forthcoming after July, and some that were announced apparently were never released. Fae Barnes filled what is believed to have been the last Black Swan session, in or around early August. The label's final release (Ethel Waters' "Sweet Man Blues"/"Ethel Sings 'Em," recorded in June at her final Black Swan session) was advertised in *The Chicago Defender* for December 22, 1923. Black Swan advertised in the *Defender* for the last time on February 23, 1924. Even then, Pace was still soliciting "agents in every community."

Pace's debts (which reportedly included a substantial sum due the New York Recording Laboratories for pressing services) had become unmanageable by the end of 1923. In January 1924, NYRL executive M. A. Supper traveled from Wisconsin to New York to negotiate a buyout of Pace's operation. On April 2, *The Port Washington Herald* reported that Pace had agreed to sell. The Black Swan Record Company was to remain in existence, but purely as a holding company. NYRL would take over the Black Swan trade name and goodwill, and it would continue to manufacture and distribute Black Swan recordings. The Black Swan masters would be licensed to NYRL, rather than being sold outright, in return for which Pace would be paid a monthly royalty. With Pace's abandonment of Black Swan, the race-record business was now entirely in the hands of White-owned record companies.

Consumers saw the first evidence of the buyout in May 1924, when NYRL's advertising logo was changed to read "Paramount Records (Combined with Black Swan)." A hybrid Paramount–Black Swan label, combining both companies' trademarks, was introduced with some fanfare a month later, but it never developed into anything more than a reissue vehicle for previously released Black Swan recordings. Having failed to attract much interest after ninety-nine releases, the Paramount–Black Swan series was discontinued. The licensing agreement was finally terminated in January 1926, marking the end of Harry Pace's involvement with the recording industry. He later earned a law degree from the University of Chicago and operated an insurance business.

PACEMAKER RECORD AND TRANSCRIPTION COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1951

Offices: 1912 Missouri Ave., Shreveport, LA (at founding); 2537 Dupont, Shreveport; 322 W. 77th, Shreveport

Original-Master Source(s): KWKH studio (Shreveport)

Pressing: Research Craft, and at least one other independent plant

Record Products: Pacemaker

A short-lived venture of country-music singer Webb Pierce and KWKH program director Horace Logan. Pierce and Logan were also partners in the equally ephemeral Ark-La-Tex Music publishing operation.

The initial Pacemaker release, by Tex Grimsley and his Texas Showboys, was later acquired by Savoy Records. Aside from a single known rhythm-and-blues release credited to one "Hot Rod Happy," Pacemaker was primarily a country-and-western label. Artists were recruited from radio station KWKH's "Louisiana Hayride," including Pierce himself, who was uncredited on the labels because he was under contract to 4 Star Records at the time. Pierce signed an exclusive contract with Decca Records in late 1951, after which no new Pacemaker releases are known. However, existing titles apparently continued to be sold for several more years.

PACIFIC COAST RECORD CORPORATION, LTD. — See Jesse J. Warner

PACIFIC PHONOGRAPH AGENCY / PACIFIC PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Founded: 1888

Offices: 323 Pine St., San Francisco

Record Products: Cylinders

Founded as the Pacific Phonograph Agency in by Louis Glass. A druggist turned electrical engineer, Glass was a manager of the Edison General Electric Company of San Francisco before becoming involved in the phonograph business. He also served as director of the West Coast Phonograph Company (Portland, Oregon) and assistant general manager of the Sunset Telegraph and Telephone Company (Fresno, California) in the late 1880s and early 1890s.

On January 7, 1889, Glass' agency was reorganized as the Pacific Phonograph Company, under license from the North American Phonograph Company, with territory comprising California, Arizona, and Nevada. Officers at the time of the reorganization included John I. Sabin (president, soon replaced by Glass), Major Frank McLaughlin (vice-president, later replaced by J. C. Ruddock), Andrew White (secretary, later replaced by D. I. Mahony, who in turn was replaced by Robert L. Stevens), and Glass (general manager). Capital stock of \$2.5 million was reported as entirely subscribed on January 26, 1889. The company had begun accepting lease orders for phonographs and graphophones a week earlier.

Glass placed his first coin-operated phonograph in San Francisco's Palais Royal Saloon on November 23, 1889. In the summer of 1890, he reported that requests to go to the bar and have a drink were "generally" placed at the end of the cylinders. The first confirmation that Pacific Phonograph was making its own recordings appeared on January 1, 1890, when it was reported that selections by the First Regiment Band of San Francisco and Mrs. Louis Glass had been played at a New Year's Eve ball in Carson City, Nevada.

The company operated a studio under the management of Frank T. Canall, who the *San Francisco Chronicle* dubbed "the impresario of the phonographs." According to a February 1891 *Chronicle* report, the studio was housed in Pacific Phonograph's Pine Street building "at the end of a dimly lighted hallway on the second floor." An accompanying illustration of the studio showed a six-machine recording set-up in an unusual stacked arrangement. Thus far, no original list of Pacific Phonograph's recordings has been found, nor is there any evidence that they were sold to the general public.

The company also operated a typing school and an agency that offered to supply businesses with "one expert young lady typewriter and two phonographs for \$50 per month." Pacific Phonograph's building was heavily damaged in the Pine Street fire of November 4, 1894. Glass estimated that machines worth \$6000–\$7000 were destroyed, of which only \$2000 would be covered by insurance. The company appears to have suspended operations following the fire.

Louis Glass was later involved in the expansion of the Sunset Telegraph and Telephone Company into other states as well as the founding of the Pacific States Telephone Company, and he and his family rose to prominence in San Francisco society. Glass' downfall came on March 28, 1907, when he was indicted on bribery charges related to the granting of telephone franchises in the San Francisco area. Glass was convicted and released on bail on July 29, pending appeal. His conviction was upheld on August 30, and he was sentenced to serve five years in the San Quentin penitentiary.

PACIFIC RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1950

Offices: 2213 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, CA (1946–1950)

Original-Master Source(s): KRE studio (Berkeley, CA); unknown San Francisco–area studio (reported but not confirmed); probably others

Record Products: Pacific

Launched in August 1945 by M. Donald (Don) Hambly (operations manager and technical director) and John E. McEwing (talent and production manager). Hambly at the time was musical director and occasional announcer for Berkeley radio station KRE, which made its studio available for Pacific's recording sessions. *Billboard* reported incorrectly that the company would record "only local jazzmen." Blues singer Ivory Joe Hunter, one of Pacific's most popular artists, reportedly was a partner in the company but does not appear to have held an executive or managerial title.

Intended mainly for jukebox use, Pacific records were released through Coinmatic Distributors, with Coinmatic manager Preston Jarrell serving as Hambly's account representative and informal advisor. Retailers included the Yerba Buena Music Shop (Oakland, California) and a few other specialty dealers.

Pacific's initial releases, by Hunter and his band, appeared in the autumn of 1945. In addition to Hunter, the Pacific artist roster included Nick Esposito's Band, the Frisco Jazz Band, and the Rising Star Gospel Singers (the latter signed away from Bob Geddin's fledgeling recording operation). *Billboard* reported in 1946 that Pacific "has no 'big' plans but is out to make a gradual impression." That attitude was reflected in *Cash Box*'s review of a Nick Esposito release, which praised the recording but cautioned that its audience "may be limited, just as good taste is limited." There were a few Black gospel items mixed among the jazz releases, and the company added a country-and-western series at some point, which seems to have attracted little attention.

Production of new releases slowed considerably in early 1947 and appears to have ended by late 1947 or very early 1948. In July 1948, Pacific sold all of its Hunter masters to 4 Star Records after turning down some larger labels. The company last appeared in *Billboard*'s July 1950 label directory (listing only a post-office box number), by which time it probably was inactive. The Pacific name was later used by an unrelated label, showing no manufacturer's credit, in the mid-1950s.

PAGE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1950; early 1960s

Offices: 203 Maple Ave., Johnstown, PA

Record Products: Page

Launched in 1946 by Alphonse (Al) & Ernest (Ernie) Page (*née* Pagliaricci), the co-owners of a record shop and small music-publishing operation in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. *Billboard* briefly mentioned Page as a new "hillbilly" label in August 1946.

Page record labels carried the logo, "Authentic Polka & Folk Music." Its roster included the Lilly Brothers, Red Belcher and the Kentucky Ridge Runners (all from radio station WWVA in Wheeling, West Virginia), the Ritchy Brothers with the Red Arrow Boys, and other country and early bluegrass groups. The label was last mentioned by *Billboard* in July 1950. Al Page reactivated the company in the early 1960s. Still based in Johnstown at the time, it produced several LPs and 45s, some with production credited to Pat Montaine, before quietly disappearing.

PALDA RECORD COMPANY / ESSEX RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947–1953

Offices: 8406 Lyons Ave., Philadelphia (1947–1953) ; 3208 S. 84th St., Philadelphia (Essex Record Co., 1953)

Pressing: Own plants

Record Products (78s): Palda, Essex, Gospel [3], Holiday [1], Noel; pressings for small independent labels

Originally a family-owned business managed by brothers Paul and David Miller and their father, Albert. The company name was a combination the owners' first names in shortened form. Palda began operations as a custom pressing plant for small independent record producers, was advertising its services in *Billboard* as early as March 1, 1947.

The Millers launched their Palda label in the spring of 1947. The initial release, issued on May 10, 1947, featured the Ferko String Band, a local group of amateur musicians who were a long-time fixture in the Philadelphia Mummers' Parades. *Billboard* dismissed it as "a strong local pitch," recommended only for jukeboxes in the Philadelphia area. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* simply noted that the records "sound fine." Despite the initial lukewarm reception, the Ferko records (which dominated the Palda catalog) began to attract a national following, and they were being widely distributed by early 1948.

As an amateur group, the Ferko String Band was not bound to honor the American Federation of Musicians' 1948 recording ban, so they provided Palda with a steady flow of new releases. In March of that year, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that the band had earned \$12,000 in royalties, with sales in excess of 300,000 records. A May 1948 *Billboard* cover story confirmed that figure, and two years later the magazine reported that the Ferko records were still generating "unusual financial returns." The popularity of Palda's Ferko records sparked the creation of several short-lived imitators, including the Philadelphia-based Krantz and Lindwood labels. Palda went on to dabble in pop, rhythm-and-blues, country-and-western, and Irish material, but the Ferko records remained the company's best sellers.

Palda introduced the Holiday label in May 1948, as a country-and-western line. The label was discontinued after several lackluster releases (at which point the name was appropriated by Nelson Lewis for his unrelated Holiday Record Company), but it was later revived by Palda. In July 1949, Palda took over manufacturing and distribution for the Philadelphia-based Cowboy Record Company. It reissued some Cowboy recordings (including early performances by Bill Haley) on its own labels, but control of artists and repertoire remained with Cowboy president James Myers. The relationship was contentious from the start, and Myers opted out of the agreement in October 1949.

Palda continued to expand, adding LPs to its product line in August 1949 and 45s in 1950. In early 1950 the company introduced two new labels, Gospel (unrelated to the later Savoy subsidiary) and Essex. The latter initially was split into race and country-and-western series, and despite getting off to a slow start, it would eventually supersede the Palda label. The Holiday label was revived during the summer of 1951, as a subsidiary of Haley-Howard Publishing (with Palda still handling the manufacturing), and featured Bill Haley and the Saddlemen.

The Millers signed other pressing and distribution deals during the early 1950s (primarily with small East Coast labels, including BBS, Flash, and Victoria), several of which ended badly for them. On April 26, 1950, the Millers were indicted by a federal grand jury on one charge of sending "lewd, obscene, and filthy" records from Philadelphia to Denver in interstate commerce. Prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney N. Warren Benedetto, the case was intended to test a recent Supreme Court ruling placing phonograph records under the same restrictions as obscene literature. No ruling in the case has been found, but the charge appears to have had a chilling effect on David Miller, who in December 1950 went into the tire-recapping business as a side-line.

In the early 1950s, Triple A Records of Cleveland, Ohio, sued Palda for distributing two of its releases outside its authorized sales territory and failing to return its masters. On February 7, 1952, former partners in the Victoria venture filed suit in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas to restrain Palda from distributing records by the Four Aces on the Victoria label. The suit charged that Palda had under-reported sales of the records, then had released other recordings by the group, to which it did not hold rights, under

the name of the allegedly non-existent Flash Record Company. At that time, it was disclosed that Palda was in danger of being blacklisted by the American Federation of Musicians.

A short time later, David Miller reorganized his operation as the Essex Record Company, with Essex as its flagship label and Palda reduced to a side-line. In the spring of 1953, Essex moved to larger quarters at 3208 S. 8th Street, where Miller set up a new plant with a daily capacity of 20,000 discs. Bill Haley continued to be a strong seller, but Miller declined his "Rock Around the Clock," and Haley signed with Decca after his Essex contract expired in April 1954.

The final Essex release appeared in February 1956. In June of that year, Miller reorganized once again, this time as Miller International. He went on to launch a string of labels that included Trans-World (1956), Somerset (1957), and Stereo-Fidelity (1958).

PALOMBA RECORD AND TALKING MACHINE COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1923

Offices: New York

Record Products: Palomba Record and Talking Machine Co.

A very short-lived venture, Palumba is known to have released only a single record, by Isaac Angel, that was marketed by Gattegno & Company (128 E. 115th St., New York). A report that Gennett recorded the masters is not supported by the Gennett matrix ledger. Isaac Angel went on to launch the Angel Record Company (*q.v.*), which specialized in Sephardic material for the American immigrant market and reissued the Palomba recordings.

PAN-AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS / PAN-AM TRANSCRIPTIONS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: 115 E. Walton St., Chicago

Pressing: Los Angeles

Record Products: Pan-A-Mer, Pan-American [2], Society; radio transcriptions

Headed by Paul Shalin, Pan-American Publications billed itself as "Chicago's only publisher of Latin Music." Shalin entered the record business in the autumn of 1945 with the Pan-A-Mer label. The label's first releases were devoted entirely to rumbas published by Pan-American, some with vocals in a mixture of English and Spanish, and were intended for the jukebox trade. A transcription division specialized in plugging Pan-American titles for radio broadcast.

In late 1947, the company appropriated the Pan-American name (which recently been abandoned by the defunct Pan-American Record Company) for its second label, which was marketed to what *Cash Box* characterized as "dreamy Latin dancers." It drew largely on a backlog of masters recorded prior to the second American Federation of Musicians recording ban by Chicago-based NBC staff musicians. Both labels used Pan-American Publications' songs exclusively.

The unrelated Pan-American Dyatonic label, distributed in the early 1950s by V. Tatay & Company (New York) and featuring similar material, is of unknown origin.

PAN-AMERICAN RECORD COMPANY / BIRWELL CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1947

Offices: 619 Antonia Ave., Los Angeles (1945–10/1946); 6245 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles (1946–1947); 6618 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA (Birwell offices, from mid-1946)

Pressing: Los Angeles

Record Products: Pan-American [1]

Founded in early 1945 by record distributor J. F. Bard, in partnership with Franz Green. The company initially specialized in Latino-style dance numbers. Pan-American's first releases were advertised in August 1945, and the records were well-reviewed in the trade papers. However, in early 1946 the Harry Fox Agency was asked to investigate the company over purportedly false royalty statements. Pan-American subsequently submitted an amended financial statement, and the matter was settled out of court.

In May 1946, Pan-American merged with the Birwell Corporation, a Detroit-based manufacturing company headed by Alfred Birney (president), William Otwell (vice-president), and Robert Gray (secretary-treasurer), none of whom had any significant experience in the record industry. By then, Pan-American was touting itself as "recognized specialists" in Latin American dance numbers, Hawaiian native songs, and "string symphonic jazz," and had introduced a short-lived Popular Star Series featuring Eddie Cantor. There were a few country-and-western releases as well.

Reorganized in 1946 as a California corporation, Birwell financed construction of a pressing plant for its Pan-American Record division. Bard and Green were retained as sales and recording managers, respectively, but they departed in October of that year, after Birwell bought out their interest in the recording operation. At about the same time, Birwell signed a reciprocal distribution agreement with Goody Distributing, securing New York-area distribution for Pan-American records.

By the end of 1946, Pan-American had distributors in more than thirty major cities. In January 1947, however, the American Federation of Musicians revoked the company's recording license for non-payment of artist royalties, and recording activities were suspended. Two months later John Laurenz, one of Pan-American's top-selling artists, defected to Mercury Records, maintaining that Pan-American's license revocation automatically voided his contract with that company.

A petition for involuntary bankruptcy was filed against Pan-American on April 7, 1947, by Jerry Rolston, of the Harry Fox Agency, in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles. Pan-American's debts were placed at more than \$40,000, of which \$11,000 was owed to music publishers Peer International, Southern Music, and La Salle Music, along with substantial amounts owned to other publishers, artists, and the American Federation of Musicians. A *Billboard* reporter, citing legal complications with the recent auction of another company's masters, held out "little hope that Pan-Am masters will be sold at auction."

Robert Gray, in partnership with W. G. Long, purchased Pan-American in July 1947, including masters and artist contracts. Gray announced he would soon re-enter the record business, then dropped his plans after the AFM demanded payment of Pan-American's back-royalties. The company was last heard from in February 1948, when Gray sued John Laurenz and Mercury Records, seeking a restraining order and \$200,000 in damages. By then, an unrelated Pan-American label was being produced in Chicago by Pan-American Publications (*see previous entry*).

PANHELLENIC RECORD COMPANY — *See* Panhellenion Phonograph Record Company, Inc.

PANHELLENION PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY, INC. / PANHELLENIC RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1920–1925; Revived late 1940s

Office and Master Source(s): W. 14th St., New York (1920–4/1922); 48 W. 39th St., New York (4/1922–c. 1924); 653 8th Ave., New York (from c. 1924); Unknown address (from late 1940s)

Pressing: Emerson Phonograph, Bridgeport Die and Machine, Siemon Hard Rubber, Brunswick-Balke-Collender, possibly other plants

Record Products: Coula Panhellenion Record, Panhellenion, Orpheum

Owned and operated by Greek-American singer Kyriaki Yiortzi Antonopoulos, in partnership with her husband, Andrew Poulos. The couple had previously owned the Orpheum Record Company (*q.v.*), the first Greek-American record producer. Known professionally as Madame Koula or Coula, Antonopoulos had earlier recorded for Columbia's ethnic series. She reportedly used the earnings from her Columbia records, along with the family's savings, to launch the Panhellenion Phonograph Record Company. The company was incorporated in April 1920, with capitalization vaguely reported at "\$20,000 to \$100,000."

Panhellenion specialized in traditional Greek music, with a smattering of Turkish and Armenian material. Early Panhellenion used masters recorded for Panhellenion by the Emerson Phonograph Company and show Emerson's universal-cut patent (#1,213,468) on the labels. Although numbered within Emerson's standard 10" matrix series, most if not all of the Emerson recordings appear to have made expressly for Panhellenion. A few

slightly later issues used Jones Recording Laboratories masters and were pressed by the Siemon Hard Rubber Company.

By May 1922, Panhellenion was recording in a studio that had the same address as the Manhattan Recording Laboratories, as confirmed in band manager Ed Kirkeby's session logs; however, this was a large multi-tenant building, so it is not certain that these studios were one and the same. Later issues used what appear to be Independent Recording Laboratory masters, based upon aural and physical characteristics, although they were not numbered within IRL's standard Plaza-Regal master series. Some of the last known Panhellenion issues show Brunswick-Balke-Collender's characteristic delta sign in the pressings, indicating the use of Brunswick's pressing plant, if not necessarily its masters. Panhellenion's label design, like its suppliers, underwent many changes over the course of five years.

The Panhellenion Phonograph Recording Company was formally dissolved on February 22, 1925. Antonopoulus retired following the death of her husband in 1927, then returned to performing in the 1930s. In the late 1940s she launched a second record venture, the Panhellenic Record Company, which reused the original pictorial trademark for her new Panhellenic Record label.

PARADE RECORD COMPANY [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1948

Offices: Philadelphia

Record Products: Parade [1]

Launched in 1947 by S. Sarnoff, Parade was one of several Philadelphia labels that specialized in recordings by that city's novelty string bands. The company sold at least four masters to Apollo in early 1948, after which nothing further was reported by the trade papers.

PARADE RECORD COMPANY (INC.) [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. Mid-1950s

Offices: 107 Lorimer St., Brooklyn, NY

Pressing: New York Record Company (Brooklyn)

Record Products (78s): Parade [2]

Launched in early 1950 by Maurier (Wally) Woolsky and Murray Dichter. Woolsky also owned the New York Record Company, an independent pressing plant. *Billboard* erroneously reported that Parade would produce only LPs and 45s.

Parade's initial release comprised a group of Strauss waltzes performed by organ soloist Jesse Crawford, which were issued simultaneously in all three speeds. The company continued to produce 78s (later in a three-track extended-play format) into 1955. In 1956, Woolsky launched the Today label, a budget-priced LP line for the discount-store market.

PARADISE RECORDING COMPANY — See Delray Recording Company

PARADOX INDUSTRIES, INC.

Termed "one of the most prolific record pirates" by *Record Changer* magazine, Paradox Industries produced unauthorized vintage-jazz reissues, dubbed from major-label pressings, on Jolly Roger, Paradox, and other labels, along with some recordings obtained from foreign sources. Ironically, many Jolly Roger LPs were custom-pressed by RCA, which at the time was threatening to prosecute the owners of bootleg labels. The relatively small amount of original material that Paradox produced was released after 1950, placing the company beyond the scope of this work.

PARAGON RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. early 1950s

Offices: 1818 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Paragon [2]

Registered as a fictitious firm in Los Angeles on July 6, 1949, by Gerald A. Dolin. It is unclear whether there was any connection to an earlier Paragon Records (842½ N. Poinsettia

Pl., Hollywood), which was listed in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook* but is not known to have produced any commercial releases. There is no connection the Washington, D.C.-based Paragon Records, Inc.

PARAGON RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – 1949

Offices: 8000 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC

Pressing: Own plant (Chevy Chase, MD)

Record Products: Paragon [1]; pressings for independent labels

Founded in the spring of 1946, as a custom pressing plant, by Jerome Reimers (president) and Rogers C. Butts (vice-president and treasurer). *Billboard*'s June 1 report of the launch, which erroneously suggested that the company was based in New York, stated that Paragon was expected to begin releasing records within sixty to ninety days.

Paragon's first known advertisement, in July 1946, offered custom-pressing services at its plant in Chevy Chase, Maryland, but made no mention of a New York office or its own record label. The plant made pressings in a Dumor plastic compound, for which Butts offered a brief testimonial in 1947. Its clients included DC Records, Rich-R'-Tone, and other small independent labels.

Paragon's own label was finally announced in October 1947 and gave its location as Washington, DC, although the company was located just outside the District line in Maryland. The records, which Paragon touted as "excellent for race spots," featured regional jazz, rhythm-and-blues, and gospel artists. In addition to its own recordings, Paragon used a few masters from DC Records and possibly other outside sources. The label was last listed by *Billboard* in its January 1949 directory.

The 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook* listed another Paragon Records, at a Hollywood address, but nothing has been discovered concerning that operation. There does not appear to have been any connection between the two companies.

PARAMOUNT RECORD MANUFACTURING AND RECORDING COMPANY —

See Value Records

PARAMOUNT RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947

Offices: Cleveland, OH

Record Products: Paramount [3]

A short-lived venture launched in May or June 1947 (depending upon the account) by Cleveland businessman Owen Goldheimer, whose stated purpose was to develop and promote new talent. The records were distributed locally by the Windsor Phonograph Company (Cleveland) and retailed for 60¢ each.

Goldheimer's roster of generally obscure local artists included Sol Fiola, Geraldine Morgan, Johnny Powell's Orchestra, the Quintones, and the (Royal) Four Aces. A *Cash Box* reviewer reported that the latter group, although "virtually unknown in many spots throughout the nation [has] come up with a cookie that's bound to put them in the limelight." Aside from that, Goldheimer's operation attracted little attention, and no mention of it has been found after 1947. Later that year, the Paramount name was reused for an unrelated label by John Steiner (*q.v.*).

PARAMOUNT RECORDING CORPORATION

A venture of Gus Statiras and Bill Grauer, who produced unauthorized reissues of Paramount blues recordings in 1946. The company made no known recordings of its own; it is included here only to distinguish it from the original Paramount label (*see* New York Recording Laboratories), with which it had no connection, and the authorized Paramount revival of the later 1940s (*see* Steiner, John).

PARAMOUNT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 608½ N. Sweetzer, Los Angeles, CA (at founding)

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Paramount [2]; pressings for Hamilton-Whitney, probably others

Launched in early 1946 by Jack Cascales, Joe Cascales, and Ivor Kallen. In addition to its own Paramount label, the company pressed some transcription-library discs for Hamilton-Whitney Productions in early 1947. There was no connection to Paramount Records of Centralia, Illinois, a custom-recording service that operated during the same period.

The initial Paramount releases, by a Johnny Richard group, featured the same selection on both sides, one a straightforward dance-orchestra rendition, and the other performed in what *Billboard* termed "a jump groove" style. Anita O'Day, novelty singer Arthur Q. Ryan, and KXLA (Padasena) disc jockey Alex Cooper were also signed, the latter to provide "serious jive narration" on some of the jazz sides.

Paramount's initial releases, by the Richard group, appeared in April 1946. On May 18, it was announced that Paramount Pictures was preparing to take legal action to prevent the Cascales and Kallen from using the Paramount name on records, citing likely confusion with their Paramount Radio Records movie-exploitation discs. Paramount Records appears to have suspended operations by mid-1947, and thus far, no evidence has been found that there was a successor. There is no connection to the numerous other Paramount labels produced during the period covered by this work.

PARKWAY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 2320 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Record Products: Parkway

A short-lived rhythm-and-blues label operated by Monroe B. Passis, the owner of Chord Distributors (Chicago) and a former regional supervisor for Black and White Records. Operation of Parkway was turned over to Chord managers Ernie and George Leaner, who served as its vice-presidents in charge of artists-and-repertoire and sales, respectively. Both of the Leaners had previously worked at Chicago's Groove Record Shop, and George had served briefly as an assistant to Chicago talent scout Lester Melrose. Production was to be handled by the newly created Hit Record Distributors, which was reported to be a subsidiary of Chord, but operated at the same address.

Recording was already under way when *Billboard* belatedly announced the label's launch on February 4, 1950, reporting that it would feature rhythm-and-blues exclusively. Approximately a half-dozen records appeared on the Parkway label during its very short lifespan. The initial session, probably held in January 1950, employed the Leroy Foster Trio (shown as Baby Face Leroy on the labels), with an uncredited Muddy Waters playing electric guitar. A second session was credited to the Little Walter Trio, again with an uncredited Waters.

The Leaner brothers resigned from Chord in March 1950 to launch United Distributors (reputedly the first Black-owned independent record-distribution company), at which point Passis took over management of Parkway. Although there would be no further releases on the Parkway label (with one possible exception), recording sessions continued. In May 1950 *Down Beat* reported that Passis had signed Benny Green's Band as Parkway's first pop artist. A single Green release on Parkway has been reported, but by an unreliable source.

Some later Parkway sessions produced recordings by Little Walter, Memphis Minnie, and Sunnyland Slim, among others, that were not released on Parkway but instead were sold to Regal Records' Fred Mendelsohn. Mendelsohn eventually acquired all of the Parkway masters, including the unissued recordings, and parceled them out to Regal, Savoy, and other rhythm-and-blues labels in the early 1950s.

George Leaner went on to launch several minor soul-oriented labels during the mid-to-late 1960s, and Ernie Leaner operated Toddlin' Town from the late 1960s into the early 1970s. The Parkway name was used in the late 1950s for an unrelated, and much better-known, Philadelphia label.

PARODY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: Brill Building (1619 Broadway), New York

Record Products: Parody

A very short-lived venture launched in the summer of 1949 by Sam and Hyman (Hy) Weiss. The brothers had worked as distributors for Exclusive and Modern before starting their own company. Sam Weiss was also operating his own music-publishing firm at the time, with offices in New York and Hollywood, which had a 1949 hit with "Sam's Song."

Parody was to have been a rhythm-and-blues label, according to a July 30 teaser announcement in *Cash Box* that named the Weisses but not their label. Its name was disclosed a week later in *Billboard*. A single release was advertised in August (Danny Taylor's "Butter Beans and Rice"/"Come Back," coupled on Parody 1002/1003), after which nothing more was reported concerning the label. Hy Weiss went on to launch the more successful Old Town Records in 1953.

PAROQUETTE RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1916 – 1918

Offices: 47 W. 34th St., New York; 36 S. State St., Chicago (branch sales office)

Studio and Pressing Plant: Bush Terminal Building, Brooklyn, NY

Record Products: Par-O-Ket

The Paroquette Record Manufacturing Company was incorporated in New York in November 1915 by James A. Clancy, Frank J. O'Brien, and Arthur P. O'Brien, with capitalization of \$200,000, to manufacture phonographs and records. Various writers have stated that recording artists Henry Burr and Fred Van Eps founded and/or owned Paroquette; however, although both recorded for Paroquette, and possibly were investors, neither is listed among the company's incorporators, directors, officers, or managers in any primary-source documentation discovered thus far.

Paroquette was reorganized before any records were produced. When recording finally got under way, probably in the summer or early autumn of 1916, the only remaining member of the founding group was Arthur O'Brien, who was listed as president, manager, and director. Other officials of the reorganized company included Walter H. Pratt (treasurer, secretary, and director), Frederick H. Cunningham (director) and John Kaiser (studio superintendant and director). E. H. Kaemmer managed the plating and pressing plant, and advertising was handled by the New York firm of Carney & Kerr. Walter B. Rogers resigned his longtime position as house conductor with the Victor Talking Machine Company to serve as Paroquette's musical director.

Paroquette's trademark application claimed use of the Par-O-Ket trademark beginning August 14, 1916, which probably pre-dates the start of recording activities by several weeks (Rogers did not resign from Victor until September 1). The records were first advertised to dealers in *The Talking Machine Weekly* for November 22, 1916, with an initial offering of thirty-five releases. *The Talking Machine World* belatedly announced the label's launch in January 1917, claiming that the records had been in development for the past year. Early advertising promised twenty new selections per month, but ultimately the company's output fell short of that goal.

Par-O-Ket was a 7" etched-label disc retailing for 25¢ (30¢ in the Western states, 35¢ in Canada). Employing a fine-groove steel-needle vertical cut, it was advertised as playing as long as a standard 10" disc. The records featured many of the usual studio freelancers of the period, as well as a foreign-language series. Despite the records' low price and generally undistinguished fare, the company at first tried to position Par-O-Ket as a high-end product, stating in their early trade-press advertising that they preferred to work only with "a few of the better dealers" and were reserving inventory for "a limited number of Tiffany-quality stores." That attitude had changed markedly by January 1917, by which time Paroquette was openly soliciting dealers of any kind. Based upon trade-press reports, the records were sold mainly in novelty shops, hardware stores, and other decidedly non-Tiffany-quality outlets. Like other small-diameter vertical-cut brands of the period, Par-O-Ket records do not appear to have been strong sellers.

In March 1917, *The Talking Machine Weekly* reported that Paroquette would introduce a

10" disc, an example of which has been reliably reported. In October of that year, it was announced that the company had been reorganized again. Arthur O'Brien remained as president, but Kaiser replaced Pratt as treasurer and secretary, and Jacques M. Kohner (formerly of the Majestic Phonograph Company) was hired as sales manager. Kohner left within a short time to work for the newly formed Lyraphone Company. Production of Par-O-Ket records probably was discontinued by the end of 1917, after approximately ninety-two releases.

The Talking Machine World for May 1918 announced an assignee's sale of Paroquette's assets, including matrices and 30,000 Par-O-Ket pressings. The assignee's sale included the contents of a complete recording studio and pressing plant, confirming that Paroquette (and not Pathé or Emerson, as several early researchers suggested) had recorded and manufactured its own records. The corporation was listed as dissolved in the 1919 *Trow Directory*.

M. G. PARSEKIAN & COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1920s

Offices: W. Hoboken, NJ

Record Products: M. G. Parsekian

An early producer of Greek, Turkish, and Arabic recordings for the American immigrant market, owned and operated by M. G. Parsekian. Parsekian and an affiliated group of singers and musicians made a number of recordings for Columbia's ethnic catalog in September 1912. Parsekian's own label, produced by an unknown manufacturer, appeared briefly in the early 1920s. Several of its recordings were later reissued by Pharos Records.

PARTY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1941 – 1943

Offices: 138 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY (to mid-7/1941); 415 Lexington Ave., New York (from mid-7/1941)

Record Products: Party Record Company

The Party Record Company specialized in mildly risqué material for the "adult" market. Reportedly incorporated in New York in 1941, Party Record began advertising in April of that year, by which time it had already released two multi-disc albums by Hope Emerson. Early Party records were advertised "privately recorded" and meant for "those who like their fun 'from the other side of the tracks'...each record a WOW!" Party Record's December 1941 advertising campaign touted them as "the perfect Xmas [gift] for sociable people." The records initially were sold directly by mail order.

Releases by Charley Drew, the label's most popular performer, were first advertised in the summer of 1941. Party Record had niche hits with its album sets by Drew, Emerson, and Ace Newell, which included such suggestive titles as "The Blushing Bride and his Fanny," "She's a Virgin on the Verge," "Gladys Isn't Gratis Anymore," and "Lord Stickitt and Lord Stuffit." As with many early party-label releases, the titles often promised more than they delivered.

In 1943 Party Record's masters were acquired by Musicraft, which continued production of the existing releases and sold them through regular retail outlets, but does not appear to have made any new recordings for the label. The Party Record Company was not formally dissolved until July 21, 1944. The Party Record name later appeared generically on unrelated "under-the counter" releases (many of them far more graphic than these) from unknown sources.

PASTEL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 9813 Quincy Ave., Cleveland

Record Products: Pastel

Launched in the late autumn of 1949 by record distributor Jim Schermer (formerly of Detroit's Central Record Sales), in partnership with rhythm-and-blues pianist Jimmy Saunders. *Billboard* reported on November 19 that Saunders' quartet and Bill Dunn and the Dunn Dots would be the label's first artists. Little more reported concerning Pastel

Records, which was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1950 directory. The Pastel name was later used for an unrelated label based in Oil City, Pennsylvania.

PATHÉ FRÈRES PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1914 – 1922

Offices: 29–33 W. 38th St., New York (1912–1917); Grand & Flushing Ave., Brooklyn, NY (from 1917).
Incorporated in Delaware.

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios (18 E. 42nd St., New York)

Pressing: Belleville, NJ (1914–1917); 10–34 Grand Ave., Brooklyn, NY (from 10/1916)

Foreign Affiliates: Pathé Frères (Paris and other major European cities)

Record Products: Actuelle, Pathé, Pathé Actuelle; Acropolis, Cleartone, Crescent [1] (1917–1918), Crystal [1], Davega, Emerson (6" vertical cut), Italianstyle, Operaphone and related labels, La Patrie, Perfect, Sapphire [1], Schubert, Superior [1], World [1]

A U.S. corporation licensed to use the brands, methods, and recordings of Pathé Frères (Paris). Often misidentified as the American branch of the French firm, the Pathé Frères Phonograph Company in fact was an independent corporation. The primary link to its French namesake was Emile Pathé, who was given the largely honorary title of vice-president.

Brothers Emile and Charles Pathé were pioneering French phonograph and cylinder manufacturers who began disc production in Paris in 1905, using the vertical cut. They initially produced unusual discs that employed a wax playing surface over a thick, ceramic-like base, with a large paper label attached to the blank reverse side. The format quickly proved to be impractical, and in 1906 Pathé began pressing vertical-cut, center-start discs in a standard shellac-based compound.

With an extensive catalog of cylinder masters already extant, Pathé developed a method of transcribing those cylinders to its new discs by means of a simple pantograph. From the start of disc production, Pathé continued to record all of its masters on oversized cylinders, which were copied to disc masters as needed. The pantograph was later refined in the United States by Frank L. Capps, who adapted it to produce disc masters in universal- and lateral-cut formats as well as various forms of vertical cut. Although Pathé's pantograph introduced audible rumble and mechanical noise in the transfers, it had the advantage of allowing a single recording to be issued in multiple formats. Pathé continued to employ pantographic dubbing in the United States until the company converted to electrical recording during 1926–1927.

An American branch of Pathé Frères, incorporated in New York on June 15, 1907, was solely an import agency; it did not produce its own records or phonographs. Pathé's American motion-picture division, already operating in Jersey City, New Jersey, was a separate company, with no corporate connection to the Pathé Frères Phonograph Company, and would always remain so.

The first step toward the production of American Pathé records came on January 4, 1912, when investors M. L. Rogers, S. E. Robertson, and H. W. Davis incorporated the Pathé Frères Phonograph Company as a Delaware corporation. As *The Talking Machine World* reported, "The French concern has nothing to do at all with the American concern, other than in the sale of American privilege of making and marketing their goods." The French company's acceptance of a licensing agreement was made contingent upon the American company's ability to raise \$3 million in capital, which was quickly accomplished. The agreement granted the American company exclusive sales rights in the United States and Canada, and provided for the exchange of masters between the two companies.

Like its American predecessor, the Pathé Frères Phonograph Company initially was only an import business, marketing imported Pathé discs and phonographs. That changed in the spring of 1914, when Pathé's chief engineer journeyed from Paris to New York to assist the Americans in setting up a studio.

After some reorganization, Eugene A. Widmann was elected president of Pathé's new American licensee, replacing Jacques A. Berst. Russell Hunting, a veteran recording comedian and first editor of *The Phonoscope* (the first independent phonograph trade paper), was recruited from Pathé's British office to serve as chief recording director. He soon returned to England, to be replaced by William Penn, but would reclaim his position in New York in 1920. The newly opened American office dispatched Frank J. Bowers to

Canada to assess the potential market for American Pathé exports, and Bowers set up several distributorships there.

U.S. recording operations began on a small scale during the summer of 1914. The house orchestra initially was conducted by Louis von der Mehden, whose tenure appears to have been a short one. His place would later be taken by Domenico Savino (better known to the public as the composer and band leader D. Onivas), who was hired as Pathé's musical director in 1916. The pressing plant would not open until 1915. In the meantime, Pathé shipped its masters to France (and later to Belgium, as the European conflict escalated) for pressing. The discs were dubbed in various metric-based sizes, with the identical recordings often mastered in more than one size, the only difference being an increase in volume (and price) on the larger diameters. Early pressings closely resembled their European counterparts, being center-start and bearing pigment-filled pressed labels.

Under its licensing agreement, American Pathé was able to draw on the French company's vast foreign catalog. It reissued material by many European stars who were not to be found on other American labels, but its supply of foreign masters was severed following the outbreak of war in Europe. With access to overseas pressing plants threatened, Pathé officials drew up plans to open a domestic pressing plant in Belleville, New Jersey, which went into operation in the spring of 1915. Construction soon began on a larger plant on Grand Avenue in Brooklyn, which would remain in use until 1929. In 1918 the affiliated Pathé Frères Phonograph Company of Canada opened its own factory at in Toronto at 4–6 Clifford Street.

Pathé was soon producing subsidiary and client labels to supplement revenue from its own line. The French-American Phonograph Distributors, Inc., a short-lived Pathé-backed venture, registered six new labels with the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office in 1915. Several were produced in very small quantities, with the remainder apparently not progressing beyond the prototype stage. Pathé itself registered designs for two additional labels in 1915 and 1916.

In 1915, Pathé began dubbing 6" vertically cut disc masters from European cylinders for the newly formed Emerson Phonograph Company. The records retailed for a dime and included a snippet from one of Caruso's Anglo-Italian Commerce Company cylinders (to which Pathé owned rights), along with similarly truncated dubbings of other Pathé-owned recordings. Some were by artists who, like Caruso, had since gone on to sign exclusive contracts with Victor in the U.S. Although Victor Emerson was an investor in Pathé, the business relationship would be short-lived.

Pathé entered into a cross-marketing agreement with the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company in 1916 under which Brunswick (which was not yet producing records) agreed not to enter the U.S. record market, but instead would promote Pathé's discs for use on its phonographs. However, beginning in November 1917, Pathé produced vertical-cut discs for Brunswick's exclusive use. Recorded and manufactured in Pathé's New York facilities, they were sold only in Canada.

Pathé produced dubbings from its cylinder masters in a variety of formats for various client labels beginning in late 1917. The client dubbings often bear little physical resemblance to standard Pathé products. They include steel-needle vertical-cut dubbings for Crescent and other minor labels; fine-groove (Edison-type) vertical-cut dubbings for Lyric (which also recorded its own masters); and, beginning in 1919, universal-cut masters for the reorganized Operaphone Company, which *Moody's* later disclosed was a Pathé subsidiary. The universal-cut discs could be played on either vertical- or lateral-cut machines, generally with mediocre results. Some of the last Operaphones were pressed from standard lateral-cut Pathé masters, although still labeled as universal records.

By April 1919, with demand for Pathé products growing rapidly, the company increased its capitalization to \$2.5 million, from \$1.9 million, and launched an aggressive expansion program. At the time, the Brooklyn pressing plant was said to have a capacity of 30,000 discs per day. When that proved insufficient to keep up with demand, president Widmann ordered that the plant be expanded to cover an entire city block. In July 1920 Widmann announced that he was taking over the "stock, plant, and policy" of the British arm of Pathé, which was to be left in the hands of local managers but controlled by the American company.

Pathé introduced its lateral-cut *Actuelle* records in September 1920, and for the next

two years the company offered identical recordings in both vertical-cut (Pathé Sapphire Record) and lateral-cut (Actuelle) formats, with a zero prefix added to catalog numbers on the latter. An exception was made for some celebrity classical and operatic recordings, which continued to be released only in vertical-cut form until new releases in that category ended in the spring of 1922.

By the time Pathé introduced its lateral-cut discs, virtually all other producers of vertical-cut discs had already made the switch to lateral cut, and demand for vertical-cut discs was plummeting. The last vertically cut Pathé discs were listed in March 1923 (although it is not certain that all on the list were actually released), leaving Edison as the sole American producer of vertical-cut discs.

Pathé's rapid expansion strained its finances, and by the end of 1920 the company was experiencing severe financial difficulties. On December 15, a creditors' committee was created to manage Pathé's rapidly mounting debt. A month later, Tito Schipa (one of Pathé's most prestigious stars) succeeded in briefly having the company's bank accounts attached for failure to pay royalties. With bankruptcy appearing inevitable, Widmann resigned as president in July 1921 but retained his title as chairman of the board. He was replaced by W. W. Chase.

On December 9, 1921, the Pathé Frères Phonograph Company was placed in the hands of receivers, who included Eugene Widmann. Liabilities were placed at \$3 million, and assets at \$2 million, with the recent recession blamed for the shortfall. Permitted to continue operations while creditor agreements were negotiated, Pathé began to shift its focus to the budget-label market. The Perfect Record Company, founded in June 1922 to market the inexpensive Perfect label, was simply a false front for Pathé, which never publicly acknowledged its connection to the low-priced line despite the obvious visual clues (for one, Pathé's original catalog numbers appeared clearly in the pressings) and virtually identical catalogs. The division initially was managed by H. T. Leeming, who had created Emerson's low-priced Regal label the previous year.

On November 2, 1922, the reorganized Pathé Frères Phonograph Company was incorporated as the Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation (*see next entry*).

PATHÉ PHONOGRAPH AND RADIO CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1922 – 1929

Offices: 18 E. 42nd St., New York (to 7/1923); 150 E. 53rd St., New York (7/1923–8/1928); 114 E. 32nd St., New York (Cameo offices, from 7/1928)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — 18 E. 42nd St., New York (to 8/1923); 150 E. 53rd St. (c. 8/7/1923–7/1928); 114 E. 32nd St., New York (from 7/1928)

Pressing: 10–34 Grand Ave., Brooklyn, NY

Record Products: Pathé Actuelle, Perfect, Perfect Star Series; Apollo [5], Harmograph (1924), Music Hour, Silvertone, Starck, Supertone [2]; special-use labels, including Music Service Company, Inc. (15½" discs)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Grand Pree (Australia); Apex and related labels, Starr (Canada); Actuelle, Dominion, Grafton, Homochord, Levaphone, Perfect, Scala Ideal (England); Salabert (France); probably many others on occasion

The sale and reorganization of the Pathé Frères Phonograph Company (*see previous entry*) originally was scheduled for September 29, 1922, but was delayed by a legal technicality involving the transfer of real estate. The sale was finally completed on October 27, and on November 2 the reorganized company was incorporated in New York as the Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation.

Eugene A. Widmann, who had been acting as a receiver for the Pathé Frères Phonograph Company, reclaimed his position as president. Among the Pathé Frères personnel who were retained were H. T. Leeming (general manager, and director of the recently created Perfect Record division), Russell Hunting (technical director), and Herman Rose (recording department manager). Emile Pathé vacated his largely honorary position as vice-president at that time, leaving management of the reorganized company entirely in the hands of American personnel, although he remained on the board of directors. The basic licensing agreement with Pathé Frères remained in force, but Pathé Phonograph and Radio would no longer have rights to the French company's foreign masters.

The revamped Pathé organization discontinued production of its classical and operatic

series and unprofitable vertical-cut discs, reduced prices of standard lateral-cut issues, developed and marketed the cut-rate Perfect label aggressively, and introduced a line of radios. It soon expanded its operations, moving to larger quarters and opening a new studio in early August 1923. In late 1925 the company installed 67 additional presses at its Brooklyn plant to accommodate the increased demand for Perfect records.

Pathé initially made little attempt to convert to electrical recording, although it tried to convince the public otherwise. Its "New Process Recording," announced in the *Talking Machine World* for September 1925, involved low-speed electrical dubbing from the acoustically recorded masters, which produced slightly better frequency response in the dubbings but served mainly to amplify mechanical noise in the transfers.

Pathé maintained close ties with the Compo Company and the Plaza-Regal-Scranton group. Master swapping among these companies was a common occurrence in the mid-1920s, with Regal often substituting its own master numbers when Pathé recordings were issued on its cut-rate labels. In early 1926 Pathé began to commission electrically recorded masters from the Berliner Recording Laboratories (the Compo Company's New York studio, *q.v.*), initially just for sessions by its higher-paid artists. Many of the recordings were assigned master numbers in Pathé's own numerical series and were marked "Charge Pathé" in the Compo ledger, although some also found their way onto Compo's own labels. By early 1927 Pathé was producing its own electrically recorded discs masters, which initially showed a small hand-lettered "E" in the wax (and later, a circled "E" on the labels). Use of the pantograph had been discontinued by then. The company's acoustically recorded cylinder masters reportedly were scrapped, although at least one specimen is known to survive.

Eugene Widmann retired as Pathé's president in September 1927 to pursue a career in banking, leaving Russell Hunting as the only founding member still on staff. The company produced a special tribute disc honoring Widmann, which was distributed only to Pathé officials. Widmann's replacement was James E. MacPherson, who in October 1927 purchased the struggling Cameo Record Corporation.

American Pathé's end as an autonomous entity came in July 1928, after MacPherson closed its studio and commenced joint Pathé-Cameo recording sessions in Cameo's New York facilities on 32nd Street. Recordings from those sessions were assigned different master numbers in each division's respective numerical series, with different takes usually (but by no means always) allocated to each label group. However, some sessions were still booked for only one of the two divisions, as revealed in band contractor Ed Kirkeby's files and on some of the surviving Pathé Form 19 cards. If it was later decided to transfer a recording to the other division, a false master number in the transferee's numerical series would be assigned at that time. Depending on how much time elapsed between assignment of the original master numbers and the false numbers, the latter could be far out of chronological sequence in relation to the actual recording date, much to the confusion of some misguided discographers who attempt to extrapolate recording dates from release dates.

In France, Pathé's recording division was sold to the Columbia Phonograph Company, Ltd. (London) in late 1928. The sale had no effect on Pathé Phonograph and Radio, which had always been independent from its French namesake, aside from continuing to license the Pathé name and trademark.

In July 1929, the Cameo Record Corporation, Regal Record Company (minus its Plaza Music Company affiliate), and Scranton Button Company were merged into a single holding company, to be known as the American Record Corporation, *q.v.* Having disposed of the unprofitable Cameo business, James MacPherson would soon sell his controlling interest in Pathé Phonograph and Radio to ARC as well. By then, ARC's plans for the Pathé and Perfect labels were becoming clear. The final masters intended for Pathé's exclusive use were recorded in July, after which Pathé's long-running master-number series was scuttled. By the end of the year, Pathé and Perfect records were drawing from the same master pool as Regal, Cameo, and the many other labels under ARC's control.

ARC found itself burdened with a host of redundant labels, and in the paring-down that ensued, the company decided to discontinue the Pathé label. The last known Pathé dealers' advance list was published in early December 1929, ending at #37066 in the dance series. The less-expensive Perfect label would survive, however. It has long been the more

popular label of the pair, and unlike Pathé, it was not encumbered by licensing costs. It went on to become one the most popular labels in ARC's budget-label line, surviving until 1938.

E. T. PAULL MUSIC COMPANY / CONCERT PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1899

Offices: 44 W. 29th St., New York

Record Products: Cylinders

Edward Taylor (E. T.) Paull was a prolific music publisher and the composer of "Ben Hur Chariot Race," "Charge of the Light Brigade," and other "descriptive" concert-band pieces that were popular in the late Victorian era. His record company was in operation by May 1899, when it first advertised in *The Phonoscope*. A. J. Loisel served as recording engineer. Charles Jerome Wilson, formerly of the North American Phonograph Company and described in one *Phonoscope* article as "an old-time phonograph man," served in an unspecified capacity.

The E. T. Paull Music Company's first advertisement touted what were termed "original master records" by "coon song singer" Charles Clinton Clark. In June it was reported that the company had secured Joseph R. Gannon for a series of his "Casey" monologues and was planning to issue recordings of Paull playing his own compositions on the piano. A month later, the same publication reported that vaudeville headliner and songwriter J. Aldrich Libby had been engaged to record for the company, which would sell only "master" recordings of his work, in limited quantities.

Paull's recording operation and catalog were taken over in August or September 1899 by the subsidiary Concert Phonograph Record Company, which operated at the same address. Charles Clinton Clark served as manager, and John A. Heinzman as studio pianist. There was no apparent connection to the Concert Phonograph Record Company of Dover, New Jersey, which was incorporated in late 1899 to make and sell phonographs but is not known to have produced records.

The first known advertisement for the Concert Phonograph Record Company, in *The Phonoscope* for September 1899, was a slightly reworked version of Paull's previous advertisements. In November 1899 the same publication reported that the company had "fitted up one of the most elaborate talking machine laboratories and are in a position to furnish records at a nominal figure." The catalog, part of which apparently was carried over from the original operation, included recordings by Paull, Gannon, and Clark (who was touted as "the best coon singer that ever attempted to sing in a phonograph"). Despite its name, the Concert Phonograph Company is not known to have produced concert-format (5" diameter) cylinders, instead advertising their standard-size records as "a Concert record upon a small cylinder."

E. T. Paull died on November 27, 1924. His business interests were split among his daughters and Carolyn C. Frank, his and longtime assistant (and an underpaid one, as Paull admitted in his will). The company was not an active publishing operation after 1924, but remained in the retail business on a small scale. E. T. Paull Music Stores in Norfolk and Richmond, Virginia, and likely elsewhere, are known to have offered personal recording services using Speak-O-Phone equipment as late as 1930.

PAVILON RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 75 Old Broadway, New York

Record Products: Pavilion

Billboard mentioned Pavilion's launch in June 1950 but gave no details concerning the company's ownership or operation. The few known releases feature Polish and novelty dance material. Pavilion's pictorial trademark closely resembled that of Odeon, with which the company had no connection.

PEACOCK RECORDING COMPANY / PEACOCK RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1970s

Offices: 4104 Lyons Ave., Houston (1949–late 1953); 2809 Erastus St., Houston (from late 1953)

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, Gold Star, other independent studios

Pressing: Own plants—New York and elsewhere; some pressing contracted to independent plants

Record Products (78s): Peacock, Duke, Progressive

Launched in late 1949 by Black entrepreneur Donald D. (Don) Robey, the owner of Houston's Bronze Peacock nightclub. Irving Marcus served as national sales manager beginning in 1950. Evelyn Johnson, who owned the Buffalo Booking Agency in Houston, was largely responsible for Peacock's daily operations. With only limited distribution at first, Peacock records could be purchased directly from Robey. The widely circulated tale that he kept a loaded pistol on hand during artist negotiations, while in character based on other accounts, appears to have originated with some less-than-reliable sources.

Peacock's initial releases, by Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and Bea Johnson, were advertised in late December 1949. Johnson's "No Letter Blues" received a lukewarm review in *Cash Box*, which noted, "Disk won't stop traffic — it should earn its keep, though." Brown would prove to be the label's first star. He was managed by Robey, who pulled him from Aladdin Records after becoming dissatisfied with that company's release schedule. By the early 1950s, Peacock's roster included the Dixie Hummingbirds, the Five Blind Boys, the Mighty Clouds of Joy, the Silver Cooks, Floyd Dixon, Memphis Slim, Elmore Nixon, Joe Higgins, Jr., R. B. Thibadeaux, and Big Mama Thornton.

In 1952 Robey invested in David Mattis' and Bill Fitzgerald's newly launched Duke Records, *q.v.* On July 26, it was reported that Robey and Irving Marcus had taken over Duke, in partnership with Mattis. Robey ejected Mattis in short order, reportedly at gunpoint in some questionable accounts. The last mention of Mattis being involved with Duke appeared in *Billboard* in August 1952, the same month in which Robey moved the operation from Memphis to Houston and placed a full-page *Billboard* advertisement to "introduce" his new label. He proceeded to build Duke into an important gospel and rhythm-and-blues line, while continuing to produce Peacock for the same market.

Robey bought out Mattis' and Fitzgerald's remaining interests in the company in April 1953. By year's end, he had consolidated the Peacock and Duke operations at a new location on Erastus Street, where he continued to produce both labels. Progressive, a jazz side-line, was added to the line-up in June 1953. Robey opened his own studio in April 1954, but it was used primarily for rehearsals and demo recordings. He continued to employ the Audio Company of America and other independent studios for most of his commercial recording sessions.

Peacock's later history is beyond the scope of this work. The combined Peacock-Duke operation (which by then included several other labels) was sold on May 23, 1973, to ABC-Dunhill Records, which kept Robey on as a consultant until his death on June 16, 1975. The Peacock catalog is currently controlled by the Universal Music Group.

PEAK RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 11 W. 42nd St. (Suite 1224), New York

Record Products: Peak

Launched in early 1949 by what *Billboard* described only as "four of five music biz people." Charles I. Katz, an attorney who represented Kay Starr and other performers on occasion, was listed as the nominal owner. Larry Newton joined the company as general manager after leaving Black and White Records in March 1949, then resigned after several months to launch Derby Records.

Peak's initial release, (Don Reid's "Hurry! Hurry! Hurry!"), released in late February 1949, was chosen as a "Sleeper of the Week" by *Cash Box* magazine, which incorrectly predicted that Reid was "sure to become one of the nation's top vocal stars in no time at all." The records were handled by some widely scattered distributors and received little marketing support after the earliest releases. No mention of the company has been found after 1949. The Peak name was later used by unrelated labels in Memphis and Philadelphia.

PEARL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1953; 1958 – early 1970s

Offices: 809 Madison Ave., Covington, KY

Record Products: Pearl, Playa

Launched in June 1946 by Larry Vincent, a popular cocktail lounge singer and pianist at Jimmy Brink's Lookout House in Covington, Kentucky. The company was first listed in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook*. It did not appear in the *Billboard* directory until February 1947, after it had a minor hit with Vincent's "If I Had My Life to Live Over." The master was almost immediately licensed to 20th Century Records.

Vincent stated that he tried out new titles on the Lookout House's clientele before deciding which to record. He appeared on most Pearl releases, sometimes pseudonymously. *Cash Box* lauded Vincent's "well-stocked catalog of happy songs," and Pearl's advertisements claimed they "make a horse laugh." Although Pearl's Specialty line touted itself as "the life of the party," suggesting adult fare, the material never went beyond double-entendre titles that generally promised more than they delivered, including "What Happened to My Fanny," "I'll Never Leave Her Behind Again," and "I Took My Organ to the Party, But Nobody Wanted to Play." Cincinnati station WLW gave Vincent his own daily television program in November 1950.

In October 1948, *Billboard* reported that Pearl Records would soon be expanding into the race and country-and-western markets. There was a short-lived attempt at the latter in the spring of 1949, beginning with two novelty titles credited to the Maple Hill Boys, but the race series never materialized. The Playa label, introduced in the summer of 1949, featured the same sort of novelty and pop material as Pearl.

Vincent added 45-rpm pressings to the product line in the early 1950s, most of which were reissues of the original 78 titles. Production of Pearl Records was suspended in 1953, at about the time that Vincent moved his act to the Beverly Hills Country Club in Southgate, Kentucky, then was revived in early 1958, with only a Covington post-office box number listed as the company's address. The resurrected company produced 45s and LPs (the latter cobbled together from 78 masters, with Vincent thinly disguised as "El Vee") but released little if any new material. After suffering a heart attack in May 1963, Vincent returned to work with the assistance of his wife, Ann. In the later 1960s they moved the company to Park Hills, Kentucky, where it continued to operate into the early 1970s.

PEARSON'S PRODUCTIONS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 905 Bankhead Hotel, Birmingham, AL (1950); 119 Fairmount Drive, Birmingham (1951)

Record Products: Bama

Owned and operated by Manley Pearson, with John Daniels serving as talent director. The Bama label, which was announced in a short blurb in *Billboard* in late February 1950, specialized in country-and-western, White gospel, and rhythm-and-blues. In a 1996 interview, singer Hardrock Gunter recalled Pearson as a deeply religious person who donated the profits from Bama to his church.

One of Bama's earliest releases, Gunter's "Birmingham Bounce," became a regional hit. When Pearson refused to license the master to Decca, the company had Red Foley cover the song, resulting in a national hit (with certified sales of a half-million copies) that undermined sales of the Bama version. Gunter signed with Decca as soon as his contract with Pearson expired. The experience apparently made Pearson more accommodating in his later dealings with other companies. In 1951 he granted licenses to Decca and its Coral subsidiary for Bama masters by Eddie Hill and Chuck Murphy.

The Bama label appears to have been largely inactive after the early 1950s, although it was still listed by *Billboard* as late as September 1955. The Bama name was revived in the 1980s for an unrelated label.

PENGUIN RECORDING CORPORATION / PENGUIN ASSOCIATES (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 - c. Late 1950s

Offices: 123 William St., New York

Record Products: Penguin

Primarily a jukebox label specializing in pop, novelty, and country-and-western material, Penguin was launched in early 1948.

Penguin's initial releases, featuring Eddie McMullen and the Rainbow Mountain Boys performing country-style material, appeared in April 1948. However, Penguin would become better-known for its race series, which was launched in July 1949. Its foremost star was Snub Mosley, who first had a minor hit in the summer of 1949 with "I'm a Fool About Mama" and would be a mainstay of the Penguin catalog for many years. His late-1949 rendition of "Abrazame" was praised by a *Cash Box* reviewer as "one of the sweetest discs to come to our attention in a long time...lots and lots of possibilities."

Production of the label was later credited to Penguin Associates, which was still releasing 45s in the late 1950s.

PEOPLE'S ARTISTS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1954

Offices: 13 Astor Place, New York

Record Products: Hootenanny

Launched in the summer of 1946 by Irwin Silber and Ernie Lieberman as an outgrowth of People's Songs, a network of leftist songwriters, artists, and publishers. People's Artists originally was a nonprofit booking agency that handled performers specializing in what was deemed subversive political material, including artists blacklisted during the Post-World War II "red scare." *Billboard* reported it as a new organization in August 1946, one of the few mentions the group received in that publication.

People's Artists ventured into the record business following the closure of Mario (Boots) Cassetta's Charter label (*see* People's Songs), whose masters it acquired. It launched the Hootenanny label in early 1950 as a nonprofit venture, with Cassetta handling production. The initial offering, in March 1950, was "Song of My Hands," by Ernie Lieberman. It was followed by The Weavers' previously unissued "Hammer Song" (which they had recorded for Cassetta in 1949), Betty Sanders' "Talking Un-American Blues," Laura Duncan's "I've Got a Right," and similar material.

Hootenanny Records are not known to have been advertised in mainstream trade or consumer publications. Silber (the editor of *Sing Out!* magazine) and Norma Starobin handled what little promotion there was by passing out leaflets and placing occasional notices in niche publications. Subject to government scrutiny, People's Artists managed to release only eight 78s from 1950 through 1952. Its final effort was the 1954 LP, "Hootenanny Tonight," the first issued live recording of a hootenanny. The catalog was later acquired by Folkways Records.

PEOPLE'S SONGS / CHARTER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1949

Offices: 130 W. 42nd St., New York (People's Songs); 1903 W. Pico, Los Angeles (distribution only)

Record Products: Charter

A seminal label in the post-World War II American folk-music movement, the Charter label was launched in December by Mario (Boots) Cassetta and Fred Warren as an outlet for material published by People's Songs (New York).

Founded by Pete Seeger on December 31, 1945, People's Songs was a network of leftward-leaning songwriters, artists, and publishers whose founding members included Woody Guthrie, Lee Hays, Sis Cunningham, Tom Glazer, Alan Lomax, Burl Ives, and Josh White. Its mission, according to Seeger, was "to create, promote, and distribute songs of labor and the American people." Within a year, Seeger was claiming that the group comprised more than 1,700 members in thirty-eight states and five foreign countries. People's Artists, an affiliated nonprofit booking agency, was spun off from People's Songs in the summer of 1946 and launched its own Hootenanny label in 1950 (*see previous entry*).

Charter's initial release was a calypso item, Sir Lancelot's "Walk in Peace" and "Atomic Energy." The focus then shifted to emerging neo-folk artists like Seeger (including his newly formed group, The Weavers) and Betty Sanders. The records were sold primarily by mail-order and in specialty shops, with virtually no advertising in mainstream publications. For a time, there was limited national distribution through the Record Merchandising Company, a Los Angeles operation that specialized in niche markets.

Charter's fortunes were inextricably linked to those of People's Music, which by the late 1940s had begun to suffer from government scrutiny and a lack of financial support in the post-World War II "red scare," as well as Seeger's increasing focus on his commercial performing career. People's Music suspended its publishing program in December 1948, having depleted its funds in supporting the unsuccessful presidential campaign of Henry A. Wallace, then closed entirely in early 1949. Charter Records was still in business in July–August 1949, when it signed a new recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians. However, it appears to have ceased operations later that year, leaving behind a backlog of unissued masters that included The Weavers' iconic "Hammer Song."

The affiliated People's Artists continued to operate. In early 1950 it backed a new folk-label startup, Hootenanny (*see previous entry*), which took over the Charter masters.

PERFECT RECORD COMPANY

Although some press releases and trade-paper reports made it appear the Perfect Record Company was an independent operation, it in fact was just a trade name of the Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation, *q.v.*

PERMA RECORDING LABORATORY

An apparently short-lived recording operation managed by former Imperial Taking Machine Company employees Fred Hager and Charles Hibbard. The company was mentioned for the first (and possibly only) time in a November 1917 article in *The Phonograph*, shortly before Imperial suspended operations. In early 1918, Otto Heineman hired Hibbard and Hager as recording engineer and musical director, respectively, for his new Okeh label, presumably signaling the end of Perma. An earlier Perma Recording Laboratories Corporation, incorporated in New York in late 1915 or early 1916, does not appear have become operational, and thus far, no connection to Hager or Hibbard has been established.

PFAU SOUND AND RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1940s – 1950s

Offices: 2993 S. Delaware Ave., Milwaukee

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Pfau; masters for Star [3], probably other independent labels; transcriptions, air checks, custom recordings

Launched in the early 1940s by Harold O. Pfau, Leo E. Pfau, and Ruben Schultz. The company was first listed in *Radio Annual's* 1942 yearbook, at which time it was not yet involved in commercial recording.

The Pfau label was first mentioned by *Billboard* in October 1949, although it probably had been introduced earlier. Ken Wendel served as the label's manager and distributor. Its roster featured local artists, including organists Bob Kames and Eddie Daniels, and bands led by Joe Gumin, Gene Heier, and Joe Potzner, with a heavy emphasis on polkas, waltzes, and novelty songs. The label had a minor local hit in late 1950 with Bernie Roberts' "Flying Saucer Polka," which Ken Wendel promoted by giving away a flying-saucer shaped balloon with each record purchase. On the strength of that records, Wendel went on to launch his own Ken label in May 1951, which failed to thrive.

Pfau also recorded masters for Sammy Madden's Star Record Company and probably other small independent labels. In February 1951, Pfau announced it was preparing to produce 45-rpm pressings. The company was last listed by *Billboard* in August 1954. Harold Pfau died at the age of forty-eight on May 14, 1958, at which time it appears his studio was still operating.

PHAMOUS RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950–c. 1952

Offices: 908½ Travis St., Houston

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America

Record Products: Phamous

An apparently short-lived venture of M. J. (Pop) Watts. The visually impaired former owner of a meat-packing plant, Watts created Phamous to employ blind performers in the area. His first artist was Otis Glover, a country-and-western singer from Watts' hometown of Freeport, Texas.

The label made its debut in February 1950 with one release credited to "Otis Glover (Blind Boy)" and two credited to "Old Pop Watts and his Old Plantation Melody Boys (Blind Troubadours)." Watts' roster also included Helen Phelpe, a Dallas housewife and graduate of the Texas State School for the Blind, who was said to play "fiddle six days a week and the violin on Sunday."

A November 1951 report stated that Phamous was producing 15,000–20,000 discs annually. There might have been a connection to Crowe-Martin Distributing (Houston), which in one case booked sessions preceding and following Phamous' session at the Audio Company of America studio. Country-and-western, pop, and Latino releases are known.

PHAROS RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1920s

Offices: 383 3rd Ave., New York

Record Products: Pharos

A producer of records for the Greek and Middle Eastern immigrant markets, of unknown ownership. The Pharos catalog comprised primarily Greek material, with a smattering of Turkish, Armenian, and Persian. Some masters might be imported; others, from an unknown studio, are by known American performers and appear to have been recorded especially for Pharos. Late recordings are electrical. Some Pharos recordings also appear on the Sohag and Yeldez labels, and reissues of M.G. Parsekian Company masters have been confirmed.

PHILADELPHIA BOOK CONCERN (Discs)

Record Production: c. Late 1930s – Early 1940s

Offices: 5437 N. Clark St., Chicago

Record Products: Gospel Herald

Despite its name, this was a Chicago-based publisher of gospel song books, of no apparent relation to the Book Concern of Philadelphia (an affiliate of the African Methodist-Episcopal Church). Its Gospel Herald label, probably introduced in the late 1930s, was devoted entirely to religious material by White performers. In 1939 the company published a song book by Einer Waermo, who sang on many Gospel Herald records. Most masters are in a 16000 series of unknown origin that should not be confused with the American Record Corporation's 16000-series masters.

PHILADELPHIA RECORDING LABORATORIES (Discs)

Record Production: From 1947

Offices: Philadelphia

Record Products: PRL (announced; unconfirmed); custom labels, transcriptions

The Philadelphia Recording Laboratories' launch was announced by *Billboard* on September 13, 1947, at which time it was reported that the company would issue recordings by local talent on its PRL label and produce transcriptions for local advertising agencies. No further mention has been found of the PRL label *per se*; however, the company did release a specially labeled four-disc "Franklin D. Roosevelt Living Memorial" album, comprising excerpts from his speeches.

PHILLIPS RECORDING SERVICE — See Memphis Recording Service

PHILMOS RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1950s

Offices: 3553 Percy St., Los Angeles

Record Products: Philmos

Launched in January 1950 by Ray Ramos and distributed by Sid Talmadge's Record Merchandising Company (Los Angeles), which specialized in records for the Latino market. Philmos featured Los Angeles-area talent, including Ramon Armengod (a Mexican-American singer) and Phil Carreón's Orchestra, an early and influential Latino-jazz group. Don Tosti's "Burlate" made *Cash Box*'s "Mexico's Top Ten Tunes" list in November 1952, but otherwise the label was went largely unnoticed in the trade papers. Philmos produced 45s beginning in the 1950s.

PHILO RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1946

Offices: 423½ W. 5th St., Los Angeles (at founding); 5352 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles (late 1945–early 1946)

Record Products: Philo

A race-record operation founded in July 1945 by brothers Edward (Eddie) and Leo Mesner, owners of the Philharmonic Music Shop (Los Angeles). Eddie Mesner and Maxwell Davis were responsible for artists and repertoire, while Leo handled the business operations. Philo's trademark application was rejected on the grounds that it might be confused with the Philco Radio Corporation, which at the time was manufacturing record blanks and reportedly was considering launching its own label. Nevertheless, the Mesners proceeded to use the Philo name, with predictable results.

Recording sessions began during mid-summer 1945. Philo's artist roster included Wynonie (Blues) Harris, Helen Humes, Illinois Jacquet, Nat (King) Cole, and Lester Young. The company had minor jukebox hits with Jacquet's two-part "Flying Home" (a remake of his Decca release), Humes' "E-Bob-o-Lee-Bob," and Johnny Moore's "Drifting Blues" (judged the best race recording of 1946 by *Billboard* magazine). The company reported total sales of 1.5 million discs in 1945, which it attributed to widespread exposure on jukeboxes and radio.

Philco Radio filed for an injunction against Philo in December 1945, claiming the name was too similar to its own. The case was settled out of court on February 2, 1946, with the Mesners agreeing to drop their use of the Philo name beginning March 1. The brothers originally planned to rename their company Medlee Records (a name that was listed in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook*), then decided instead on Aladdin Records (*q.v.*).

PHOENIX PUBLICATIONS AND RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949 – 1950

Mailing Address: Los Angeles (PO box number only; no street address given)

Record Products: Phoenix

No reliable information has been located concerning the ownership or operation of Phoenix Publications and Recordings. It does not appear to have been connected to the earlier Long Angeles-based Phoenix Records, listed in *Record Retailing*'s 1946 Yearbook, about which no information aside from a street address has been located.

The Phoenix label, which is not known to have been advertised or distributed nationally, specialized in Black gospel material. The company was first listed in *Billboard*'s label directory in January 1949. What is probably its second group of releases (all credited to the Crowns of Harmony and Brother Noah) appeared in the December 1949 advance lists. The last confirmed releases were made c. late 1950.

PHONO-CUT RECORD COMPANY — See Boston Talking Machine Company

PHONO RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY — See United Artist Records

PHONOGRAPH RECORD AND SUPPLY COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1896–1897

Offices: 97–99–101 Reade St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Cylinders

Launched in early 1896 by Henry J. Hagen and Walter H. Miller after leaving the firm of Walcutt, Miller & Company. According to Miller's testimony in an unrelated lawsuit, he became "associated" with the Phonograph Record and Supply Company in February 1896. John Kaiser served as recording engineer.

A supplementary cylinder catalog has survived, published c. August–September 1896 and featuring an endorsement by tenor George J. Gaskin. The list, which is believed to consist of original recordings, features Gaskin, Joseph Natus, Dan W. Quinn, Edward Clarence, and other studio freelancers of the period. In addition, there were several titles by the Unique Quartette, who were described as "the best Negro talent available." The records retailed for \$1 each, "strictly spot cash."

The Phonograph Record and Supply Company's demise was reported in *The Phonoscope* for December 1896, which probably was published a month or more after its cover date (Miller later testified that he resigned from the company in March 1897). Its inventory was purchased by Gianni Bettini (who also hired Kaiser) and Russell Hunting, among others. Walter Miller moved to Edison's newly formed National Phonograph Company, where he quickly advanced to manager of the recording division. Henry Hagen, in partnership with Kaiser, launched the short-lived Harms, Kaiser & Hagen cylinder operation in 1898. He later worked as a recording engineer for the Universal Talking Machine Company (Zonophone).

PHONOGRAPH RECORDING COMPANY OF SAN FRANCISCO (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1920s

Offices: San Francisco

Pressing: Probably Columbia (West Coast plant)

Record Products: Phonograph Recording Company; custom recordings

The Phonograph Recording Company was primarily a provider of custom-recording services. It owes its inclusion here to a few apparently commercial releases, electrically recorded and bearing catalog numbers in several series, by professional performers working in the San Francisco area.

PHONOGRAPH RECORDING LABORATORIES

Managed by Hartwell E. Webb, Phonograph Recording Laboratories acquired the assets of the bankrupt American Recording Laboratories (*q.v.*) in early 1921 and operated at that company's former address. Although it claimed to offer commercial recording services, no reliable information has been found concerning which labels, if any, it supplied.

PHOTO AND SOUND, INC.

Primarily a producer of radio programs, transcriptions, air-checks, and personal recordings. Photo and Sound's San Francisco studio, at 152 Kearny Street, was managed by Hugh Allen in the early 1940s. Although the studio is not known to have made commercial recordings *per se*, some of its privately recorded acetates were later dubbed and issued commercially by Rhythm Records.

PHOTOTONE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – 1948

Offices: 9417 Parmalee Ave., Los Angeles

Record Products: Phototone

This company was listed in the *Record Retailing Yearbook* for 1946, and in *Billboard's* label directories from January 1947 through January 1948, but thus far, no reliable information has been found concerning its ownership or output.

PIKES PEAK RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950s

Offices: 3230 Quinton, Colorado Springs, CO; 465 First National Bank Building, Colorado Springs (fulfillment)

Record Products: Pikes Peak

A square-dance label launched in 1949 by A. G. (Abe) Hooper, a transplanted livestock dealer from Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Pikes Peak's slogan was "Recorded for Dancers by Dancers." An October 1949 report noted that Pikes Peak was about to release its third album and was doing a "flourishing" mail-order business. The company's special introductory offer included all three albums, "giving every possible form of square dance music complete with instructions and calls," plus a bonus record with which customers could practice making their own calls, for \$17.50.

PILOT RADIO COMPANY / PILOT RADIO CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1948

Offices: 37-06 36th St., Long Island, NY

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Own plant (Long Island City)

Record Products: Pilotone; custom recordings

Founded as a radio manufacturer, the Pilot Radio Corporation opened a recording studio in 1944, under the management of WOR Artists' Bureau manager Nat M. Abramson, to record material for the Office of War Information. By 1945 it was operating its own pressing plant as well. The company announced plans to begin commercial record production under the Pilotone label in December 1945, having filed a trademark application on October 20. Officers at that time included Isadore Goldberg (president), Ernest L. Hall (executive vice-president), and Allen D. McGehee (sales manager).

Pilotone's initial commercial releases were drawn from Abramson's wartime masters, which were supplemented and eventually supplanted by newly recorded material as the 1940s progressed. Although early reports stated that the records would be sold exclusively by Macy's department store, they were also carried by Pilot Radio dealers. Pilotone's catalog featured light classical selections, with a smattering of jazz, pop, gospel, and country-and-western material. The records were sold only as album sets.

The Pilotone Academy of Music Series, announced in late 1946, consisted of album sets of symphonic works, pressed in vinylite, with added narration by Deems Taylor. Compositions were selected by an advisory board that included Taylor, *New York Times* music critic Irving Kolodin, and the Julliard School of Music's Dean Wedge. Rudolf Ganz and Eric Leinsdorf conducted the fictitious Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra on early releases in the series.

Pilot Radio operated its own pressing plant in Long Island City. Although the December 1945 announcement of Pilotone's launch stated that the records were to be vinylite, the earliest were pressed in ordinary shellac. Vinyl pressings were finally introduced in late 1946, initially only for the Academy of Music sets, then for the full line in 1947.

In 1948 Pilot Radio management decided to exit the record business rather than undertake the expense of converting to LP production. By then, the company had produced approximately 280 Pilotone masters, which it announced it would hold for the time being, but eventually intended to sell. The studio and pressing equipment were sold in November 1949. The Pilot Radio Corporation remained in business until 1965, when it was acquired by Emerson Radio.

PIONEER RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 4565 Boston Blvd., Detroit

Record Products: Pioneer

Launched in the summer of 1950 by songwriter Bert Kriechman in partnership with Irving Ziedman, a former salesman for Varsity and Mercury records.

Despite the label's name and covered-wagon trademark, Pioneer was largely a pop and light-jazz line. Its first offering, by Pat Morris with the Bobby Stevenson Trio, was released

on August 1, 1949. The records were handled locally by Cadet Distributing (Detroit). A national distribution arrangement reportedly was in the works, but little more was reported concerning the company, which was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1951 label directory. There was no connection to the New York- or Houston-based Pioneer labels of the same approximate period.

PIX RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1949

Offices: Suite 501, 1647 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Pix

Launched in November 1948 as a partnership comprising Murray Singer (owner of Murray Singer Records, *q.v.*), Sam Singer (owner of Joy Records, a Singer side-line), pop vocalist Jack Emerson, and attorney Sid Katz. Emerson negotiated a release from his Metrotone contract to join the company and brought along some previously unissued masters, which were used on the initial Pix releases.

Pix's first release ("Eep—Ipe—Wanna Piece of Pie" by Artie Dann, "The Clown Prince of Comedy") was released in December 1948. *Billboard* reported that Pix had also purchased some unspecified foreign-language masters and was "looking for more masters to buy," after which little more reported concerning the label.

In 1950, a Pix Records operating at 1760 Broadway, New York, introduced a line of children's picture discs. It has been suggested that this was the immediate predecessor of Voco, Inc., a children's picture disc producer that was spun off from Singer's original Voco pop label; however, the connection has not been confirmed.

PLANET RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Universal Recording (Chicago), possibly other independent studios

Record Products: Planet

A very short-lived race label of uncertain ownership. James (Snooky) Pryor reportedly recalled that his Planet recording date was "set up" by Chester A. Scales, a small-time entrepreneur who operated the Northside Playland and Record Shop in Chicago, and who might also have been involved with the equally obscure Marvel Record Company. Planet's masters were acquired by Egmont Sonderling's Swing-Master Record Corporation in 1949. The Planet name was used beginning in the mid-1950s for several unrelated labels.

PLAZA MUSIC COMPANY

Offices: 18–22 W. 20th St., New York (through 1/1925); 10–16 W. 20th St., New York (from 2/1925)

Record Products: See Regal Record Company for affiliated labels

The Plaza Music Company was a marketing, sales, and distribution company, not a manufacturer, and thus seemingly beyond the scope of this work. As *The Talking Machine World* confirmed in 1925, Plaza distributed Banner, Playtime, Regal, and Little Tot records, but did not claim to produce them. However, the company merits inclusion here because its history is inextricably linked with that of the affiliated Regal Record Company (*q.v.*), the actual producer of what have long been informally, if inaccurately, termed the "Plaza labels." It was also responsible for the creation of the Crown Record Company, *q.v.*

The Plaza Music Company began business as a musical merchandise wholesaler and sheet music dealer in 1911. By 1920 it was the New York distributor for Operaphone records and Supertone phonographs, but was bankrupt by December of that year. In March 1921, Plaza was taken over by its creditors, which included the Regal Record Company's Herman Germain and Sol Kronberg.

Although separate companies from a legal and accounting standpoint, the Plaza and Regal operations were interconnected, and both were closely affiliated with the Scranton Button Company, a major independent pressing plant and master-broker. Germain and Kronberg held executive positions with both Plaza and Regal, which shared office space and some staff. As the distributor of Banner, Domino, and Regal records in the 1920s, as well as the supplier of Challenge, Conqueror, Oriole, and other client labels, Plaza enjoyed

tremendous success in the low-priced record market. "Start a 3 for \$1.00 Record Department in Your Store," a 1925 Plaza ad encouraged. "A \$50 Investment Is All that Is Necessary." In the mid-1920s Plaza was a well-diversified company that dealt in piano rolls, sheet music, portable and children's phonographs, radios, cameras, and inexpensive musical instruments, in addition to records.

In January 1929, the Regal Record Company was acquired outright by the Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Company (London), which had first taken a financial stake in the company in 1927, and which would now assume full ownership. The Plaza-Regal alliance quickly began to unravel, with the two companies required to keep their accounting separate after January 1, 1929. Plaza was not purchased by Crystalate but was allowed to continue handling all product lines except records, which became Regal's sole responsibility. The final split between Plaza and Regal came in July 1929, when the Regal Record Company, Cameo Record Corporation, and Scranton Button Company were merged to form the American Record Corporation, *q.v.* The Banner label, which had been Plaza's flagship brand since 1922, became ARC's property following the merger, and the Plaza name was removed from the labels.

Deprived of its label and production arm, Plaza found itself temporarily out of the record business. The company continued to operate independently after its split from Regal, dealing in low-cost musical merchandise and handling other lines of records, and Germain continued to serve as treasurer of both Plaza and ARC for a short time. Plaza made a tentative re-entry into the record market in the summer of 1930 with Pal Player Records, a children's line sold in conjunction with Plaza's Pal Picture Player film-strip projector. At the same time, it purchased the Crown Music Company and took the brand for a new (and ultimately ill-fated) subsidiary, the Crown Record Company. By the summer of 1932, Plaza was deeply in debt. The company was reorganized at that time and continued to operate for approximately another year before finally declaring bankruptcy.

PLAZA RECORDS — See Atlantic Records

PLEASANT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1950

Offices: Brill Building, Room 205 (1619 Broadway), New York

Record Products: Pleasant

A producer of pop, novelty, and holiday-related material, amounting to approximately eight known releases in three years. Pleasant was one of several small record companies with offices in the multi-tenant Brill Building during the late 1940s, none of which are known to have been related. The company was operating by December 1947, when *Billboard* reported that Henry Jerome had cut four titles for the label. The small artist roster included saxophonist and band leader Andy Sannella, whose prolific recording career had peaked two decades earlier. Pleasant Records was last listed by *Billboard* in its July 1950 directory, and its last known release was mentioned briefly in October's *Cash Box*.

PLYMOUTH RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 11919 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles

Record Products: Plymouth

A race label launched in the spring of 1949 by John Graves and Larry Sutton. The company was briefly mentioned in April, by *Cash Box*, which reported that distribution would be handled by Ben Pollack's Jewel Record Company. Plymouth's initial release, by a Sherman Williams group, appeared in June, after which little more was reported on the label in the trade papers. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Plymouth name was later used for an unrelated budget label operated by Jack Meyerson.

POLO RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 200 Ferry St., Newark, NJ

Record Products: Polo

Launched in 1949, the Polo Record Corporation specialized in polkas and other material for the ethnic markets. No reliable information has been found concerning the company's ownership or operation. Polo's artists, including violinist-arranger Joseph Snihur and singer Michael Tizio, were recruited locally. In June 1950, *Billboard* reported that the label was going into the pop field, but no further details were forthcoming. The company was last listed in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

POLONIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1919–Mid-1920s

Offices: 7 W. 108th St. (at founding); 110. W. 42nd St., New York (1919–1920); 435 Broadway, Milwaukee (from late 1920); Grove & Harrison Sts., Milwaukee (from 1921; unconfirmed)

Original-Master Source(s): Commissioned from Emerson, New York Recording Laboratories, possibly others; own studio — New York (unconfirmed)

Pressing: New York Recording Laboratories, possibly others; own plant—Grove & Harrison Sts., Milwaukee (unconfirmed)

Record Products: Polonia; possibly Wisla

A producer of records for the Polish-American market, the Polonia Phonograph Company was incorporated on March 21, 1919 by Hattie Siudzinski, W. Pierzchaiski, and veteran recording artist Vincent S. Czerwinski, with an initial capitalization of \$25,000. Czerwinski also used the Polonia name for an import-export company that he incorporated on January 16, 1920, which might have been connected with the short-lived Wisla label.

The earliest known Polonia advertisement, published in May 1920 in *Zgoda* (a Chicago Polish-language newspaper) listed nineteen records, starting at number 101. Some early releases were reissues of material from the Emerson and Paramount catalogs, but many masters were exclusive to Polonia. The earliest were commissioned from Emerson, beginning c. mid-1919, and were numbered in Emerson's standard master series. Some labels show Emerson's universal-cut patent (#1,213,468), although inspected specimens employ the standard lateral cut. Recording and manufacturing shifted to the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount) in 1920. In early 1921, NYRL sued Polonia over unpaid invoices and suspended services to the company.

The Polonia Phonograph Company closed its New York office and moved to Milwaukee in late 1920. The company was reorganized in early 1921, and an entirely new group of officers was elected on March 9, 1921, included C. P. Dziadulewicz (president) and other prominent Milwaukee businessmen of Polish ancestry. *The Talking Machine World* for April 1921 reported that the company had opened a studio in New York, but no documentary evidence of that studio has been found this far. Some Polonia issues from that period appear to be Siemon Hard Rubber Company pressings from Jones Recording Laboratories masters that apparently were original to Polonia. The records were heavily advertised in several Midwestern Polish-language newspapers during 1922.

Polonia was sued again over unpaid invoices, this time by a private party, in 1922. By 1924 it had returned to NYRL as its primary supplier of masters and pressings. It appears to have suspended operations several years later. At some point Polonia registered as a Delaware corporation, although it did not conduct business there. On April 13, 1928, Polonia's board of directors proposed that the company be dissolved, and a certificate of dissolution was filed by Delaware secretary of state on June 27. A later Polonia label, introduced in the United States in the mid-1940s, is of no relation.

POLORON RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. Early 1950s

Offices: 30-21 93rd St., New York

Record Products: Poloron

Owned and operated by composer-conductor Ted Cylicki, Poloron produced records exclusively for the Polish-American market. Jack Bergman, of Tempo Distributors (New

York), was the label's national representative. Poloron's launch was briefly noted by *Billboard* in November 1949, after which little more was reported concerning the company. It was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1950 directory.

POLOTONE MUSIC CORPORATION

Polotone produced the Polart label for the Polish-American market beginning in the late 1940s. In June 1950, *Billboard* noted that the company was going into the pop field, but nothing further was reported in that regard. Based upon the few confirmed Polart releases, all of which use imported masters, the company might be beyond the scope of this work.

THE POLYPHONE COMPANY / THE TALKING MACHINE COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1898 – 1899

Offices: 107 Madison St., Chicago (Chicago Talking Machine Company)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Polyphone cylinders

Incorporated in Chicago on October 10, 1898, by Lewis E. Curtis, H. M. Munday, and Edmund Abcock, with capital stock of \$1,800, to manufacture Leon F. Douglass' Polyphone. A dual-reproducer, dual-horn attachment for Columbia or Edison cylinder phonographs, the Polyphone was advertised as "more than twice as loud" as a standard reproducer. The device was first advertised in *The Phonoscope* for September 1898 (which probably was published a month or more after its stated cover date) and retailed for \$15, with horns included. It could also be purchased pre-installed on a Columbia or Edison phonograph for \$35 and up. In his quest for greater volume, Douglass also developed the 5"-diameter "concert" cylinder, an idea that was quickly appropriated by Columbia and Edison. The Polyphone Grand, a complete machine designed to play the oversized cylinders, was introduced in early 1899 and retailed for \$140.

The Polyphone operation initially was affiliated with the Chicago Talking Machine Company, which by then was serving as Columbia's Chicago sales office. The companies shared office space and executive staff, which included Leon Douglass and Henry B. Babson. Silas Leachman, a local entertainer who recorded prolifically for Chicago Talking Machine, was employed as a duplicating-machine operator as well as a singer.

Babson soon launched The Talking Machine Company to take over management of the Polyphone line, which included cylinders. Original recordings by Leachman are known that state "Polyphone Record" in their introductory announcements, but some other Polyphone offerings are known to be copies of Columbia cylinders, with their tell-tale announcements deleted. *The Phonoscope* for December 1898 reported that Polyphone had arranged to secure records from Columbia that would be "devoid of the usual announcement," but it is unclear whether this was a legitimate arrangement or simply a cover story. It appears to have been the latter, as three months later Columbia applied for an injunction to prevent Babson, Douglass, Leachman, the Polyphone Company, and The Talking Machine Company from making duplicate records or building duplicating machines. A preliminary restraining order was granted, then was vacated on June 3, 1899. The defendants were allowed to continue with their business pending final hearing on American Graphophone's application for injunction.

At trial, Babson and Leachman denied they made the duplicates, claiming they had simply purchased them from Douglass. Douglass then admitted to having made the duplicates, but claimed that he did so under a "personal license" from American Graphophone (Columbia), citing an 1892 verbal agreement with Edward Easton. Judge Kohlstaad, expressing confusion over the conflicting claims and "considerable doubt" that a license to Douglass existed, reinstated the restraining order, pending appeal. In October 1899, however, the case was decided in Polyphone's favor. Two months earlier, Polyphone announced that it was about to introduce a new cylinder that it claimed was "five times as loud" as an ordinary record.

Leon Douglass left Polyphone in November 1900 to work for Eldridge R. Johnson in what would become the Victor Talking Machine Company. Babson remained and by the early 1900s was operating The Talking Machine Company, along with the Moto Cycle Company and New Moto Cycle Company (all at the same address) in partnership with Charles Dickinson, who had been an original incorporator of Chicago Talking Machine. In

1903 he handed off management of The Talking Machine Company to his brothers, who developed it into a successful distributor of Victor and Edison products. The company remained in operation, under a succession of managers, into the late 1920s.

POPULAR RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1920s

Offices: New York

Record Products: Popular [1]

A short-lived label specializing in Greek music, reportedly operated by Tetos Demetriades. Its offerings included what are probably the first recordings by Demetriades, a well-known tenor and prolific recording artist who later served as manager of RCA Victor's International Department and would go on to launch the Standard Phono Company in 1939.

POPULAR TUNES (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: Sheboygan, WI

Record Products: Disc Jockey

A Wisconsin music publisher, owned and operated by songwriters Henry Grey and Frederick Zenk. The team launched their Disc Jockey label after admittedly being unable to convince the larger record companies to record their compositions. Disc Jockey advertised itself locally as "Sheboygan's Own Recording Company" and appears to have had only local distribution. Standard releases retailed for 63¢ each.

Disc Jockey employed obscure local artists. Its first two releases appeared in October 1949 and received passable reviews in *Billboard*, aside from a criticism of the mediocre recording quality. Singer Georgia Scott was featured on several of the few known releases, as were Grey and Zenk, singing their own songs. Rondo Records purchased two Disc Jockey masters by Ralph Nejedle's Orchestra in November 1949.

As an incentive for radio play, Grey and Zenk offered a half-cent royalty per side to the disc jockey who could verify the most listener requests for their records. A few more releases appeared from late 1949 into the summer of 1950, including several in a 79¢ country-music series (one of which *Billboard* described as "a thumping midwestern polka"), after which nothing further was reported on the label.

PORTRAIT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: Hollywood, California

Record Products: Portrait

A very short-lived label launched by Ralph Bass in the summer of 1949. The label's entire output apparently consisted of several August 1949 recordings by pianist Errol Garner. The masters were quickly taken over by Savoy Records, for which Bass was working as an artists-and-repertoire manager.

PREMIER RADIO ENTERPRISES, INC. / PREMIER RECORD COMPANY [1] / PREMIER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – Early 1950s

Offices: Mart Building, St. Louis, MO (at founding); 1218 Olive St., St. Louis (1942–1944); 1700 N. Garrison Ave. (1944–early 1950s); 3033 Locust St., St. Louis (1944–early 1950s); 3504 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis (Premier Distributing, 1944–1946)

Original-Master Sources: Own studio—3033 Locust St.

Pressing: Own plant—1700 N. Garrison Ave. (1945)

Record Products: Premier [2]; transcriptions

Launched by H. S. Somson in the late 1930s, Premier Radio Enterprises originally was a transcription producer. One of its earliest productions was Purina Mills' "Checkerboard Time" program, for which company officials claimed to have traveled 8,000 miles seeking out talent. Officers at the time included Somson (president), Wilson Dalzell and Dave Ward (vice-presidents), and J. M. Yawitz (secretary-treasurer). There was no connection to the

Hollywood-based Premier Record Company (*see next entry*), which had recently discontinued its Premier [1] label.

The company's Premier Records division was launched in early August 1944, and its initial releases were first advertised later that month. Touted as "The Label That Will Bring in the Nickels from Coast to Coast," Premier was a cut-rate (50¢) line that initially was marketed only to jukebox operators. The records were distributed locally at first, through Lee W. Turner's Turner Phonograph Company, a jukebox and slot-machine distributor that shared a Locust Street address with Premier's record operation. In the autumn of 1944, Turner launched the Premier Distributing Corporation in Council Bluffs, Iowa, to handle national distribution. Turner, known in the 1920s as the "flying gunman" of the notorious Egan Gang, was a convicted felon with a lengthy criminal record. His questionable business practices and increasing involvement with Premier (of which he was made a director) would soon prove to be liability for the company.

Premier's artist roster included Nick Lucas, Ted Fiorito, George Olsen, and Barney Rapp, all of whose heydays had been in the 1920s. More current artists included Chuck Foster, Julia Lee, Jay McShann, and Sonny Dunham, along with some local radio-station favorites. There was also a modest country-and-western series featuring Ambrose Haley's Ozark Ramblers. Early releases used a different catalog number on each side, and there were large gaps in the numerical sequence, perhaps intended to suggest that far more records had been released than was actually the case (the releases for September 1, 1944, for example, comprised only two discs, #20166 and #20188).

Premier purchased a factory building on North Garrison Avenue in St. Louis for its own pressing plant in January 1945. A proposed takeover of the company by Philco Radio was called off in July 1945, for reasons that were not made public. In September 1945, Turner reported that Premier was preparing "special new numbers" for jukebox use, but the label's last known advertisement appeared in December of that year.

On March 22, 1946, band leader and shareholder Ernie Venuto filed a lawsuit requesting a receiver for Premier Radio Enterprises, alleging gross mismanagement, and requesting a dissolution of the company and distribution of its assets to shareholders. Venuto accused Turner, Dalzell, and two other directors of conspiring to operate Premier for their personal benefit, in total disregard for the best interests of the corporation and investors. Venuto cited the transfer of Premier's Garrison Avenue building, which was said to comprise two-thirds of the company's assets, to Turner for a "grossly inadequate" consideration. A day later, *Billboard* reported that Mercury Records had purchased 125 masters from Premier, which the report termed "now defunct." In January 1947, Turner was indicted on three counts of federal income tax evasion in an unrelated case, to which he pled no contest in April.

The Premier label was revived on a modest scale following Turner's departure, with only Dalzell remaining from the original executive team. It made news in 1949, when it offered to refund a nickel to any jukebox customer who disliked Charlie Ackerson's "I Had My Heart Set on You." *Cash Box* reported that the guarantee boosted jukebox plays, and no refunds were requested. Late releases show a 1950 copyright date, after which little more was reported concerning Premier Records.

PREMIER RECORD COMPANY [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1943 – 1944

Offices: 8848 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Premier [1]

Founded in late 1943 by Robert Scherman, the composer of "All for You" and other early-1940s hits. *Billboard* reported in December 1943 that Premier had made its debut "recently" (a 1944 article in the same publication erroneously claimed that Scherman had launched Premier "several years ago.") Scherman claimed to have enough rationed shellac on hand to issue records "in unlimited quantities," but by late January 1944 the company was soliciting scrap records for recycling and alluding to a vague "production problem" that supposedly had been overcome.

Premier's initial releases, including four titles recorded by the Nat (King) Cole Trio on November 2, 1943, were announced in late December. However, the label attracted little

attention, and it was discontinued in the late summer of 1944, at about the time that Kansas City-based Premier Radio Enterprises launched its own Premier label (*see previous entry*). In October 1944, Scherman reorganized Premier as the Atlas Record Company.

PREMIUM RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1951

Offices: 2326 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): United Broadcasting studios; unknown studio (Cleveland)

Record Products: Premium

Launched in April 1950 by Lee Egalnick, as the successor to Miracle Records, *q.v.* *Billboard* erroneously reported in May 1950 that Lew Simpkins would continue to run Miracle. In fact, he closed Miracle a month later and joined Egalnick as an equal partner in Premium Records. In early June, Egalnick departed on a three-week trip through the southern states, where he scouted for artists and promoted his new label to disc jockeys.

Like its predecessor, Premium was targeted primarily to the race-record market. The label retained several of Miracle's artists (including Robert Anderson, Eddie Chamblee, and Memphis Slim), but lacked access to most of its masters, which were entangled in litigation and ultimately seized by the Internal Revenue Service. The initial Premium releases, announced in early June 1950, included titles by the Lynn Hope Quartet, Memphis Slim, and Miff Mole's Dixieland Quintet (the latter in the Dixieland Series, a short-lived departure from the label's race focus), all recorded in March. The company reportedly made some recordings in an unknown Cleveland studio in early 1951, including titles by Chamblee and Danny Overbea. Premium's final confirmed recording sessions at the United Broadcasting studios, by Tab Smith and his Orchestra, were held in April 1951.

Despite promotional efforts that included dance contests and appearances by its artists in several major southern cities, Premium discontinued operations in June 1951. The partners split a month later, with Simpkins launching a new United label (unrelated to the various other United labels listed in this work) in partnership with Leonard Allen. Egalnick turned his attention to the Premium Music Corporation, a publishing venture he had launched with Floyd Hunt during the summer of 1950, while continuing to manage several artists who had recorded for Premium. He later launched the Topper label, which failed in late 1952 after a single known release.

Operations were suspended in September 1951. Egalnick had already begun disposing of Premium's masters piecemeal, beginning in July with the sale of six Terry Timmonds sides to RCA Victor. In December of that year, Chess records purchased a large lot of Premium masters from a creditor, including titles by Robert Anderson, Memphis Slim, Sarah McLawler, Tab Smith, and Sonny Stitt.

PRESIDENT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1957

Offices: 712 Louisiana St., Little Rock, AR (shared with Morrissey Music, 1947–mid-1949); 109 Main St., Little Rock (shared with President Records Distributing Company, mid-1949–early 1950s); 321½ Main St., Little Rock (from early 1950s)

Record Products: President

Predominantly a country-and-western label, President was founded in early 1947 by Little Rock songwriter and music publisher Thomas Morrissey, the owner of Morrissey Music. Salesmen and distributors at first were recruited through small classified advertisements, but by mid-1949 Morrissey was operating his own distributing company. For a time, Morrissey took the unusual step of offering a choice of shellac or vinyl pressings of each release, the latter at a small premium.

Morrissey recruited his artists from local radio stations, most notably Little Rock's KARK. According to a 1946 *Billboard* pre-launch report, President records would feature, but not necessarily be limited to, Morrissey Music publications (which at the time consisted of only approximately ten titles). The company had a minor regional hit in the late 1940s with Buddy & Claude's "Flying Saucers." President's most popular act appears to have been the Stamps-Baxter Melody Boys, whose President records were still being sold as late as 1957.

In August 1957, an unrelated New York company began issuing records under the

President brand, prompting a belated cease-and-desist order from Morrissey eight months later. However, it appears that Morrissey's label (although not his distributing company) was inactive by then, and the New York company continued to use the President label.

PRESTIGE RECORDS – See New Jazz Record Company

PREVIEW RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1946

Offices: 1870 W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles (Jack Gutshall Distributing); 4215 S. Vermont St., Los Angeles (early 1946)

Record Products: Preview

A short-lived race-record label launched in early 1945 by disc jockey Herb Allen in partnership with pressing-plant owner Harold Yorgason. The records were credited to and distributed by Jack Gutshall (a West Coast distributor of small independent labels), whose Washington Boulevard address appears on the labels.

Preview's initial releases, by the Four Tones, were first advertised in March 1945. Numbering began at A-666/A-667, each side being assigned its own catalog number. *Billboard*'s reviewers, who had been critical of the Four Tones' live cocktail-lounge act, were no more enthusiastic about their Preview records, which they dismissed as "fearful" and "laden with triteness."

Yorgason died of a heart attack on October 22, 1945, at the age of thirty-nine. Allen carried on briefly with Preview, but the label appears to have gone dormant by the end of 1946. It did not appear in the 1947 *Billboard* directory.

PRIMROSE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices: 54 W. Randolph St., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Majestic Records studio

Record Products: Primrose

A short-lived operation launched by band leader George Olsen in the spring of 1948 to release his unissued Majestic recordings. Olsen claimed ownership of the masters based upon Majestic's alleged failure to honor the terms of his contract. The venture was dissolved after becoming entangled in legal questions concerning Olsen's rights to the masters, which were listed as Majestic assets in that company's bankruptcy filing.

PRIZE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1950; 1953

Offices: 4015 Leslie St., Detroit

Record Products: Prize

Launched in the autumn of 1948 by Detroit disc jockey and producer Bob Maxwell, of radio station WWJ. David Usher left Emanon Records to serve as Maxwell's director of artists and repertoire. A trademark application was filed on November 19, 1948, claiming use of the Prize name on records since October 21 of that year.

Intended primarily for jukebox use, Prize records featured pop and rhythm-and-blues, mainly by local artists. Operations were discontinued in 1950, after Usher relaunched the Emanon label. He briefly revived the Prize label in November 1953 for a novelty Christmas number by fourteen-year-old Willie John, whom he accompanied on a Midwestern promotional tour.

PROCESS RECORDS / PROCESS RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1952

Offices: 19 Pennell St., Franklin, PA (given as Rocky Grove, PA, in some classified ads; 1946–1952); Los Angeles (branch, from mid-1949)

Pressing: Own plant — Council Bluffs, IA; probably other independent plants

Record Products: Process

Owned and operated by Pennsylvania country-music singer, songwriter, and publisher Norman Kelly, in partnership with Los Angeles record distributor Charles House. The

company was launched as Process Records in 1945, under which name it first appeared in the *Record Retailing Yearbook*. No records were immediately forthcoming, and on March 26, 1946, Kelly and House filed notice with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania of their intent to operate under a different name, the Process Record Company.

Process' initial releases finally appeared in *Billboard's* July 1946 advance lists and were intended for jukebox use. The label specialized in country-and-western material, with a roster that included Cowboy Jack Hunt, Pie Plant Pete (Claude Moye), and Bashful Harmonica Joe (Joe Troyan). Several Process sessions, including one held in Buffalo, New York, were supervised by James Myers, who was affiliated with Cowboy Records. Distribution was handled by Process Records of Council Bluffs, Iowa, which also operated an independent pressing plant.

The company added a Los Angeles office in mid-1949, at which time many of the 1946–1947 releases reappeared in *Billboard's* advance lists. The records retained their original numbers but were re-pressed with labels citing both locations. The company appears to have gone largely dormant in the early 1950s. In November 1952, Ross Hull's Dome Records took over the Process label from Kelly.

PRODUCERS RECORDING COMPANY — See Record Syndicate Trust

PRUDENTIA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 1659 Cornelia St., Saginaw, MI

Pressing: Empire Record Corporation, Superior Recording Company

Record Products: Prudentia, Cinderella

Launched in early 1949 by Edward Sowulewski, owner of the Saginaw-based United Artists Publishing Company (unrelated to United Artist record or United Artists pictures). The company was first listed by *Billboard* in January 1949. Prior to its launch, Sowulewski had a minor local hit in 1948 with his composition "Dancer's Polka," which Saginaw singer and songwriter Bedrick Smeage recorded as a private release.

Prudentia specialized in polkas, novelty dance numbers, and pop tunes by Michigan-area artists. The records were in production by April 1949, when the *Flint [Michigan] Journal* reported that local musician and songwriter Buddy Harris had recorded four of his compositions for the label. Prudentia's initial releases, by the Buddy Harris Trio and Bedrick Smeage & his Eight Aces (for whom Sowulewski supplied the lyrics) appeared in May. The records appear to have had only local distribution.

Sowulewski reportedly was negotiating at that time to lease his masters to three unnamed Canadian labels. However, Prudentia attracted little attention, and the company appears to have suspended operations in 1950. In May 1951, Sowulewski launched the equally unremarkable Cinderella label, which *Billboard* termed a "revival" of Prudentia.

PUBLIC RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 - c. 1950

Offices: 2102 Market St., Philadelphia

Record Products: Public

Launched in early 1948 by Elliot Wexler (treasurer), in partnership with Sam Katseff (president) Walter Maguire (general manager), and Isadore Beilis (secretary). Elliot Wexler (the brother of Paul Wexler, who later headed the Record Club of America) was a former Columbia Records sales representative and Musicraft distributor. He had briefly worked as Benny Goodman's post-war road manager. He was managing the Kayler Company, a Philadelphia record distributor, at the time he launched Public.

Public's initial releases appeared in March 1948. With the second American Federation of Musicians recording ban in effect, Wexler at first hired Philadelphia-area novelty string bands (beginning with the Woodland and Hegeman groups) and other non-union performers. In October 1948, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that local organists Ralph and Buddy Bonds were preparing to record for Public as soon as the ban was lifted.

Distribution of Public records initially was limited to the mid-Atlantic and New England states. Following the end of the AFM ban, Wexler attempted to expand Public's distribution

and acquire better-known artists. *Billboard* reported that George (Bon Bon) Tunnell was among those who had been signed, a false report the magazine quickly retracted. Public appears to have gone dormant by early 1949, without having released any records by nationally known talent.

Wexler reactivated the Public label in October 1949, after having finally secured an AFM recording license and announcing he was preparing to enter "the regular field." It was reported that the revived Public label would be used to promote some of the artists Wexler managed. However, Wexler continued to split his time between Public and his talent agency, distribution business, and newly launched Colony Music publishing house, and his recording operation does not appear to have survived beyond 1950. Public Records' brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 manufacturers' directory (with included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

In late 1952, Wexler and Herb Siegal formed Music Merchants, Inc., an early rack-jobbing operation that placed records in supermarkets and chain stores. It failed, despite having signed more than seven-hundred outlets. Wexler went on to launch Moon Records in 1957, and Benny Goodman's BG label in 1958, then briefly joined M-G-M Records as director of marketing in 1959. During the 1960s he worked as an independent consultant while launching and closing several other minor labels. He died on October 17, 1966.

PYRAMID RECORD COMPANY / PYRAMID RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 - 1960s

Offices: Boulevard Gardens, Woodside, NY (1950–1951); 1658 Broadway, New York (from 1952)

Record Products: Pyramid

Owned and operated by pianist-songwriter Elmo Russ, who appeared on many Pyramid releases as soloist, accompanist, or composer. Russ had been a popular attraction on New York radio stations in the 1920s and 1930s, performing on piano and organ. He was briefly associated with faux-diva Florence Foster Jenkins, with whom he co-wrote "Trailing Arbutus." At the time Russ launched the Pyramid Record Company in November 1948, he was employed by U.S. Music, which published many of his compositions.

Pyramid's earliest releases consisted of poetry readings set to musical accompaniments composed by Russ. "The Pyramid Song" was reviewed by *Billboard* in April 1949, which termed the performance "a weird concoction of organ and three voices doing a surrealist montage in music." Pyramid's first LP — Stewart Robb's reading of "The Sermon on the Mount" with Russ' incidental organ music (said to incorporate "fragments of themes sung in Bible lands as early as 200 B.C."), coupled with Mary Dallas' reading of "Our Friend from Bethlehem" — was released in February 1950.

By 1951 Pyramid was releasing conventional pop fare as well. Russ' major discovery was singer Buddy Costa, who was awarded a five-year contract. His recording of Russ' "The Mask Is Off" became a best-seller for Pyramid. Casting about for a follow-up while escorting Costa on tour, Russ invited local Tampa residents to submit "a hometown tune for a hometown boy," about which nothing more was reported. In early 1951, Russ cut an audition disc by one Marian Mayo, who Russ considered promising but allowed to slip away without obtaining a forwarding address. When his attempts to locate her were unsuccessful, Russ overdubbed an accompaniment and released the record in April 1951, without her knowledge or permission.

Pyramid's output declined in the later 1950s, and production was suspended in the early 1960s after Russ became ill. He revived the label in late 1964, launching a Songs of Faith series, after which little more was heard of Pyramid.

Q. R. S. COMPANY (Discs)**Record Production: 1928 – 1930****Offices:** 306 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago**Original-Master Source(s):** Starr Piano Company studios (1928–1929); Stanley Recording Company studio (1930)**Pressing:** Gennett plant (1928–1929); unknown plant (1930)**Record Products:** Q. R. S. (four versions licensed to outside producers)

A major producer of piano rolls, the Q. R. S. Company licensed its brand for use on records on four occasions. Its first two attempts to enter the record business did not involve the production of original recordings. The first occurred in 1919, when Q. R. S. briefly marketed 9" Emerson pressings under its own label. A second attempt, in the early 1920s, marked Q. R. S.'s first involvement with the Starr Piano Company (Gennett). As with the Emerson venture, the records were simply rebrandings of existing releases.

With piano-roll sales on the decline in the later 1920s, the Q. R. S. Company began to branch into other markets, licensing its brand to products ranging from phonographs and records to radio tubes, home-movie cameras, and projectors. *Moody's Industrials* for 1929 reported that thirty-five businesses of various sorts were currently licensing the Q. R. S. trademark.

At some point in 1928, Paramount executive Arthur Satherley (who, according to Mayo Williams, had expressed a desire to "move up" from his position with that company) approached Q. R. S. management with his plan for a new record label. The first indication of Satherley's affiliation with Q. R. S. appeared on June 23, when a notice from "A. E. Satherly [*sic*] of the Q. R. S. Company" appeared in *The Chicago Defender*. Evidence of a May or June start-up for the record operation is found in the Q. R. S. Company's trademark application of May 18, 1928, which claimed use of the brand on phonographs since January 1928, but did not mention records at that early date.

Satherley's version of the Q. R. S. label was aimed primarily at the race-record market, and he commissioned original recordings for the label's exclusive use. There was also a country-music series, although Satherley appears to have expended little effort on it. The handful of original recordings in the country series was supplemented by material he licensed from the Paramount and Plaza-Regal catalogs. There would be no conventional pop series.

Satherley contracted recording and pressing to the Starr Piano Company, which had recently opened a much-improved Gennett studio in Long Island City, New York. The masters were commissioned exclusively for Q. R. S.'s use, although a few would later be licensed to other labels. A special numerical series was allocated to the Q. R. S. masters, which were not logged in the standard Gennett ledgers (and as a result were not preserved, making the recording dates a guessing-game for modern researchers). The Q. R. S. sessions probably began in late July or early August 1928. A month later, *The Chicago Defender* announced the label's impending launch:

In contrast to Paramount's increasing focus on rural southern performers, much of the Q. R. S. race catalog had a distinctly urban, East Coast flavor. The offerings included a number of New York cabaret-blues singers, a group of modernistic piano solos by Earl Hines, and such oddities as George "Chicken" Wilson and Jimmy "Skeeter" Hinton, who comprised a two-man skiffle band believed to have been from Washington, D.C. The label's best-known artists were Clarence Williams's Orchestra (in its own right as well as in an accompanying role) and Sara Martin.

Satherley failed in his attempt to hire Harry Charles, the flamboyant Paramount salesman and talent scout. He soon discovered that locating saleable talent and marketing race records in the highly competitive East Coast environment called for more sophisticated methods than those employed by Charles and other Paramount salesmen who worked mainly in the South. His problems were compounded by spotty distribution, a nearly complete absence of national advertising, and lack of financial support from the parent company.

In April 1929, the Q. R. S. Company merged with the De Vry Corporation, a Chicago company founded in 1914 by pioneering radio engineer Herman A. De Vry. In the corporate reorganization that followed, Satherley's recording operation was forced to close. The final

Q. R. S. session was held c. May 1929. The New York Recording Laboratories subsequently licensed some of the Q. R. S. masters but reissued only a few. De Vry apparently held the rights to Earl Hines' solo recordings at the time of their reissue in the late 1940s.

The Q. R. S. label was revived for the last time in January 1930, under license from the Q. R. S.-De Vry Corporation, with George L. Ames serving as general manager. Although at least one press report listed Q. R. S.-De Vry as the manufacturer, production was actually credited to the Cova Recording Corporation (*q.v.*), and the masters were made for Q. R. S. by the Stanley Recording Studio (*q.v.*). *Variety* erroneously reported that Columbia was pressing the discs.

The Music Trade Review reported that recording sessions for this final version of Q. R. S. began in February 1930, although *Variety* reported on January 29 that Alice Remsen had already made two recordings for the label. There are also conflicting reports concerning the initial release date, with *Variety* at first citing February 15, then the last week of February, while another report stated that the first eighteen releases were shipped to dealers in March, in advance of any advertising to the public.

The new Q. R. S. label was a budget-priced line of mediocre musical and technical quality. Under Cova's management, its focus shifted from race records to conventional popular fare, performed largely by the usual New York freelance singers and dance bands. The artist roster included Irving Kaufman, Frank Luther, Tommy Weir, and other over-used singers, with Rubie Greenberg (masquerading under Gus Haenschen's old "Carl Fenton" persona) serving as house conductor. Bearing smaller red labels that were otherwise identical to the 1928 design, the new Q. R. S. records wholesaled for 18¢. The supposed list price was three for a dollar, but Macy's sold the records for 25¢ each, and *Variety* reported that some dealers were them for as little as 22¢.

Some Q. R. S. instrumental recordings were issued anonymously as Checker background-music discs. They were marketed by the Checker Music Corporation, which operated at the same address as Cova. It is not clear whether the 33 1/3-rpm Checker masters were dubbed from the 78-r.p.m. Q. R. S. masters or were recorded simultaneously.

Cova's version of the Q. R. S. label did not survive for more than a year. In 1931, De Vry sold the Q. R. S. piano-roll division to the Imperial Industrial Corporation, by which time the production of Q. R. S. records had been discontinued.

QUAKER MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1950

Offices: 2956 Jasper St., Philadelphia (publishing only, 1946); Room 922, Center City Building, 121 N. Broad St., Philadelphia (from 1/1947)

Record Products: Quaker, Quaker Music

A music-publishing operation founded in March 1946 by R. Fleming (Mac) Maguire, who performed on some Quaker releases. A country-and-western singer and songwriter, Maguire was working as a disc jockey at radio station WIP (Philadelphia) at the time he launched Quaker Music.

The Quaker label was introduced in late 1946, in affiliation with Maguire's publishing operation, and the records were being advertised locally by late January 1947. Early releases were labeled Quaker Music, which was shortened to Quaker in the later 1940s. Maguire's own Harmony Rangers were featured on many releases in the country-and-western series. There was also a smaller pop series, featuring pianist Ben Greenblatt, accordionist Ludy Kobalt, and other locally available artists, many of them from the WIP roster. Some late Quaker pressings were made in red vinyl.

Maguire sponsored a talent contest in April 1950, the winner of which was to record with him for Quaker. However, no mention of the winner has been found, and Maguire signed an exclusive contract with Capitol Records two months later. Quaker records were last mentioned by *Billboard* in August 1950, by which time the company appears to have been inactive. After a long career performing on stage, radio, and television, Maguire died after suffering a stroke in 1963, at the age of forty-three.

QUALITY RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 1832 7th Ave. NW, Washington, DC

Record Products: Jubilee, Quality

A short-lived venture launched in early 1946 by Ahmet Ertegun, Herb and Miriam Abramson, and record-store owner Max (Waxie Maxie) Silverman. The company briefly produced the Quality and Jubilee labels.

Jubilee was conceived as a Black gospel label but soon drifted into the rhythm-and-blues field. The Quality label, named for Silverman's record and radio-repair shop at 7th Avenue and T Street in Washington, D.C., was to have been devoted to jazz and popular fare but did not survive long enough to do so. The company began advertising and accepting advance orders in April 1946, two months before any records were ready for sale. The first two Quality releases featured a fusion of Black gospel music and traditional jazz, pairing Sister Ernestine Washington with Bunk Johnson's New Orleans Jazz Band. Ertegun recalled that Quality "recorded two or three sessions, which turned out quite well but did not do well... [the label] folded right away."

Silverman and Ertegun withdrew their financial support after the initial Jubilee and Quality releases failed to garner sufficient sales. They subsequently sold their shares in the business to Jerry Blaine, who in late 1947 moved the operation to New York and renamed it the Jubilee Records Company, *q.v.* Ertegun and Herb Abramson went on to launch Atlantic Record in 1947.

QUARTET RECORDINGS — See Super Discs

QUINN, WILLIAM RUSSELL (BILL) (Discs)

Gold Star Records / Gold Star Studios / Gulf Record Company, Inc. / Quinn Radio Service / Quinn Recording Company

Record Production: 1945 – 1968

Offices and Master Source(s): 3104 Telephone Rd., Houston (1939–early 1952); 5628 Brock St., Houston (studio, from 1950; separate entrance at 5626 Brock St., from 1959)

Record Products (78): Gold Star, Gulf; masters for many independent labels; radio transcriptions, custom recordings

William Russell (Bill) Quinn founded Quinn Radio Service in 1939 as a producer of air-checks and transcriptions for Houston-area radio stations. The company was reorganized as the Quinn Recording Company in 1941, when it began offering custom recording services to private and commercial clients. The original studio and offices were housed in a converted gas station and general store on Telephone Road.

Quinn launched the Gulf Record Company at the same address on June 1, 1944, in partnership with Frank L. Sanborn and Orville T. Hess. Notice of partnership's pending dissolution was posted on January 14, 1945, the stated intent being to reorganize as a corporation on February 1 or "as soon thereafter as the organization can be perfected and the charter received." Gulf was finally formally registered as a Texas corporation on June 26 of that year.

By all accounts, the Gulf Record Company was a hardscrabble operation, with Quinn doing his own electroplating (and accidentally destroying some masters in the process, as he later recalled) and pressing. The plant reportedly had a single secondhand press and used recycled scrap due to wartime shellac shortages. Country singer Eddie Noack recalled that the studio "had only one microphone and we cut directly to an acetate disc...so you didn't stop if you made a mistake, you just kept going."

Quinn once claimed that the first Gulf recording was "When We Plant Old Glory in Japan," credited to one Tex Moon, a record whose existence it has not been possible to confirm. The first documented Gulf release (Woody Woodworth's "A Rainy Sunday Night"/"Wait for Me," issued under the name of Woody Vernon on Gulf 100) was first advertised in September 1945. In the same month, Standard Music Distributors (Houston) was appointed to handle national distribution for Gulf. *Billboard* reported that Standard's H. M. Crowe would also assist with tune selection.

Although Quinn did little advertising for Gulf, the label had a minor local hit with Jerry Irby's "Nails in My Coffin," which went on to be widely covered by other artists. The Gulf

Record Company was still listed in *Billboard's* label directory in January 1948, at Quinn's Telephone Road address, although the label was inactive by then. Only four releases are known to have been made (several numbers in the 100-series sequence apparently having not been used).

The Quinn Recording Company was launched in 1946 to produce Gold Star records. Although some labels bore the logo, "King of the Hillbillies," Gold Star is best remembered for its blues and Cajun releases. Gold Star had a surprise Cajun hit with its first release, "Jole Blon" (a misspelling of "Jolie Blonde"). Recorded by Jimmie Foster and his Swingsters on March 31 or April 1, 1946, depending upon the account, the song was released as a B-side filler. When the record appeared, it was credited only to band member Harry Choates, whose name was misspelled "Shaotes" on the first label run. In October 1947, Foster sued Quinn for the omission of his band's name and was awarded a half-cent royalty on sales of the first 50,000 pressings. The recording was subsequently licensed to De Luxe and Modern Music (whose pressing was the first Cajun record to make *Billboard's* "Top Five Most-Played Country Jukebox Records" list), neither of which credited Foster.

With demand for Gold Star records increasing, Quinn contracted with Modern Records to handle pressing, promotion, and national distribution. In 1947 he recorded four titles for Aladdin Records by blues singer Lightnin' Hopkins, then signed him for Gold Star and immediately had a regional jukebox hit with his "Short Haired Woman." Hopkins went on to record prolifically for Quinn, and several of his Gold Star releases made *Billboard's* rhythm-and-blues charts during 1948–1949. Quinn assembled a stellar blues roster that included Li'l Son Jackson, Buddy Chiles, and L. C. Williams (*a.k.a.* "Lightnin', Jr."), all of whom were paid modest flat rates with no provision for royalties. However, Quinn's lack of marketing skills and reluctance to extend credit to distributors ultimately doomed his Gold Star label.

Quinn made his last recordings for Gold Star in late 1950 or early 1951, at about the time the unrelated Gold Star Recording Studios opened in Los Angeles. In September 1951, under investigation for failure to pay federal excise tax, he sold thirty-two masters by Son Jackson and Lightnin' Hopkins (along with the latter's recording contract) to Modern Records for \$2,500. Other Gold Star masters were widely licensed during the 1950s, appearing on Dot, 4 Star, Starday, and other labels, sometimes with Quinn's Gold Star logo still visible in the wax.

With the Gold Star label defunct, Quinn continued to cut masters for other labels. He had begun to equip a new studio on the first level of his home on Brock Street in 1950, while Gold Star was still in operation. The new facility was incorporated as Gold Star Studios by Quinn and his wife (as co-owners), C. M. Faber (vice-president), and Richard Greenhill (treasurer). The original Gold Star shop on Telephone Road remained open into early 1952, primarily to dispose of the remaining records.

Quinn's studio was employed by numerous producers during the 1950s and early 1960s, hosting sessions by the Big Bopper, George Jones, Willie Nelson, and Floyd Tillman, among many others. Upon retiring in 1963, Quinn leased the studio to J. L. Patterson, who also worked with several independent producers. In 1968 the studio was sold to International Artists, a Texas "psychedelic" label that went into receivership a year later. Huey Meaux bought the facility in 1972 and renamed it Sugar Hill Studios. Quinn died on January 4, 1976.

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RABSON'S (Discs)

Record Production: 1936 – Early 1940s

Offices: 1373 6th Ave., New York (1930s–early 1940s); 111 W. 52nd St., New York (from early 1940s)

Record Products (78): Rabson's, Rabson's Music Shop, Music Box [2]

A major New York record, electronics (and later, sporting goods) store, owned and operated by Meyer Rabson. Rabson had a reputation as a no-nonsense businessman who cared little for social pleasantries, telling a reporter in 1945, "I don't like the lingering conversations after everything has been said that should be said."

Rabson's record department specialized in classical, imported, and hard-to-find recordings. It began marketing its own releases on a very modest scale in 1936. They

appeared only sporadically, employing a variety of label designs, and with no systematic approach to assigning master or catalog numbers. The earliest, from an off-the-air recording of King Edward's abdication speech that appeared on numerous other labels, was a generic white-label pressing to which a printed half-label with the store's logo was affixed. Later Rabson's issues have full printed labels designed especially for the store.

Rabson's launched its Music Box label in early 1940. Its first release, announced in *Jazz Information* magazine for February of that year, was a four-disc album by singer Lee Wiley, accompanied by the Joe Bushkin and Max Kaminsky ensembles. Favorably reviewed, it was still being sold as late as 1945. Music Box's Dance-Sing records were launched in May 1945 with a release by Kitty Carlisle and Jesse Smith's Band. A review noted, "Vocal and orchestral honors are divided under a prevailing dance tempo, and several selections are merged on each surface." Another recommended the records as "fine for those who can't get enough vocals with their dancing." The extended-play masters were made for Rabson's by an unknown studio using the Western Electric process.

For a time, Rabson's had a master-swapping arrangement with Gala Records (*q.v.*), for which it was a retailer. Gala reissued the Lee Wiley album in the late 1940s, and there are instances of Gala and Music Box issues that were issued under the same catalog numbers. In 1946, Meyer Rabson launched the short-lived Crown Records [III], *q.v.*

RADIO ARTIST RECORDS — See Herzog Recording Company

RADIO CORPORATION OF AMERICA (RCA VICTOR DIVISION) (Discs)

Record Production: 1929 – 1984

Offices: 30 Rockefeller Plaza and other locations, New York; Front & Cooper Sts., Camden, NJ

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios—Camden, NJ (to early 1930s); New York; Culver City, CA (1929–late 1930); Hollywood, CA (late 1930–1932); numerous temporary studio locations; other locations after the period covered by this work; independent studios (from late 1940s)

Pressing: Own plants—Camden, NJ; Oakland, CA (to early 1930s); Hollywood, CA (from 6/1947); Canonsburg, PA (from 6/1947); other locations after the period covered by this work

Record Products (78s): Victor, Bluebird, Electradisk, Fiskana, Historic Record Society, International Record Collectors' Club, Liberty Music Shops, Montgomery Ward, Orthophonic, Program Transcription, Standard [4], Sunrise [2], Timely Tunes, World's Greatest Music (1939–1940 only), World's Greatest Operas (1940 only), Yorkville Phonograph Shop; pressings for Crown [3] and related labels; Talking Books and other custom, private, and promotional issues; radio transcriptions; sound-effect, background music, and other special-use recordings; Vitaphone motion-picture soundtrack discs; Victor Home Recording Blanks; pressings for Philharmonic [II] and other independent labels; custom pressing services

Foreign Affiliates: The Gramophone Company, Ltd. (England); Electric and Musical Industries (England); Victor Company of Japan, Ltd.

Foreign Labels Using Masters (78s): Numerous, including Bluebird (Canada); Electrola (Germany); His Master's Voice (international, including Disque Gramophone, Disco Gramofono, La Voce dal Padrone, and other variations); Regal-Zonophone (international); Victor (Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, Japan); Zonophone (international)

The largest U.S. manufacturer of radios and related electronics for many decades, the Radio Corporation of America introduced its Radiola line in September 1921 and registered its RCA lightning-bolt trademark on September 22, 1922, claiming use since August 15 of that year. The company originally was chartered to control and license radio technology that had been developed and patented during World War I. Its restrictive licensing policies drew complaints from others in the emerging radio industry, and by the late 1920s RCA was the target of a Federal Trade Commission investigation. In January 1929, however, the FTC dropped charges against RCA of unfair competition, monopoly, and conspiracy to restrain competition in the manufacture of radio apparatus.

RCA's first significant collaboration with a phonograph company came in March 1924, when it began supplying Radiolas for installation in Brunswick phonographs. In April 1928, RCA formed a subsidiary to market the Photophone recording system (originally developed for optical film soundtracks, and subsequently adapted for disc mastering) to record manufacturers. RCA president James G. Harbord served on Photophone's board of directors, and David Sarnoff (who was later to play a major role in RCA's development of television) served as president. The company licensed the Photophone system to the

Starr Piano Company (Gennett) in June 1928, and insurance papers preserved at the Edison National Historic Site confirm that Edison's New York studio also possessed Photophone recording equipment.

The banking firms of J. & W. Seligman and Speyer & Company (which had acted as a holding company for the Victor Talking Machine Company since Eldridge Johnson's sale of the company in 1926) sold Victor to RCA on January 4, 1929. A short time later, E. R. Fenimore Johnson, Eldridge's son and one of the last survivors of the old Victor regime, announced his resignation. *The Talking Machine World and Radio-Music Merchant* for May 1929 reported that Victor had been reorganized as the Radio-Victor Corporation of America, a wholly owned subsidiary of RCA. The merger included Victor's Canadian, South American, and Japanese operations. Victor retained its financial stake in the Gramophone Company (England), ensuring its continued access to material from the H.M.V. catalog.

RCA's radio manufacturing facilities were moved to Victor's plant in Camden, New Jersey, which by 1930 occupied fifty-one acres. A city within a city, it boasted its own printing and binding plant, executives' clubhouse, auditorium, cafeteria, police force, infirmary, ambulance service, and standard-gauge electric railroad. "The interior decoration scheme," the *Talking Machine World* noted, "is early American."

Soon after the merger, Victor began to split its catalog, segregating material that was outside the mainstream into separate V-prefixed series that would receive only limited exposure in the general catalog. A separate race-record series apparently had been in the planning stages prior to RCA's takeover, as the first releases were announced on the day of the merger. Numbered in the V-38000s, the series was originally named "Red Hot Dance Tunes," although early listings included some blues and gospel material. It was reserved primarily (but not exclusively) for Black performers, and selected items were listed in the standard catalog as well. A companion V-38500 series, launched on April 5 and designated "Victor Race Records," was targeted exclusively to Black consumers, and no listings appeared in the standard catalog. At about the same time, a V-40000 series was created for White country music. Belatedly realizing that the new series were costing sales in the mainstream market, Victor eventually restored several of their most popular artists, including Duke Ellington and Jimmie Rodgers, to the standard catalog. Although the V-numbers were dropped at the end of 1930, all three series continued, using 23000-series catalog numbers. They were finally discontinued in January 1934, after which most race and country-music artists were transferred to the cut-rate Bluebird label.

Under RCA's ownership, the Victor division remained heavily involved in the production of motion pictures. In January 1929, the company installed equipment for transferring optical-film soundtracks to discs, although it would not be employed in the production of commercial records until the later 1930s. At about the same time, Victor undertook a joint venture with Columbia Pictures to produce a long series of short subjects, including some plugs for Victor artists. In July 1930, RCA awarded a \$250,000 contract for the construction of a new Hollywood studio, replacing the Culver City facility, to be used for the production of commercial recordings as well as movie soundtracks.

Thee Victor label credits underwent continual change for the next decade, beginning with Victor Talking Machine Division, Radio-Victor Company of America (1929), then proceeding to RCA-Victor Company, Inc. (1930–1934); RCA Manufacturing Company, Inc. (1934–1939); RCA-Victor Division of RCA Manufacturing Company, Inc. (1939–1942); and finally, simply Radio Corporation of America (from 1942). The changes were not indicative of any significant corporate restructuring, and for the purpose of this work, the company is referred to throughout as simply RCA Victor.

Victor record sales declined during the label's first year under RCA ownership, then plummeted in the early Depression years, falling from 34.5 million copies in 1929 to only 3.1 million in 1932. With much of its pressing plant idled, RCA took over the manufacturing of Crown records in February 1932, under the supervision of Eli Oberstein. RCA's role was limited to making pressings from Crown's own masters. After Crown suspended operations in August 1933, RCA commenced production of a house label for Montgomery Ward, mixing reissues of deleted Victor titles with newly recorded material from the Bluebird catalog. Initially retailing for only 21¢ each, or 10 for \$1.79, the records were an undeniable bargain for consumers, but little better than a break-even proposition for RCA.

While RCA officials continued to assure investors and the public that all was well, action

was being taken behind the scenes to cut costs in the Victor recording division, beginning with a reevaluation of the company's costly contract with Western Electric for use of its recording equipment. With RCA's engineering department capable of designing a substitute system of equal quality, there was no need to continue the relationship. On August 20, 1931, authorization was given to switch a single studio over the RCA's own equipment. For the time being, the other studios would continue to use Western Electric equipment, which would generate the minimum annual royalty payment required under the Western Electric agreement. Within several years, Western Electric equipment was being used only on the occasional recording expedition. The only outward indication of the change was the appearance of the "V.E." logo in a diamond, replacing the oval that indicated Western Electric recordings.

No annual record catalogs were issued in 1931 or 1932. Yet, in the depths of the Great Depression, RCA introduced its expensive Victor Home Recording system and long-playing Program Transcriptions, both of which proved to be technical and commercial failures. Rumors began to circulate during the summer of 1931 that RCA was experimenting with the latter. Following a private demonstration in Victor's New York studio, the long-playing Program Transcription was formally unveiled at New York's Savoy-Plaza Hotel on September 17, 1931, to an audience of more than one-hundred carefully selected executives, celebrities, performers, and reporters. The records were unlike any commercial disc on the market, recorded at 33¹/₃-rpm and (aside from some anomalous shellac discs) pressed in lightweight Victrolac, a form of vinylite manufactured by Union Carbide that RCA engineers had initially used in movie soundtrack discs.

Program Transcriptions and the special phonographs needed to play them went on sale a month after the Savoy-Plaza demonstration. The initial release was the Philadelphia Symphony's recording of Beethoven's fifth symphony. Unlike the earlier Edison long-playing discs, which had been cobbled together from 78-rpm masters, this recording (and those of other extended works that followed) was recorded without side breaks, specifically for release in long-playing format. However, most of the shorter selections, popular "programs," and complete operas were dubbed from existing 78-rpm masters, and critics were quick to note a degradation in sound quality when compared with the originals. A plan to record complete Broadway shows never materialized.

RCA encountered delays in delivering a promised low-cost adaptor for the Program Transcriptions, leaving customers with no choice but to purchase a \$300 phonograph if they wished to play the records. In July 1932, the company finally announced that a \$7.50 replacement motor board was in stock, but the delay, along with mounting complaints over technical problems and limited selection, doomed the Program Transcription. The Program Transcription's end came with the arrival in 1933 of Edward Wallerstein, who as RCA Victor's new general manager ordered an end to production. Some inventory remained in the catalog as late as 1936, but no new recordings were made.

RCA would be far more successful in catering to the budget-conscious, a segment of the market that Victor had steadfastly ignored since its creation. In the spring of 1931, the company began recording masters for use exclusively on cheaply produced, cut-rate labels, of which Timely Tunes would be the first. The earliest Timely Tunes sessions were held on March 31 and April 1, 1931, and master numbers were assigned special BCR- and ABRC- prefixes (which rarely appear in modern discographies) to distinguish them from standard Victor recordings. In addition, some deleted Victor recordings were selected for reissue. The entire Timely Tunes list, consisting of forty records, was released in a single batch on July 1, 1931, after which nothing further was heard of the label.

RCA then shelved the budget-label idea until the spring of 1932, when the company bested Brunswick and Crown in negotiations to produce cut-rate discs for the Woolworth stores. The Electradisk and Bluebird labels were quietly launched by Woolworth's in July and August 1932, respectively, initially in 8" and 10" pressings. They were replaced by standard 10" discs in April 1933, again comprising a mixture of Victor reissues and material that was newly recorded for the budget line. Bluebird, which until then had been a client label produced for Woolworth's, was taken over as RCA's own brand at that point. The records were intended to retail for 35¢ each, but some dealers sold them for as little as 25¢. Sunrise, another 35¢ label using the same material as Bluebird and Electradisk, appeared in August 1933. With three largely redundant budget labels in

production, RCA discontinued Electradisk in February 1934, followed by Sunrise in May. Production of the Montgomery Ward label, which had been barely profitable for RCA was discontinued in 1941. In the meantime, supervision of Bluebird had been turned over to Eli Oberstein, who went about transforming it into a strong contender against Decca's increasingly popular 35¢ line. Under Oberstein's management, Bluebird was transformed from a reissue vehicle to a competitive pop label boasting some of the day's top bands (most of them under Oberstein's personal management), while maintaining a healthy presence in the race, country, and ethnic markets. Oberstein left RCA in 1939 to launch his own Varsity label, unsuccessfully attempting to poach some Bluebird and Victor artists in the process.

RCA Victor remained the largest American record producer throughout the 1940s, pressing what it claimed to be its billionth disc in October 1946. By the end of the decade, however, the company was facing increased competition from Capitol, Decca, M-G-M, and the newly revitalized Columbia, all of which were steadily gaining market share, as well as the proliferation of start-up labels. Some housecleaning was done in the latter half of 1946, which included scrapping the outdated "Race" and "Old Familiar Tunes" designations (which were replaced with "Rhythm and Blues," "Spirituals," "Country Music," and "Western Music" designations), purging many outdated releases, and dropping the Bluebird trademark (although not the 35¢ series itself). During the inflationary post-war period, RCA resisted raising its pop releases to 75¢ during 1947–1948, becoming the second-to-last major label (followed only by M-G-M) to do so.

Victor's traditional rivalry with Columbia intensified in 1948, when CBS officials unveiled their revolutionary microgroove LPs and player, then made the technology freely available to all. RCA officials offered no public response to the LP until early 1949, when they countered with what they claimed would be an entirely different format. Given the code name "Madame X," the project at first was cloaked in a veil of secrecy. In February, *Audio Record* magazine finally leaked some basic details: "Madame X" was to be a fine-groove 7" thin-vinyl pressing with a 1½" center hole and a maximum playing time of 5½ minutes at 45 rpm. Tonearm tracking pressure, with a .001" radius sapphire stylus, would be a mere five grams. To minimize contact between the changer mechanism and playing surfaces, and provide some rigidity to the thin pressings, the records were pressed with a thicker, raised label area.

RCA engineer D. D. Cole gave a more detailed description of the new records and matching player a month later, in the same publication. The 45-rpm record-and-changer combination was touted as the "first in history of the industry to be designed specifically to complement each other." That was not the case, given that the same could be said of the Columbia LP and player. Much attention was lavished on the compact, inexpensive 45-rpm changer. In a move reminiscent of the premium schemes of the early 1900s, the changers were designed to play only the new 45-rpm discs (although Cole promised that multi-purpose changers were being developed), and the discs were not usable on any other players then on the market.

Cole assured the public that 78-rpm records were in no imminent danger, but his wording hinted that they were already becoming an after-thought: "RCA Victor," he stated, "will continue to serve the standard market by making all selections recorded for the 45-rpm system also available on 78-rpm records." The company also announced a novel plan to allocate a different color of vinyl to each series: "ruby red" (Red Seals), "jet black" (standard pop), "grass green" (country-and-western), "lemon-drop yellow" (children's), "cerise" (rhythm-and-blues), "sky blue" (international), and "midnight blue" (semi-classical). In late January, RCA international record sales manager Frank McCall was dispatched to Cuba on the first leg of a seven-week trip to promote the new format to Latin American distributors.

The new records and players were introduced with considerable fanfare in April 1949. RCA executives had predicted that other record manufacturers would quickly embrace the new format, as was already happening with Columbia's LP. But unlike Columbia, which had made the LP format freely available to other manufacturers soon after its launch, RCA was demanding licensing fees for use of the 45-rpm format, a stumbling block for companies that were already investing heavily in the conversion to LPs. The industry-wide adoption of 45s that RCA executives had anticipated failed to materialize at the time.

Consumers were slow to embrace the 45-rpm disc, particularly for recordings of extended classical works, which still entailed a side break every five minutes. Columbia executive Edward Wallerstein recalled that RCA "spent huge sums of advertising money trying unsuccessfully to convince the public that the 45 was really a good thing for classics... actually, the introduction of 45s didn't touch the sales of LPs at all." Wallerstein's recollections appear to be correct, based upon dealer and trade-press reports from the period, which showed Columbia's Masterworks LPs outselling RCA's 45-rpm Red Seal sets by a substantial margin.

Aside from general consumer resistance, sales of the 45-rpm Red Seal sets had been undermined almost from the start by RCA's ill-conceived decision, in June 1949, to place virtually its entire 78-rpm catalog on "clearance sale," at discounts of 40–50%. Dealers reported that the largest sellers by far were the 78-rpm classical and operatic album sets, undercutting demand for the more expensive 45-rpm versions. By late 1949, a false rumor was circulating that the 45 was being abandoned, which was vehemently denied by RCA president Frank Folsom.

RCA reactivated the Bluebird trademark for a new line of 49¢ records in July 1949, in an attempt to compete with Eli Oberstein's recently reintroduced Varsity label, Columbia's revival of the Harmony label, and other new cut-rate brands. An announcement that the records would start shipping on August 10 proved to be premature. The initial shipment was withheld until August 25, to coincide with a launch party at RCA's New York headquarters for local disc jockeys, distributors, and member of the trade press. *Cash Box* reported that the emphasis would be on jukebox use. Unlike the main Victor line, Bluebird was termed a "high-speed operation," with no set release schedule. Instead, it was reported, the label's managers would wait until a song demonstrated "hit potential," then rush a recording to market with two weeks' advance notice. Bluebird 45s were added to the product line in November 1949.

After taking a loss on record sales in 1949, RCA finally capitulated and began producing LPs, becoming the last major producer to do so. The impending arrival of its three-speed changer was announced in early December. On January 4, 1950, the company reported that it was making its classical library available in LP format, and the first pop LP releases followed several months later.

In July 1950, RCA raised the retail price for 45s by a dime, citing high production costs. To help offset the increase, it began supplying coupon books with its 45-J players that entitled purchasers to receive one free 45-rpm per month for six months. The 45-rpm disc finally began to gain some traction after RCA dropped its licensing requirements, encouraging more companies to adopt the format. Although the 45 failed as a vehicle for classical material, it became the preferred format for pop singles by the mid-1950s, eventually supplanting the 78 entirely.

In 1984, the Radio Corporation of America was acquired by General Electric. Ownership of the record division subsequently was handed off to the Bertelsmann Music Group, then to Sony Music, its current owner. RCA's later history is beyond the scope of this work.

RADIO MUSIC PRODUCTIONS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1959

Offices: 51 Highlawn Ave. and 1235 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY

Record Products: R-M-P

Owned and operated by Joseph Pellgrino, Jr., Radio Music Productions made occasional commercial releases on its R-M-P label over a ten-year span. Its initial offering, by Johnny Gaurneri, was advertised in June 1950, but nothing more was reported concerning the label during the period covered by this work.

RADIO RECORDERS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1933 – 1960

Offices: 932 N. Western Ave., Hollywood, CA (to 1944); 7000 Santa Monica Blvd. (from 1944)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations

Pressing: Contracted to Allied Record Manufacturing (1930s), other independent plants

Record Products (78s): Masters for Capitol, Jazz Man (and many others after the period covered by this work); Sunshine Hour and other custom and private labels; radio transcriptions; personal recordings; spot-promotion discs, and other special-use recordings

Launched in 1933 by Robert (Bob) Le Mond after purchasing RCA Victor's former Hollywood studio. Radio Recorders reportedly was the largest independent recording company on the West Coast during the 1940s, serving mainly as a supplier of radio transcriptions and other special-use recordings. Le Mond was no longer actively involved by the later 1930s, by which time officials included Lou R. Winston (president, replaced in 1938 by F. H. Winter), J. C. Brundage (vice-president), Ralph Snelgrove (recording engineer), and J. Joseph Sameth (production and sales manager).

In 1942 the company was chosen as the main recording studio for the American Armed Forces Radio Service. With the West Coast record-company boom of the mid-1940s, its studios increasingly were used by commercial labels. Many of the commercial recordings Radio Recorders produced during the 78-rpm era are easily identified by their RR-prefixed master numbers.

The company expanded substantially in the later 1940s, occupying additional space at its Santa Monica Boulevard location and aggressively marketing its services to larger commercial record companies, many of which came to employ its studios on a regular basis. During the 1940s and 1950s Radio Recorders' clients included Capitol, Decca, RCA Victor, and Verve. Among the stars it hosted for various labels were Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, Sam Cooke, and Elvis Presley.

Radio Recorders underwent several changes in ownership and executive personnel over the years, culminating in Howard Hutchins' and De Voe Rae's purchase of a 60% interest in July 1949. They replaced F. H. Winter and Darrell Minkler as president and secretary-treasurer, respectively. By that time, Radio Recorders boasted twenty-one tape decks and twenty-eight acetate-cutting lathes, providing around-the-clock service in multiple studios.

Radio Recorders and Universal Recorders (*q.v.*) merged in July 1960 to form Radio Universal Recorders, Inc. In April 1963 the company was sold to EMC Corporation (St. Paul, Minnesota), which operated it as a subsidiary until 1977. The facilities were then sold to Paul Schwartz, of Studio 56.

RADIO-RUNDFUNK CORPORATION / EUROPA IMPORT COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1937 – 1950

Offices: 207–211 E. 84th St., New York (combined with Europa Import Company office from 1940)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (including portable equipment)

Record Products: Discus, Radiodisque, Radiofunken, Tempofunken

Owned and operated by German expatriate and Nazi sympathizer Herbert F. Oettgen. By 1933, Oettgen was working as director of "The German Radio Hour" on radio station WEVD (New York). From there, he moved to station WHOM (New York), from which he was fired for suspicion of being sympathetic to the Nazi regime.

Oettgen launched Radio Rundfunk in New York in 1937, in affiliation with the Europa Import Company, to produce transcriptions of imported German-language recordings. The company was also listed as a foreign news service in the 1938 *Radio Annual*. By then, Oettgen was regularly broadcasting pro-Nazi material, in German, over station WBNX (New York) and was involved with Europa's importation of pirated Telefunken transcriptions, which included speeches by Hitler and Goebbels.

Oettgen was soon making his own recordings of pro-Nazi material in a New York studio managed by William C. Foerster. They included twenty-two transcriptions made during a 1939 meeting of the German-American Vocational League (Bund) at Madison Square Garden, copies of which Oettgen sold privately. His initial commercial offering probably was the short-lived Tempofunken label, which used allegedly illegal dubbings of German Telefunken recordings. The better-known Radiofunken label was introduced in 1940, at

which time Europa Import began sharing Radio-Rundfunk's offices. Like Tempofunken, the Radiofunken label drew largely on dubbed Telefunken material, but it also used some of Oettgen's own domestic recordings of German-American choirs and musical clubs.

With the entry of the U.S. into World War II, Oettgen and his associates came under intense government scrutiny, resulting in his firing by WBNX on March 8, 1942. By the end of that year, he had purged most of Radiofunken's German-language offerings and begun production of the more politically acceptable Radiodisque label. It offered innocuous folk songs and comedy routines in German, along with instrumental selections which, according to the catalog, could be sold to "any clientele." In June 1943, Telefunken in Germany attempted to sue Europa Import for unauthorized use of its material, only to have the case put on hold under provisions of the Trading with the Enemy Act. By then, it was clear that Europa Import and Radio-Rundfunk were one and the same business. Record production appears to have been suspended at about the same time.

Following the end of war, Oettgen (by then calling himself Fred Herbert-Oettgen) worked as a recording engineer for the Carl Fischer Miracoustic Studio and its successor, the Apex Recording Studios. After leaving Apex in the late 1940s, he reactivated Radiofunken, operating legally as the American representative of the German-based Kristall Schallplatten (a Carl Lindström subsidiary), while continuing to issue unauthorized Telefunken dubbings. He also introduced the Discus label, another German-language line, which used a mixture of old Telefunken dubbings and Oettgen's own masters. Red-vinyl Radiofunken pressings were introduced in the late 1940s.

The Radiofunken label was discontinued in 1950, following a reorganization of Europa Import. The Discus label was handed off to Jack Caidin's Empire Record Company, which had begun pressing for Oettgen a year earlier. Oettgen later briefly hosted a German-American television program and in later years worked as an insurance salesman.

RADIO TRANSCRIPTION COMPANY OF AMERICA, LTD. (Discs)

Record Production: 1931 – 1944

Offices: 1509 N. Vine St., Hollywood, CA; 666 Lakeshore Drive, Chicago (to early 1939); Hollywood Blvd. & Cosmo St., Hollywood (from c. 1939)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios; Freeman Lang studio

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products (78s): Masters for Racy Records, probably other small commercial labels; Transco and other radio transcriptions, custom recordings

Founded in 1931 by Charles C. Pyle, the Radio Transcription Company of America was a producer of original radio programming and transcriptions. Known by the nickname "Cash-and-Carry," Pyle was a sports promoter who claimed to have made \$400,000 managing football star Red Grange, only to lose a substantial sum promoting two transcontinental foot races. In March 1931, it was reported that Pyle was attempting to recoup those losses with revenue generated by the Radio Transcription Company of America. "I expect to make it back in this new field," he told a United Press reporter, "and pay off every dollar I owe."

A March 1932 report that Pyle had sold a controlling interest in the company to Freeman Lang Enterprises was retracted several months later. However, Lang held two directors' positions with the company, one under his own name, and the other as the fictitious "F. L. Post." In April 1935, G. Y. Clement (owner of a 44% share in the Radio Transcription Company) filed for an injunction to block a stockholders' meeting, charging that Lang could not occupy two seats on the board and was diverting funds from the company for personal expenses, including the operation of his yacht, and for expenses incurred in unrelated businesses.

Pyle used Lang's Hollywood studio into the mid-1930s, when he opened his own. The company's first production manager was Lindsay MacHarrie, who was based in the main Hollywood office. Radio actor J. Donald Wilson also served briefly as a production manager. The company maintained a Chicago branch office under the management of E. L. Donnan, although it is not clear whether any recording was done in that city.

Pyle does not appear to have been deeply involved with the daily operation of his company. Among other side-ventures, he was employed by Robert Ripley's organization

as general manager of the Believe It or Not Odditorium at the Century of Progress exposition in Chicago (1933–1934) and Ripley's Oddities at the Texas Centennial in Dallas (1936).

Although the Radio Transcription Company apparently did little work for commercial labels, it is known to have recorded masters for Hollywood Specialty Recordings (with which it shared a mailing address), whose Racy Records was one of the earliest adult "party" labels. Some of the same recordings appeared on Hollywood Hot Shots and other mid-1930s California novelty and party labels, and many were later widely pirated. In 1937, comedian Bob Burns sued Pyle for combining some of his 1933–1934 recordings with material of "a vulgar and suggestive nature" in such a way as to damage Burns' reputation.

Pyle died suddenly on February 3, 1939. He was replaced by Andrew J. Schrade, who closed the Chicago office a short time later. A corporate descendant reportedly operated for a time as Transco (which Radio Transcription originally used as a brand name on its program transcriptions), further details of which are not known.

RADIO-VICTOR COMPANY OF AMERICA — See Radio Corporation of America

RAGTIME RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1950s

Offices: 1331 McGee Ave., Berkeley, CA

Record Products: Ragtime Records

Launched in 1950 by trumpeter Bob Scobey, whose Dixieland-style band was the label's main attraction. Early releases used some 1948 recordings, leading some modern writers to assume that the Ragtime label was launched earlier than was the case.

The first two Ragtime releases, by a Scobey group credited as Alexander's Jazz Band, were announced in early 1950. They were dismissed by *Record Changer* reviewer Bucklin Moon as "almost burlesque... Maybe this is all good clean fun and aimed at making you get in an old-timey mood but, if it is, I can get the same thing and more of it from listening to the Corn Cobbers [*sic*]." Jazz historian and critic George Avakian, who chose to re-review the first release in the following month's *Record Changer*, was more enthusiastic.

The records were distributed locally by the Melody Sales Company (San Francisco) until February 1951, when the label was handed off to Lester Koenig's newly launched California Records Distributors. The company was last mentioned in *Billboard*'s March 1952 label directory.

RAINBOW MUSIC SHOP — See Apollo Records, Inc.

RAINBOW RECORD COMPANY — See Rodeheaver, Homer A.

RAINBOW RECORDS, INC. / RAINBOW RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1957

Offices: 156 W. 44th St., New York (1947–early 1948); 234 W. 44th St., New York (1948–mid-1949); 767 10th Ave., New York (originally combined with Derby, from mid-1949)

Record Products: Rainbow [2]; Riviera, Star of David

Founded in January 1947 by Harry Fromkes (president), Herb Hendler (vice-president), and Eddie Heller (vice-president in charge of sales). Hendler and Heller had previously worked for Cosmo Records, but Fromkes (who for a time had owned the Playhouse in New York) had no experience in the record business. A *Cash Box* columnist described the new company's offices as a "striking penthouse location."

Rainbow opened its own distribution facility in the spring of 1947. The following autumn, Fromkes advertised in *Cash Box* that he was interested in acquiring other record companies, but he appears to have had no takers. A Canadian pressing and distribution deal was signed with Charles Darwyn's Toronto-based Monogram Records/Ambassador Music Company conglomerate in the later 1940s.

Press releases stated that Rainbow would focus on the production of unspecified "special albums." One of the label's early offerings was "Romeo Loves Juliet," a half-hour "original musicomedy on wax." The elaborate production included album-cover art commissioned from Casey Jones, a well-known illustrator whose work was featured in *Cosmopolitan* and

Ladies' Home Journal. It sold poorly, despite heavy promotion and giveaways to disc jockeys and dealers. A so-called Glenn Miller album fared worse. Representatives of the Miller estate filed for an injunction, accounting action, and damages against Rainbow for allegedly deceiving the public with an album that featured a large photo of Miller on the cover, when in fact the recordings were by Ralph Flanagan and some former members of the Miller orchestra. In addition, Rainbow's albums-only policy alienated jukebox operators. Bowing to pressure, in April 1947 the company announced that it would sell selected discs individually to jukebox operators.

With its albums-only model a failure, Rainbow shifted to its attention to the production of pop singles. Again bowing to pressure from jukebox operators, who were now seeking more plays per hour, Fromkes announced in November 1947 that Rainbow would reduce the average playing time of its discs to two minutes from the usual three. Barry Green's "Whispering" was advertised that month as "Only 1 Minute–50 Seconds Long — A Short Record — A Sure Money Maker." However, only a few such releases appear to have been made, and the practice was not employed on records intended primarily for the retail market.

Rainbow had a hit in January 1948 with Esy Morales' "Jungle Fantasy," a flute-and-bongo novelty number with echo-chamber effect that Duke Ellington said "hits you like a triple zombie." The record reportedly sold more than 300,000 copies to jukebox operators alone. The company's "Jungle Fantasy Days," a promotion launched in March 1948, had New York disc jockeys playing the record hourly over several weeks. The fad soon passed, and Morales moved on, but sales remained strong for Rainbow records by Eddie (Piano) Miller and Dick Todd in particular, both of whom were managed by Heller.

Fromkes resigned from Rainbow in June 1949, at which time Heller (who had been serving as general manager, in addition to his sales duties) assumed the presidency. A reorganization followed, as the Rainbow Recording Corporation, and Heller entered into a cooperative marketing agreement with Larry Newton's recently launched Derby Records Corporation. Office and warehouse space was consolidated with Derby, and advertisements for the two labels were combined, although both companies otherwise operated independently. In December 1949, Heller and Newton launched Rainbow Booking Attractions, which held management contracts with many Rainbow and Derby artists. Rainbow introduced the Riviera and Star of David labels in 1950 and acquired the masters of the short-lived Saturn Records.

The cooperative marketing arrangement with Derby was terminated in September 1950, and Derby moved to a new office. Following the split, Heller announced that Rainbow would enter the rhythm-and-blues field, which he had agreed not to do during his partnership with Newton. LPs were introduced in the autumn of 1950.

RAMPART RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1951

Offices: New York (Grand Central Station PO box number only; no street address given)

Record Products: Rampart

Launched in late 1947 by Harry Crawford, a New York jazz-record collector and dealer who was employed by the Commodore Music Shop at the time. The Rampart label was devoted to ragtime and traditional-jazz revival recordings by White musicians, many of whom were foreign.

Rampart's initial releases, comprising Bob Wilber and his Wildcats' covers of some 1920s jazz classics, were recorded in December 1947. The session, hastily convened after a scheduled Commodore date fell through, was financed by jazz critic and record producer George Avakian. They were reviewed by Bucklin Moon in the May 1948 *Record Changer* (almost certainly with input from Avakian, *Record Changer's* primary record reviewer at the time), who noted, "Although many of these sides...have the same feel as the originals, none of them could be called carbon copies in any sense of the word." *DownBeat* magazine was less enthusiastic, assigning the records a "Two-Note" (tepid) rating.

A substantial portion of Rampart's small catalog featured imported recordings by foreign traditional-revival bands, including the Dutch Swing College Orchestra and the bands of Claude Luter (France), Graeme Bell (Australia), and Humphrey Lyttelton (England).

In the spring of 1949, Rampart became the East Coast distributor for Castle [1] and Jazz Corner Records (the latter a U.S. label that used imported masters). By 1950, Rampart had become largely a distribution business (having taken over distribution for the Good Time Jazz, Jump, and Mouldy Fygge labels, among others), at the expense of its recording operation. The final Rampart releases, comprising several previously unused 1948 recordings by pianist Dick Wellstood, were advertised in December 1950, marking the company's last appearance in *Record Changer*. The Rampart name has since been used for several unrelated labels.

RANCHO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1948; 1964

Offices: 12517 Hortense St., Studio City, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above location

Record Products: Rancho Records

Launched in the autumn of 1946 by country-music singer and film star Smiley Burnette, after American Recording Artists (with which he had an exclusive contract) suspended operations. In the first advertisement for his Rancho label, headlined "How Mad Can You Get?," Burnette declared, "When *The Hollywood Reporter* announced ARA had gone bankrupt, wow, I was fit to be tied... The first time in my life I had a swell chance of going to town with some tunes... Well, can't stay mad long... No choice, gotta buy the masters, establish my own label... "

Burnette filed a trademark application for Rancho Records on January 13, 1947, claiming use of the name since about November 4, 1946 (one day after news of the launch was reported nationally). Distribution would be handled by a network of former ARA distributors.

Early reports stated that Burnette would produce only children's records, beginning with an album that was supposed to release in time for the Christmas season but did not. By early 1947, however, Burnette had retrieved his ARA masters and begun reissuing them on Rancho, while recruiting other country artists. Burnette's artists were required to sign eighteen-month contracts under which they agreed to pay all costs of their recording sessions. In return they would retain full ownership of their masters, an almost unheard-of privilege at the time.

Rancho Records last appeared in *Billboard's* January 1948 directory. Its brief reappearance in the March 1952 directory (which included many defunct or inactive companies) probably can be disregarded. Burnette revived Rancho Records briefly in 1964, and the label was produced again in the 1990s, as a CD line, by Burnette's son Stephen. The Rancho Records name was also used later in the 1950s for an unrelated label, believed to have been based in the Southwest, that showed no company name.

RANGEL MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: From c. 1947

Offices: San Antonio, TX (PO box number only; no street address given)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products (78s): Corona [1]

Owned and operated by Manuel E. Rangel, who in the late 1940s serviced and supplied records to jukeboxes in San Antonio's Mexican-American neighborhoods. In 1947 or 1948 (depending upon the account), he opened a studio in his electronics shop to record local performers for his Corona label. There was no connection to the Corona labels based in Pittsburgh [version 2] and New York [version 3] during this period.

Corona's first release was by accordionist Valerio Longoria, a key figure in early *conjunto* music. Although Corona's pressing runs reportedly were very small, and national advertising virtually nonexistent, Rangel built his company into an important producer of *conjunto* and other recordings for the Mexican-American market, continuing to issue records into the 1960s on various labels. He also operated a successful record distribution business that was taken over by his son, Manuel, Jr., in the early 1970s.

RAPOPORT, MAURICE A. (Discs)

Metro Records [I] / Rem Records / Rex Records

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1950

Offices: 5280 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Metro [2], Rem, Rex [2]

Owner of the Hollywood Music Shop (Hollywood, California), Maurice Rapoport launched Metro Records in early 1947 and self-marketed the records locally. There was no connection to the New York-based Metro label (*see* Metro Records [II]), a pop line that was sold by Woolworth's and other chain stores; nor to the New York-based Metro Music Company, whose version of the Metro label is thought to have used only imported masters (and thus is beyond the scope of this work). Rapoport's last name was often misspelled in the trade papers (usually as "Rapaport"), an error that persists in some modern writings.

Rapoport got his start in the record business by purchasing some masters from trustees of the bankrupt American Recording Artists operation. He was subpoenaed on February 28, 1947, after his \$2,200 check failed to clear. On March 5, he was cited for contempt of court for failure to appear. Facing possible jail time, Rapoport paid for the masters in cash. They included Art Tatum's ARA output (which he had tried unsuccessfully to resell) and the soundtrack album from the movie "Spellbound."

In December 1947, on complaint of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Records, a preliminary injunction was granted preventing Rapoport's use of the Metro name. Rapoport ignored the injunction, continued to sell Metro records, and was again cited for contempt. A final injunction was handed down in May 1948, and Rapoport was fined \$14,800 and sentenced to thirty days in jail. At that time, 1,300 Metro discs were seized, and all infringing discs were ordered to be destroyed on June 8.

Rapoport resurfaced later that year with the Rex label, which retained his original Metro label design. His artist roster included Kay Starr, Wingy Manone, Teddy Edwards, Charlie Mingus, Jay McShann's Orchestra, and Professor James E. Hines with the St. Paul's Baptist Church Choir of Los Angeles. Some were acquired from other sources, and he also licensed some British masters. In April 1949, Rapoport placed a large advertisement in *Billboard* thanking Roberts Record Distributing for making Rex "No. 1 on jukeboxes in St. Louis and Kansas City," a questionable claim. In the same month, Rapoport was ordered to abandon use of the Rex brand by the London Gramophone Corporation, which claimed prior use of the name. Rapoport was given until August to discontinue use of the name and dispose of all Rex pressings. He complied, changing the label's name to Rem while retaining his original Metro/Rex label design.

In January 1949, Rapoport was arrested on his company's premises for the alleged sale of "lewd" records. Apparently no action was taken, and Rapoport went on to introduce Rem LPs in the spring of 1950. Rem was last listed in *Billboard's* label directory for July 1950. Rapoport's catalog was acquired by Atlantic Records in June 1951. Rem's brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 label directory (a list that included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

RAVEN RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 413 E. Wyoming Ave., Philadelphia

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above location

Record Products: Raven

Launched in August 1947 by William Hornick and William Rich Zimmerman, who registered their Raven trademark on September 9, 1947. The pair had already launched the Keystone Recording Company (unrelated to the later Keystone Records) on July 30 of that year, also in Philadelphia. Both companies were registered as fictitious names with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Raven released a handful of recordings by area artists, including the Don Henry Harmonica Trio, Piccadilly Pipers, and Bonnie Davis. The label was affiliated with David Grimes Music, which published several of the compositions recorded by Raven and distributed the records. The operation closed in April 1948, and its masters were sold to De Luxe Records.

RAYMOR-McCOLLISTER MUSIC / RAYMOR RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1954

Offices: Woods Theater Building, 54 W. Randolph St., Chicago; Nomar Building, Wichita, KS (sales and distribution); 1901 N. Hillside, Wichita (early 1950s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (unconfirmed); Universal Recording (Chicago), probably other independent studios

Record Products: Raymor; McCollister (unconfirmed)

Raymond Charles McCollister launched the Raymor label in 1948 to promote his publishing company's songs. Marketed primarily for jukebox use, Raymor records featured country- and western and pop fare, with pipe-organ recordings a specialty.

The Raymor label's launch was announced by *Billboard* in late September 1948, by which time McCollister had already released recordings of four of his publishing company's titles performed by Freddy Nagel's Orchestra. At the same time, it was announced that McCollister had purchased twelve additional Nagel recordings from Vitacoustic, which was disposing of some the masters it had stockpiled prior to the start of the 1948 American Federation of Musicians recording ban.

Raymor began issuing 45s in the early 1950s, which originally were pressed by RCA's custom division. At about the same time, the publishing and recording operations were merged as the Raymor-McCollister Music and Record Enterprises (Wichita), with the recording division operating under the Raymor Record Company trade name. Record production appears to have ended in mid-1954.

RCA VICTOR COMPANY — See Radio Corporation of America

RCI RECORDING CORPORATION — See Vox Productions, Inc.

REBELLE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1950s

Offices: Birmingham, AL

Record Products: Rebelle

Launched in early 1950 by Raymond J. Rowell. *Billboard* briefly noted the label's introduction in March. Rebelle's roster was drawn from regional artists, including Thomas Brown's Maroon Notes and organists Jim Griffin and Talmadge Anderson (the latter a Black church organist who was working in Atlanta at the time). *Billboard* stated that LPs and 45s were planned, but nothing further was reported concerning the company. An anecdotal report that Rowell also produced the Affiliated, Free, Lance, and Seaboard labels remains to be confirmed.

REC-ART RECORDINGS / REC-ART STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: c. Mid-1930s – Mid-1940s

Offices: Radio Center (1120. S. Main, Los Angeles, to c. 1940); 1203 S. Main, Los Angeles (from c. 1940)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations

Record Products: Rec-Art; personal and special-use recordings; transcriptions

Primarily a custom recording service, Rec-Art Recordings briefly produced its own label, which appears to have been intended for retail sale. Its staff in the late 1930s included Al Nazareth (general and recording manager), A. Norman (musical director), and Helen Thayer (production manager).

Rec-Art was in operation by November 1935, when it placed a classified advertisement offering recording and microphone "coaching." In early 1937 the company began to offer talent analysis and free radio appearances to customers, with audition recordings provided at cost. A 1938 *Los Angeles Times* advertisement for Rec-Art listed "personal recordings, lifelike transcriptions" and "complete stage and radio training with professional debut" among its services.

In or around 1940, the name was changed to Rec-Art Studios and the company moved to new offices, although there were no significant personnel changes.

RECOLA RECORD COMPANY — See Recording Company of Los Angeles

RECORD BROADCASTING CORPORATION — See Strong Record Company

RECORD CORPORATION OF AMERICA — See Wright Record Corporation

RECORD CORPORATION OF NEW ENGLAND — See Continental Record Company, Inc.

RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 – 1922

Offices: Boston

Pressing: Own plant (Framingham, MA)

Record Products: RMC; pressings for unknown labels

A pressing plant incorporated in Boston in May 1920, with capitalization of \$325,000. Incorporators included James E. MacPherson, a former Massachusetts state senator who would purchase the Cameo Record Corporation in 1927. There is no connection to a similarly named company founded in New York in early 1917, which apparently failed before having produced any records.

The Record Manufacturing Company initially served only as a custom pressing plant, but in June 1921 its launched its short-lived RMC label. Most known RMC releases were pressed from New York Recording Laboratories' Paramount masters, or from masters made for Grey Gull by NYRL, duplicating material on those labels. However, several recordings remain untraced to other sources and might have been exclusive to RMC.

On July 1, 1921, an involuntary petition in bankruptcy was filed against the Record Manufacturing Company by three creditors with an aggregate claim of \$878. In March 1922, the company was purchased by Cameo, which reorganized it as the American Record Manufacturing Company (*q.v.*) for use as its primary pressing plant.

RECORD SYNDICATE TRUST / PRODUCERS RECORDING COMPANY

The Boston-based Record Syndicate Trust aggregated masters from defunct companies during the 1940s and licensed them to independent labels. Although the group did not produce any original recordings, it is included here because of its role as a major conduit for masters. Most material came from the Scranton Record Company, which over the years had become owner-by-default of masters from failed companies for which it had pressed, most notably Eli Oberstein's United States Record Corporation. Customers included Moses Asch, who purchased North and South American rights to some Oberstein masters in the mid-1940s. In 1946, the Record Syndicate Trust catalog was taken over by the Producers Recording Company (New York), which continued to lease masters to Asch, Joe Davis, and other small independent producers.

RECORDED IN HOLLYWOOD — See Dolphin, John

THE RECORDED VOICE COMPANY LABORATORIES (Discs)

Record Production: 1920s

Offices: Canton, OH

Record Products: Audola; custom-label and private recordings

Primarily a custom recording service, the Recorded Voice Company produced a few commercial Audola records by local artists that retailed for \$1 each. Two Audola series are known, A-prefixed (comprising a mix of commercial and private releases) and D-prefixed (the few known examples of which are private and promotional records). Ten- and eight-inch pressings are known. An anecdotal report that Audola records were sold by small retailers in the upper Midwest has not been confirmed.

RECORDING COMPANY OF LOS ANGELES / RECOLA RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1939 – c. 1950

Offices: Hollywood, CA

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Recola; custom and private recordings

Managed, and possibly owned, by Robert Louis (Bob) Carleton, who is best known as the composer of the 1918 hit, "Ja-Da." The earliest reliable references to the Recording Company of Los Angeles and Recola records appeared in autumn of 1939.

Carleton purchased songs and lyrics from aspiring amateurs, who over the years included a miner, steelworker, bricklayer, railroad police officer, several housewives, and one deceased individual who, according to the *Star Press* (Muncie, Indiana), had "died thinking the song was a failure." Many of the lyrics were set to music to Cliff Dixon, one of Carleton's collaborators.

In addition to soliciting song and lyrics, Carleton scouted federal copyright applications for promising material. Several writers were startled to receive offers from Recola for the use of unpublished songs and lyrics they had never sent the company. Among them was Ohio steelworker Wilford Whitla, who received an unsolicited contract for the lyrics to "You Robbed Me of My Treasures," which had already been set to music by a Boston publisher without his knowledge. "As far as Mr. Whitla knows," the East Liverpool *Evening Review* reported, "the piece never has been offered for public sale... How the Hollywood recording outfit got hold of it is another mystery."

An October 1939 report stated that Recola would press 17,500 copies of Nevada miner Harry Harker's composition, "Flower of the Prairie," probably an exaggeration given the rarity of Recola records in general. In early 1950, Recola signed a five-year contract with Dawn Marie Nagel, of Village Green, Pennsylvania, who was described by her local newspaper as a twenty-one year old lyricist for a "Hollywood studio." She and Carleton filed joint copyrights on two songs in the spring of 1950, after which the trade papers reported nothing further concerning her or the Recola label.

RECORDINGS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1930s

Offices: 5505 Melrose Ave., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: R Inc.

A transcription and custom studio managed by L. N. Pfeiffer. Recordings, Inc., produced a group of records in affiliation with the National Orange Show by singer Bud Averill (who also served as the show's director of combined features), Cecil Stewart's Orchestra, and other artists who performed at the event. The recordings appeared on the R Inc. label, with catalog numbers, but it not certain that they were intended for general distribution outside the exhibition. Although damaged by fire in May 1937, the studio was still listed in the 1939 *Broadcasting Yearbook*.

RED BARN RECORDING COMPANY — See White Church Recording Company

RED BIRD RECORDING STUDIO (Discs)

Record Production: 1947

Offices: Newark, OH

Record Products: Red Bird [1]

A custom recording operation that briefly produced the first version of the Red Bird label. The studio listed its address simply as "South Side of the Square (Over Red Bar)." It advertised a "Saturday Night Special" at which customers could make their own double-sided records for 50¢. At least one Red Bird release was advertised locally, in March 1947, with the slogan, "Hillbilly Style — They're Different." Nothing more was reported concerning the label or studio, and in 1948 the Red Bird name was taken over by an unrelated Indiana label (*see next entry*).

RED BIRD RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1960

Offices: 215 Farmers Trust Building, Fort Wayne, IN (1948–1949); Lincoln Highway E., Fort Wayne (1950s); 5423 New Haven Ave., Fort Wayne (late 1950s–c. 1960)

Record Products: Red Bird [3], Urab [2]

Founded in 1948 by Elsie Birt Byers, president of Byers Music Publishing (Fort Wayne, Indiana). There was no connection to the earlier Red Bird Recording Studios of Newark, Ohio (*see previous entry*).

The first Red Bird [3] records were released in October 1948. The label featured country-and-western material by locally available artists, often performing compositions written and/or published by Byers. The roster was dominated by Joe Taylor and his Indiana Red Birds, whose most unusual offering was a re-creation of a cattle auction. Red Bird's catalog began with a short-lived 10000 series in the early autumn of 1948. It was replaced by a 1000 series in December, which used a different catalog number on each side. New releases appeared only sporadically after 1950 but continued into November 1955. After a four-year hiatus, a final Red Bird release, by Eddie Alford and the Virginia Mountain Boys, appeared in December 1959. The company was last listed in *Billboard's* April 1960 directory.

Byers' short-lived version of the Urab label, produced in late 1947 or early 1948, apparently was unrelated to the earlier New York label of the same name (*see URAB Recording Studio*). Unlike the New York version, Byers' Urab records have U-prefixed catalog numbers, and they are not known to have been advertised nationally. One release appeared in *Billboard's* January 1948 advance lists, after which nothing further was heard of the label.

The Red Bird label was discontinued in 1956, and the remaining inventory was remaindered through Byers Music. However, Red Bird Records was still listed by *Billboard*, at a different Fort Wayne address, as late as 1960. There is no known connection to a short-lived Red Bird label that was produced by or affiliated with Globe Records during the same period.

RED HOT AND BLUES RECORDING COMPANY — *See* Black and White Records / Black and White Recording Company

RED JAY RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1950

Offices: 1658 Broadway (Melocraft Music office), New York

Record Products: Red Jay

A race-record label launched in the late summer of 1948 by the Melocraft Music Company, a small publishing operation. Red Jay's first release, by Gren Collins and the Melocrafters, appeared in the September 1948 advance lists and was dismissed by a *Billboard* reviewer as a "distressingly poor job." Its last, released in July 1950, fared no better, with *Billboard* rating it a "wretchedly amateurish recording." The company's brief reappearance, in *Billboard's* March 1952 label directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

REDSKIN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: c/o Jimmy Saul, Piqua, OH (no street address given)

Record Products: Redskin

A short-lived venture of country singer Jimmy Saul, who was broadcasting over radio station WHIO (Dayton, Ohio) at the time. The company was first listed in *Billboard's* January 1949 label directory, although its first two releases (both by Jimmy Saul and his Prairie Drifters) appeared in the December 1948 advance lists. Two Redskin recordings were later reissued on the 4 Star label.

REED & DAWSON / REED, DAWSON & COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: c. 1898 – 1900

Offices: 516 Broad St., Newark, NJ (main office); 74 Cortlandt St., New York (branch office and show room, from early 1899)

Record Products: Reed & Dawson cylinders

Founded by Thomas Herbert Reed and Frank H. Dawson c. early 1898. The company was first mentioned in *The Phonoscope* for March 1898, which probably was published at least a month after its stated cover date. Reed was a professional musician whose portrait and recordings were featured prominently in the early Reed & Dawson catalog. *The Phonoscope* reported, "Being a thorough musician and playing three distinct instruments, Mr. Herbert Reed has the advantage over other record-makers, who cannot distinguish when the musician makes a mistake or false note."

Reed & Dawson specialized in instrumental recordings, which were claimed to be original. The artist roster included clarinetist William Tuson and cornetists A. C. Sweet and John C. Heed, in addition to Reed himself. Reed & Dawson's advertising, which first appeared during the summer of 1898, claimed, "Our violin records can be heard with horn 100 feet distance away... We are the only successful violin record makers." However, the company lost *The Phonoscope's* 1898 contest for best violin record, with the grand prize going to Fred Hager, of Harms, Kaiser & Hagen.

A report in the January 1899 *Phonoscope* claimed that Reed & Dawson "pay the best prices for talent." The company was one of the earliest to advertise Cal Stewart's "Yankee stories," although the relationship appears to have been short-lived. Stewart (through John Kaiser, of Harms, Kaiser & Hagen, which had begun advertising itself as the only maker of genuine Stewart records) claimed in the summer of 1899 to have worked for Reed & Dawson for only five days and suggested that if the company was still making records bearing his name, they might be the work of others. Reed & Dawson refuted the claim.

By 1899, Reed & Dawson was employing Billy Golden, Vess L. Ossman, Dan W. Quinn, Frank C. Stanley, and other well-known studio regulars. The company also claimed to be the first to record A. C. Sweet as well as baritones G. A. Simonds, F. E. Nichols, and others, who unlike Stewart, Golden, *et al.*, were not destined to have long careers as recording artists.

James G. Barnett joined the firm in 1898, in an unspecified capacity. On April 6, 1899, Reed, Dawson, and Barnett incorporated as Reed, Dawson & Company, with capital of \$50,000. (The incorporation was also reported in the *The Phonoscope* for February 1899, the cover date again probably pre-dating the actual publication date by at least a month). The new company was primarily a retail operation, dealing in phonographs, accessories, and even bicycles, but record production remained a key component of the business. During the spring of 1899, the company announced that it would produce concert-type (5" diameter) cylinders to order. The July 1899 issue of *The Phonoscope* reported that work was going on "day and night in their laboratory in order to keep up with the demand." The same article noted that comedian Joseph R. Gannon, who had recorded some of his "Casey" routines for Reed & Dawson, was now managing the company's New York office. However, little was heard of the company after that year.

REEL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1950

Offices: Packard Building, Philadelphia

Record Products: Reel

Affiliated with the Elliott Music Company, Inc. (Philadelphia), Reel Records appears to have been launched in 1950, based upon the label's copyright notice.

Reel's first reviewed release, announced in July 1950, was the Delaware County String Band's rendition of "The Red We Want Is the Red We've Got," which *Cash Box* described as "an anti-Commie piece that makes sense and good music at the same time." Ivan H. Peterman, of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, blamed Tin Pan Alley's "pinks, reds, [and] pro-Muscovites" for keeping the song off the major labels and opined that New York "could use this new ballad...it has too much of the 'wrong red' and not enough of the 'true-blue.'" Subsequent Reel releases, also devoted to string-band novelties, failed to arouse much

patriotic sentiment or attract national attention. They appeared sporadically throughout the 1950s, with limited local distribution.

REEVES, HAZZARD E. (Discs)

Consolidated Records, Inc. / General Records / Reeves-Ely Laboratories / Reeves (Sound) Recording Studios / Reeves Sound Laboratories / Reeves Soundcraft Corporation

Record Production: 1933 – 1949

Offices: 1600 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Source(s): 1600 Broadway, New York (to 7/1947); 304 E. 44 th St., New York (from 7/1947)

Pressing: Independent plants

Record Products: General, General Tavern Tunes, General Topical Tempos, General Voices from History; Accompo (accompaniment records) and other special-use records; masters for Blue Note, Exclusive Recordings, Gala, Gamut, Hot Record Society, Liberty Music Shop, New Music Quarterly, Solo Art, Timely, and probably many others; private and custom recordings; radio transcriptions; movie soundtrack recordings

Founded by Hazard E. Reeves, the Reeves Sound Studios was one of the major suppliers of masters to small independent labels in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Its most recognizable output are its R- and RS- prefixed masters.

A graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology, Reeves came to New York in 1928, where he worked for the Columbia Phonograph Company as an assistant research engineer before joining the Stanley Recording Company as a sound engineer in 1930. He stayed on after Stanley was reorganized as the Standard Sound Recording Corporation in late 1931, then worked as recording director for the Harvard University Film Foundation, before launching Reeves Sound Recording Studios in October 1933. Reeves recalled, "I was chief cook and bottle-washer, starting it all with a little equipment, \$2,500 provided by a few close associates, and no outside capital." Laurence D. Ely served as president of the new company, with Reeves serving as general manager.

Reeves initially specialized in movie soundtrack production, with a client list that included Oscar Micheaux, Perfex Pictures, Standard Brands, and the Johns-Manville Corporation. By late 1934, however, Reeves was also advertising "wax recording" and had begun producing masters for New Music Quarterly records, his first known involvement with a commercial record label.

Reeves Sound Studios ("Recording" having been dropped from the name) was finally incorporated in February 1936, with an initial capitalization of \$10,000. In the same year, Reeves launched Preview Theater, Inc., a joint venture with Bob Gillette that provided private movie screenings. In 1937 he founded Audio Devices, Inc., which would become one of the largest manufacturers of coated recording blanks. His Fibra Development Company, launched in the later 1930s, marketed cactus-spine phonograph needles, while Reeves Sound Laboratories, operating at the same address as Reeves Sound Studios, conducted radio-related research.

Reeves launched the subsidiary General Records Company in 1939, initially as a producer of masters for custom and client labels that included Gamut and New Music Quarterly. It was also reported that General Records would serve as distributor for several other small independent labels, including Gamut, Hot Record Society, and Timely, all of which were recording at Reeves Sound Studios. Reeves later took over the Gamut and Timely catalogs and masters.

Later in 1939, Reeves announced General Records was preparing to launch its own General label. Little more was heard of the label until January 1940, when *Jazz Information* magazine reported that Reeves had recorded twenty masters for his new line, which was expected to launch in February. Among them was a group of piano solos by Jelly Roll Morton, recorded in December 1939, that numbered among his last commercial recordings.

At about the same time, General began marketing Accompo records, available in "swing" and "light classical" series, which provided instrumental accompaniments (bundled with the corresponding sheet music for the classical series) intended mainly for music students and instructors. By then, Lyman J. Wiggin was serving as Reeves' chief engineer and Chester L. Stewart as studio manager. General soon shifted its focus from jazz to more diverse fare. There were albums of unusual ethnic material, including Mexican Indian recordings made

on location by John H. Green, African tribal music dubbed from the soundtrack of the Denis-Roosevelt Expedition film "Dark Rapture," and a Haitian voodoo program performed by the Damball Wedo Singers.

Several variations on the General label appeared during 1940–1941. General Topical General Tavern Tunes, introduced in early 1940 for the jukebox trade, offered a few more sides by Morton (now fronting a small band), along with a mixture of comedy, blues, and party-record fare. General Topical Tempos was devoted exclusively to organ solos for skating-rink use. General Voices from History, a short-lived series of dubbed spoken-word recordings by major historical figures, was drawn from the catalog of National Vocarium, *q.v.* The Voices from History records could be purchased individually or packaged in five-disc "volumes" that retailed for \$10, but sales appear to have been negligible. Classical offerings included reissues of Gamut and Timely material that Reeves had recorded, to which he purchased the rights after those labels were discontinued.

Reeves discontinued production of new General releases in 1942, although existing inventory remained on sale well into the mid-1940s, and reorganized his recording operation as Reeves Sound Laboratories. He devoted much of his time to the war effort, supplying radio crystals to the military, and hosting shows and dances for the troops at his company's Broadway headquarters. In November 1943, Reeves Sound Laboratories was presented with an Army-Navy "E" Award for its efforts.

Reeves began to diversify his business holdings in January 1944, purchasing the Winsted Hardware Manufacturing Company (a maker of kitchen appliances) and acquiring a sales agency for Waring Blenders. However, he soon returned to sound recording. In 1945, he reorganized Reeves Sound Laboratories as the Reeves-Ely Laboratories, Inc. An affiliated company, the Reeves Soundcraft Corporation, was launched in June 1946 to produce instantaneous recording discs and equipment.

In July 1946, Reeves sold the inactive General Records to Commodore. The sale included approximately 400 masters, a mixture of Reeves' own recordings and those he had acquired from Gamut and Timely. Reeves used proceeds from the sale to modernize his facilities, which opened in new quarters in July 1947 under the original Reeves Sound Studios name. The new business advertised custom recording services for commercial record, film, radio, and television producers. Late in the year, Robert (Bob) Fine was hired as Reeves' chief recording engineer, following Fine's departure from the failing Majestic operation.

By 1949, Reeves had become deeply involved in sound-film and television research. After purchasing the Tele-Video Corporation (manufacturers of one of the earliest projection television systems), he split Reeves Sound into disc and film divisions, the latter under the management of Richard J. Vorisek. He later founded and was the first president of Cinerama, Inc. He was still active in various enterprises, including Reeves Telecom Associates and two real estate ventures, at the time of his death on December 23, 1986, at the age of eighty-one.

REGAL RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 – 1929

Offices: 206 5th Ave., New York (Emerson offices, 1921–mid-1922); 18–22 W. 20th St., New York (from mid-1922); 10 W. 20th St., New York (later 2/1925)

Original-Master Source(s): Independent Recording Laboratory

Pressing: Scranton Button Company

Record Products: Banner [2], Domino [2], Regal [1]; numerous client labels in affiliation with the Plaza Music Company and Scranton Record Company, including Acme [1], Bernardo, Challenge (1927–1929), Conqueror (1926–1929), Homestead, Jewel [2], Muse (1923 only), National Music Lovers, New Phonic, Oriole [1], Shamrock Store, Silvertone, Supertone [2], U.S.A.; Little Tots Nursery Tunes (children's); Repeat-a-Voice (metal recording blanks marketed by Plaza)

Foreign Affiliate: Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Company (London)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Aeroplane, Amfonola, Angelus, Arcadia, Austral, Banner, Beeda, Bellbird, Bon Marche, Clarité, Clifford, Fossey's, Leonora, Lyric, Olympic, Paling's, Savoy, Simolian (Australia); Imperador (Brazil); Apex, Crown, Domino, Microphone, Lucky Strike, Sterling (Canada); Curry's, Edison Bell Winner, Grafton, Imperial, Savana (England); Maxsa (France); Acme, Artiphon, Goldora (Germany); Usiba (Poland); probably many others on occasion

Originally a subsidiary of the Emerson Phonograph Company, headed by H. T. Leeming. The Regal Record Company introduced its 50¢ discs on February 1, 1921, according to its

trademark filing. Retailing for 25¢ less than the Emerson issues that they duplicated, Regal records sold well, despite the frequent use of pseudonyms to disguise Emerson's artists. The records revealed a strong market for moderately priced discs, which would soon be crowded with competitors. However, Regal's success was insufficient to offset the losses being incurred by Emerson, which was operating under receivership.

On May 12, 1922, it was reported that the Regal Record Company had purchased Emerson's assets for \$90,000, but the sale was nullified. On June 1 of that year, both Emerson and its Regal subsidiary were purchased by Benjamin Abrams, a Roumanian immigrant who had no significant experience in the record business and recalled having to borrow from friends to make the purchase. The Regal subsidiary was formally incorporated on June 12 as the Regal Record Company, with capitalization of \$50,000. In the reorganization that followed in August, the Emerson Phonograph Company and Regal Record Company were split. A controlling interest in Regal was sold to the Scranton Button Company, a major independent pressing plant that was looking to expand into full-service record production. The Emerson Phonograph Company continued to operate as a separate business but no longer supplied masters to Regal. Some Emerson personnel, including recording manager Arthur Bergh and sales manager Harry Neu, moved to Regal following the split.

Once the Emerson affiliation was terminated, the Regal Record Company temporarily employed the New York Recording Laboratories as its primary master source, drawing mainly on material from the Paramount catalog. The first NYRL-derived Regal issues were listed as July and August 1922 releases, intermixed with the last of the Emerson material. Within several months, Regal was relying entirely on NYRL material, duplicating material on Paramount and related labels. In late 1922, however, NYRL recorded thirty masters for the exclusive use of Regal and its new Banner affiliate, which appeared in those labels' January 1923 lists.

In November or December 1922, the Regal Record Company began its formal affiliation with the Plaza Music Company (*q.v.*), a dealer in musical merchandise. Plaza had recently been taken over by its creditors, which included Regal Record Company executives Herman Germain and Sol Kronberg. Production of Plaza's flagship Banner label (which had been introduced in January 1922 as a competitor to Regal) was turned over to Regal.

Plaza's and Regal's personnel and operations were consolidated at Plaza's headquarters during the summer of 1922. Although the two companies remained separate entities for legal and accounting purposes, their operation, along with those of the affiliated Scranton Button Company and Independent Recording Laboratory, would be closely linked into mid-1929. Regal's role was to manage recording and production of what became an extensive line of cut-rate labels headed by Banner, Domino, and Regal, all of which drew from a common master pool. Although collectors commonly refer to these products as the "Plaza labels," the Plaza's Music Company's role was limited to marketing and distribution.

NYRL ceased to be Regal's main master supplier at the end of 1922, although Regal continued to occasionally license Paramount masters into the late 1920s, and NYRL licensed a large number of Regal masters after closing its New York studio in 1926. Recording instead was contracted to the Independent Recording Laboratory (*q.v.*), which was already recording for Arto and other small companies. IRL created a new matrix-number series specifically for Regal and its associated labels, beginning at #5001. The series would continue unbroken, under a succession of owners, into the 1940s. The first of the new IRL masters appeared in the Banner and Regal lists for February 1923. Pressing remained with Scranton, which was soon licensing Regal masters to some of its other clients, including Bell and National Music Lovers.

The Plaza–Regal line eventually expanded to include Oriole (made for the McCrory's dime stores) and Challenge and Conqueror (made for Sears, Roebuck), and other client labels. All drew on a common master pool, comprising a mixture of IRL recordings, masters Scranton had taken over from Olympic and other defunct companies, and material licensed from Pathé and other labels. Use of artist pseudonyms was common (particularly on the cheapest client labels), and control or false master numbers were substituted for actual master numbers on some of the client labels.

Regal purchased the Independent Record Laboratory in 1924 (although the name

remained in use) and moved it to new quarters. Electrical recording of a crude sort began there in late November 1925, using primitive equipment of unknown origin. The earliest issued electrical recording probably was master number 6305 ("Let Us Waltz as We Say Goodbye," by Nathan Glantz's Orchestra), recorded on November 23, 1925. Acoustic and electric sessions were intermixed throughout December, but by January 1927 all sessions appear to have been electrical. The first electrically recorded Regal and Banner releases were advertised in March 1926. The earliest were marred by severe distortion, but technical quality improved somewhat after September 1926, when the company hired acoustic specialist Frank D. Lewis.

In 1927 the Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Company (London) acquired a part-interest in the Regal Record Company. Other than another slight improvement in sound quality, the purchase had no perceptible effect on Regal's output or operation as an independent company. The manufacturers of Imperial and other popular British brands, Crystalate had been issuing Regal material since 1923 on its own labels (it could not use the Regal name, which in England was a long-established Columbia brand). However, no Crystalate material found its way onto the Plaza-Regal labels.

Crystalate purchased the Regal Record Company outright on January 1, 1929, and the Plaza-Regal alliance began to unravel. Crystalate did not purchase Plaza, although Plaza continued to share executives and office space with Regal into the summer. With the change in Regal's ownership, Plaza was required to maintain separate books and was restricted to sales of phonographs, piano rolls, sheet music, and other musical merchandise, leaving records production entirely in Regal's hands. The final separation of Regal and Plaza came in July, when the American Record Corporation (*q.v.*) was organized to serve as a holding company for stock of the Regal Record Company, Cameo Record Corporation, and Scranton Button Company, excluding Plaza. The creation of the American Record Corporation marked the end of the Regal Record Company as an independent entity.

REGAL RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1951

Offices: 20 E. Elizabeth Ave., Linden, NJ

Record Products: Regal [4], R.F.D.; Tots 'n' Teens (children's)

Launched in July 1949 by Julius (Jules) and David Braun, in partnership with Fred Mendelsohn. Successor to the Brauns' De Luxe Record Company (*q.v.*), Regal's formation was the result of their acrimonious split with King Records' Syd Nathan. Mendelsohn brought along the masters from his short-lived Merit Records venture, most of which had not yet been issued. Howard Biggs served as musical director. The company's first releases were announced in August 1949.

Regal was marketed primarily as a race-record label, although Jules Braun was ambivalent about that term. Writing to the *Pittsburgh Courier*, he noted, "We appreciate that certain words bring about unpleasant memories, and we have always favored and welcomed recommendations as to a more agreeable word for identification... For example, I hate the word 'ebony.' 'Race' leaves me with a better feeling. Perhaps your many readers would suggest a more suitable mark." Commenting on a mass talent audition staged for him in January 1950, Braun advised that his label was more interested in originality than in beautiful, well-trained voices. "Forget about the note-for-note style," he declared, "and put a feeling into your work."

Regal's artist roster eventually came to include Savannah Churchill (signed away from Manor Records), Larry Darnell, Paul Gayten, John Lee Hooker, Memphis Minnie, the Magichords, Sunnyland Slim, and Roosevelt Sykes. *The California Eagle* reported that Regal's top-selling artist for 1950 was Darnell, followed by Gayten and Laurie.

Regal also helped revive the careers of Alberta Hunter, Cab Calloway, Papa Celestin's Original Tuxedo Orchestra, Blind Willie McTell (masquerading as "Fig 'n' Whistle Red"), and others whose heydays had been a decade or more ago. Long past their primes, they were not particularly auspicious acquisitions. Jules Braun even admitted publicly that Calloway was not the national figure he had been a decade ago, but reported that "extensive plans" were being formulated to restore him to that position.

In July 1950, Regal took over distribution and sales of the Roost label (with which it co-advertised for a time). In September of that year it began leasing masters from the

Detroit-based Sensation Record Company. At about the same time, the company launched a new Regal series for the mainstream popular market, which apparently attracted little attention.

In early 1951, Regal made a brief attempt to enter the country-and-western market with the R.F.D. label, under the management of Ed McMullen. The label was discontinued in August 1951, after approximately a dozen releases. Its final offering was "Marijuana, the Devil's Flower" credited to "Mr. Sunshine and his Guitar Pickers" (masking the identity of Carl Swanson, a record-store owner and disc jockey at WRUN, Utica-Rome, New York). *Billboard's* two-line review concluded with the observation that "Sunshine's chanting leaves something to be desired."

Regal was shut down with little advance notice in November 1951. The company at the time was in the process of suing the Burns Distributing Company, a case that dragged on long after Regal ceased operations. Some masters were subsequently licensed to King Records, and several of the Regal's artist contracts (including those of Laurie, Darnell, Gayten, and Titus Turner) were sold to Columbia, which assigned the artists to its cut-rate Okeh label.

REGAL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946–1947

Offices: 1506 N. Sierra Bonita, Hollywood, CA (early 1947); 6089 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles (from mid-1947)

Record Products: Regal [3]

Regal Records was one of several small West Coast ventures that entered into a cooperative manufacturing and marketing arrangement with the Sierra Distributing Company in the summer of 1946. Sierra almost immediately turned the group over to Charles House's and John Davis' Independent Record Sales Company.

Two Regal album sets ("Rancho in the Sky" by cowboy-movie singer Tony Farrell, and a collection of Gershwin tunes performed by pianist Calvin Jackson) were briefly noted by *Billboard* in August 1947, after which little more was reported concerning the label. There was no connection to the Detroit-based Regal label, which was produced at the same time (*see* Willow Walk Industries), nor to any other Regal label.

REGENT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1956

Offices: 1184 Elizabeth Ave., Elizabeth, NJ (1947–early 1948); 58 Market St., Newark, NJ (to 9/1948); 50 Market St., Newark, NJ (from 9/1948)

Record Products: Regent

Launched in the autumn of 1947 by Fred Mendelsohn. The company at first catered largely to the jukebox trade, advertising "Records made for operators by operators," but it soon expanded into the retail market.

Initially operating with minimal funding in a temporary office, Regent's launch was further hobbled by the start of the American Federation of Musicians' second recording ban. In December 1947, just prior to implementation of the ban, *Billboard* reported that Mendelsohn had signed "a flock" of artists for Regent, including the Don Henry Trio, Dolly Dawn, Al Trace, and Beverly White. Regent's early catalog, drawn from pre-ban recordings, consisted largely of pop material, showcasing such novelty numbers as Khachaturian's "Sabre Dance" performed by the Don Henry Harmonica Trio, and commercialized country-and-western fare by the likes of Freddy "Schnicklefritz" Fisher. A 1948 advertisement boasted, "If it's corn you want, Regent has it." There was a line of children's records as well, featuring Al Trace, that received generally poor reviews.

Regent attracted some attention during the summer of 1948 with Al Trace's "You Call Everybody Darlin'," a surprise hit that reached #1 on *Billboard's* pop chart and reportedly sold one-million copies within two months of release. However, the record quickly became entangled in a legal battle after the Sterling label issued a different recording of the song credited to Al Trace and his Revelers. Trace denied having made the recording and immediately sued Sterling, seeking damages and a restraining order. Although Regent placed ads warning buyers to not accept "substitutes," a *Billboard* critic noted that Sterling's version was "just like the Regent disk." The case was later settled out of court.

Savoy Records' Herman Lubinsky purchased a major interest in Regent Records in June 1948. He installed himself as Regent's treasurer and sales manager but left Mendelsohn in place as president and artists-and-repertoire manager. It was reported that Regent would continue to operate entirely independently, and that Mendelsohn was to have no involvement with Lubinsky's Savoy operation. However, Lubinsky's control of Regent quickly became apparent. He moved the company into Savoy's Newark offices, hired John Abrams as vice-president, and decreed that the label would continue to focus on pop material, with Savoy continuing to concentrate on the race-record market. When Regent resumed recording in December 1948, following the end of the second AFM recording ban, *Billboard* reported that Lubinsky had signed additional talent for Regent, with no mention of any input from Mendelsohn.

Lubinsky bought out Mendelsohn's remaining share in Regent in June 1949 and took full control of the company. Regent was completely folded into Lubinsky's Savoy Records operation, although Regent Records would remain in use as a trade name. Mendelsohn resigned in the same month, stating that he intended to start a new label, but in 1952 he returned to work for Lubinsky as manager of artists and repertoire for Savoy's rhythm-and-blues line. Beginning in late 1953, he held the same position for Regent's classical, pop, and children's catalogs.

One of Lubinsky's first actions following the buy-out was to launch a Regent race series, numbered in the 1000s. Recruitment of talent for the new series was aided greatly the arrival of Lee Magid in November 1950, who served as a joint artists-and-repertoire manager for Regent and Savoy. In the pop field, Lubinsky purchased rights to Buddy Clark's decade-old Varsity recordings from Sterling, which he attempted to capitalize on by reissuing them immediately following Clark's death in September 1950.

Regent LPs were announced in late October 1950, in two series — a standard 10" line retailing for \$2, and a \$1.25 budget line reserved for public-domain and other royalty-free material. Introduction of a 45-rpm line, announced at the same time, was delayed until February 1950. Early LP and 45-rpm releases included previously released material from the defunct Sonora label, which was soon supplanted by Regent's own rhythm-and-blues recordings. In an unexpected move, Regent began experimenting with premium-priced classical LPs in the same year. After a handful of releases, however, Lubinsky announced in March 1951 that Regent would instead begin issuing cut-rate classical LPs, retailing for \$2 (10") and \$3 (12"), pressed from masters that he claimed to have "picked up" two years earlier from an unnamed European source. The first of the budget releases appeared during the summer of 1951.

Operations at Regent were suddenly suspended in November 1951, then resumed in February 1952. At that time, it was announced that the Regent label would be used primarily for pop material. Plans were announced for a new LP line in 1956, but the label was discontinued before that occurred.

REGIS RECORD COMPANY / REGIS RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1942–1949

Offices: 162 Prince St., Newark, NJ (1942–early 1947); 313 W. 57th St., New York (Manor Records office, early 1947–1949)

Original-Master Source(s): Independent studios

Pressing: Clark Phonograph Record Company

Record Products: Regis

Founded by Irving Berman, the owner of the G&R Record Shop in Newark, and a former manager of the Clark Phonograph Record Company's pressing plant. Mildred Berman served as treasurer. Regis' formation occurred in the midst of wartime shellac rationing and the American Federation of Musicians' first recording ban. Its launch was announced by *Billboard* on December 5, 1942, which gave the name in error as "Regina Records, Inc." In the same article, Irving Berman stated, "It's too early to say anything... We're making some masters next week [but] nothing's quite set, shellac being what it is."

The first Regis offerings were released in February 1943. According to Berman, they initially were pressed in lots of only 2,000 copies, and they failed to attract national attention. The Regis label catered largely (although by no means exclusively) to the race-record market, sometimes advertising itself as "The Elite in Sepian." In common with many other

record producers, Berman required that his artists assign him the copyrights for songs they composed and recorded, which he registered in his company's name.

Billboard initially reported that Regis' talent would be "all Negro" and its catalog "spirituals only," which was not entirely accurate. Although the early offerings included a substantial amount of Black gospel material by Rev. Utah Smith, Sister Ernestine Washington, the Silver Echo Quartet, and others, the catalog was soon expanded to include jazz, blues, pop, and even a smattering of country-and-western material. *Billboard* finally reviewed three of Regis' earliest releases in November 1943, praising the Silver Echo Quartet's gospel selections but cautioning jukebox distributors that Albino Jones' jump-band sides were best reserved "chiefly for the race locations."

Once production increased after the war, Berman promoted Regis records by sponsoring broadcasts over radio stations WHOM (Jersey City, New Jersey) and WPAT (Paterson, New Jersey). However, he began phasing out Regis in 1945, in favor of his new Manor label. In early 1947, Berman merged Regis with the Manor Record Company (*q.v.*) and consolidated operations at the latter's offices. Although the Regis Record Company designation remained in use into 1949, as a trade name, Manor handled production of the Regis label after the merger.

REGO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1950

Offices: 1504 Broadway, Detroit (1946–7/1949); 18100 Greenlawn, Detroit (8/1949–11/1952)

Record Products: Rego

Launched in the spring of 1946, although the event was not reported by *Billboard* until September of that year. Rego served as the recording division of the Grand Central Music Company, a publishing operation founded two years earlier by Peter (Polka King) Uryga in partnership with Paul S. Jenkins and Steven L. Drobac. Grand Central, which specialized in polkas and novelty tunes, had a hit with "Cornbelt Symphony," which by mid-1949 had been recorded for at least twelve labels.

Band leader Peter Viera served as the first president of Rego. The label's initial release, by Uryga's Melody Kings, was listed in June 1946. In October 1947, a *Detroit Free Press* photo feature highlighted Rego's recording of a song composed by local housewives Marion Kay and Helene Roth. The paper reported, "The song is a satire novelty dealing with the dubious benefits of higher education... Housework compelled some musical collaboration over the phone."

Rego was notified in November 1947 that its American Federation of Musicians recording contract would not be renewed in 1948, in advance of the second AFM recording ban. Little more was heard of Rego until July 1949, when the company was reorganized and moved into a private residence in suburban Detroit that it shared with Grand Central Music and Studio Record, *q.v.* Al Whitty replaced Viera, with Jack Combs serving as vice-president, Robert F. Calder as treasurer, and Uryga staying on as secretary. Three new board members were also added as well. However, no new releases were forthcoming.

On September 9, 1950, *Billboard* noted that Rego Records had been "virtually inactive in recent months" and erroneously reported that Grand Central Music had launched two new subsidiaries, Studio Records and the Sweet-Tone Recording Company. The report was corrected three weeks later to reflect the fact that both were independent operations, albeit managed by Rego executives (Studio by Calder, Sweet Tone by Uryga).

Grand Central Music was dissolved in November 1952. The Rego name was used in the mid-1950s for an unrelated New York label.

REINA RECORD COMPANY — See Atwood-Herscher Publications

RELAX RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1951

Offices: 47 Norfolk St., New York

Record Products (78s): Relax, Carol

Of unknown ownership, probably launched in late 1949. The initial Relax releases, recorded by pianist Dick Hyman in January 1950, appeared in the following month's advance lists. Classic Edition, an LP-only line, was launched in May 1950 with the album, "Simeon

Bellison Plays Rarely Heard Music." The company also briefly produced the obscure Carol label. No mention of Relax Records has been found in the trade papers after mid-1950, and its brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

RELIGIOUS RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1949

Offices: 3800 W. Warren Ave., Detroit

Record Products: Religious Recording

A gospel label launched in the summer 1947 by John W. Gilbert, pastor of the Zion Holiness Chapel in Detroit. James O. Willis served as musical director, and the records were distributed by Idessa Malone (*q.v.*), who might have had a hand in their production. A *Billboard* article datelined June 23, 1947, reported that operations had started on a small scale.

Gilbert's most notable offerings were by the Harmonizing Four, which were issued under the name of the Richmond Harmonizers of Richmond, Virginia. Releases were sporadic, and catalog numbers appear to have been assigned randomly. The company was still advertising in May 1949, but in October the affiliation with Malone was severed, at which time *Billboard* reported that Gilbert was planning to dispose of his masters.

REM RECORDS — See Rapoport, Maurice A.

REMINGTON RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1961

Offices: 254 W. 54th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Mastertone Recording Studios (New York), other independent studios

Pressing: Own plants—Webster, MA; New Jersey (auxiliary)

Record Products (78): Remington [2]; Acro, Continental, Lenox [2]; Broadway (announced but cancelled); Kiddie, Remington Junior (children's)

Founded in mid-1948 by a group of investors headed by Donald Gabor, as a subsidiary of his Continental Record Company, *q.v.* Former Vox recording director Bill Simon served as president and general manager. Gabor initially took no active part in the new company, but that would change in 1950, after Continental and Remington were merged. From the start, the records were pressed in Gabor's plant at Webster, Massachusetts, which in the early 1950s was expanded to include a complete printing and album-manufacturing facility.

Before the Remington label itself was launched, Gabor announced the creation of four subsidiary labels — Acro, Broadway, Kiddie, and Lenox — in July 1948, during the second American Federation of Musicians recording ban. All were initially under the management of Bill Simon, but only Lenox had gone into production by the time Simon resigned to join Continental Records in September.

Management of Lenox, a 75¢ race-record label that had limited East Coast distribution, was turned over to former King Records executive Foch Allen. *Cash Box* reported that the records would feature "the 'Lenox Beat,' special accentuation in recording of some tremendous driving rhythm." Early Lenox releases were a mixture of masters purchased from an undisclosed source and reissues of some Continental material, including sides by Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Champion Jack Dupree, Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, and Lester Young.

Broadway was a cut-rate attempt to compete with Eli Oberstein's recently revived Varsity label, retailing for 39¢, with a 40% discount for dealers and jukebox operators. It was to have used Swiss instrumental masters on which English vocals were overdubbed in the U.S., thus skirting the American Federation of Musicians' recording ban. However, its launch was cancelled following a complaint from The Appliances Company, which had introduced its own Broadway label two years earlier. Although The Appliances Company had not formally registered the trademark, and its version of the label probably was inactive by then, Gabor had 25,000 Broadway-labeled pressings scrapped rather than risk litigation.

Acro was purely a classical label, pressed in vinyl from the start, using recordings licensed from the Pacific (French) and Elite (Swiss) labels. Remington Junior, a children's

label, initially was to have been sold directly to retailers, bypassing distributors, but that plan was abandoned by the time the line was launched.

The Remington label itself was finally announced in October 1948. Morton (Morty) Shad, who previously had worked as sales manager for Lenox, became Remington's director of artists and repertoire. In November, Shad embarked on a month-long tour of the southern states, scouting race and country-and-western talent. He appears to have had little luck. The label featured conventional pop and commercialized ethnic and country fare, the latter two categories comprising a large number of polka and yodeling records. Pop releases were dominated by Enoch Light and the Light Brigade, on its own and in an accompanying role.

Gabor made trade-press headlines in May 1950, with his launch of a budget-priced classical LP line that retailed for only \$1.49 per 10" disc. A 12" line, retailing for \$1.99, soon followed. Initially, most used newly recorded European tape masters, but Gabor was soon recording his own domestic masters as well, beginning with his signing of Metropolitan Opera sopranos Karen Branzell and Christina Carroll. *Time* magazine reported that Macy's, W. T. Grant, and Sears had already placed combined orders of \$75,000 for Gabor's cut-rate LPs. Prices were increased modestly at the end of the year, but they always remained substantially lower than those of the major labels.

Gabor was back in the headlines in June 1950 when he announced several new lines, beginning with a 99¢ pop LP line that promised releases by Dizzy Gillespie, Sarah Vaughan, and Ethel Waters, among others, using a mixture of material licensed from other labels and reissues from the Continental catalog. There was also to be a new 45-rpm line retailing for 39¢, and yet another 78-rpm label, Playhouse. At the same time, Gabor announced a \$9.99 package deal that included an LP player attachment, a six-pocket record album, and two LPs.

In early 1951, Gabor reactivated his long-dormant Continental label, coinciding with the announcement that his company was substantially increasing production of its new, cut-rate LP and 45-rpm lines. In an attempt to capture the ultra-cheap market, Gabor introduced 79¢ Pontiac 10" LPs in June of that year, consisting of anonymous reissues cobbled together from previously issued Continental and Remington 78s.

Gabor's low prices belied the effort he often put into production. Unlike Eli Oberstein (his major competitor in the budget-label market), Gabor generally did not produce pseudonymous or anonymous releases (aside from Pontiac), nor did he issue material to which he did not hold clear title. In 1950, he arranged to produce a series of operatic albums in collaboration with the Florence May Festival in Rome, using a mix of competent American and Italian artists, and he arranged to fly conductors H. Arthur Brown and Felix Gunter to Vienna to conduct a series of orchestral recordings, under the supervision of his musical director, Edward J. Smith. Many of the early LP covers featured distinctive artwork commissioned from Alex Steinweiss' and other well-known artists. Pressing quality, however, was often substandard.

Although Gabor ran a more reputable business than Oberstein, he had his share of legal problems. Questions occasionally were raised about the sources of some of his recordings, usually to no avail, but in 1952 Berna Films sued both Remington and Continental for using material from its film soundtracks without a license. Continental had signed a licensing agreement with Berna in 1950, but had failed to make payments; Remington apparently never secured a license.

In February 1959, Gabor sold his U.S., Canadian, and Puerto Rican pressing plants to the Thompson Record Corporation (a syndicate that reputedly held a financial stake in Remington), then departed on a four-month world tour. In Remington's absence, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit (New York) ruled against Remington in a long-running case brought by a group of music publishers for non-payment of royalties. Gabor resigned as president of Remington Records upon his return in July. His place was taken by vice-president George Curtiss, who announced new organizational plans were forthcoming, but Remington discontinued operations in 1961.

RENAISSANCE RECORDS — See American Elite Record Company

REPUBLIC RECORDS / CECILLE MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1950

Offices: 1674 Broadway, New York (1947–1949); 580 5th Ave., New York (1950); 6356 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA (branch, from late 1948)

Record Products: Ohio Records, Republic [2]

John McLaughlin's Cecille Music Company (a distributor for Damon Records and other small labels) entered the recording business in the spring of 1947 with its Ohio Records label for the jukebox market. Ohio Records was advertised as "A Midwest Label for Midwest Ops," despite its New York roots. It released "I Had a Wonderful Time in Columbus" by Jack Lathrop and the Buckeyes in the spring of 1947, then disappeared from the trade papers.

Republic Records was launched during the summer of 1948, as a Cecille affiliate, with Anthony Gallucio serving as vice-president and Guy Ward (formerly of Black and White Records) serving as sales manager. Its early offerings included albums of college songs, along with some undistinguished pop singles by obscure artists. A Hollywood branch office opened in the autumn of 1948, which reportedly was to promote Republic records and Cecille songs via radio, television, and motion pictures. However, nothing more was reported concerning the company's ambitious plans, and the last known Republic advertising appeared in late 1948. The records were still being sold in 1950.

The Republic name was later used by an unrelated (and much better-known) Nashville label, launched in 1952.

REQUEST RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: Minneapolis (PO box number only; no street address listed)

Record Products: Request

Of unknown ownership, Request Records specialized in artists from Minnesota (including Cliff Kyes and his Orchestra), Wisconsin (Clem Rohde and his Old-Timers), and Iowa (Moeller's Accordion Band) who were active in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The second letter in Request's catalog-number prefixes indicates the artist (e.g., R-M for Moeller, R-R for Rohde). The Minneapolis *Star Tribune* reported in June 1950 that Kyes' band had recorded four sides for Request, one of the very few period reference found for the label. Advertising and distribution appear to have been strictly local.

REX RECORDS (Hollywood) — See Rapoport, Maurice A.

REX TALKING MACHINE CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1914–1917

Offices: Philadelphia (1–8/1914); 35–37 W. 31st St., New York (from 8/1914); 9 Vandever Ave., Wilmington, DE (factory offices); 1332 Arch St., Philadelphia (sales)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios—1209 Walnut St., Philadelphia (former Keen-O-Phone studio, 1/1914–8/1915); 35 W. 31st St., New York (from 8/1915)

Pressing: Orthodox St. & Frankford Creek, Philadelphia (former Keen-O-Phone plant, 1–5/1914); 9 Vandever Ave., Wilmington, DE (5/1914–2/1917)

Record Products: Rex [1]; Crescent [1] (c. 1917), Empire [1], Fraad, Lyric [2], McKinley, Mozart [2], Playerphone, Rishell, Triumph [1]

The Rex Talking Machine Corporation was incorporated in January 1914, in Wilmington, Delaware, by Philip Wohlstetter and Paul F. Haessler, with capital stock of \$1.2 million. Officers at founding included Wohlstetter (president), H. W. Stoll (treasure), and A. C. Simpson (secretary). Fred Hager, Charles Hibbard, and Thomas Kraemer — all from the defunct Keen-O-Phone Company — served as were retained as Rex's musical director, recording engineer, and factory superintendant, respectively.

Rex was not a reorganization of the Keen-O-Phone Company, as has been stated in some works, although it did take over Keen-O-Phone's assets. *The Talking Machine World* for February 1914 reported that Rex had secured a long-term lease of the Keen-O-Phone Company's plant, equipment, and patents. It also acquired rights to the Keen-O-Phone masters, probably through Fred Hager, who apparently owned them outright (and still

had possession of them as late as the 1930s). The company substituted its own Rex label for the Keen-O-Phone label, but continued Keen-O-Phone's catalog numbering series from the point at which Keen-O-Phone left off. A significant portion of the Keen-O-Phone catalog was reissued with Rex labels. Rex's catalog consisted mainly of popular and standard fare performed by Hager's house ensemble and the usual studio freelance singers, but there was also a Grand Opera Series (largely comprising reissues from the Keen-O-Phone catalog) that featured Ellen Beach Yaw, Feruccio Giannini, and Attilio de Crescenzo, among others, as well as a few offerings for the ethnic markets.

Unlike Keen-O-Phone, which had been noted for its innovative, high-quality phonographs, Rex marketed inexpensive machines of undistinguished design. The company operated its own retail stores in Buffalo, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and other major cities. Rex, as well as independent retailers, concocted all sorts of premium schemes, generally involving phonograph giveaways tied to record sales. At first, free phonographs were offered to customers who purchased six records and signed an agreement to purchase sixty-six more, at the rate of one per week. Later offers required that as many as seventy-seven records be purchased. A dealer in Asheville, North Carolina, concocted the Rex Talking Machine Club, requiring the up-front purchase of only ten records, plus a 5¢ down payment to obtain a phonograph, followed by thirty-one weekly payments, which increased by 5¢ per week until \$26.50 was repaid.

In early May 1914, it was disclosed that the Chamber of Commerce of Wilmington, Delaware, had convinced Rex officials to move their equipment to that city, where the company would take over a former tobacco factory on Vandever Avenue (said to be Liggett & Myers' in some reports, and P. Lorillard's in others). One reporter estimated that the plant would be in a position to hire 300 employees, forty-percent of whom were expected to be women. In January 1915, it was reported that the actual number employed was only 125–150. At the time, Rex reportedly was paying an average wage of \$16 per week to its factory workers.

Wohlstetter seems to have been unprepared to handle the move, admitting to *The Talking Machine World*, "at the present time matters are in such a preliminary stage that it is almost impossible to tell the trade what we are planning to do." Full conversion of the tobacco factory was not completed until the early autumn of 1914, coinciding with the introduction of a new zero-prefixed master-number series. In the meantime, Rex continued to record in the former Keen-O-Phone studio in Philadelphia.

By late 1914, Rex was experiencing serious financial problems. On January 26, 1915, the factory temporarily closed after creditors filed a petition with the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia for a declaration of involuntary bankruptcy. The filing claimed that the company was insolvent. The largest creditor by far was Gustave Mayer, who had loaned the company \$17,5000. The other two claims were negligible, totaling only \$163. Wohlstetter dismissed the action as "merely an incident in a plan of reorganization," claiming that creditors were "friendly to the concern." Nevertheless, the company was placed in bankruptcy, with Mayer appointed to act as its receiver.

Phonograph manufacturing was temporarily suspended, but record production continued. The factory resumed full-time operation in early March 1915, with approximately half of its previous staff. During the confusing period that followed, Rex filed corporate charters in Richmond, Virginia (on April 20, 1915) and Erie County, New York (on May 8, 1915). Reorganization as a Delaware corporation finally began in July 1915, involving what was termed "a substantial increase in assets," after creditors agreed to accept Rex stock in lieu of cash. Wohlstetter was retained as president despite his uneven performance thus far, with Mayer serving as secretary and treasurer.

In August 1915, the reorganized company opened a new studio in New York and introduced a redesigned label. A new X-prefixed master-number was begun at that time, and many of the former Keen-O-Phone titles were deleted, or were given new couplings and assigned new Rex catalog numbers. The company found a much-needed new revenue stream as a producer of client labels, supplying pressings to Empire, McKinley, Mozart, Playerphone, Rishell, and other regional and mail-order brands, most of which used the same couplings and catalog numbers as the corresponding Rex issues. The increased demand caught Rex's managers unprepared. In November 1915, the factory reported a backlog of more than 25,000 unfilled record orders.

The Talking Machine World for August 1916 reported that "the Rex Talking Machine Company is doing considerable advertising in the 'movies,' and with good results." However, Rex found itself competing for market share with Pathé's Frères' superior sapphire-ball discs, which were being heavily promoted. They had gained steadily in popularity since their introduction to the American market in late 1914, with a stellar artist roster that Rex could never have afforded.

With Rex continuing to struggle financially, a group of creditors headed by Mayer (who was still owed \$15,300) filed a bankruptcy petition on October 9, 1916. Paul B. Stevens and Paul F. Haessler were appointed receivers on October 15 and were instructed to continue operation of the plant until further notice. In early 1917, the Rex Talking Machine Corporation was ordered to liquidate. Its assets, offered at bankruptcy sale on February 2, originally were to have been sold in separate lots comprising the recording studio, pressing plant, etc., but in the end were purchased as a whole by David J. Reinhardt, representing a group of Rex stockholders, for \$55,000. The new owners left Wohlstetter and his existing staff in place. In March 1918 the business was reorganized and incorporated by several Wilmington investors as the Imperial Talking Machine Company, *q.v.*

A final meeting of Rex creditors was held on September 12, 1917. Philip Wohlstetter died on April 3, 1918, by which time the Imperial Talking Machine Company had failed. Surplus Rex phonographs and records were still being remaindered by Babson Brothers, at deep discounts, as late as 1920. Fred Hager retained possession of the masters, which he later recalled having sold to an unnamed party in the 1930s. They are no longer known to exist.

REYNARD, JAMES KENT (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1919–1921

Offices: New York area

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Peerless [5]; masters for Arto, possibly other labels

James Kent (J. K.) Reynard was an early studio recording artist who later owned Pathé retail stores in Pittsburgh and New York. His recording career began c. 1896–1897, as a tenor soloist and member and manager of the Diamond Quartet and other vocal groups. His later musical endeavors included a stint as director of the Union Social Club Band of East Elmhurst, New Jersey, which is not known to have made records. A 1913 *Brooklyn Daily Times* article referred to Reynard as simply "a retired band-master and musical instructor."

Reynard was also an amateur inventor with several phonograph-related patents to his credit, beginning with a cylinder-molding process that he assigned to the American Graphophone Company (Columbia) in 1900. In August 1903, he patented a convertible reproducer that could play both lateral- and vertical-cut discs, with the aid of Philip Mauro's law firm. Mauro was closely affiliated with Columbia, which he represented in numerous patent-related lawsuits. His interest in the patent might have stemmed from the fact that Columbia was developing a vertical-cut phonograph and disc at the time, although they were never produced commercially.

Reynard's 1918 U.S. patent #1,283,903 covered a form of the universal cut, which could be played without attachments on either lateral- or vertical-cut phonographs. It was first employed on his short-lived version of the Peerless label, which was marketed by the Electric Phonograph Corporation (makers of the Phonolamp phonograph-lamp hybrids) in the summer of 1919. The labels show Reynard's patent number and his "Corkscrew Cut" pictorial trademark. An advertisement in the *Binghamton [NY] Press* for June 13, 1919, offered a free sample Peerless record "before commencing our national advertising campaign," which apparently never materialized. Because of the label's extreme rarity, it has not been possible to determine whether the recordings were Reynard's own. No mention of the label has been found after 1919.

Reynard subsequently licensed his universal-cut patent to newly launched Arto Company, which cited it on their earliest labels. Reynard operated his own studio in the early 1920s and recorded some masters for Arto in 1921, as confirmed by an entry in band manager Ed Kirkeby's session log.

RHAPSODY RECORDS [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1949

Offices: 1752 N. Vine St., Hollywood, CA (to mid-1946); 2519 W. 7th St., Los Angeles (mid-1946–1947); 204 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, CA (1947–1949)

Pressing: Courtney Records plant (Los Angeles)

Record Products: Rhapsody [1]

Owned and operated by songwriters Tony Harrison, Pearl Walla, Bobby Worth, and Allie Wrubel. The company was launched in the spring of 1946, primarily to promote songs published by Harrison's and Walla's Harwall Music, with which the record operation briefly shared office space before moving to its own quarters. Distribution was handled locally by Fox Associates (Los Angeles).

Rhapsody specialized in middle-of-the-road pop fare performed by local artists of no particular distinction. The initial releases, first advertised in May 1946, were by the Esquire Trio, a cocktail-lounge group that had a minor local jukebox hit with "My Little Abode Hacienda."

In August 1946, Harrison signed a deal under which Rhapsody would supply Persian movie-theater owner Amid Ahkbar with custom recordings of songs from American films, some of which were said to have premiered in Persia six to ten years after their American release. Harrison was to copy the original movie arrangements as closely as possible, and Ahkbar agreed to purchase the records in lots of 25,000. Harrison retained the option to release the recordings in the U.S., should there be any demand for such outdated material, which apparently there was not. At the same time, Harrison said he was considering recording current American pop tunes sung in Chinese, for export to Asia.

In 1947 Rhapsody turned production and distribution over to United Artist Records, an ill-fated cooperative that released small producers' records under its own label. Rhapsody survived United Artist's bankruptcy in 1948, only to be purchased in early 1949 by Lee Penny's Rhapsodette Records, a newly formed venture that failed almost immediately. By late 1949, the Rhapsody name was being used by an unrelated Toledo label (*see next entry*).

RHAPSODY RECORDS [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1951

Offices: 2671 Cheltenham Rd., Toledo, OH

Record Products: Rhapsody [2]

An obscure operation unrelated to Los Angeles-based Rhapsody Records (*see previous entry*). The company appeared in *Billboard's* label directory as late as March 1952 (a listing that included many inactive or defunct companies). No reliable information has been located concerning its ownership or output.

RHUMBOOGIE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1946

Offices: 343 E. Garland Blvd., Chicago

Record Products: Rhumboogie

One of the last independent race-record labels to appear prior to post–World War II boom, Rhumboogie was affiliated with Charlie's Rhumboogie Cafe, a popular Chicago night-spot. (Neither the cafe nor the record company was connected with the Rhum-Boogie Club in Los Angeles, which was also in operation at that time.)

The club got its start in 1942, when automobile dealer Charlie Glenn refurbished a run-down establishment on Chicago's South Side that had passed through a succession of owners, housing one failed club after another. Glenn paid \$15,000 for the property, then reportedly spent nearly double that amount on repairs and upgrades. The club hosted an opening-night gala on April 17, 1942, staged by producer Joe "Ziggy" Johnson and featuring Tiny Bradshaw's Orchestra. Notable among the invited guests was heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis. A rumor was already circulating that Louis owned a part-interest in the club, which Glenn initially denied, although later events confirmed that was indeed the case.

In late 1944, Glenn decided to issue records to promote his club. The first recording

session was held on October 10, 1944, but a disagreement between Glenn and house band leader Marl Young reportedly delayed release for many months. The Rhumboogie Recording Company, under Glenn's management, finally made its public debut in May 1945 with "Sail On Boogie" / "I'm Still in Love with You," by T-Bone Walker, one of the club's most popular stars.

After Rhumboogie's initial release reportedly sold 50,000 copies in its first six months, Glenn decided to sign other artists and distribute the label nationally. *Billboard* reported in November 1945 that he was preparing Walker's second release while planning to press 150,000 additional copies of his first. Glenn had recently signed a second artist (Boogie Woogie Allen) and was seeking larger pressing and distribution facilities.

Glenn sold the Rhumboogie Café in July 1946 to a group of investors headed by Joe Louis. Glenn stayed on briefly to assist with the transition, and he also retained control of the Rhumboogie Recording Company. However, both operations soon began to unravel. Having severed his business connections with the club, Glenn managed to keep Rhumboogie Records afloat, if only barely. Walker filled his last confirmed Rhumboogie session in December 1945 then moved on to Black and White Records in September 1946. An early 1946 session by Charles Gray and his Rhumboogie Five was the label's last, although *Billboard* reported in March 1946 that Walker had recorded twelve additional sides for Rhumboogie. Two of the Walker masters were later acquired by Egmont Sonderling's Swing-Master Record Corporation.

The Rhumboogie Cafe outlived its namesake label, but on May 20, 1947, it was temporarily shut down by the American Federation of Musicians, which filed a \$7,000 claim for unpaid salaries on behalf of union members Erskine Hawkins and Johnny Moore's Three Blazers. Shortly after a settlement was reached with the AFM, the Internal Revenue Service closed the club for failure to pay an undisclosed amount in back taxes.

RHYTHM RECORDINGS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945–1947, revived 1953

Offices: 1317 Grove St., San Francisco (Rhythm Record Shop); 316 6th St., San Francisco (1945–mid 1947)

Original-Master Source(s): Independent studios

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing (1940s), Bob Geddins' plant (1950s), other independent plant(s)

Record Products: Rhythm [2] (Rhythm Recordings)

Founded in 1945 by Dave Rosenbaum, as an adjunct to his Rhythm Record Shop. The launch date is often given in error as 1942 because the label's initial offerings (released in January 1946) included several previously unissued sides by Saunders King that had been privately recorded in 1942 by the Photo & Sound studio (San Francisco).

The Rhythm Recordings label was in production by December 1945, when the trade papers reported that it would be handled by the Jack Gutshall Distributing Company's newly opened San Francisco branch, of which Rosenbaum would serve as manager. The records were first advertised nationally in January 1946 and retailed for \$1.05, considerably more than major-label releases. Rhythm Recordings specialized in jazz and rhythm-and-blues, with newly recorded material by King prominently featured. The operation appears to have gone dormant by mid-1947. Saunders King moved on to Modern Records, which purchased his Rhythm Recordings masters.

Producer Bob Geddins revived the Rhythm Recordings label in late 1953 in partnership with Dave Rosenbaum, with Geddins handling artists, repertoire, and production, and Rosenbaum providing the financing. In 1955 ownership passed to sports figure and nightclub owner Don Barksdale. The label's later history is beyond the scope of this work.

RHYTHM RECORDS COMPANY / RHYTHMTONE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1948

Offices: 4710 S. Hoover St., Los Angeles; 705 N. Sierra Bonita Ave. (1945); Hollywood, CA (early 1947); 4842 Placidia Ave., N. Hollywood, CA (from 5/1947)

Pressing: Modern Records, The Bishop Presses, possibly other independent plants

Record Products: Rhythm [1] (Rhythm Records)

A pop label launched in 1945 by clarinetist and band leader Neely Plumb. The initial releases were advertised in early 1946.

Rhythm Records' regular series featured Plumb himself, as well as Bob Graham, Four Hits and a Miss, and other popular artists. The company also produced a "Sing with the Stars" series (consisting of instrumental accompaniments only, to which customers could sing along) and a "Four Star Rhythm Section" series (rhythm-section performances at slower-than-normal tempos, intended for practice use). The latter employed some well-known jazz musicians, including Stan Wrightsman (piano), George Van Eps (guitar), Artie Shapiro (bass), and Nick Fatool (drums), but *Billboard* warned that the records were not suitable for jukebox use.

In January 1948, at the start of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, Plumb reorganized his company as Rhythmtone Records, with Al Burton serving as vice-president. Drawing on Plumb's supply of forty-six pre-ban Rhythm masters, the new company was set up as a cooperative venture involving ten unnamed studio musicians who had participated in those sessions, and who were to split any profits from the new releases. However, Rhythmtone appears to have suspended operations by the end of 1948. The company was last listed by *Billboard* in January 1949.

Plumb went on to have a distinguished career in the recording and movie industries, working in various capacities for Modern Records, M-G-M, RCA and Capitol, and producing or working on the soundtracks for "Taxi Driver," "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly," and "True Grit," among many others. He died on October 4, 2000, at the age of eighty-eight.

RIALTO RECORDS CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Rialto [3]

A short-lived pop label launched in August 1949 by Michael Cassone, formerly of the CA-Song Record Company (*q.v.*), where his wife, Marie, was employed as a sales representative. Rialto signed a recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians in July or August of that year, and belatedly received a passing mention in *Billboard* in February 1950, but otherwise attracted no attention in the trade papers. The company appears to have been inactive by the end of 1950. The Rialto name was later used by several unrelated labels.

RIBBON RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1949

Offices: 301 W. College Ave., Tallahassee, FL

Record Products: Ribbon

Launched in late 1947 by Johnny Lawrence (an aspiring songwriter and band leader who was studying music at Florida State University at the time), in affiliation with Ribbon Music, a Tallahassee publishing operation.

Ribbon's initial release ("Ain't Got Nothin'" / "One of Those Things," credited to Lawrence and his Florida Statesmen) appeared in February 1948. The *Tallahassee Democrat* reported that Lawrence had been "moved" to record several masters prior to implementation of the American Federation of Musicians' 1948 recording ban, suggesting that professional union talent had been involved. However, *Billboard* later reported that the company would use only university musicians. Lawrence predicted that the AFM ban would "create a market for independently made records," which proved to be correct to some extent (although not in the case of his own label, which quickly went dormant).

Lawrence and Ribbon Music relaunched Ribbon Records in March 1949, in partnership with Buck Green, Roy Breedlove, Merl Russ, and Doug Roberts. All were members of Green's Dixieland Playboys, a country-and-western group. Lawrence announced a forthcoming release by the band, after which nothing further was reported concerning Ribbon Records or Ribbon Music. The Ribbon name was later used for an unrelated New York label.

RICE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – 1947

Offices: Patriot, OH

Record Products: Blue Ribbon [1]

An extremely short-lived label of unknown ownership. Several titles, by Marty Licklider's Missouri Fox Hunters and Ted Krause's Lone Star Wranglers, were briefly mentioned by *Billboard* in November 1946. However, the records reportedly did not reach market until mid-1947, after which nothing more was reported concerning the company. The Blue Ribbon name was used beginning in 1949 for an unrelated venture of Chaw Mank (see Blue Ribbon Music Company/Blue Ribbon Records).

RICH PUBLICATIONS / RICH-ART ENTERPRISES, INC. / RICH-ART RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1943 – 1949

Offices: 504 W. Valley Blvd., El Monte, CA (Rich Publications, early 1940s); 2638 S. Gladys Ave., Garvey, CA (Rich-Art Enterprises, 1946–late 1940s)

Record Products: Rich Records, Rich-Art, Richtone [1]

Rich Publications launched its Rich Records label as a country-and-western line c. late 1943. The company was largely a family operation, with Arthur C. Rich serving as president, N. J. Rich as manager, and P. A. Rich as head of distribution. Early reports stated that the records were for jukebox use only, so would not be sold through retailers.

The original Rich label design showed no manufacturer but credited Rich Publications as the distributor. Early offerings were dominated by Ezra Paulette's Beverly Hillbillies, a popular radio act. A redesigned label, with the addition of a 1944 copyright date, credited production to Rich-Art Records but did not mention Rich Publications. Catalog numbering was started over after the redesigned labels were introduced, causing some of the original catalog numbers to reappear on entirely different releases. By that time, the Smokey Roberts' 101 Ranch Boys had replaced Paulette's group as the label's main attraction. Distribution was taken over by K & M in November 1945.

The publishing and recording operations were merged in 1946 as Rich-Art Enterprises, Inc., at which time Arthur Rich purchased a pressing plant and announced ambitious expansion plans for what he termed "three new lines of living, virile records." In addition to Rich Records (which was recast as purely a race and country-and-western label), the new label line-up included Rich-Art (pop) and Richtone (standards and light classics). However, distribution of Rich-Art products appears to have been limited largely to California and Utah, and little more was heard of the operation after 1946. Rich-Art Enterprises was still listed in *Billboard*'s manufacturer directory as late as January 1949, although the recording operation probably was inactive by then. Some Rich recordings were reissued on the Courtney and Solar labels in the later 1940s.

RICH-R'-TONE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947–1952

Offices: 415 W. Pine St., Johnson City, TN

Record Products: Rich-R'-Tone; Cowboy, Folk Star, Wheeling (all manufacturing only)

Launched in early 1947 by Jim Stanton. The Rich-R'-Tone label originally specialized in country music. It had only limited regional distribution during its first year of existence, but in May 1948 Stanton signed a national marketing agreement with David Miller of Palda Records.

Stanton reportedly discovered many of his artists by listening to local radio broadcasts. His early roster included the Stanley Brothers, Church Brothers, and Blue Ridge Ramblers. In a departure from his White country-and-western roots, Stanton began signing rhythm-and-blues and Black gospel artists in August 1950. *Billboard* reported the initial gospel release was to be by the Happy Gospel Singers of Greenville, South Carolina.

Stanton took over manufacturing of the Cowboy label in 1949, contracting distribution to the Palda Record Company but leaving Cowboy's James Myers in place as manager. Later that year, Stanton took over manufacturing of two more independent country-and-western labels, Folk Star (managed by Joe Price, and unrelated to the Folk-Star label of Louisiana) and Wheeling (managed by Doc Williams, who retained his financial interest

in that company). Folk Star was discontinued in 1951, and control of Wheeling was returned to Williams in 1952.

In September 1951, Stanton launched a music-publishing affiliate, Melody Trail Music, in partnership with Melody Trail Records' Ray Parker. Rich-R'-Tone's end as an independent company came in August 1952, when it merged with Clifford Spurlock's Acme Radio and Record Corporation, *q.v.* Operations were consolidated at Acme's pressing plant in Campbellsville, Kentucky, where Stanton took over the management of both divisions.

The final Rich-R'-Tone releases appeared in the spring of 1953. The Rich-R-Tone name (no apostrophe) was used for an unrelated label in the later 1950s.

RICHTONE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: Canton, OH

Record Products: Richtone [2]

A short-lived operation launched by John D. Crawford and unknown others shortly before implementation of the American Federation of Musicians' second recording ban. The Richtone Record Company released several pre-ban recordings by the Ralph Wilson Quartet (a night-club band from Akron, Ohio) in 1948 but failed within a year of its launch. In September 1948, the masters were purchased by the Lucky Music Corporation (*see* Stapleton Industries). The Richtone name was used for an unrelated Dallas label beginning in 1951.

RICO PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1921

Offices: 2137 Seventh Avenue, New York

Record Products: Rico

The very short-lived Rico Phonograph Company was founded in 1921 by African-American basso Pureza Rico, who a writer for *The Chicago Defender* foolishly described as "the world's greatest voice." Rico had attracted some attention in New York in the late 'teens. A Carnegie Hall appearance, scheduled for April 2, 1920, was cancelled over an unspecified "misunderstanding," but on May 17 Rico gave a song recital at New York's prestigious Aeolian Hall.

A year later, the *Defender* announced that the newly formed Rico Phonograph Company was "to record concert and opera music by our people only," indicating that was Rico was intended to be more than just a vanity label. One release, coupling Rico's renditions of "The Mountain King" and "A Son of the Desert" reportedly was already on sale by that time, but nothing more was heard of the venture. Thus far, no example of a Rico record has been reliably reported.

RINGLE, DAVID (DAVE) (Discs)

Heart Records, Inc. / Belmont Records

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1950

Offices: 1607 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Heart, Belmont

David (Dave) Ringle was a well-known New York radio personality and songwriter whose compositions included "Wabash Blues" and "Carolina Moon." He launched his music-publishing operation in 1932 and later operated a rehearsal studio in New York. Ringle produced two short-lived pop labels in the late 1940s, both aimed primarily at disc jockeys and jukebox operators, to plug his publishing house's tunes.

Heart, launched in November 1948, was marketed as "The Record with a Heart." Its gimmick consisted of coupling a supposed "new hit" with an "old hit" (usually a decades-old public-domain title, which *Billboard* dismissed as "back-room sob tunes") on the same theme. Heart records were briefly advertised in late 1948, usually with an offer of free copies to disc jockeys. According to *Billboard*, the company's artists and stockholders (the latter all said to have "solid jockey connections") were expected to personally plug the discs. No mention of Heart Records has been found after early 1949. The name was later used by several unrelated labels.

Belmont Records was launched in the spring of 1950 to "discover and record fresh

material by new writers and to feature new artists," according to Ringle. The first release, in May, featured two Ringle publications performed by the Paul Harris Orchestra, a little-known Midwestern group, after which nothing further was reported concerning Belmont. The company's brief reappearances in *Billboard's* July 1951 and March 1952 directories (which included many inactive or defunct labels) probably can be disregarded. Ringle died in June 1965.

RIVOLI RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1951

Offices: New York

Record Products: Rivoli

Owned and operated by band leader Noro Morales, the self-styled "Rhumba Maestro." Some press reports of the period misidentified Morales as Cuban. Born in Puerto Rico, Morales came to New York in 1935, reportedly with \$60 in his pocket. By the early 1940s, his orchestra was a fixture at New York's La Conga Club.

Billboard announced Rivoli Records' impending launch in late October 1949. *Cash Box* reported on January 28, 1950, that sixteen sides had already been pressed, the first of which were to be released in February. Early reports stated that Rivoli would feature local New York talent, but not Morales himself, who was under contract to M-G-M Records at the time. However, Morales did not renew his M-G-M contract in January 1950, freeing him to record for his own label but likely entailing a loss of income, given the Rivoli label's relative obscurity.

Morales established Rivoli Music in the early 1950s as an affiliated publishing operation, and Rivoli LPs were introduced at about the same time. However, he apparently scuttled the label in 1951, by which time he was recording for Decca. Morales died in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on January 16, 1964. The Rivoli name was later used for an unrelated LP line.

RKO PATHÉ STUDIOS (NEW YORK) (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1950s

Offices: 625 Madison Ave., New York (main New York office); (studio)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (105 E. 106th Ave., New York)

Record Products: Masters for Capitol

Designed by Nathaniel Shilkret, RKO Pathé's New York studios were used primarily for television and movie soundtrack production. They owe their inclusion here to the fact that one studio was leased by Capitol Records for commercial recording sessions beginning in November 1946. The main RKO Pathé studio was located in Culver City, California, and is not known to have been used by any commercial record producers.

ROBIN HOOD RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1951

Offices: Brill Building (1619 Broadway), New York

Pressing: Perfection Records, other independent plant(s)

Record Products: Robin Hood

A short-lived company launched by trumpeter Louis Prima, in partnership with Milton Ross and Leo Rogers (the latter serving as president) in the autumn of 1950. It was named for a 1944 Prima hit, which Varsity Records had recently reissued.

Robin Hood's first release (Prima's "Oh Babe"/"Piccolina Lena") appeared in early October 1950, in 78- and 45-rpm pressings. In November, *The New York Age* reported that the record had already sparked cover versions of "Oh Babe" on at least ten other labels. Leo Rogers launched an aggressive promotional campaign on the strength of that release, hiring Irving Shiffrin to handle marketing and securing British and Canadian distribution deals, but little more was heard of the venture. The company was last listed by *Billboard* in its July 1951 directory.

The Robin Hood name was later used for an unrelated label credited to Paramount Enterprises.

ROBIN RECORDS COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1949

Offices: New York

Record Products: Robin

Launched by Hy Kipniss (a cousin of Broadway producer Joe Kipniss) in late 1948. The company appears to have perished within a year, after having released a handful of undistinguished pop titles by obscure artists. The Robin name was later used for several unrelated labels, beginning with Kansas City and New York versions in the early 1950s.

ROCKET RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – c. 1950

Mailing Address: Portland, OR (PO box number only; no street address given)

Records Produced: Rocket [1]

The Rocket Record Company was briefly mentioned by *Billboard* in September 1947, when it signed Blondie Force and his Montana Cowboys. In November, Universal Records purchased the masters and recording contract of band leader Vince DiMaggio and his polka combo from Rocket, after which little more was heard of the label. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 label directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Rocket name was later used for several unrelated labels, including one for the Latino market.

ROCKET / ROCKETTE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1950s

Offices: 109 Court Ave., Albany, GA

Records Produced: Rocket [2], Rockette

Launched in 1950 by E. R. Ross. The Rocket name (which was already in use) was almost immediately changed to Rockette, although labels retained their original design and 1950 copyright date. Red Rider was featured on the few known releases.

RODEHEAVER, HOMER A. (Discs)

Rainbow Record Company / Rainbow Recordings / Rodeheaver Record Company / Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories / Rodeheaver-Bennett Radio Productions

Record Production: 1920 – 1929, 1940s

Offices: Winona Lake, IN (1920–10/1921); 440 S. Dearborn St., Chicago (from 10/1921); 1600 McClarge Building, Chicago (Rodeheaver Record Company sales office); 814 Walnut St., Philadelphia (sales and distribution office); 219 E. 39th St. and 150 E. 41st St., New York (sales office)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios—Winona Lake, IN (1920–1921); 150 E. 41st St., New York (reported but not confirmed); 218 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago (from 10/1921)

Pressing: Own plant (early 1920s); Starr Piano Company (from late 1921); RCA Custom Products, possibly other independent plants (1940s)

Record Products: Rainbow [1], Rainbow Sacred Records; Karpathia, Sergei Marinoff School of Classic Dancing, United Society of Christian Endeavor, and other custom and client labels; masters for Paramount, Wallin's, probably labels; Special [1] (house label) and other personal recordings

A singer, trombonist, prolific composer of religious songs, and close associate of evangelist Billy Sunday (with whom he toured as a star attraction for many years), as well as an astute businessman, Homer Rodeheaver recorded for all of the major labels before launching his own Rainbow Record Company in 1920.

Rodeheaver filed his original Rainbow trademark application on March 26, 1917, claiming use on books and sheet music since January 20 of that year. Records were not included in that application, but on March 5, 1921, Rodeheaver filed a trademark application for the first Rainbow record label design, claiming use on records since October 1, 1920.

Rainbow Record's launch was announced somewhat belatedly in *The Talking Machine World* for January 1921, which reported that the recordings were being made in a studio at Rodeheaver's religious retreat in Winona Lake, Indiana. C. R. Johnson served as recording manager, and Thomas P. Ratcliff (a former manager of the Aeolian Company's record division) was hired as general manager several months later. In July 1921, *The Music Trades* reported that Rodeheaver would open a New York studio before September 1.

The earliest Rainbow releases were being advertised by early January 1921. Rodeheaver was adept at cross-marketing, advertising his publishing company's song-books and religious literature in the Rainbow record catalogs, and his records in some song-books. *TMW* reported, "This new record is not an effort to enter into competition with records already in existence. For the present, at least, the recordings will be confined entirely to sacred songs...." Excess profits were to be used to finance a school for evangelists at Winona Lake.

Virtually all Rainbow releases were devoted to religious material, with Rodeheaver prominently featured. In addition to the main 1000 series, there were short-lived 300 and 500 series for Swedish and Japanese titles, respectively, as well as occasional "Special Numbers" (some in a 100 series and some unnumbered, the latter including Rodeheaver's own "Negro Stories of the War"). The 6000-series masters that appear on some early Rainbow records are Rodeheaver's own, not Gennett recordings as is stated in some discographies (the Gennett masters bearing those numbers are all confirmed 1919 recordings of popular songs).

Almost from the start, Rodeheaver also produced records for other independent labels. His first client, signed in July 1921, was the United Society for Christian Endeavor. The recording operation was restructured in October 1921, with the creation of separate divisions to handle Rainbow and client recordings. Sales and marketing of Rainbow records were assigned to the newly incorporated Rodeheaver Record Company, which soon opened branch offices in New York and Philadelphia. It was reported that the company "planned to do considerable recording" in New York, but Rodeheaver did not open a studio there. Instead, the recording and manufacturing of Rainbow records was turned over to the Starr Piano Company (Gennett). The Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories were opened as a separate business, in the heart of Chicago's "phonograph district," as a work-for-hire studio that handled personal recordings and client-label production.

The Talking Machine World for November 1921 reported, "Mr. Rodeheaver recorded fifty new numbers which will be placed on the market by the first of the year." The new series bore redesigned pastel-hued labels that deleted the phrase "Sacred Record." It used a mixture of Rodeheaver's own masters from the original series and previously issued as well as newly commissioned Gennett recordings, most of the latter made for Rainbow's exclusive use. Numbering was begun over at 1000, often resulting in two entirely different versions bearing the same catalog number. Surplus copies from the original series were remaindered after Rodeheaver announced his new records, with the notation "Cancelled" rubber-stamped across the labels.

By late 1924, the Rainbow label had been redesigned again, with the rainbow hues replaced by simple gold-on-red design. At about the same time, Rodeheaver issued his "Mission of Rainbow Records" speech on Rainbow 20151, which was recorded by Gennett in October 1924 and numbered in their personal series rather than being assigned a standard Rainbow catalog number.

The Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories were largely a separate operation from Rainbow Records, although its personal recording services were advertised on some Rainbow sleeves. Its first manager was L. E. Gillingham, who resigned in May 1922 to take a position with the Nipponophone Company in Japan. (Following the devastating earthquake of September 1, 1923, Rodeheaver journeyed to Japan to find Gillingham. Ever the entrepreneur, he scouted for opportunities to produce records for use in missionary work while there.) Charles Rowe, a member of the original Winona Lake orchestra, served as the studio's house violinist for a time.

As a work-for-hire studio, the Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories' primary commercial clients were the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount) and, running a distant second, Wallin's Svenska Records. Paramount held most if not all of its Chicago sessions there from late 1923 through the spring of 1926, when it switched the Orlando Marsh's electrically equipped studio. Paramount's use of the Rodeheaver studio was confirmed by pianist Lovie Austin in a 1950 interview. Since then, a number of Paramount race recordings have surfaced with Rodeheaver test-pressing labels which, along with the aural evidence, lend credence to her account.

Beyond that, the Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories studio was used primarily for custom-label and personal recordings. Many of the latter were issued on Rodeheaver's

Special label. The records were strictly private productions, with recording and manufacturing costs the customers' responsibility. *TMW* reported that the studio made fifty-six custom recordings during its first weeks of operation in November 1921. It staff seems to have gone to great lengths to secure good recordings for its private customers, if one 1923 account is any indication. The *Forest Park Review* reported that the studio devoted more than four hours to recording two selections by Waldemar Zutz, a local piano teacher, "on one of the hottest days this summer, with doors and windows shut tightly," making four test recordings of each composition before cutting the final masters. Although it has been claimed that Rodeheaver did not produce any Ku Klux Klan-affiliated labels, at least one Klan-related issue appeared on his Special label.

The Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories appear to have closed by mid-1926, never having converted to electrical recording. However, Rodeheaver's separate Rainbow Records operation remained in business, with Gennett continuing to handle the recording and manufacturing. The first electrically recorded Rainbow masters, by the Jackson College Glee Club of Jackson, Mississippi, were made by Gennett in the autumn of 1926. The Gennett ledger states that the entire session was rejected on October 16, with notations that included "weak," "swishy," "blasts," and "dangerous grooves." However, "Steal Away" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" were released on Rainbow, contrary to one modern discography. Very weakly recorded, they affirm the Gennett engineer's judgement.

Rainbow's own catalog numbering ended in late 1926. After that, Rainbow records were assigned catalog numbers within Gennett's Personal series. The final Rainbow entry in the Gennett ledgers is a February 1929 session, which was billed to Rodeheaver as a personal recording session.

Rodeheaver later recorded for Decca but was let go, prompting him to complain that "all of their records [are] being taken over for jazz and juke and jive." In the 1940s he launched Rodeheaver-Bennett Radio Productions, a Chicago-based transcription company, in partnership with sister Ruth Rodeheaver Bennett. They briefly revived the Rainbow label, with production contracted to RCA's custom-record division. Rodeheaver continued to tour and broadcast into the early 1950s. He died in Winona Lake on December 18, 1955.

RODEO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1945

Offices: 1511 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles

Pressing: Own plant (Los Angeles)

Record Products: Rodeo; pressing for independent labels

Owned and operated by Charles E. Washburn, who got his start as a distributor of coin-operated entertainment devices in the 1920s. At some point, Washburn began importing Peerless records from Mexico. In the mid-1940s (various accounts give 1943 or 1945), Washburn opened his own pressing plant in Los Angeles, marketing his services to small independent labels.

Washburn turned management of his distribution business over to his wife, Gladys, in mid-1944, and launched Rodeo Records as a subsidiary in partnership with Paul Mayer and William Abel. Introduced in August 1944, the Rodeo label was devoted entirely to country-and-western material and was intended primarily for the jukebox market. In June 1945, Rodeo Records was reorganized as Coast Records (*q.v.*) after Washburn decided to expand into the race and pop markets.

ROLAND RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1951

Offices: 170 2nd Ave., New York

Records Produced: Roland

A short-lived venture of jazz vibraphonist and arranger Joe Roland. The company's launch was briefly noted by *Billboard* in March 1950, after which little more was heard of its label. Joe Roland signed with the Mercer label in March 1951. His move probably marked the end of Roland Records, which last appeared in *Billboard*'s July 1951 label directory. Its brief reappearance in the March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

RONDO RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1954

Offices: 329 S. Wood St., Chicago (1948–Early 1950); 220 Locust St., Chicago (Early 1950–12/1954)

Records Produced (78s): Rondo, Rolin

Launched in June 1946 as an equal partnership between Nicholas (Nick) Lany and Julius F. Bard. The latter also operated J. F. Bard Distributors (a Chicago record-distribution company) and was part-owner of the Pan-American record label. Lany, who served as the company's president, filed a trademark application for Rondo on September 12, 1946, claiming use on labels since July 15.

The initial Rondo releases were advertised in September 1946. Early offerings consisted mainly of piano and Hammond organ recordings, ethnic material by obscure local artists (intended for the local Czech and Polish markets), and a race-record series that was never developed to any significant extent.

The Rondo label attracted little attention outside of the Chicago area until the spring of 1948, when it had a surprise hit with organist Ken Griffin's "You Can't Be True, Dear," a composition that Griffin had originally recorded privately and self-distributed to local jukebox operators several years earlier. Released by Rondo on March 15, the record spent several months on *Billboard*'s Top Ten list, beginning in April. Subsequent Griffin releases were also heavily promoted for jukebox use, touted by Rondo as "sure-fire nickel-pullers." Rondo often employed overdubbing on Griffin's masters, adding separately recorded vocal tracks to the organ solos.

Lany and Bard expanded their operation significantly throughout 1948, suffering occasional stumbles along the way. A minor scuffle broke out during the summer, when they reissued an old Varsity recording by the Lang Thompson Orchestra at the same time as Regent Records. Both had licensed the master from Sonora, but *Billboard* was quick to point out that Regent had honored the royalty provision of Thompson's original Varsity contract, whereas Rondo had not. Lany and Bard became entangled in other legal skirmishes during the late 1940s, most of them involving disputes over the rights to foreign compositions.

Bard spent July and August 1948 in Europe, negotiating master-exchange agreements with various minor companies as the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban dragged on. The foreign recordings, which largely comprised old standards and semi-classical material, were allocated to a special Rondo International Series, which was introduced in late 1948. In the same year, Dave Dreyer set up Biltmore Music in New York, initially to clear foreign rights for Bard and Lany.

Lany and Bard finally incorporated in December 1948, as Rondo Records, Inc., at which time Lany refiled the original 1946 trademark application. Although Rondo remained primarily a pop label, there were brief excursions into the jazz, rhythm-and-blues, and country-and-western markets (the latter consisting of reissued Sonora recordings). Plastic pressings were introduced during the summer of 1949, followed by LPs later that year.

In January 1950, Rondo became the first independent label to adopt the 45-rpm format, barely nudging out Discovery for the honor. By then, however, its sales had begun to decline. The company lost Ken Griffin, its best-selling artist, in a 1950 bidding war with Broadcast Records. His replacement, Tommy Fairclow, never approached Griffin's popularity. Sales of the imported recordings also proved to be disappointing. In July 1950 they were transferred to the new 49¢ Rolin label, which was dropped at the end of the year.

Billboard last listed Rondo releases in February 1953, coinciding with Bard's departure from the company. The label lay dormant until December 1954, when Lany sold all of Rondo's assets to budget-label producer Eli Oberstein. Although Oberstein retained Rondo Records as a trade name, it was an entirely new organization, operating at a different address and employing different personnel, pressing plants, and distributors. The Rondo label was finally discontinued in 1970.

ROOST RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1958

Offices: 72. W. 52nd St., New York (1949–early 1950s); Brill Building (1619 Broadway; early 1950s–1954); 625 10th Ave., New York (from late 1954).

Record Products (78): Royal Roost, Roost, Showcase, 3 Deuces

Founded in early 1949 by Monty Kaye, with the financial backing of Ralph Watkins and Arthur and Bill Faden, the owners of New York's Royal Roost nightclub. One of the first venues to champion be-bop, the Royal Roost for a time had its own nightly broadcast over radio station WNEW (New York). Teddy Reig, who had been affiliated with Savoy and other small independent labels, served as Roost Records' manager of artists and repertoire. He later acquired part-ownership of the company.

Billboard for January 22, 1949, reported that negotiations were under way for the production and distribution of Roost records. The first release on the Royal Roost label was to have been Kai Winding's "Bop City" (in honor of Kaye's newly opened club), as reported by *Cash Box* in March. But at the last minute, the honor instead went to calypso singer Harry Belafonte's "Recognition," which was released in early April.

The label's name was shortened to Roost following the Royal Roost' closure. In September 1949, Sammy Kaye and Jack Hooke (co-owners of the 3 Deuces nightclub) bought out Roost Records' original owners and took over some of the company's artist contracts, including those of Belafonte, Errol Garner, and Howard McGhee. Hooke bought out Kaye's interest in the company a short time later. In late 1949, Hooke introduced his own 3 Deuces label, while continuing to produce Roost records under Teddy Reig's management. In October 1950, Reig signed an exclusive Roost contract with Stan Getz, who he had first signed for Savoy in 1945.

On July 16, 1955, *Billboard* reported that Birdland owner Morris Levy had purchased a half-interest in Roost Records, which he planned to rename Birdland Records. *Billboard* retracted the story a month later. Levy resurfaced in August 1958, when he purchased Roost outright and folded it into his Roulette Records operation. Teddy Reig stayed on as a producer with Roulette.

ROSAS RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Rosas

Launched in early 1949 as a division of Paul Kalet Enterprises. A well-known songwriter and publicist, Kalet reactivated Pops Music (a record-promotion venture), in partnership with Hal Halpern, at about the time he introduced the Rosas label.

Rosas records, which were devoted exclusively to Latin-American pop fare, were released in several batches throughout 1949, the last of which appeared in the November advance lists. The company appeared in *Billboard's* July 1950 directory, although by then it was no longer listing new releases. Rosas Records' brief reappearance in *Billboard's* July 1951 and March 1952 directories (both of which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. Kalet moved into artist management in early 1951, initially representing singer Marilyn Davies. He later managed a second-generation version of the Ink Spots, which was related to the original group in name only.

ROSE CITY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: Portland, OR

Record Products: Rose City

A short-lived country-music label launched by Oregon country-and-western singer Roy Jackson in early 1948. Rose City records were first advertised locally in March of that year. The records were handled by Poole's Music Shop in Astoria, the Fred Meyer stores, and probably other local retailers, but do not appear to have a distributor.

Billboard belatedly reported in January 1949 that Roy Jackson and his Northwesterners were recording for Rose City. The label's only other confirmed artist was Hector Vincent Plateau, billed as Heck, the Singing Cowboy. The venture appears to have closed after

approximately a dozen known releases. The records were still being sold as late as November 1950, although it appears that there had been no new releases since 1949.

ROUNDUP RECORDINGS — See Western Radio Features

ROYAL RECORD COMPANY [I] / SEPIA RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1947

Offices: 251½ Occidental Blvd., Hollywood, CA (1945–1/1946); 9163 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood (2/1946–early 1947); 8407 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood (from early 1947)

Record Products: Coronet [1], G & G, Gem [2], Sepia; Royal [3] (possibly not produced)

The Royal Record Company was launched in 1945 by African-American songwriter Joseph Perkins (Joe) Greene, whose hits included "Across the Alley from the Alamo," "And Her Tears Flowed Like Wine," and "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying." Dick Stabile served as recording director. The company's various labels specialized in jazz (including a "Collectors Jazz" series on Coronet) and rhythm-and-blues, with a smattering of pop material. Distribution was handled by Jack Gutshall, Paul Reiner, and several other jobbers specializing in small independent labels.

Greene experienced ongoing difficulties in naming his company and labels. The G & G label appeared briefly in 1945, only to vanish before being revived a year later. Coronet, Royal Record's first regularly issued label, reportedly was withdrawn after *Coronet* magazine objected to Greene's use of the name, although a White-owned label of the same name began operating in New York shortly after Greene withdrew his version (see Coronet Records, Inc.). Coronet was replaced in July 1945 by Gem, which had a minor hit that summer with its first release, Ernie Andrews' "Soothe Me." However, Gem was withdrawn in March 1946, after Greene was unable to secure rights to the name because Irving Mills claimed prior use by his identically named company (see *next entry*). By the summer of 1946, distributors were remaindering Gem pressings for half of their original price. Plans to launch a Royal label reportedly were scuttled after prior use was discovered.

In March 1946, Greene organized Sepia Records as a Royal Record Company subsidiary, which a month later substituted the revived G & G label for Gem. Production continued into 1947.

ROYAL RECORD COMPANY [II]

Launched in Hollywood in 1944 by music publisher Irving Mills to produce American jazz recordings for London-based Electric and Musical Industries (Parlophone, *et al.*). According to the *Record Retailing Yearbook* for 1945, Mills was producing a Gem label at that time. No examples have been confirmed, although Mills apparently did secure rights to the Gem name. As an export-only operation, Royal Records is beyond the scope of this work. It is included here only to distinguish it from another Hollywood-based company of the same name, which also produced a Gem label (see *previous entry*).

THE ROYCROFTERS (Discs)

Record Production: 1928 – 1929

Offices: East Aurora, New York; 50 W. 47th St., New York (Roycroft Record Shop, 1929)

Original-Master Source(s): Cameo Record Corporation (1928–1929); American Record Corporation (1929)

Pressing: Cameo plant (1928–1929); Scranton Button Company (1929)

Record Products: Roycroft

An arts-and-crafts society founded in the late 1890s by author Elbert Hubbard, The Roycroft Shops were best known for their fine handcrafted furniture, decorative wares, and esoteric books. By the mid 'teens, its sprawling campus in East Aurora, New York, employed five-hundred "artisans."

Doing business as The Roycrofters, the Roycroft Shops became increasingly commercialized in the years following Hubbard's death aboard the *Lusitania* 1915. Elbert Hubbard II oversaw an ever-growing presence in the mass retail market, although the focus remained on high-quality furniture and accessories. No reason has yet been discovered for The Roycrofters' decision to enter the record market in late 1927.

Ironically, for a company whose motto was "Not how cheap, but how good," production of the records was contracted to the Cameo Record Corporation (*q.v.*), a manufacturer of mediocre, cheaply produced discs for the discount-store trade. William H. Wise & Company, a major New York publisher, was granted the exclusive distribution rights. The Roycrofters belatedly filed a trademark application for Roycroft records on February 21, 1929, claiming first use on February 15, 1928. The exact date of the initial release is unclear.

Roycroft masters, the first of which were recorded by Cameo in December 1927, were commissioned for the label's exclusive use. The earliest series was devoted to renditions by The English Singers of what were inaccurately advertised as "The Songs of Shakespeare's England" (the recordings included material from as early as the thirteenth century). The London-based ensemble was led by Cuthbert Kelly, who provided spoken introductions on many of the early recordings. The group performed material that had been virtually ignored by American record producers, and their Roycroft releases came as a welcome revelation to many record buyers. Although Cameo's recording and pressing quality left something to be desired, The English Singers' records garnered enthusiastic reviews from critics, musicians, and celebrities. Record sleeves and other packaging featured brief endorsements from Walter Damrosch, David Belasco, George Gershwin, and even George M. Cohan.

Sales were handled by William H. Wise, which opened a Roycroft Record Shop in its headquarters at 50 W. 47th Street, New York. The records could also be purchased by mail order directly from Wise, or from Lyon & Healy and other retailers, usually for \$1.50 each, but they are not known to have been listed in The Roycrofters' own catalogs. Far from being great rarities (as is claimed in numerous Internet postings and record dealers' lists), most of the English Singers' releases appear to have sold well, based upon the surprisingly large number of surviving copies. The first four Roycroft records initially were offered as a boxed set that included the individually sleeved discs and a leaflet containing the lyrics. Various other packages were offered as new records were released, including (at the end) a hefty album containing the complete English Singers set. A few masters were remade at later dates, and changes were later made to some of the initial couplings, resulting in alternate versions of several releases.

The English Singers series ended after twelve releases. Roycroft's second series, introduced in late 1928 and again produced by Cameo, marked an abrupt shift from The English Singers' records, comprising mostly contemporary compositions as performed by American artists. The performers — including baritone Warren Mills, tenor John Jacob Niles, and pianists Rudolph Gruen, Helen Ware, and Jessie Moore Wise (the latter being William H. Wise's wife) — were respected concert artists. However, the new series does not appear to have sold well, based upon the records' scarcity today.

Roycroft's final series was produced in late 1929 by the American Record Corporation, which by then had acquired the Cameo Record Corporation. ARC's Roycroft offerings were yet another departure from the label's previous repertoire, devoted to mawkish semi-popular fare by a mysterious NBC radio personality known to his listeners only as "Cheerio" (in real life, Charles Kellogg Field) and members of his radio program's cast. Seemingly meant to appeal mostly to the elderly and infirm (although Field claimed that was not the case), the "Cheerio" releases sold poorly and marked the end of the Roycroft label.

An inexpensive Roycroft portable phonograph, marketed in the later 1920s in Australia and elsewhere by the Grand Pree Record Company, had no connection to the The Roycrofters.

'R-TIST RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 3903 N. Franklin St., Philadelphia

Record Products: 'R-Tist

Launched in August 1946 by Lawrence R. Igoe, a minor New Jersey politician who was described by *Billboard* only as "an industry newcomer." The address given was that of a Philadelphia row-house. The few known 'R-Tist releases feature undistinguished popular fare by obscure regional performers. Thus far, no evidence has been found that the company was active after 1947.

RUMPUS RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 6021 Will Rogers St., Los Angeles

Record Products: Rumpus, Pauli

A short-lived producer of novelty and mildly risqué records. Its Pauli "Soiree Intime" Series was introduced in June 1946 for comedienne Pauli Wheeler, who *Billboard* reported was "well-known for her unusual and intimate presentations of original comic numbers." The company last appeared in *Billboard*'s February 1947 label directory.

— S —

S & G RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1401 Mateo St., Los Angeles

Pressing: S & G Rubber Company (Los Angeles)

Record Products: S & G

Launched in 1947 by John P. Galitza as a subsidiary of his S & G Rubber Company, in partnership with Cal Simon and others. Dan Merlino served as the record operation's sales manager.

Galitza composed several of the tunes that appeared on S & G records. The initial releases, all credited to "Slumber" Nichols & his Western Aces, appeared in *Billboard*'s advance lists for August 1947. Although the label specialized in pop, country-and-western, and rhythm-and-blues, its most popular artist appears to have been dialect comedian Yogi Yorgesson, who was signed away by Capitol Records in 1949.

S & G Records was last listed at the Mateo Street address in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies. The S & G name resurfaced during the spring and summer of 1954, at two different addresses, but it is unclear whether it was related to Galitza's original venture.

S & S RECORDING STUDIO — See Miracle Record Company

S. B. W. RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1950

Offices: 2033 Woodward Ave., Detroit (1946 – c. 7/1947); 17719 Pierson, Detroit (c. 8/1947–1950)

Record Products: Cathedral, S. B. W., Sobie, Sun [3]

Originally owned and operated by Detroit singer, songwriter, and music publisher Carl Sobie, in partnership with Fred Bruland (president) and Marcus Wilcox (vice-president). Norman Harp served as sales manager.

Sobie was known in the 1930s as "The Singing Policeman" on the "Father Coughlin Hour" radio broadcasts. In the mid-1940s he launched Carl Sobie Publishing, which catered to unpublished amateur songwriters. Sobie offered the choice of a 10% royalty deal if he assumed the full cost of publication, or a 50-50 split of publishing costs with the songwriter, in exchange for which he would receive half of any proceeds from sheet-music or record sales. Most of his clients apparently opted for the latter.

In November 26, 1946, Sobie was found guilty of defrauding his amateur songwriters. A United Press reporter commented, "Some of the titles they produced may have driven him to it." Plaintiffs in the case included fifteen aspiring songwriters who had opted for the 50-50 split, their principal complaint being that Sobie had taken their payment but failed to publish their works. A jury decided in the plaintiffs' favor on December 7, awarding \$3,695 in damages. Sobie threatened to appeal, but his classified advertisements soliciting amateur songwriters (which for a time had appeared almost daily in the Detroit newspapers) ceased abruptly following the verdict.

Sobie entered the commercial market in the spring of 1947, with the launch of S. B. W. Recording. On May 17, it was reported that the company had recorded sixteen masters, all by local artists, for its new Sun label. The S. B. W. and Sobie labels were added in August 1947, followed by Cathedral (for religious material) in September. The first release on the

S. B. W. label ("In the Good Old Summertime" / "Summer Morning," by Buck Bassey's Royal Yorkers) was reviewed in September 1947 by *Billboard*, which dismissed it as "so-so," "very weak," and "corny," with little potential for jukebox play.

Billboard reported in November 1947 that the S. B. W. Recording Company was now affiliated with Eddie Sikora's newly launched National Song Record Music Company. S. B. W. was split up a month later, with Bruland and Harp taking the S. B. W. label (which they continued to produce into 1950), and Sobie and Wilcox taking the publishing business. Sobie also retained the Cathedral label. He died in Detroit on January 6, 1949, at the age of forty-seven.

S. D. RECORDS — See Steiner, John

SACRED RECORDS, INC. / CAMPUS CHRISTIAN RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1963

Offices: 217 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles (1947–mid-1949); 1206 S. Hill St., Los Angeles (mid-1949–mid-1950); 342 N. La Brea, Los Angeles (mid-1950–late 1950s); 5574 E. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles (from late 1950s); Whittier, CA (1960s); Kansas City, Philadelphia, New York (branches))

Pressing: Universal Plastics, probably other independent plants

Record Products (78s): Sacred, Campus Christian, Steeple; White Church (from late 1949)

Owned and operated by Earl Williams, Sacred Records was one of the largest religious labels to emerge in the late 1940s. Williams, a former associate of evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, claimed that he sold his car, his dog, his wife's piano, and other possessions to fund the start-up.

According to a *Billboard* report, the company was actually incorporated as the Campus Christian Recording Corporation. That name first appeared in the 1946 *Record Retailing Yearbook*, and on the short-lived Campus Christian label, but is not known to have appeared on the Sacred labels or in Sacred Records' advertising. A publishing arm, Sacred Music, was set up to control copyrights on titles composed by Sacred artists.

Williams launched a half-hour Sunday afternoon program of recordings by Sacred artists over radio station KXLA (Los Angeles) in October 1946. His marketing schemes sometimes shifted costs to his vendors, as happened in 1950, when he issued coupons for a free disc of "The Lord's Prayer" with the purchase of one or more Sacred records (which at \$1.05 each were considerably more expensive than major-label offerings). The 20¢ pressing costs of the giveaway discs were passed on to distributors, and dealers were charged \$225 for the requisite display fixture.

Sacred introduced the Steeple label as a standard-priced (79¢) side-line on April 1, 1948. In late November 1949, Williams purchased the White Church Recording Company for approximately \$25,000, acquiring 200 masters and the White Church artist contracts, including that of the popular Blackwood Brothers Quartet. White Church manager P. M. Hewitt was kept on as a Sacred vice-president, and White Church's Kansas City office was converted to a Sacred distribution center.

Badly over-extended, Williams was forced into a creditors' agreement with thirty-eight parties on October 31, 1949, and temporarily stepped down as president of the company. When settlement was not forthcoming, two of the creditors (Ralphs Record Manufacturing Company in June 1950, and James G. Lee Record Processing in December) sued Williams and Sacred Records for failure to pay for services rendered.

Despite its financial difficulties, Sacred added 45s to its product line in May 1950, at which time Williams said he was also considering adding LPs. He grew the company successfully during the 1950s, opening a pressing plant and launching the Friendship Record Club, a mail-order scheme specializing in religious recordings, which claimed to have several thousand members. In December 1963, he sold the Sacred Record Company, Sacred Music, and the record club to a group of businessmen from Waco, Texas, headed by Word Records president Jarell McCracken.

SAKS RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: 884 Pavonia Ave., Jersey City, NJ

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products (78s): Saks

A short-lived pop label of unknown ownership, not connected in any way with the Saks Fifth Avenue department store. The records were advertised as containing 10% more shellac than other labels' pressings, not a particularly strong selling point at a time when many companies had already abandoned shellac-based compounds in favor of quieter synthetic resins or plastics.

Saks records were marketed primarily to jukebox operators. In June 1948, the company placed a large advertisement in *Billboard* for disc jockey Ted Steele's "Schoene Maedel." Steele, who *Billboard* termed a "one-man industry," was a featured singer, pianist, band leader, and disc jockey on radio station WMCA (New York) at the time. Despite a mediocre review in *Billboard*, Saks claimed that orders were "pouring in" for the record, which reports in the trade papers appear to confirm. However, little more was heard concerning Saks, and its last regular listing appeared in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory. Its brief reappearances in the July 1951 and March 1952 directories (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

SAN ANTONIO PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

The Phonoscope for December 1896 reported that the San Antonio Phonograph Company had "taken some very fine Spanish records." These likely were original cylinders, based upon San Antonio's large Spanish-speaking population. However, no reliable information has been located concerning the company's address, ownership, and operation.

SAN ANTONIO RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1947

Offices: 9160 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA (1946–Early 1947); 8407 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA (from early 1947)

Record Products: San Antonio [1]

A country-and-western label launched in early 1946 by Hermon S. Hatch. The records were distributed by Jack Gutshall and handled by dealers as far away as Honolulu. The company is not known to have had any physical presence in San Antonio.

San Antonio's first release appeared in *Billboard*'s April 1946 advance lists. The label was advertised as "Devoted exclusively to the finest in American folk music," a claim not necessarily reflected in a lackluster artist roster that included Larry Bryant, Frankie Marvin (sometimes with his Boogie Billies), and Paul Westmoreland and his Pecos River Boys (whose "Texas Steel Guitar" was a minor jukebox hit for the label). San Antonio's last confirmed release appeared in the autumn of 1946, and company was last listed in *Billboard*'s February 1947 directory.

SAN FERNANDO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: 1107 N. El Centro Ave., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: San Fernando

Launched in April 1948, during the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, by Jim Erbaugh, Don Clegg, Gar Hatfield, and Bob Remington. *Billboard* reported that the San Fernando label would specialize in country-and-western material, with a roster that included Remington and Jack Rivers (the latter from the ABC radio network's "Hitching Post"). Initial releases were made from a group of pre-ban recordings from an undisclosed source. San Fernando did not advertise nationally, and the company is not known to have made any new releases after 1948. It last appeared in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory.

SAPPHIRE RECORD & TALKING MACHINE COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1910 – 1911

Offices: 50 Church St., New York; Metropolitan Tower, New York (from late 1910)

Original-Master Source(s): Possibly Indestructible Phonographic Record Company studio

Record Products: Princess, Princess Grand Opera Record, Empire Sapphire Record)

The Sapphire Record and Talking Machine Company was the second U.S. producer of vertical-cut discs, preceded only by Sonora. The company was incorporated in June 1910 by P. B. Verblanck, M. Wagner, and Dezso Tauber, with capital stock of \$100,000. Tauber, who had recently resigned as manager of R. H. Macy's phonograph department, served as the company's general manager.

Within a few months of its founding, Sapphire was taken over by George Otis Draper. The son of General William F. Draper (a U.S. ambassador to Italy) and nephew of a former Massachusetts governor, Draper was a well-connected inventor and entrepreneur who at various times was involved in real estate, lumber, textile, and manufacturing businesses. Between 1909 and 1911 he wrote *More: A Study of Financial Conditions Now Prevalent*, squandered a \$1.15-million inheritance, then declared personal bankruptcy. Sapphire's business address had been changed to that of Draper's personal office in New York's Metropolitan Tower by the time the company became fully operational. Of the original investors, only Tauber appears to have remained following Draper's takeover.

Sapphire's trademark application of August 13, 1910, claimed use of the Princess brand on phonographs and records since August 1 of that year. However, no Princess records are known to have been released that early. In January 1911, *The Talking Machine World* finally announced that the records were "ready to come into the market." The same article reported that the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company's Frederick W. Matthews was serving as studio manager. (Thus far, Indestructible had been involved only in the production of cylinders.) The company also marketed Sonora universal-cut phonographs, rebranded as Princess, which were manufactured by Paillard in Switzerland.

Many Princess recordings are original to the label and possibly could have been made in the Indestructible studio, given Matthews' involvement. Other releases used masters obtained from Sonora. Popular-series releases retailed for 75¢ each, and early issues used a separate catalog number on each side. There was also a Sonora-derived Princess Grand Opera Record series, which retailed for \$1 but did not feature any particularly noteworthy artists.

In April 1911, *TMW* reported that the Sapphire Record and Talking Machine Company's owners "concluded they better quit than go ahead, as the enterprise required more capital than was anticipated." In the same month, the company was sold to Indestructible. The new owners marketed surplus Princess phonographs and records at deep discounts, but did not continue production of the line. Several claims filed against Sapphire by the Metropolitan Life Company, Merchant's Exchange National Bank, and others, were finally settled in the autumn of 1911. Draper himself was petitioned into bankruptcy on December 30, 1911, which he attributed to having made poor investments.

SAPPHIRE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1960

Offices: 1600 Chancellor St., Philadelphia; 1655 S. Taney St., Philadelphia (Sapphire Music Company); various New Orleans addresses (revived label, 1954–c. 1960)

Record Products: Sapphire [2]

Launched in the spring of 1946 by Frankie Adams to promote songs published by his Sapphire Music Company. Dick Mayo served as the company's first general manager. The records were handled by several retailers in the Philadelphia area but do not appear to have had national distribution.

The Sapphire label, which featured pop and country-and-western material, originally catered mainly to jukebox operators. Recording sessions began c. May 1946, using artists recruited from area nightclubs and radio stations, most notably WDAS (Philadelphia). The roster included such little-known groups as the Four C-Notes, Tony Caruso's Orchestra, Carl Russell's Arizona Ramblers, and Larry Lane's Mellow Men (whose "My Little Red Head" reportedly was a minor local hit in 1947). During the second American Federation

of Musicians recording ban, Adams continued to release new recordings by Durning's String Band and other local non-union performers.

According to a November 1948 report, Adams claimed to have sold all of his masters to Savoy Records. He recanted a month later, stating that he was keeping the company and had sold only a single master, to Regent. However, the label appears to have been inactive from that point until October 1951, when its revival was briefly noted in *Billboard*. Little more was heard of Sapphire Records until early 1954, when yet another revival was announced, this time in New Orleans, by Adams in partnership with Lou Welsch. The company continued to operate following Adams' death in late 1956. The Sapphire name was later used for several unrelated labels.

SARAFIAN SOHAG / SOKHAG RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1923 – 1924

Offices: New York

Pressing: Scranton Button Company, possibly other independent plants

Record Products: Sohag, Sokhag

Launched in the early 1920s by New York jewelry store owner Sarkis Sarafian. Sarafian's U.S. trademark application, filed on January 31, 1924, claimed use of the Sohag trademark on records since December 1923. An alternate spelling, "Sokhag," appears on some labels. Sohag records featured Armenian and, to a lesser extent, Syrian and Persian fare. Masters are largely from unknown sources. Many appear to have been American-made, by artists who are known to have been working in New York at the time. There are also confirmed examples of Sohag records pressed from Pharos masters.

SARCO RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1945 – c. 1950s

Offices: 6107 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Sarco

Launched c. 1945 to specialize in what *Billboard* termed "ultra-modern hot jazz and Brazilian specialties." Sarco's earliest confirmed releases, of 1945 recordings by the Vivien Garry Quartet, appeared in May 1946.

In the same month, manufacturing and distribution were taken over by the Goody Distributing Corporation, forerunner of the Gotham Record Company. Goody controlled Sarco to such an extent that *Billboard* at one point termed it a "companion label" to Gotham, and some Sarco recordings were also released on the Goody and Gotham labels. Some Sarco masters passed to Ivin Ballen in January 1948, when he purchased Gotham from Goody. After severing ties with Gotham, production of the Sarco label continued into the 1950s as an independent operation.

The Sarco name was later used by an unrelated Iowa company that distributed adult "party" records.

SAVOY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1942 – 1974

Offices: 58 Market St., Newark, NJ; Paris (from 1949)

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America, International Recording Company, WOR Studios, other independent studios

Pressing: Scranton Record Company and Capitol Records plants

Record Products (78s): Savoy [1], Acorn, Franklin [1], Gospel [1], King Solomon, Regent (from mid-1949), Royalty [2]

Founded in the summer of 1942 by Herman Lubinsky, a Newark, New Jersey, radio and record dealer who advertised his venture as "The Biggest Little Record Manufacturer." Notorious for his cheapness, unethical behavior, and professed lack of interest in the music and musicians on his labels, Lubinsky was reviled by many of his artists and others in the industry. He succeeded largely thanks to the work of his talent scouts and other associates, who over the years included Teddy Reig, Ralph Bass, and Lee Magid.

Savoy sessions were contracted to various independent studios. Pressing initially was handled by the Scranton Record Company, then by Capitol after that company purchased

the Scranton plant in 1946. The records initially were distributed by the Modern Musical Sales Company (New York).

Despite Lubinsky's personal shortcomings, Savoy proved to be one of the most popular and prolific of the independent jazz, blues, and gospel labels that launched in the early 1940s. Its earliest releases were advertised in November 1942. The first *Billboard* review of the label, in January 1943, reported that "The firm's waxes are dedicated to the Harlem brand of hot." Early advertising boasted that Savoy did not use "pre-war material," referring to some labels' practice of passing-off reissued recordings as new, a not uncommon practice during the first American Federation of Musicians' recording ban.

Lubinsky was also involved with many other labels over the years. King Solomon, a companion label devoted to Black gospel material, was announced in May 1943, although its initial releases did not appear until the following September. It was discontinued in 1948. In 1946 alone, Lubinsky purchased five small regional labels, and in the same year he launched Savoy Music, a music publishing firm that controlled copyrights on original songs recorded for his various labels.

Lubinsky acquired a major stake in Regent Records in June 1948, installing himself as treasurer and sales manager of the company, but leaving owner Fred Mendelsohn in place as president and manager of artists and repertoire. A year later, he bought out Mendelsohn and merged Regent with the Savoy operation, where it served mainly as a budget-priced side-line to Savoy. A month after the Regent buy-out, Lubinsky purchased 4,000 masters from the defunct Sonora Record Company. *Billboard* reported he planned to "freshen them up and take out any kinks that may be present," but relatively few were used.

A country-and-western series was launched in 1947, leading *Billboard* to reassure readers that despite the addition of "vocal and guitar twangers," Savoy was "still pitching strongly for the hep crowd." The gospel series, which would become a major component of the Savoy catalog in later years, was greatly expanded beginning in the later 1940s.

Savoy and several other independent labels were the victim of a counterfeiting operation in early 1948. On May 1, Savoy placed a notice in *Billboard* warning its customers to beware of counterfeit pressings and offering a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrators. Lubinsky claimed that a million counterfeit Savoy records had been sold. He attempted to investigate on his own, concentrating on the West Coast, without developing any worthwhile leads. Investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Treasury Department also failed to locate the culprits, but their well-publicized efforts did succeed in reducing the flow of counterfeits by year's end.

In the midst of the American Federation of Musicians' 1948 recording ban, Lubinsky announced plans to launch the 39¢ Franklin label. It was to use existing pre-ban masters to which he owned rights, but little more was heard of the label. In October he announced that he had purchased the rights to some European classical and operatic recordings from an undisclosed source, which he was planning to release in LP form.

Lubinsky capitulated to the AFM's terms and resumed recording with union musicians in late December 1948. At that time, *Billboard* announced that he had signed "a flock of additional talent" for both Savoy and Regent. Savoy also announced its first LP release at that time, compiled from previously released Errol Garner recordings and retailing for \$2.85. Production of Savoy and Regent 45s began in March 1950, although 78s would remain a major part of the company's output for several more years. In 1949 Lubinsky announced that sales of Savoy records had increased by 33% over the previous year, which he attributed solely to "plugging, pushing, and peddling." He experimented with marketing Savoy records by telephone, playing them to dealers through a specially designed equalization system.

In June 1949, Lubinsky bought out Fred Mendelsohn's remaining stake in Regent and took full control of the company, retaining Regent Records as a trade name. Mendelsohn resigned in the same month, but in 1952 he returned to work for Lubinsky as manager of artists and repertoire for Savoy's rhythm-and-blues line. Beginning in late 1953 he served in the same capacity for Regent's classical, pop, and children's lines.

Savoy emerged as a strong modern-jazz label in the late 1940s and early 1950s, issuing some of the earliest recordings by Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, and Stan Getz. International demand for the records spurred Lubinsky to open a Paris office in 1949 and arrange for pressings to be made in France for foreign distribution. The search for new talent received

a boost in November 1950 with the arrival of artists-and-repertoire manager Lee Magid, who split his time between the Savoy and Regent labels.

Acorn Records, launched as a Savoy subsidiary in 1950, drew many of its artists from the Savoy roster. The first releases (which included recordings made the previous year) were advertised in October 1950, at which time it was announced that Savoy would act as Acorn's sales agent but would use different distributors. The records were also distributed in Europe by the Savoy Record Co., Ltd. (London), Lubinsky's foreign branch. Despite ambitious plans, the label was discontinued in late 1951. The Acorn name was later used by an unrelated Cincinnati label.

Savoy's later history is beyond the scope of this work. The catalog was acquired by Arista Records manager Clive Davis following Lubinsky's death in 1974. It was later split between the Malaco Music Group (which took rights to the gospel material) and the Columbia Music Entertainment Group (which took rights to the jazz and blues material). Rights to much of the catalog are currently controlled by Nippon Columbia.

SAV-WAY INDUSTRIES — See Vogue Recordings

SCANDINAVIAN MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – 1949

Offices: 1019½ University Ave., Berkeley, CA

Pressing: Oliver Record Company, probably other independent plant(s)

Record Products: Harmony Music

Owned and operated by Inn Ingegerd and John Linbgergh, Harmony Music specialized in Swedish songs, some of them sung in English. English apparently was not the owners' first language; one advertisement stated "We have many Swedish sheet music and records, that you wish we send catalog to you."

Harmony Music records were first advertised locally in late January 1948, by which time the company had produced three albums and several single releases. They were sold in the company's Berkeley shop or by mail order. Initially they were manufactured by the Oliver Record Company, whose name is struck-out on later labels, suggesting the use of a different plant. The master source is unknown, but at least some of the recordings are domestic. In November 1948, it was reported that Carole Larsen (a high school student in Santa Cruz, California) had been awarded a five-year recording contract. However, the company appears to have exited the record business in 1949.

SCANDINAVIAN MUSIC HOUSE, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: From 1943

Offices: 625 Lexington Ave., New York

Record Products: Cordion, Scandinavia

Owned and operated by Edwin (Eddie) Jarl, who also served as sales manager. His Scandinavia label was copyrighted in 1943, followed by Cordion in 1944. Both used a mixture of imported and domestic masters. Distribution was handled by J. F. Bard (east of the Ohio River, excluding Minnesota and Wisconsin), along with several small Midwestern and Canadian firms. Jarl also worked as a master broker, acquiring foreign recordings for Rainbow Records (which he licensed from Cupol in Switzerland, in 1948) and probably other labels.

SCHIRMER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1939 – c. 1950

Offices and Master Source(s): 3 E. 43rd St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above location (portable equipment also used)

Record Products: Schirmer; custom and private recordings; radio transcriptions, air-checks

The recording division of music publisher G. Schirmer, Inc., was launched in the mid-1930s. Schirmer operated its own studio, which it enlarged in 1938 and advertised as possessing "the most modern equipment in a studio acoustically treated by experts." The studio worked on a for-hire basis, offering custom recording and transcription services. Key company personnel included Carl Engel (president), Gustave Schirmer (secretary), and Robert V.

(Bob) Hyndman (chief recording engineer, later replaced by Harry W. Boyd). Rea Reynolds served as Schirmer's in-house vocal coach and accompanist in the early 1940s.

Schirmer operated a three-studio suite. Unnumbered personal recordings were pressed under the Schirmer label as early as 1939–1940, and the studio did a strong business in private instantaneous recordings by professionals and amateurs alike. In July 1945, Hyndman reported that the studio was scheduling twice as many private bookings as in the previous year, mostly by what he termed "just plain folks."

Schirmer announced the impending launch of its commercial label in November 1939. The masters were original recordings made for Schirmer's exclusive use. The label's first offering was a multi-disc album of classical piano snippets performed by Harold Bauer, who at the time was employed by Schirmer as a musical editor. Its Christmas 1939 list included three album sets and several individual releases. The records were sold in Schirmer's retail outlets and by a few specialty stores, as well as by mail-order.

Some esoteric fare found its way onto the Schirmer label, including Colin McPhee's "Balinese Ceremonial Music," with the composer at the piano, assisted by Benjamin Britten (second piano) and Georges Barrère (flute); Dana Seusse's "Suite for Harp and Orchestra," with Seusse (piano), Casper Reardon (harp), and jazz drummer Chauncey Morehouse; John Alden Carpenter's "String Quartet in A Minor," by the Gordon String Quartet; and composer-pianist Rudolf Friml performing his "Arabian Suite" and "Chinese Suite (Po Ling and Ming Toy)," as well as selections from his popular musicals. There were also ethnic offerings, including a set of traditional Hungarian airs performed by Charles Benci's ensemble with vocals by Margit Bekker.

In addition to its well-received classical recordings, Schirmer offered an exclusive line of 75¢ popular releases by Carol Bruce (who did Schirmer record signings in area department stores), Lanny Ross, Lee Wiley, Sheila Barrett, harmonica virtuoso John Sebastian, and other New York stage and nightclub stars. There was also a special green-label series that included instrumental instruction records.

The company garnered some favorable publicity during World War II by offering enlisted personnel a 10% discount on Schirmer records. However, distribution and sales seem to have been weak, and in 1950 *Billboard* reported that the records were being discounted to dealers. No new releases are known after 1950 on the Schirmer label, although the company continued to sell other companies' records until 1957. Schirmer remains in business as a major publisher of classical music and related material.

SCHOOLER RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1922 – c. 1924

Offices: Chicago, Cleveland

Original-Master Source(s): Marsh Laboratories

Record Products: Messiah Sacred Records

Incorporated in late 1923 in Cleveland, Ohio, with capital of \$10,000, by A. K. Schooler, R. R. Cheeks, K. F. Smith, R. D. Potter, and G. T. Haywood. Although the company's Messiah Sacred Records label shows a copyright symbol, no date is cited, and no formal copyright or trademark filing has been found. The records were electrically recorded, albeit rather crudely.

One of Marsh Laboratories' earliest client labels, Messiah was devoted almost entirely to religious material. It was launched in the autumn of 1922 (before the Schooler Record Company was incorporated), although its lowest-numbered master, by tenor Floyd Jones, is believed to have been recorded some months earlier. The most unusual Messiah release is a straightforward rendition of "The Rosary" by jazz pianist Clarence M. Jones, who also accompanied at least two vocal sides in the same manner. Messiah's last known recording (H. N. Green's "A Son of the Desert Am I," an anomalous non-religious item) was also issued on Marsh's Autograph label. The Messiah label was discontinued in late 1923 or early 1924, after having released approximately ten records.

SCHOONER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1953

Offices: 1929 Military Ave., Detroit

Record Products: Schooner

Launched in February 1950 by Nurjan and Matthew W. Schooner. The label features religious fare by obscure artists. *Billboard* reported that Schooner's first offering would be an album of "liberty hymns" (with no description of what those might be), scheduled for release on April 1. Nothing more is known to have been reported concerning the company. It last appeared in *Billboard*'s May 1953 label directory.

SCHRIBER AND GUSTAFSON — See Swan Recording Company

SCOOP RECORD COMPANY [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1947

Offices: 1204 Walnut St., Philadelphia

Record Products: Scoop [2]

A pop label launched in the spring of 1947 by Nick Basillo and Russ Smith. *Cash Box*, in announcing Scoops's impending introduction, reported the records would feature an "echo effect," at a time when artificial reverberation was still a novelty.

Scoop's first release, by the Kirby Stone Quintet, was reviewed by *Cash Box* in June 1947, which characterized its "Va Za Pa" as "an Italian novelty fling." Nothing further concerning Scoop is known to have been reported in the trade papers. The Scoop name was also used by two unrelated labels in the 1940s (see Jewel Record Company and Scoop Records).

SCOOP RECORD COMPANY [II] — See Jewel Record Company [II]

SCOOP RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947

Offices: 1309 13th St., Washington, DC

Record Products: Scoop [1]

A short-lived venture, Scoop obtained its MF-prefixed masters from the Feld brothers, the owners of Super Discs. It has been suggested that Scoop was a Super Disc subsidiary, although no evidence of a formal connection between the two companies has been found.

Scoop's first release was "I'm a Solider"/"Babylon" credited to Rev. Kelsey's Congregation. The artist roster also included Bill Grammer's Shenandoah Valley Boys and the Christian Leaders Quartet, both believed to have been from the Washington region. The confirmed catalog-number range is 500 through 506, within which three issues are so far untraced. The Scoop name was also used by two unrelated labels in the later 1940s (see Jewel Record Company and Scoop Record Company [I]).

SCOTT RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – 1948

Offices: Philadelphia

Record Products: Scott Recordings

A short-lived operation launched in late 1947 by singer Hal Kipling, who *Billboard* described as part-owner of the company. Scott's first release (Kipling's "Raisins and Almonds"/"Ol' Poppa Zudick") was reviewed in March 1948 by *Billboard*, which dismissed it as "wailful warbling...nothing out of the ordinary." The company sold both masters to Apollo Records in early 1948 and does not appear to have survived the year. The Scott name was later used for several unrelated labels.

SCRANTON BUTTON COMPANY / SCRANTON RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1915 – 1946

Offices: Scranton, PA (main); 50 Union Square, New York (sales, 1920s)

Pressing: Own plants—Brook St. & Remington Ave., Scranton, PA; Auburn, NY (former Auburn Button Works plant, from 11/1924); Framingham, MA (former Cameo plant, from 1929); Los Angeles (1945–1946)

Record Products: Pressings for American Record Corporation, Capitol Records, Emerson Phonograph, Plaza Music–Regal Record Company, United States Record Corporation, and numerous other companies.

The largest independent pressing plant of the 1920s and 1930s, the Scranton Button Company did not make any recordings of its own, and its name never appeared on a commercial record label. It owes its inclusion here to its close affiliation with the Plaza Music Company and Regal Record Company (*q.v.*), and its control for a time of the Emerson, Federal, and National Music Lovers labels.

Founded in 1885, the Scranton Button Company originally manufactured buttons, electrical insulators, and molded novelty items. In the 1910s it added piano-roll spools to its product line. A late 1924 *Talking Machine World* article claimed that Scranton was the largest producer of molded plastic materials in the United States. The company occupied a sprawling factory complex south of downtown Scranton. At the time it began pressing records, in the mid-to-late 'teens, Scranton's officers included Louis G. Sylvester (president; later, vice-president and general manager), Edwin E. Connell (treasurer), and F. C. Stackhouse (secretary). Frank Marquardt served as the first supervisor of the record department.

Scranton's first confirmed pressing customer was the Emerson Phonograph Company, for which it might have manufactured records as early as 1915. In April 1918, Sylvester reported that the plant was pressing 25,000 Emerson discs daily. Scranton began offering complete record-production services to other labels in 1922, including pressing, labeling (contracted to the Keystone Printed-Specialties Company), and packaging. Clients who lacked their own recording studios could license masters from Scranton's affiliates and subsidiaries, including the Regal Record Company and Emerson Recording Laboratories, or could commission custom recordings at Regal's affiliated Independent Recording Laboratory or other independent studios. They could also choose from the growing pool of masters that Scranton had begun accumulating in the early 1920s from Arto, Olympic, and other defunct labels.

Internal theft was an ongoing problem during the early years of Scranton record production. Several high-profile cases were reported, including the theft in February 1920 of an estimated 10,000 discs that were smuggled out by female employees, reportedly in "pockets made in their underskirts." Another case, reported in February 1922, resulted in the arrest of four male employees.

In October 1922, Scranton began managing production of National Music Lovers' mail-order records and in 1923 purchased a 49% interest in NML to ensure its continued business. The Regal Record Company and its Plaza Music Company affiliate, which began its own recording program in late in 1922, was Scranton's largest client. Grey Gull Records became a Scranton client at about the same time and by 1924 was obtaining most of its masters from the Emerson Recording Laboratories, which Scranton purchased in November of that year. In the same month, Scranton purchased the Auburn Button Works' pressing plant, which most recently had been used to handle Brunswick's overflow pressing.

Scranton's recording affiliates cross-licensed their masters freely, resulting in frequent duplication of material among labels manufactured by at the plant. Under Scranton's management, Emerson maintained a dual master-number system, with separate master numbers (one for Emerson, and one for Grey Gull and other client labels) often allocated to the same recordings. In the case of Plaza-Regal material, a single master might eventually appear on a dozen or more Scranton-produced labels, as well as additional export or foreign labels, often under an array of artist pseudonyms, and sometimes with false matrix or control numbers substituted for the actual matrix numbers.

In July 1929, Scranton was merged with the Cameo Record Corporation and Regal Record Company to form the American Record Corporation (*q.v.*), with Louis Sylvester initially serving as president of the new company. Deeds conveying the Scranton property

to the American Record Corporation were filed on January 24, 1930. For the next decade, the Scranton plant would make all of ARC's pressings with the exception of laminated discs, which were made at the Columbia plant in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Scranton also continued to press for client labels, who now booked its services through ARC.

The Columbia Broadcasting System purchased the American Record Corporation (including its Brunswick and Columbia divisions) on January 1, 1939. In the reorganization that followed, CBS's pressing operations were consolidated at Columbia's Bridgeport plant. Dropped as a supplier by CBS, Scranton was reorganized by Eli Oberstein and a group of Pennsylvania investors as the Scranton Record Company. Oberstein held a 30% interest in the operation, which was to serve as the production facility for his newly formed United States Record Corporation, *q.v.*

Oberstein soon fell behind in payments to the plant, and on August 31, 1940, the Scranton Record Company filed for bankruptcy. Once again reorganized, Scranton pressed for Musicraft (beginning in 1940), Capitol (beginning in 1942), and other small companies and start-ups. It was also involved in a venture, with the Boston-based Record Syndicate Trust, to license or sell the masters that Oberstein had forfeited to Scranton as a result of his default.

In May 1944, Scranton officials purchased shares in Capitol Records and agreed to begin phasing out pressing of all other labels in anticipation of becoming an exclusive supplier to Capitol. Construction of a Scranton Record Company plant in Los Angeles, to be dedicated solely to Capitol production, was begun in 1945. Scranton's end as an independent pressing company came on March 26, 1946, when Capitol purchased the company and subsequently reorganized it as its new manufacturing division.

SCHRIBER & GUSTAFSON — See Swan Recording Company

SEARS, ROEBUCK & COMPANY — SILVERTONE RECORD CLUB (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1950

Offices: Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Muzak studios

Pressing: Mercury Records plant

Record Products (78s): Silvertone Record Club

Sears, Roebuck & Company's trademark filing claimed first use of the Silvertone name on records beginning in October 1915, although Silvertone records did not appear in the company's catalog until the autumn of 1916, when they replaced Oxford. Early Silvertone records, manufactured by the Columbia Graphophone Company into 1918, were simply anonymous, single-sided reissues of material from the Columbia catalog. Double-sided discs, introduced in 1919, initially were produced by the Federal Record Corporation. During the 1920s the label used multiple suppliers, including Brunswick/Vocalion, Columbia, Gennett, Paramount, and Regal. Other than a few recordings by WLS radio artists, which were commissioned from Gennett, Sears did not commission its own recordings for the original Silvertone label, which was discontinued in 1928.

Sears revived the Silvertone label for use in a record-of-the-month club operation in late 1946. The records' impending introduction was announced by *Billboard* in November 1946, at which time the label name was not disclosed. The recordings were commissioned for Sears' exclusive use from Muzak, which pressed the 12" discs in its proprietary red-vinyl compound. Sears executives declared that the vinyl pressings justified the unusually high price of \$1.50 per record.

The first releases were to appear in Sears' Christmas 1946 catalog. The original plan called for three new releases to be added each month, which could be purchased from the catalog or retail stores. Muzak assembled a noteworthy artist roster for Sears, including Lanny Ross, Vincent Lopez, Vic Damone, Salvador (Toots/Tutti) Camarata, the Chicago Philharmonic, and the so-called Silvertone Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Erich Leinsdorf and Georges Enesco.

In November 1947, *Billboard* reported rumors of a shake-up in Sears' record-division personnel and an impending switch to 10" discs, which were confirmed in January 1948. Retailing for \$1.25, the new 10" releases marked the beginning of a shift in master suppliers

from Muzak to the Columbia Recording Corporation, which provided a mixture of transcription excerpts and previously issued material by Columbia artists, including the Benny Goodman and Harry James orchestras.

Sears licensed the Silvertone recordings to Mercury Records in March 1950, for use on its own LPs and 45s (but not 78s) for a four-year period beginning May 1. Mercury's David Hall handled reprocessing of the classical material for LP reissues, while Joe Carlton oversaw transfer of the pop material to 45s.

SECURITY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1949

Offices: 120 N. Newberry Rd., York, PA

Record Products: Security

A country-and-western label launched in the autumn of 1947 by members of the 101 Ranch Boys, who were broadcasting over radio station WSBA (York, Pennsylvania) at the time. *Billboard* reported that Security was to be run as a cooperative. The label's first release was announced in November 1947. The artist roster, in addition to the 101 Ranch Boys, included George Long and others from the WSBA roster. Security Records was last listed in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory. The Security name was used for an unrelated Texas label in the 1950s.

SEECO RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1968

Offices: 1393 5th Ave., New York (to early 1950s); 39 W. 60th St., New York (from early 1950s); 2519 W. 7th St., Los Angeles (West Coast branch, 1940s)

Pressing: Independent U.S. and Mexican plants

Record Products (78s): Seeco, Seeco Universal, Exito, Lina

Founded in 1944 by Sidney Siegel, Seeco was the first major American producer of records for the Latino market. At the time of Seeco's launch, Siegel owned a small Harlem shop that sold jewelry, household goods, and records to a predominantly Puerto Rican clientele. Siegel initially handled his own distribution through the Seeco Distributing Corporation, which operated at the same address as the record company. By 1945, Seeco Records was advertising nationally, and Siegel declared his label "the biggest name in Latin American recordings."

The earliest Seeco label design resembled Decca's, a company with which it had no connection. The records originally were pressed in Canada to circumvent U.S. shellac rationing. Seeco at first catered largely to the American rhumba craze, but soon expanded its scope. Siegel traveled extensively throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America to locate and record promising talent. His artist roster in the mid-1940s included Bobby Capo, Daniel Santos, Johnny Rodriguez, Chucho Martinez Gil, Noro Morales, Celso Vega, Laurita y Ray, and several early *conjunto* groups.

A new green-label Seeco Universal series was launched in October 1948 for what *Billboard* described as "fanciers of the smoother Spanish stylings [featuring] Seeco's 'class' talent." At the same time, rhumbas and other dance fare with appeal to the mainstream market were transferred to a new blue-label Specialty series, leaving the original black-label series to focus on material for the Latino markets. By the late 1940, Seeco was billing itself as "The largest manufacturer of Latin-American recordings in the world."

In December 1948, Siegel announced that he was launching a new pop line on Seeco, beginning with two titles by Harry Babbitt, a vocalist with the Kay Kyser band. Future releases, according to Siegel, would include race and country-and-western material, from a large number of masters he claimed to have purchased from an undisclosed source. However, Latino material remained Seeco's primary focus. During the summer of 1949, Siegel acquired the U.S. distribution rights to Comix, a Mexican label specializing in Spanish-language comedy records.

In 1949, Siegel reported that 75% of Seeco's output was being exported. In May of that year he signed a five-year agreement under which Seeco recordings would be distributed in Mexico under the Columbia label, while he retained full control of the label elsewhere. Siegel at the time was said to "control" a pressing plant in Mexico City, but details are

sparse. Late in the year, he arranged for Odeon to press and distribute Seeco records in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay.

LPs were introduced in July 1949, with the technical assistance of the Columbia Recording Corporation. They were followed by 45-rpm pressings in April 1950. Seeco 78s (which remained in production well into the 1950s) were converted to vinyl pressings in late 1949. At that time, Siegel introduced the 59¢ Exito label as a budget-priced side-line to Seeco, pressed in shellac only.

In July 1950, Siegel bought out Murray Shapiro's Lina Records, a year-old start-up and potential competitor in the Latino field. He then scuttled the label, giving dealers 25 free Lina discs with the purchase of 100 Seecos, and reissuing Perez Prado's entire Lina output on a single LP. He also expanded his export business in the early 1950s, launching Seeco International in 1951 to distribute Seeco-branded radios, televisions, and phonographs in Central and South America. In England, Seeco discs were manufactured during the 1950s by a division of that country's Vogue operation.

Seeco maintained its leadership in the Latin-American market into the 1960s. In 1968, Siegel licensed the catalog to David Last of Met-Richmond Record Sales. Following Siegel's death in 1969, the two were merged as Met-Richmond Seeco Records. The catalog is currently controlled in the U.S. by Polygram.

SELECT RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 215 Memorial Hotel (c/o Dorothy Dillard), Nashville, TN

Record Products: Select

An obscure pop label owned by or affiliated with singer Dorothy Dillard. The few known releases feature Dillard and the Owen Bradley Orchestra, both from radio station WSM (Nashville). A reviewer called the team's radio work, "Easy to listen to while reading your newspaper or dunking your doughnut...good for your blood pressure." Select Records last appeared in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many defunct companies), although it probably was inactive by then. There is no known connection to Select Records of California (Santa Barbara), which launched later in 1952.

SELECTIVE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Offices: 1475½ W. Washington Blvd., Los Angeles (1949–1950); 6255 Landgon Ave., Los Angeles (1950–1952)

Record Products: Selective

Launched in the spring of 1949 by John Blackburn, following his February resignation as sales manager of Black and White Records. Blackburn had earlier been associated with the Exclusive, Fine Arts, and Modern labels. An early advertisement touted the company as the "Prize Baby of the Record Industry," and urged, "Watch Us Grow!" *Cash Box* magazine's March announcement of Selective's launch gave its name in error as "Select."

Selective specialized in jazz, rhythm-and-blues, and gospel, with a smattering of pop and country-and-western material. The records were first advertised in late April 1949, beginning with "Annie Laurie" by Bumps Meyers' Sextet. It had a minor hit in the summer of 1949 with Donn Reynolds' "Texas Yodel" and was the first label to record the Hollywood Flames, who quickly moved on.

Sam Lane, the founder of International Records, joined Selective in the spring of 1950 as artists-and-repertoire manager. However, the company failed to thrive, and its last known release appeared during the summer of that year. At least one Selective master (The Five Trumpets' "Jesus Hits Like the Atom Bomb") was acquired by Coral Records. The company's brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 manufacturers' directory (which included many inactive and defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

SELEST RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 155 E. 46th St., New York

Record Products: Selest

An operation that appears to have failed after a single release, Selest Records was launched in the autumn of 1950 by William Raymond. Its only known offering, released in November 1950, was a Christmas item by Raymond's orchestra that clearly was intended to test the market. "Do you like this music?," the label asked. "We will release new records frequently. We want to sell our records thru the dealer. However, if he tells you that he cannot supply you, please mail your order to us." A *Cash Box* reviewer commented that the record "should hold its own in the jukeboxes." Raymond placed advertisements for salesmen and dealers for his "smooth dance music" in late 1950, but nothing further was heard of his company.

SELLERS, INC. / SELLERS COMPANY, THE (Discs)

Record Production: 1940s – 1960s

Offices: 912 Commerce St., Dallas; later, 2102 Jackson St., Dallas

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios

Record Products: Masters for commercial labels; Sellers Co. (private issues), other custom recordings; transcriptions, air-checks

Owned and operated by J. E. Sellers, originally as Sellers, Inc. A full-service custom studio, Sellers used its Sellers Co. label for private issues, which were produced mostly for area school and church groups and others non-professional performers. Beginning in the later 1940s, Sellers recorded masters for Apollo, Capitol, King, Specialty, and other commercial labels, specializing in country-and-western, rockabilly, and related material. Sellers also sold what it termed "musical hillbilly selections" to radio-station libraries in the late 1940s. The studio's later history is beyond the scope of this work.

SENSATION RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1950

Offices: 3747 Woodward Ave., Detroit (1947–2/1950); 3731 Woodward Ave. (combined with Pan American Distributors, from 2/1950)

Original-Master Source(s): United Sound Systems (Detroit), probably other independent studios

Record Products: Sensation

Founded in 1947 by John Kaplan and Bernard (Bernie) Besman. A year earlier, the pair had launched the Detroit-based Pan American Distributors, a Midwestern distributor of Vitacoustic records.

Sensation merged with Vitacoustic in September 1947, in what was termed a "fifty-fifty partnership." Besman and Kaplan continued to use their Sensation label on records distributed in Michigan and Ohio, while selected items were sold elsewhere under the Vitacoustic label. Following Vitacoustic's bankruptcy, Kaplan and Besman retrieved their masters and relaunched Sensation as an independent label in May 1948.

Besman was known for making recordings on speculation in hopes of leasing the masters to other independent labels, sometimes at the expense of his own. His specialty was local rhythm-and-blues performers, including Sylvester Cotton, T. J. Fowler, Madonna Martin, and Todd Rhodes. He made the first commercial recordings by John Lee Hooker (with whom he held a management contract for a time) but leased many of Hooker's masters directly to Modern Records, bypassing Sensation. Hooker's "Boogie Chillen'" (recorded for Besman by United Sound Systems) topped *Billboard*'s race charts soon after its November 1948 release.

In June 1948, Kaplan and Besman leased more than sixty Sensation masters to King Records, with which they signed a pressing and distribution agreement. Their recordings were to be sold under the King label except in Michigan and Ohio, where they would continue to be sold under the Sensation label. Sensation retained first-release rights, with sales of the corresponding King-label pressings delayed for several weeks. The partnership with King was dissolved during the summer of 1949, and Sensation returned to fully autonomous status in late August. In the meantime, Besman and Kaplan, in partnership

with Robert B. Doyle, had formed the Sensation Music Company to control the copyrights on their artists' original compositions.

Sensation's initial offering following the split with King comprised six race releases, including some new John Lee Hooker titles that Besman allocated directly to Sensation rather than immediately leasing to other labels. There was also a new emphasis on jazz, with an artist roster that included Teddy Bunn, Milt Jackson, the Bumps Myers Sextet, Peppy Prince, and Sonny Stitt. Some of the new releases garnered favorable reviews in the *Detroit Free Press* (which in March 1950 lectured that "other small record companies around the country could take a lesson from Sensation") as well as the trade papers.

By then, Kaplan and Besman were pressing for other independent labels, but they closed their plant in September 1950, citing shortages of materials and the risks inherent in extending credit to small companies. At the same time, they announced they would lease their race-catalog masters to Regal and Modern, with each company initially taking three titles per week. *Billboard* reported that Sensation was "quitting the field in good shape, as a sound business move," and might resume pressing at a later date if conditions warranted, which apparently never occurred. Kaplan and Besman instead would devote their efforts to building their Pan American distributing operation.

SEPIA RECORDS, INC. — See Royal Record Company

SEQUOIA RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1948

Offices: 1746 Las Palmas, Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Vel-Tone

Sequoia Recording's Vel-Tone label was launched in late January 1947 with five pop releases by singer Hugh Cameron (who *Billboard* recommended for those who like "their music soft and sweet"), with various accompanists. One, with accompaniment credited to the Sagebrush Serenaders, was assigned to a Western Series, about which nothing more was reported. The company last appeared in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory, although it appears to have been inactive by then.

SERENADE RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1952

Offices: 1650 Broadway (Suite 715 at founding; Suite 701, from 5/1950), New York

Record Products: Serenade [2], Muzicon

The Serenade Recording Corporation was launched in early 1950, and Serenade records were first advertised in March of that year. There was no connection to Unique Music Publishers' earlier Serenade label.

In May 1950, Serenade's suite number was changed to that of the Franwil recording studio. The short-lived Muzicon label, launched at that time, released some mid-1940s recordings obtained from Signature and possibly other sources, in addition to new material. The company made a brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies. The Serenade name was later used for several unrelated labels.

SERENADE RECORDS — See Unique Music Publishers and Recording Company

SESSION RECORDS, INC. / DELTA RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1943 – 1947

Offices: 125 N. Wells St., Chicago (1943–1946); 119 W. 57th St., New York (distribution, and Delta Records, 1944–1946; Los Angeles (mid-1946–1947)

Original-Master Source(s): Independent studios

Pressing: Independent plant(s) (East Coast), The Bishop Presses (Pasadena, CA)

Record Products: Session, Session Reissue; Delta Jazz (Delta [3])

Launched in November 1943 by William P. (Phil) Featheringill (president) and David Walker Bell (vice-president), as an adjunct to Featheringills' Session Record Shop. Featheringill's first wife, Evelyn, served as Session's secretary-treasurer.

Session began as a producer of unauthorized jazz reissues, specializing in dubbings from rare 1920s recordings on the defunct Autograph, Gennett, and Paramount labels. However, Featheringill was already producing his own recordings, beginning with a large number of late-1943 selections by pianists Jimmy Yancey, Cripple Clarence Lofton, and Alonzo Yancey (some of whose Session recordings allegedly were made at a house party, on portable equipment). Session's initial piano releases, announced in February 1944, were offered as premium-priced, limited-edition vinyl pressings. However, standard shellac pressings, generally of mediocre quality, soon became the norm.

Featheringill next turned his attention from piano solos to small jazz combos, recording groups fronted by Sid Catlett, Ed Hall, J. C. Higginbotham, Art Hodes, Richard M. Jones, Mezz Mezzrow, Punch Miller, Ben Webster, and other traditional jazzmen. His final session, by the J. C. Higginbotham Quintet, was held on September 14, 1944. Delta Jazz, a short-lived companion label, was introduced in the same month. It was credited to the probably fictitious Delta Recording Company, which shared a mailing address with Session's New York office.

By early 1945, Featheringill was concentrating on his writings for *Metronome* and other jazz magazines, and he had begun to produce local concerts and jam sessions. He continued to operate Session Records, but new releases appeared at such a leisurely pace that in July 1945, *Billboard* reported that Featheringill still had an unissued backlog of thirty-five masters.

Featheringill moved to California in June 1946 and closed the Chicago store several months later. David Bell moved to New York, after which he appears to have had little if any involvement with Session Records. After resettling in California, Featheringill ran a record distribution operation at various addresses. He continued to market Session discs, but no new recordings were made, and new releases from his backlog of 1943–1944 masters became increasingly infrequent.

In March 1947, Featheringill took over the Jump label (*see* Jump Records), which quickly supplanted Session. The last known Session advertisement appeared in *The Record Changer* for June 1947, and the operation reportedly was dormant by the end of the year. Session was said to have many unissued masters still on hand at the time it closed, some of which were later issued by Jump.

SEVA RECORD COMPANY / CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – c. 1949

Offices: 45 E. 49th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): United Masters, other independent studios

Pressing: Bard Record Manufacturing Company (Pelham, NY)

Record Products: Seva

Launched in late 1944 by Seva Foulton (sometimes misspelled "Foullan" in *Billboard*) and Joseph Kupitsky. Both became involved with other companies beginning in 1946 — Kupitsky as vice-president of Diamond Records, and Foulton as owner of United Masters — but apparently retained control of Seva. Following Foulton's launch of United Masters (*q.v.*), some Seva masters were reissued on that company's Unique label.

Seva's catalog straddled the line between ethnic and mainstream pop fare, specializing in "Americanized" adaptations of foreign songs and dance numbers, religious music (including a heavily promoted album by the Vatican Choir), and novelty vocal and instrumental numbers. An early report stated that accordionist Basil Fomeen's band was to record "four marches dedicated to the U.S.S.R." The company was last listed in *Billboard*'s January 1949 manufacturer directory.

SEYMOUR RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1951

Offices: 2117 S. Loomis St., Chicago; 439 S. Wabash, Chicago (store location)

Original-Master Source(s): Modern Recording Studio (Chicago)

Record Products: Seymour

Launched in 1950 by Chicago jazz cornetist and used-record dealer Seymour Schwartz. Earlier, Schwartz had attracted the attention *Billboard* magazine with his contention that the ten most popular songs in a jukebox should cost a dime to play, rather than the standard nickel, a proposal that was roundly ignored by the jukebox trade.

Following the end of World War II, Seymour began advertising nationally that he would purchase used records in any quantity. His retail business became a haven for Chicago-area jazz enthusiasts and record collectors in the late 1940s. For a time, the store employed jazz writer George Hoefer, who conducted on-site auctions of the choicest early records. Seymour and his brother Roily also hosted in-store jam sessions and sponsored twice-weekly radio broadcasts over WFJL-FM.

Billboard announced the launch of Schwartz's recording operation in October 1950 (other, less-reliable sources give August as the start-up date). Only five sessions are known, all devoted to local musicians. Sales of Seymour records appear to have been minimal, and in late 1950 Schwartz sold Discovery Records his Lurlean Hunter masters (which included her rendition of Schwartz's composition, "My Home Town, Chicago"). The last known Seymour recording session (by Schwartz himself, playing "Go-Go-Sox" as a cornet solo) was held c. mid-1951.

In 1959 Schwartz sold his retail operation and remaining inventory to Bob Koester, who moved the store and renamed it Jazz Record Mart.

SHARP RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1952

Offices: 2614 W. North Ave., Chicago

Record Products: Sharp

Founded in early 1949 in affiliation with the James H. Martin Company, a Chicago record distributor that handled Mercury, Aristocrat, and other local labels. James (Jimmy) Martin got his start in the cigarette vending-machine business in the early 1940s and soon expanded his operation to include jukeboxes. George Solar, Martin's longtime assistant, served as Sharp's artists-and-repertoire manager. Solar left the company in early 1950 and was replaced later that year by former Mercury Records arranger Lew Douglas.

The first Sharp releases were announced in May 1949, two months before Martin signed a recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians on behalf of Sharp. The records were intended primarily for the jukebox trade, and distribution initially was limited to Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Martin specialized in pop material by midwestern artists, with an eye toward licensing the most popular recordings to larger labels. He made his first such deal in August 1949, when he licensed four Sharp masters to the London label for national distribution, excluding five midwestern states in which he would continue to market those recordings on the Sharp label. Martin signed a one-year agreement in the autumn of 1950 under which London could automatically license his recordings after 5,000 copies had been sold on the Sharp label. London exercised its option on several Sharp masters by the Jack Teter Trio, one of Sharp's most popular groups. Following expiration of the London agreement, Martin made a similar deal with Frank Walker at M-G-M Records in November 1951, and in the process was awarded a regional M-G-M distributorship.

Sharp had a local hit in the autumn of 1951 with "Oh, How I Love You," which Martin had purchased outright from the composer for \$50, and which reportedly sold 90,000 copies soon after release. However, Martin wound-down the Sharp operation in 1952 to concentrate on his distribution business. The label appears to have been inactive by October of that year, when a group of twelve music publishers sued Martin for failure to pay royalties on thirteen titles he had recorded.

SHELBY RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Offices: 1205 Griswold, Detroit

Record Products: Shelby

Launched in December 1948 by veteran music-publisher Joseph W. Guinan, as an adjunct to his Shelby Music Publishing Company (Detroit). *Billboard* reported on January 1, 1949, that the company planned to begin recording "within the next few weeks."

Shelby records featured pop fare by regional artists, many of them recruited from Detroit-area radio stations, including band leader Al Werner (musical director of WXYZ), singer Johnny Nolton (WWJ), Lloyd Kaye's Orchestra, and organist Tom Montgomery.

Shelby Recordings was listed in *Billboard's* July 1950 directory, although no report of the company's activities had appeared in the trade papers since the announcement of its launch. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard's* July 1951 and March 1952 directories (both of which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

SIEMON HARD RUBBER COMPANY/CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1917– 1950s

Offices: 662 6th Ave., New York

Pressing: Own plants—Bridgeport, CT; Albany, NY

Record Products: Pressings for Brunswick (Decca subsidiary, 1940s), Cameo (1922), Gaelic Record Company, Harmograph (brown label), Lyric [3] and related labels, Maloof, New Republic, O'Dowd; probably many other minor and custom labels

A molding company founded in early 1903 by Carl F. Siemon and Waldo C. Bryant. Its Bridgeport, Connecticut, plant was in operation by April 1903 and later offered record-pressing services. The company is included here because of its close affiliation with Earle W. Jones and his Jones Recording Laboratories, which produced masters for Siemon's custom-label clients.

The Talking Machine World for July 1921 announced that Siemon Hard Rubber was "about to enter the phonograph record field." Carl Siemon claimed he had already been pressing discs for some years for an unspecified "leader in the talking machine industry." However, his company would now offer full-service record production, from recording through plating and pressing, having entered into an agreement with Earle W. Jones under which Siemon would send its custom-label clients to his studio.

Jones closed his own business in late 1921 to serve as vice-president of the newly formed Cameo Record Corporation. Carl Siemon served on Cameo's board, having secured a Cameo pressing contract for his company. The agreement called for Siemon Hard Rubber to supply Cameo exclusively, but the company's pressing quality was mediocre at best, and Cameo transferred its pressing business to the American Record Manufacturing Company following Jones' departure in early 1922.

In late 1922, Siemon acquired the Duranoid Company (one of the earliest record-pressing plants, although it had long been out that business). Its 1926 acquisition of the Watertown Manufacturing Company was said to make Siemon the largest U.S. producer of molded insulators. In the late 1940s, Decca Records leased a portion of Siemon's plant for its Brunswick subsidiary and staffed it with its own employees. A record-crushing machine exploded there on December 31, 1947, injuring nine workers. The company sold its Bridgeport property in 1954.

SIGNATURE RECORD COMPANY / SIGNATURE RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1940–1952

Offices: 117 W. 46th St. (Asch Recordings offices, 1941–1946); 601 W. 26th St., New York (Signature Record Co., from 1945) ; 119 W. 57th St., New York (Hanover-Signature, from 1959); Shelton, CT (manufacturing, sales and distribution, from 1949)

Original-Master Source(s): Independent studios

Pressing: Scranton Record Company (1940–late 1945), Superior Recording (early 1950s), other independent plants; Own plants—New York (1945–mid-1948) and Shelton, CT (from mid-1948)

Record Products (78s): Signature; Hi-Tone, Shelton, Signature Hi-Tone, Signet

Robert (Bob) Thiele founded the Signature Record Company in 1940, while a high-school senior. Being a minor at the time, the initial company paperwork bears the name of his father, Herbert. A trademark application (not filed until 1944, by which time Thiele was an adult) claimed use of the Signature brand on records beginning May 15, 1940.

Signature's early focus was largely on jazz. In December 1944, Thiele launched *Jazz* magazine, a monthly publication that offered special subscriber-only record releases. He also hosted a radio program over radio station WHN, where (according to the 1945 *Record Retailing Yearbook*) he "gained attention for his ability to anticipate the public's desires in popular music." *Billboard* identified Signature as one of several independent labels that was attracting top-flight sidemen from the major orchestras by paying them substantially more than union scale.

Moses Asch took over the production and distribution of Signature records in June 1944, although Thiele reportedly retained control of artists and repertoire. Thiele seems to have viewed the relationship as simply a stopgap measure to ensure the survival of his label by tapping Asch's shellac ration. Late in the year, Thiele asked Asch to account for the exact locations of all of the Signature masters, in anticipation of taking back control of his label at the war's end.

Thiele chartered the Signature Recording Corporation in January 1945, with capital stock of \$501,000. By that summer he had severed relations with Asch and begun preparing to restore Signature to its status as a fully independent label. In late 1945, he opened his own pressing plant under the supervision of former Columbia production manager George Jaycox. At about the same time, he announced that Signature was preparing to enter the pop field. *Billboard* reported on December 8, 1945, that Thiele had begun stockpiling masters in advance of an exclusive distribution deal with the General Electric Supply Corporation, which the magazine characterized as "one of the cushiest distrib set-ups enjoyed by any platter-maker in this country."

The Signature Recording Corporation was showing clear signs of financial distress by 1947. In March, Thiele began to pare his artist roster, warning that only than half of the current artists would remain. Nevertheless, in May 1947 he purchased an additional 30,000-square foot plant in Shelton, Connecticut, the opening of which was delayed until January 1948. In July he denied rumors that Signature was in financial trouble, claiming that layoffs and the temporary suspension of pop recording sessions were merely the company "tightening its belt" in the face of slow summer sales. In September, Thiele announced sharp price reductions on Signature's black-label series, which apparently did little to stimulate sales. A widely publicized push to sign new talent yielded only meager results, and Thiele's October 1947 bid to take over Bullet Records was rejected by owner Jim Bulleit. Compounding Thiele's problems were expenses related to the stockpiling of masters in advance of the impending American Federation of Musicians' recording ban.

Despite the company's ongoing problems, Signature ranked high in *Billboard*'s 1947 disc-jockey satisfaction poll, scoring in the top five on virtually all counts, from distribution and service to technical quality. In late 1947 the company bowed to pressure from the jukebox lobby and announced it would produce special two-minute discs for jukebox use only, on the Signet label, enabling more plays per hour.

The threat of a lawsuit by the Harry Fox Agency over unpaid publisher royalties was fended off in late November 1947, after Thiele and Fox negotiated a satisfactory payment agreement. In early December, however, Thiele requested a debt moratorium from his creditors, in anticipation of filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in early 1948. By late December, an agreement had been reached with the creditors. Signature was declared a debtor-in-possession and was granted access to \$100,000 in funds it had been raised prior to the creditor agreement, allowing operations to continue into 1948.

At the same time, the distribution agreement with General Electric Supply was scuttled by mutual consent. After two years, it had become clear that GE's distribution channels were not suited to record sales. In severing the relationship, Thiele cited GE's inability to sell records in sufficient quantity to allow Signature to operate efficiently, despite a large expenditure on Signature's part to shore up GE's ineffective marketing efforts.

A reorganization plan and reshuffling of executive personnel (beginning with the termination of general sales manager Earl Winters) was announced on June 11, 1948. An optimistic report published in *Billboard* the following day noted that Thiele had acquired some self-produced masters by Liberace and was planning to sign the entertainer. Production of plastic pressings (initially used only for sample and children's records) began in mid-summer, following a long-delayed move to the company's new plant in Shelton, Connecticut. They employed an unnamed non-vinyl material developed by plant manager Jaycox.

Signature emerged from bankruptcy in August, by which time distributors were liquidating the company's old inventory for 10¢ a disc. Although recovery was slow, Thiele managed to open a new Los Angeles branch in 1949. In May, Thiele announced he was discontinuing production of the 75¢ Signature label and transferring the catalog to Hi-Tone, which he had recently launched as a 35¢ budget label. *Cash Box* reported at that time, "Hi-Tone has become the new gold mine of the record business with sales hitting the million

mark in its first fifty days of operation." Hi-Tone was followed in August by Shelton, a jazz label that served in part as a reissue vehicle for older Signature material. Signature LPs, compiled largely from previous 78-rpm releases, began shipping in July 1950.

Despite the progress made during 1949–1950, Thiele continued to face legal and financial difficulties that were largely of his own making, including federal tax-evasion charges. His pressing plant and masters were seized and on March 31, 1951, were sold at tax auction to a used-machinery dealer for \$70,000. Unbeknownst to federal authorities, the Superior Records pressing plant in Los Angeles held a duplicate set of masters, and by December 1951 Thiele was openly soliciting buyers for them. After much speculation in the trade papers, it was announced in March 1952 that Decca's Coral subsidiary had licensed the Signature masters, some of which were reissued on Coral LPs. The deal included an executive position for Thiele with Coral, where he championed Buddy Holly and was largely responsible for rebuilding Decca's moribund Brunswick line. In the meantime, he had launched a new venture, Halco, to produce cheap records for the discount-store market.

Thiele formally dissolved the inactive Signature Recording Corporation in 1952, after his move to Coral. He later revived the Signature label, in partnership with entertainer Steve Allen, before job-hopping among a succession of other companies, including Roulette Records and ABC's Impulse division. He remained active in the recording industry nearly until the time of his death on January 30, 1996.

SILVER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Offices: 425 (later, 423–425) Vine St., Evansville, IN

Record Products: Silver

A short-lived country-and-western label launched in late 1949 by Sol Silver, owner of the Silver Novelty Company in Evansville, Indiana. The company distributed and serviced a wide array of coin-operated machines, including jukeboxes. In late 1948, Silver began sponsoring his own program over radio station WHOT (Youngstown, Ohio) to plug the records he was featuring on his jukeboxes.

Silver's first (and possibly last) releases appeared in December 1949. One, by Tex Justus, appeared in the *Billboard's* January 1950 Music Popularity Charts, where it was rated as mediocre. Nothing further was reported concerning Silver Records in the trade papers. The Silver name was used in the later 1950s for an unrelated California label.

SILVER SPUR RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 3907 Lankershim Blvd., N. Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Silver Spur

Launched in the summer of 1946 by Joe Erwin and Dean Watson, formerly of Constellation Records, in partnership with country-music artist Don Weston. Like Constellation, Silver Spur specialized in country-and-western material.

Erwin reportedly had embarked on a two-month tour to secure distributors and artists for Silver Spur before the company was fully operational, but in the end, it was decided to feature Don Weston on most releases. Silver Spur's first two records had already been released by the time that Erwin and Watson formally announced Silver Spur's formation on August 10, 1946. At the same time, *Billboard* reported that Erwin and Watson were planning to produce color motion pictures starring Weston. However, nothing further was reported concerning the project, and Silver Spur Records closed in March 1947, after producing only a handful of known releases.

SILVER STAR RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1951

Offices: 713 Colvin St., Fort Worth, TX (1947–1950); 1121 Morningside Dr., Fort Worth (1950–1952)

Record Products: Silver Star [2]

Owned and operated by Texas country-music singer and entrepreneur Cecil Harris Gill. Billed as "The Yodeling Country Boy," Gill was a fixture on Dallas–Fort Worth radio stations,

in addition to running a cafe and a laundry-pickup service, and dealing in copies of vintage silent films.

Although 1946 is given as the company's launch in some modern works, Gill did not file a copyright on the Silver Star name until August 14, 1947, by which time he had moved to radio station WGAD (Gadsen, Alabama). The first Silver Star release, which was later licensed to Rich-R'-Tone, was not noted by *Billboard* until February 1948.

The Silver Star Record Company was last listed in *Billboard*'s July 1951 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies), at Gill's home address. The Silver Star name was later used by several unrelated labels.

SILVER STAR RECORDING COMPANY

The launch of this New Brunswick, New Jersey, venture was announced in the trade papers in 1923. The company reportedly planned to produce unbreakable records, which president Percy A. Cook — parroting an earlier Indestructible cylinder-record advertisement — claimed could be "thrown on the ground, kicked around, run over by automobiles, cut with a knife, and then put on a machine and played perfectly." Some unbranded novelty flexible discs were produced at about this time, although it is not certain that they were Silver Star products.

SILVERTONE RECORD CLUB — See Sears, Roebuck & Company

SIMFONIA RECORD/RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. Late 1950s

Offices: 75 Old Broadway, New York (1950–c. 1953); 117 E. 7th St., New York (from c. 1953)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products (78s): SimFonia

Of unknown ownership, Simfonia specialized in Eastern European ethnic material, some of it reportedly from domestic masters. The company was in operation by August 1950, when what appears to have been its second release was listed in *Billboard*. Later labels show a 1953 copyright and a studio location on 7th Street in New York.

SINGER, MURRAY (Discs)

Murray Singer Records / Nu-Vogue Record Company / Pix Records

Record Production: 1941 – 1952

Offices: 1674 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Murray Singer, Mirror Tone, Nu-Vogue, Rite-a-Lyric, Swank, Voco; A-Musing, Joy [2] (party records); Kiddie Tunes (children's)

Founded in late 1941 by Murray Singer, formerly an employee of General Record (Reeves Sound Studios), as an adjunct to the Murray Singer Music Publishing Company. Al Singer served as technical and recording director. Joy Records (a producer of adult "party" records that was launched around 1947 and was advertised briefly as "A Sophisticated Line") operated at the same address. Its owner was listed as Murray Singer's brother, Sam, who was better known as a local nightclub manager.

The launch of Nu-Vogue, Murray Singer's earliest known label, appears to have been put on hold in the summer of 1942, after Singer was inducted into the army. It was in production by 1945, when it was first listed in the *Record Retailing Yearbook*. Swank (unaffiliated with Swank Motion Pictures) was launched in October of that year. It initially specialized in barbershop quartets, a niche it soon abandoned.

After a six-month hiatus in Chicago during which his activities were not reported upon, Singer returned to New York in January 1947, recast Swank as a conventional pop line, and launched the Mirror Tone label. Plastic pressings were introduced in the same year, using a Dumor compound for which Al Singer supplied a brief testimonial on behalf of Swank Records. Murray Singer produced Voco very briefly in the later 1940s, as a conventional pop label, then spun it off as a separate children's record company in 1950. In November 1948 the Singer brothers, in partnership with vocalist Jack Emerson, launched Pix Records (*q.v.*) at the same Broadway address as their various other ventures.

Singer was often involved with other record companies while operating his own. In May 1946, *Billboard* reported that he was "taking time out" from Swank to assist James H. Martin, a Chicago distributor who was preparing to enter the record-production business. By early 1947 he was distributing other companies' labels, including Universal and Tower, and working with Enterprise Records. Beginning in September 1947, he maintained an office in the headquarters of the Manhattan Phonograph Company, a New York distributor of independent labels.

Murray Singer Records appeared sporadically in *Billboard's* manufacturer directories into the early 1950s. Its last appearance was in the March 1952 list, which included many inactive or defunct companies. In 1954 Singer was hired as general manager of Bethlehem Records (a pop label, despite what its name suggests) and advanced to president by the end of that year. In the later 1950s he moved to Laurie Records, initially managing its jazz department, then serving as director of special products and vice-president for merchandising in the 1960s. He was still employed by Laurie at the time of his death on January 5, 1968.

SITTIN' IN WITH RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1952

Offices: 412 W. 42nd St., New York (to 11/1950); 733 11th Ave. (from 11/1950)

Record Products (78s): Sittin' In With, Jade, Jax

Successor to Robert (Bob) Shad's Castle Records [II], which had produced and distributed the Sittin' In With and Jade labels beginning in 1948. In late 1950, Shad closed Castle Records and launched Sittin' In With Records, Inc., as an independent company after purchasing masters from the defunct Lee and Candy labels. Shad licensed the Sittin' In With catalog (including Jade) to Mercury Records in 1951, then discontinued the label in 1952. There is no connection to the later Sittin' In (no "With") label.

Mercury Records hired Shad as a manager of jazz and blues artists following the closure of Sittin' In With. However, he continued to operate primarily as a freelancer, launching a string of new labels that began with Jax in 1952. After a long but sporadic association with Mercury, he left that company for the last time in 1958 to launch the Shad label. His final and most successful venture was Mainstream Records, a 1960s label that released reissues as well as new material, the latter including the first album by Janis Joplin with Big Brother and the Holding Company.

SKYLINE RECORDS — See Music, Inc.

SKYSCRAPER RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 1650 Broadway (Suite 403), New York

Record Products: Skyscraper

A short-lived label of unknown ownership, launched in the summer of 1950. The first two releases, by Buddy Hawkins and the Keynotes, appeared in August and were advertised in *Cash Box* the following month.

Nothing further was heard of the Skyscraper label until December, when two Bob Howard releases were announced (with an intervening gap of forty-nine catalog numbers, which appear not to have been used). Howard's "The Elephant Rock" was dismissed by a *Billboard* reviewer, who said it was "sung and played with an easy beat by the radio-TV personality, but appears to have little significance." Buddy Hawkins' group disbanded in July 1951, by which time Skyscraper appears to have suspended operations. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard's* July 1951 and March 1952 directories (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

SLATE ENTERPRISES, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1950

Offices: 209 Clinton Ave., Newark, NJ (1946 – mid-1950); 972 Broad St., Newark (from mid-1950)

Record Products: Slate

Launched in June 1946 talent agent by Maurice Slate. The label featured pop and country-and-western fare and initially relied largely on local artists. Slate's first two releases were advertised in September 1946, and the last known issues under the Slate Enterprises imprint appeared in late 1950. The Slate label was revived in 1953, possibly under different ownership. There is an unconfirmed report that the label was later acquired by M-G-M Records.

SMART RECORDS — See Desert Recording Company

SMITH, HARRY (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1930s – c. Late 1940s

Offices: 1776 Broadway, New York (to 9/1939); 2 W. 46th St., New York (early 1940s); 113 W. 57th St., New York (from mid-1940s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations (portable equipment also used)

Record Products (78s): Masters for New Jazz, Varsity and related labels, other commercial labels; custom recordings; air-checks and radio transcriptions

Primarily a producer of radio transcriptions and custom recordings, Harry Smith also occasionally recorded masters for commercial labels. (This was not the same individual as folk-music specialist Harry Smith, producer of the 1952 "Anthology of American Folk Music" for Folkways, with whom he has been confused by some writers.)

Smith worked as a Brunswick Record Corporation recording engineer in the later 1930s and acquired the vacated Brunswick–American Record Corporation studio in 1939, which he briefly operated as his own. It is remembered for having made Frank Sinatra's first commercial studio recording ("Our Love," with Frank Manne's Orchestra).

Smith was also listed as the United States Record Corporation's recording engineer for a short time, and USRC's Eli Oberstein purchased Smith's studio in late September 1940. By the end of that year, Smith was again operating on his own, as Harry Smith Recordings, offering custom and commercial recording services, with Robert E. Scheuing serving as manager. Smith sold his studio to Fred Hall and Chuck Phillips in August 1944, for their newly launched Tel-a-Recordings venture. By 1945, Smith was affiliated with Advertisers Recording Service (a New York transcription producer), with which his studio shared an address and telephone number.

SOCIETY RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1955

Offices: Encino, CA

Pressing: RCA Custom Products

Record Products: Society Recordings

Owned and operated by veteran songwriter Al Piantadosi, in conjunction with his Piantadosi Music, a music-publishing operation. The few known Society releases feature tunes from the Piantadosi Music catalog.

Society records were being advertised nationally by the summer of 1950. Early releases featured singer April Stevens (who signed an exclusive contract with Piantadosi in 1950 and had a minor hit with "Later Perhaps" in 1951) and film and radio star Penny (Blondie) Singleton. In August 1950, Society released an album of dance-instruction records narrated by the team of Veloz & Yolanda. The operation continued to make sporadic releases into the early 1950s, then closed following Piantadosi's death on April 8, 1955.

SOKHAG RECORD COMPANY — See Sarafian Sohag / Sokhag Record Company

SOLAR RECORDING COMPANY / SOLAR RECORDS — See D-H Recording Company

SOLO ART RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1939–1940

Offices: 1600 Broadway, New York (General Records office)

Original-Master Source(s): Reeves Sound Studios

Record Products: Solo Art

A short-lived jazz label owned by Brooklyn bartender and record collector Dan Qualey. Ross Russell, a friend of Qualey's at the time Solo Art was launched, recalled that he was "completely atypical of the American collector, who at this time was college educated and middle class, whereas Qualey was a red-necked Irish type."

Qualey reportedly financed the start-up by soliciting subscription from his bar's clientele, collecting \$10 in advance with the promise that they would receive ten records annually through the mail. The address given for the new venture (1600 Broadway, New York) was actually that of General Records and Reeves Sound Studios, which recorded Solo Art's R-prefixed masters. The initial pressing runs reportedly were limited to 300 copies per record.

Qualey recorded twenty-four Solo Art masters (all but two of which were issued) by jazz pianists Albert Ammons, Art Hodes, Pete Johnson, and Meade (Lux) Lewis. Recording sessions were held between February 1939 and August 10, 1939. The label was discontinued in 1940, after Qualey ran out of funds. He later moved to California.

In May 1948 *Billboard* announced that Qualey was returning to New York to negotiate the sale of his Solo Art masters to Circle Records. The transaction was completed in July, and Circle began offering reissues, packaged in album sets, beginning on November 15 of that year. Rights were later acquired by the George H. Buck Jazz Foundation, which reissued the recordings in CD format.

SONART RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1941 – 1948

Offices: 251 W. 42nd St., New York (to late 1947); 463 W. 42nd St. (from late 1947)

Record Products: Sonart

Founded in the early 1940s by John Marsich, a Yugoslavian immigrant, to deal in records for the ethnic markets. Marsich was listed in the 1944 *Record Retailing Yearbook's* company directory, which did not mention what labels he was producing at the time. His belated trademark filing for the Sonart label design, made on February 27, 1946, claimed continuous use on records since April 21, 1941, but it is not certain that Sonart was releasing any original recordings at that early date.

Sonart initially specialized in international dance music, particularly polkas. In the later 1940s it expanded its scope to include a few jazz and country-and-western releases but continued to cater primarily to the ethnic markets, particularly eastern European. Beginning in the mid-1940s, distribution was handled by Interstate Music Suppliers (New York) and other jobbers specializing in small niche labels.

In March 1948, Marsich sold his catalog to Anthony Benis, the owner of Harmonia Records (*q.v.*). Benis took over production and distribution of the Sonart label, paying Marsich a modest royalty on record sales.

SONATA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 505 5th Ave., New York.

Record Products: Sonata

A short-lived pop label launched in the spring of 1950 and possibly affiliated with Al Kaalund. Its initial release, by singer Elizabeth Palmer (who was managed by Kaalaund) received an enthusiastic *Cash Box* review in May, after which nothing more was reported in the trade papers. The company's last regular listing was in *Billboard's* July 1950 directory. Its brief reappearances in the July 1951 and March 1952 *Billboard* directories (both of which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. There was no connection to the Swedish label of same name and period.

SONG BIRD RECORD COMPANY — See Davis, Joe

SONGCRAFT, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Songcraft, Songcraft Party Series; Adelphi, Laff, Laugh; custom labels; pressings for Opus, Parade, and other small independent labels

Launched in early 1946 as an independent master-processing and pressing plant by Manuel M. (Manny) Warner. By May, Songcraft was advertising shellac and vinylite pressing services to "a limited number of small companies."

Songcraft produced several of its own labels, probably beginning with Laff in 1947, which was advertised as "The Songcraft Party Series." It was renamed Laugh in early 1948 (a later Laff label, based in California, was unrelated). In the meantime, the Songcraft label itself had been introduced, although releases were sporadic and advertising virtually non-existent. The obscure Adelphi label appeared briefly in 1950.

Warner encouraged songwriters and artists to finance their own recording sessions. In return, they would be given an agreed-upon number of copies, pressed on a label of Warner's choosing, to sell on their own or use for demonstration purposes. Among the takers was William A. Johnson, a Harlem masseur and owner of a local health-and-beauty institute. In August 1951, Songcraft recorded Johnson's "Millionaire's Jingle," a "metaphysically inspired" tune he claimed would "bring better health, more prosperity, and greater happiness to all who conscientiously sing it." One-thousand copies were pressed, and the record received a plug in *The New York Age*. Earlier that year, Warner had released a recording of Pope Pius XII's Holy Year prayer, to which he claimed to have acquired the worldwide distribution rights.

Songcraft last advertised in the early 1950s. By 1958, Warner was managing production for Aamco Records, a producer of cut-rate LPs.

SONG-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB

A mid-1940s subscription business, operated by N. R. Real, that targeted amateur songwriters. For a \$1 monthly fee, members could submit their songs for consideration, the "best" of which supposedly would be selected for each month's record and sheet-music release. Purely a vanity operation, its output is beyond the scope of this work.

SONORA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, INC. / SONORA PHONOGRAPH CORPORATION

(Discs)

Record Production: Record Production: 1910–1911

Offices: 78 Reade St. (through 1911); 57 Reade St., New York (1913–1916); 279 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (former American Record Company studio, 241 W. 23rd St., New York)

Record Products: Sonora [1]; Crown (not produced; label design published); masters for Princess

Sonora was the first commercial producer of vertical-cut discs in the United States. The company was in operation by 1907 (although not yet incorporated), when it announced plans to produce a disc phonograph. However, no phonographs were immediately forthcoming. Sonora's trademark applications consistently cite May 1908 as the date the Sonora brand and "Clear as a Bell" slogan were first used on phonographs.

The Sonora Phonograph Company was finally officially incorporated in Yonkers, New York, on December 17, 1908, by William E. Hoschke, Harry F. Menten, and Charles E. Lauton. Hoschke had been previously associated with the Hawthorne & Sheble Manufacturing Company, to which he assigned several patents, including a spring-loaded tonearm and other attempts to skirt the Berliner patents.

After having produced nothing, the Sonora Phonograph Company was reorganized and reincorporated in January 1909, with an initial stock offering of \$150,000. Charles Brightson assumed the presidency, and the company began marketing Swiss-made Paillard phonographs (which were equipped universal reproducers and feed-screw drives) under the Sonora brand. The machines were thought to skirt the Victor Talking Machine Company's Berliner patent, since the feed-screw rather than the groove appeared to propel

the stylus. Victor attorney Horace Pettit disagreed, contending that the Sonora arm pivoted to such an extent that the record's groove actually propelled the stylus, and sued for patent infringement in August 1910 (*Victor Talking Machine Co. v. Hoschke et al.*, 180 F. 777). On December 12, 1910, the court found in favor of Victor. Pettit placed notices in newspapers nationwide reporting the verdict and warning of his company's intent to "vigorously enjoin all infringing acts." However, the ruling was reversed on appeal on February 25, 1911. Victor vacated another lawsuit against William Hoschke three days later.

In September 1909, Sonora leased the former American Record Company studio, under George Cheney's management, in anticipation of producing its own records. The April 1910 edition of *The Talking Machine World* confirmed that Sonora owned a "fully equipped and carefully manned laboratory for the making of master records." Initially, Sonora planned to produce records in both vertical- and lateral-cut formats. Sonora's advertisement in the April 1910 *TMW* depicted both a Sonora (vertical-cut) and a Crown ("needle," or lateral-cut) label, but the latter is not known to have been produced. Introduction of the new records stalled after Cheney resigned from Sonora on May 14, 1910, to take a position as recording engineer with the Boston Talking Machine Company (Phono-Cut).

The first of Sonora's long-delayed records were finally listed in the November 1910 *Talking Machine World*. Some of Sonora's masters would be reissued on the Sapphire Record & Talking Machine Company's Princess and Empire Sapphire Record labels, leading some writers to speculate that the companies were one and the same, which was not the case.

In a December 1910 interview, Hoschke referred to personnel changes at the Sonora studio that seemed to hint of ongoing problems. No market yet existed in the United States for vertical-cut discs, and sales appear to have been negligible. In addition, Sonora's ongoing legal battles with Victor were proving to be very costly. On November 16, 1911, an involuntary petition in bankruptcy was filed against the company. Among the creditors was president Brightson, who filed a claim of \$5,729 for unpaid salary of. Assets at the time were listed at \$54,870, liabilities at \$17,653. The company was adjudged bankrupt on November 29.

Reorganized in 1913 as the Sonora Phonograph Corporation, under new ownership and management, the company went on to become a major manufacturer of high-priced phonographs, many of which were assembled at John Herzog's Art Furniture factory in Saginaw, Michigan. The machines were marketed through the Sonora Phonograph Sales Company, Inc. (New York), and Canadian distribution rights were secured by I. Montagnes & Company (Toronto) in 1915.

Victor, alarmed by Sonora's incursion into the phonograph market, sued the company for infringement of its internal horn design. As the result of an out-of-court settlement in 1916, Sonora acknowledged its infringement of Victor's patent and agreed to license the patent from Victor for a substantial sum.

Sonora made several apparent attempts to revive record production during this period, none of which came to fruition. In 1916 Sonora officials filed applications for at least six U.S. trademarks they falsely claimed had been used on records since 1913. In 1920 the company registered the old "Clear as a Bell" trademark (which had appeared on the 1910–1911 labels) specifically for use on records, falsely claiming use on records since December 1, 1919. In March 1921, the company announced that it was about to place Sonora lateral-cut discs on the market, but no records were forthcoming.

Sonora underwent two further reorganizations in the 1920s, the first in mid-1921, as Sonora, Inc. In 1924 the company acquired two of its cabinet suppliers (Herzog, and the Jordan Cabinet Works of Brooklyn, New York) and was reorganized as the Sonora Phonograph Company, Inc. In 1927 Sonora was taken over by the Bidhamson Company, a holding that had recently been involved in the launch of the Acoustic Products Company for former Brunswick-Balke-Collender vice-president Percy Deutsch.

The Talking Machine World for December 1927 reported that a Sonora recording studio would open the following month, but a new Sonora label was not forthcoming, and it is not known whether the studio ever became operational. In 1929 it was announced that electrically recorded Sonora records were ready to go into production, but if any recordings were made, no evidence of them has been found. Sonora filed for bankruptcy soon after the announcement.

After operating for a period during the 1930s as the Sonora Electrical Phonograph Company, the company emerged from bankruptcy in 1938 and was reorganized as the Sonora Radio and Television Corporation (*see next entry*), which revived the long-dormant Sonora label in 1942. By then, it had undergone so many changes in ownership and management that it was related to the original company only in the use of its brand name and trademark.

SONORA RADIO AND TELEVISION CORPORATION / SONORA RECORD COMPANY

(Discs)

Record Production: 1942 – 1949

Offices: Merchandise Mart, Chicago (corporate headquarters, to 9/1943); 325 N. Hoyne Ave., Chicago (corporate headquarters, from 9/1943); 77 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago (record division, from early 1944); 730 5th Ave., New York (record division, from mid-1944)

Original-Master Source(s): WOR and other independent studios

Pressing: Meriden, CT (from mid-1945); some pressing contracted to Capitol and probably other independent plants

Record Products: Sonora [2]; Sonora Play-Land (children's)

The Sonora Radio and Television Corporation had only a tenuous link to the original Sonora Phonograph Company (*see previous entry*), which filed for bankruptcy in 1930 and was subsequently reorganized as Sonora Electrical Phonograph Company. Reorganized again in March 1938, as the Sonora Radio and Television Corporation, all that remained of the original company was the brand name and the "Clear as a Bell" trademark.

Introduced in 1942, the Sonora label originally released only reissues, primarily of material acquired from the defunct United States Record Corporation (Varsity-Royale) and the temporarily inactive Musicraft, including material from the latter's budget-priced Masterpiece label. Master numbers were sometimes altered or effaced, particularly on the USRC masters. The company initially eschewed single releases, issuing only album sets that were devoted largely to royalty-free old standards and light classics.

Sonora obtained a recording license from the American Federation of Musicians in November 1943. In February 1944, the recording division was incorporated as the Sonora Record Company (although the Sonora Radio and Television Corporation imprint continued to appear on record labels) and was moved to a separate office under the management of Joseph Gerl (president) and Jess S. Raban (vice-president). In the same month, *Billboard* announced that the company was preparing to open a New York office and make its first original recordings. Although headquartered in Chicago, Sonora would record primarily in New York.

The earliest Sonora sessions were held in New York's WOR Studios under the supervision of C. Paul Baldwin, former owner of the Baldwin Recording Studios. The artist roster at first was fairly conservative, featuring Lani McIntire and his Aloha Islanders, Noy Gorodinsky and his Gypsy Ensemble, Enric Madriguera's Orchestra, the Ben Yost Singers, pianist Pauline Alpert, and other middle-of-the-road performers. A country-and-western series, introduced in December 1945, employed several artists from radio station WBT (Charlotte, North Carolina). It was followed in September 1946 by a rhythm-and-blues series that survived for only eight months and seventeen releases. By the later 1940s, Sonora had begun to develop a modest jazz catalog.

Sonora opened its own pressing plant in Meriden, Connecticut, during the summer of 1945. In October the company announced that it would begin producing single issues in addition to album sets, a decision it would later reverse. Production increased significantly during the latter part of 1945, and in February 1946, Milton T. Benjamin (who had served as Sonora's eastern sales manager since 1935) was transferred to Chicago to manage the rapidly growing record division.

In January 1947, Sonora announced the launch of a black-label disc retailing for 39¢ and wholesaling for just 26¢. The new line included short-lived rhythm-and-blues and country-and-western series but otherwise was aimed at the pop market and jukebox operators. The announcement provoked an unusually strident response from leading industry executives, who questioned Sonora's motives and the viability of such an inexpensive record. M-G-M and RCA officials declared it to be an impossible feat, which proved to be the case. In May, after having given a substantial pay raise to its pressing-plant employees to fend off a

threatened strike, Sonora was forced to raise the price of its 39¢ discs to 50¢. At the same time, the company raised its standard 50¢ red-label discs to 60¢.

Sonora largely suspended recording during the early summer of 1947, giving rise to rumors that it was seeking to sell its pressing plant and was getting out of the pop-singles business. In August, *Cash Box* confirmed that Sonora's board of directors was considering dropping singles and returning to the company's previous albums-only policy, despite denials elsewhere from president Joseph Gerl, who promised a full autumn recording schedule. However, in November *Billboard* revealed that Sonora not only had stopped recording and releasing pop singles, but was not stockpiling masters in advance of the second American Federation of Musicians recording ban, as other companies were doing.

In January 1948, Gerl finally admitted that Sonora had abandoned its ambitious recording schedule and instead would return to repackaging existing singles in album sets. In fact, the company's final album had already been released a month earlier. It was also discovered that some Sonora artists, including Griff Williams and Saxie Dowell, had asked to be released from their contracts, or had not had their contracts renewed.

Billboard reported in May 1948 that Sonora's "virtually inactivated" Meriden pressing plant had been sold to Milton Benjamin and his wife, Marie Reubens, with the understanding that it would be used to supply Eli Oberstein with cut-rate pressings for his newly revived Varsity label. Benjamin and Reubens made a final attempt to revive the Sonora label, which apparently did not progress beyond a single issue on a new 79¢ purple label. A short time later, Benjamin and Reubens sold the plant outright to Oberstein, who also purchased 250 Sonora masters, along with the accompanying album-cover art, for reissue on Varsity. In July *Billboard* made the questionable claim that Savoy's Herman Lubinsky had purchased 4,000 masters from Sonora, which was nearly six times the number of original recordings that Sonora is known to have made.

The Sonora Radio and Television Corporation filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in October 1949. In the reorganization that followed, it was announced that the company would devote itself exclusively to the production of radios and television, and would not be producing any more records. The master sell-off continued, with Rondo purchasing eighty Sonora masters in the same month as the Chapter 11 filing. Oberstein continued to purchase additional masters into at least early 1949, and in 1950 Lubinsky announced that some Sonora material would be transferred to 45-rpms for Savoy's initial releases in that format.

Sonora Radio and Television filed for bankruptcy on January 1, 1957, with no plans for continued operation. The corporation was officially dissolved on December 23, 1958.

SONOROUS MUSIC COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 1658 Broadway, New York

Record Products (78s): Eastly

A publishing operation founded in June 1944 by Robert H. Jean, and Arthur H. Gundersdorf (*a.k.a.* Gunders). Robert Gundersdorf, a songwriter and musician, served as president, his wife Jean as vice-president.

The Eastly label was launched in the spring of 1950, primarily to promote Robert Gunderson's compositions. Its small output consisted of inconsequential pop material. The initial release, by former Guy Lombardo and Tommy Dorsey band vocalist Stuart Foster, was announced in May 1950. The label was last mentioned by *Billboard* in November 1950. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

SORORITY FRATERNITY RECORDS AND PUBLICATIONS / MAYHAMS AND CO-ED RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1942 – 1980s

Offices: 12 W. 117th St., New York

Record Products (78s): Co-Ed

Founded in 1943 by Black entertainer and entrepreneur Norridge B. (Norris) Mayhams. Sorority Fraternity Records was a family-owned business, with Julia Betty Mayhams serving as secretary-treasurer and Benjamin J. Mayhams as sales manager.

A native of Georgetown, South Carolina, Mayhams had worked with Chick Webb, Gypsy Rose Lee, and other well-known personalities in the 1930s and early 1940s, and had fronted and recorded with a small combo known variously as the Barbecue Boys, Blue Boys, or Blue Chips. However, he was best known for his solo act, "Norris the Troubadour," on the college entertainment circuits. His autobiographical *Experiences of a Collegiate Singer* was self-published in 1947.

Mayhams filed a trademark application for the Co-Ed label design on August 8, 1940, claiming use on records since February 1938, although no records are known to have been produced that early. The earliest confirmed Co-Ed release was made on February 16, 1942 (Mayhams' sixteenth wedding anniversary), according to a report in *The New York Age*. Mayhams had a unique niche-marketing angle, selling the records only on college campuses, or to jukebox operators who serviced those locations.

During the summer of 1943, Mayhams solicited financing for additional releases through a small classified advertisement in *Billboard*, which finally took notice of the label in November of that year. In the same month, Mayhams began adding announcements to his records urging the purchase of war stamps and bonds, in return for which he reportedly was given preferential treatment from the pressings plant.

Co-Ed's specialty was novelty and topical songs, many of them written by Mayhams, who also performed on some releases in the guise of "Norris." There were jazz and rhythm-and-blues releases as well, largely by college and other semi-professional performers. In 1949, impressed by an *Ebony* magazine photo of Mary Coldbrook (a singer of mixed German and Samoan ancestry), he arranged to have her record two bilingual selections in Germany for release in the U.S., but only after having determined that she was "anti-Nazi." In the late 1940s, Mayhams began issuing country-and-western material, which he marketed as "Western Rhythm Hillbilly Songs." The handful of Co-Ed releases that were reviewed generally were dismissed as jukebox-filler material.

The company was renamed Mayhams and Co-Ed Records in the 1950s, at which time the 45-rpm Mayhams, Mayhams Collegiate, and Mayhams Sorority Fraternity labels were introduced, largely supplanting Co-Ed. A long-running feud with George Paxton and Marvin Cane, whose label was named Coed (unhyphenated), was settled out of court in the autumn of 1960, after Mayhams agreed to give them the Co-Ed name.

Mayhams began arranging for international distribution of his records in 1959, and in April 1960 it was reported that distribution deals had been made in such far-flung locations as Sudan, Ethiopia, Liberia, and Nigeria. Pre-recorded tapes were added to the product line in 1960. Mayham's company was still operating as late as 1980.

SOUND STUDIOS OF NEW YORK — See World Broadcasting System, Inc.

SOUTH DAKOTA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889

Offices: Rooms 321–322, Syndicate Building, Sioux Falls, SD

A licensee of the North American Phonograph Company, chartered to deal in Edison phonographs and Columbia graphophones in North and South Dakota. The company was organized in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, on April 18, 1889, by brothers Henry and E. R. Lacey, who shared responsibilities as general managers. Others involved with the company were Charles E. Baker, T. G. Brown, H. T. Corson, and Judge C. S. Palmer. Henry Lacey represented the South Dakota Phonograph Company at the National Phonograph Association convention in May 1890.

South Dakota Phonograph was in operation by May 17, 1890, when it staged an invitation-only phonograph demonstration that promised "a variety of musical cylinders which we are confident will assist in entertaining you." A week later, it was announced that company representatives were expected soon in Bismarck, where they would be "prospecting in North Dakota with a view to supplying the demand for their instruments."

Demand, however, appears to have been sparse throughout the Dakotas. The Sioux Falls *Argus-Leader* reported in May 1890, "While there are twenty of these machines in use in Sioux Falls, only a few persons yet fully realize their full value." In an attempt to build interest, the Lacey brothers for a time staged an open house in their offices, where for 25¢ the public could hear a selection of musical cylinders. South Dakota Phonograph apparently

obtained some, if not all, of its cylinders from the Columbia Phonograph Company, based upon their testimonial in an 1891 Columbia advertisement. Thus far, no catalog or other evidence has been found to suggest that the company produced any original recordings for sale to the general public.

SOUTHERN RECORD CORPORATION — See Williams, J. Mayo

SOUTHERN STATES PHONOGRAPH COMPANY — See Emerson Phonograph Company

SOUVENAIR RECORDS COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 6362 Hollywood Blvd. (Room 407), Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Souvenair

Launched in May 1946 by C. P. (Pete) Jaeger, a sales manager for the ABC Blue Network. The name was misspelled "Sauvenair" in *Billboard's* directory.

According to *Billboard's* launch report (which spelled the name correctly), Souvenair planned to produce albums devoted to "great moments in radio." The actual output fell short of that goal, consisting of excerpts from ABC's "Breakfast in Hollywood," "Breakfast Club," and "Bride and Groom" broadcasts, with their sponsors credited on the labels. The operation does not appear to have survived beyond 1946. By early 1947, Jaeger was working with Audience Records (*q.v.*), which was preparing to launch its own series of broadcast-related recordings.

SPANISH MUSIC CENTER / CODA RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1945 – 1950s

Offices: 1291 6th Ave., New York

Record Products: Coda, SMC, SMC Pro-Arte

Founded in the early 1940s by Gabriel Oller, Jr., the Spanish Music Center was a music and record store specializing in Latino-style music for the U.S. market, capitalizing in particular on the 1940s rhumba and tango fads.

Oller's Coda Record Company was launched in 1945, in affiliation with the Spanish Music Center. Coda records (touted as "El Disco Supremo" on some labels) originally were pressed in Canada to bypass American wartime shellac rationing. Edesio Ocando Soto served as sales manager for Coda records, which were packaged in multi-disc albums and were self-distributed. The roster included the Conjunto Cuba Libre, Noro Marales' Rhythm Sextet, and the Marcelino Guerra, Ramon Littee, and Carlos Varela orchestras.

The SMC and SMC Pro Arte labels were added to the product line in 1948. Sold individually, the records were more expensive than Coda, at \$1.09 *vs.* 79¢ each. They featured the same sort of material as Coda, as well as classical works, most notably some Spanish compositions for guitar as performed by Andres Segoiva and Rey de la Torre. SMC microgroove LPs, pressed for Oller by Columbia, and initially cobbled together from previously released material, were announced in July 1949 but were not generally available until later that year.

In 1950 Oller began licensing his masters to independent foreign labels, including Villar (Philippines) and Discos Tropical (Colombia). Oller appears to have discontinued commercial record production in 1952, although his LPs could still be purchased from the Spanish Music Center well into the 1950s. Several other unrelated companies, including one in Honolulu, later used the Spanish Music Center name.

SPECIALTY RECORD COMPANY, INC. / FAMOUS RECORD COMPANY, INC., OF NEW YORK (Discs)

Record Production: 1940 – 1941

Offices: 366 Madison Ave., New York (Specialty Record Co.); Box 245, Madison Square Station, New York (Famous Record; no street address listed)

Record Products: Specialty [1], Famous Record Co.

The Specialty Record Company was short-lived venture, of unknown ownership, that produced soundtrack dubbings from movies by well-known celebrities.

Radio Today announced the company's first (and apparently only) offerings in October

1940, consisting of one single-sided 10" disc each by John Barrymore, Joe E. Brown, Ilka Chase, Luise Rainer, and Franchot Tone. The publication reported that thousands of the records were already in dealers' hands, with the Warren-Norge Company handling New York distribution. Each record opened and closed with what was termed "appropriate incidental music" and included introductory remarks by radio announcer Del Shubart. Retailing for 39¢ each, they were marketed to the general public and radio stations.

The same five records were reissued in 1941, downsized to 8" laminated cardboard picture discs, by the equally obscure Famous Record Company, Inc., of New York. The artwork employed for the picture discs consisted of enlargements of the original Specialty labels, with the brand name removed. Dubbings to the smaller-diameter masters were commissioned from RCA Victor in April 1941, and labels stated that the records were licensed under a patent of the Talking Book Corporation, an RCA affiliate. The records retailed at three for a dollar, an odd amount given that there were five discs in the series. No further releases were advertised, and *Variety* reported on December 3, 1941, that the Famous Record Company had been dissolved. The name was reused in 1944 for an apparently unrelated Famous Record Company, *q.v.*

SPECIALTY RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1946

Offices: 2719 W. 7th St., Los Angeles (1946); 311 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles (1946–1948); 8508 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA (from 1949)

Pressing: Own plant — Los Angeles; Monarch Record Manufacturing, other independent plants

Record Products (78s): Specialty [2]; Fidelity [2] (from late 1951)

Founded by Arthur N. (Art) Rupe (*née* Goldberg), Specialty was one of the most successful of the early independent labels specializing in rhythm-and-blues, jump, gospel, and (later) rock-and-roll. Rupe began his music-industry career in 1943 as a partner in Robert Scherman's Atlas Records. In 1944 he launched Juke Box Records, which later became entangled in a partnership with Albert Middleman of Sterling Records. In August 1946, Rupe sold out to Middleman and used the proceeds to launch Specialty Records.

The first Specialty releases, pressed from Juke Box masters to which Rupe had retained the rights, were advertised on August 10, 1944. Roy Milton, who already had several hits on Juke Box, came along as Specialty's first star. According to his various biographers, Rupe purchased a large number of race records before launching Specialty and studied them thoroughly to ascertain why they did or did not sell, from which he developed a set of guiding principles for his new company.

Rupe moved Specialty into larger quarters in 1947 and opened his own pressing plant. With only a modest budget, he at first found many of his artists in the local Los Angeles clubs. He erred on one occasion in 1947 by releasing two disguised recordings of Sister Rosetta Tharpe, who was under exclusive contract to Decca. Decca executives quickly recognized the voice and obtained a court order for the destruction of Tharpe's Specialty masters and pressings.

In August 1947, Specialty was one of several small West Coast labels that began air shipment of its records to the East via Flying Tiger Airlines, a marked improvement over the usual rail shipment. The final releases for that year were temporarily withheld to allow Rupe extra time to stockpile masters in advance of the impending American Federation of Musicians' recording ban.

The Specialty label was completely redesigned in mid-1949, with the Specialty name now appearing in bold yellow script against a black background. By then, Specialty releases were beginning to appear regularly in the *Billboard* and *Cash Box* best-seller charts, and Rupe was attracting well-known talent, including Buddy Banks, Joe Higgins and the Honeydrippers, Percy Mayfield, Roy Milton, and the Soul Stirrers with an uncredited Sam Cooke. Milton's "Everything I Do Is Wrong" was a hit for Specialty in 1948, remaining on the *Billboard* and *Cash Box* race-record charts for an extended period.

A country-and-western series, launched in January 1949, failed to thrive and was soon abandoned. Rupe attempted a second venture into country music in June 1952, again with unhappy results. The initial releases featured Claude King, Shot Jackson, and Leo Stancil, all lesser-known performers who failed to attract attention in the national market. Rupe soon refocused his attention on race records, as well as the growing teen-age market. His

major breakthrough with the latter came in 1955, when he signed Richard Penniman (*a.k.a.* Little Richard) away from Peacock records. Little Richard stayed with the label into 1958, providing Specialty with a string of hits before emotional problems and a subsequent religious conversion temporarily interrupted his rock-and-roll career.

Specialty 45-rpms were introduced in February 1951, but the company continued to produce 78s into the late 1950s. In late 1951, Rupe acquired Fidelity, a blues and doo-wop label. He purchased the catalog of the Mississippi-based Champion label from John Vincent in April 1953. Rupe, it was reported, had "no plans for continued use of the Champion label," but he asked Vincent to stay on as manager of Specialty's new branch office in Jackson, Mississippi, and to handle public-relations work in the southern states. Rupe also owned two publishing firms, Greenwich Music (ASCAP) and Venice Music (BMI), which were managed by Ben Sabia.

In May 1960, Specialty Records and Arthur Rupe were among those named in a Federal Trade Commission payola investigation. Charged with making illegal payments to disc jockeys and station owners, Rupe turned the operation of Specialty over to others, and the last new releases appeared in 1973. Later attempts to revive the label primarily involved the repackaging old material. Rupe finally sold his rights to the Specialty catalog in 1990, to Fantasy Records. He was inducted into the Rock-and-Roll Hall of Fame on March 14, 2011.

SPECIALTY SALES — See Bell Records, Inc.

SPIKES BROTHERS PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1922

Offices: 1203 Central Ave., Los Angeles

Original-Master Source(s): Nordskog studio

Pressing: Arto Company plant

Record Products: Sunshine [1]

An exceedingly short-lived venture of music publishers John and Benjamin (Reb) Spikes, who operated a popular Los Angeles music store catering to a Black clientele. The store's opening was announced in the *California Eagle* on December 13, 1919. With business flourishing in the early 1920s, the Spikes brothers decided to produce their own Sunshine label, using local talent. Although only three releases were produced, all involving Kid Ory's Creole Jazz Band, they are historically significant as the first commercially issued recordings by an authentic Black New Orleans jazz band.

Recording was done in Andrae Nordskog's studio in Santa Monica, California, and the masters were shipped by rail to the Arto Company's pressing plant in New Jersey. There are conflicting anecdotal accounts of the business arrangement between the Spikes brothers and Nordskog. What is known for certain is that all three Sunshine releases (which have Sunshine labels pasted over the Nordskog originals) were also released with Nordskog's own labels and catalog numbers, negating the often-heard claim that the Nordskog-label specimens are simply Sunshine releases from which the labels have fallen off. As far as can be determined, Arto pressed the records with Nordskog's labels, and the Spikes brothers purchased a portion of the pressing run for their own use, arranging to have their Sunshine labels pasted over Nordskog's at the Arto plant. Reb Spikes recalled ordering 5,000 copies of the final release with Sunshine labels, which he had to hand-apply because the factory had failed to do so.

In a 1947 *Record Changer* interview, Ory claimed that the Sunshine recordings were made in 1921, during a single session. However, based upon reports in *The Chicago Defender*, 1921 can be definitively ruled out as the recording date (as can June 1922, the date that appears in most modern discographies). Nor is it likely that all of the Sunshine recordings were made during a single session, based on other *Defender* reports.

Reb Spikes selected local singers Ruth Lee and Roberta Dudley for the first Sunshine releases, backed by Ory's band from the Creole Cafe in Oakland. *The Chicago Defender* for May 22, 1922, reported that Lee and Dudley had already recorded "Maybe Someday" and "Krooked Blues," respectively, which were expected to release on or about June 1. On June 2, the Spikes Brothers hosted a gala event at the Gaumet Auditorium to celebrate the two records' release. Given the time required to ship the masters to New Jersey by rail, process

them and press the discs, and then return the finished pressings to Los Angeles by rail, late April 1922 seems the most likely date for Sunshine's initial session.

Ory's band, which thus far had been heard only in an accompanying role, came into its own on the third Sunshine release. The session can be accurately dated to late May 1922, based upon "Ragtime" Billy Tucker's May 27 report in *The Chicago Defender* that the Spikes brothers had sent to Oakland for the band during the previous week. The resulting record, coupling "Ory's Creole Trombone" and "Society Blues," was available by late July, when Tucker reported it was "running the two vocal numbers a tight race."

Marketing and distribution of Sunshine records outside the Los Angeles area were spotty at best. Tucker, who was among those personally handling Sunshine records, boasted in August 1922 that "money orders have been pouring in from all parts of the country," but little was done to promote or distribute the records nationally. A combination of weak sales and friction between the Spikes brothers and Nordskog over the labeling error on the Ory disc brought the venture to a halt. Reb Spikes later admitted that Sunshine had been "a lot of trouble, a lot of work and expense afterwards."

In July 1923 *The Pittsburgh Courier* reported that Los Angeles singer Minnie Rogers had signed a contract with one Charles Morgan to make records for the Spikes Brothers Phonograph Company, but no evidence has been found that the records were ever produced. Nothing further was heard of the Sunshine label until Reb Spikes revived it briefly in 1946 (see Sunshine Record Company).

SPIN RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1949

Offices: 74 Riverside Drive, New York

Record Products: Spin

Launched by Jerry Tanner in 1945, Spin originally specialized in novelty and country-and-western material. Its main star was self-styled "hillbilly" disc jockey and singer Rosalie Allen, who was signed to a five-year contract. However, the company was inactive by early 1947. Later that year it was purchased by Fred Holly, a New York ice cream manufacturer with no known experience in the record industry.

Holly reactivated Spin in the autumn of 1948, as a pop label. In an attempt to garner extra air play, he solicited songs written by disc jockeys and tapped WMGM's Bill Bird to serve as Spin's artists-and-repertoire manager, but the venture appears to have failed in 1949. The Spin name was later used for several unrelated labels.

SPINET RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950s

Offices: 744 S. Orange Grove Ave., Los Angeles(1950s)

Pressing: Coast Records (1949), possibly other independent plants

Record Products: Los Angeles

Launched in April 1949 by band leader Lou Citro. The initial Spinet releases, pressed by Coast Records, were listed in June and July. The label was subsequently taken over by songwriter and publisher Nick Therry, who in the early 1950s was also a Coast representative. In March 1951, the American Federation of Musicians threatened to revoke Therry's recording license over his sale of some masters to Gordon Burdge, whose revived version of the Majestic label had recently lost its AFM license. Spinet Records last appeared in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies). It was later revived by Therry.

SPIRE RECORDS COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1948

Offices: 537 S. Dearborn St., Chicago

Record Products: Spire [1]

Launched in the summer of 1947 by a group of Chicago broadcasters headed by E. Jerry (Jay) Walker (president), Harry Elders (vice-president), and John Toothill (secretary-treasurer). Directors included Dr. George Washington Crane (a radio and newspaper pop

psychologist) and Dr. Charles R. Goff (pastor of the Chicago Temple). Walker's trademark application claimed first use of the Spire name on September 1, 1947.

Spire specialized in religious material for adults and children, employing local radio performers and original music composed by Adolf Hoffmann, first cellist of the Chicago Philharmonic. Sold only in album sets, the records were available in either standard shellac or more expensive vinyl pressings. *Billboard* reported that distribution was to be handled through various religious organizations, as well as unspecified "normal channels." The venture appears to have failed by late 1948, and in 1949 the Spire name was used for an unrelated rhythm-and-blues label (*see next entry*).

SPIRE RECORDS, LTD. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1520 Tulare St., Fresno, CA

Record Products: Spire [2]

Launched in 1949 by Chester Lew, a Fresno record store owner of Chinese descent. The Spire name had previously been used by an unrelated Chicago religious label that failed in 1948 (*see previous entry*). Although *Billboard* reported Lew's Spire as a new label in August 1949, its initial releases had been advertised two months earlier in that publication. In September 1949, Lew opened the Spire Distributing Company in Los Angeles to handle other small California labels, in addition to his own.

Despite what its name suggests, Lew's Spire label specialized in jazz and rhythm-and-blues material by West Coast performers, including Sonny Parker and Mercy D. Walton (as Mercy Dee). Dee's "Lonesome Cabin Blues," which was promoted with special glow-in-dark streamers, briefly made *Billboard*'s rhythm-and-blues charts in 1949. Dee had originally recorded the tune on speculation, in 1943, at which time a jukebox distributor purchased a small pressing run. The record was promptly forgotten, but not the song, and in 1948 Lew had Dee re-record it for Spire.

Spire's last known recordings were released in 1950. The company's brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 label directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. Lew later operated an audio-equipment store in Fresno.

SPIRO RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1950

Offices: 1133 Broadway, New York (to mid-1950); 358 5th Ave. (from mid-1950)

Record Products: Bravo, Spiro

Launched by former Harmonia Record Corporation president Alexander Spiro in early 1948, during the American Federation of Musicians' second recording ban. Spiro employed non-union musicians until January 1949, when he signed a contract with the AFM.

The Spiro label specialized in much the same sort of fare as Harmonia, featuring novelty and dance numbers intended largely for the ethnic markets, with a smattering of pop tunes and standards by mostly obscure artists. A *Cash Box* reviewer characterized one early release as "excellent filler material" for jukeboxes.

Spiro launched the Bravo label later in 1948. Its initial releases were advertised in October, although *Billboard* did not announce the label's introduction until January 1949. Early reports stated that Bravo would specialize in race and country-and-western material, but much of its output mirrored that of Spiro. Its largest hit reportedly was the Chester Budny Orchestra's "Sweetheart of Mine," a polka record for which Spiro claimed weekly sales of 18,000 copies in Cleveland alone.

In the summer of 1950, Spiro offered 200 masters for sale after deciding to close his record business and open a travel agency. The company's last regular appearance in the *Billboard* label directories came in July 1950. Its occasional reappearance in later *Billboard* label directories (which often included inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

SPOKANE PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Founded: 1889

Offices: Hazel Block, Spokane Falls, WA

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs. Its sales territory comprised the portions of Washington and Oregon not already allocated to the West Coast Phonograph Company, as well as Idaho. The company was organized in early 1889 by Rockwood Morse (president), H. L. Cutter (treasurer), and H. L. Norman (secretary). The initial capital stock offering of \$500,000 was fully subscribed by March 1889.

Spokane Phonograph's first documented phonograph demonstration was held on February 12, 1889. Its original office was destroyed in the Spokane fire of August 1889, after which little business was conducted for a year. In August 1891, the North American Phonograph Company (to which the Spokane company was deeply in debt) finally dispatched J. W. Wilson to reorganize the company and take over as its general manager.

The Phonogram reported in late 1891 that use of the phonograph for dictation purposes had yet to develop to any great extent in the Spokane area. However, the same article noted that Wilson was placing coin-operated phonographs in mining towns throughout the territory, with provisions made for local servicing, with good results. Spokane Phonograph apparently made some original recordings, although no evidence has been found that they were intended for sale to the general public. During the summer of 1891, it was reported that the company was recording the local Auditorium Orchestra as well as unnamed operatic stars "when they come around."

SPOTLIGHT RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1947

Offices: 6064 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA (1945–3/1946); Hollywood & Vine (from 3/1946)

Record Products: Spotlight

Launched by John Horshor in the autumn of 1945. Horshor served as president, and Ted Hollands as production manager. Early Spotlight advertisements promised six releases per month, featuring "Tomorrow's Music Today."

Spotlight began soliciting "professional calibre" artists through classified advertisements in the autumn of 1945. The catalog included a mixture of pop, jazz, country-and-western, and folk material. Spotlight records were specially discounted, to 49¢ each, for jukebox operators. The company's promotional efforts included free sampler discs, on which excerpts from the latest releases were interspersed with spoken plugs.

Spotlight claimed to be contracting its pressing to five independent plants, according to a February 1946 *Billboard* report, with the potential to produce 7.2 million discs annually, although it is unlikely that anything approaching that number was ever produced. A month later, it was announced that Horshor had departed to launch Collector's Items, Inc., *q.v.* *Billboard* initially reported that Spotlight had been renamed Collector's Items, but quickly corrected its error.

Horshor's place was taken by Charles (Chuck) Hastings, who concentrated largely on developing Spotlight's country-and-western catalog. The roster included Jack Kenney (who supplied Spotlight with masters he recorded independently) and Shirley Gray (billed as "The Female Burl Ives"). The company appears to have been inactive by the end of 1947. There is no known connection to the Spotlight Corporation, which introduced a new version of the Spotlight label in the early 1950s.

SPOTLITE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 457 W. 45th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Unspecified New York and West Coast plants

Record Products: Spotlite; masters for Capri

Launched in January 1949 by Frank Marks, a former newspaper-promotion specialist, with Jack Berman acting as general manager. In August, *Billboard* reported that Berman had

replaced Marks "for the present." The company's budget-priced Spotlite label was an attempt to compete with the recently introduced Allegro and Varsity lines.

Billboard reported that the initial Spotlite releases had been shipped to dealers (including Gimbel Brothers and Kresge's) by January 29, 1949; *Cash Box* gave the date as the week of February 19. Originally retailing for 44¢ each, or three for \$1.25 (tax included), the records were sold directly to dealers, bypassing distributors. Marks stated that only one outlet would be selected in any given community, preferably one that was not already carrying a competing cut-rate line. No discounts, return privileges, or free disc jockey copies were offered, although dealers were encouraged to provide the latter at their own expense. The retail price was later reduced to 35¢, not including tax.

In February 1949, arrangements were made to have the records pressed by Charles Darwyn's Monogram Records in Canada, for distribution there under the Spotlite label. However, Berman stopped shipping masters to the company after several months, complaining that Darwyn had not constructed the production facilities or delivered the promised level of national distribution.

Spotlite announced in April 1949 that it was discontinuing single releases, which retailers now had the option of selling for as little as 37¢ each, and instead would concentrate exclusively on album sets featuring public-domain standards and light classics. The transition appears to have been delayed until that autumn.

Marks resigned from Spotlite in late June 1949, citing poor health. Production was largely handed off to Apollo Records executives, with Bess Berman serving as general manager until a replacement could be found, and Irving Katz stepping in as producer. At about that time, Spotlite began recording masters for William Palazzolo and Mike Brawley, who had arranged to supply the Albers grocery chain with inexpensive store-branded discs (see Capri Records).

In December 1949, Darwyn filed a \$4,200 lawsuit against Spotlite for breach of contract, and Spotlite counter-sued for \$5,000. A settlement report has not been found, but Spotlite was last mentioned by *Billboard* in that month.

SQUARE DEAL RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: Chicago

Original-Master Source(s) United Broadcasting studios (Chicago)

Record Products: Square Deal [2]

A very short-lived race-record operation owned by Buck Douglas, Frank Lewis, and Jack Cooley. The company's formation was announced in *The Chicago Defender* on February 26, 1949. Although the paper reported that three records were produced, thus far only two have been reliably documented (one issue each by Douglas and Cooley).

STAFF RECORD COMPANY — See Malone, Idessa

STANCHEL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – Mid 1950s

Offices: 1913 Pico Blvd., Los Angeles (K & M Service office)

Record Products: Stanchel

A subsidiary of Len Kelley's and Fred Myers' K & M Distributing, a Los Angeles company that distributed Atomic, Memo, Solar, Sunshine, and other small independent labels. Owned and operated by Kelley and Myers, Stanchel appears to have been the only label in which K & M held a controlling interest, with Kelley the key figure in its operation. He toured widely to promote Stanchel, which he incorrectly claimed to be the first West Coast label sold exclusively for jukebox use (an honor probably held by Ammor).

Kelley (who was in charge of artists and repertoire) favored country-and-western fare, which he featured on Stanchel's 3000 series. Its first release ("Okie Boogie," by Jimmy Tyler and his Riders of the Rio Grande) was reviewed in May 1946 by *Cash Box*, which described the record as "hillbilly done up for stomping." Some negligible pop fare, by apparently local performers, was issued in the same series. A 1000 series featured ethnic material for the Eastern European ethnic markets, particularly Yugoslavian.

The Stanchel label underwent a radical redesign in the early 1950s, at which time 45-rpm pressings (some of them in red vinyl) were added to the product line. Existing Stanchel inventory was still being sold as late as 1954, although it does not appear that any new material was being released by then. Some Stanchel masters were later licensed to Memo and other small labels.

STANDARD PHONO COMPANY / STANDARD PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, INC. [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1939 – 1950s

Offices: 163 W. 23rd St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): RCA Victor (to 1945); independent studios (from 1945)

Pressing: RCA (to 1945), Universal Record Manufacturing Company (New York, from 1945); International Plastics Corporation (Culver City, CA, purchased 3/1946); own plant—Universal Record Manufacturing Company (from late 1940s)

Record Products (78s): Orthophonic, Standard [4], Standard International; pressing for Grand [2] and other independent labels

Founded by Tetos Demetriades, the son of Greek immigrants. Demetriades was a singer, musician, and successful entrepreneur, who in addition to his work in the recording industry owned and operated a large dairy farm in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He is believed to have owned the Popular Record Company (*q.v.*) in the early 1920s. He began recording as a tenor for Victor's foreign catalog in May 1922 and in the early 1930s was hired by RCA's Victor division, where he worked his way up to manager of the International Department by the end of the decade.

In the late 1930s, Demetriades opened the Standard Phono Company, a record retailer and distributor that carried RCA Victor's ethnic records. At about the same time, he launched the Orthophonic label as an ethnic line featuring Greek and (to a lesser extent) Turkish fare. The records were produced for Demetriades by RCA, using the retired brand-name that Victor had originally used for its electrical recordings and phonographs in the 1920s. RCA was credited on the labels, which underwent several design changes. The final RCA-produced version, the least-ornate of the group, used RCA's logo and concentric-ring label design. The company's trademark filing claimed use of the Standard name since "on or before" January 1, 1939. Masters were licensed from the Gramophone Company in Europe, and Demetriades dubbed some 10" recordings in more profitable 12" form.

Standard, Demetriades longer-lived ethnic label, was launched in the summer of 1941. Like Orthophonic, Standard originally was licensed and produced by RCA Victor, but it drew on a mixture of domestic masters (comprising older Victor recordings, many of which had long been deleted from the Victor catalog, along with new recordings made by RCA for Demetriades' exclusive use) and imported, dubbed Gramophone Company masters.

Demetriades left RCA in 1945 to launch the Standard Phonograph Company as a fully independent venture, with Joe Scovell serving as general manager. The Orthophonic trademark remained with RCA, which discontinued production of the label, but Demetriades retained control of his Standard label, which he soon renamed Standard International. After working with independent pressing plants for a year, in 1946 Demetriades purchased the International Plastics Corporations' plant in Culver City, California, then launched the Universal Record Manufacturing Company to handle East Coast production. He also formed a music-publishing company, Colonial Music, to control copyrights on original songs recorded for his label.

The Standard label continued to be aimed mainly at the ethnic markets, eventually offering records in twenty-one languages. Although much of the catalog remained devoted to Greek and other foreign fare, some conventional pop material was also released, with an emphasis on polkas and novelty songs. Demetriades also began pressing client labels in his Universal Record Manufacturing plant, beginning in early 1948 with F. W. Martens' Grand [2] label, which specialized in the same sort of material as Standard. Joe Scovell departed in October 1948, taking some employees from Universal Record Manufacturing with him, to launch his own Advance Plating Company.

In June 1948, Demetriades announced that Standard would reduce or possibly even eliminate its reliance on distributors in favor of direct marketing to dealers by a corps of salesmen with "background and savvy in international music." Demetriades told a *Billboard*

reporter in 1950 that his company had a "no hits" policy, his rationale being that pursuing and developing hit records only resulted in high expenses and the need to hire more personnel. He also refused to supply review copies to radio stations, claiming that doing so could bankrupt his operation. The company began pressing LPs and 45s in 1950, later adding the Colonial label (unrelated to the Bihari brothers' rhythm-and-blues label of the same name) to its product line.

STANDARD PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, INC. [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1921

Offices: 163 W. 23rd St., New York

Record Products: Standard [3] (samples only)

The Standard Phonograph Company was incorporated in October 1920 following a reorganization of the short-lived Invicta Phonograph & Record Company (New York), which did not produce any records. Invicta's capitalization was increased at that time, to \$3 million from \$500,000. The company was headed by P. Waldman, formerly of the London-based Invicta Record Company, with James Richardson serving as general manager.

Waldman reportedly had ambitious plans for his new company. *The Talking Machine World* for November 1920 reported that he had sailed for London and would be visiting "the capitals of Europe" to secure exclusive artists for Standard. He was also said to be setting up studios overseas and was expected to bring back some of his British Invicta masters. The new records were to be pressed in an "unbreakable" composition, the exact nature of which was never revealed.

Richardson signed Marty Walsh for Standard in January 1921. An Eastern League pitcher who abandoned baseball for music, Walsh recorded two titles for Standard, according to *The Talking Machine World*. However, the only confirmed Standard Phonograph products are sample pressings from other companies' masters (including Lyric, Criterion Laboratories, and an unknown source), suggesting that the company had abandoned plans to produce its own records and was shopping for a master supplier. Although labels claim the records are "Non-Breakable, Unwarpable," inspected specimens are pressed in an ordinary breakable and warpable shellac-based compound.

Standard's sample pressings are more frequently encountered than most prototypes, but no evidence has been found that the label was ever produced for the consumer market. The company was last mentioned by the trade papers in late 1921.

STANDARD PHONOGRAPH RECORD COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1898 – 1899

Offices and Master Source(s): Broadway & 37th St. (NW corner), New York

Successor to baritone J. W. Myers' Globe Phonograph Record Company, *q.v.* *The Phonoscope* for March 1898 reported the company's impending opening, noting that Myers would "endeavor to retain his reputation as heretofore." Advertising began in the April 1898 *Phonoscope* (which probably was published a month or more after its cover date). It claimed that all recordings were original and were made "by and under the personal supervision of J. W. Myers." They retailed for \$1 each, or \$10 per dozen.

In June 1898, Myers placed an advertisement offering to sell a half-interest in his company for \$5,000, \$3,000 of which was to be used as working capital in anticipation of a surge in demand for the records come autumn. The following month, however, he signed with Columbia as a vocalist, probably marking the end of his own recording operation. The last known advertisement for the Standard Phonograph Record Company appeared in the August 1898 *Phonoscope*. The company was officially dissolved, as was Myers' inactive Globe Record Company, in 1899.

STANDARD RECORDS, INC. — See Jones, Earle W.

STANDARD SOUND RECORDING CORPORATION — See Stanley Recording Company

STANDARD TALKING MACHINE COMPANY (New York) (Discs)

Record Production: 1898

Offices: 23 E. 14th St., New York

Record Products (78s): Wonder Record

The first American company to market non-Berliner disc phonographs and records, Standard Talking Machine had its roots in Joseph W. Jones' pending patents on a mechanical-feed disc phonograph and a method of recording disc masters in wax. In November 1897, Jones entered into an agreement to supply investor Albert T. Armstrong with phonographs and records, although neither was immediately forthcoming.

Jones had worked briefly in Emile Berliner's laboratory, where he became familiar with Berliner's recording and manufacturing processes, and where he might also have observed Eldridge Johnson's experiments in wax mastering, a marked improvement over Berliner's etched-zinc masters. Belatedly realizing the threat that Jones might pose, Berliner attempted to lure him back to the company in June 1897 with an array of financial inducements, admitting in a letter to Frank Seaman, "the [Jones] machines...were not absolutely flawless when they arrived, but they have some excellent points, and there should be some money in them." Jones declined the offer and continued in his initially unsuccessful efforts to develop a competing disc phonograph and record.

The Standard Talking Machine Company was incorporated in New York in the spring of 1898, with capital of \$30,000. Its incorporators included musical-instrument manufacturer G. C. Conn, who would file a patent on a dual-horn disc phonograph on June 1, 1898. Jones was to manufacture the phonographs and records, while Conn would supply the horn assemblies. Marketing was handled by the Wonder Talking Machine Company, which occupied the same address as Standard Talking Machine.

Wonder pressings, which the company described as "flat vulcanized fibre plates," were made in a fibrous brick-red material with label information stamped directly into the pressings. A large catalog of single-sided 7" Wonder records was issued, but with several exceptions, all are obviously pirated Berliner recordings, with catalog numbers that are identical to Berliner's, plus 1000 (*e.g.*, Gramophone 472 = Wonder Record 1472). However, at least two inspected specimens (Wonder Records 425 and 750, neither of which is listed in the catalog) do not fit this pattern and thus far have not been conclusively traced to Berliner, although their source remains unknown.

Standard Talking Machine Company suspended operations following a patent infringement suit brought by Berliner in June 1898. Conn's double-horn patent, which was not granted until May 2, 1899, was later acquired by the Victor Talking Machine Company, which never utilized it. In the autumn of 1898, Jones and Armstrong reorganized Standard as the American Talking Machine Company [II], *q.v.*

The Standard Talking Machine Company name was later used for Robert Johns' unrelated Chicago premium-scheme operation, which obtained its pressings from Columbia and produced no original recordings.

STANLEY RECORDING COMPANY OF AMERICA, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1928 – 1931

Offices: 1841 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Sources: Own studio at above address

Record Products: Q. R. S. (Cova version); Checker [1] and other special-use records; film soundtrack discs; radio transcriptions; personal and custom recordings

Primarily a producer of custom recordings, particularly for use with motion pictures. The Stanley Recording Company was incorporated in New York in late November 1928, with capital of \$6,000, by W. Wirtshafer, Jacob (Jack) Miner, and Gus Rosenblit. J. G. Byers served as the first of its several recording engineers.

By the spring of 1929, Stanley was advertising, "We Do *Everything* in Connection with Sound Pictures... . Trailers — Talking Shorts — Personal Recordings — Sound Effects Added to Shorts and Features — Synchronization — Production." The studio, which operated twenty-four hours a day, could be rented by the hour, day, or week. Pioneer Broadcast Service, a Stanley subsidiary, was launched at about the same to produce radio transcriptions for the spot-broadcast market but appears to have been short-lived.

Variety reported in April 1929 that Stanley was doing a good business in personal recordings by "Park Avenue youngsters" and "the fashionable East Side bunch." Personal and private-label discs bearing the Stanley Recording Company imprint are known, in 10" and 12" pressings. Stanley's master numbers are easily confused with similarly numbered (but unrelated) Grey Gull masters, which led some early researchers to erroneously conflate the two studios.

Stanley's film activities were well-covered by the press. In October, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported that several local Democratic candidates (including Mayor Walker) had assembled in the studio to film a campaign "talkie." One of the studio's early specialties was the conversion of existing silent films to sound by creating accompanying soundtrack discs, as it did for a group of U.S. Navy films in 1930.

In early 1930, the Cova Recording Corporation commissioned Stanley to produce masters for its revival of the Q. R. S. label, which previously had been supplied by Gennett (see Cova Recording Corporation and Q. R. S. Company). Recording had already begun by March 5, when *Variety* reported that Q. R. S. had secured the services of Alice Remsen, Dale Wimbrow, Frank Luther, Tommy Weir, and Irving Kaufman for the initial releases. Rubie Greenberg served as Stanley's studio manager and house conductor, masquerading as "Carl Fenton" (a name he had licensed from its creator, Gus Haenschen, after Haenschen left Brunswick in 1927.) Byers left at some point in 1930, to open his own studio, and was replaced by H. Belock.

Stanley Recording was also affiliated with Albert Shayne's Checker Music Corporation (1845 Broadway, New York), for which it produced cut-rate 33 ¹/₃-rpm background-music records on the Checker label. Cheaply produced and issued anonymously, some Checker discs were transcribed from (or possibly recorded simultaneously with) Cova's Q. R. S. masters, while others appear to have been original to Checker. Rather than being leased, as were some other background-music records, they were sold outright, at six for \$5.

Stanley Recording was reorganized in late 1930, with only Jack Miner and Rubie Green remaining from the original management team. Hazard Reeves replaced Belock as chief sound engineer and might have supplied what advertisements touted as new "special designed equipment." The company underwent yet another reorganization in late 1931, as the Standard Sound Recording Corporation, with Reeves staying on as engineer. A producer of transcriptions and movie soundtracks, it is not known to have supplied any commercial labels.

STAPLETON INDUSTRIES / LUCKY MUSIC CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1951

Offices: 792 The Arcade, Cleveland

Pressing: Own plant—Cleveland

Record Products: Lucky; Animal (children's)

Stapleton Industries was primarily a manufacturer of molded plastic products, headed by Ernest Bruell and Lloyd Rosenblum. The company entered the record business in 1947, when it licensed the Animal label from Eugene F. (Gene) Carroll, a Cleveland disc jockey who specialized in adapting current pop tunes for the children's market. In June 1948, Carroll and Stapleton Industries sued Bandwagon and Sterling records for infringing the form and style of their Animal discs. The case was dismissed later that year.

In September 1948, Bruell and Rosenblum launched the Lucky Music Corporation as a Stapleton subsidiary. A combined music publishing and record production operation, Lucky Music purchased the masters of the failing Richtone label and signed Richtone's Ralph Wilson Quintet. Lucky labels carried the slogan, "It's a Lucky Hit," and catalog numbers were prefixed 7-11-. The first two releases, advertised in October and November 1948, were reissues of two of Wilson's Richtone sides.

Gene Carroll severed relations with Stapleton in March 1949, following a dispute over royalties. The last confirmed Lucky release appeared in the autumn of 1950. Stapleton Industries was last listed by *Billboard* in its July 1951 directory, which included many inactive and defunct companies.

STAR MELODIES MUSIC PUBLISHERS AND RECORD PRODUCERS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 419 Taft Building (Hollywood & Vine), Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Star Melodies

A minor Hollywood music publisher, Star Melodies introduced its own label in the summer of 1949. Its first two releases were advertised during August and September, with the note, "order now while we still have some in stock," after which nothing further was reported concerning the company's record operation.

STAR RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – c. Late 1940s

Offices: 1119 W. N. Ave., Milwaukee

Original-Master Source(s): Pfau Sound and Recording Studios, possibly others

Record Products: Star [4]

Owned and operated by Milwaukee band leader Sammy Madden, who was featured on many Star releases. Masters were recorded in Harold Pfau's studio (*see* Pfau Sound and Recording), and early releases were distributed through the "440" Music Company, a Milwaukee publishing operation. Madden signed with Chord Records in October 1947, at which point production of Star records appears to have been discontinued.

Madden revived the Star Record Company in 1948, and his later masters were processed and pressed by RCA's custom products division. There was no connection to the New York-based Star Record Company, a custom studio that operated during the same period but is not known to have made recordings for the consumer market.

STAR RECORDS [I] (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 1600 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Star [3]

A short-lived pop label launched in the autumn of 1947, of unknown ownership and no apparent relation to the New York-based Star label [6] of 1949 (*see following entry*). *Billboard* reported that Star's first record would be by Lanny and Ginger Grey, who were best known as radio-jingle singers. Scheduled to release on November 1, 1947, it was intended for jukebox use. The company was last listed by *Billboard* in late January 1948, the same month in which its final confirmed release appeared.

STAR RECORDS [II] (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 1674 Broadway, New York

Record Products: Star [6]

A pop and country-and-western label launched in the spring of 1949, of unknown ownership and no apparent relation to the Star [3] label of 1947–1948 (*see previous entry*). Singer-songwriter Ray Carter served as manager of artists and repertoire and was featured on some releases. Two Star records received favorable reviews in *Billboard*, in May 1949 (Ray Carter) and August 1949 (Steve Kisley), but the company was last mentioned by that publication in late October. The Star name was used for numerous unrelated labels beginning in 1950.

STAR SONGS — *See* Clipper Records

STAR TALENT RECORDS — *See* Talent Records / Star Talent Records

STARLAND RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Starland

A short-lived pop label of unknown ownership. The earliest known mention of the company is a November 1949 report that it was negotiating to record a ballad composed by one James E. Moxley, a beauty-parlor operator in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Starland's artist roster included singers Margaret Lenhart and Annette Warren, both relatively well-known performers who had previously recorded for other labels. A *Cash Box* reviewer predicted (incorrectly) that the latter's "Gone," had "hit potential," while *Billboard* dismissed her "When It's Nighttime, It's Lovetime" as "weakly sung." No mention has been found of the Starland Record Company in the trade papers after December 1950. The Starland name was later used for an unrelated label.

STARLIGHT MUSIC COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947

Offices: Pasadena, CA (PO box number only; no street address given)

Record Products: Star-Disc

A music-publishing operation launched in the early 1940s by songwriter Raymond W. Davis, unrelated to the New York-based company of the same name. Davis briefly produced the Star-Disc label (touted as "The Disc with the Star") to promote his company's compositions. The records were on the market by late March 1947, when *Billboard* dismissed a release by Virginia Garland (Judy Garland's sister) as revealing "a spark of the Garland talent" but otherwise having "no coin appeal." The Star-Disc label appears to have been discontinued by the end of 1947, although Starlight Music remained in the publishing business into at least the 1950s.

STARR PIANO COMPANY (GENNETT RECORDS DIVISION) (Discs)

Record Production: 1915–1934

Offices: 500 S. 4th St., Richmond, IN (main office); 56 W. 45th St., New York (late 1915–6/1917); 9-11 E. 37th St., New York (from 7/1917); 729 7th Ave., New York (1930s); Pacific Division branches at 634–636 Hill St. (1920s) and 1344 S. Flower Ave., Los Angeles

Original-Master Sources: Own studios — Richmond, IN (1915–1916; 1921–1934); 56 W. 45th St., New York (late 1915–6/1917); 9-11 E. 37th St., New York (6/1917–12/1927); 6010 38th Ave., Woodside (Long Island City), New York (12/1927–6/1932); 27 W. 4th St., Cincinnati (from 12/1924); Birmingham, AL (1927); Chicago (1927–c. 1928); other occasional locations, including Minneapolis and El Tovar Hotel, Grand Canyon (1920s); mobile studio for sound-effects recordings (based in Richmond, from late 1920s).

Pressing: Own plant — S. 1st & A Sts., Richmond, IN; Canadian pressing contracted to Compo Company

Record Products: Gennett [1], Gennett Art Tone, Apollo [4], Arion, Bell [1] (1927–1928), Buddy, Cardinal [1], Celesta, Celtic [1], Challenge (1926–1927), Champion [2], Claxtonola (1924–1925), Connorized, Fraternity, Gospel Trumpet, Herschel Gold Seal, Herwin, Hitch, Ideal [1], Irish Music House, Jugoslavia, Maloof, O'Byrne DeWitt Irish Record, Peerless [6], Q. R. S., Rainbow [1], Rayo Electrico Gennett, Remington [1], Rich-Tone, Savoy [1], Silvertone, Starr [1], Superior [2], Supertone [1], Universal [1], Vaughan; Gurney, Ku Klux Klan-affiliated labels, and many other custom labels; numerous promotional issues and private labels, including Gennett Christmas Greetings, Moxie, Salvation Army; numerous special-use records, including Gennett Chapel Transcriptions, Gennett Electrical Transcriptions, Gennett Skating Rink Service Records, Gennett Sound Effects Records

Foreign Affiliate: Starr Company of Canada, Ltd. (London, Ontario)

Foreign Labels Using Masters: Angelus, Electron, Gaiety, Grand Pree, Lyric, Melotone, Operaphone, Star (Australia); Apex, Starr, Starr-Gennett (Canada); Aco, Beltona, Citizen, Coliseum, Edison Bell Winner, Guardsman, Homochord, Keith Prowse, Ludgate, Meloto, Portland, Scala, Sterno, Velvet Face, Westport (England); probably many others on occasion

The Starr Piano Company had its roots in an Indianapolis company founded by George M. Trayser in 1849. After several moves, the Trayser Pianoforte Company settled in Richmond, Indiana, in 1872, at the urging of Richmond businessmen Richard Jackson and James M. Starr. The company was subsequently reorganized, with Starr serving as president, and G. M. Chase replacing Trayser as manager. In 1884, Starr acquired full control of the

company, which he renamed James M. Starr & Company. He purchased a large tract of bottomland along the Whitewater River, which provided power for the plant.

In 1893 Nashville businessmen John Lumsden and Henry Gennett (Lumsden's son-in-law) purchased a half-interest in Starr's plant, which was subsequently renamed the Starr Piano Company. Lumsden died in 1893, Starr in 1903, and the Gennett family eventually acquired all common stock in the company. By the early 1900s, the Starr Piano Company was being managed largely by Henry Gennett's sons, Harry, Fred, and Clarence. Only family members held executive positions at the Starr Piano Company until 1925, when W. D. Stevens (former vice-president of the Starr Company of Canada, Ltd.) was appointed a vice-president). The company flourished as the manufacturer of moderately priced Starr, Remington, and Trayser pianos and operated a national chain of piano stores, several of which would later serve as temporary recording studios.

Formation of Starr's record division under the Gennett brothers' direction probably was under way by 1914. Fred Gennett recalled having purchased the assets of an unnamed bankrupt Boston company when setting-up Starr's record division. His recollection was corroborated by Harry Gennett in a sworn deposition given in Richmond on November 2, 1942, in which he recalled having purchased some assets of "a concern in either Cambridge or Boston." That concern almost certainly was the Boston Talking Machine Company, as is suggested by the existence of Remington [1] discs credited to the Starr Piano Company, but pressed from Boston Talking Machine's Phono-Cut masters. This first incarnation of the Remington label was briefly sold as a cut-rate side-line to the Starr label.

The Starr label was introduced as Starr Piano's flagship brand in 1915, using original fine-groove (150 line-per-inch) vertical-cut masters. Recordings at first were made in Richmond, Indiana, using midwestern performers who were largely unknown outside of their home territory. In late 1916, citing the reluctance of East Coast artists to travel to Indiana to make records, the company opened a New York studio under the management of R. C. Mayer. Following the move, the Richmond studio appears to have gone dormant until August 1921, when commercial recording sessions resumed there. Anticipating increased sales, Starr in 1916 expanded its Richmond plant, opening a new five-story phonograph factory and pressing plant at the main complex, and enlarged its showrooms on North 8th Street in downtown Richmond.

Starr Piano introduced the Gennett label in October 1917 as another fine-groove vertical-cut brand and began phasing out the Starr label. The public frequently mispronounced the Gennett name — so often, in fact, that in January 1920 the family placed a large advertisement with instructions on correct pronunciation ("G" as in "general," emphasis on the second syllable). The earliest Gennett label design, which was used for reissues of Starr-label releases as well as newly recorded masters, was devoid of decoration. The familiar scrollwork design made its first appearance in early 1919, initially being reserved for the expensive Gennett Art Tone line. The scroll design became standard on all issues at the end of 1919.

In 1917 Starr Piano arranged for Canadian distribution of its machines and records through the Canadian Phonograph Supply Company of London, Canada. By late 1918, the Canadian company had changed its name to the Starr Company of Canada and was reported to be doing a good business in Starr phonographs and Starr-Gennett records. In 1919 the pressing of Canadian Starr-Gennett discs, from American masters, was turned over to Herbert Berliner's recently launched Compo Company (*q.v.*). In 1925 Compo took over all Canadian production of Starr records, including recording for the Canadian market, and thereafter relied largely upon its own masters.

Gennett's early lateral-cut list, in addition to the usual pop fare and several offerings by the Original New Orleans Jazz Band, included British recordings licensed from Edison Bell. The Art Tone series initially comprised an indiscriminate mixture of material ranging from dance medleys and concert-band selections to operatic arias. Eventually it evolved into a concert and operatic series which, despite its premium price, offered no serious competition to the major manufacturers' records for that market. The early Art Tone catalog was dominated by Helen Ware's violin solos, along with vocal performances by studio freelancers and some midwestern concert artists with strictly regional followings.

Starr did not begin advertising its lateral-cut Gennett releases nationally until April 1919, but word of the new records had already reached Victor officials by then. On

February 26, Victor's executive committee had authorized the filing of a lawsuit charging Starr with infringing specifications 6 and 8 of Eldridge Johnson's U.S. patent #896,059, which covered a wax master using an incised, laterally modulated groove of constant depth. On October 14, 1919, U. S. District Court Judge Mayer rejected Victor's request for a preliminary injunction that would have halted Starr's production of lateral-cut discs, citing lack of invention and abandonment in regard to the Johnson patent. Subsequently upheld by the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals, it was a landmark decision for the American recording industry. The result was a widespread conversion to the standard lateral cut by vertical-cut producers during 1919–1920. Victor's petition for review was denied by the U. S. Supreme Court on October 16, 1922.

Although Gennett relied largely on its own masters after 1920, it occasionally licensed or commissioned material from other sources, including the Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories and Marsh Laboratories. The masters usually were assigned control numbers in an 81000 series that was reserved for material from outside sources.

By the early 1920s, New York studio manager Mayer had been joined by E. P. Miller (assistant recording engineer). The New York studio underwent improvements during the summer of 1922, at which time pianist-composer Thomas Grisselle was appointed Gennett's musical director. Due to illness, he was replaced in September 1923 by Frederic D. Wood (whose career as a studio conductor had begun in 1904, with the American Record Company), but he later returned. Management of the New York studio was taken over by Arthur Lyons later in the 1920s.

In 1921 Gennett resumed recording operations in Richmond. Documented sessions began on July 21, 1921, with a "Special" matrix series that began at #1 and consisted of recordings made for internal or private use. Richmond's commercial matrix series was inaugurated on August 20, 1921, beginning at master #11000, with a Homer Rodeheaver session. The company went on to develop a close association with Rodeheaver, from whom it took over production of his Rainbow label in the early 1920s.

The Richmond studio was housed in a converted lumber-storage building alongside a railroad spur at the factory complex. Ezra C. A. (Wick) Wickemeyer served as recording engineer. Veteran record producer John O. Prescott (a co-founder of the American Record Company, and later, of the predecessor of the Nipponophone Company of Japan) was hired as chief technician for the record division at Richmond, with duties that included master testing, wax formulation, and oversight of the pressing plant. The studio was well-equipped (a reporter observed in 1925 that it had more than seventy-five different recording horns at its disposal), but recording had to be paused when there was activity on the rail siding, the studio's horse-hair insulation having proven to be rather ineffective. In addition, the studio was heavily draped, as can be seen in some uncropped publicity photographs, which contributed to the muffled quality of the Richmond's acoustic recordings. In contrast, Gennett's New York studio, which does not appear to have been similarly draped, produced bright, well-balanced acoustic recordings.

Personal recording and custom label services were soon being offered in both New York and Richmond, with the latter location being the more active by far. Artists paid all recording and production costs and handled their own sales. Although personal recordings were not listed in Gennett's catalogs, some Starr retail outlets advertised selected items as "Specials." The personal series also included custom labels, which often used the Gennett label design, but with a different label name substituted. A few of these (such as Yugoslavia and certain Ku Klux Klan-affiliated brands) were produced in sufficient quantity, and available for purchase by the general public to a sufficient extent, that their sponsors have been considered producers for the purposes of this work.

Despite its size, Starr's Richmond complex (which by the early 1920s occupied thirty-two buildings) remained a rather homespun operation. Many employees, some of whose families had worked there for generations, hiked to work on a footpath into the Whitewater gorge. Singing Klansmen and other local amateurs regularly dropped in to make personal recordings, and Homer Rodeheaver sometimes mingled with the employees. A thousand employees turned out to present a Starr phonograph to Rodeheaver's associate, evangelist Billy Sunday, in May 1922. Harry Gennett was well-known for the giant corn and blue-ribbon livestock he raised on his nearby farm. Following Henry Gennett's sudden death in June 1922, management was carried on by sons Harry (who took over his father's position

as president), Fred (secretary), and Clarence (treasurer). The family remained in full control of the company, with all stock held in the name of the Henry Gennett estate.

Although few of Gennett's earliest releases are noteworthy, its later catalog was remarkably diverse and preserved much material that might otherwise have gone unrecorded. The label is best remembered for its pioneering jazz recordings by the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band (with Louis Armstrong), and the Wolverine Orchestra (with Bix Beiderbecke), among many others. However, countless other interesting, obscure, and even bizarre items appeared on Gennett and Gennett-produced labels, running the gamut from political speeches and racist propaganda to blues, gospel, country music, ethnic recordings, midwestern singers and dance bands, Hopi Indian songs, and sound effects. A 1923 series of ten records with special Gennett Christmas Greetings labels featured spoken messages by what the company termed "famous authors, humorists, and stage folks," a group that ran the gamut from William Jennings Bryan to Sid (Andy Gump) Smith.

A few early Gennett releases used masters licensed from Edison Bell in England. Gennett widely licensed its masters to foreign labels, beginning with Edison Bell in 1922. It also produced many recordings for the domestic ethnic markets, with an emphasis on French, German, Italian, Spanish, Yiddish, and Welsh material (the latter from imported masters). Its first catalog of "Discos Gennett en Español" appeared in 1923. The company also recorded masters for the exclusive use of many independent ethnic labels, including Arion (German), Yugoslavia (Yugoslavian), Maloof (Middle Eastern), O'Byrne De Witt (Irish), and in the later 1920s, Universal (Mexican-American).

Fred D. Wiggins was transferred from Starr's Chicago office in July 1924 to serve as Richmond sales manager, with duties that included selling and booking Gennett's private and custom label sessions. A 1925 article in *Presto* magazine reported that less than half of the Richmond studio's output was assigned to the Gennett catalog, the remainder presumably appearing on private, custom, and client labels. The company's largest commercial client by far was Sears, Roebuck & Company, which in 1925 placed an initial order for a half-million Silvertone discs that the company struggled to fill. Starr produced a vast number of pressings for Sears' Silvertone, Supertone, and Challenge labels before losing their business in 1930. A 1927 contract to press Bell records proved to be far less lucrative (*see* Bell Record Company).

In an attempt to curry favor with dealers, Gennett launched a new exchange program in the spring of 1924 under which dealers were allowed to exchange up to 20% of records purchased within three months of the release date, which was added to the label in abbreviated form (*e.g.*, 624 = a June 1924 release). Prices for current popular, country, and race-record Gennett releases were reduced to 50¢ in June 1925. The reduction, along with introduction of the cut-rate Champion label, eventually produced the desired effect. *The Talking Machine World* reporting that Starr made its largest record shipment to date during February 1926.

Sporadic location recording began in 1924, in Cincinnati's Starr Piano store. In December, it was decided to make the Cincinnati studio permanent, under the supervision of W. M. Purnell. *The Music Trade Review* reported in February 1925 that the Cincinnati studio was producing records on a regular schedule, although it appears that most of its output consisted of personal and private-label recordings. Gennett engineers later went farther afield, pressing Starr Piano stores into service as temporary studios in Birmingham, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Minneapolis–St. Paul. Los Angeles sessions, although rumored, have been verified in the surviving matrix ledgers. The company announced in March 1925 that it was planning a Los Angeles factory, but construction never began.

One of Gennett's most remarkable recording expeditions involved a trek to Arizona during the summer of 1926, under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution. Ezra Wickemeyer and John Prescott set up a temporary recording studio in the Grand Canyon's El Tovar Hotel, where they recorded authentic Hopi Indian songs under the supervision of Dr. J. Walter Fewkes, head of the Smithsonian's Ethnology Department. The recordings, some of which were issued commercially on the Gennett label, were later deposited with the Smithsonian.

Starr Piano entered the budget-label market in September 1925 with its Champion label. The name might have been suggested by John Prescott, who in 1908 had registered

Champion as a trademark for use on records that were not produced at that time. Initially retailing for 30¢ each, or four for a dollar (later raised to 35¢, or three for a dollar), Champion records drew on the Gennett catalog, including material recorded as early as 1923, and most issues were pseudonymous. Master numbers generally do not appear in the pressings, but on early issues they were printed on the labels in reverse form (e.g., Gennett master 9656 = false Champion master 6569).

The Gennett files document what appear to have been experimental recording sessions with General Electric equipment during the summer of 1925. A few electrical recordings made during February 1926, including one by Jelly Roll Morton's *Incomparables*, were released in the spring of that year. However, these appear to have been largely experimental sessions, alternating between carbon-button and condenser microphones, and the engineers reverted to acoustic recording in March. During the summer and autumn of 1926, some electrically recorded masters were commissioned from Herbert Berliner's New York studio. They were renumbered within Gennett's own master sequence, with the addition of a BEX- prefix (which is not shown in most modern discographies). In-house sessions using General Electric equipment resumed on a more regular basis in October, but acoustic and electric sessions continued to be intermixed through the end of 1926.

The full conversion to electrical recording was finally achieved in January 1927, the month in which the Gennett Electrobeam label was introduced. The Champion Electrograph label was introduced a month later, followed by the Rayo Eléctrico Gennett for Mexican export issues. Charles Beisel, Gennett's comptroller of sales, explained the delay in converting to electrical recording by claiming, "The secret of this lies in a process of tonal modulation, which our engineers have perfected after more than a year's research." Despite label claims of electrical recording, some early Gennett Electrobeam and Champion Electrograph releases were pressed from acoustically recorded masters. Reflecting the GE licensing costs, Electrobeam Gennetts retailed for 75¢, reversing the 1925 price cut. However, many of the same recordings were also available on the Champion label (albeit with the performers masked by pseudonyms), which held its pricing at 35¢.

After continuing to experience problems with its General Electric equipment, Gennett licensed the more reliable Photophone system from the Radio Corporation of America (which had not yet acquired Victor) on July 1, 1928. The first Photophone sessions were held in Richmond on July 2, and in New York on July 14.

Gennett's New York studio was moved during December 1927–January 1928 to a 10,000-square foot building in Long Island City, which also housed a master-plating plant, offices, and a sales room. Gordon Soule was retained as recording manager. The Long Island studio was hired by other labels on occasion, including Q. R. S. (1928–1929), Paramount (1929), and Maloof (1931–1932). Gennett also made its Richmond studio available for some Black Patti sessions (at \$30 per finished master), and for most Paramount sessions from March through October 1929 (at \$40 per master), while the New York Recording Laboratories was constructing its own studio. The Paramount masters were numbered in Gennett's own master series, and some were also issued on Gennett, Champion, and related labels.

Harry Gennett's son, Harry Jr., launched what would become a lucrative side-line for Starr Piano when he began producing sound-effects records for the company in 1928. Using a custom-built sound truck, Gennett initially captured sounds in the Richmond area, with railroad, airplane, and traffic noise a particular specialty. Gennett's first sound-effects customer was the Hannaphone Company, a Philadelphia-based theater management company, but the records were later widely marketed to other theaters and radio stations, and they would come to represent a significant portion of Gennett's sales in later years. Working with Robert Connor, Harry Jr. later traveled farther afield, eventually capturing sound effects in locations ranging from Massachusetts (where Gennett recorded "the world's best-known rooster") to New Mexico and California. As an added service, in December 1930 the company began offering Gennett Electrical Transcriptions to broadcast producers.

Despite technical improvements, Gennett's record sales declined steadily in the later 1920s. In early 1929 the company began remaindering its older releases, which discount stores offered for 8¢ to 25¢ per disc. The 25¢ Superior label (which had appeared briefly in 1928, only to be dropped inexplicably after ninety-one releases) was reintroduced in

December 1930. Gennett was discontinued as a commercial label in the same month, and thereafter would be used only for sound-effects and other special-purpose recordings. Starr Piano continued to advertise the records for another year, while it sold off existing inventory, but there were no new Gennett-label releases for the consumer market. With the Gennett label discontinued, Champion became Starr Piano's primary label for the consumer market.

Gennett's New York studio saw only limited use during 1931, hosting just nine sessions from January through March. After a nine-month hiatus, sporadic recording activity resumed there in January 1932. The final New York session, held at the end of June 1932, was devoted to organ solos by Alexander Maloof for Gennett Chapel Transcriptions (a funeral-home series) and Maloof's personal label. In the same month, it was reported that Starr Piano had dropped its membership in The Radio Association and was abandoning the manufacture of many goods. The company's sales of all goods had fallen from a high of \$75 million in 1929 to only \$5.5 million in 1931.

Superior was discontinued in June 1932, leaving Champion as Harry Gennett's only commercial label. With the New York studio closed, Gennett was forced to rely on local midwestern performers, not all of whom were professionals (several won their recording contracts in amateur talent contests), and few of whom were known outside the region. The last commercial recording session, by Jack Walkup and his Orchestra, was held in the Richmond studio on October 25, 1934. The final Champion record (#16832, coupling two selections by Walkup) was released in December of that year, after which Gennett discontinued production of records for the consumer market. Although more than 1,800 Champion records had been released, sales had been declining sharply since the late 1920s, and many 1930s Champion issues are extremely rare today. Surviving royalty sheets show sales in the two-to-three digit range for many late Champion and Superior releases. "Lonesome" Luke Deckers' Champion 16269, for example, sold 194 copies in the eleven months following its release, on which Decker received 96¢ in royalties.

The Starr Piano Company declared bankruptcy in 1934 and exited the record business at that time, although it continued to manufacture other goods on a small scale. In 1935, Harry Gennett sold the Champion trademark and rights to some Gennett and Champion masters to Decca's Jack Kapp. He used the proceeds to continue operation of the recording business under the name of the Gennett Recording Laboratories (*q.v.*). In 1944 he relaunched the Gennett label in partnership with producer and music publisher Joe Davis (*q.v.*), a contentious relationship that was finally terminated by court order in July 1946.

The Starr Piano Company later emerged from bankruptcy and remained in business through 1949 as a diversified manufacturer with a product line that included pianos, refrigerators, cabinets, airplane propellers and bomb sights (during World War II), and other goods. The Richmond factory complex was demolished in the 1980s. Today, only a portion of one building's walls remains to mark the site, which has been redeveloped as a park. The Starr Piano Company Pacific Division (California) survived the parent company's demise and in 1978 was renamed Refrigeration Supplies Distributor (and later, RSD/Total Control).

STARR RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1949

Mailing Address: San Antonio, TX (PO box number only; no street address given)

Record Products: Starr [2]; San Antonio [2] (unconfirmed)

Launched in early 1946 by Max Starr, a Texas record-store owner and jukebox distributor who operated businesses in San Antonio and Houston. His Starr label used the same old-English logo as the Starr Piano Company's long-defunct label, with which it had no connection.

Starr's initial releases, advertised in late March 1946, featured the Howard LeRoy Orchestra, a Texas hotel band. A *Cash Box* review of "My Gal from Houston" noted that LeRoy's singer, Marguerite Claudet, still had "a long way to go and lots to learn." *Billboard* reported that although Starr was intended mainly as a "folk" (country-and-western) label, and was preparing a large catalog of country selections, some pop artists would also be signed. The label was last listed in September 1949, in the *Radio Retailing* directory.

STATE PHONOGRAPH COMPANY OF ILLINOIS

Founded: 1890

Offices: Home Insurance Building, Chicago (1890–1891); 232 S. Clinton St., Chicago (from 1891)

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs. Its sales territory comprised all of Illinois other than Cook County, which had already been allocated to the Chicago Central Phonograph Company. The company was incorporated on May 7, 1890 (erroneously reported in *The Phonogram* as May 20) with capital stock of \$250,000. Incorporators were Granger Farwell (listed as president beginning in 1891), Edward L. Lobdell, and E. H. Pearson.

General agent George A. McClellan demonstrated the phonograph throughout the company's sales territory during the spring and summer of 1890. Reports of McClellan's travels make it clear that he was marketing the phonograph primarily for business use, but he also demonstrated some musical cylinders (as "side-issues," according to one report), including titles by the Arion Quartet of New York, apparently obtained from an outside supplier. Thus far, no evidence has been found that the company produced any original recordings for sale to the general public.

The State Phonograph Company was still advertising in early 1892, but in July of that year, *The Chicago Tribune* reported, "Nobody ever heard of any lucrative returns from the stock of that organization."

STEINER, JOHN / STEINER & DAVIS (Discs)

New York Recording Laboratories [II] / S. D. Records / Steiner-Davis

Record Production: 1944 – 1955

Offices: 104 E. Bellevue, Chicago (1944–1945); 1225 N. La Salle, Chicago (1946–1948); 8 S. Dearborn St., Chicago (1949–1950s); 1637 N. Ashland, Chicago (distribution, from 1949)

Original-Master Source(s): United Broadcasting Studios, Davis Technical Recording Services, probably others

Pressing: The Bishop Presses, other independent plants

Record Products (78s): S. D., Paramount [4]

A chemist by trade, John Steiner launched S. D. Records in early 1944 in partnership with electrical engineer Hugh Davis. Steiner was a traditional-jazz enthusiast but lacked any significant experience in commercial record production at the time he and Davis launched S. D. Records, which was (and continues to be) mistakenly referred to as "S & D Records" or "S–D Records" in some publications.

The initial S. D. releases, announced in February 1944, were dubbed reissues of long-deleted Paramount jazz recordings. They were followed several months later by a few original recordings. Steiner claimed to have licensed the Paramount material from Otto Moeser of the Wisconsin Chair Company (of which the New York Recording Laboratories had been a subsidiary). Production was suspended at the end of 1944 due to wartime shellac rationing. Davis sold out to Steiner in 1945 and launched Davis Technical Recording Services, a custom recording operation.

Steiner resumed recording in September 1946 and relaunched the S. D. label in March 1947. Although he continued to concentrate on reissues, primarily from the Paramount catalog, Steiner also offered an increasing amount of new material on the S. D. label, culled from previously unissued studio recordings, live performances, and radio broadcasts. The new releases largely favored traditional jazz musicians, including Punch Miller, Baby Dodds, and Casino Simpson, but there were occasional bows to more modern performances, most notably the Dizzy Gillespie Band's reworking of "Tiger Rag." Steiner was also involved in several side-ventures in the later 1940s, including an unsuccessful attempt to launch a new label in partnership with Jack Green, and a distribution arrangement with the Dublin Record Shop for their short-lived Dublin's label.

In 1946, Gus Statiras and Bill Grauer, doing business as the Paramount Recording Corporation in New York, had produced unauthorized reissues of some rare Paramount blues recordings. In response to the increasing piracy of Paramount material, Steiner (who was not involved with the Statiras-Grauer venture) began negotiating with Otto Moeser in late 1947 to relaunch the Paramount label as a properly licensed reissue vehicle, under the old New York Recording Laboratories banner. The venture reunited Steiner with Hugh

Davis, who served as recording engineer. Steiner assembled an advisory board that included George Hoefer, Paul E. Miller, and Don Haynes.

In April 1948 Moeser sold Steiner the remaining New York Recording Laboratories assets. They consisted of very little aside from the trademarks and supposed exclusive rights to the recordings, which have never been taken seriously by other record producers. News of Steiner's impending revival of the Paramount label had appeared a month earlier, in *Record Changer* magazine, but Davis' ill health delayed release of the initial offerings until January 1949. *Cash Box* had reported that Steiner would use original masters whenever possible, but he found nothing of musical interest among NYRL's remains, most masters and metal parts having been scrapped in the early 1940s. Instead, like the S.D. releases, the Paramount reissues employed Davis' rather murky dubbings from commercial pressings that were not always in good condition. Steiner later retrieved a few original Paramount masters by important blues singers from Decca Records, which had been holding them since they arrived there by way of Jack Kapp in the 1930s.

Numbered in a 14000 series, Steiner's Paramount reissues used the original 1920s label design, still crediting the New York Recording Laboratories, but with silver type substituted for the original gold. To lend an air of authenticity, Steiner even opened a post-office box in Port Washington, Wisconsin, under the NYRL name. The early shellac pressings were of mediocre quality, despite their premium-label pricing of \$1.05 each. Improved vinyl pressings were introduced in 1950.

Steiner could be slipshod or even devious at times in his presentation of discographical data. In at least two instance that were quickly detected by collectors, he misrepresented edited dubbings of issued recordings as newly discovered alternate takes. A release he credited as being from a hand-played Duke Ellington piano roll was later found to be from a mechanically cut nickelodeon roll. His Paramount dubbing of Eubie Blake's "Charleston Rag" from an Emerson test pressing was labeled "African Rag" by "Unknown Rag Pianist," although the actual title and artist were well-known to some collectors, a fact that did not stop *Cash Box* reviewer Bucklin Moon and ill-informed others from making an unnecessary guessing-game of the recording.

Following the closure of his recording business in 1955, Steiner licensed much of his material to Bill Grauer's Riverside Records. Rights to his recordings were acquired by George H. Buck, of Jazzology Records, in 1970. Steiner died in Milwaukee on June 3, 2000.

STELLAR RECORDS, INC. — See Trans Radio Productions

STERLING RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1949

Offices: 9 (later, 7–9) W. 46th St., New York; Hollywood CA

Pressing: Former Juke Box plants (reported; locations not specified); own plant (Los Angeles)

Record Products: Sterling [3]; Bandwagon, Juke Box; Animal (children's)

Launched in August 1945 by the Juke Box Record Company's Arthur N. (Art) Rupe (*née* Goldberg) and Ben Siegel, in partnership with Albert E. Middleman, of the defunct Classic Record Company (the makers of Hit records). Initially, Middleman served as president, Rupe as recording director, and Siegel as vice-president and director of artists and repertoire. Eli Oberstein (Middleman's former partner in Classic Record, and out of work after having sold his interest in that company to Majestic) was rumored to be a silent partner.

The company advertised that "On records, as on silver, Sterling always means a good platter." Although Middleman declared he would feature "two outstanding hits on every Sterling record [as] was our policy [with] Hit records," there was no shortage of filler material on the B sides (as had been the case with Hit, as well). The 1945 *Record Retailing Yearbook* reported that Sterling hoped to produce five-million discs in its first year of operation, a goal it likely failed to achieve.

The initial Sterling releases were announced in October 1945. The label at first focused on the jazz and race-record markets, with an artist roster that included Buddy Banks, Roy Eldridge, and Lillette Thomas. A pop series, devoted largely to West Coast artists, was added in March 1946. Sterling made a brief excursion into the country-and-western market in early 1947, beginning with the late-January release of Hank Williams' first record ("Calling You" / "Never Again Will I Knock at Your Door"). Williams' Sterling output met with mixed

reactions. *Billboard* praised the "real spiritual qualities" of Williams' singing and recommended his first release for "phonos at the prairie stops," then dismissed his second release as "entirely funereal...not for music machines." Williams' final Sterling release ("Honky Tonkin"/"Pan American") appeared in May 1947 and earned *Billboard*'s endorsement for its "lusty backwood style."

Rupe's Juke Box Records (*q.v.*) operated as a division of Sterling, with which it shared office space. However, relations between Rupe (who had remained in Los Angeles to oversee pressing operations) and Middleman became increasingly contentious, particularly after rumors surfaced of Oberstein's involvement with the company. On August 3, 1946, Rupe sold his entire interest in the Sterling-Juke Box operation to Middleman and departed to launch Specialty Records (*q.v.*). Rights to the Juke Box masters were transferred to Rupe, with the provision that Middleman could continue marketing Juke Box discs until his inventory was exhausted. Middleman continued to advertise Juke Box records alongside Sterling until August 1947.

Sterling underwent a reorganization in September 1947. Siegel was promoted to vice-president, and George C. Bennett was brought in to manage artists and repertoire. New sales and publicity managers were hired at the same time, but Sterling soon began experiencing financial and legal troubles. The problems began after Sterling issued a cover version of Al Trace's Regent hit, "You Call Everybody Darlin'," credited to "Al Trace and his Revelers," although Trace denied having made the recording. Trace immediately sued Sterling, seeking damages and a restraining order. The widely publicized case was later settled out of court, with Sterling agreeing to stop production of the record, but the company's image sustained considerable damage in the process.

Bennett and Middleman launched Bandwagon Records (*q.v.*) as a Sterling subsidiary in late 1947. In June 1948, Sterling and Bandwagon were sued by Stapleton Industries for infringing the form and style of their Animal children's records, a case that was dismissed later that year. In the same month, a large distributor announced that it would no longer handle Sterling records and would remainder its inventory for 15¢ per disc.

George Bennett left the company in November 1948 to run Bandwagon full-time, after buying out Middleman's share in the label. On February 5, 1949, the Internal Revenue Service began attaching Sterling's accounts receivable and threatened to seize other assets if that was not sufficient to cover the company's tax debt.

STINSON RECORDS / STINSON TRADING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: From 1939

Offices: 27 Union Square West, New York (to early 1950s); Granada Hills, CA (from early 1950s)

Original-Master Source(s): Recording contracted to independent studios

Pressing: None; pressing initially contracted to Scranton Record Company (taken over by Capitol)

Record Products: Stinson, Asch-Stinson

Founded in 1939 as the Stinson Trading Company by Herbert Harris, owner of the Union Record Shop (Union Square, New York), in partnership with Irving Proscky. Proscky held an exclusive license to import and sell Soviet-made records at the 1939 New York World's Fair. When the Russian pressings sold out, Proscky and Harris arranged to have new pressings made domestically using facsimiles of the original Russian labels.

The Stinson Trading Company claimed to have manufactured records since 1916, according to a 1946 *Billboard* article, but no evidence has been found to support that claim. As far as can be determined, the company first marketed records under its own label c. 1942. The earliest offerings used imported Soviet material, including reissues of the 1939 titles and dubbings from "Girl from Leningrad" and other Russian Artkino movie soundtracks. To accompany them, Stinson published a 50¢ booklet, *The Most Popular Songs from Soviet Union*.

Moses Asch (*q.v.*) entered into a partnership with Proscky and Harris in 1942, under which they would share manufacturing and distribution facilities and produce a joint Asch-Stinson label. As Asch became more directly involved with the operation, Stinson's catalog expanded to include jazz, folk music, and even some esoteric classical material. By late 1945, Asch had stopped releasing new material on his own label, and in December he announced that he was leaving the partnership to launch his Disc Company of America.

Following the split, Asch licensed his masters to Proscky and Harris for a fifteen-month

term, for a total of \$1. When the licensing agreement ended in May 1946, Proskey and Harris (now operating as Stinson-Asch Distributors) began marketing Asch's recordings under their own Stinson label, touching off a legal dispute between the two parties as the title to Asch's masters became increasingly muddled. Asch himself contributed to the confusion by ignoring repeated requests from Capitol Records (which was pressing the discs) to clarify which masters were his and which were Stinson's.

Proskey withdrew from the partnership in December 1946, leaving Harris in full control of Stinson. On January 7, 1947, a separation agreement was finally reached between Harris and Asch, which went into effect in March. Asch's masters were ruled to be his property, and Stinson was forbidden to use Asch's name. However, ambiguities in the agreement resulted in a long-running dispute over the rightful ownership of some Asch masters, which Stinson continued to use. A 1948 advertisement proclaimed, "Stinson records, under its old label [Asch-Stinson], pioneered the careers of some of the most popular singing artists of today." The ad went on to offer "the early works of Coleman Hawkins, Meade Lux Lewis, Art Tatum, and others," while failing to disclose that those recordings had been made by Asch and originally issued on his own label. In the meantime, the company continued to make its own recordings (concentrating on jazz, folk, and ethnic material, and what it termed "songs of social significance") and reissued a few recordings from Varsity and other defunct operations.

Stinson introduced LPs in September 1949, beginning with several Burl Ives compilations. The dispute over rights to the Asch masters flared up again after Harris reissued some of Asch's choicest material on Stinson LPs without authorization. Asch periodically threatened to bring legal action against Stinson, but he never acted on his threats.

Harris' son Robert took over operation of Stinson in the early 1950s, following its loss to producer Norman Granz in a lawsuit brought over Stinson's questionable use of Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic masters. The company relocated to California a short time later. Herbert Harris died in 1956, and ownership the company passed to his wife, Sonia, who retained ownership until her death 1988. Ownership then passed to Jack and Trudy Kall, who had been largely responsible for its operation for several decades.

STORK RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 1650 Broadway, New York (to c. 5/24/1946); 576 5th Ave. and 756 7th Ave., New York (from c. 5/25/1946)

Record Products: Stork

Successor to the Crescent Record Company (*q.v.*), which had been launched in early 1946 by Sammy Nate and J. Eric Keller. The company was renamed Stork in April, after it was discovered that the Crescent name was in use by another company. Sam Erric (thought to be fictitious name derived from Nate's and Keller's names) was later listed as Stork's owner.

The initial Stork releases were reissues from Crescent, retaining the original CR-prefixed catalog numbers. They were advertised in early May 1946 and reviewed by *Cash Box* the following month. Although Crescent had advertised that it would specialize in "hillbilly" tunes, Stork featured pop and novelty fare by singers Ross Leonard and George Price, and the Bill McCune, Hotel McAlpin, George Shaw, and Kenn Sisson orchestras. Little more was reported concerning the company, which was last listed by *Billboard* in January 1948.

STRAND RECORDS, INC. — See Clarion Record Manufacturing Company, Inc.

STRONG RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1922–1924

Offices: 206 5th Ave., New York (1922–3/1924); 353 Pierce Ave., Long Island City, NY (from 3/1924)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios—206 5th Ave., New York; Long Island City, NY (reported but not confirmed, from 3/1924)

Pressing: 28 Jackson St., Newark, NJ (shellac pressings); Bay & Trenton Sts., Point Pleasant, NJ (flexible pressings)

Record Products: Strong; masters for Arto and probably others; personal and custom recordings

The Strong Record Company was incorporated in New York in June 1922 by J. Strong, L. F. Stumpf, and G. A. Hopkins. *The New York Times* for September 28, 1922, reported that

Strong had doubled its capitalization to \$1 million. By that time the original officers had been replaced, with Adolf Hawerlander listed as president and Henry Glaue as secretary and production manager. The company advertised that it was "under expert European supervision," apparently referring to Hawerlander, a German chemist and inventor who became a U.S. citizen in 1921.

In October 1922, Strong took over the former Emerson studio on Fifth Avenue (erroneously reported as Edison's former studio in *The Talking Machine World*), with John A. Lawrence serving as recording engineer. *TMW* reported that Strong operated its studio "for other companies and does a substantial business in advertising and other special records." Strong is known to have recorded masters for the Arto Company, as confirmed by an entry in band contractor Ed Kirkeby's session log. According to a 1923 report in *The Brooklyn Citizen*, the company also recorded for Emerson, probably referring to some Strong recordings that were also issued in Emerson's ethnic series.

The company first advertised its own recordings, on the Strong label, in the *Talking Machine World* for March 1923, the same month in which *The Talking Machine Journal* confirmed the company had begun issuing records. They were mostly German popular and light-operatic selections, sung by Ivan Frank and Lucy Westen. The recordings were made in New York, not in Germany as some writers have speculated (both artists are known to have been residing and working in New York at the time).

Strong briefly produced a popular series, comprising a few current dance tunes by Abe Small's Rosemont Orchestra, as well as a Yiddish series featuring Abe Schwartz's Orchestra and Abraham Moscovitz. In April, the company announced that it had arranged for distribution in Mexico, beginning with a shipment of 5,000 records. At about the same time, Thomas McCreedy (a former Victor employee) joined the company as a sales executive and announced a forthcoming major national advertising campaign for Strong records, which never materialized.

Strong made a new stock offering and appeal for additional working capital in May 1923, in anticipation of switching to production of flexible, "unbreakable" records pressed in a quick-setting thermoplastic compound that Hawerlander had developed. The new discs were aptly advertised as "Printed — Not Molded — Not Pressed." The process employed rolls of heavy paper coated with Hawerlander's linseed oil-based thermoplastic material, which were fed continuously through a heated press. The material set within seconds of emerging from the press, and the finished records were punched from the sheets. The process markedly reduced the time required to produce a pressing; one report claimed the Strong's new Point Pleasant plant had a capacity of 50,000 discs per day. Hawerlander's patent was later acquired (but not used) by the makers of Hit of the Week records, which employed strikingly similar materials and processes (*see* Durium Products Corporation).

Distribution of the new flexible records was to begin on September 1, 1923, according to newspaper reports. But on August 4, the Strong Record Company was petitioned into bankruptcy, and a receiver was appointed the following day. Among Strong's creditors was Edward Lyman Bill, Inc., publisher of *The Talking Machine World*, in which Strong had often advertised. Hawerlander claimed the Strong Record Company was solvent and blamed the action on a plot by disgruntled former officers, but the company listed assets of only \$1,000, not including its Point Pleasant pressing plant. All of the company's assets, including the masters, were offered for sale in November, but in December 1923 *TMW* reported that Strong's creditors had agreed to a deferred settlement of claims. The receiver was dismissed, and on December 21 it was reported that all debts had been paid and the business would be reestablished.

The Emerson Recording Laboratories reclaimed the Fifth Avenue studio in early 1924 and reissued a few Strong recordings in Emerson's ethnic series. The Strong Record Company was reorganized in March 1924, at which time it moved to Long Island City, where it reportedly opened a new studio. A new line of Strong records appeared briefly, with labels crediting one Philip Phillips of New York, about whom nothing has been discovered.

On September 24, 1924, the Strong Record Company was reorganized as the Record Broadcasting Corporation, a custom-recording operation that is not known to have produced any records for the consumer market.

STUDIO RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1952

Offices: 18100 Greenlawn, Detroit

Record Products: Studio

Launched in September 1950 by Robert F. Calder, who was the treasurer of Rego Records at the time. Its mailing address (which it shared with the Grand Central Music Company and Rego Records) was a private home in suburban Detroit.

Noting that Rego had been "virtually inactive in recent months," *Billboard* erroneously reported on September 9, 1950, that Studio Records was a subsidiary of the Grand Central Music Company (Detroit), Rego's parent company. The report was corrected three weeks later to reflect the fact that Studio was an independent operation, although it used the same Greenlawn mailing address as Grand Central Music and Rego. The Studio label made a few undistinguished pop releases by mostly obscure artists, the notable exception being Rosemary Clooney's sister, Betty. Later releases plugged tunes published by Fergus Music, an affiliated publishing operation that Calder launched in October 1951.

SULLIVAN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1951

Offices: 54 W. Randolph St., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Universal Recording (Chicago), possibly other independent studios

Record Products: Sullivan

Launched in early 1949 by Cletus M. Wichens. Sullivan's first release ("It's Noisy Out in Boise, Idaho" / "In The Hills of Old Wyoming," by The King's Jesters) appeared in February 1949. It received a brief notice in *Cash Box*, which reported, "Those hailing from Idaho naturally prefer the 'A' side, while those from Wyoming think the 'B' side...is tops. Well, that's one way to make sure that both sides get plenty of plugs." Sullivan releases appeared sporadically, averaging only two per year. The company was last listed in *Billboard*'s July 1951 label directory.

SULTAN RECORDING COMPANY / TOWER TOP RECORDING AND TRANSCRIPTION STUDIO (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1951

Offices: 834 Penobscot Building (645 Griswold St.), Detroit (1946–late 1947); 5110 Stanton Ave., Detroit (1949–1950); various other Detroit addresses (1950–1951)

Original-Master Source(s): Unknown studio (1946); Own studio (from 10/1947)

Record Products: Sultan [1]; radio transcriptions (from late 1947)

Launched in May 1946 by Detroit construction-company owner Morton Sultan, in partnership with Samuel A. Grossbart, Louis Sultan, and Sydney Verier. The same group launched the affiliated Sultan Distributing Company in July. In 1949, the operation moved into the Stanton Avenue offices of Morton Sultan's construction business.

Sultan's first (and possibly only) national display advertisement appeared in *Billboard* on June 8, 1946. Its "Double-Header Hits" featured a different artist on each side of the disc, a practice that had been largely abandoned in the late 1920s. The roster was made up of readily available Chicago artists, including Red Saunders, Sonny Thompson, and Eddie Wiggins. Saunders' "Red, the Be-Bop Guy," a *Metronome* reviewer observed, "sounds more like typical jump music than be-bop." The same publication described Wiggins' "Onyx Jump" as "nothing sensational...but very good for an unknown band of which you expected nothing."

In addition to three jazz releases in a 2500 series, Sultan produced records for the Jewish market, by Hyman Adler of Congregation B'nai David (Detroit), numbered in a separate 1000 series. Sultan Recording appears to have suspended operations in late 1946, coinciding with Morton Sultan's increasing concentration on other ventures. In January 1947, he took over distribution of Bullet and Musicraft records in Michigan and portions of Ohio, and in August he opened a Drive-a-Teria (an combination gas station and drive-in restaurant) in Detroit.

In October 1947, Morton Sultan purchased J. Hall Smith's Tower Top Transcription Company, where it was reported that he would make commercial recordings and radio

transcriptions. A month later, Sultan was notified by the American Federation of Musicians that his recording license would not be renewed in 1948, in advance of the AFM's second recording ban. *Billboard* reported in January 1948 that the Sultan label was being revived "with a whole stable of recordings on the foreign-language and hillbilly fields," thus skirting the ban by employing non-union artists.

A month later, Sultan accepted a position as Musicraft's eastern sales manager. *Billboard* mentioned in May 1948 that Sultan was still involved in unspecified "disc operations," but nothing further was reported concerning his label. It was last listed in *Billboard*'s July 1951 directory (which included many defunct companies) but probably was inactive by then. The Sultan name was used for an unrelated label in Natchez, Mississippi, in 1950 (*see next entry*).

SULTAN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950

Offices: 1 Prentiss St., Natchez, MS

Record Products: Sultan [2]

A short-lived race-record label launched in the summer of 1950 by Scott Berner, Jack Davis, Ruby Goldber, and Edvent Davis. There was no connection to the earlier, Detroit-based Sultan label (*see previous entry*). *Billboard* reported in June 1950 that records by Preston Alexander's Orchestra, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Bonita Cole, Papa George, and the Zion Travelers had already been released. The records are not known to have been advertised, and only one release has been located in the trade-paper advance lists. The label probably was inactive by 1951.

SUN RECORDING CORPORATION (Discs)f

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1949

Offices: 260 E. 161 St., Bronx, NY

Record Products: Sun [2], Sun Jewish Records

Owned and operated by Abe Lyman (not the well-known band leader, but a producer of foreign-language radio programming). The company filed a copyright on its slogan, "The Brightest Thing on Record," in 1946, and re-filed in 1947. Fred Mendelsohn initially served as Sun's house accompanist and composed several titles that were copyrighted in Sun's name, but departed in 1947 to launch Regent Records. Lyman's label was unrelated to the many other Sun labels that preceded and followed it.

The Sun Recording Corporation's launch was mentioned by *Billboard* in March 1947. Although the report stated that Sun would specialize in general foreign-language recordings, virtually all of the label's output consisted of recordings for the Jewish market, particularly by Yiddish-theater stars. The last known Sun [2] releases appeared in early 1949, after which some masters were licensed to Londisc, Melodie, Melodisc, and other foreign labels. .

SUN RECORDS (Detroit) — *See* S. B. W. Recording Company

SUN RECORDS (Memphis) — *See* Memphis Recording Service

SUNBEAM RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 6128 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

Record Products: Sunbeam

Launched in September 1946 by Marl Young, an African-American pianist and arranger who performed at the Rhumboogie Cafe and other Chicago clubs in the 1930s and 1940s.

The first Sunbeam release was announced in November 1946. Nine releases, all by Young's band or other Chicago-area performers, have been confirmed, one of which (#S-107) exists in two versions. Sunbeam made its final release in March 1947, and its last known advertisement appeared in *The Pittsburgh Courier* the following month. In September, Vitacoustic purchased most of Young's masters, which then passed to Egmont Sonderling's Swing-Master Record Corporation following Vitacoustic's Chapter 11 filing.

SUNRISE RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1949

Offices: 307 Lenox Ave., New York, 500 E. 63rd St., Chicago (branch, from c. 9/1947)

Record Products: Sunrise [3]

Founded by Leonard Evans in April 1947, primarily as a jazz label. Duke Ellington's son Mercer produced the early Sunrise sessions, many of which featured Al Hibbler, Johnny Hodges, Billy Strayhorn, and other Ellington-orchestra associates. An anecdotal report that Dr. Arthur Logan (Duke Ellington's personal physician) owned a share in the company has not been confirmed. The artist roster soon expanded beyond Ellington's circle to include groups fronted by Earl Hines, Tiny Grimes, and Milton Larkins, as well as the Dixieaires, a gospel vocal group.

Sunrise apparently had an informal relationship with Miracle Records as early as September 1947, when it began listing Miracle's address as its Chicago branch. Miracle took over the marketing and distribution of Sunrise records, as well as control of its catalog, in March 1948. Operating as the Miracle-Sunrise Record Distributing Corporation, Miracle's Lee Egalnick and Lew Simpkins gutted the Sunrise catalog after transferring a few choice titles to their new Miracle Sunrise Series label. The only new Sunrise releases known to have appeared under Miracle's management were several titles by Al Hibbler.

Leonard Evans reclaimed the presidency of Sunrise in April 1949. Although *Billboard* termed the move a split with Modern, Egalnick retained control of distribution, and Simpkins of artists and repertoire. An Al Hibbler session in late April was Sunrise's last. Sunrise lost its recording license in September 1949, after Eddie Chamblee and several other musicians filed a non-payment complaint with the American Federation of Musicians. In the same month, the Harry Fox Agency filed suit against Sunrise for nonpayment of royalties, on behalf of several music publishers.

The Sunrise masters were widely dispersed in the early 1950s. The Dixieaires recordings were acquired by Bob Shad's Sittin' In With label, and many of the band sides were taken over by Mercer Ellington for his Mercer label. Most of Al Hibbler's recordings were purchased by Leonard Chess, who reissued them on Chess 45s and LPs.

SUNSET RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924–1925

Offices: 320 Omar Ave., Los Angeles

Record Products: Sunset [1], Geisha; The Classic Record (private label), personal recordings

Launched in Hollywood in late 1924, under the management of A. M. Harris. *The Los Angeles Times* for December 21, 1924, stated that the company was newly organized, although its trademark application for the Geisha label (filed January 15, 1925) claimed use since September 1, 1924. Record production reportedly was under way by December, when it was reported that the company would specialize in "private recording in all languages." The operation appears to have been taken over by the Hollywood Record Company (*q.v.*) by mid-1925.

SUNSET RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – c. 1951

Offices: 10527 Felton St., Inglewood, CA (to early 1946); 1523 N. Hudson, Hollywood, CA (from 5/1946)

Record Products: Sunset [2], Just Jazz

A jazz label launched in 1944 by former Keynote Records executive Eddie Laguna. *Billboard* noted on July 8 that Sunset was "reported ready to start production," and initial releases were announced in November. Distribution was largely limited to the West Coast until October 1945, when it was announced that Sunset had secured national coverage through several distributors. However, production soon began to decline, and a proposed cooperative arrangement with Ross Russell's Dial Records, announced in August 1946, failed to materialize. By the end of 1947, Sunset was essentially an inactive operation.

Eric Bernay (the founder of Keynote Records) bought into the company in early 1948 and announced that he was reactivating its Sunset label. He launched the Just Jazz label at the same time, featuring jam-session recordings that were an attempt to compete with Norman Granz's far more successful Jazz at the Philharmonic series. Bernay's plan to

launch a Theme label, primarily as a reissue vehicle for some Keynote masters that Mercury had passed over, never came to fruition. The Theme name was used for several unrelated labels, beginning with New York- and Knoxville-based versions in the early 1950s.

Sunset appears to have been inactive by late 1951, when some of its recordings were licensed to the Monarch label for reissue on LP. A Sunset label resurfaced in 1955, at a different Hollywood address. Its connection with the original company, if any, has not been determined.

SUNSHINE PHONOGRAPH AND RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1925

Offices: St. Petersburg, FL

Original-Master Source and Pressing: General Phonograph Corporation (Okeh)

Record Products: Sunshine [4]; Scott Record (private label)

A short-lived Florida operation that released several records by the local performers, including the Royal Scotch Highlanders Band, Royal Scotch Grenadiers Band, singer Bobbie Brollier, and bird imitator Harold Stockton. Okeh made the recordings in St. Petersburg, Florida, during a January 1925 field trip. Some recordings appeared exclusively on Sunshine, some exclusively on Okeh, and several on both labels. Two were also licensed to the Parlophone label in England. The last two recordings from the St. Petersburg sessions, by singers Erle B. Renwick and Say Scott, were issued on the private Scott Record label.

SUNSHINE RECORDING COMPANY / SUNSHINE PRODUCTIONS AND RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 1480 W. Jefferson Blvd., Los Angeles

Record Products: Sunshine [5]

Launched in early 1946 by Los Angeles composer and music publisher Benjamin (Reb) Spikes, whose original Sunshine label failed after only three releases in 1922 (see Spikes Brothers Phonograph Company). The revived Sunshine label used basically the same design as the original, and Spikes' compositions were featured.

Billboard listed Sunshine as a new company in March 1946. Its initial releases, announced in the same month, featured Mae Johnson (nicknamed "Miss Atomic Blues") and Lillette Thomas and her Escorts. *Cash Box* predicted that the latter's records, although "real good for race spots," would do well in any location catering to jazz and blues fans. The same magazine gave a particularly enthusiastic review to the Austin McCoy Sextet's two-part "Choo Choo Boogie Train," but little was done to promote the records, and Sunshine's overall sales appear to have been negligible. The label was last listed in *Billboard*'s January 1949 directory, although it might have been inactive by then.

SUPER DISCS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1949

Offices: 610 5th Ave., New York (1945–1/1948); 1110 7th St., NW, Washington, DC (sales office, 1945–1/1948); 3623 12th St. NE, Washington DC (from 1/1948)

Record Products: Super Disc, Quartet; masters for Scoop [1] and possibly others

Owned and operated by Irvin and Israel Feld, who opened the Super Cut Rate Drug Store in Washington, DC, in May, 1940. The store's small record department expanded rapidly after the brothers began promoting it on fifteen-minute daily radio spots hosted by WWDC disc jockey Jack Lowe. When wartime shellac shortages interrupted their production, the Felds recruited school children to scavenge unwanted used discs. Saleable copies were used to restock the store, while the remainder were recycled into new pressing material.

The Felds launched Super Discs (plural for the company name, singular for the record label) in the spring of 1945. Although the Felds remained in Washington, where they managed marketing and sales, recording operations originally were headquartered in New York. The Super Disc label specialized in jazz, blues, gospel, and country-and-western material. The company had a surprise hit with Arthur Smith's "Guitar Boogie," for which it claimed sales of a half-million copies; the initial demand reportedly was so great that the pressing plant could not keep up with orders. Based on the strength of that record, the Felds boasted that "leading artists are 'flocking' to get on the Super Disc label." Although

the claim was highly exaggerated, Super Disc did attract some well-known names, including Erskine Butterfield, Sid Catlett, Jimmy Crawly, and Bull Moose Jackson.

Quartet Records, an obscure gospel label operating at Super Discs' 7th Street address, was launched at some point before early 1948. It employed two local Washington gospel groups, the Harmonizing Four and Sunset Harmonizers. The known numerical range is 101–106, within which several releases remain untraced.

Super Discs' operations were consolidated in Washington, DC, in early 1948, at which time the Felds also began recording masters for Scoop Records, a small local startup. On June 26, 1948, M-G-M Records' Frank Walker completed negotiations with Irvin Feld for the purchase of Super Discs' released and unreleased masters, some of which were slated for immediate reissue in M-G-M's race-record and country-and-western lists. Judson Music, which held rights to the original songs in the Super Disc catalog, was sold to M-G-M at the same time. The company continued to supply masters to M-G-M into 1949.

SUPERB RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1950

Offices: 614 N. Plymouth Ave., Hollywood, CA (1949–mid-1950); 5747 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles (mid-1950)

Record Products: Superb, A Gayety Original

A short-lived pop label of unknown ownership, launched in the spring of 1949. The records had limited distribution, primarily through small firms in California and the Midwest. No reliable information concerning this company's ownership or operation has been located.

Superb's earliest known releases were advertised in May 1949. Its artist roster included Ted Fiorito's Orchestra, cocktail-lounge pianist Jack Nye, and singers Artie Wayne and Paul Judson (the latter flown in from New Orleans in September 1949 especially for his Superb session). Judson had a minor jukebox hit with "Black Lace," in connection with which he reportedly planned to send black-lace handkerchiefs to his fans. Wayne's masters were later sold to Vega Records, which reissued them as a 10" LP album in November 1950. *Billboard* commented, "Wayne [is not] a name draw, but the songs are pleasant enough, Wayne sings more than well enough, and the ork-chorus backgrounds are big-league."

Superb's short-lived Gayety label was a "party" record line that featured such mildly risqué numbers as "Falsies" by Lillian Long, accompanied by a group credited as "Joe Banana and his Bunch, the Band with Appeal."

The last Superb releases appeared in early 1950, and the company was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1950 directory. Its brief reappearance in the March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

SUPREME RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1950

Offices: 4910 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA (Black and White offices, 1948–2/1949); 4253–4255 S. Main St., Los Angeles (from 6/1949); 475 5th Ave. and 728 10th Ave., New York (sales and distribution); 1059 E. Jefferson Blvd., Los Angeles (distribution, from 1/1949)

Pressing: Black and White plant (to 3/1949); independent East Coast plants (from 3/1949)

Record Products: Supreme [2]; Religious Tone

Launched in the autumn of 1947 by Los Angeles dentist Albert T. (Al) Patrick, primarily for the race-record market. Al Kash was added to the promotional staff in February 1948. In April 1948, Supreme contracted its pressing and distribution to Black and White Records, which in turn assigned the Canadian pressing and distribution rights to Charles Darwyn's Toronto-based Monogram Records. Supreme shared an office with Black and White until early 1949, when its severed relations with that company.

Supreme's earliest documented recording session, by Jimmy Witherspoon and a group fronted by Louis Speigner, was held in Los Angeles on October 18, 1947. Patrick assembled an outstanding artist roster that included Floyd Dixon, Percy Mayfield, Jay McShann, Buddy Tate, and Eddie Williams' Brown Buddies. The label had a national hit in October 1948 with Paula Watson's "A Little Bird Told Me," which reached #2 on *Billboard's* rhythm-and-blues chart and, briefly, #6 on the pop charts. After Decca and Capitol released cover versions that closely imitated the Supreme original, Supreme and Black and White filed

lawsuits against both companies, seeking \$200,000 in damages and \$200,000 in punitive damages from each. The case would not be settled until early 1950.

Supreme severed relations with Black and White in February 1949 and opened a New York branch office, under the management of Guy Ward. The company quickly secured an injunction preventing Black and White from pressing and distributing any discs, including its own, until an accounting discrepancy involving money owed to Supreme could be resolved. The injunction was vacated three days later. After a flurry of suits and counter-suits, the matter was finally settled out of court in April 1949, with full manufacturing and distribution rights reverting to Supreme. Supreme also sued Black and White for having granted Canadian rights to Monogram without legal authority. Black and White countered that Supreme (which had profited from the arrangement) had assigned them exclusive world manufacturing distribution rights, which constituted automatic authorization to close the Canadian deal.

In March 1949, Guy Ward announced plans to aggressively expand Supreme's artist roster. Black and White's Leo Flack joined the Supreme staff three months later. Despite ongoing legal skirmishes, the company managed to launch the Religious Tone label in November 1949. However, Supreme's final known release, by Percy Mayfield, appeared in January 1950. Later that month, the United States District Court for the Central District of California, Southern Division, finally ruled in favor of Decca in the Paula Watson—"Little Bird" case, holding that individual interpretations of a given style were not subject to legal protection.

SWAN RECORDING COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 1600 Broadway, New York

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Swan, Pick-Up; pressing for independent labels

Owned and operated by Lester (Les) Schriber, Sr., who had sold his Black and White Records the previous year. Schriber and Walter F. Gustafson were equal partners in the company's Pick-Up label, whereas Schriber held the controlling interest in Swan, with Gustafson serving as secretary and Eric Becker as treasurer. The company operated its own pressing plant, which regularly solicited work from other small independent labels. There was no connection to the better-known Swan label founded in 1957.

The Swan and Pick-Up labels were launched almost simultaneously. Swan specialized in traditional jazz, jump, and rhythm-and-blues, with a smattering of pop material. The initial Swan releases, advertised in May 1946, featured Don Redman's Orchestra. Its artist roster featured some performers who had been in their heyday two to three decades earlier, including Phil Napoleon's Emperors and a group comprising members of Napoleon's long-defunct Original Memphis Five under the nominal direction of Original Dixieland Jazz Band drummer Tony Sbarbaro. Pick-Up, credited to the firm of Schriber & Gustafson on the labels, featured jazz and pop material and briefly advertised alongside Swan.

Schriber left Swan in the autumn of 1946. Few if any new releases are known to have appeared after his departure. Swan's last known advertisements appeared in May 1947, and the company was last listed in *Billboard's* January 1948 label directory. Mercury purchased sixteen Swan masters for reissue on LP in 1950. Several Swan recordings were pirated by the Emm Ess label in the early 1950s.

SWANK RECORDS — See Murray Singer Records

SWEET-TONE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1951

Offices: 2900 Military St. Detroit

Record Products: Sweet-Tone

Launched in August or September 1950 by Rego Records' Peter (Polka King) Uryga, in partnership with Carl Bartley. There is no connection to an earlier Sweetone label (unhyphenated), whose unknown producer made a single confirmed release c. 1938.

Billboard initially reported that Sweet-Tone was a subsidiary of the Grand Central Music

Company (which had controlled Uryga's Rego label), then corrected the story three weeks later to reflect the fact that it was an independent operation. The Four Dukes, a Detroit supper-club act, signed with Sweet-Tone in March 1951, after which nothing further was reported in the trade papers.

SWING BEAT RECORDS / SWING TIME RECORD COMPANY — See Lauderdale, Jack

SWING-MASTER RECORD CORPORATION — See Master Record Company

SWING RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1949

Offices: 262 2nd St. SW, Paris, TX

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Royalty [1]; All Spice, Cajun Classics, Downbeat, Hill-Billy Hit Parade, Personality Records, Swing, Western Magic, Zest, Zip; Stamps-Baxter Quartet, other private and custom labels

Owned and operated by Jimmy Mercer (*née* Harry Schaefer). According to researcher Bill McClung, Mercer had a checkered past that included a 1928 conviction for robbery and forgery, and a possible 1931 arrest for passing bad checks. Mercer, who sometimes used the alias "Jivin' Joe Jackson," came to Paris, Texas, in 1944 or 1945 (depending upon the account), where he worked at radio station KPLT, operated the Melody Lane Record Shop, and gave piano lessons.

Mercer launched the Swing Record Manufacturing Company in October 1946, at which time he invited local artists to audition for his new Swing and Downbeat labels (the latter not related to Jack Lauderdale's Down Beat label, which operated during the same period, nor to *DownBeat* magazine). He sold the Memory Lane shop in late 1946 to devote full attention to his record business.

Mercer operated his own plant, which made mediocre pressings on poor-quality recycled stock. Quality control was lax, and label errors were not uncommon. He regularly solicited scrap records for recycling, and on several occasions he advertised for "strong active women" to work the night shift at his plant. Although Mercer claimed to be pressing for "several major labels," confirmed examples of his client work are known only on some minor independent brands.

Swing (mistakenly cited in some works as "Swing with the Stars," the label's slogan) was Mercer's primary label. Mercer's studio originally was housed in the Memory Lane shop, and he generally employed artists working in and around northeast Texas. However, he is also known to have used recordings from Atlantic, Cow Town, Freedom, 4 Star, Gold Star, and other labels, most if not all of which he pirated. Gold Star sued Mercer, then reportedly settled out of court after he agreed to purchase some masters from the company. Atlantic Records reportedly threatened legal action as well. Mercer's own masters do not appear to have been in great demand by others companies, although Savoy Records purchased at least one in 1950.

Mercer also produced the Hill-Billy Hit Parade label, a joint venture with Frank Sanborn. Retailing for 25¢, these were single-selection laminated paper discs, one specimen of which has been reported with a Swing label. The concept was not a success, and the records are now extremely rare. In addition, Mercer pressed the Zest and Zip party records, along with similar "adult" material on unbranded labels, which eventually brought him to the attention of federal authorities. In March 1949, Mercer was arrested and charged with delivering obscene records for shipment across state lines. He pled guilty to two counts in January 1950, was sentenced to three years' probation, and moved to Chicago later that year. He is not known to have had any further involvement with the record business following his conviction.

SWING TIME RECORD COMPANY — See Lauderdale, Jack

SYLVAN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: Unknown

Record Products: Sylvan

A short-lived country-and-western label of unknown ownership, possibly affiliated with music-publisher Benjamin Adelman, whose Eagle Music titles were featured. Sylvan's initial release, by Don Kidwell and his Red River Valley Boys, appeared in late February 1949. "Hillbilly Wolf"/"All Because of My Jealous Heart," by Billy Strickland and his Hillbilly Kings, was released in April 1949 and was subsequently purchased by De Luxe Records, from which it passed to Regal. Nothing further was reported in the trade papers concerning Sylvan Records.

SYMPHONY RECORDS (Los Angeles) — See American Recording Artists

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TALENT RECORDS / STAR TALENT RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1952

Offices: 313 Oakland Ave., Dallas

Record Products: Talent [1], Star Talent

Founded in 1948 as Talent Records by Dallas record-store owners Jesse and Louise Erickson. The Talent label originally specialized in country-and-western material by local artists, some of whom (including Riley Crabtree and Buddy Walker) were performing with Ed Lemoire's "Lone Star Jamboree" at the time. Jesse Erickson later traveled as far afield as Memphis and New Orleans to scout and sign artists. Edward A. Khoury, of Chateau Publications (Philadelphia), served as Talent's East Coast representative and had several Chateau titles recorded for the label.

Talent's first six releases were all by Buddy Walker, who also worked as a salesman in the Ericksons' store. His "Bordertown Fiesta," the label's first release, was a minor regional hit. Talent's roster soon expanded to include Freddie Burns, Buster Doss, Johnny Mathis (not the pop star of the same name), Hoyle Nix, Jack Padgett, Ray Rohers, Slim Willet, and other southern and southwestern artists. Willet, an Abilene singer, songwriter, and disc jockey for radio station KRBC, was signed to a three-year contract in December 1950 on the strength of his tune "Pinball Millionaire," which had been a minor hit for other artists on Capitol and 4 Star. His own recording for Star Talent did not fare as well.

By early 1949, the company and label name had been changed to Star Talent, possibly to avoid a conflict with Grimes Music Publishers' Philadelphia-based Talent label. Professor Longhair (Roeland Byrd) signed an exclusive contract with Star Talent on November 3, 1949. He had a regional jukebox hit, in the New Orleans area, with "She Ain't Got No Hair" in the spring of 1950. However, no new releases were announced after late 1951, and the company last appeared in *Billboard's* March 1952 label directory.

TALKING BOOK CORPORATION (Discs)

Founded in 1920 and bankrupt by February 1921, the Talking Book Corporation was the first producer of die-cut laminated picture records, employing a process invented by Victor Emerson (patent #1,399,757) covering "a tablet made in imitation of the appearance of a well-known animate or inanimate object and comprising a phonographic record that can reproduce sounds which the hearer generally associates with that object." The company was unrelated to the later and much better-known Talking Book Corporation of America, producer of recordings for the visually impaired. As a manufacturer of records intended primarily for the children's and educational markets, its history is beyond the scope of this work.

TALKING PHOTO CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1920 – 1921

Offices: 334 5th Ave., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Emerson Phonograph Company studio

Record Products: Talk-O-Photo

A venture of physical fitness expert Robert B. (Pat) Wheelan, in association with Victor H. Emerson, the Talking Photo Corporation marketed 7" discs by popular silent-film stars. Wheelan was better known as the president of Health Builders, Inc., which beginning in 1921 marketed the Musical Health Builder "Daily Dozen" exercise records and Camp-Fone portable phonographs. Talking Photo's trademark application, filed on August 9, 1920, claimed use of the Talk-O-Photo brand on records since June 15, 1920.

Introduced in the July 1920 *Talking Machine World*, and selling for 35¢ each or three for \$1, Talk-O-Photo records featured talks and recitations by Gloria Swanson, Mae Murray, Lew Cody, H. B. Warner, and other movie celebrities. The single-sided discs are pressed in an unknown semi-flexible compound, with large reverse-side labels on which the performer's photograph and facsimile autograph appear.

Talk-O-Photo masters, which were numbered in the same series as Emerson's standard 7" recordings, were produced for Talk-O-Photo's exclusive use and do not appear on other labels. Catalog numbers were simply the last two digits of the Emerson master number (e.g., Talk-O-Photo 74 = Emerson mx. 21574), accounting for the large gaps in Talk-O-Photo's catalog-number sequence.

The Talking Photo Corporation's advertisements claimed the company had a hundred artists under contract, but thus far, only twelve recordings are known to have been issued. The general public seems to have had little interest in hearing the voices of silent-film stars, and the venture was discontinued within a year of its launch.

THE TALK-O-PHONE COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1904–1909

Offices: 35 Bond St., Toledo, OH; 244–246 W. 23rd St., New York; Chicago, San Francisco (sales only)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (Toledo)

Factory: Central & Lawrence Ave., Toledo (phonograph assembly)

Record Products: Talk-O-Phone

Primarily a phonograph manufacturer that marketed other companies' recordings under its own label, the Talk-O-Phone Company is included here because of the likelihood that it also produced or commissioned some original recordings.

The Talk-O-Phone Company was successor to the Ohio Talking Machine Company (*q.v.*), which operated its own studio in Toledo and issued original recordings. The American Graphophone Company (Columbia) sued Ohio Talking Machine for patent infringement in May 1902 and finally obtained a temporary injunction on January 10, 1903, which was made permanent on March 20.

On October 28, 1903, it was announced the Ohio Talking Machine Company would "soon cease to exist," and that its place would be taken by a new, as-yet unnamed corporation (soon to be named the Talk-O-Phone Company). Ohio Talking Machine owners Winanat Van Zant Pearce Bradley and Albert L. Irish stayed on, and George Robertson was brought in as vice-president. Court documents reveal that Edward F. Leeds, of the Leeds & Catlin Company, was a major shareholder. Despite initial reports that Talk-O-Phone would be incorporated in New Jersey, the company was incorporated in Toledo with a capitalization of \$500,000. Talk-O-Phone appears to have been an attempt to distance Bradley and Irish from their patent-infringement problems. An October 1903 report in *The Music Trade Review* stated (incorrectly, as it would turn out) that those problems "have been satisfactorily settled in the courts."

In November 1903, the company filed an application for Talk-O-Phone's parrot trademark and the slogan, "Learning Some New Ones." A second trademark application, made by the Talk-O-Phone Company for use of the Talk-O-Phone name on records, was filed on April 29, 1905.

Initially, Talk-O-Phone simply marketed Leeds' foil-label discs to which its imprint was added. But in 1905 the company introduced its own label, on which the Parrot trademark appeared. Catalogs from that period claim that the company had a studio in Toledo, where

the Ohio Talking Machine Company is known to have made recordings. Some early Talk-O-Phone 9" releases have not been traced to other sources, suggesting that they might have been recorded by Talk-O-Phone in Toledo (in the case of some anonymous issues) or made for the company's exclusive use (in the case of recordings by known New York artists). By 1906, however, 10" Talk-O-Phone records were being manufactured by the International Record Company, duplicating material on IRC's Excelsior label.

Bradley left the Talk-O-Phone Company at the end of 1904 and was later sued for his involvement with the Continental Record Company, a shadowy operation that pirated Victor and Fonotipia recordings. Although both Bradley and Irish were implicated in other record-pirating schemes at various times, there is no evidence that Talk-O-Phone records ever used pirated recordings.

Talk-O-Phone was frequently sued for infringing Columbia's and Victor's patents. As Leeds & Catlin's midwestern affiliate, Talk-O-Phone often found itself the co-defendant in lawsuits brought against Leeds. *The Talking Machine World* for January 1906 featured advertising for a mechanical-feed Talk-O-Phone machine, an obvious attempt to circumvent Berliner's patent #534,543. Victor, in the meantime, had filed suit against both Talk-O-Phone and Leeds & Catlin. A judgement in Victor's favor was handed down on April 26, 1906 (*Victor Talking Machine Co. et al. v. Talk-O-Phone Co.*, 146 F. 534) and was upheld on appeal on October 12, 1906 (*Victor Talking Machine Co. et al. v. Talk-O-Phone Co.*, 148 F. 1022).

A 1906 advertisement assured potential investors "100 Per Cent Profits Probable...Here Is an Opportunity to Make a Small Investment Pay You an Income for Life." In August of that year, however, it was reported that the Talk-O-Phone Company factory had been idled for several months and the company was in the midst of a corporate reorganization. A short time later, Albert Irish was replaced as president by Toledo banker B. V. D. Manley. Irish dropped out of public view for a time but retained his substantial financial stake in the Talk-O-Phone Company.

By late 1906, a rumor was circulating that Columbia was attempting to buy out Talk-O-Phone. It proved to be false, and in November it was reported that Irish and Manley were forming a \$2 million corporation (to be named the Atlantic Phonograph Company) that would take over Talk-O-Phone. Irish could not be located for comment at the time, and no products were forthcoming from Atlantic Phonograph. On December 8, 1906, a special stockholders' meeting was called to discuss liquidation of Talk-O-Phone's debts.

Production of Talk-O-Phone records apparently ended in June 1907, when an injunction was handed down against the International Record Company, which had been supplying Talk-O-Phone. On February 8, 1908, it was announced that the Talk-O-Phone Company had been petitioned into bankruptcy. Harry Ensign was appointed as receiver for both Talk-O-Phone and the Atlantic Phonograph Company, and on April 6, 1908, he consented to Talk-O-Phone being perpetually enjoined from manufacturing phonographs. Ensign was dismissed in June 1908, after creditors complained of conflicting claims between Talk-O-Phone and Atlantic Phonograph. Individual receivers were then appointed for each company. On March 30, 1909, Talk-O-Phone's receiver agreed to a U. S. Circuit decree for infringement of Columbia's Jones patent, and the company was dissolved a short time later.

Albert Irish filed for personal bankruptcy, claiming liabilities of \$464,790 in connection with personal loans and notes on the two companies. The moral, Irish told *The Talking Machine World*, was "don't fool with buzz-saws." He re-entered the banking business and in December 1909 was indicted for abetting embezzlement by the president of the Broadway Bank of Toledo.

TANNER MANUFACTURING AND DISTRIBUTING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947–1953

Offices: 1314 N. Brazos St., San Antonio, TX

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Tanner; Allied [1], Hot Rod, It's a Hit Record

Originally an independent record-pressing and distribution operation, launched by Bob Tanner in San Antonio in 1947. Tanner, a veteran of the coin-machine business, had come to Texas a year earlier to manage Coast Records' Dallas distribution center.

Tanner launched his eponymous label in the later 1940s, specializing in country-and-western material by local artists. He also produced the short-lived Hot Rod label in partnership with Virgel Bozman, following the demise of Bozeman's O.T. Records operation in 1949. The short-lived Hit Record Company, which might have been nothing more than a trade name, also operated at Tanner's Brazos Street address. In the early 1950s Tanner took over distribution of the Everstate label, some of whose artists subsequently signed new contracts with him.

Tanner reorganized as the Tanner 'n' Texas Manufacturing Company in 1953 and introduced the TNT label (unrelated to the Hi-Tension Company's "party" record line of the same name). On December 30, 1957, the company was formally registered as Tanner 'n' Texas, Inc. In addition to producing his own label, Tanner continued to press and distribute for many small local companies, increasingly specializing in material for the Mexican and Tex-Mex markets. In a 1972 interview, Tanner's wife, Dorris, erroneously asserted that the company pressed what she termed "the first Chicano record" in 1949. In 1973, plant manager Foy Lee estimated that 80% of the company's pressing business came from Chicano labels.

Dorris Tanner took over management of the company in the early 1970s, after her husband suffered a stroke. In August 1973, the plant was sold to a privately held corporation headed by Tom Albright.

TARA IRISH RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 4903 Girard Ave., Philadelphia

Record Products: Tara Irish Records

Launched in January 1947, Tara records were devoted exclusively to Irish fare. They were handled by Lesco Distributors (Philadelphia) beginning in September of that year. The initial releases, by singer Nora Walsh and the Garyowen Irish Recording Orchestra, appeared in March 1947, after which little more was heard of the company. Tara's last regular listing appeared in *Billboard's* January 1949 directory. Its brief reappearances in the July 1950, July 1951, and March 1952 directories (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

TAXCO RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1952

Offices: 4920½ S. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles (1948–1950); 3128 Main St., Los Angeles (1951)

Original-Master Source: Radio Recorders studio

Record Products: Discos Taxco

Owned and operated by Albert Castillo, Taxco specialized in contemporary as well as traditional Mexican and Mexican-American fare. Reports that Taxco was exclusively an export label are incorrect. The records (some of which featured vocals in English) were distributed in the southwestern United States from the start and had national distribution by early 1949.

Taxco's earliest releases appeared in *Billboard's* February 1948 advance lists. According to trade-paper reports, Taxco records had a good following on jukeboxes in Spanish-speaking neighborhoods on the West Coast. The label offered a wide array of material for the Mexican-American (and to some extent, the broader Latino) markets, ranging from ranchero, conjunto, and mariachi selections to modern novelties, pop vocals, and dance numbers. Its roster included Rubén Reyes, Eva Quintinar, and other popular Mexican and Mexican-American artists. Don Ramon, who had a local hit for Taxco with "Pachuco Boogie," was actually Don Tosti, using an alias because he was under contract to band leader Jimmy Dorsey at the time.

Not all of Taxco's artists were full-time professionals. Members of the Trio de Mar, who recorded "The Tamale Vendor" for Taxco in early 1950, were laborers by day for a power company in Phoenix, Arizona. Angelita Ramirez won her Taxco recording contract (including travel expenses to the Los Angeles studio) as a prize in an Arizona amateur talent contest.

In March 1952, Castillo entered into an agreement to turn over Taxco, including all

masters and artist contracts, to Don Armando and band leader Carlos Molinas. Eight months later, he sued to recover his company after Armando and Molinas reneged on payment, but production was not resumed.

TECH-ART RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – Early 1950s

Offices: 8812 6th Ave., Inglewood, CA (pressing plant); 6120 S. Van Ness Ave., Los Angeles (record division); 8403 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles (early 1950s)

Pressing: Own plant at above location

Record Products: Tech-Art

Launched in 1945 by W. I. Barnard and Bob Hunter, initially as a milling and pressing plant only. A 1946 advertisement, aimed at independent record producers, claimed a daily capacity of 25,000 shellac discs. Distribution services were available through Ben Pollack's Jewel Records. There was no connection to Alfred Mannon's earlier Tec-Art Studios (Hollywood), a custom recording operation.

Tech-Art's record division was launched in April 1946 with the slogan, "A musical treat created by master artists." Accordionist and band leader Al Gayle served as musical director, and his orchestra was featured on the earliest Tech-Art recordings. Released in June, they were rated by a *Billboard* reviewer as "pleasant platterings," with the potential for jukebox profits. The company's Theremin solo recordings by Bud Averill, with organ accompaniment, garnered mixed reviews, some of them sharply critical. The last known releases on the Tech-Art label were listed in early 1949. The pressing plant continued to operate into the early 1950s.

TECHNICHORD RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1937 – c. 1972

Offices: 39 Worthington Ave., Brookline, MA (1937–c. 1942); 83-A Washington St., Brookline, MA (from later 1940s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Technichord; private and custom recording services

Founded in 1937 as a custom-recording service by H. Vose Greenough, Jr., who held an engineering degree from Harvard University and later became a member of the Acoustical Society of America and Audio Engineering Society. Greenough launched the Technichord label the following year, with a stated goal of specializing in classical fare that could not be found on the major labels.

Technichord is noted for having produced the first commercial releases by organist E. Power Biggs. The company's records received favorable reviews in some national publications, including *Time* magazine, which in November 1939 praised the five-disc album, "Early Cantatas and Songs" by soprano Isabel French and tenor Hugues Cuenod. Commercial production was temporarily suspended in the early 1940s, after Greenough enlisted in the Navy. During World War II, he was engaged in mine-warfare research at the David Taylor Model Basin in Maryland.

Greenough resumed commercial record production on a modest scale following his discharge. A *Boston Globe* reviewer found the recordings "tonally faithful" but the surfaces "a bit rough." Technichord's album sets included high-quality booklets, under the Technichord Records Press imprint, that included historical notes and complete musical scores. However, like other small independent classical producers of the period, Technichord was hampered by limited distribution and a small market for such esoteric material.

The Technichord label marked its tenth anniversary in July 1948 with a special album devoted to the works of William Byrd. New Technichord albums were still being released as late as 1949, and garnering consistently favorable reviews, but the label appears to have been discontinued by the early 1950s. Technichord Records continued to operate as a custom-recording laboratory into the early 1970s.

Greenough died in March 1977. His papers, including the files relating to Technichord records, are housed at the Library of Congress.

TEL-A-VIX RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – 1960s

Offices: 216 Tremont St., Boston

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Dilila; transcriptions, private and custom recordings

Owned and operated by WORL radio engineer and former band leader Michael Pesanelli (a.k.a. Pesanelly). *Broadcasting* magazine reported in July 1946 that Wyman Holmes had joined the company to direct a new transcribed radio series, which it did not identify.

Tel-a-Vix was primarily a custom-recording studio, but it briefly produced the Dilia label, which made its first and only known appearance in *Billboard's* advance list for February 1950. Among Tel-a-Vix's private clients was Harvard's Woodberry Poetry Room, for which the company recorded Dylan Thomas in 1950 and David Ferry in 1956. The Tel-a-Vix studio, which was later used primarily for television work, was still operating as late as 1968. Pesanelli died March 4, 1977.

TELE-RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices: Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco; 188 W. Randolph, Chicago

Record Products: Tele-Record

A short-lived venture launched in early 1948 by night-club entertainer George Givot. Givot was billed as "The Greek Ambassador of Good Will," although he was Russian by birth (according to a 1935 biographical blurb, Givot acquired his "indescribable" accent as a teenager, while working in a Greek-owned shop in Omaha, Nebraska). He was featured on the few known Tele-Record releases.

The *Minneapolis Star* reported in May 1948 that Givot had already recorded twenty-six sides for Tele-Records, with three "headed for volume release." The initial offering (which *Cash Box* termed "an oldie that has plenty of shmaltz in it") appeared in the same month. Tele-Records opened a Chicago office in June, at which time Givot declared that his company was "well on its way into the diskery biz." However, it does not appear to have survived beyond 1948.

TEMPO RECORD COMPANY OF AMERICA (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1956

Offices: 8534 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA (1946–late 1949); 8540 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood (from late 1949); branches at 728 10th Ave., New York (from 9/1948); 1310 Callowhill St., Philadelphia (Clarion pressing plant); 11 Avondale Rd., Avondale Estates, GA

Pressing: Clarion Record Manufacturing, other independent plants

Original-Master Source(s): Universal Recorders (Hollywood), other independent studios

Record Products (78): Tempo, Theme; custom recordings and transcriptions

Founded in 1946 by Irving B. Fogel, who had worked with the Armed Forces Radio Service during World War II. The company was unrelated to the British Tempo label, which was founded in the same year by Colin Pomroy and George Davies. Fogel filed a trademark application on January 30, 1946, for use of the Tempo brand on "mechanically grooved phonograph records." In the late 1940s, Fogel hired musicologist Leo Sarkisian, who he trained as his recording engineer.

Fogel created a mystique around Tempo records, advertising that they were "custom-made" using a secret electronic process. In July 1947, heat-sealed cellophane bags were substituted for traditional paper sleeves to assure the consumer that "the record he buys comes to him in the same perfect condition as when it received its final rigorous inspection at our pressing plant." In January 1948, Fogel advertised that having anticipated the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, his company had stockpiled masters "produced unhurriedly [and] with painstaking care."

Fogel launched a transcription-library service during the summer of 1948, packaging 78-rpm vinyl pressings from imported masters for use as background music. An LP mood-music library soon followed. The company announced a plan to color-code the edge of each disc by "mood." Fogel mailed 250 letters to promote the library service, enclosing a dollar bill in each as the recipients' first "dividend."

Fogel announced in January 1949 that the previous year had been the company's most successful to date, giving much of the credit to Ben Light and other Tempo artists, as well as the company's expanded foreign presence. A month earlier, he had licensed English Decca to press Tempo discs for distribution ranging from the British Isles to parts of Scandinavia, Africa, and Asia. By early 1949, Tempo records were also being distributed by Cetra in Italy and Turicaphon in Switzerland and Austria. Later that year, Fogel acquired world distribution rights (excepting Hawaii) for the Honolulu-based 49th State Record Company (*q.v.*). The records, which a *Billboard* reporter called "pineapple platters," were issued with standard Tempo labels crediting the Honolulu source.

In early 1949, Tempo became the first company to shift its entire line to plastic pressings, employing a vinylite compound that was guaranteed to withstand a thousand playings. At the same time, Fogel announced the Tempo was about to enter the classical market, having acquired U.S. rights to the catalog of an undisclosed foreign company, which eventually was revealed to be Cetra in Italy. Tempo made a splashy entry into the classical market in May 1949 with a special five-LP set, retailing for what was then the astounding sum of \$22.50 and packaged in a padded faux alligator-leather album. The discs could also be purchased individually, for \$4.99 each. In June, Tempo made the same material available in multi-disc 45-rpm sets, which were also packaged in special albums. With its introduction of 45s, Tempo became the first record company to offer the same recordings in all three speeds, beating Capitol by three months.

Tempo paid investors a 5% quarterly dividend in June 1948, at a time when many other record companies were reporting weak sales. Several months later the company opened a New York office. In the summer of 1949, Fogel reported that Tempo's sales had increased by 53% during the first five months of the year (a figure that *Billboard* originally reported in error as 3%). However, its sales declined in 1950.

The Theme label, retailing for 25¢ less than standard Tempo 78s, was added in late 1949 and used a mixture of domestic and foreign masters. Fogel's trademark registration, belatedly filed on October 23, 1950, claimed use of the name on records beginning November 21, 1949. By then, Fogel was beginning to investigate the commercial potential of pre-recorded magnetic tape. In 1953 he began production of tapes for background-music services, in affiliation with the Ampex Corporation. The company shipped its first Tempotape release in April of that year. A 14" reel containing eight hours of uninterrupted music, it retailed for \$65.

Fogel discontinued commercial production of the Tempo label in 1956 to focus on development of Tempo International, an outgrowth of his original company that produced custom and special-use recordings. He announced on February 4 that he was selling approximately 1,000 of his masters to various labels, including Dot and Imperial. He retained only the tape rights, for use by his newly launched Musitape venture.

In mid-1956 it was announced that Al Ellsworth planned to reactivate Tempo as a commercial label, but little more was heard of the idea.

TEMPO-TONE RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949

Offices: 301 N. Sacramento, Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Commissioned from Universal Recording (Chicago)

Record Products: Tempo-Tone

A very short-lived rhythm-and-blues label launched in early 1949 by Irving (Irv) Taman, the proprietor of Irv's Boulevard Lounge in Sacramento. Taman's son Marv recalled, "The enterprise was very much a mom-and-pop operation. The business was also helped out in part by my mother who took care of paperwork." The company signed a recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians in July or August 1949, allowing it to employ union musicians.

Researchers Robert Pruter and Robert L. Campbell report that Taman's personal notebook makes it appear as if he made Tempo-Tone recordings for five consecutive days from December 21 through December 25, 1948. However, they note that the surviving AFM Recording Report sheets show that the four issued Tempo-Tone masters were recorded on May 4, 1949. Other supporting evidence for a May date cited by Pruter and Campbell include a May 26 master-processing receipt from Universal Recording.

The two confirmed Tempo-Tone releases are by Sunnyland Slim (a fixture at Taman's lounge during 1948–1949), whose uncredited backup group included Muddy Waters and Little Walter. Four additional titles (including two by the obscure blues singer Sam Moton, as "Lonesome Sam"), were assigned catalog numbers but probably were not released. The rest of Taman's masters, including selections by Jimmy Rogers and the Bruce Heller Trio, apparently were not processed for release.

Taman closed Tempo-Tone in 1950. The company's brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 label directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) can be disregarded. After his lounge was burned in the 1968 Chicago riots, Taman and his family moved to Los Angeles, where they operated the Korned Beef Kastle. No more was heard of Tempo-Tone until a short-lived 1976 revival, which produced only a single 45-rpm release. Taman died on February 23, 1992

TENNESSEE PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889

Offices: Noel Block (Room #5, Third Floor), Nashville, TN (1889); Baxter Court, Nashville (from 1890); Memphis and Chattanooga, TN (branch offices, from 4/1890),

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Tennessee. Officers included former Edison employee Fred G. Browning (president), Jack B. Balleras (vice-president), and James H. Barham (secretary-treasurer). The company went through a succession of general managers, including W. T. Ross (1889–January 1890), J. Harry Ross (January–April 1890), and Balleras (from April 1890).

In late June 1889, Tennessee Phonograph advertised that it was ready to accept orders for phonographs and graphophones. W. T. Ross was on hand from 4 to 6 p.m. daily to demonstrate the machines for dictation purposes. For a time, the company offered free instruction to typists at its office.

W. T. Ross transmitted a phonograph concert by telephone to the offices of *The American* on July 25, 1889. The event drew so much attention from the local press that Ross repeated it the following night on a grander scale, inviting every citizen of Nashville to "put his telephone to his ear at the appointed time and hear a concert that has not had a parallel in Nashville." He then departed on a statewide tour to promote the competing Columbia graphophone.

The Southern Standard (McMinnville, Tennessee) reported in September 1889 that the Tennessee Phonograph Company would supply a phonograph "to be used" during a concert by the Warren House Cornet Band. In February 1890, *The Tennessean* reported that Ross had issued a list of more than one-hundred musical selections "which he plays on the machine for the edification of visitors." The cylinders were also available for purchase by the general public, but it was not stated whether they were the company's own original recordings. Three months later, it was reported that Jack Balleras had on exhibition a cylinder of "'Home, Sweet Home,' as sung by Adelina Patti in the Grand Opera House at Mexico," although how he came by it was not disclosed. *The Tennessean* reported that Balleras sent the recording to Thomas Edison, who made a copy for himself. No evidence has been found that copies of the cylinder were sold to the general public, or that it was an authentic Patti recording.

The Tennessee Phonograph Company was reorganized in April 1890, and a branch office was opened in Memphis under the direction of president Browning. Balleras remained at the Nashville headquarters, where he served as general manager. He resigned from the company on September 22, 1890, for unspecified personal reasons. In the same month, Browning traveled to Vicksburg, where he attempted unsuccessfully to organize a Mississippi phonograph company. Tennessee Phonograph appears to have failed during the summer of 1891. It last appeared in *The Phonogram's* list of North American Phonograph licensees in May of that year.

TENNESSEE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1950–1952

Offices: 417 Ash St., Nashville, TN (1950–mid-1951); 824 5th Ave. S, Nashville (mid-1951–1952)

Record Products: Tennessee, Dixie Jamboree, Jamboree [2]

Launched in January 1950 by Reynold Bubis, Alan Bubis, and Bill Beasley, the owners of Nashville-based Coastline Distributors and a publishing affiliate, Babb Music. Reynold Bubis served as general manager, Beasley as recording director, and Ted Jarrett as artists-and-repertoire manager. Adelaide Hazelwood (*a.k.a.* Del Wood), an employee of the Tennessee Public Health Department by day, served as the house pianist.

Tennessee Records specialized in country-and-western material, featuring Babb Music titles and recruiting its artists from area radio stations. The first release on the Tennessee label (Rick Riddle's "Second-Hand Heart," superstitiously numbered 711) was reviewed favorably by *Billboard* in late January 1950. The Jamboree label was added several months later but was soon renamed Dixie Jamboree, possibly to avoid conflict with the recently reactivated Jamboree label of New York (*see* Jamboree Records, Inc.). In February 1950, Charles Darwyn signed a licensing agreement to issue Tennessee recordings in Canada under his Monogram label.

In January 1952, the Fairway Music Corporation (Los Angeles) sued Tennessee Records over its unauthorized use of the song "Mine, All Mine," which Wood had recorded for the company. The record reportedly sold 750,000 copies, although "Down Yonder" on the reverse appears to have been the hit side. An action was also brought on behalf of the musicians involved, who had not been paid for their work. When no satisfactory resolution was forthcoming, the American Federation of Musicians revoked Tennessee Records' recording license in March 1952. Wood sued to have her contract voided in May 1952, claiming that her continued association with the company would place her in the AFM's "bad graces" and cause irreparable harm to her career. She eventually recovered \$5,000 in back royalties.

Shortly after the AFM revoked Tennessee Records' license, Beasley and Alan Bubis regrouped as Republic Records, a Nashville operation unrelated to the earlier New York-based label of the same name. Beasley bought out Bubis' interest in 1953 and continued production of Republic records into the mid-1950s.

TEXAS PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889

Offices: Tremont and Mechanic Sts., Galveston, TX (1889–1890); Fox Building, Galveston (1891); 2209 Post-Office St., Galveston (from late 1891)

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Texas. A Texas Phonograph Company filed a charter in Cullison, Kansas, on August 20, 1889, but none of the incorporators were persons known to have been involved with the Galveston company, and the connection, if any, is unknown.

The Galveston office of the Texas Phonograph Company opened in the summer of 1889, under the management of H. Lee Sellers, Hugh R. Conyngton, and Thomas Conyngton. On October 10, 1889, the *Galveston Daily News* reported that the company had been exhibiting phonographs and graphophones "for some time past, pending the organization of a state company to operate the franchise in this state." The same article reported, "The organization of the company, by the election of officers, etc., has not yet been perfected, nor has the selection of management yet been settled upon." By year's end, officers included Sellers (president), J. H. Atchison (vice-president), Hugh Conyngton (secretary-treasurer), and Thomas Conyngton (general manager).

In late 1889, Texas Phonograph began advertising that it was prepared to furnish subscribers with new model Edison phonographs beginning about December 15, which would replace all earlier models. The company initially focused on business rather than entertainment use. Thomas Conyngton blamed "musical exhibition" for undermining business placements and ordered that the two operations be strictly segregated. In 1890 he reported, "Our arrangement at present in Dallas, is that in our regular office there are no musical cylinders on exhibition under any circumstances; but we inform them that next

door there is a young man ready to exhibit the machine for amusement purposes to all who come and pay him a fee for hearing it."

The musical exhibit paid very well, according to Conyngton. During January 1890, the company attracted attention by transmitting phonograph concerts via telephone, a gimmick originated by the Tennessee Phonograph Company five months earlier. The artists whose recordings were mentioned, including Adelina Patti, were international celebrities, ruling out the likelihood that the recordings were Texas Phonograph's own.

By early 1891, Sellers and the Conyngtons were devoting much of their time to the formation of a new phonograph company in Louisiana. The *Galveston Daily News* reported in April that Sellers was back in Texas after having spent several months in New Orleans launching the Louisiana Phonograph Company. *The Phonogram* for November–December 1891 reported that Texas Phonograph had "not met with as great success as some of the other companies," which it ascribed to Thomas Conyngton's absence (presumably in connection with the Louisiana start-up), its distance from suppliers, and the vast territory its sales representatives had to cover. The same article expressed some optimism, reporting that "a vigorous campaign has been inaugurated." Texas Phonograph boasted that it had "a most successful phonograph exhibit" at the 1891 Dallas Fair, and the company moved into larger quarters later that year.

Thus far, however, no catalog or other evidence has been found to suggest that Texas Phonograph produced original recordings for sale to the general public. Exhibitions of musical recordings were reported as early as January 1890, but details were rarely given concerning the recordings that were played. In April 1892 Thomas Conyngton reported that he was obtaining cylinders from several unspecified eastern companies. One was almost certainly the Columbia Phonograph Company, based upon Texas Phonograph's testimonial in an 1891 Columbia advertisement. The company's last known advertisements appeared in August 1893.

TEXSTAR RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1951

Offices: 512 Main St., Fort Worth, TX

Pressing: Research Craft

Record Products: Texstar

Founded by J. L. (Jack) Haight in Fort Worth, Texas, during the summer of 1948. *Billboard's* July 1948 announcement of Texstar's launch stated that it was a Dallas company. National distribution was handled by Bullet records.

Launched in the midst of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban, Texstar Records relied on local non-union musicians for its early releases. Haight nevertheless issued a statement in support of the striking AFM musicians, promising royalties and national exposure to any who recorded for Texstar once the ban was lifted.

An early report stated that Texstar records were "cut only by Texas artists." Its catalog was a mixture of country-and-western, jazz, and pop material. The initial Texstar releases, announced in late July 1948, were credited to "Jack Haight's Kadoodlers" and "The Texstar Playboys," groups that *Billboard* reported were "almost identical" with the Calument Indians, a popular radio group sponsored by General Mills. *Billboard's* reviews of Texstar's early country-music releases were mixed. The Texstar Playboy's "One Life, One Love" was praised as an "auspicious debut for a new Texas label," while some other sides were dismissed as "so-so" or "drawn-out and repetitious."

Although Texstar was conceived primarily as a country-and-western label, its best-selling artist reportedly was novelty jazz pianist Knocky Parker, whose trio recorded updated versions of some vintage ragtime and pop tunes, along with new titles that included "Supersonic Sonia." A November 1949 Texstar advertisement asked jukebox operators, "Are you ignorant? Or do you know that Knocky, Smoky and Joe equals plenty easy dough?" By then, Texstar had already lost Parker, who left Texas several months earlier to head the English department at Kentucky Wesleyan College.

Haight claimed to have pressing facilities capable of producing 61,000 discs per week, apparently referring to the Research Craft plant, which pressed for his company. Texstar records were still being sold in the summer of 1951. The company's brief reappearance in

Billboard's March 1952 label directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Texstar name was later used for an unrelated label based in Brownfield, Texas.

THEME RECORDS — See Tempo Record Company of America

THREE MINUTE RECORD, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices: 66 St. Nicholas Place (Room 37A), New York

Record Products: 3 Minutes

A short-lived rhythm-and-blues label owned and operated by Robert "Catfish" Pope. The 3 Minutes label was first advertised in January 1948. Targeted mainly to disc jockeys and jukebox operators, its artist roster included Pope, Frankie Hollins, and Larry Johnson. Modern Records took over New York-area distribution in May 1948, at which time the company had produced only five releases. No mention of the company has been found after 1948.

THRILLWOOD RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1954

Offices: North Bergen, NJ and Bloomindale, NJ (PO box numbers only; no street addresses given)

Record Products: Thrillwood

Launched in 1949 by Serine Fuglestad Smith (sometimes misspelled "Serene" in *Billboard* and other publications), primarily as an outlet for her own compositions. Also an amateur inventor, Smith was granted a patent on her mop-shaker in 1959.

Thrillwood's initial releases, listed in June and July 1950, were by obscure singers accompanied by an organ-and-rhythm combo sometimes billed as the Thrillwood Orchestra. Peggy Trilling's rendition of "My Sugar Lump"/"In Dreams We Never Part" was praised by *Cash Box* as "sincere" and "tempting," but lambasted by *Billboard* as "dull warbling of some cloying tunes." The Thrillwood Orchestra's own version of "My Sugar Lump," released several month later, was dismissed by *Billboard* as "a cliché-ridden hunk of nothing."

Ray Perkins, John Perkins, Rudi Maugeri, and Pat Barrett (*a.k.a.* The Crew-Cuts) made their first recording for Thrillwood in 1952 (Smith's "Chip, Chip, Sing a Song, Little Sparrow," which she had copyrighted the previous year) but the record was not promoted in any way. Some Thrillwood records were still being distributed in early 1954, although the company probably was inactive by then.

TIME ABROAD, LTD.

Originally a producer of foreign-language radio programs and transcriptions, primarily for export. Time Abroad was incorporated in New York February 1937 by Kenneth E. Ryan, John D. Garrison, and H. C. Blackiston, Jr., with E. V. Meeker serving as treasurer and general manager. The company did not produce recordings for the consumer market, but 1938 it merged with E. V. Brinckerhoff & Company (*q.v.*), the producers of Nocturne records.

TIME RECORDS— See Allender Record Distributors

TIMELY RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1935 – 1940

Offices: 235 5th Ave., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Reeves Sound Studio

Record Products: Timely

Founded in 1935 as a rather shadowy company for which only sparse documentation exists, the Timely Recording Company saw its mission as disseminating what it termed "songs of revolutionary struggle." Several of the company's recordings were later used as evidence in investigations conducted by the House Un-American Affairs Committee. Timely's early labels were unique in their use of political cartoons that were tailored to

each issue. The records, which apparently were pressed in very small quantities, were sold only through specialty shops (largely in the Greenwich Village area, according to one news report), or by mail order.

Among the early offerings were pro-Communist songs by Hanns Eisler and Bertolt Brecht, sung by Mordecai Bauman and a "workers' chorus" calling itself The New Singers. Timely also planned to release an album of Black protest songs collected by Lawrence Gellert. Gellert's methods and lack of supporting documentation raised suspicions among some member of the academic community. The album was aborted shortly before it was to have been released, over questions concerning the material's authenticity.

Timely released a second group of pro-Communist songs in early 1937, again featuring Bauman, after which operations appear to have stalled. In May of that year, the company was purchased by Leo Waldman, a New York insurance-company executive who set about shifting the label's primary focus to esoteric classical material that had been overlooked by the major labels. Waldman adopted a new, subdued label design for the classical issues. He hired William Kozlenko (music critic and editor of *One-Act Play Magazine*) as Timely's musical advisor and program annotator. Max Goberman, assistant concertmaster of the Andre Kostelanetz Orchestra, was also associated with the company on a part-time basis.

Timely's first classical release, in October 1937, comprised eight brief symphonies by the obscure eighteenth-century English composer William Boyce, as transcribed by Constant Lambert and performed by the New York Simfonietta under Goberman's direction. Later offerings included seventeenth-century works for the lute by John Dowland, performed by Suzanne Bloch; Muzio Clementi's "B Flat Major Sonata," by pianists Grace Castagnetta and Milton Kaye; and an album of eighteenth-century symphonies by Pietro Locatelli, Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, and Karl Stamitz, performed by the New York Simfonietta. Reviewers generally lauded the records for their high musical interest and technical quality.

In August 1938, Timely Recordings was named by Walter S. Steele, of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, as one of 640 organizations he claimed were Communist, or were "cooperating in various ways with the Communist movement." Undeterred, in 1940 Waldman returned to politically oriented material for Timely's final release, Earl Robinson's "Songs for Americans," performed by Robinson with the American People's Chorus.

Waldman apparently was little more successful than his predecessors in marketing and distributing esoteric classical material. In 1940 he sold the company to General Records' Hazard Reeves, whose studio had recorded Timely's masters. Reeves soon discontinued production of the Timely label and sold off the remaining inventory, after which he reissued some of the recordings on his General label. The Timely masters were acquired by Commodore Records in July 1946, as part of their purchase of Reeves' commercial recording operation.

The Timely name was also used for an unrelated launched by Hy Siegel in 1953 and credited to the S.K.M. Corporation.

TIN PAN ALLEY RECORDS COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1951

Offices: 1101 Chestnut St., Philadelphia

Record Products: Tin Pan Alley

Owned and operated by Frank Capano as an adjunct to his publishing firm, Tin Pan Alley Music. Capano also owned the Hillbilly Music Company (Philadelphia), which specialized in country-and-western material. Capano received his American Federation of Musicians' recording license in late June 1946.

Tin Pan Alley's initial releases comprised what *Billboard* described as Capano's "mother and father poems...with musical backgrounds added." Subsequent releases were devoted to compositions from the Tin Pan Alley Music and Hillbilly Music catalogs, recorded by obscure artists. The company was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1951 label directory, although the recording operation probably was inactive by then. Its brief reappearance in the March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

TITAN PRODUCTION COMPANY — See Warner, Jesse J.

TOKEN RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1952

Offices: 59 Bruen St., Newark, NJ

Record Products: Token

A pop and country-and-western label owned by Sidney Kleiner, whose primary business was a farm in California. Token Records' advertising claimed the company was launched in 1949, although it was not mentioned by *Billboard* until July 1950.

Token's small artist roster included country singer Tex Carson (featured on many of the early releases) and Tommy Shelton. Token took over Delvar's masters in early 1951 and launched a short-lived pop series featuring Dixieland-style numbers by Ed Farley's Band and polkas and novelties by Rudy Yancar. Kleiner was still operating Token Records at the time of his marriage in August 1951, but the company's last confirmed release appeared in January 1952. Token was last listed by *Billboard* in its March 1952 directory.

TOM TOM RECORDS — See Archuleta Production Enterprise

TONE-E RECORDS — See North-American Recording Company

TOP RECORD COMPANY / TOP RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – c. 1948

Offices: 74 Riverside Dr., New York (1944–3/1945); 1674 Broadway, New York (from 3/1945)

Record Products: Top

Launched in late 1944 by Dick Kuhn, a former Decca recording artist. Kuhn, who was featured on many Top releases, also served as the company's recording manager and musical director. Jerome H. (Jerry) Kanner was employed as Top's general promotion manager before leaving to launch the Chief Record Corporation in 1946. Distribution was handled by Modern Music Sales (New York).

Top records (the mascot of which was "Nick the Nickel-Nabber") were marketed mainly to jukebox operators. The label offered a mixture of pop, jazz, rhythm-and-blues, and country-style material by generally undistinguished artists. Its initial releases were reviewed unfavorably in March 1945 by *Billboard*, which noted, "There isn't much to commend in the mickey-mouse music dished out by Dick Kuhn's band to introduce this label."

Top's last known releases appeared in early 1948, although the company continued to market existing material into the following autumn. The operation appears to have been inactive by early 1949, when the Jubilee Records Company purchased several of Top recordings by the Master Keys, a Harlem vocal group.

TOP TUNE RECORDINGS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 790 Broadway, Gary, IN

Record Products: Top Tune [1] (Top Tune Record)

Incorporated on June 21, 1946, by Carl F. Lomax, Jay F. Sampson, and L. Stanley Sampson. Aside from a 1946 notice that the records were being sold by the Franklyn Music Company in Belvidere, Illinois, no mention of them has been found in area newspapers or the trade press. The few known releases are pop titles by what apparently were local performers.

TOP TUNES COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 1 Atlantic Ave., Ocean City, NJ

Record Products: Top Tune [2]

A music publisher of unknown ownership, the Top Tunes Company began copyrighting songs in late 1948. The company signed a recording contract with the American Federation of Musicians in July or August 1949, although its Top Tune (singular) label does not appear

to have been launched until 1950. Confirmed releases are clustered around the summer and autumn of that year.

Pop titles published by Top Tunes were featured, performed by the Tony De Simone Trio, Lee Morgan, Tom Perkins, and other regional artists. Morgan's "My Heart's Aflame" received a brief mention in August 1950 in *Billboard*, which reported that the record was being plugged in Philadelphia movie theaters and a local drugstore. The final confirmed Top Tune release appeared in January 1951. The publishing business was still operating as late as 1953.

TOPS MUSIC ENTERPRISES / TOPS RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1960s

Offices: 4418 S. Hoover St., Los Angeles (1948–1949); 4705 S. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles (1949–mid 1950s); 5810 S. Normandie Ave., Los Angeles (from mid-1950s)

Record Products (78s): Tops

Founded in late 1948 by Carl Doshay (president) and Sam Dickerman (vice-president), in a bid to undercut Varsity in the budget-label market. Advertised as "The lowest price record in America," Tops discs initially wholesaled for 29¢. Dealers had the option of retailing them for 44¢ or 39¢, depending upon how much profit they desired. Tops records were shipped directly to dealers from the manufacturer, eliminating distributors' markups.

The initial Tops releases were announced in November 1948, with sales initially limited to the West Coast. By the end of the year, the records were being carried by Rexall and several other drugstore chains, and the price eventually climbed to 49¢. Like Varsity, early Tops releases featured cover versions of current hit tunes, but unlike Varsity, they carried no artist credits.

Tops rattled the industry October 1950, when it announced it was preparing to introduce a 98¢ LP. In August 1951, the company began producing fine-groove 78s with two selections per side, still featuring no-name covers of current hits. Retailing for 89¢, they initially were sold by mail order but soon became drug- and discount-store staples as well. Due to the records' long playing time and dual tracks, the company made no effort to market them to the jukebox trade.

In 1958 Dickerman and Doshay merged Tops with Precision Radiation Instruments, Inc., a bankrupt manufacturer of Geiger counters, solely for tax purposes. Other than substantially reducing Tops' tax bill for the year, the merger had no effect on the record company's operations. In February 1960, a group of Diners' Club executives purchased Doshay's 80% interest in Precision Radiation Instruments. Doshay remained in charge of the record operation and added several new labels to the Tops LP line, including Goldentone, Kimberly, and Rondo (the latter acquired from Eli Oberstein's estate). Larry Finley replaced Doshay in late 1962.

TOWER RECORDS — See Bradley, Richard and Associates

TOWN & COUNTRY RECORD COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1949

Offices: 4068 Easton Ave., St. Louis (main office, to 1/1949); 730 Lucas Ave., St. Louis (from 1/1949); 6110 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA (branch)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios (reported but not confirmed)

Pressing: Own plants (reported but not confirmed)

Record Products: Town & Country

A general-line label launched in early 1947, with offices in St. Louis and Hollywood (the latter managed by Bob Reichenbach, formerly of the Disco Record Company). Town & Country's first advertisement, in March 1947, claimed the company had studios and pressings plants in both cities and was bringing its records to market after "a year of intensive preparation."

Billboard mentioned that country singer "Skeets" Yaney had already recorded for Town & Country in May 1947, the same month in which the company was first listed in that publication's manufacturer directory. Distribution at first was handled by Reichenbach's Record Distributing Company, a local operation covering the St. Louis and Kansas City areas. By 1948, Town & Country has secured additional small distributors in Los Angeles,

Chicago, San Antonio, and other scattered locations, but national advertising and trade-press coverage would remain virtually nonexistent until the end.

Town & Country's artist roster was a mixture of regional and nationally known talent, including Yaney, Rusty Marion, and Billy Starr (country); the Crew Chiefs, Letty Barbour, Mildred McMurray, and the Sportsmen (pop); and Eddie Oliver's Orchestra and the Stuff Smith Trio (jazz). A race-record series was launched shortly before operations ended in early 1949. Its initial release, by St. Louis singer Tommy Dean, garnered a favorable *Cash Box* review in mid-February.

Town & Country's label was redesigned at some point, replacing the cluttered type-on-musical staff logo with a bolder, more legible design. The company moved its St. Louis office in early 1949 and was last listed in *Billboard's* February directory, at its new address. The Town & Country Record Company name resurfaced in 1955, in Oakland, California, but the connection with this operation, if any, is unknown. There is no connection to Town and Country Records, Inc. (no ampersand), a Detroit company that was launched in 1955.

TRANS-RADIO PRODUCTIONS / STELLAR RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – Early 1950s

Offices: 178–179 Tremont St. Boston (1940s); 683 Boylston St., Boston (1950s); 2 Park Sq., Boston (Stellar Records)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: RCA Custom Products, possibly other plants

Record Products: Stellar; private issues on Trans-Radio label; custom labels, radio transcriptions

Owned and operated by C. W. French, Trans Radio Productions was primarily a custom-recording and program-production service. The company was unrelated to Transradio New Features (a major New York-based transcription producer) or Trans-Radio Press (a news service), both of which operated during the same period.

Trans Radio produced "The Bowmans," "Cathedral Hour," and other radio programs in the later 1940s. Its custom-label clients included the Christian Science Publishing Society and Harvard University Band. The company's only confirmed commercial output was the subsidiary Stellar label. Launched as a pop line in the autumn of 1947, it made its last known release in March 1949. The label's brief reappearances in *Billboard's* July 1950, July 1951, and March 1952 directories (which included many defunct or inactive companies) probably can be disregarded.

TRELL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices and Master Source(s): 2829 Bostic, Houston (to late 1950)

Original-Master Source(s): Audio Company of America

Record Products: Trell

A pop and country-and-western label of unknown ownership, launched in late 1950. Teaser announcements appeared in November, which was largely the extent of Trell's marketing efforts. efforts.

Trell's first two releases were listed December but attracted little national attention. The label bore the slogan, "A Hit Every Time," which apparently was not the case. What was possibly its last release, in February 1951 ("Boostin' Houston," by Betty Jo and her Saddle Tramps), was dismissed by *Billboard* as an "amateurish chamber-of-commerce ditty [of] strictly localized appeal, if that." The company last appeared in *Billboard's* July 1951 directory.

TRIANON RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – c. 1952

Offices: 6060 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Trianon

Owned and operated by singer and songwriter Lee Penny. There was no connection to a c. 1946 Trianon label, the producer of which is not known.

Billboard briefly mentioned Trianon Record's launch in August 1950. Penny was under contract to London Records at the time, so initially was unable to record for Trianon. The

label attracted little attention until March 1951, when it signed a two-year contract with the venerable Hoosier Hot Shots, who remade some of their old titles. Trianon last appeared in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory, a list that included many inactive or defunct companies.

TRI-COLOR RECORDING COMPANY — See Garten, Mauricio (Maurice)

TRIDENT RECORDS CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: c. Late 1940s – 1950s

Offices: 159 2nd Ave., New York (1949); 270 E. 10th St., New York (1950–1960s)

Record Products: Trident

An ethic label of unknown ownership, probably launched in the late 1940s. Although labels touted the records as "The Finest in Foreign Dance Music," many releases were vocals. The company advertised primarily in foreign-language newspapers and received virtually no coverage from the mainstream trade press. It introduced LPs and 45s in the early 1950s. The name was later used for an unrelated California label.

TRILON RECORD MANUFACTURING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1948

Offices: 3123 San Pablo Ave., Oakland, CA; 1208 S. Spalding, Chicago; Los Angeles (distribution)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Own plant (Oakland, CA)

Record Products: Trilon; pressing for Laurent and probably other independent labels; private recordings, transcriptions

Founded in January 1946 by Rene T. LaMarre, a vaudevillian and co-owner of the Downtown Theatre in Oakland, California, which was well-known in the early 1940s for LaMarre's amateur-talent contests. LaMarre and George Drummod purchased the Bal Theatre in Oakland in mid-1946. La Marre also served as a western distributor for Bel-Tone, Bullet, Savoy, and other small independent labels through his Trilon Record Distributing Company, which operated at the same address as his record business.

Trilon's officers initially included Charlie Mish (president, replaced almost immediately by Harry Leader), Drummond (vice-president), and LaMarre (secretary and treasurer). Mish's role in Trilon remains unclear. In late May 1946, a notice was placed in *Billboard* stating that Mish had been out of the company for six months, and it is known for certain that Harry Leader had replaced him as president by March of that year. However, in May 1946 Mish provided *Billboard* with a detailed but highly questionable report concerning Trilon's pressing plant. Among other things, Mish the plant would soon be capable of producing 20 million discs per month (which *Billboard's* reporter observed was far beyond the capacity of even the largest companies) and that stamper-production time, from the start of plating to completion of stamper, would take no more than forty-five minutes. This appears to have been Mish's last attempt to represent himself as a Trilon executive, after which nothing more was heard from him concerning the company.

Trilon's most popular act reportedly was the Vagabonds, an Italian-American novelty quartet, whose "I Wonder, I Wonder, I Wonder" was a minor hit. A country-and-western series, launched in mid-1946, was followed by a race series in 1947. The latter featured the Paramount Gospel Singers, Rising Star Gospel Singers, pianist Viviane Greene, and some Midwestern talent managed by Indianapolis booking agent Denver Ferguson. In addition to its commercial output, Trilon offered custom recording services.

For a time, Big Town Recording's Robert Geddins was associated with Trilon, which took some of his overflow pressing work and employed him as a traveling salesman and part-time talent scout. When Geddins' masters were seized by his creditors in 1948, they were sold to Trilon. At about the same time, LaMarre, in partnership with Herb and Sam Lutz, launched a music-publishing business that was granted exclusive rights to all future original songs recorded by Trilon. By late in the year, however, Trilon was in financial trouble, and LaMarre and Leader sold the company to Mercury Records, reportedly for \$250,000.

TRI-STATE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948

Offices: 1903 S. Harwood, Dallas, TX

Record Products: Tri-State

A short-lived country-and-western label of unknown ownership. The initial releases, by Dick Dyson and his Musical Texans, appeared in the August 1948 advance lists and were advertised nationally the following month. They included "Cocaine Blues" and "Hell's Fire," both of which a *Billboard* reviewer recommended for jukebox play but cautioned against broadcasting. The last confirmed Tri-State release appeared in November 1948, and Dyson moved to Bullet Records a month later.

TRIUMPH RECORD COMPANY — See Damon Recording Studios

TRIUMPH RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1952

Offices: 443 Bergen Ave., Jersey City, NJ (1950–1952); 25 Spruce St., Jersey City (1952)

Record Products: Triumph [4]

A jazz label launched in the summer of 1950 by Gus Statiras, doing business as Gus Grant. He set up Triumph Music at the same time to handle his artists' unpublished original compositions. He had previously worked as an artists-and-repertoire manager with Abbey Records and other small independent labels.

The earliest confirmed Triumph session, by saxophonist Al Cohn, was held on July 29, 1950, two months before the label's launch was announced in the trade papers. Statiras sold his interest in Triumph in early 1952, and later that year he launched the better-known Progressive label. He eventually sold Progressive to Prestige Records, bought it back in the late 1970s (from Fantasy Records, Prestige's new owners), then resold it, to George Buck's Jazzology group in the 1980. Statiras died on April 2, 2004, at the age of eighty-one.

The Triumph name was subsequently used by Peacock Records for an unrelated jazz label it launched in 1953.

TROPE MUSIC PUBLISHING AND RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: 19 Market St., Newark, NJ

Record Products: Trope

A country-and-western label launched in 1948 by Frank Trope, in conjunction with his music-publishing company. Trope received a brief mention in *Billboard* in January 1948, which noted that Shorty Warren and his Western Swing Band from radio station WAAT (Newark, New Jersey) had recorded ten titles for the label. Trope's earliest releases appeared in *Billboard*'s June 1948 advance lists and, like most if not all of the label's output, featured Warren's band and Trope's compositions. The final confirmed release appeared in February 1949. Trope's brief reappearances in *Billboard*'s July 1950, July 1951, and March 1952 directories (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

TROPHY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 3062 Penobscot Building, Detroit

Original-Master Source(s): United Sound (Detroit), probably other independent studios

Record Products: Trophy

A pop and country-and-western label of unknown ownership, reportedly launched in late 1947 (one anecdotal account gives the date as 1946). The company was first listed by *Billboard* in January 1948.

The few known Trophy releases include performances by Detroit pianist Bobby Stevenson and members of his trio. Stevenson had a minor regional hit that summer with his version of "Steel Guitar Rag," which a *Detroit Free Press* critic described as "an adroit bit of satirical hillbillying." His "Wabash Cannon Ball" was similarly reviewed in the *Free*

Press as "a satire on hillbilly and corn-fed music." Little more was heard of Trophy after the summer of 1948. The company last appeared in *Billboard's* July 1951 label directory (which included many defunct companies), although it probably was inactive by then.

TROPICAL RECORDS CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: c. Early 1950s

Offices: 131 W. 14th St., New York

Record Products: Tropical

Launched in early 1950 by Puerto Rican songwriter Rafael Seijo to produce records for the Latino market. The Tropical Records Corporation's launch was briefly mentioned by *Billboard* in February 1950, after which nothing more was reported in the trade papers. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Tropical name was also used by an apparently unrelated Colombian record company, and by a low-priced Seeco Records side-line beginning in 1958.

TRU-BLUE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – c. 1951

Offices: Brill Building (1619 Broadway), New York

Record Products: Tru-Blue

Of unknown ownership, Tru-Blue was launched in mid-1948, originally as a rhythm-and-blues label. The initial releases appeared in *Billboard's* June 1948 advance lists. The early artist roster included Clyde Bernhardt, Louis Hayes and Alex Steward (as "Jelly Belly and Guitar Slim"), the Tru-Blue Boys, and Fannie Wesley (whose work was termed "race-style pop" by *Billboard*).

Gospel and country-and-western series were launched concurrently in November 1948. The former featured the Southland Singers, who received good reviews (the Southland Singers' identity on Tru-Blue has been questioned, with some researchers claiming the group heard was actually the Four Knights, which also used the name Southland Jubilee Singers). The country roster was dominated by the Blue Ridge Rangers (some of whose recordings were rated "filler items" by *Cash Box* and "nothing special" by *Billboard*) and Vernon Fox and his Sun Valley Rangers.

Tru-Blue's last confirmed releases appeared in mid-1951. The company's brief reappearance in *Billboard's* July 1951 and March 1952 directories (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The name reappeared in 1956, at a different Broadway address, but the connection to this operation, if any, is not known.

TRU TONE PRODUCTIONS, INC. / TRU TONE RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1951

Offices: 1211 Jackson, Anderson, IN (1947–late 1949); 2301 Meridian St., Anderson, IN (late 1949)

Original-Master Source(s): Cook Laboratories, probably other independent studios

Record Products: Tru Tone

A religious label owned and operated by Bob Williams, whose slogan was "If It's Tru Tone, It's Sacred — If It's Sacred, It's Tru Tone." Styling of the brand name was inconsistent in the trade papers and the company's own advertising, appearing at various times as Tru Tone (as registered), TruTone, or Tru-Tone.

Tru Tone's initial releases, by the Dixie Four from Indianapolis radio station WIBC, were being advertised locally by April 1947. Advertising in *Billboard* began in September 1947, and a large number of releases appeared in that publication's October advance lists. In late 1948, Tru Tone became the first commercial label to employ Cook Laboratories' fine-groove "QC [Quality Control] Process," which was produced high-fidelity 78s containing up to five minutes of playing time on a 10" disc.

Tru Tone Productions moved in late 1949, at about the time it changed its name to Tru Tone Records, Inc. A large group of releases listed in July 1949 appears to have been the last substantial Tru Tone offering. The company was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1951 label directory, which included many inactive or defunct companies.

TRUMPIS-COLLAR & ASSOCIATES

Owner of the Los Angeles-based Universal Plastics Corporation (an independent pressing plant), Trumpis-Collar was primarily a manufacturer and distributor of other companies' records, with a client list that included London, Tempo, Frontier, Sacred, Columbine, and Pan-Art (not be confused with the similarly named Cuban label). The company owes its inclusion here to the short-lived Vega Records (*q.v.*), the only label it is known to have owned outright.

TRUTEST STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: c. Late 1930s – 1940

Offices: Kearney and Sutter Streets, San Francisco

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing, unknown other(s)

Record Products: Trutest Recording

Housed in the Sherman, Clay & Company store in San Francisco, Trutest Studios briefly produced the Trutest Recordings label. Trutest's eclectic catalog contained recordings by some well-known West Coast personalities, including operatic arias by songwriter and baritone George Gibson Davis, and recitations by actor and director Ed V. Goodin. Its specially labeled 1940 series, "America! Cavalcade of a Nation," was intended for library use. The Trutest label was not advertised nationally. The company offered portable recording equipment for sale "at large reductions" in a February 1940 classified advertisement, suggesting the studio might have closed at that time.

TUNE-DISK RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 1415 Locust St., Philadelphia (Tune Shop Music Publishers and Keystone Records); 63 E. 3rd Ave., Collegeville, PA (Tune-Disk Records, 1947–1948)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (1415 Locust St., Philadelphia); independent studios

Pressing: Own plant (Collegeville, PA)

Record Products: Tune-Disk, Keystone

Launched by Edward R. Wilson in November 1947, as a subsidiary of his Tune Shop Music Publishers. *Billboard* noted in early 1948 that Broadcast Music, Inc., reportedly had advanced Wilson \$4,800. Tune-Disk offered to produce records for small publishers who were willing to advance all recording and production costs, which were to be repaid after the discs were released. Publishers who signed with Wilson were promised that their songs would be recorded by some well-known artists, including Ray Anthony, Ray Eberle, and Sonny Dunham.

In early November 1947, *Billboard* reported that Wilson had approached twenty-five music publishers, five of which had signed with him. The report noted that some publishers were wary of the arrangement, which did not specify minimum pressing quantities or offer any guarantee that advances would be repaid in full. Wilson claimed that sessions would be held in his own Philadelphia studio (which he also offered to rent out as a rehearsal hall) as well as in the Muzak, Carl Fischer, Advertisers' Recording, and other independent studios.

Tune-Disk placed a full-page advertisement in *Billboard* to announce its initial releases in January 1948. In the same month, Wilson posted "An Announcement of Vital Interest" in *Billboard*. Laden with legalese, it repeatedly alluded to the company's Broadcast Music affiliation, which Wilson claimed would result in the records enjoying "unlimited commercial and radio time performance use and popularity." Publishers were to be "thoroughly investigated as to their integrity, business ethics, and affiliations." They were instructed to submit their songs, in both vocal and instrumental versions, on acetate masters onto which the U.S. copyright certificate numbers were to be inscribed. Submitted manuscripts and recordings became Tune-Disk's property.

In late January 1948, General Artists Corporation, acting on behalf of Anthony, Eberle, and Dunham, asked the American Federation of Musicians to assist them in collecting overdue payments from Tune-Disk totaling \$17,000. Wilson reportedly had been voted off of Tune-Disk's board of directors by then, so the response came instead from Sid

Berman, who (after initially having been misidentified in *Billboard* as a board member) was described as having unspecified "business connections" with Tune-Disk. Berman requested a delayed-payment arrangement, claiming that Mills Music was about to loan the company \$25,000. Mills adamantly denied the report, stating that it wanted nothing to do with the Tune-Disk operation "in any manner, shape, or form." Nevertheless, the AFM agreed to a delayed-payment plan after Berman claimed that the \$25,000 would now be coming from an undisclosed investor.

On March 27, 1948, Tune-Disk was ordered to return Sonny Dunham's masters, and there were predictions that lawsuits by other artists would soon follow. Reportedly still seeking funds, Wilson sold some Tune-Disk masters in May to the Embassy and Rainbow labels. *Billboard* reported at that time that Tune-Disk was "virtually defunct," although the company continued to appear in that publication's label directories through January 1949. By then, some pressings had been acquired by Algene Sound and Radio, which pasted its own labels over the Tune-Disk originals. In the meantime, Wilson had re-entered the record business as Keystone Records (*q.v.*), which retained its connection to Tune Shop Music Publishers and initially operated at the same address.

THE TURNTABLE (Discs)

Record Production: 1944 – 1950

Offices: 1132 Tamarind Ave., Hollywood, CA

Pressing: The Bishop Presses (affiliated company)

Record Products: Corax, Jump (to early 1947)

Launched in the early 1940s, initially as a distribution company, by Clive Acker and Ed Kocher. Acker and Kocher also operated The Bishop Presses, an independent pressing plant, at the same address. The Turntable was the first producer of the Jump label (*see* Jump Records).

20th CENTURY RECORDS — *See* Ballen Record Company

— U —

U. S. PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1909 – 1913

Offices: Arcade Building, Cleveland

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio (622 6th Ave., New York)

Pressing: 1390 E. 30th St., Cleveland; Albany, NY (reportedly; from early 1911)

Record Products: U-S Everlasting; Lakeside, Medico-Phone, Singaphone

Successor to the Cleveland Phonograph Company (*q.v.*), through a 1909 change of charter. The U. S. Phonograph Company was the last American cylinder manufacturer to enter the market. The company was inconsistent in the styling of its name, usually using "U.S." to refer to the company, and "U-S" to refer to its products. However, many exceptions occur in the company's catalogs and advertising, and "U-S" appears to have become the preferred styling during the last few months of operation. There was no connection to the earlier United States Phonograph Company (New Jersey).

U. S. Phonograph manufactured molded celluloid cylinders under Varian Harris' patent #854,886. In 1904 Harris had patented a method of duplicating cylinders using a roller to press thin sheets of softened celluloid into a metal mold, a process that apparently was never used commercially. By late 1906, he had developed a method of rolling thin celluloid sheets into a tube, then bonding the edge with ether to form a blank. The seam was not visible or audible in the finished cylinders, and the process had the advantage of not infringing the Philpot patent on molding celluloid tubing, which by then was owned by the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company. The bonded blanks were molded in the usual manner, using compressed air to force the celluloid against the master mold. The cylinders were then backed by a thick core of compressed wood pulp, dyed black and bonded with wax or resin, which was said to act as a "sounding board."

Harris assigned a controlling interest in his patent to the Tacoma Manufacturing Company (Toledo, Ohio), which never commenced operation and was soon placed in receivership. Tacoma Manufacturing's stake in Harris' patents was sold to a group of Cleveland investors that included E. C. Beach. They registered the Cleveland Phonograph Record Company as a for-profit corporation on August 19, 1908, with Beach serving as president.

With little to show after its first year of operation, Cleveland Phonograph was reorganized on July 14, 1909, as the U. S. Phonograph Company, with Beach retained as president. The earliest U. S. Phonograph offerings probably were the language-instruction cylinders it produced for the Cortina Company. Although the original production agreement had been with Cleveland Phonograph, the records were not advertised until the autumn of 1909, by U. S. Phonograph.

The U. S. studio was to be located in New York, and the pressing and phonograph plant in Cleveland. Varian Harris, who was to oversee construction of the pressing plant, was given his own laboratory in Cleveland's Caxton Building. Thomas H. Towell (owner of Cleveland's Eclipse Musical Company) was to manage the phonograph factory. He brought along one of his clerks, Harry B. McNulty, who later designed and patented U. S. Phonograph's dual two-/four-minute reproducer.

John Kaiser was hired away from The Talking Machine Company in Chicago to manage the recording department, and recording sessions were held in Isaac Norcross' former New York studio. There is an anecdotal report that Norcross himself recorded the early masters, which were found to be unsatisfactory. If correct, that might account for the disappearance of the first fifty two-minute U-S Everlasting releases, which were listed only in the initial catalog. Recording engineer Charles Hibbard was hired away from Edison by the time that recording began on a regular basis. The last documented Edison correspondence addressed to Hibbard is dated October 21, 1909, but the date on which he began his employment with U.S. Phonograph is uncertain.

Albert Benzler, a pioneer studio musician and another longtime Edison employee, served as U. S. Phonograph's first musical director. As with Hibbard, the exact date of Benzler's arrival at U-S is not documented; however, Benzler's final Edison recordings were issued in October 1909, suggesting that he joined U.S. at about the same time as Hibbard. Several modern accounts claim that Benzler was a "founder" of U. S. Phonograph, without stating what that might have entailed. He was not listed among the company's incorporators or executives.

U. S. Phonograph staged the first major display of its goods on May 18, 1910, at the Piano Trade Exhibition in Richmond, Virginia. The first U-S Everlasting cylinder catalog (undated, but probably issued in the spring of that year) included two- and four-minute records, with catalog numbers beginning at 150 and 1001, respectively. Two-minute numbers 150–199 (presumably the initial unsatisfactory recordings) did not appear in any subsequent catalogs, and although a few specimens are known, it is not certain that all cylinders in that group were issued. A few Cleveland singers appeared in the U-S list (including Ethel Coit, Francis J. Sadlier, and Charles E. Wheeler), but no documentary evidence is known that would confirm their recordings were made in Cleveland, or that U. S. Phonograph operated a studio anywhere other than New York.

U. S. Phonograph initially seems to have concentrated its sales efforts in the Midwest, not opening its own New York store until March 1911. However, the company's activity quickly caught the attention of Thomas Edison, who resorted to spying and harassment in an unsuccessful attempt to deter his new competitor. The actions were largely coordinated by Delos Holden, general counsel of Edison's legal department, who reported to National Phonograph's Frank Dyer and to Edison himself. Edison's National Phonograph Company sent its first warning letter to U. S. Phonograph on June 30, 1910, accusing the company of patent infringement. Edison then dispatched industrial spy Joseph McCoy on a mission to pry information from Varian Harris. McCoy made regular reports to Edison concerning U. S. Phonograph's activities during the latter part of 1910. Company officials unknowingly took another Edison spy on a guided tour of the facilities, where he made detailed sketches. Edison executives also applied pressure to dealers, sending undercover shoppers to businesses suspected of selling U.S. Phonograph products in violation of their Edison sales agreements.

J. Louis von der Mehden, Jr., joined the U. S. Phonograph staff in the autumn of 1910 and made his first recordings on November 9. A well-known composer and conductor, Von der Mehden was directing the Herald Square Theater orchestra in New York at the time he first worked for U.S. Phonograph. He was soon given approval to form his own twenty-four piece recording orchestra (which included a stringed bass, refuting the common misconception that the instrument was never used in acoustic recordings). In February 1912, Von der Mehden also began to direct some sessions with the regular studio band, and he was later made house arranger and conductor at a salary of \$60 per week.

The U-S Everlasting artist roster was somewhat more distinguished than Indestructible's, and its catalog was more diverse, including substantial ethnic offerings. Its premium-priced Grand Opera series featured some well-respected if not-quite-stellar artists, but took no chances musically, never straying from the same popular arias and concert pieces that were already available, by more famous performers, on other cylinder and disc brands.

U.S. Phonograph produced several client series, the most frequently encountered of which are the Cortina language-instruction records, a competitor to Edison's International Correspondence School series. The company also produced a unique series of continuing-education cylinders for the Medicophone Post-Graduate Company. These were low-speed cylinders with playing times of up to eight minutes, on which eminent physicians gave instruction in the diagnosis and treatment of various diseases. The rarest of the client productions was a group of vocal-instruction records made for Oscar Saenger, which were marketed under the Singsophone brand.

In early 1910, E. C. Beach was replaced as U. S. Phonograph's president by Kirk D. Bishop of the Bishop-Babcock Company. Bishop and a group of friends purchased a controlling interest in U.S. Phonograph in February 1911, and (according to Edison industrial spy Joseph McCoy) purchased Indestructible's Albany pressing plant. A well-established Cleveland manufacturer of soda fountain, hydraulic, and steam heating equipment, the company was reorganized in April 1911 as the Bishop-Babcock-Becker Company, after acquiring the L. A. Becker Company. By late 1911, Bishop had arranged for his company to take over the manufacturing of U-S phonographs. C. J. Lilienthal, Bishop-Babcock-Becker's general sales manager, reported to *The Music Trade Review* in November 1911 that the company's Cleveland factories were running night and day, and that sales of U-S Everlasting records were "enormous."

Nevertheless, Edison's legal attacks were taking a financial toll on U. S. Phonograph. Edison sued the company repeatedly, filing four lawsuits alleging patent infringements in U-S phonographs. In retaliation, U. S. sued Edison over its use of the "Opera" trademark, which U. S. was already using on one of its phonographs. U. S. Phonograph won that case, forcing Edison to discontinue use of the Opera trademark on one of its most expensive and prestigious models.

In 1912, Von der Mehden noted in his diary that a disc-recording machine was being tested in the U. S. studio. No mention of the event has been found in the trade papers, but it might have been connected with the impending launch of disc records by the Keen-O-Phone Company (*q.v.*), for which Charles Hibbard worked after leaving U. S. Phonograph.

U. S. Phonograph was restructured in the late summer of 1912. On August 1, notice was issued of a stock sale to one Mr. Garfield. The reorganized company was finally officially incorporated on September 4, with a reported initial capitalization of \$500,000. Five days later, it received a charter from the Secretary of State of Ohio to deal in phonographs, accessories, and records. The new incorporators were William L. David, T. H. Hogsett, F. H. Ginn, Thomas H. Jones, and J. C. Rexroth, none of whom is known to have had any experience in the phonograph or recording industry or to have taken an active role in U. S. Phonograph's operation. Thomas Towell resigned and returned to his Eclipse Musical Company, and was replaced by George P. Steele. At about the same time, the company began to style its name "U-S Phonograph," using the hyphenated form that had appeared on its products from the start.

The pressing plant and factory were expanded and consolidated at 1204 E. 55th Street in Cleveland during October 1912. By that time, however, the signs of financial distress were becoming increasingly apparent. Kirk Bishop severed his relationship with the

company the following month, at the same time resigning from the Bishop-Babcock-Becker Company. Von der Mehden resigned on November 19, after having been handed a note during a recording session stating that the company was about to close. That proved not to be the case, but U-S Phonograph's days were numbered.

The Edison lawsuits were dismissed as groundless in May 1913, and National Phonograph was ordered to pay U-S Phonograph's legal costs. By then, its capitalization had been reduced from \$500,000 to \$50,000. In a deal that came too late to save the company, U-S arranged to sell cylinders to Montgomery Ward, to be marketed under their Lakeside brand. The records made their debut in Ward's Spring–Summer 1913 catalog. No mention of U-S Phonograph appeared on the Lakeside rims or boxes, and artist credits usually were omitted.

The Lakeside list comprised only selected issues from U-S Everlasting's general catalog, and did not include the Grand Opera or most ethnic recordings. With U-S Phonograph on the verge of collapse and no longer making new recordings, Montgomery Ward dropped the U-S Lakeside cylinders after its Fall 1913–Winter 1914 catalog, turning instead to the Indestructible Phonographic Record Company for its supply of store-brand cylinders. At some point, U-S sold or licensed some of its masters to Indestructible, which renumbered and reissued them in late 1913.

Some of the last U-S Everlasting releases were of songs that competing companies recorded during April–June 1913, suggesting that U-S continued to record at least into the late spring of that year. Exactly when the last U-S cylinders were manufactured remains a mystery. Dealer invoices have been reported confirming that U-S Phonograph was still shipping cylinders from the factory as late as December 1913. However, in February 1914 U-S Phonograph's capitalization was reduced again, this time to a mere \$5,000, marking its end as a viable company. By the end of that year, U-S Everlasting cylinders were being remaindered by the Charles Williams Stores and other discount houses for as little as 23¢ each, sometimes packaged in cheaply made Everlasting Indestructible Record boxes that listed no manufacturer.

On November 5, 1918, the U-S Phonograph Company's stock was decal red to have no value. After seven years of inactivity, the company was officially dissolved on February 21, 1921. The last known mention of U-S Phonograph in the public record appears in *The Official Gazette of the United States Patent Office* for May 27, 1921, involving a trademark-interference notice that had been mailed to the company concerning an Operaphone Company trademark filing. The notice was returned as undeliverable.

ULTRA RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1949

Offices: 255 W. 98th St., New York

Record Products: Ultra

Launched in December 1946 by W. A. Timm (the former vice-president of Continental Records) and Sam Levitch, reportedly to specialize in novelty material. Ultra's first release (Kitty Mattern's "Laughing Record") appeared in the January 1947 advance lists. There were also some Polish vocal and polka releases, but nothing was reported concerning the company after 1947. It was last listed in *Billboard's* January 1949 directory, although it appears to have been inactive by then. The Ultra name was reused in the 1950s for two unrelated California labels.

UNION OF IRISH INDUSTRIES, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1922

Offices: 236–238 W. 116th, New York (distribution)

Record Products: Emerald [2]

Incorporated in Brooklyn, New York, on January 28, 1922, by A. S. Hall, P. D. Benson, and A. E. Claffey, with a stated capitalization of \$5,000. The Union of Irish Industries' launch was not reported by *The Talking Machine World* until June 1922, three months after that publication had begun running the company's advertisements. The *TMW* report (some details of which are at odds with what had appeared in *The New York Times'* incorporation

notice three months earlier) listed capitalization at only \$1,000 and showed C. P. Henry as one of the incorporators, with no mention of Hall.

The Union of Irish Industries' charter stated that it would manufacture phonographs but did not mention records. Its Emerald discs, touted as "An Echo from the Emerald Isle," were said to be advertised in "leading Irish magazines." First advertised in *TMW* in March 1922, and initially pressed in green shellac, the records featured Irish and Irish-style music exclusively. Several masters from the defunct Apollo Record Company were used, along with what appear to have been original recordings that are not known to have been issued on other labels. No mention of the company, or of Emerald records, has been found after 1922.

UNIQUE MUSIC PUBLISHERS AND RECORDING COMPANY / SERENADE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – Early 1950s

Offices: 910 Alberta St., Detroit (1945–early 1948); Toledo, OH (P.O. box number only, from mid-1948)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Serenade [1]

Unique Music Publishers was launched in 1945 by Carrie L. Hoffman (president) and Marilou Dawn (promotions manager). Hoffman and Dawn were songwriters, and Hoffman also conducted the Unique All-Girl Orchestra in Detroit. Dawn reportedly was the wife of a wealthy Toledo industrialist.

Hoffman and Dawn launched their record operation during the summer of 1946, renaming their venture the Unique Music Publishers and Recording Company. Their initial releases, on the Serenade label, were announced in August 1946. The first *Billboard* advertisement for a Serenade record, comprising a single unnumbered release, did not appear until December 1946. Small advertisements for numbered Serenade releases, beginning at #101, began to run in *Billboard* in early 1947.

Serenade specialized in pop titles from the Unique Music Publishers catalog. Its artists, recruited largely from local clubs and radio stations, included Warren Wood (WBBC–Flint, Michigan) and The Two Henrys and Jean (WSPD–Toledo, Ohio). The company went farther afield to sign country-music artists Frank Dudgeon (who had briefly operated his own Frank's Folk Tunes label) from a radio station in Little Rock, Arkansas. *Cash Box*, which rarely recommended that jukebox operators avoid a record entirely, made an exception for Emile Boreo's Unique release, warning, "The customers won't be able to use either side for dancing, and it's doubtful if they will go for 'em very much as listening items."

In November 1947, Serenade Records was notified by the American Federation of Musicians that its recording license would not be renewed in 1948, in advance of the AFM's second recording ban. Hoffman and Dawn dissolved their partnership in early 1948. Hoffman remained in the Detroit office and launched Your Record Company (*q.v.*), which reissued at least one pre-ban Serenade recording. Dawn took over Unique Music and moved the operation to her hometown of Toledo, a change of address that is reflected on the labels. Following the end of the AFM recording ban, she relaunched the Serenade label in late 1948 or early 1949, introducing new 500, 600, and 800 series to replace the original 100 series. However, production of the revived Serenade label was sporadic, and little more was heard of it after 1949.

The Serenade name was reused beginning in 1950 by an unrelated New York label (*see* Serenade Recording Corporation).

UNISON RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 2128 N. Hudson Ave., Chicago (1950–1951); 58 E. 29th St., Chicago (1951–1952)

Record Products: Unison

Launched in 1949 by veteran jazz cornetist Jimmy McPartland and pianist Marian Page (McPartland), who were featured with their sextet on Unison's few known releases.

Two McPartland sides recorded in 1948, before the company was formed, were not immediately issued. Instead, four recordings made on March 24, 1949, were selected for the label's initial releases, in the summer of 1949. The records received good reviews, but sales suffered from poor distribution and lack of marketing. A *Detroit Free Press* critic noted,

"The two platters are wonderful, but it takes a Geiger counter to find them." Will Davison reported in the *Chicago Tribune* that McPartland was acting as his own "plugger" and wrote, "I hope Jimmy sells a million of these," but sales appear to have been meager.

The McPartlands took what was termed their "Unison label recording band" on the road during the autumn of 1949. Their company was last listed in *Billboard's* July 1951 label directory, although it had made no new releases in some time. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct labels) probably can be disregarded. The Unison recordings were licensed to the Harmony label in England and were later reissued in LP form on Marian McPartland's Halcyon label.

UNITED ARTIST RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1948

Offices: 6605 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles

Pressing: Phono Record Manufacturing Company (Los Angeles)

Record Products: United Artist (including co-branded labels)

A cooperative formed during the summer of 1947 by John (Johnny) Clein, owner of the Phono Record Manufacturing Company pressing plant, to handle production and distribution for small independent labels. Otis Rene, whose Excelsior label would become entangled in the operation, managed releases intended for the race-record market. Clein reportedly patterned his operation on the United Artists movie studio's business model, although neither he nor United Artist Records had any connection to that company or its the later United Artists (plural) record label.

Cash Box magazine detailed the terms of the cooperative agreement in late August 1947. Member companies' recordings were to be released under Clein's own United Artist label, with the originating company named on the labels. Each member was to receive a percentage of the profits on sales of their titles, while retaining control over their recording programs and ownership of their masters. Members at that time included the Bell (Hawaii), Eagle, Excelsior, Hucksters, Minor, Rhapsody, and Urban labels. The financially troubled Enterprise label was added in November 1947, although Clein was careful not to take on its considerable debt. But Clein's stated goal of signing at least twenty labels was never realized.

Clein attempted to curry favor with jukebox distributors and operators. During the summer of 1947, United Artist Records issued a specially labeled version of the Esquire Trio's "Ella" and donated 8½¢ per record sold to the Coin Machine Industries' Damon Runyon Memorial Cancer Fund. It placed full-page advertisements and supplied special jukebox stickers drawing attention to that fact, a move that generated some goodwill for the company, but seems to have accomplished little in the way of boosting sales.

Bebe Daniels sued United Artist Records for \$2,200 in March 1948, claiming that Clein had refused to pay her share of the proceeds for approximately 5,000 pressings made from masters she owned. In the same month, UAR passed into the hands of a creditors' assignee after what *Billboard* termed "a long period of financial stress." On April 8, a creditors' committee that included Otis Rene authorized immediate disposal of the company's assets, which were said to amount to \$128,000. Liabilities reportedly included substantial unpaid federal excise taxes and publisher royalties. In addition, UAR members Bell and Diamond were in arrears to Clein's Phono Record Manufacturing Company for \$13,000 and \$12,000, respectively, for pressing services.

The widespread distribution that Clein had envisioned never materialized. On April 20, it was reported that United Artist Records was bankrupt. Masters obtained under the cooperative arrangement were returned to their owners, which in most cases resumed operation as fully independent companies. The remaining assets of United Artist Records and the Phono Record Manufacturing Company, including UAR's own masters and pressings, were advertised for sale for the benefit of creditors on May 15, 1948.

UNITED BROADCASTING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1939 – 1950

Offices: 64 E. Lake, Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios—Chicago (various addresses, 1939–11/1946); 301 E. Erie, Chicago (former World studio, from 11/1946)

Pressing: Own plant (Major Record Company, *q.v.*)

Record Products: Masters for affiliated Master Record Company and Swing-Master Record Corp. (*q.v.*), and for Gold Seal, Joco, King, Miracle, Sunbeam, Vitacoustic, other independent labels

Owned and operated by Egmont Sonderling. H. K. Carpenter was the company's first vice-president. Opened in 1939, the United Broadcasting Company initially occupied RCA-Victor's former Chicago studio. Leonard Klein served as studio manager before leaving to launch the Gold Seal Record Company in August 1946.

Sonderling opened his own pressing plant in May 1946 and offered its services to independent labels. By August 1946 the plant was operating as a United Broadcasting subsidiary, doing business as the Master Record Company (*q.v.*). Sonderling was soon touting United Broadcasting as the largest independent recording studio in Chicago, advertising "every type of recording...from audition recordings to transcribed shows," with services available "seven days a week, around the clock." Most of the recordings the studio produced for commercial labels are easily identified by their UB-prefixed master numbers.

There was a partial merger between the Master Records and Armour Plastics pressing plants in March 1950, followed in July by Armour's takeover of Master's plating plant. Sonderling subsequently exited the recording business to concentrate on broadcast work, beginning with a position as station manager at WOPA (Forest Park, Illinois) in 1951.

UNITED HEBREW DISK AND CYLINDER COMPANY / UNITED HEBREW RECORD COMPANY (Cylinders and Discs)

Record Production: 1904 – c. 1907

Offices: 251–257 Grand St., New York (1904–10/1906; 414 Grand St., New York (from 10/1906); 257–261 Grand St., New York (sales office and warehouse)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — 261 Grand St., New York (to 10/1906); 414 Grand St., New York (from 10/1906)

Pressing: Leeds & Catlin, Auburn Button Works (discs); unknown cylinder manufacturer

Record Products: United H. D. & C. Record Company, The United Record Company

Incorporated as the United Hebrew Disk and Cylinder Company in New York on July 7, 1904, by piano dealers Henry Perlman, Jacob Dronsiek, and Louis Rosansky, with a capitalization of \$20,000. P. Long served as recording engineer. The records were retailed locally by Dronsiek & Daiboch, a New York piano and phonograph dealer.

The company initially produced cylinders and single-sided discs but soon abandoned cylinder production. In early 1905 it was renamed the United Hebrew Record Company, reflecting its changeover over to all-disc production. For a time the company was a prolific producer of records for the Jewish immigrant market, with offerings ranging from traditional cantorials to the earliest known klezmer accordion recordings, the latter by one A. Greenberg. It issued at least one pirated recording by Cantor Gerson Sirota, but otherwise appears to made its own recordings. Its United Record Company discs are of no relation to a later, identically named label that was manufactured by Columbia for the United Talking Machine Company (Chicago).

Continual friction and double-dealing among the partners ultimately led to United Hebrew's downfall. In August 1905, Perlman and an unnamed "other" sued the original United Hebrew Disc & Cylinder Company (which apparently had not been officially dissolved) to collect a \$1,020 debt. Dronsiek, whose piano store served as United Hebrew's main outlet, left the business in the same month, owing the other partners \$700. His shares in the company were attached after a deputy sheriff found his store vacated and emptied of all merchandise.

Long resigned as recording engineer in February 1906 to take a management position in Leeds & Catlin's pressing plant, where some United Hebrew discs were pressed. Perlman and Rosansky finally dissolved their partnership in September 1906, with Perlman returning to his piano business. Rosansky continued to manage the record business, consolidating

the studio and office at a new location in October. New United Hebrew Record Company discs were last listed by *The Talking Machine World* in December 1906, as January 1907 releases, and the company last advertised in *TMW* in May of that year. It appears to have ceased operations a short time later.

UNITED HOT CLUBS OF AMERICA — See Commodore Records

UNITED MASTERS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1946 – 1951

Offices: 205 Amsterdam Ave., New York

Pressing: Bard Record Manufacturing Company (Pelham, NY)

Record Products: Unique; masters for Seva, probably others

Launched c. 1946 by Seva Foullon (sometimes misspelled "Foullan" in *Billboard*), as an independent recording studio. Clients included Foullon's own Seva Record Corporation (*q.v.*), some material from which was reissued on United Masters' Unique label. Like Seva, Unique's catalog straddled the line between ethnic and mainstream pop material, specializing in accordion bands, gypsy orchestras, updated adaptations of foreign songs and dance tunes, and similar fare. *Billboard* characterized the operation, somewhat inaccurately, as a "foreign-language waxery."

The E. B. Marks publishing firm sued Foullon and United Masters for unpaid royalties in June 1947, one of four test cases brought by Marks to determine effectiveness of suing both a company and its chief executive officer. A month later, Marks sued Foullon, United Masters, and the Bard Record Manufacturing Company for alleged copyright infringement in Unique's recording of "Malaguena." The latter case was ultimately dismissed, by which time Foullon had departed for National Records, where he served as manager of artists and repertoire. United Masters was last listed in *Billboard*'s July 1951 manufacturer directory. The Unique name was used for several unrelated labels beginning in the early 1950s.

UNITED PHONOGRAPHS CORPORATION — See New York Recording Laboratories

UNITED RECORD COMPANY — See Juke Box Record Company

UNITED SOUND STUDIOS / UNITED SOUND SYSTEMS RECORDING LABORATORIES (Discs)

Record Production (Original Ownership): 1933 – 1971

Offices: 5051 Cass Ave., Detroit (1933–1939); 5840 2nd Blvd., Detroit (from 1939)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios

Pressing: American Record Pressing Company (Detroit; purchased in 1950)

Record Products (78): United [2]; masters for Dot, Fortune, Sensation, Trophy, and other independent labels, radio transcriptions, custom and personal recordings

Originally owned and operated by James V. (Jimmy) Siracuse, who reportedly opened his first studio in Detroit in 1933 as a custom recording service. The mailing address originally given was that of his personal residence. Reliable information on Siracuse's early operation is lacking until 1939, when he converted a house on Second Avenue in Detroit into a professional recording facility and began actively soliciting work under the name of United Sound Systems Recording Laboratories.

In the early years of its operation, United Sound specialized in recording advertising jingles for clients in and around Michigan (most notably the Kellogg Company) and also did a large business in private recordings. In a 1950 *Detroit Free Press* interview, Siracuse recalled private sessions with a parrot that refused to talk and a bickering mother-daughter duo who broke into name-calling in the middle of a song. Siracuse introduced his United label in 1942 for occasional custom and private issues. The first was a recording of "Bomb Tokyo," which Siracuse co-wrote.

By the later 1940s, United Sound Systems was known primarily as a supplier of masters to independent labels. In 1948 the studio made the first commercial recordings by blues singer John Lee Hooker for Bernard (Bernie) Besman, who released them on his Sensation label. In early 1950, Siracuse and his brother Joseph purchased the American Record Pressing Company plant, to which United Sound was contracting its pressing work. At

the same time, the brothers relaunched the United label. Bearing redesigned labels, it was intended for the jukebox and retail markets. Its most highly publicized release, in April 1950, was a three-disc album by Frank Gillis and his Dixie Five, a local Dixieland-style band, which *Detroit Free Press* critic Jim Wilson described as "about as authentic as you can get in a revived style of jazz." The revived United label was not a success, and its last releases appeared in 1950. The United name was used beginning in 1951 by an unrelated, and much better-known, Chicago label.

Siracuse went on to operate one of the most highly regarded recording facilities in the U.S., hosting major and minor stars for other labels until 1971, when he sold the studio to former Stax producer Don Davis. It changed hands several more times before reopening in 2014 under new ownership. The building, which was last used as a studio in 2018, is currently owned by the Michigan Department of Transportation and is in the path of a proposed expansion of Interstate 94.

UNITED STATES GRAMOPHONE COMPANY — See Berliner, Emile

UNITED STATES PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1893 – c. 1900

Offices: 87–91 Orange St., Newark, NJ

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above location

Record Products: United States cylinders

Successor to the New Jersey Phonograph Company, *q.v.* Henry Lewis, Andrew Taylor, and J. Marvin Carson (none of whom appear to have been directly involved with the company's operation) filed a certificate of organization with the State of New Jersey on February 16, 1893. New Jersey Phonograph's George G. Frelinghuysen (president) and Victor H. Emerson (general manager and recording engineer) retained those positions with the new company. George E. Tewksbury and Simon S. Ott, who had previously been associated with the Kansas and Nebraska Phonograph companies, joined the venture shortly after its launch and would eventually acquire a major financial stake in the company.

The United States Phonograph Company was housed above a Swift's meat-packing plant in Newark, New Jersey. Banjoist Fred Van Eps, who made his earliest recordings for the company, recalled, "They had the hams and carcasses downstairs and the records upstairs." In addition to manufacturing its own records, the company sold phonographs, Edison Kinetoscopes, and related merchandise.

One of George Tewksbury's first actions upon joining the company was to travel to Washington, D.C., in the company of Len Spencer, to record the United States Marine Band. They were quickly discovered by officials of the Columbia Phonograph Company, who claimed exclusive rights to the territory. Tewksbury and Spencer locked themselves in their hotel room while Columbia president Edward Easton applied for a temporary restraining order, which reportedly was served on Tewksbury and Spencer by a marshall who climbed through the transom. Tewksbury initially was allowed to continue recording the band, provided that the records were immediately turned over to Columbia, but a permanent injunction, issued on March 9, barred him for conducting any phonograph-related activities in Columbia's territory.

Undeterred, Frelinghuysen negotiated with Columbia for a license to make its own recordings. Edward Easton submitted a draft of the agreement in early May, calling for a 25¢ license fee on each cylinder produced, with a \$1,000 advance. However, United States Phonograph officials missed the deadline for acceptance of the agreement, which as of August 1893 had not been ratified. Ironically, Columbia later purchased some cylinder masters from United States Phonograph, which it legally duplicated and sold under its own name.

United States Phonograph made headlines on February 15, 1894, when female baritone Helene Mora was successfully recorded in the Newark studio. "It is a well-established fact that the female voice is not adapted for phonographic use," *The New York World* reported. "It was therefore a matter of congratulation to Victor Emerson, the phonographic expert at the works, when he placed the tubes to his ears and found he had secured a most perfect record."

In March 1895, American Graphophone (the manufacturer of Columbia products)

applied to the United States District Court in New Jersey for an injunction to prevent United States Phonograph from making, selling, or using instruments "to reproduce speech," which was denied. The suit did not seek to prevent United States Phonograph from making recordings, and the company continued to supply masters to Columbia. However, Columbia's Frank Dorian was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the quality of the masters he was receiving, and in October 1895 he wrote to United States Phonograph officials, "We do not believe we have been getting your best records of late...They must be smooth and otherwise perfect, both musically and mechanically." The issue was resolved, with Columbia agreeing to pay United States Phonograph \$1–\$3 per acceptable master, but the relationship appears to have been severed by the end of 1896.

Victor Emerson resigned from the United States Phonograph Company in January 1897, to accept a position as recording engineer with Columbia. His place was taken by Henry J. Hagen, who worked only briefly for the company before departing to launch the firm of Harms, Kaiser & Hagen. Victor Emerson's departure was quickly followed by that of Clyde and George Emerson, as well as Len Spencer, all of whom also moved to Columbia. Shortly after their resignations, Spencer and the Emersons were arrested and charged with having stolen a substantial number of United States cylinders that they allegedly sold to an unnamed "rival concern." Charges were dropped after the prosecutor admitted that he had no case. A disgruntled Spencer placed a notice in *The Phonoscope* declaring that he was no longer connected with the United States Phonograph Company in any way.

United States Phonograph was sued twice in 1897, once by the National Phonograph Company (Edison) to prevent its use of the term "Vitascope," and once by Columbia over its use of a patented motor-speed regulator. Requests for injunctions were refused in both cases, but Columbia would persist. In late 1898, hearings began in another patent-infringement lawsuit. Columbia attorney Philip Mauro demanded that infringing records and equipment be seized, to no avail. In the meantime, Tewksbury and Simon S. Ott had launched the Consolidated Phonograph Companies at the same location as United States Phonograph, reportedly to serve as the latter's export agent.

It was announced in December 1898 that Tewksbury and Ott had sold their interests in both companies to the Philadelphia firm of Fox & Challenger. Thomas E. Challenger assumed United States Phonograph's debt and took over management of the company. Under his control, United States Phonograph continued to produce cylinders until late 1899, when Columbia finally succeeded in securing an injunction prohibiting Challenger and his company from manufacturing or selling duplicated records. United States Phonograph was given until January 15, 1900, to wrap up its business.

At the same time, it was reported that United States Phonograph had arranged to have the Edison plant produce a "special line of records" for them. This probably referred only to Edison's duplicating service, since the company was now prohibited from making its own duplicates. Some late United States Phonograph and Consolidated Phonograph supplements state that the cylinders were made on "genuine Edison blanks," probably referring to dubbed copies from United States Phonograph's own masters.

On April 19, 1901, stockholders voted to dissolve the United States Phonograph Company, which had been operating at a loss for the past two years. The company was formally dissolved on May 7, 1901. Following Tewksbury's death, Ott and Howard W. Hayes (as his executors) sued principals of the defunct company in May 1903 to recover money they allegedly owed Tewksbury.

UNITED STATES RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1939–1941

Offices: 1775 Broadway, New York (at founding); 1780 Broadway, New York (from 9/1939)

Original-Master Source(s): Associated Music Publishers (8–10/1939); own studio — 1776 Broadway, New York (from 9/1939)

Pressing: Scranton Record Company

Record Products: Royale, Varsity; Inco, Masterpieces of Music (Hamilton Ross), Masterpieces of Music (Remington-Morse Records), Montgomery Ward, Musette (10" only)

Launched in March 1939 by Elliot Everet (Eli) Oberstein, one of the most controversial record producers of the period covered by this work. Oberstein's mentor was Victor talent scout Ralph Peer, who taught him the importance of personally holding artist management

contracts with the performers he signed to make recordings. Hired in January 1929 as a Victor sales representative, Oberstein was working as a production manager at RCA's Camden plant by 1931, where his duties came to include supervising the pressing of Crown records from the Crown Record Company's own masters. He was then put in charge of RCA's budget-label line, and was largely responsible for the success of RCA's Bluebird label, for which he signed Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw, and other rising stars.

Oberstein resigned from RCA on February 22, 1939, to try his hand as an independent record producer. A week later, *Variety* reported that Oberstein, in partnership with Phillip Kastel and Lewis A. Jaffa, had formed a new company that was to be called Discs, Inc., a name that was quickly discarded. Instead, the company was chartered as the United States Record Corporation in May 1939.

Investor Charles M. Hemenway, of Paine Webber & Company, held the largely honorary title of president, but Oberstein, as vice-president and general manager, was the company's driving force. Initially headquartered in New York at 1775 Broadway, USRC announced that it would produce two labels — Varsity (a 35¢ popular brand) and Royale (reserved largely for classical material, retailing for 75¢ and up). The Varsity and Royale trademarks were not published until April 23, 1940, and May 7, 1940, respectively.

Almost from the start, USRC found itself under scrutiny. Oberstein was rumored to have the financial backing of a syndicate that controlled 150,000 jukeboxes. He denied the allegation, while at the same time his sales representative was aggressively promoting Varsity records to the jukebox trade. Oberstein quickly earned the distrust of several large music publishers who were concerned about collecting royalties from jukebox play. To placate them, he agreed to place the standard (and largely unenforceable) disclaimer on his labels stating that the records were licensed only for noncommercial use on phonographs in homes, while sales to jukebox operators continued unabated.

Oberstein released a preliminary, crudely mimeographed Varsity and Royale catalog to the trade on June 29, 1939. It stated, "All listed [numbers] have been recorded," an accurate claim; the list was made up entirely of reissues of other companies' recordings, although there was no disclosure to that effect. The initial Royale issues came entirely from European sources, primarily Ultraphone. The 35¢ Varsity records were largely dubbings of decade-old Crown recordings, with a smattering of dubbed Gennett and Paramount reissues. The artists were masked by pseudonyms on most of the dubbed reissues, and a few selections were even given new titles.

Exactly how Oberstein came to possess the Crown recordings remains unclear. Crown had no corporate successor and was in arrears to RCA for pressing services at the time of its closure. It appears likely that RCA inherited the masters by default and that Oberstein, as an RCA insider, would have been in a position to acquire them. It does not appear that any illegality was involved in Oberstein's use of the recordings. The original Crown master numbers were retained on the newly dubbed Varsity masters, but Oberstein's use of artist pseudonyms on most of the reissues raised suspicions that he was concealing something. His use of pseudonyms, however, probably had less to do with disguising sources than with disguising outdated material and artists who no longer had much of a following.

Some of the Paramount material came to Oberstein by way of Crown, which had licensed a few Paramount masters from the New York Recording Laboratories in the early 1930s. Oberstein, when accused of pirating Paramount material on Varsity, vehemently denied the allegation, apparently not realizing that Crown had replaced the original Paramount master numbers with its own. The Gennett material was licensed from Harry Gennett, who had been making his masters available to other labels (with the choicest items going to Decca) since the mid-1930s. The Gennett recordings Oberstein licensed were of little commercial value at the time, having already been passed over by Decca and consisting largely of obscure, decade-old race-record releases that had sold in minuscule numbers in their original form. They would do little better on Varsity.

The first Varsity records were pressed on August 4, 1939, before any original recordings are known to have been made. Manufacturing was contracted to the Scranton Record Company, and many of USRC's directors and investors were local Scranton businessmen. Oberstein maintained a 50% share in the United States Record Corporation and also purchased a 30% interest in the Scranton pressing plant, while retaining full ownership of his masters.

Lacking any original material for his new labels, Oberstein began recording in earnest during August 1939. The American Federation of Musicians granted him a recording license on August 7, marking the earliest date on which he could legally record with union members. Early Varsity sessions were held in the Associated Music Publishers Recording Studios. In September 1939, *Fortune* reported that Harry Smith (a former Brunswick recording engineer, not to be confused with a later, better-known producer of the same name) was serving as USRC's recording manager. The former Brunswick–American Record Corporation studios, directly across the street from USRC's offices, were sold to Oberstein in late September 1939. *Variety* reported that the studios were being "done over" and would be ready for use by October 15.

Shipments to dealers were scheduled to begin on October 12, 1939, but a week later, *Jazz Information* magazine reported that the records had yet to arrive. Once regular shipments finally began later that month, there were complaints of late and short deliveries. Observant customers soon recognized the disguised Crown recordings, which comprised the bulk of the earliest Varsity offerings. The most recognizable were Fletcher Henderson's 1931 recordings, the identity of which was revealed in *Jazz Information* as early as October 24, just a few days after the records began arriving in customer's hands.

Original recordings were in the pipeline, however. Oberstein had attempted to coerce some of RCA Victor's popular stars into switching to Varsity by invoking a clause in his artist management contracts that required his artists to move with him if he changed recording companies. However, the mass defection he envisioned never materialized. Artie Shaw bought out his management contract; Glenn Miller contested his with RCA's assistance and prevailed after the American Federation of Musicians refused to arbitrate the case. Xavier Cugat also successfully fended off Oberstein. Despite such strong-arm tactics, Oberstein managed to sign some stars for Varsity, including Harry James, Will Osborne, Roy Eldridge, Buddy Clark, and Jan Peerce. Others, including Jess Stacy and Toots Mondello, took advantage of Oberstein's offer to showcase their talents outside of the bands with which they normally performed.

Despite his boast to *Time* magazine that "everybody who is working with me loves me," Oberstein had a reputation for being overbearing in the studio and forcing mediocre compositions on his artists. Oberstein did not deny the latter, telling the *Time* reporter, "When I find out that one song has \$50,000 behind it for promotion and another has nothing, I forget about the quality of the music and bet on the song with the \$50,000." Varsity's biggest hit, by Oberstein's reckoning, was Johnny Messner's mildly risqué "She Had to Go and Lose It at the Astor," which Oberstein claimed sold 150,000 copies within a few weeks of release. The Astor's managing director was not amused and threatened to sue Oberstein for defamation.

During the summer of 1940, Oberstein purchased the Club Evergreen in Bloomfield, New Jersey, as a showcase for Varsity performers. The venture survived for only six weeks. By then, *DownBeat*, *Jazz Information*, and other publications were regularly reviewing Varsity's jazz and blues releases, often less than favorably, citing lackluster performances, uninspired arrangements, and poor choice of material. The disguised Crown reissues came in for some particularly harsh criticism.

The more expensive Royale label presented a curious hodgepodge. Devoted largely to classical and operatic recordings, it also offered material ranging from rhumbas and Sousa marches to some sophisticated "salon" jazz. Like Varsity, Royale began primarily as a reissue vehicle, with most of the early issues using material licensed from foreign suppliers. Ultraphon supplied recordings by the Berlin Philharmonic and Berlin State Opera Orchestra (which were issued pseudonymously) and the Hot Club of France (which were properly credited). Other foreign sources included Artiphone (the source of the Marian Anderson recordings), Edison Bell, Filmophone, Radiola, and Supraphon. Some, like Edison Bell, were defunct operations whose masters were licensed through their subsequent owners. The Ultraphon masters allegedly were shipped through a third party in Holland to skirt punitive tariffs on imported German goods.

Royale's turning point came in the autumn of 1939. With his supply of foreign masters severed by the escalating conflict in Europe, Oberstein launched his own domestic recording program for classical material. In October he assembled what he called the Royale Symphony Orchestra of Philadelphia, under the direction of Robert A. Gombert. The

reviews were mixed, praising the skills of individual players, but complaining that the overall performances were "lacking careful preparation and polish." December 1939 saw the beginning of improvements to Royale's artist roster, the result of a collaboration with radio station WQXR and their resident violin virtuoso, Eddy Brown. Brown and his associates curried favor with the critics, not only for their performances, but for making the first recordings of some obscure but interesting works. There was an abundance of piano offerings as well, including the first recording of Moussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* in its original form, by pianist Alfred Mirovitch, and a string of well-reviewed releases by the dual-piano team of Clifford Herzer and Jascha Zayde. Oberstein also gambled with compositions by several unfamiliar American composers, including John Powell and Lamar Stringfield, which won praise for the initiative involved, if not the recordings themselves.

In early 1940, Oberstein signed what should have been a lucrative contract to press Varsity and Royale records under the cut-rate Montgomery Ward label. The deal marked a small victory for Oberstein over RCA, which (aside from two brief attempts by Decca) had manufactured Montgomery Ward's discs since 1933. The relationship would prove to be short-lived, however. The first USRC-produced issues, which appeared in Montgomery Ward's Spring 1940 catalog, were drawn mainly from the outdated Crown recordings and failed to excite much interest. The Fall 1940 offerings were more up-to-date, drawn largely from USRC's own recordings by Harry James, Rudy Vallee, Frankie Trumbauer, and other well-known artists. Some of Royale's Ultraphone reissues were also released pseudonymously on 12" Montgomery Ward discs. By that time, however, USRC was bankrupt, and Montgomery Ward returned to RCA.

The Inco label, a joint venture between USRC and the International News Company (New York), failed after only five confirmed releases. Conceived as a six-week marketing experiment, the records retailed for 35¢ each at news stands. *Business Week* reported that approximately 85% of the run reportedly sold during the first two weeks, but the venture was abandoned for unexplained reasons, and Inco vendors were switched to standard Varsity records.

Facing growing criticism from customers, reviewers, and investors alike, Oberstein stepped aside as manager of Varsity's artists and repertoire in early 1940 and hired Warren Scholl to take over those duties. The reviews began to improve somewhat, but sales remained far short of Oberstein's optimistic projections. By the summer of 1940, USRC was facing mounting legal and financial problems.

Variety reported on August 18, 1940, that Leeds Music was suing USRC for unpaid royalties, sparking a chain reaction. Within a week, the Harry Fox Agency joined the suit on behalf of thirty-four other music publishers, claiming unpaid royalties totaling \$11,148. On September 5, USRC filed a petition for reorganization, citing liabilities of \$250,000. Judge Vincent L. Liebell allowed USRC to continue operations, subject to approval of a reorganization plan that would pay 14¢ on the dollar to unsecured creditors. The plan was approved in short order, but in the meantime, recording activities had been placed on hold. Oberstein blamed the hiatus on the Scranton investors and brushed off the publishers' lawsuits. Once they were settled, he declared, new capital would be flow in, and USRC would "go ahead where it left off."

In late September, Oberstein told a *DownBeat* reporter that the company would soon be recording again, "under a solid financial setup," but no further sessions were held. The last Royale reviews had appeared in the August 1940 edition of *The Steinway Review*. Joe Rine's rendition of "The Quiz Song," probably recorded at the end of that month, was the last USRC master to be issued. The final release to be scheduled was Varsity 8419, by Harry James' Orchestra. By 1941 Oberstein's remaining inventory was being heavily discounted. *Variety's* 1941 transcription directory noted that USRC was now also known as the 57th Street Broadway Studios, Inc., a name that does not appear to have ever been used in commercial production.

The Scranton-USRC connection was severed, and the pressing plant was reorganized as the Scranton Record Company. With USRC in arrears, Scranton inherited the Varsity masters by default and was soon licensing them piecemeal to small independent labels through the Record Syndicate Trust (*q.v.*), a Boston-based master broker. Majestic Records (which briefly employed Oberstein) later purchased many of them, as did record producer

Joe Davis, who in 1947 made them available to Asch, Commodore, Continental, Regent, Savoy, Signature, and seemingly any other label that would have them.

The remaining claim of \$71,792 against USRC was reduced to about \$10,000 in March 1941. On May 27, 1941, the court approved a new reorganization plan for the inactive company, but operations were not resumed. Oberstein, who had since launched the Viking label (*see* Nu-Phonic Corporation), mysteriously disappeared shortly after the plan was announced. A few weeks later it was discovered that he had checked himself into New York's Mt. Sinai Hospital, complaining of various vague symptoms. He was back in business by November 1941, in the guise of the Imperial Record Company, *q.v.*

UNITED STATES RECORD MANUFACTURING CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1920 – c. 1922

Offices: 48 E. 34th St., New York; 249 W. 34th St., New York

Original-Master Source(s): Possibly own studio

Pressing: Own plant (Pierce Ave. between 8th and 9th, Long Island City, NY)

Record Products: Hits, Rialto [1]; Apollo [2], Emerald [1]; possibly custom labels

The United States Record Manufacturing Corporation was incorporated in May 1920 by Victor H. Emerson, with a reported capitalization of \$1 million. Officers included Emerson (president); Bernard D. Colen (who was also an Emerson executive, as secretary and treasurer), and former Columbia employee George W. Beadle (as consulting engineer, a position he also held with the Emerson-financed Southern States Phonograph Company). Thomas H. McClain, a former Edison engineer, was hired as general manager in the spring of 1921. Production space was shared with Emerson's in-house printing plant in Long Island City, New York.

USRMC was intended as an independent pressing plant that would handle work for the Emerson Phonograph Company as well as outside clients. Victor Emerson (who had been contracting his pressing work to the Scranton Button Company) reportedly guaranteed the plant a minimum daily order of 50,000 pressings. A USRMC advertisement in *The Talking Machine World* offered "Latest hits of Broadway shows manufactured in any quantity for you under your label or ours."

The plant was in operation by the autumn of 1920 and was credited with production of several short-lived labels, with Hits the apparent flagship. Although it is not known if USRMC maintained its own studio, the company implemented a unique master-numbering system, consisting of 5-, 8-, and 10- prefixed series that appeared exclusively on its own labels and have not been traced to other sources. Given Victor Emerson's involvement, it is likely that these masters were commissioned from the Emerson studio. However, no master exchanges between the Emerson and USRMC labels have been discovered.

In September 1921, USRMC placed a full-page advertisement in *The Talking Machine World* to announce the signing of dialect comedian Leo Carrillo for its Hits label. Although the same ad promised forthcoming releases "by equally famous artists," production of Hits and the other USRMC labels appears to have been discontinued by year's end. The company probably closed in early 1922, coinciding with Victor Emerson's resignation from the Emerson Phonograph Company in March of that year, and his subsequent withdrawal from the commercial recording industry.

UNITY SCHOOL OF CHRISTIANITY (Discs)

Record Production: 1924 – c. Late 1920s

Offices: Kansas City, MO

Original-Master Source(s): Jesse J. Warner studio

Pressing: Warner Record Company

Record Products: Unity

The Unity Society of Practical Christianity (Kansas City) was founded by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore in 1889 and was incorporated in 1903. The Unity School of Christianity was formed as an offshoot in 1914, to manage the society's educational and publishing programs. In 1924, Charles Fillmore went on the air with Unity programing over radio station WOQ (Kansas City).

The *Unity News* for February 9, 1924, reported that a studio was being equipped at 1319 E. 9th Street in Kansas City for the organization's "phonographic department," under the management of Jesse J. Warner, *q.v.* The records were still being produced as late as 1928, when they were mentioned in Charles W. Ferguson's book, *The New Book of Revelations: The Inside Story of America's Astounding Religious Cults*. Ferguson reported that Unity had its own recording department, "where Charles Fillmore speaks words of love and light," and noted that the records were sold by subscription for \$3 a year. Several Unity releases featured the MacDowell Sisters, who performed with Fillmore on the Unity broadcasts as "Sweethearts of the Air." The records were manufactured locally by the Warner Record Company (New Flexo) and, like other Warner products, were pressed in flexible plastic.

An earlier, unrelated Unity label, credited to the Unity Record Company (New York), appears to have been a single-issue private label.

UNIVERSAL PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Record Production: 1897–c. 1899

Offices: 45 E. 20th St., New York (1897–1898); 34 E. 21st St., New York (from late 1898)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios—21 E. 20th St., New York (to late 1898); 34 E. 21st St., New York (from late 1898)

Record Products: Universal cylinders

Owned and operated by music publisher Joseph W. Stern & Company (New York). According to Edward B. Marks, Stern's business partner, the recording studio was housed in the loft of a building several doors away from the publishing operation's main office.

The Universal Phonograph Company was first mentioned in *The Phonoscope* for January–February 1897, which probably was published a month or more after its stated cover date. Its first manager was comedian Russell Hunting (*q.v.*), who had recently been sentenced to three months in jail for producing and selling "obscene" cylinder records. *The Phonoscope* reported that United Phonograph "proposes to manufacture high-class records by celebrated artists of the vaudeville and dramatic stage." Stern turned his position as a prominent music publisher to Universal Phonograph's advantage, supplying the company with new songs prior to their publication and boasting, "We issue catchy music before competitors." In 1898 the company advertised that Albert Campbell "sings all the latest hits from manuscript copy before they are published and therefore before any other dealer can possibly supply them."

Edward Marks recalled, "Any performer who came into our publishing house for professional copies was dragged down to the laboratory for a phonograph test... Our wide acquaintance with performers and our sense of popular taste gave us a jump on the Edison people." In early 1897, *The Phonoscope* reported that Universal Phonograph had completed arrangements to record Lottie Gilson, James Thornton, Leona Lewis, Sam Devere, Johnny Carroll, Weber and Fields, Sam Bernard, Annie Hart, and other prominent stage performers. There has been speculation that Bert Williams recorded for the company as well, based upon slim circumstantial evidence, but if so, no examples are known to exist. *The Phonoscope* praised Gilson's recordings as "excellent" and Hart's as "marvelous" and "wonderful," not necessarily an unbiased assessment given that the publication was edited by Hunting. Marks offered a less biased assessment, recalling, "The women's voices never sounded right, but their names looked good in the catalog."

Universal Phonograph's recordings by George Rosey's Orchestra, touted as the largest group to have played for the phonograph at the time, were said to be particularly popular. However, not all of the promised celebrities are known to have recorded for Universal Phonograph, and the company seems to have relied on the usual studio freelancers for much of its output.

By 1898 Hunting had been replaced as manager by Mitchell B. Marks. Late in the year, Universal Phonograph and Stern & Company consolidated operations at 34 E. 21st Street, where members of the trade were invited to "Come and take the records off the rack while they are being made... This is proof that records are original." Universal cylinders at that time retailed for 75¢ each, undercutting the industry average of \$1. The records were also exported to England, where they retailed for the equivalent of \$1.25. The company was last mentioned in *The Phonoscope* in February 1899.

UNIVERSAL RECORDERS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: Early 1940–1960

Offices: 6757 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above address

Record Products: Masters for numerous independent labels; radio transcriptions; custom, audition, and promotional recordings

Created to provide recording services to the federal government during World War II, Universal Recorders made the transition to a full-fledged commercial operation after the war. Officers in the later 1940s included Will H. Voeller (vice-president, then president, later replaced by Wesley I. Dumm), George E. Hughes (vice-president), and Arthur B. Hogan (secretary-treasurer and chairman of the board). The company is sometimes confused in modern works with the Chicago-based Universal Recording Corporation, to which it was not related.

By 1950 Universal Recorders was advertising itself as the second-largest record-production company on the West Coast, offering tape as well as conventional disc mastering. It continued to handle government-contract work while servicing Young & Rubicam, Smith & Bull, and other major advertising agencies. It also recorded masters for numerous commercial labels during the period covered by this work, including Crown, Modern, Mercury, Tempo, Vitacoustic, and Windsor. In July 1960, it merged with Radio Recorders to form Radio Universal Recorders, Inc.

UNIVERSAL RECORDING COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1935 – c. 1949

Offices: RKO Building (1270 6th Ave.), New York (to early 1940s); 57th St. & Broadway, New York (from 3/1945)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above addresses

Record Products: Masters for independent labels; custom recordings and transcriptions

Launched in 1935 by composer and band leader Raymond Scott (*née* Harry Warnow), originally in partnership with his brother, band leader Mark Warnow. Lester Troob served as recording engineer. Scott also launched Circle Music, a publishing operation, in the same year.

Initially, Universal Recording was solely a custom recording operation, noted for having recorded Judy Garland's CBS audition demo and Benny Goodman's January 1938 Carnegie Hall concert. Too preoccupied with his composing and performing activities to devote his full attention to the studio, Scott soon turned management over to Troob, who was replaced by Allen Best in late 1941. (Troob went on to manage Young People's Records in the late 1940s, and in 1954 he developed the Book of the Month Club's record division.) In 1943 Circle Music was sold to Warner Brothers Pictures, which used some of Scott's compositions in their cartoon features.

Universal Recording appears to have been inactive during much of World War II, but Scott revived the operation in early 1945, at a new location and with a new business model. After failing to secure the Nora Bayes Theater for his new studio, Scott moved into an existing facility he had previously purchased. He canceled a spring road trip with his band to set up his new studio, which was intended to supply masters to small independent labels. Recording began on March 16, 1945, with a Justin Stone session for Signature Records. The studio was still in operation in 1949, when Scott launched his short-lived and idiosyncratic Master Records, *q.v.*

UNIVERSAL RECORDING CORPORATION / UNIVERSAL RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: From 1946

Offices: Ridge Ave., Evanston, IL (1946); Civic Opera Building (20 N. Wacker Drive), Chicago, 1947–1949; 100 E. Ohio, Chicago (temporary, 1949–1950); 111 E. Ontario St., Chicago (1950–1955); 46 E. Walton, Chicago (from 1955)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios at above locations

Record Products (78): Universal [4], Universal Double Feature, Vitacoustic; masters for numerous commercial labels; radio transcriptions, custom recordings

Founded by engineer Milton Tasker (Bill) Putnam in 1946, the Universal Recording Corporation was a major producer of masters for many commercial labels, including its own, as well as transcriptions and custom recordings. There was no connection to the defunct Universal Recording Laboratories, an early Chicago producer of air-checks and radio transcriptions that is not known to have produced commercial recordings.

After training with the Armed Forces Radio Service during World War II, Putnam opened a studio in Evanston, Illinois, in partnership with Bernie Clapper and Bob Weber in 1946. According to Putnam, "We had one small studio with an old Western Electric broadcast console and the lathe... Our original capitalization was \$20,000, most of which I had borrowed from my family." Universal's first major client was the NBC Blue Network, which contracted with the company to produce transcriptions of its East Coast and midwestern prime-time programs for delayed broadcast on the West Coast.

Putnam moved his company to the top floor of Chicago's Civic Opera Building in early 1947. In February he recorded Jerry Murad's Harmonicats, using a simple form of artificial reverberation that involved recording from a speaker placed in the men's rest room. Putnam recalled, "I had a lot of opportunities to experiment with marble walls in the men's room and in the long halls of the Opera Building in addition to a wide variety of configurations for reverberation rooms. The men's room was great, except for the occasional interruptions when someone flushed the toilet or made other non-musical noises."

The results — reportedly, the first commercial releases to employ artificial echo — were issued locally under a prototype Universal label. After the Harmonicats' "Peg o' My Heart" became a regional hit for Universal, Putnam joined the new Vitacoustic Records venture with the goal of securing wider distribution for the Harmonicats' records. However, the relationship began to unravel in the late summer of 1947.

In September 1947, Putnam (who held a management contract with the Harmonicats) relaunched the Universal label. By then, "Peg o' My Heart" had become a certified million-seller, a feat that *Billboard* judged to be "probably the first time any independent diskery has hit the million class." The jukebox operators' lobby, in its campaign to induce record-makers to reduce playing times (thus generating more plays per hour), hailed the two-minute "Peg o' My Heart" as proof that shorter records could become major hits.

Putnam announced in late November 1947 that Universal had installed Magnacord wire recorders and would begin transferring its clients' acetate masters to wire for a nominal fee. By then, his company was recording for other commercial labels (most notably Mercury) and was developing a reputation for its use overdubbing and other advanced studio techniques, beginning with some Patti Page self-duets for Mercury. At the same time, Putnam continued to develop his Universal label for the consumer market, supplementing Universal's own recordings with masters he leased from Tower and other labels in advance of the impending American Federation of Musicians' recording ban.

In January 1948, *Billboard* announced prematurely that Universal had purchased a group of "approximately thirty" masters by Gene Austin, accompanied by guitarist Les Paul. The report sparked a bidding war for those recordings with Capitol Records, but in March *Billboard* reported that Universal had acquired the masters and had offered Austin a two-year contract with two-year renewal option. Trade-press reports put the number of Austin masters between thirty (*Billboard*) and fifty (*DownBeat*), but Bill Putnam recalled that the actual number was approximately twenty, of which only a few were used.

The Universal Double Feature, a fine-groove 78 with two selections per side, was introduced on January 15, 1949, with labels showing a 1948 copyright and crediting the fictitious Double Feature Records, Inc. Putnam employed Emory Cook's state-of-the-art QC equipment to produce the Double Feature masters (see Cook Laboratories). Retailing in dime stores for 79¢ (the same price as standard Universal releases), the Double Feature

was an unsuccessful attempt to compete with the newly introduced LP. To overcome objections from jukebox operators, who were opposed to giving two selections for the price of one, Putnam claimed to be developing an inexpensive attachment that would allow a single selection to be played. However, there appears to have been little interest in the device among jukebox manufacturers, and Double Feature was quickly discontinued. The Universal label itself was discontinued by the end of 1949.

By the early 1950s, Universal had leased a new building on East Ontario Street, after a brief stay in temporary quarters while construction was completed. Its client list expanded to include Aristocrat, Capitol, Chess, Decca, London (for which Putnam produced country-and-western masters using artists he recruited locally), United, and Vee Jay. In 1955 the company moved again, opening new studios and production facilities on East Walton.

Putnam sold his interest in Universal Recording in 1957 and moved to Los Angeles, where he launched the United Recording Corporation. Bernie Clapper assumed the presidency of Universal following Putnam's departure. The company's later history is beyond the scope of this work.

UNIVERSAL RECORDING STUDIOS / UNIVERSAL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: Late 1930s – c. Mid-1940s

Offices and Master Source(s): 13942 E. Jefferson, Detroit

Record Products: Universal [2]

Primarily a custom recording operation, the Universal Recording Studios also produced Detroit's first commercial record label beginning in the late 1930s, in the guise of the Universal Record Company.

Universal records featured country-and-western fare and were intended for local jukebox use. The company had a regional hit in 1939 with the York Brothers' "Hamtramck Mama." Sales were reportedly brisk across the upper Midwest, and the record attracted some notoriety after a district attorney in Detroit attempted to ban it from jukeboxes on the grounds that it was defamatory to the city of Hamtramck. The recording was licensed in the early 1940s to Detroit record store owner Edward Kiely, who reissued it on his Hot Wax and Mellow labels (*see* Mellow Music Shop). Universal failed to deliver a comparable hit, and the company appears to have suspended commercial record production by the mid-1940s.

UNIVERSAL RECORDS — *See* Globe Distributors

UNIVERSAL TALKING MACHINE (MANUFACTURING) COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1898–1912

Offices: Yonkers, New York (1898); 1234 Broadway, New York (c. 1899–early 1900s); 20 and 23 E. 20th St., New York (early 1900s–1/1903); 24 E. 22nd St., New York (1/1903–4/1903); 28 Warren St., New York (Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Co., 1904); Rooms 1405–1407, 257 Broadway, New York (c. 1905–1/1910)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — Unknown location (to 1/1903); 24 E. 22nd St., New York (1/1903–4/1903); 750 E. 134th St., New York (4/1903–c. early 1904); 152 E. 23rd St., New York (c. early 1904–1/1905); 256 W. 23rd St., New York (1/ 1905–early 1910); Victor studios (Camden, NJ, and New York, from early 1910)

Factory: Lincoln Ave., New York (mid-1899–3/1902); 130th St. & Park Ave., New York (3/1902–1904); Camp & Mulberry Sts., Newark, NJ (1904–2/1910); 4th & Race Sts., Philadelphia (from 2/1910)

Pressing: Burt Company (c. 1899–1901); Auburn Button Works, New York City branch (c. late 1901–4/1903; moved to 750 E. 134th St., New York (4/1903–1904); Duranoid Manufacturing (1904–1906; pressing plant purchased by Universal Talking Machine in 1906); Victor Talking Machine Company, Camden, NJ (1910–1912)

Record Products: Universal Talking Machine Company, Universal Zonophone, Zonophone, Disco Zonofono (export); Busy Bee, Oxford (c. 1909–1910), Mills "Perfeg" Record, Peerless [4] (sample or prototype); Standard [2] ("Standard" Record), Tetrassini Record (paste-over labels applied by outside parties). Label name was styled "Zonophone" or "Zon-O-Phone" at various times.

The Universal Talking Machine Company was the corporate descendant of Frank Seaman's National Gramophone Company, which originally marketed Berliner Gramophone Company products (*see* Berliner, Émile). Seaman had become dissatisfied with Berliner's commissions and pricing structure, as well as the company's failure to make timely

deliveries, produce a workable coin-operated disc phonograph, and pursue potential overseas markets.

Seaman resigned as president of National Gramophone on October 1, 1897, and was replaced by Orville La Dow. Following Seaman's departure, National Gramophone's already strained relationship with the Berliner company was largely severed. On December 19, 1897, National Gramophone advertised a competing disc machine, the Vo-Co-Phone, much to the displeasure of Berliner Gramophone president Thomas Parvin.

Seaman opened an experimental recording studio in New York in the autumn of 1897, with the knowledge and consent of the Berliner company. Its primary purpose seems to have been to demonstrate the recording process to the public, and it is not likely that any masters from Seaman's studio found their way into commercial production. More serious experimental recording, reportedly begun in late December 1897 under the direction of former Edison engineer Theo Wangemann, continued into mid-March of 1898. Electroplating of the masters was handled by Rhinebeck & Sons, Electrotypers (New York), but it is doubtful whether that any of those recordings were marketed commercially.

Incorporation papers for the Universal Talking Machine Company were filed on February 3, 1898, by New York residents Orlando J. Hackett, Edward A. Reser, and William Moyse, Jr., none of whom is known to have actively participated in the company's operation. Based in Yonkers, Universal was organized to "manufacture, buy, own and sell, coin actuating and other automatic devices, and also machines for reproducing musical and other sounds..." according to its incorporation papers. La Dow was elected president of the new company, while retaining his position as secretary and manager of National Gramophone, which would drop the Berliner line and instead act as Universal's sales agent. Seaman justified creation of the new company based upon a clause in his 1896 contract with Berliner under which Seaman was allowed to obtain machines and records from other sources should Berliner fail to deliver satisfactory goods in a timely manner, as had been the case.

Initially, the Universal Talking Machine Company simply sold modified Berliner products through the National Gramophone Company. During the summer of 1898, Seaman hired H. H. Eldred to deliver a batch of Berliner machines to Europe from which the Berliner decals had been effaced and covered with celluloid Zonophone nameplates.

Universal claimed use of its Zonophone brand (unhyphenated in the original trademark application) on phonographs beginning August 11, 1898, although National Gramophone had already used the name as early as February 24, 1898, in a *New York Evening Post* advertisement. The earliest known public appearance of the Universal Talking Machine Company name is in an advertisement in October of that year, in *Munsey's Magazine*.

By the autumn of 1898, inventor Louis P. Valiquet had joined the Universal staff. In March 1899, Seaman's company was reorganized as the National Gramophone Corporation, with Frederick M. Prescott handling the growing export business. Within several months, Berliner ceased all shipment of goods to the new company, which then began marketing what it claimed were its own discs. In fact, they were simply pirated pressings from electroplated copies of commercial Berliner pressings, using the original catalog numbers, but with Berliner's name and patent notices effaced.

Production of Zonophone machines got under way at approximately the same time. A mechanical-feed machine, utilizing a George K. Cheney patent, was briefly pictured in an 1899 advertisement, but possibly was never sold. Subsequent advertisements picture a more conventional-looking model without the feed mechanism. *The Phonoscope* for June 1899 (which probably was published a month or more after its stated cover date) reported that the Universal Talking Machine Company had "started a large factory...where they employ about forty people, making Gramophones under the name of Zonophones, thereby avoiding the heavy royalties which the National Gramophone Corporation are obliged to pay to Emile Berliner, the inventor, and the Berliner Company." Deliveries of the new machines were expected to commence on or about September 15.

Berliner Gramophone discs, with an additional hole drilled through the label area (to accommodate a retractable pin on the Zonophone turntable), might have been National Gramophone's first record offerings. Their date of introduction is uncertain but would have been after Universal began manufacturing its own phonographs in or around mid-1899.

The Universal Talking Machine Company's first original masters probably were made in the autumn of 1899, after the company secured the exclusive services of recording engineer John C. English. The employment agreement was signed on June 12, 1899, although English's official starting date was given in later court testimony as October 12 of that year. The contract specified that English would develop recording equipment and processes exclusively for the Universal Talking Machine Company and would assign all inventions and improvements to the company. Pressing was contracted to The Burt Company, which had already pressed some discs for Berliner. The unbranded 7" pressings probably were produced for only a very short time. They were quickly replaced by 7" pressings into which the Universal Talking Machine Company logo (but not the Zonophone brand) was crudely embossed, the company's first attempt at a label design.

The Zonophone brand finally appeared on discs in or around September 1899, when Zonophone products were first advertised in *The Phonoscope*. The earliest 7" Zonophone-branded discs, showing the embossed Zonophone and National Gramophone Corporation imprints within a shield, were numbered in a 9000 series, which eventually extended into the 10000s. A few early American Zonophone pressings are known with embossed Hannover back-plate, indicating they were pressed at the International Zonophone Company's German plant. In or around late 1901, the pressing of Zonophone discs was taken over by the Auburn Button Works, which opened a branch plant in New York City to accommodate Zonophone.

English left Universal in March 1901 for the Globe Record Company (*q.v.*) and was immediately sued by Universal Talking Machine for breach of contract and disclosure of trade secrets. English's defense was that he had not discovered or invented anything of significance while employed by Universal, and "now knows no more on the subject than when he first entered plaintiff's employ." Universal's motion was denied, and a temporary injunction preventing English from working for Globe was vacated.

English's replacement was George K. Cheney, who had worked in the Zonophone studio during English's tenure. In 1902 he patented a method of recording on cold wax with a heated stylus and declared that "all of the original [Zonophone] records are made by a method or process of my own, the details of which are known by no one else." In a 1904 affidavit, Cheney stated that he recorded Zonophone masters on high-quality tallow blanks, occasionally substituting stearic acid when tallow could not be obtained.

In May 1901, Frederick M. Prescott (who had been exporting Universal Talking Machine products to Europe) formed the International Zonophone Company in New York. By May 1901, Prescott had opened an office in Berlin, and the first German Zonophone discs were issued in September of that year. In the meantime, on April 6, 1901, Universal had signed a licensing agreement with the American Graphophone Company (Columbia), which extended protection to Universal under its Bell-Tainter patent. Universal was to pay royalties on its record sales to Columbia, and for a brief period in 1900–1901, Columbia (which was not yet producing its own disc phonographs and records) allowed its dealers to stock Zonophone goods.

The National Gramophone Corporation was declared bankrupt in September 1901. It eventually was placed in receivership, and some of its assets were auctioned in February 1905. However, the company remained a legal entity until March 1908, when it was finally voluntarily dissolved. Its last remaining assets, including a large number of foreign patents and its manufacturing formulas, were auctioned in April of that year.

National Gramophone's failure deprived Universal Talking Machine of financial backing and a sales outlet. On October 28, 1901, Universal was forced to sell its assets. A new company, the Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Company, was organized on December 19, 1901, to handle the manufacturing of Zonophone products. A reorganized Universal Talking Machine Company took over National Gramophone's sales and distribution role. Louis Valiquet remained on staff and assigned a number of important patents to the reorganized company.

Although the original Universal Talking Machine Company had been licensed by American Graphophone, the new Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Company enjoyed no such protection. Consequently, American Graphophone sued the company for infringement of its Bell-Tainter patent on March 2, 1902. An injunction was granted on November 25 that barred the manufacture and sale of records by Universal. Within a matter

of days, American Graphophone began filing lawsuits against dealers who continued to handle Zonophone records. In response, Universal offered to pay dealers' legal defense fees, but American Graphophone's tactics proved to be effective in discouraging dealers from handling the records.

Prevented from producing its own records, and unable to sell those already in inventory, Universal officials met with The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. in London in April 1903. Negotiations were begun for the sale of the Universal Talking Machine Company, Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Company, and the latter's shares in the International Zonophone Company to G&T. In the same month, Universal opened what was represented as its own pressing plant, which appears actually to have been owned by the Auburn Button Works, with George Cheney serving as superintendent. In May it introduced a new line of brown-shellac pressings, the first Zonophone discs to carry paper labels.

The sale to G&T was agreed to on June 6, 1903, and concluding negotiations were completed in early August. By that time, rumors were already circulating that Victor Talking Machine Company president Eldridge Johnson was in some way involved with the sale. The rumors were confirmed on September 12, 1903 (several days before negotiations were completed), when the news was leaked that Johnson would personally purchase a controlling interest in the Universal Talking Machine and Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing companies from G&T for \$135,000. The sale included rights to the Zonophone brand in the United States, but not elsewhere. G&T would retain control of the International Zonophone Company, as well as rights to the Zonophone brand outside of the U.S.

Contrary to many modern accounts, the purchase was not made by the Victor Talking Machine Company *per se*, but by Johnson himself. Johnson made the purchase only to gain control of a competitor, as was pointed out in Victor's *Second Annual Report to Stockholders*. No doubt anticipating further legal attacks on Zonophone by Columbia, Johnson maintained Victor and Universal Talking Machine as separate companies. In a letter to dealers dated October 7, 1903, Victor vice-president Leon Douglass stated, "The Victor Talking Machine Company does not own the Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Co., but Mr. Eldridge R. Johnson, President of the Victor Co., owns a large block of stock in the Universal Co. The two companies are entirely separate and independent, are competitors, and, so far as we know, will continue to be competitors."

Johnson appears to have had little to do with Universal Talking Machine's operations (which he rarely mentioned in his correspondence or other papers), leaving management largely in the hands of its own staff for the next seven years. Universal operated its own studio independently of Victor, and for the first year under Johnson's ownership it continued to make its own pressings. Some signs of new ownership finally appeared in late 1904, when the 9" brown-shellac discs were replaced by standard 10" black-shellac discs pressed by the Duranoid Company, which was handling much of Victor's pressing. Surplus 7" and 9" pressings, pre-dating Johnson's purchase, remained in the 1905 Zonophone catalogs and were still being advertised at full price as late as December of that year. Eventually, the remaining pre-Johnson inventory was liquidated at discounted prices.

Beginning at #1, the new Duranoid pressings closely resembled Victor's, and the reverse-side labels claimed protection under Victor's Berliner patent. The similarities ended there, however. A new Zonophone studio was opened in early 1905, under the supervision of Henry J. Hagen, and the company continued to make its own decisions in regards to artists and repertoire. Fred Hager stayed on as musical director until April 1906, when he resigned to devote more time to his music-publishing business. He agreed to let Zonophone continue using his name on recordings by its house band and orchestra for a time. His replacement was Edward King, who would later have a long career with Victor. A 12" Zonophone series was launched in March 1907 but did not sell well, and only a few new 12" releases were listed after November of that year.

Ongoing legal challenges from Columbia, as well as Universal Talking Machine's own actions on occasion, justified Johnson's decision to maintain an arms-length relationship. In March 1904, for example, Universal was sued by composer Victor Herbert, whose orchestra had been widely advertised as recording for Zonophone. In fact, the recordings were made by a band with which Herbert had no connection. Zonophone's defense was that Herbert had given verbal consent to use his name, which the company was unable

to prove. In its ruling against Universal (*Victor Herbert v. Universal Talking Machine Co.*, N.Y.L.J., March 9, 1904), the court ruled that "the defendant sold graphophone [*sic*] records, using in connection therewith the name of the plaintiff, who had nothing whatever to do with them."

Double-sided Zonophone pressings, the earliest of which were couplings of previous single-sided issues, were announced on September 17, 1908, the same day that Victor announced its double-sided pressings. The records were on the market by late November. Priced at just 65¢ (a nickel more than the single-sided discs), the new records bore redesigned labels that cited additional Victor patents and featured Zonophone's infant-and-phonograph trademark, "On Speaking Terms." Universal had filed an application for the trademark on May 27, 1907, and it had begun appearing in advertisements soon thereafter, but it had not been used on the single-sided pressings. The new records met resistance from dealers, who complained that offering two selections for 5¢ more than the price of one constituted price-cutting. As a result, many dealers dropped the Zonophone line, and at least one filed a lawsuit against Universal Talking Machine.

Sale of Zonophone products undoubtedly took some market share from Victor. Its later phonographs were basically just less-expensive versions of the Victor, and its record catalog offered much the same material as Victor's black-label line, sometimes by the same artists, for 10¢ less than comparable Victor releases. In 1908 it undercut Victor's first releases by Luisa Tetrazzini by selling reissues of some of her 1904 Zonophone recordings for substantially less than her Victor Red Seals. As the decade drew to a close, plans were being drawn up to bring Universal Talking Machine under Victor's control.

In January 1909 a tentative decision was made to close the Zonophone studio and offices and transfer all Zonophone recording sessions to Victor's studios. However, the move did not occur until the spring of 1910, when Zonophone's studios and offices were closed. Of the Universal Talking Machine Company staff, Hagen and King were given comparable positions with Victor. Many others were simply let go. Beginning in May or June 1910, Zonophone's recordings were made in the Victor studios under the supervision of Victor personnel. The masters were assigned a special Z prefix and were never issued under the Victor label. During the transition, however, a few of Victor's own B-series masters that had been rejected for issue on the Victor label were transferred to Zonophone. The practice was quickly discontinued.

The introduction of the Z-series masters marked Victor's final takeover of Zonophone production. The masters were made in Victor's Camden and New York studios under the supervision of Victor recording engineer Harry Sooy, using Victor's own house conductors (usually Edward King in New York and Walter B. Rogers, with Arthur Pryor occasionally substituting in Camden). Unlike the earlier Zonophone masters, file documentation for some of the Z-series masters survives in the Victor archives.

Aside from the Victor B-series masters, there are a few other documented examples of master swapping between Victor and American Zonophone. What little did occur mainly involved recordings made in Asia by Zonophone engineer George Cheney under Victor's auspices. During this time, the Duranoid Company (whose pressing plant had been acquired by Universal Talking Machine in 1906) also made pressings from Zonophone masters for several of Universal's client labels, including Busy Bee and Oxford. In addition, Eldridge Johnson gave permission to reissue some discontinued 7" Victor recordings within Zonophone's Oxford series.

In the meantime, American Graphophone had obtained another injunction against the Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Company, this time charging infringement of its Jones patent. However, it initially did not enforce the injunction, on the widely held supposition that Universal was owned by the Victor Talking Machine Company and thus was protected under Victor's and Columbia's cross-licensing agreement of December 1903. Once Universal's status as an independent company was accidentally disclosed by Victor and Universal executives during the course of some unrelated litigation, American Graphophone demanded that the 1907 injunction be enforced, that Universal Talking Machine be held in contempt, and that an accounting be made of all Zonophone records manufactured since the 1907 ruling. American Graphophone's motion was denied on August 17, 1909, but the company persisted in its attempts to drive Universal out of business.

Faced with declining Zonophone sales, soaring litigation costs, and the prospect of an adverse ruling at American Graphophone's hands, the Universal Talking Machine's shareholders decided to close the operation. The last documented Zonophone recording sessions were held in April 1912. On May 27, *The New York Times* carried notices to stockholders of the Universal Talking Machine and Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing companies advising that a meeting was to be held on June 17, 1912, "for the purpose of voting upon a proposition to dissolve said company forthwith."

The shareholders agreed to dissolve both companies and liquidate their affairs. The dissolution was formally certified by the State of New York on June 20, 1912, and production of Zonophone products was halted. Dealers and customers were notified of the action in a letter dispatched on June 28, which confirmed that no new records would be issued. A July catalog supplement that had been announced earlier was never released. A proposal that Zonophone records be listed in the Victor catalog was referred to general manager Louis Geissler by Victor's executive committee on July 16, and was rejected. On July 26, Victor officials authorized a tax write-off sufficient to cover Universal Talking Machine's losses for the first half of 1912. The remaining inventory was destroyed. Some dealers who were left with unsold Zonophone records relabeled them to disguise what had become a damaged brand.

The Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Company resurfaced in the legal records in July 1913, when an appeal of an earlier case against the Southern California Music Company was heard in the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. However, the company had been out of business for a year by then. The last known reference to the Universal Talking Machine Company in the Victor files is a 1918 order that its remaining paperwork be destroyed.

UNIVERSITY RECORDING COMPANY, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1947

Mailing Address: 7870 Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: University [2]

Launched in the summer of 1945 by songwriter and band leader Jimmie Richards, as an adjunct to his University Publishing Company, to promote songs by amateur and semi-professional writers. In a 1947 interview, Richards told a *Cash Box* reporter, "There are a great number of songs written from the heart, with more music appeal than a great number of songs written by the professional writers of today." The records were marketed primarily to jukebox operators and disc jockeys. After distributing briefly through Coinmatic, the company switched to Allied Products in December 1945.

University was primarily a pop label, with an artist roster included Richards' own Southerners, Al Donahue's Orchestra, Red Nichols' Five Pennies, and Pinky Tomlin, along with some lesser-known local talent. The initial releases appeared in the autumn of 1945, and Richards placed a large display advertisement in *Billboard* in November, but his label soon faded from notice. In January 1947, he severed relations with his distributors and began selling his records directly to retailers and jukebox operators, offering them a 50% discount at a time when 40% was the norm. Even that inducement was not sufficient to prevent University's failure in the summer of 1947.

An unrelated University Records was launched in New York in July 1947. A producer of custom albums for the use of schools and educational associations, it is beyond the scope of this work.

UNIVERSITY RECORDS CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1921 – c. 1923

Offices: New York (PO box number only; no street address given)

Original-Master Source(s): Vocalion studio

Pressing: Vocalion plant

Record Products: University [1] (University Records; customized names and designs)

A short-lived operation specializing in college and fraternity songs. The records were produced by The Aeolian Company (Vocalion), which recorded most of the masters for University Records' exclusive use and pressed the discs in its customary orange shellac. Each fraternity was given a customized label, printed in full color. University Records filed

label registrations with the Patent Office for four of its customized designs on October 27, 1922, although the Vocalion master numbers indicate that some of the recordings had been made the previous year. At some point, the Fraternity Record Company (*q.v.*) took over distribution and sales of the University Records label, to which it affixed stickers reading, "Successor to University Records," or "University Records Has Become Fraternity Record Co." before dropping the line in favor of its own Fraternity label.

UPTOWN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1949

Offices: Newark, NJ (PO box number only; no street address given)

Record Products: Uptown [2]

Launched in late 1948 by Leonard Cohen (not the singer-songwriter of the same name) as a race-record label, with Bill Martin serving as manager of artists and repertoire. Specializing in jazz, jump, and rhythm-and-blues, the Uptown label was intended mainly for jukebox use. The records, which retailed for the standard 79¢, were handled by several regional distributors, including Belmont, Chord, and F&M, but apparently lacked coverage in the southern states (one advertisement admonished, "Southern Distributors...Wake Up!!!"). There is no connection to the Lasso Record Company's Uptown [1] label, which was produced during the same period.

Billboard reported that Uptown had a backlog of masters recorded prior to the start of the second American Federation of Musicians' recording ban in January 1948. Its first releases ("Bashful Bubber Blows" by the George Barkley Quintet with saxophonist Bubber Brooker) was announced in December 1948. A week after its release, *Billboard* reported that the record was "already smoking up attention." In early 1949, Cohen arranged to have the record distributed in Canada by Monogram, which took an option to distribute further Uptown releases as well.

Uptown releases garnered mixed reviews, with one *Billboard* critic complaining that Bubber Brooks' "conception is not strong" and the he "doesn't build to an effective resolution." Uptown's last known release was listed in late 1949. The records were still being handled by some distributors as late as March 1950, but nothing more was reported on the company after that.

URAB RECORDING STUDIO / UNITED RECORDING ARTISTS BUREAU (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1939 – c. 1959

Offices: 245 W. 34th St., New York; 2181 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, NY (later 1950s)

Record Products: URAB [1]; custom and private labels

The URAB Recording Studio claimed to have been established in 1939. It was first listed by *Radio Annual* in its 1941 directory. Jay Alexander served as executive director, Mark Rubens as musical director, and one "Miss Marianne" (whose full name was not stated) as business manager.

URAB initially operated as a vanity service that offered to set clients' poems to music and printed the score. The results were then recorded, often by house song-plugger Jack Allyn, and copied onto a small number of acetates at the client's expense. Among URAB's customers were James A. McGrane and Angelo Bacari, a guard and band-master, respectively, at Sing Sing prison. The company also offered independent pressing and printing services, published a 25¢ "Treatise on Song Writing," and dealt in used records, which it sold for 16¢ each in lots of 100.

As the United Recording Artists Bureau, URAB began commercial record production during the summer of 1946. The records were advertised nationally beginning in February 1947. The label appears to have been discontinued in 1948, after releasing a few inconsequential pop items by obscure artists. The URAB Recording Studio continued to market its vanity recording and publishing services into the late 1950s, mainly through small classified ads in *Popular Mechanics* and similar magazines.

In late 1947 or early 1948, Byers Music Publishing launched an apparently unrelated Urab label, which appears to have been quickly discontinued (*see* Red Bird Recordings).

URBAN RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1948

Offices: 1801 N. Curson, Los Angeles; 1506 N. Sierra Bonita, Hollywood, CA (Sierra Distributing Company)

Record Products: Urban

Launched by Ed Urban in early 1946. *Cash Box* reviewed two early releases in March 1946. A month later, the same publication reported that Urban was planning to do his own recording and pressing in a newly acquired building. The records initially were handled by the Hollywood-based Sierra Distributing Company.

Intended primarily for jukebox operators (to whom they were sold for just 33¢ each), Urban records offered a mixture of race, gospel, pop, and country-and-western material, along with an Arabic series that went largely unmentioned. The artist roster was made up of lesser-known artists, including singer Pat Kay, Art West's Sunset Riders, and Paul Page's Paradise Music.

During the summer of 1946, Urban joined several other small West Coast labels in a cooperative manufacturing and marketing arrangement with Sierra Distributing, which almost immediately turned the labels over to Charles House's and John Davis' Independent Record Sales Company. Urban was handed off again in mid-1947, this time to the United Artist Records cooperative. Production continued under a co-branded United Artist–Urban label until April 1948, when United Artist filed for bankruptcy. Urban briefly reverted to independent status, but the company appears to have been inactive by 1949.

UTAH PHONOGRAPH COMPANY — See Colorado and Utah Phonograph Company

— V —

VALUE RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1519 South St. Philadelphia; same, plus 1801-03 Ridge Ave., Philadelphia, and another unknown address (Paramount Record Shop)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Value

Launched in October 1949 by Feliciano (Felix) Valdera. Value Records was an offshoot of the Paramount Record Shop at the same address. Founded in the late 1930s by Valdera and his wife, Ernestine, in partnership with Samuel R. Harris and Glendella Harris, the store stocked a wide array of small independent labels. It later expanded to two other locations.

The Valdera's original South Street store housed a studio that offered custom recording services as early as 1942, doing business as the Paramount Record Manufacturing and Recording Company. At the time of Value's launch in 1949, Felix Valdera was hosting "Jumping at the Record Shop" on radio station WIBG (Philadelphia), and told a *Billboard* reporter that business at the store was booming.

Value was Valdera's first label for the consumer market. *Billboard* mentioned the label in October 1949, reporting that it would launch in November and feature "spiritual singing." The recordings were to be made in Paramount Record Shop studio, according to the report, but nothing more was reported concerning the venture.

VAN-ES RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – c. 1949

Offices: 607 N. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles

Record Products: Van-Es

Launched in early 1947 by disc jockey Bob McLaughlin (KLAC–Los Angeles). Robert Gordon served as vice-president and handled marketing. The earliest Van-Es releases, by Barclay Allen's Rhythm Four, were on sale by June 1947. *Variety* reported that Allen was a co-owner of Van-Es, which has not been confirmed. The story appears questionable, given that Allen breached his Van-Es contract to record for Ambassador and Enterprise in

1947, causing McLaughlin to demand his Van-Es masters be destroyed. The company was last listed in *Billboard's* manufacturer directory in January 1949.

VAN KAMPEN PRESS — See Bibletone

VANGUARD RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947

Offices: 787 Washington St., New York

Record Products: Vanguard

A very short-lived venture launched in early 1947 by Jim Blish and Robert A. W. Lowndes, members of the Vanguard Amateur Press Association. The association, which operated at the same address as Vanguard Records, was a group of science-fiction writers and publishers that was formed in 1945 and disbanded in 1950.

Vanguard Records' minuscule output had no known science-fiction component, despite its affiliation with VAPA. Its first release, in March 1947, comprised two pop tunes by Joanne Lowell with the Red Camp Quintet. A *Billboard* reviewer dismissed Lowell as "displaying no voice, no warmth, no style...hardly worth the hearing." The second release, in April, featured pianist Bertha Melnik in two works composed expressly for the label (Sam Morgenstern's "Toccata Guatemala" and Chandler Davis' "Song of Worlds Unseen") and was more favorably reviewed.

A month later, *Billboard* reported that producer Norman Granz was considering "activating" his Vanguard label, which he claimed to have founded in 1942, but which had not released any recordings. The report coincides with the disappearance of VAPA's Vanguard label.

The Vanguard name was used beginning in 1950 by Seymour Solomon's much better-known Vanguard Recording Society, which went directly to LP production without having produced 78s, and thus is beyond the scope of this work.

VARGO RECORD COMPANY / DICCHA INDUSTRIES (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1951

Offices: 1011 E. Main St., Owosso, MI

Pressing: Own plant — Owosso, MI

Record Products: Vargo; pressings for independent and custom labels

An independent pressing plant launched by engineer Lawson Turner in 1946, originally as Diccha Industries. Diccha advertised a special process for producing standard matrices from anyone's "master recordings," presumably referring to instantaneous lacquers or acetates. Plastic as well as standard shellac pressings were offered. In addition to its custom plating and pressing work, Diccha pressed records for Alben, Latin American, and other small independent labels.

Diccha Industries was reorganized in late 1947 as Vargo, Inc. Its new recording division would do business as the Vargo Record Company, although Diccha had already been notified that the American Federation of Musicians would not be renewing its recording contract at the end of December. The first Vargo release listed in the *Billboard* advances appeared in January 1948. The company had stockpiled masters in advance of the second AFM recording ban. Early releases heavily favored dance numbers credited to Don Pablo's Orchestra (from the Detroit-based Latin American label, which Diccha distributed), and a smattering of Latino and country-and-recordings, mostly by obscure regional performers.

Production of Vargo discs was suspended in the autumn of 1948 while Turner installed new pressing equipment and fended off rumors that his plant was for sale. The suspension was said to be temporary, but *Billboard* reported that Turner had sold some Vargo masters (including unissued material) to Rondo Records and was dropping a "substantial part" of his own line to concentrate on pressing for other labels.

On October 27, 1951, it was announced that James Siracuse's American Record Pressing Company (Detroit) had purchased Vargo, Inc., including its masters and the Owosso plant, and would be dropping the Vargo label. Turner by then had exited the record business and was working as a jet engineer

VARIETY RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1950

Offices: 746 N. La Cienega Blvd., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Variety [3]

Founded in late 1946, Variety Records initially specialized in comic and novelty material. There was no connection Irving Mills' earlier Variety label (*see* Master Records [I]).

Variety's first release, a multi-disc album announced in January 1947, included dubbings of the late W. C. Fields' "The Day I Drank a Glass of Water" and "The Temperance Lecture." Made under the supervision of Bill Morrow, the records featured new musical accompaniments that were overdubbed by guitarist Les Paul (who received no label credit) in his home studio. Single-disc releases, beginning with three Irish-style items by singer Pat O'Brien, were introduced in March.

Distribution initially was handled by the Jack Gutshall Distributing Company, but later in 1947, production and distribution were taken over by United Artist Records (*q.v.*), a cooperative venture that issued Variety recordings under its own United Artist label, with the credit, "Produced by Variety Records." The move came as Variety was expanding into the country-and-western market, beginning with the signing of Smiley Burnette in the autumn of that year.

Variety Records survived United Artist's collapse in 1948, recovered its masters, and resumed operation as a fully independent label. Its final releases appeared in late 1949 or early 1950. The company is of no known relation to a similarly named New York firm that began operation in 1951.

JAMES D. VAUGHAN, PUBLISHER (Discs)

Record Production: 1923 – c. 1930

Offices: Lawrenceburg Square, Lawrenceburg, TN

Studios and Pressing: Recording and pressing contracted to Starr Piano Company

Record Products: Vaughan

A significant figure in southern White gospel music, James D. Vaughan published numerous shape-note song books, operated the Vaughan School of Music, and in the mid-1920s served as mayor of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. In October 1922, he purchased Lawrenceburg radio station WOAN, which in 1924 was upgraded to a 500-watt Class 1 station. By the mid-1920s, sixteen Vaughan-managed vocal quartets were on the road or in the radio studios promoting his songs, and at least two of them recorded for Victor in 1928–1929.

Vaughan launched his own record label in 1923. He dispatched his artists to the Starr Piano Company's Gennett studio in Richmond, Indiana, which according to the company ledgers charged him \$40 per finished master. The recordings were made for his exclusive use and are not known to have appeared on other labels. Although devoted to religious material, the label issued one notable secular item, "Hold 'Er Newt (They're After Us)," a primitive ragtime solo by local pianist Theodore Shaw, who accompanied the Vaughan Quartet's "Wake Up America and Kluck-Kluck-Kluck" (a Ku Klux Klan-related song) on the record's reverse side.

The earliest Vaughan sessions documented in the Gennett ledgers were held in Richmond during June 17–22, 1922. Masters from Vaughan's April 1924 sessions were assigned special numbers with "11B" prefixes, for reasons that are not noted in the Gennett files. Aside from one known issue from Gennett's K-prefixed Ku Klux Klan series, Vaughan's later masters were numbered in the standard Gennett series. Catalog numbers began at 300 and increased incrementally by twenty-five, eventually reaching the 1800s in early 1930. Two anomalous issues, Vaughan 1550 and 1575, were produced by the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount) in or around late 1926, during Gennett's difficult transition to electrical recording. The last Vaughan session located in the Gennett ledgers was held on June 10, 1930.

James D. Vaughan died on February 9, 1941. The company continued to operate under his son Keiffer's management until its sale in May 1964. The James D. Vaughan Museum opened in Lawrenceburg in September 1999.

VEGA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – c. 1951

Offices: 720 Queen Anne Ave., Seattle (to mid-1950); 146 W. 37th Place, Los Angeles (from mid-1950)

Original-Master Source(s): Morrison Music Company studio (early issues), other independent studios

Pressing: Morrison Music (1950), Universal Plastics (from mid-1950)

Record Products: Vega

Launched in Seattle in early 1950, originally in affiliation with the Morrison Music Company, *q.v.* The earliest Vega releases were pressed in the same multi-colored "spatter" plastic as Morrison records and featured recordings by Morrison's house artists. Distribution was limited to the West Coast, and the series was short-lived.

In the summer of 1950, Vega Records was taken over by Trumpis-Collar & Associates, owners of the Universal Plastics pressing plant. Trumpis-Collar pressed and distributed for many companies, but Vega was the only label it is known to have owned outright. The Vega operation was moved to Los Angeles, where the company began recording its own masters and exploring the country-and-western market. Pressing was transferred to Universal Plastics, which produced standard black plastic pressings. At about the same time, distribution was expanded into Chicago and other midwestern cities. The Morrison Music connection was not entirely severed, however, with Vega handling distribution of the Morrison label.

Vega introduced 98¢ LPs during the summer of 1950, in an attempt to compete with the cut-rate Remington and Varsity lines. The company employed what were described as self-developed materials and pressing techniques that reportedly would permit a good margin for dealers "willing to cooperate" with the company's marketing plans. After several months of largely local sales, in October 1950 it was reported that Trumpis-Collar was signing distributors to handle Vega LPs on a national scale. However, advertising was meager, and the records apparently aroused little interest. The last confirmed releases appeared in 1951. The Vega name was later used by several unrelated labels, including operations in Montana and New York.

VELVET RECORD COMPANY

Record Production: 1949 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1145 N. Detroit, Hollywood, CA (to 9/1949); 6447 River Rd., Cincinnati (from 10/1949)

Record Products: Velvet

Owned and operated by songwriter Wally Wiley, and originally headquartered in Hollywood. Velvet's slogan was "So Smooth."

Velvet's first offering, released in early April 1949, was by Dick Farney, a pop singer *Billboard* termed a "Crosby-type crooner." In addition to Farney (who left the label and moved to Mexico a short time later), the roster included country singer Redd Harper and a novelty pianist identified only as "The Old Ragtimer."

Wiley moved his operation to Cincinnati in the autumn of 1949, citing the city's centralized location and his need to escape the high cost of labor and manufacturing on the West Coast. He reportedly drove from Hollywood to Cincinnati, plugging his records to radio stations and disc jockeys along the way, but little more was heard of Velvet after the move. The company last appeared in *Billboard*'s label directory in July 1950. The Velvet name was later used by several unrelated labels.

VELVET TONE RECORD COMPANY

Although some press releases and advertisements made it appear that the Velvet Tone Record Company was an independent operation, it was simply a trade name of the Columbia Phonograph Company, which registered the trademark on June 21, 1926.

VERDI MUSIC SHOPS (E. E. VERDI) — See J. & J. Clano

VERNE RECORDING CORPORATION OF AMERICA (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1950s

Offices: 1724 Madison Ave., New York

Record Products (78s): Verne, Verne Latino

Founded by Luis Cuevas in January 1945 in affiliation with the Hernandez Music Company, which operated at the same address. Charles Lopez served as artists-and-repertoire manager, and Ernie Ballesta as advertising manager. The company was chartered to "conduct a business in records."

Verne records were being advertised on a very small scale by early 1947. The label specialized in material for the Latino market, employing domestic and foreign artists. In late 1948, Ballesta devoted six weeks to a promotional tour of Puerto Rico, then moved on to Havana, where Cuevas was supervising recording sessions and arranging for distribution throughout the Caribbean region. A 1948 copyright suit, brought by Juan Acosta over Verne's alleged unauthorized recording of his "Bajo la Sombra de un Pino," apparently had little or no effect on operations, which continued well into the 1950s.

VICTOR TALKING MACHINE COMPANY and Predecessor Companies (Discs)

CONSOLIDATED TALKING MACHINE COMPANY

Record Production: 1900

Offices: 108 N. Front St., Camden, NJ (through 1/1900); 120 N. Front St. (from 2/1900)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio — Johnson Factory Building, Camden, NJ

Pressing: Duranoid Manufacturing Company

Record Products: Improved Gram-O-Phone Record

ELDRIDGE R. JOHNSON

Record Production: 1900–1901

Offices: Philadelphia; Camden, NJ

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — Johnson Factory Building, Camden, NJ (to 9/1901); 424 S. 10th St., Philadelphia (9–10/1901)

Pressing: Duranoid Manufacturing Company

Record Products: Improved Record, Victor Monarch Record, Victor Record, Victor Ten-Inch Record

VICTOR TALKING MACHINE COMPANY

Record Production: 1901 – 1929

Offices: Front & Cooper Sts., Camden, NJ (principal office, from 1901); Stephen Girard Building (Room 1313), Philadelphia (branch, from 1901)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — 424 S. 10th St., Philadelphia (10/1901–11/1907); Front and Cooper Sts. (Building #15), Camden, NJ (from week of 11/25/1907); Trinity Church, 114 5th Ave., Camden, NJ (from 3/1918); Carnegie Hall (Room 826), New York (3/26/1903–10/8/1904); 234 5th Ave., New York (10/9/1904–6/1/1909); 37–39 E. 28th St., New York (6/2/1909–4/1912); 12–14 W. 37th St., New York (5/1912–1/18/1917); 46 W. 38th St., New York (1/19/1917–1/5/1921); 28 W. 44th St., New York (from 1/6/1921); Liederkrantz Hall, E. 58th St., New York (from 5/1927); Oakland, CA (from 5/1924); 952 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago (from 1/30/1927); Atlanta (from 6/3/1927); Culver City, CA (1929–late 1930); other temporary locations from 1908, including Havana, Mexico City, and Rio de Janeiro. Regular recording tours (initially to Chicago, but later including numerous cities) began in 1921. Foreign masters supplied by The Gramophone Company.

Pressing: Duranoid Manufacturing; auxiliary pressing by Burt Company (1901–1902); own plant — Market St., Camden (from 1902, with Duranoid continuing to handle overflow into 1906); Oakland, CA (from 5/1924)

Foreign Affiliates: The Gramophone & Typewriter, Ltd. (England); The Gramophone Company (England); Compagnie Française du Gramophone (France); Deutschen Grammophon A.G. (Germany, to 1914); other Gramophone Company affiliates (Europe); Berliner Gramophone Company, Ltd. (Canada); Pan American Recording Company (Argentina); Victor Company of Canada

Record Products: Victor, De Luxe Record [1], De Luxe Special Record, Melba Record, Monarch Record, Victor Monarch Record, Victor Ten-Inch Record, Victrola, Victrollette (prototype), Zonophone (19010–1912 only); Bubble Books (children's, from 9/1924); Pict-Ur-Music, Vitaphone and other synchronized and non-synchronized soundtrack discs; radio transcriptions and numerous other private, promotional, and special-use labels. *See also* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division).

The largest and most successful American record manufacturer of its time, the Victor Talking Machine Company traces its roots to Eldridge R. Johnson's small machine shop in Camden, New Jersey. Johnson recalled having first seen the Berliner Gramophone in early 1896, which at the time was still a primitive, hand-powered device. He soon developed an improved, spring-motor-driven prototype that was a considerable improvement over the existing machine. In August of that year, with the financial support of Levi Montross, Johnson began supplying Berliner with his improved machines. Johnson and Montross subsequently severed relations, following a dispute over division of profits, leaving Johnson to carry on alone as Berliner's primary supplier.

At the same time, Johnson began experimenting with a new recording process on his own. It involved recording on wax disc masters, a significant improvement over Berliner's noisy acid-etched zinc masters. There is evidence suggesting that Johnson's experimental recording work, and possibly some of his plant expansion, was financed by the Berliner Gramophone Company. Johnson applied for a patent on his process in 1898, which initially was contested as having been anticipated by earlier work. It finally was granted on August 11, 1908 (#896,059) and was assigned to the Victor Talking Machine Company, which employed it successfully for some time in its ongoing attempts to fend off aspiring competitors in the lateral-cut disc field.

Court records reveal that W. H. Nafey developed an improved method of copper-plating wax masters for Johnson in January 1898 and produced the first successful copper matrix in or around April of that year. On June 28, 1898, Johnson purchased Joseph Collings' Front Street building in Camden for \$4,500, and Nafey, Berkley Reinhart, and Harry O. Sooy were soon making experimental wax-matrix recordings there on a regular basis. Johnson's staffers (and sometimes Johnson himself) were pressed into service as performers.

According to Harry Sooy, Johnson originally planned to sell the wax-master process to the Berliner Gramophone Company. In anticipation of that event, he began recording masters for commercial use as early as January 30, 1900. Some of Johnson's wax masters reportedly were used on very late Berliner issues.

On May 24, 1900, it was reported that Frank Seaman's National Gramophone Corporation and the Universal Talking Machine Company (Zonophone) had formed "an alliance for legal protection" with the American Graphophone Company and Columbia Phonograph Company. Targeting Emile Berliner, the group secured an injunction preventing him from marketing Gramophone products, including records, on June 25. Suddenly deprived of his sole customer, Johnson decided to proceed to market with his own products.

Two days before the injunction was handed down, a group of Philadelphia investors had chartered the Johnson Sound Recording Company to "manufacture, sell and buy records of sound, machinery and tools for the reproduction of sound, and plants for the manufacture of same." The company was registered in Virginia, although no operations were conducted there, and none of the incorporators are known to have been directly involved in phonograph or record production. Its purpose appears to have been only to secure financing for Eldridge Johnson's new venture.

Johnson's earliest known discs, pre-dating the launch of his Consolidated Talking Machine Company, were unbranded 7" etched-label pressings probably produced during the spring and early summer of 1900. They closely resembled Berliner's discs, but in place of the Berliner logo was the legend, "This record is licensed only for use on Berliner Gramophone," with Johnson's patent notice displayed on the blank reverse sides. They were pressed from some of Johnson's earliest A-prefixed masters. Pressing was contracted to the Duranoid Company, as confirmed by Harry Sooy.

On July 6, 1900, the Consolidated Talking Machine Company of America was chartered in Camden, New Jersey, to acquire the stock of the Berliner Gramophone Company, the United States Gramophone Company (a holding company for the Berliner patents), and the Johnson Sound Recording Company, with Emile Berliner's stock comprising the largest portion of its holdings. Eldridge Johnson, who was not involved with the holding company, launched an identically named company in Philadelphia at about the same time, for the purpose of keeping his phonograph and record business separate from his machine-shop operation. Promptly challenged by the holding company, he deleted "of America" from his new company's name. By then, he was already planning to drop the Consolidated name altogether. With the Berliner operation at a standstill, Calvin Child and several other

recently discharged Berliner employees joined Johnson's staff and began cobbling together a preliminary catalog drawn from the experimental masters.

On August 8, 1900, Johnson filed a patent on a process for applying paper labels to discs. His Improved Gram-o-Phone Record, unveiled in late August or early September 1900 and credited to the Consolidated Talking Machine Company, was the first disc to use a paper label on the playing side. The records were advertised as a replacement for the Berliner Gramophone discs, signifying Johnson's split with Emile Berliner.

Because some early unnumbered recordings were assigned numbers at later dates, Johnson's master/catalog numbers did not always proceed in strict chronological order at first. The lowest-numbered Johnson master was George Broderick's "Departure" (A-1), recorded on June 28, 1900. However, the earliest Johnson master to be issued (violinist Charles D'Almaine's "Ben Bolt"), recorded on January 12, 1900, was assigned number A-405. Having produced 370 pressings, the stamper was returned by Duranoid on May 1, 1900, the same date on which regular commercial recording activities commenced (albeit sporadically at first) in the Johnson studio. As Harry Sooy recalled in his memoirs, Johnson already had a method in place for generating the large number of stampers that Duranoid would require, involving the production of a sub-master (pressed in very fine-grained material from the initial stamper) from which additional stampers could be electroplated.

Frank Seaman reentered the picture on October 5, 1900, when he secured an injunction to prevent United States Gramophone's acquisition by the Consolidated Talking Machine Company. An immediate result was the substitution of the Improved Record label, omitting the Gramophone name. The Improved label was introduced in November 1900, although the trademark was not approved until January 1, 1901. The Victor trademark, which first appeared in early 1901 on Johnson's new 10" pressings, was approved on March 12, 1901. The Improved and Victor pressings of the period were credited simply to "Eldridge R. Johnson, Camden, N.J." Reverse-side warning stickers show a company in transition, operating in both Philadelphia and Camden.

Although many colorful anecdotes have been published concerning the inspiration for the Victor name, the actual reason for its selection was more prosaic than those tales would have it. Vice-president Leon Douglass explained the decision in a letter to the trade on April 2, 1901: "Our machine talks, so we call it a 'TALKING MACHINE. It has proved superior to every other talking machine; so we call it the 'VICTOR.'"

Johnson's progress was briefly stalled in May 1901, when sixty of his workers joined a general machinists' strike. Johnson was the first employer to accede, agreeing to pay his machinists ten hours' salary for nine hours' work. He would go on to pioneer workers' benefits at the Victor factory, including on-site healthcare, paid summer vacations, and for a time, a free Thanksgiving turkey.

In September 1901, Johnson moved his studio from Camden to the former Berliner facility on the corner of 10th and Lombard streets in Philadelphia (where it would remain for the next six years) and began laying the groundwork for a new company that would further distance himself from the embattled Emile Berliner.

Johnson was anxious to resolve the legal uncertainties that had so far hobbled his operation. By late summer, he had concocted a plan that would protect his own interests as well as Berliner's. On September 28, 1901, Berliner licensed his patents to Johnson. That license, along with Johnson's own patents and business assets, would be combined and transferred to an entirely new corporation. Berliner would receive stock in the new company but would have no hand in its management or operation. He would be licensed to operate only in Canada, as a separate company.

The new venture was named the Victor Talking Machine Company. It was incorporated in Camden on October 3, 1901 — not by Johnson, who did not appear on the list of incorporators or investors — but by Leon Douglass, Albert C. Middleton, and Charles Haddon, three of his close associates. John T. Cross would served very briefly as the Victor Talking Machine Company's first president. However, Johnson was clearly the driving force behind the company's formation. It held an option to purchase Johnson's business outright, which shareholders voted to exercise on October 5. The purchase was made with 24,990 shares of Victor Talking Machine Company stock, making Johnson the majority shareholder and, eventually, an exceedingly wealthy man. Cross resigned in short order, clearing the

way for Johnson to assume the presidency of the company he would head for the next quarter-century.

Once fully in control of the company as its president and majority shareholder, Johnson transferred his rights to the Berliner patents to Victor, in what would prove to be a major step toward dominating the American recording industry. Emile Berliner subsequently moved his business to Canada, where he had established a branch operation in 1899. Although Berliner retained a financial stake in the Victor Talking Machine Company, and licensed Victor masters for release in Canada on a royalty basis, he would not be involved with Victor's management or operation.

The Victor Talking Machine Company imprint first appeared on record labels in late 1901, supplanting Johnson's name as manufacturer. Almost immediately, the new company ran afoul of the American Graphophone Company (Columbia). Although Victor owned rights to Berliner's crucial patent #534,543, covering a laterally modulated groove that served to propel the stylus, American Graphophone owned Joseph W. Jones' patent #688,739, which covered disc mastering in wax (Johnson's patent on a similar process having yet to be approved). Thus, each company controlled a patent essential to the other's continued operation.

Already a major cylinder producer, Columbia introduced its Disc Graphophone in the same month the Victor Talking Machine Company was founded. The accompanying discs were manufactured by the Globe Record Company, a subsidiary of the Burt Company, under license from American Graphophone. Learning that Columbia had become delinquent in its account with Globe, Eldridge Johnson began negotiations to purchase the company from Burt. The sale was completed on January 19, 1902, for \$10,000 and an agreement to turn over a portion of Victor's pressing work to Burt. Victor immediately took possession of the Climax masters, which were moved to Camden and marked with a circled "VTM" logo, although they were never used by Victor.

Left without a source of discs, Columbia president Edward Easton immediately entered into negotiations with Johnson for the purchase of Globe. On February 15, 1902, Johnson sold Globe to Columbia for his original purchase price and, far more significantly, Easton's pledge to drop a threatened patent infringement suit against Victor. Victor and Columbia subsequently agreed to cross-license these crucial patents on December 8, 1903, ensuring their control of the American lateral-cut disc market for years to come.

The Victor Talking Machine Company declared its first dividend on May 24, 1902, amounting to \$2.50 per share on common stock and \$3.50 per share on preferred. Five months later, Johnson rescinded his pressing agreement with The Burt Company. Although the quality of Burt's pressings (easily distinguished by a small capital "B" on the labels) did not differ markedly from Duranoid's, Johnson claimed they were inferior. The decision probably had more to do with Burt's impending acquisition by Columbia, which would have placed Victor's masters in the hands of its competitor. Although Victor soon opened a small pressing plant in Camden, Duranoid would remain its main supplier until the spring of 1906, when its pressing plant was acquired by Victor's Zonophone subsidiary.

Thus far, "His Master's Voice"—Francis Barraud's painting of his dog, Nipper, listening intently to a Berliner Gramophone—had yet to appear on a Victor label. Johnson had acquired North American rights to the painting from Emile Berliner, who had registered the work as a trademark on May 26, 1900. Although featured prominently in early Victor advertising, the trademark did not appear on record labels until February 1902. Victor registered several alternate versions during 1903–1904, all of them variations on the basic theme. One replaced Nipper with a woman in evening gown; another substituted an ape. But none would be used aside from a special variation for the Asian market, in which a man in Chinese garb was substituted for Nipper (the reason being, according to *The Music Trade Review*, that the Chinese found the depiction of dogs "distasteful"). Victor even registered "His Master's Voice" for use on unrelated products. A trademark application from the autumn of 1904 claimed use on cigars, cigarettes, and pipe tobacco. By 1910, "His Master's Voice" was generally acknowledged to be the most valuable and widely recognized American trademark.

Victor announced the launch of its Red Seal records to dealers on March 9, 1903. Reserved for concert and operatic performers of the highest caliber, they would be the company's

most expensive line. The idea of using a red label for celebrity recordings apparently originated with The Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. (London), which first placed red labels on some Russian operatic recordings in 1901. Victor belatedly registered the color scheme with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on June 6, 1904, claiming protection for "a red circular label...applied to the center of a disc of contrasting color." Despite its generic nature, the device was approved. The term "Red Seal" was belatedly registered on July 20, 1904. Both filings erroneously claimed use on records since July 25, 1902. The company was quick to threaten competitors who also used red labels. Only after a decisive defeat in 1943 did Victor (by then a division of the Radio Corporation of America) finally cease to challenge the use of red labels by others.

The initial Red Seal offering consisted of twenty-five domestic pressings from masters recorded in Europe by The Gramophone & Typewriter, Ltd. Victor then opened a part-time recording studio in the Carnegie Hall Annex (New York), staffed by Camden personnel, for the exclusive use of its Red Seal artists. The first domestically recorded Red Seal offering (#2186, Ada Crossley's "Caro mio ben") was recorded on April 30, 1903, followed by additional American recordings by Crossley and Zelig De Lussan. However, imported recordings dominated the Red Seal catalog for the first year of its existence. A decisive shift to domestically recorded material came in early 1904. On January 28 of that year, Enrico Caruso signed his first Victor contract, ending Victor's dependence on his imported G&T recordings.

In July 1903, Gramophone & Typewriter general manager William Barry Owen approached Eldridge Johnson with an offer to sell him a controlling interest in the Universal Talking Machine and Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing companies (the American manufacturers of Zonophone products), which G&T had purchased the previous month. Johnson, although reportedly unenthusiastic about the prospect, realized that the purchase would hand him control of a potentially troublesome competitor. The news that Johnson would purchase the U.S. rights to Zon-O-Phone finally broke on September 12, 1903, with negotiations not yet completed.

Contrary to many accounts, the purchase was made by Johnson himself, not by the Victor Talking Machine Company. Victor vice-president Leon Douglass made the relationship clear in a letter to dealers dated October 7, 1903, stating, "The Victor Talking Machine Company does not own the Universal Talking Machine Manufacturing Co., but Mr. Eldridge R. Johnson, President of the Victor Co., owns a large block of stock in the Universal Co. The two companies are entirely separate and independent, are competitors, and, so far as we know, will continue to be competitors." For the next few years, the situation would be just that, with Universal Talking Machine Company maintaining its own studio and operating more-or-less autonomously, while its somewhat less expensive (but well-produced) Zonophone records cut into Victor's market share. The subsidiary was finally reined-in beginning in 1909, when orders were given to begin transferring recording and production to Victor's facilities. The final dismantling came in 1912.

Victor produced records for the export and American immigrant markets almost from the start. Large blocks of catalog numbers were set aside for Chinese and Japanese titles beginning in 1902. By the end of that year, as recording engineer Harry Sooy recalled, work had been completed on a portable recording outfit for use in foreign countries. Because of the way in which world rights were allocated between Victor and G&T, Victor was limited to recording in China, the Pacific Island nations (including the Philippines, Hawaiian Territory, and after initially being excluded, Japan), Mexico, and Central and South America.

On July 3, 1905, recording engineer George Cheney sailed for Shanghai aboard the steamship *Empress*. Although Cheney was an employee of the Universal Talking Machine Company, trade-paper reports of his trip consistently stated it was being undertaken for Victor — one of the very few instances of a cooperative effort between the two companies. Cheney would spend the next year making recordings in Asia, with the able assistance of Yuen Sing Foong, an English-speaking employee of the largest Victor distributor in Shanghai. With Yuen's assistance, Cheney made recordings in all of the major Chinese dialects. Cheney's first batch of masters arrived in Camden at the end of December 1905. Although the recordings were intended primarily for export, a representative sampling

was released in the United States by Zonophone as well as Victor, one of the few times the latter issued Zonophone material.

Other than a China trip of its own in 1908, Victor largely restricted its foreign recording activities to the Americas. The company had dispatched a recording team to Mexico City as early as 1905 that included William Nafey and Samuel H. Rous (the latter an assistant recording engineer who was better-known to record buyers as the singer S. H. Dudley). Harry Sooy embarked on his first Mexican trip in June 1907, accompanied by his wife, but not at first by his recording equipment, which was temporarily detained in El Paso. His second trip to Mexico, in November 1910, proved to be more difficult and fraught with danger than the first, coinciding with the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution. Between 1907 and 1913, in addition to Mexico City, Victor recording teams were sent on marathon recording expeditions to Havana, Buenos Aires, Lima, and Bogotá, where they worked in makeshift studios under sometimes difficult conditions.

The Victor Talking Machine Company battled several remarkably persistent patent infringers from 1904 through 1909, including the Duplex Phonograph Company, International Record Company, Talk-O-Phone Company, and Leeds & Catlin Company. It eventually prevailed against all of them in the courts, although Leeds & Catlin proved to be especially tenacious. In 1909, Eldridge Johnson very publicly celebrated Leeds' demise, following a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that upheld the validity of Victor's Berliner patent. Upon learning of the ruling, Johnson issued a lengthy statement in *The Talking Machine World*, rife with warning to others who might be tempted to challenge Victor. The Berliner patent, which withstood years of legal challenges, expired in 1912. That left Victor with only Eldridge Johnson's questionable patent #896,059 as a defense against would-be competitors in the lateral-cut disc market. The patent would come under increasing fire for lack of invention as potential new competitors attempted to enter the market.

On September 17, 1908, Victor announced that it would introduce double-sided pressings, in response to Columbia's surprise introduction of the Double Disc. Lacking patent protection for double-sided pressings, Victor officials belatedly purchased the U.S. rights to Ademor N. Petit's 1904 patent (#749,092) on January 8, 1909. Eldridge Johnson was adamantly opposed to the change. The company bluntly informed its dealers, "We deplore the advent of double-faced records at any price," although that stance was not evident in its advertising to general public. The changeover was not universal, as it had been at Columbia. Initially, only the black-label series was coupled, although occasional new single-sided black-label releases continued to appear into mid-1911. The prestigious Red Seal line remained single-sided until September 1923.

At least one New York department store advertised double-sided Victors discs in early November, but based upon reports in trade press, the new records did not start reaching dealers in large quantities until the end of the year, when a hastily compiled initial listing was published. The early offerings were simply couplings of previous releases, still showing the original single-sided catalog numbers in the pressings.

A single-sided purple-label series, priced midway between black labels and Red Seals, was introduced in February 1910. Something of a catch-all line, its catalog ran the gamut from popular recordings by Broadway headliners to classical and operatic material by Lucy Isabelle Marsh, Lambert Murphy, Reinald Werrenrath, and other concert artists deemed not quite worthy of Red Seal status. The initial offering was dominated by Harry Lauder (who recorded twenty-four titles in a single December 1909 session), but the roster was soon expanded to include George M. Cohan, Nora Bayes, Jack Norworth, Blanche Ring, Elsie Janis, and other stars. Aside from Lauder, the series' most popular artist appears to have been Victor Herbert, who was signed away from Edison on June 1, 1911. His orchestra became a mainstay of the purple- (and later, blue-) label series, although he was not made a company musical director, as he had been at Edison.

A double-sided purple-label series, introduced in 1910, was almost immediately switched to a blue label. The first forty-nine issues comprised operatic and ethnic material (the latter including a substantial number of Egyptian recordings) from imported G&T masters. It has been suggested that these releases (which were not listed in the standard supplements and are rarely encountered in the U.S.) were intended for export only. In early 1913, the blue-label series was recast as a conventional, double-sided companion to the purple-label series, which would be slowly phased out over the next seven years. The blue-label series

was finally discontinued in 1926, then was revived a short time later for foreign material. Several of the blue-label artists, including Lauder, were promoted to Red Seal status. For internal purposes they were classified as "junior Red Seal artists," a term that was never used publicly.

Victor holds the distinction of having issued the first authentic jazz recordings, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band's "Livery Stable Blues" and "Dixie 'Jass' Band One-Step" (Victor 18255), recorded on February 26, 1917. Contrary to some pop-culture writers, there is no evidence in the Victor documentation that the company considered the record anything more than a one-off novelty, nor that it was rushed to market within days of recording (an impossibility, given the length of Victor's production cycle). Although there is evidence to suggest that some copies reached dealers in April, the record was first officially listed for sale in the May 1917 supplement. It sold well, as did several follow-up releases, but Victor surrendered its early lead in the jazz field after the ODJB departed to England in 1919. Opting instead to focus on pop fare by large commercial dance orchestras, Victor would not begin to achieve a significant presence in the jazz market until 1926.

On May 16, 1917, Victor's Executive Committee approved Calvin Child's plan to make experimental recordings with the Boston and Philadelphia symphony orchestras. The Victor engineers were determined to record both orchestras at full strength, despite never having worked with such a large a group. With the existing studios unable to accommodate all of the musicians, the auditorium in Victor's New Office Building was pressed into temporary service. When that proved to be impractical, Victor officials purchased the former Trinity Baptist Church on 5th Street in Camden and set about installing a large recording studio. The first documented recording session was held there on March 15, 1918, employing contralto Elsie Baker and a studio orchestra directed by Joseph Pasternack. By mid-1918 the church studio was being used with some regularity, primarily for symphonic sessions, but it would soon become the favored venue for instrumental soloists as well. A smaller studio was added at some point in the early 1920s. The original church organ was found to be unsuitable for recording purposes, a problem that was remedied in 1921 with the installation of a new Estey pipe organ, which would be regularly upgraded over the years.

The Johnson patent faced its first serious challenge in April 1919, when the Starr Piano Company introduced lateral-cut Gennett discs. The action prompted a lawsuit by the Victor, which charged infringement of the patent's specifications 6 and 8 (covering an incised, laterally modulated groove of constant depth). On October 14, 1919, U. S. District Court Judge Mayer rejected Victor's request for a preliminary injunction that would have halted Starr's production of lateral-cut discs, citing the patent's lack of invention and abandonment. Subsequently upheld by the U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals, it was a landmark decision, legalizing use of the lateral cut by all. The result was a widespread abandonment of the unpopular vertical cut by existing producers, and an influx of new record companies, during 1919–1920. By the time Victor's petition for review was denied by the U. S. Supreme Court on October 16, 1922, the lateral-cut conversion was virtually complete industry-wide, with only Edison still producing vertical-cut discs.

In October 1920, Victor acquired a 50% interest in its British affiliate, the Gramophone Company, Ltd. (G&T's successor, by then headquartered in Hayes, Middlesex, England). The acquisition resulted in a reversal of Victor's long-standing policy of replacing foreign recordings in its catalog with American versions whenever possible. By 1921, Victor was drawing on the Gramophone Company's catalog for imported recordings by Feodor Chaliapin, Jacques Renaud, and others of equal stature, which usually were marked with a small crown imprint in the wax. There would be a steadily increasing use of imported classical recordings as the decade progressed. The policy did not extend to the popular catalog, which remained virtually devoid of European-sourced content until the early 1930s.

On February 26, 1923, Harry Sooy was instructed to draw up plans for a Victor studio on the West Coast. Three months later, the company purchased a lot on 78th Avenue in Oakland, California, and began construction of a 24,000 square-foot building in October. George Hall, a veteran of Victor's Camden plant (and unrelated to the band leader of the same name), was chosen to manage the Oakland facility. Victor 19325, coupling two Chicago recordings by the Coon-Sanders Orchestra, was the first record to come off the Oakland presses, on May 6, 1924. It was clearly distinguished from the Camden product by a small

"O" placed above Nipper's head, and by a nonstandard label typeface that was quickly vetoed by the home office.

Experimental recording sessions finally began in Oakland on May 29, but the studio was not yet ready for regular use. Thus, the first California sessions were held in a temporary studio at the Alexandria Hotel in Los Angeles, under the supervision of Victor artists-and-repertoire director Edward King. The Oakland studio finally opened for regular use on June 18, beginning with a session by Art Landry's Orchestra. It initially was not a full-time operation, being staffed only by visiting Camden personnel. Nevertheless, the studio was soon hosting some of California's choicest talent, including the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra under Alfred Hertz, and the dance orchestras of Max Dolin, Henry Halstead, Art Hickman, Art Landry, and Vincent Rose. Touring bands, including Glen Oswald's Serenaders and George Olsen's Music, began dropping by as well.

Victor acquired a controlling interest in the Berliner Gramophone Company of Canada in the spring of 1924. Reorganized as the Victor Talking Machine Company of Canada, Ltd., it became little more than a clone of the parent organization. Emile Berliner was no longer directly involved in the Canadian company's business, having retired to his estate outside of Washington, D.C., where he maintained a personal laboratory and experimental recording studio.

Victor's aging management team was seemingly unprepared to compete with such well-financed and expertly managed newcomers as Brunswick, Okeh, and Vocalion, nor with the increasingly popular cut-rate labels. In October 1923 Calvin Child, who had been associated with Eldridge Johnson since the 1890s, retired as director of artists and repertoire and was replaced by John S. Macdonald (the head of Victor's studio operations, better known to record buyers as the tenor Harry Macdonough). Child left his conservative stamp on the Victor catalog and artist roster, and his replacement was no more adventurous. As a result, Victor lost some market share in the early 1920s to less hidebound companies, especially those that catered to younger customers and the burgeoning race-record and country-music markets that Victor so far had largely ignored.

Victor officials resisted entering the lucrative race-record field. Some notable Black artists (including Mamie Smith, Lucille Hegamin, and Eubie Blake) auditioned for Victor in 1920 and were all rejected. In May 1923, music publisher and talent broker Joe Davis finally persuaded Victor officials to record several of the cabaret blues singers he managed, including Rosa Henderson, Edna Hicks, Lizzie Miles, and Lena Wilson. Victor placed its first race-record advertisement on August 4, 1923, in *The Chicago Defender*. It featured four of Davis' singers along with an assortment of other selections by Black performers, including a relisting of its 1921 sides by the "Shuffle Along" orchestra. The records received only a passing mention in the mainstream trade papers, and Victor would do little more to develop its race-record line until 1926.

Although Victor remained reluctant to compete in the race market, the company apparently had fewer qualms about White country music. In late 1923 and early 1924, Victor issued authentic performances by Eck Robertson, Henry Gilliland, and Fiddlin' Powers & Family, which initially were designated as regional releases. Unfortunately, Victor's studio managers sometimes inflicted their own musical tastes on the performers. Pop singer Carson Robison was substituted anonymously for Charlie Powers on several of the 1924 Powers Family sides, and classically trained studio musicians were chosen to accompany singer Kelly Harrell on his early recordings. Vernon Dalhart's contrived, stereotypical "hillbilly" style apparently was more to management's liking, particularly after his coupling of "The Prisoner's Song" and "The Death of Floyd Collins" became a national best-seller in 1924.

Victor was also slow to innovate from a technological standpoint in the early 1920s. It was the last of the major companies to allow its exclusive artists to broadcast. The company's chief innovation during that period was the addition in July 1923 of a run-out groove that served to trigger the turntable brake, a feature already present on several competing brands. Victor engineers James Owen and Albertis Hewitt had been experimenting with microphones since 1916, even assigning a microphone patent to Victor. During 1922, Hewitt conducted secret in-house experiments in electrical recording, at first with his own equipment, then with a Hoxie Pallophotophone (a device originally configured to record optical-film soundtracks, which was later employed in Brunswick's Light-Ray recordings).

A test pressing of a 1922 Hewitt recording by pianist Myrtle Eaver surfaced in 2006, confirming the occurrence of these undocumented sessions. However, nothing came of them from a commercial production standpoint.

Having abandoned its own electrical-recording experiments, in 1924 Victor began to collaborate with Western Electric, which had developed a commercially viable electrical recording system. The company produced electrical test recordings for Victor as early as October of that year, as confirmed by the existence of multiple dated test pressings. However, Eldridge Johnson balked at the royalties and terms demanded by Western Electric. He refused to capitulate until it was discovered that Columbia was also working with Western Electric. Negotiations were turned over to vice-president Edward Shumaker, who was successful in securing the system for Victor. Wiring of Victor's first electrically equipped studio, carried out under the supervision of Western Electric engineer Joseph Maxfield, began in Camden on January 27, 1925, and experimental recording commenced there on February 9.

The first electrical recordings to be accepted for release ("A Miniature Concert," recorded in two parts by the Eight Popular Victor artists) were made in Camden on February 26, 1925, originally as a test. Acoustic versions, recorded for comparison's sake on the same date, initially were approved for release, but then were rejected in favor of the electrics. However, the record was listed on May 29, and thus, Victor 19626 (coupling two March 1925 recordings, but listed on May 1) was the first Victor electrical release.

Acoustic recording sessions continued in Camden through mid-March 1925, and in New York until July 31. After some delay due to damaged equipment, electrical recording sessions began in Oakland on August 21. In the United States, Victor at first did not officially acknowledge the new technology, although the change was obvious to dealers and customers alike. Its Canadian affiliate broke the news in July 1925, in a national advertising blitz. However, Victor delayed its official announcement until October 1926, ostensibly to allow dealers time to dispose of their now-obsolete acoustic inventory. The announcement coincided with introduction of the Orthophonic brand name and ornate "scroll" label, Victor's first label redesign since 1914.

Most Victor phonographs that were sold through the late 1920s were still acoustic, although playback was greatly improved with the introduction in November 1925 of the exponential-horn Orthophonic machines. Victor had purged most acoustically recorded material from its catalog by 1927–1928, but a few acoustically recorded operatic items were still listed into the early 1950s. For many years, individuals could order any deleted acoustic Victor recording for which a stamper still existed, as a premium-priced, single-sided white-label pressing. Occasionally, unissued alternate takes appear on those pressings.

Eldridge Johnson retired as president of the Victor Talking Machine Company on December 7, 1926, citing poor health and a desire to be "free of the business." Balance sheets as of September 30, 1926 (the last released before Johnson's retirement), placed Victor's total assets in excess of \$54 million. On January 6, 1927, Johnson's majority share in the company was purchased for \$28 million by the New York banking firms of Speyer & Company and J. & W. Seligman. On the same day, Edward E. Shumaker succeeded Johnson as Victor's president. A Victor employee since 1904, Shumaker had served as Victor's vice-president of sales, as well as a director of the Victor Talking Machine Company of Canada. More forward-thinking than Johnson, Shumaker had been the driving force behind Victor's West Coast expansion, and he was widely credited with the company's successful transition to electrical recording.

Shumaker had largely taken over management of the Victor Talking Machine Company in the years leading up to Johnson's retirement, and his ascent to the presidency marked a turning point for the company's record division. Although Victor's profits reached an all-time high in 1926, that gain came primarily from sales of the new phonograph line. In contrast, record sales had been declining for several years. They bottomed out in 1926, down 58% from their 1921 high. The next several years saw a general shake-up in Victor's record division, including the resignations of several veteran managers and the increasing marginalization of Johnson's son, Fenimore, who ultimately resigned in 1929.

Under Shumaker's management, considerable effort was devoted to developing Victor's race-record and country-music catalogs, while maintaining the company's accustomed lead in the popular and classical fields. Costly exclusive contracts with aging studio singers,

including Billy Murray and Henry Burr, were allowed to lapse. In their place, the company signed current radio favorites, including crooner Gene Austin (who produced a string of million and near-million sellers for Victor in the later 1920s) and the team of Correll & Gosden (who re-created their tremendously popular "Sam 'n' Henry" and "Amos 'n' Andy" radio skits). However, the Red Seal artist roster remained largely mired in the past, a problem that would not be fully addressed until RCA's takeover of the company.

Victor increasingly came to rely on outsiders to locate and recruit new artists, particularly in the race-record and country-music fields, where development continued to lag. Foremost among them was Ralph Peer, who came to Victor from Okeh in early 1927 after initial resistance from some board members. In an unprecedented arrangement, Peer would receive no salary from the company. Instead, he would sign personal management contracts with the artists he secured for Victor, keep a portion of their royalties for himself, and take the copyrights and lucrative mechanical-reproduction rights to their compositions for his nascent music-publishing operation. Because of the latter's potential value, Peer insisted that his artists record only their own original material (or at least, traditional material that was sufficiently altered that it could be copyrighted as original). The result was a considerable freshening of the country list, which until then had been dominated by old folk tunes supplemented with faux-country offerings by the likes of Vernon Dalhart. Peer's signing of the Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers in 1927 quickly catapulted Victor to preeminent status in the country-music field.

Peer's counterpart in Chicago was music publisher Walter Melrose. Although not formally affiliated with the company in the way that Peer was, he played an outsized role in developing Victor's race catalog, beginning with his creation of Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers in late 1926. Assembled purely for recording purposes, the band's early releases proved to be strong sellers among Black and White customers alike. Although Victor had not yet followed Okeh's and Columbia's leads in segregating their race and country recordings in separate series (that would occur later, under RCA's ownership), many records in those categories were designated "regional releases," which received only limited marketing and distribution. However, the "regional" designation was also applied to some White dance bands and pop singers who lacked national followings.

Victor became involved in sound-film production in 1927, when it began producing synchronized soundtrack discs for Warner Brothers' Vitaphone films. In early 1928, a sound stage and projection and dubbing facilities for the production of movie soundtracks were installed in the Camden church studio. The first tests were conducted on March 16, and were pronounced successful several days later. That summer, Victor recorded the scores to First National's "Lilac Time" and Paramount Pictures' "Wings" and (the latter incorporating sound effects recorded by Raymond Sooy at Camden's Crescent Air Field), the first of many such efforts. By then, Victor's movie-related operations were already outgrowing the Camden church facility. In July 1928, the company purchased a large tract in Hollywood and began construction of a new plant in which it would provide the same services without the need to shuttle films and recordings back-and-forth between the coasts.

While Victor's movie business boomed, record sales were stagnating. Total records sale for 1928 were virtually identical to those for the previous year, a trend that was being seen across the industry and widely blamed on radio. On January 4, 1929, the banking firms sold the Victor Talking Machine Company to the Radio Corporation of America. The merger plan was declared operative on March 5, 1929 (*see* Radio Corporation of America — RCA Victor Division).

VICTORY RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. Early 1940s

Offices: 646 8th Ave., New York

Record Products: Victory Record Co.

Owned by or affiliated with Cosmos Music, which operated at the same address. Victory Record Company labels state "1943" (not styled as a copyright date), and the few confirmed specimens feature Greek ethnic material of unknown origin. The Victory name was also used in the mid-1940s for an unrelated Beverly Hills company about which no reliable information has been discovered thus far.

VITACOUSTIC RECORD COMPANY / VITACOUSTIC RECORDS, INC (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1949

Offices: 20 N. Wacker Drive (42nd Floor), Chicago (Universal Recording, 1947–early 1948); 624 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago (early 1948–1949)

Original-Master Source(s): International Recording Company, Universal Recorders (Hollywood), Universal Recording (Chicago), United Broadcasting Company, possibly other independent studios

Pressing: Lee Records (Los Angeles), Long Island Plastic Products, Perfection Plastic Products, Gennett, possibly other independent plants

Record Products: Vitacoustic

Launched in March 1947 by Universal Recording Studios' Bill Putnam, in partnership with George Tasker, Lloyd G. Garrett, and John D. (Jack) Buckley (the latter two apparently having scuttled the launch of their Gee Bee Records, *q.v.*). The address given was that of the Universal Recording studio, which supplied Vitacoustic's early masters.

Putnam recorded Jerry Murad's Harmonicats in February 1947, using a primitive form of artificial reverberation that involved recording from a speaker placed in the men's rest room. *Billboard* reported that the process "is said to make a band sound as if it were in the listener's room, similar to a good wired music system in a restaurant with four or five speakers set at the right places." The results were issued locally under a prototype Universal label (*see* Universal Recording Laboratories).

When "Peg o' My Heart" became a regional hit in March 1947 (reportedly selling 100,000 copies in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin alone), Putnam launched Vitacoustic to secure wider distribution for the Harmonicats' recordings. By early summer, Vitacoustic records were being distributed nationally, largely on the strength of the Harmonicats' releases, and the company was pressing at multiple independent plants (including one in Windsor, Ontario) to keep up with demand.

The partnership began to unravel in the late summer of 1947, beginning with Tasker's resignation on August 29. A short time later, Putnam (who held a management contract with the Harmonicats) left to relaunch his Universal label. Garrett and Buckley remained, hiring Maurice Murray (artists-and-repertoire manager) and Art Ward (publicity) to replace Putnam and Tasker. Following Putnam's departure, the company was reorganized as Vitacoustic Records, Inc.

Putnam licensed the existing Harmonicats releases on a non-exclusive basis to Vitacoustic, which continued to employ Universal's facilities. To replace the Harmonicats, Vitacoustic's new team brought in novelty harmonica soloist Leo Diamond, whose record sales fell far short of the Harmonicat's. There were also attempts to expand into the country-and-western and race-record markets. The latter included a brief partnership with Detroit-based Sensation Records (*q.v.*) under which selected Sensation items were issued simultaneously on the Vitacoustic label outside of Sensation's Michigan and Ohio sales territory.

In the late autumn of 1947, Vitacoustic began stockpiling a large numbers of masters (eventually amounting to more than 250, according to Buckley) in advance of the second American Federation of Musicians recording ban. Failure to recoup those costs would later prove disastrous for the company. Faced with such a glut of material awaiting release, in January 1948 Garrett paid \$50,000 to Research Services (headed by Edward Whittlesey, the University of Denver's director of public relations) to develop a system for pre-testing the public's reaction to one-hundred scheduled releases. Some pilot studies were undertaken in the Denver market, as a result of which both parties admitted they did not expect the sales forecasts to be particularly accurate.

In the meantime, Vitacoustic was beginning to fail financially. In February 1948, Universal Recording sued Vitacoustic for \$24,000 in unpaid licensing fees for the Harmonicats recordings, demanded return of the masters, and sought to enjoin Garrett and Buckley from using the term "Vitacoustic," which Universal now claimed as a trademark for its recording process. By the end of that month, Vitacoustic had petitioned for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The company's court filing showed assets of \$204,500 and liabilities in excess of \$182,000.

Attempting to reorganize, Garrett and Buckley petitioned the federal court for an extension of debt repayment, citing financial hardships caused by their inability to recoup expenses during the AFM recording ban. The extension was granted, and by March 1948,

Garrett, Buckley, and a referee were meeting with the company's creditors, one of which was the Internal Revenue Service, to which Vitacoustic owned more than \$18,000 in back taxes. A repayment plan was established, and following another meeting in June, it was agreed that the company would continue operations under its present management, overseen by a four-member creditors' board. Recording was shifted to the United Broadcasting studios, and Perfection Plastics agreed to continue pressing for Vitacoustic, solely on a cash basis.

As Vitacoustic's largest creditor, Bill Putnam took over as president and general manager of the company in August 1949. In late October he was appointed the company's receiver and began to liquidate Vitacoustic's assets. He successfully disposed of the office furniture and some masters before encountering United Broadcasting's Egmont Sonderling, who refused to turn over the Vitacoustic masters in his possession (including some Harmonicats titles) until he was reimbursed \$13,800 for unpaid recording costs. With payment not forthcoming, Sonderling recouped part of his loss by releasing some Vitacoustic recordings he was holding on his Old Swing-Master label.

An attempt was made to auction Vitacoustic's remaining masters and pressings on April 28, 1949, but because of what was termed "apathetic bidding," it was decided to hold all materials for private sale for an indeterminate period. Garrett and Buckley and went on to launch a Chicago talent agency specializing in Latino performers.

VITANOLA TALKING MACHINE COMPANY

The Talking Machine World for June 1920 announced that this Chicago phonograph manufacturer had opened a recording studio in New York and pressing plant in Orange, New Jersey, under the management of H. T. Schiff. However, the details Schiff gave a *TMW* reporter clearly refer to The Arto Company's facilities and records. Schiff reported that satisfactory pressings had been produced, and that Vitanola records were to be introduced in July, but no evidence has found that Vitanola records ever went on sale. The company was placed in receivership in October 1920.

VOCALION RECORDS, INC.

A division of Decca Records, created in 1949, and largely beyond the scope of this work. See Aeolian Company, American Record Corporation, Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, and Brunswick Radio Corporation for information concerning earlier producers of the Vocalion label.

VOGUE RECORDINGS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1945–1947

Offices: 4949 E. Eight-Mile Rd., Detroit

Original-Master Sources: Own studio at above address; unconfirmed locations in New York, Chicago, and Hollywood

Pressing: Own plant at above address

Record Products: Vogue; custom picture discs

A subsidiary of Thomas E. Saffady's Sav-Way Industries, Vogue produced high-quality picture discs. Described by *Variety* as "a mechanical wizard," Saffady launched Sav-Way in 1941 to manufacture and market some of his many inventions. Saffady claimed credit for what he termed the "idea" of the picture disc, although Victor Emerson had patented and produced similar records, primarily for the children's market, in the late 'teens, and RCA Victor produced many picture discs in the 1930s.

Saffady spared no expense in launching Vogue, constructing new studios and production facilities on a ten-acre tract north of Detroit. *Billboard* reported that details of the recording and manufacturing processes were closely guarded trade secrets, and the entire facility was placed off-limits to visitors. Vogue's production process required specially designed presses, which Saffady claimed ran eighty times faster than standard commercial equipment. The records' core was a thin aluminum disc, rendering them virtually unbreakable. It was sandwiched between printed sheets illustrating the selections (often in cartoon form), and encased in a transparent vinylite shell. Single discs were packaged in clear cellophane sleeves to allow for full display of the artwork, and a few album sets

were also produced. Although the surfaces were excellent, the paper inserts proved to be problematic, sometimes tearing or creasing in the pressing process. Rather than discard the defective copies, Saffady sold them at a discount to jukebox operators.

Vogue reportedly had fourteen bands and an unspecified number of singers under contract by the time production commenced in the late summer of 1945. In October Saffady purchased the Latin Quarter, a Detroit nightclub, and signed some of the bands performing there for his new label. Thanks in part to his ownership of the club, Saffady was able to sign many nationally known stars, including Clyde McCoy, Shep Fields, Art Mooney, Phil Spitalny, Sonny Dunham, Patsy Montana, and Lulu Belle & Scotty. Although Saffady claimed to have invested \$50,000 in the Detroit studio, many Vogue sessions were held in New York and elsewhere.

A *Variety* reporter claimed to have seen a Vogue test pressing by Jackie Heller (which he described as "a pinkish affair") in late September 1945. The same reporter noted that the records would be color-coded by genre (red for swing, green for sweet bands, blue for blues, etc.), an idea that apparently was abandoned before commercial production got under way.

Vogue's initial offerings, originally scheduled for release in January 1946, were postponed for several months after a fire in the Detroit studio destroyed the masters. Sample copies finally arrived in New York in late February, but the records did not go on sale there until May 6. The launch was held in the Gimbel Brothers department store, which was given the exclusive New York sales rights for one week, after which any dealer could handle the records. By that time, however, Vogue's New York distributor was advising dealers that deliveries would be delayed by thirty days. *Variety* warned that because of the delays in getting the records to market, many would be of "pop tunes already dead."

Adding to the label's erratic launch was the company's indecision on pricing. According to sales manager Gene Dahl, wholesale pricing had still not been finalized at the time the first review copies were distributed. The retail price initially was reported in various publications to be anywhere from 85¢ and \$1.05, with vague hints that it might eventually be halved. The latter figure (including tax) had been settled-upon by the time Macy's first began advertising the records. Albums started at \$2.89 list, for a three-disc set. The company also promoted the records heavily to jukebox operators, claiming that the unbreakable aluminum core eliminated the need for record trays, but Vogue charged jukebox operators 65¢ per disc, nearly double what many labels were charging for jukebox copies.

The trade's reaction to Vogue's picture discs was mixed. Many dealers felt that although the records were interesting novelty items, and had potential as special promotional issues, they were unlikely to become regular sellers in the general market. The prediction proved to be correct. A new children's series, announced in the autumn of 1946, garnered some attention in the press. By then, however, the public's interest in Vogue records had begun to wane. In October, Saffady declined to renew his contracts with Shep Fields, Art Mooney, and Frankie Masters, stating that he wanted to concentrate on a shorter list of bands. In the face of declining sales, two Vogue distributors claimed that plans were being made to increase production to a million discs per month.

Interest in the Vogue operation remained high among industry insiders, however. In November 1946, it was reported that Universal-International Pictures vice-president Matty Fox was negotiating to purchase Vogue Records from Saffady, but no agreement was reached. By January 1947, *Billboard* was reporting that Saffady was attempting to sell Vogue for \$900,000, with M-G-M Records and RCA's Eli Oberstein supposedly expressing interest.

With sales of Vogue discs stagnating and his plant (which by 1947 had grown to forty presses) running far below capacity, Saffady signed a one-year contract in May 1947 to press Decca vinylite children's records. The contract specified 100,000 pressings the first month, increasing to 200,000 monthly in three months. *Billboard* reported that Vogue would continue to press its own discs, but in limited quantities. At about the same time, Vogue began pressing special picture discs for Mercury Records, to be handed-out to disc jockeys as promotional items.

No Decca pressings had yet been produced when Sav-Way was placed in receivership on August 30, 1947, after claims were filed by six small creditors. The company was judged to be basically sound, with \$2.2 million in assets and \$750,000 in liabilities, but problems

continued to surface. In September, it was reported that Vogue owed the Harry Fox Agency \$9,000 in unpaid royalties. Saffady was said to be willing to dispose of Sav-Way's various units (which included a toy-wagon factory and a state-of-the-art machine shop, in addition to the record operation) separately.

Although the trade papers expressed optimism that Vogue Recordings would survive, the company suspended production in November 1947. Phil Spitalny had already defected, after accepting his masters (including unissued titles) and Vogue's promise to destroy all unsold pressings of his records in lieu of unpaid guarantees and royalties. Several other artists, including Clyde McCoy and Art Mooney, purchased or otherwise acquired control of their Vogue recordings in 1948 and licensed them to other labels. Despite the problems, Saffady apparently was looking ahead to the production of LPs; the studio possessed two Scully lathes equipped for microgroove cutting, which Saffady later offered for sale.

Surplus inventory was being remaindered by mid-1948. As late as April 1949, one jobber was advertising that it had 50,000 Vogue records in stock. Some issues were still being sold by discount stores, for as little as 39¢ each, in the mid-1950s. The entire contents of Vogue's studio and pressing plant were offered for outright sale in November 1949, apparently without attracting a buyer. The materials were finally sold at auction on February 18, 1950.

VON BATTLE RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1960s

Offices: 3530 Hastings St., Detroit (to 1960); 8434 12th St., Detroit (from 1960)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Pressing: Vargo, probably other independent plants

Record Products (78s): J-V-B

Launched by Detroit record-store owner Joe Von Battle (née Joseph Battle) in 1948. According to family members, Battle added "Von" to his name as a young man, in honor of Erich von Stroheim. A licensed African Methodist Episcopal Minister in training, Von Battle reportedly became disillusioned and abandoned the ministry in favor of music. In 1945, he purchased a storefront on Hastings Street in Detroit and opened Joe's Music Shop, initially stocking it with records from his own collection.

In 1948, Von Battle installed a small recording studio in the back of his Hastings Street store and launched the J-V-B label, specializing in blues and Black gospel. Initially he relied heavily on local performers, including "One-String Sam," "Detroit Count" (whose two-part "Hastings Street Opera" appeared on one of the earliest J-V-B releases), and assorted preachers and gospel groups. His most prolific artist was Reverend C. L. Franklin, whose sermons Von Battle recorded in the New Bethel Baptist Church on Hastings Street. J-V-B eventually released more than seventy sides by Franklin with members of his congregation, some of them complete services that extended over six or eight sides. Franklin's young daughter Aretha could be heard on some of them. Von Battle produced her first solo record ("Never Grow Old") when she was fourteen.

Another Von Battle daughter, Marsha Philpot (*a.k.a.* Marsha Music), recalled, "My father recorded everywhere, obsessively; in the back room of the shop, in pulpits, in the streets, in our living room — once I came home from school to the sight of his amps and mics trained on a man called Washboard Willie playing the — you guessed it — in our back yard."

J-V-B records initially were sold locally and by mail-order. Distribution was later taken over by Chess Records. During the 1950s, Von Battle added the Gone, Von, and Viceroy labels. He licensed his masters over the years to several companies, including King and De Luxe in the 1950s, and Riverside in the 1960s. In 1961 he launched the Battle label (which served largely as a reissue vehicle) in partnership with Riverside Records owner Bill Grauer.

Von Battle's Hastings Street building was demolished in 1960 to make way for the Chrysler Freeway, and he moved to new quarters on 12th Street. The shop and studio there were burned during the Detroit riots of July 1967. His masters, including a large collection of unissued material, were destroyed, and Von Battle never reopened. He died in 1973.

VOX CORPORATION OF AMERICA

The U.S. branch of Berlin-based Vox-Schallplatten und Sprechmaschinen A.G., the Vox Corporation of America was doing business in New York by November 1923 and was dissolved on March 11, 1927. All of its American Vox [1] releases are believed to have been pressed from imported masters, placing it beyond the scope of this work. It is included here only to distinguish it from the later, unrelated Vox Productions (*see next entry*).

VOX PRODUCTIONS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: From 1946

Offices: 236 W. 55th St., New York

Pressing: New York, Los Angeles

Record Products (78s): Vox [2]

Launched in 1946 by George Mendelssohn (*née* Mendelssohn-Bartholdy), a fourth-generation descendant of composer Felix Mendelssohn. George Mendelssohn at the time was the president of Interstate Music Suppliers, one of the largest distributors of small independent labels, handling Asch, Bost, National, Signature, and Stinson, among others. The two companies operated at the same address. Vox Productions was unrelated to the earlier Vox Corporation of America (*see previous entry*).

In January 1947, Henry H. Reichhold (whose middle initial was given in error as "J." in *Billboard*, and last name often misspelled "Reichhold" in other publications) was elected chairman of Vox's board and took a 50% stake in the company. A prominent Detroit chemical magnate and the owner of *Musical Digest*, Reichhold planned to issue recordings of the Detroit Symphony's broadcasts on Vox, projecting production of fifty-two album sets per year. However, he ended his involvement with the Detroit Symphony and Vox in early 1948, and his grand plan was never implemented.

The earliest Vox releases were being advertised by March 1946. They were largely reissues of imported Polydor recordings. The Spotlight Series was introduced in 1947, under the direction of Larry Green and Bill Simon. Its purpose, Mendelssohn declared, was "to throw the phonographic spotlight on outstanding and significant personalities in the musical world. Toward this end, albums issued will feature material that we feel has contributed to the development of new art forms based on the expressions of authentic folk material and attitudes. This includes improvised jazz, folk songs and dances, European specialties, operettas, etc."

Early Spotlight Series releases included reissues of Polydor recordings by Marlene Dietrich and Edith Piaf. Vox's Music Master Series, comprising short classical selections with narration by actor José Ferrer, was launched in 1946. Its Saturday Night Swing Session series, dubbed from WNEW (New York) broadcasts under the supervision of program director Robert Bach, was first advertised in May 1947. However, its launch was delayed until January 1948 because Vox had neglected to obtain clearance from competing labels for two of the musicians involved. At about the same time, Vox introduced children's albums devoted to the lives of famous composers.

Vox's interest in the jazz and pop markets proved to be short-lived, and the company's focus soon shifted almost exclusively to classical material. As early as mid-1947, *Billboard* was reporting that Vox was "piling up longhair masters for future release." Much of the material was obtained through complicated and occasionally conflicting reciprocal licensing arrangements with European producers. One such conflict erupted in late 1947, when it was discovered that Keynote and Vox had unknowingly licensed the same pre-war foreign classical recordings through different, but entirely legal, channels (Keynote through the Gramophone Works National Corporation of Czechoslovakia, and Vox through Polydor), a result of the post-war fragmentation of Europe's recording industry.

Undeterred by that incident, Mendelssohn went on to sign successful distribution and master-exchange deals with several European companies, including Polydor (which served as Vox's British distributor), its various affiliates, and Discophile Français. He spent two weeks during the summer of 1949 negotiating additional deals in France and Italy, including rights to press selected Discophile Français recordings in the U.S. rather than merely importing the pressings, as he had done previously.

Vox LPs were introduced during the first week of May 1949, in domestic and imported series that retailed for \$4.85 and \$5.85, respectively. *Billboard* reported that Columbia was

giving Vox its full cooperation in making the conversion to LP production. In November of that year, the company announced that it was discontinuing 78-rpm production. Approximately fifty Vox 78-rpm albums had been released by then, many of which were subsequently transferred to LP format.

Vox went on to become a leading producer of mid-level classical LPs in the 1950s and 1960s. Its later history is beyond the scope of this work.

VULCAN RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1921 – 1924

Offices: 15 E. 40th St., New York (incorporated in Delaware)

Original-Master Source(s): Probably own studio

Record Products: Vulcan [1]; Junior Operetta (children's)

Vulcan was chartered as a Delaware corporation on May 17, 1921, with capitalization reported at \$550,000. Frederick H. Hedinger served as the company's secretary and general manager.

Vulcan produced at least two labels using masters that were recorded by or for the company and do not appear on other labels. The Vulcan label, pressed in ordinary shellac, featured conventional popular fare. The labels cite an April 1921 patent date, but no patent number. Advertised as "Best For Dancing," Vulcan records used masters numbered in an unusual 1.000 series of unknown origin.

Vulcan also produced Junior Operetta, a children's series. Vulcan's trademark application, filed on September 1, 1923, claimed use of the Junior Operettas trademark on records since approximately June 1 of that year. The records were announced in the August 1923 edition of *The Talking Machine World*. They were pressed in an "unbreakable" black plastic compound laminated over cardboard cores, and Vulcan offered to replace broken records free of charge. Despite the company's claim of durability, many surviving specimens exhibit crazing and cracks in the laminated playing surfaces. The records were packaged as sets of three in illustrated tri-fold albums (which the advertisements noted could double as counter displays) and retailed for \$2.50 per set.

Junior Operettas were specially commissioned musical adaptations of popular fairy tales. *TMW* noted that the "Little Red Riding Hood" set featured a ten-piece band directed by Charles A. Prince, who otherwise had no known connection to the company.

VULCAN RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1947– 1949; 1955

Offices: 210 S. 74th St., Birmingham, AL

Record Products: Vulcan [2]

Launched by Francis Goodman in late 1947, Vulcan Records was first mentioned by *Billboard* in January 1948. Vulcan had limited distribution through Nashville-based World Records. The company was named for Birmingham's statue of Vulcan on Red Mountain, near radio station WAPI's studios.

Vulcan specialized in country-and-western material with an artist roster that included Everett Lackey and the Lone Star Ramblers, and Happy Wilson and his Golden River Boys. There were also offerings by Black and White gospel groups, including the Birmingham Harmony Boys and All American Quartet. Several of Vulcan's artists were broadcasting over WAPI at the time. Bill Rumore, one of the station's disc jockeys, performed on Happy Wilson's Vulcan recording of "I Butted In," which a *Billboard* reviewer dismissed as "too placid" (the reverse side, on which Rumore did not participate, was better-received).

Vulcan records were last mentioned in *Billboard* in the autumn of 1948, in a World Records advertisement, and the company appears to have suspended production in 1949. The Vulcan label was revived in the spring of 1955 as a rhythm-and-blues label, by Goodman's Southland Enterprises. Peter Doraine (formerly of Abbey and Allen Records, and by then residing in Birmingham) served as manager of artists and repertoire. The Penant label was launched at the same time, as a country and pop line, but both had been discontinued by year's end.

W AND W RECORDINGS AND DISTRIBUTORS (Discs)**Record Production:** c. Late 1940s – Early 1950s**Offices:** 623 E. Vernon Ave., Los Angeles**Record Products:** W and W

W and W Recordings moved into Leroy Hurte's Bronze Records offices in or around early 1949, by which time the Bronze label appears to have been inactive. In a 1959 interview, Hurte could not recall who owned W and W, but he stated that the company had "inherited" some of his Bronze masters. W and W also issued its own recordings, featuring Jerry Perkins' Blues Blasters and other local rhythm-and-blues artists. It appears to have still been in business in the early 1950s.

THE WABINE COMPANY — See Warner, Jesse J.**WALCUTT, MILLER & COMPANY / WALCUTT & LEEDS / THE WALCUTT & LEEDS LTD (Cylinders)****Record Production:** 1894 – 1899**Offices:** 20 E. 14th St., New York (Walcutt, Miller & Co.); 53 E. 11th St., New York (Walcutt & Leeds)**Original-Master Source(s):** Own studios at above locations**Record Products:** Walcutt & Leeds (cylinders); also supplied masters to Edison

Following the bankruptcy of the North American Phonograph Company (*q.v.*), its record-making operation was taken over by Cleveland Walcutt and Walter Miller on September 1, 1894.

Walcutt, Miller & Company originally consisted of Walcutt, Miller, Edward F. Leeds, and Henry J. Hagen. Miller and Hagen resigned in early 1896 to launch the Phonograph Record and Supply Company (*q.v.*), and the two remaining members (who were cousins) reorganized the firm as Walcutt & Leeds.

Walcutt & Leeds first advertised their cylinders in *The Phonoscope* for November 1896, which probably was published a month or more after its cover date. Almost immediately, the records were reduced to 50¢ from \$1. When the newly organized National Phonograph Company reintroduced Edison-branded cylinders to the consumer market in 1897, it obtained many of its masters from Walcutt & Leeds while it built up its own stock of recordings. The arrangement, which is well-documented in the Edison archival materials, was terminated in early 1899, by which time Edison was recording its own masters.

Cleveland Walcutt was seriously injured in June 1897, when a vat of wax exploded and started a fire in the 11th Street Building. Damage to the building was estimated to be only \$200. Walcutt soon recovered, and operations do not appear to have been interrupted.

The American Graphophone Company (Columbia) successfully sued Walcutt & Leeds in the autumn of 1897 for patent infringement in making and selling duplicate cylinders. An injunction was issued but ignored, the beginning of a pattern that Edward Leeds would follow for the next decade. The action prompted U.S. Circuit Court Judge Wheeler to cite both partners for contempt in early 1898. Wheeler, admitting a possible "misunderstanding" of the injunction, allowed Walcutt and Leeds to avoid further prosecution if they turned over profits from their sales of infringing products, paid damages and court costs, and agreed to refrain from any further unauthorized duplication.

At about the same time, a new company doing business as The Walcutt & Leeds Ltd., was incorporated in Newark, New Jersey, to "make and sell amusement and talking machines." The new firm was also enjoined from duplicating cylinders and was eventually dissolved. Columbia sued Edward Leeds individually in 1898, claiming that he had appropriated their floating reproducer design.

Walcutt & Leeds closed in April 1899, and its remaining inventory was taken over by the Excelsior & Musical Phonograph Company, which advertised the records in *The Phonoscope* for a time. Cleveland Walcutt went on to become briefly involved with the Berliner Gramophone operation in France. In June 1899, Edward Leeds joined L. Reade Catlin in a new business that would experience even more catastrophic legal problems than his Walcutt & Leeds (*see* Leeds & Catlin).

GLENN WALLICHS RECORDING STUDIOS

Founded by Glenn Wallichs in the late 1930s, prior to his launch of Capitol Records, *q.v.* Located at 5205 Hollywood Boulevard, the studio offered recording services of all types, but no links to any commercial labels have yet been confirmed.

WALLIN'S MUSIC SHOP (Discs)

Record Production: Early–mid 1920s

Offices: 3247 N. Clark St., Chicago

Original-Master Source(s): Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories; Marsh Laboratories

Record Products: Wallin's Svenska Records; Scandinavian Bell Ringers

Wallin's Music Shop was a dealer in Okeh records and Howard radios in the early 1920s. The store, which specialized in Scandinavian sheet music and recordings, introduced its own Wallin's Svenska Records in the early 1920s and also produced several custom releases for the Scandinavian Bell Ringers.

Early releases used masters recorded by Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories for Wallin's exclusive use. Later releases used electrically recorded Marsh Laboratories masters recorded for Wallin from late 1925 through mid-1927. At least one early Wallin's issue is known to have been pressed from Gennett masters recorded in New York, and recordings of unknown (possibly foreign) origin appear on several other releases.

WALLIS ORIGINAL RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1950 – 1960s

Offices: 4 Yale Terrace, Linden, NJ (to mid-1951); 100 N. Wood Ave., Linden (from mid-1951)

Record Products: Wallis Original

Owned and operated by Hy Pastman, the husband and manager of nightclub entertainer Ruth Wallis. Before launching her own label, Wallis had recorded for De Luxe, which stockpiled twenty-four of her masters in advance of the 1948 American Federation of Musicians recording ban. Joe Liebowitz, who had produced the De Luxe recordings, served as Wallis Original's general manager until early 1957, when he reportedly sold his share in the company to Pastman. By then, Wallis was again recording for other labels.

A 1949 report claimed, "Practically every Wallis lyric is banned on the radio." A shipment of her records was later seized as obscene by Australian officials. *Billboard* reported that they were later returned to the distributor with a warning that "they thought the country better off without them." In fact, Wallis' records were only mildly risqué, even by the conservative standards of the day.

Wallis Original began producing 45s and LPs in the mid-1950s, compiled largely from previously released recordings. The company was still operating as late as 1961, when it was reported that the records were being pirated in Australia and New Zealand, where Wallis had developed a considerable following in spite of officials' ongoing efforts to suppress them.

WARNER BROTHERS PICTURES — See Brunswick Radio Corporation; Muzak Transcriptions

WARNER, JESSE J. (Discs)

Warner Recording Laboratories (1923–1924) / Warner Record Company (1925–1927) / The Wabine Company (c. 1927–1929) / The Mexo-Flex Company (export, late 1920s) / Pacific Coast Record Corporation, Ltd. (1929–1934) / Pacific Coast Record Corporation, Ltd. / Flexo Theater Record Company (1930) / Hollywood Flexo Record Company (c. 1931) / Flexo Pacific Coast Record Corporation (1932) / Pacific Coast Record Studio (1931–1932) / Titan Production Company, Inc. (from early 1930s) / Titan Recording Studios (later 1930)

Record Production: Early 1920 – 1939

Offices: Canton, OH (early 1920s); 1319 E. 9th St., Kansas City, MO (early 1924–late 1929); 1040 Geary St., San Francisco (late 1929–1939)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios

Pressing: Own plant

Record Products: Flexo, New Flexo; Flexo-Olympus, Unity; private and promotional labels; motion picture soundtrack discs

Recording engineer by Jesse J. Warner was first mentioned in the January 1923 *Talking Machine World*, which reported that he was operating a custom-recording studio in Canton, Ohio, a specialty of which was phonographic postcards. For the next decade, Warner would operate what was essentially the same business under multiple company names.

Warner had opened a Kansas City studio by early 1924, initially to supply recordings to the Unity School of Christianity. *The Unity News* for February 9 reported that a studio was being equipped at 1319 E. 9th Street for its "phonographic department," under Warner's management. Warner was still producing the records as late as 1928, when they were mentioned in Charles W. Ferguson's book, *The New Book of Revelations: The Inside Story of America's Astounding Religious Cults*.

On June 27, 1924, *The New York Times* reported that Warner had recorded portions of the Democratic National Convention from a radio broadcast. *The Talking Machine World* noted that Warner employed "an amplification device, constructed on the principle of a loudspeaker and connected to the phonographic recording device." Warner reportedly planned to mail "tiny disc records" to some of the convention speakers, but the records were not released commercially.

The Warner Record Company was launched the following year to manufacture and market a unique semi-flexible plastic disc, at a time when shellac-based pressings were the industry norm. The plastic was easily damaged by steel needles (although labels often specified their use), a drawback that does not appear to have deterred Warner from continuing to employ it. A few paper-labeled pressings are known, but most labels were printed directly onto the discs.

Although Warner was primarily a producer of custom and private-label recordings, he also made some commercial releases on the New Flexo label, for sale in the Kansas City area. Song titles on the earliest known New Flexo releases suggest that the label was introduced in mid-1925. Much of New Flexo's commercial output consisted of popular vocals, dance numbers, hymns, and light classical pieces performed by regional talent, including the Joe Gish, Johnny Campbell, and Jack Riley bands. There was also a very short-lived Greek ethnic series, on the Flexo-Olympus label. All were electrical recordings, albeit rather primitive ones.

Warner changed the name of his operation to The Wabine Company in 1927, for reasons that have not been discovered thus far. His Mexo-Flex Company, which appeared at about the same time, exported commercial Flexo pressings to Mexico, with labels in Spanish.

At some point in 1929, Warner moved his operation to California. His Pacific Coast Record Corporation was incorporated in San Francisco on December 26, 1929. It appears to have been the parent corporation behind the Flexo Theater Record Company, Hollywood Flexo Record Company, and Titan Production Company, Inc. The latter — the longest-lived of the many Warner-related enterprises — produced radio transcriptions, movie soundtrack discs, and promotional recordings, usually pressed in the same plastic as Flexo discs. Anecdotal reports that Warner provided standard shellac pressings to clients on occasion, including Accompany-U-Recordings and the Green Recording Laboratories, have not been confirmed.

Pacific Coast produced Flexo records ("New" having been dropped from the name), which like their predecessors were pressed in flexible plastic. Diameters ranged from 3"

to 16", with colors ranging from standard black to red, green, yellow, and pink. Most of Pacific Coast's output consisted of private, promotional, or special-use recordings. However, some commercial Flexo issues appeared sporadically during 1930–1932 that included titles by Oakland pianist Henry Starr and several otherwise unrecorded West Coast dance bands.

In 1930, Warner produced a series of 6" discs by Hollywood celebrities credited to Hollywood Enterprises, Inc. The most frequently encountered example is an interview with Luella Parsons, on a Flexo-labeled disc with customized mailer, which was used in a promotion for Sunkist oranges. Perhaps the only Flexo product encountered more often today is a demonstration record for Mussehl & Westphal's musical saws.

By 1931, Max Graf was listed as chief studio executive of the Pacific Coast Record Studio, and Louis Graf as general studio manager, with Warner serving as chief sound and production engineer. The parent Pacific Coast Record Corporation declared bankruptcy on May 8, 1934. The Titan Production Company, Titan Recording Studios, and subsidiary National Transcription and Recording Company continued to operate at Warner's Geary Street facility following the bankruptcy, under the management of Max Graf. Neither company is known to have produced recordings for the consumer market. In 1939 Warner sold Titan (which was subsequently reorganized as Lewis Studios) and used the proceeds to launch the J. J. Warner Company, which placed coin-operated recording booths in arcades and amusement parks.

WARNER RECORD COMPANY / WARNER RECORDING LABORATORIES —

See Warner, Jesse J.

WASHBURN COMPANY — See Coast Record (Manufacturing) Company

WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY

This religious organization released many records during the 1930s and 1940s, mostly produced for them by Columbia. Although very widely distributed, the records were not sold to the general public, being intended for members' use only, and thus are beyond the scope of this work.

WAX RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1949

Offices: 304 W. 26th St., New York

Record Products: Wax

A jazz label launched in early 1946 by bassist Al Hall. Wax's first session was held on January 24, 1946, after which the venture stalled. Recording resumed in April 1947, with the first new releases appearing in June.

Many Wax recordings featured a quintet that included Hall, Dick Vance (trumpet), Ben Webster (saxophone), Jimmy Jones (piano), and Denzil Best (drums). Other than Vance, each was given top billing on at least one issue. Jones also recorded a group of piano solos, which could be purchased individually or in an album set. Other releases featured a small group from the Duke Ellington orchestra that included Johnny Hodges and Billy Strayhorn. The records, which were not advertised nationally, were available only through small distributors and specialty stores.

Wax's masters were purchased by Atlantic Records in 1949. The company's brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

WEBSTER RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1949 – 1950

Offices: 1538 ½ Wilcox Ave., Hollywood, CA

Record Products: Webster

Launched in the autumn of 1949 by former King Records recording director Robert Scherman, in conjunction with his Webster Music Company publishing operation. The composer of "All of You" and other 1940s hits, Scherman had earlier produced the Atlas

and Premier [1] labels. There was no connection to Donald Gabor's Webster Records, an East Coast pressing plant.

Webster's launch was briefly noted in October 1949 by *Billboard*, which reported that Ben Pollack's Jewel Records would serve as distributor. However, little more was reported concerning Webster. The company apparently had closed by early 1951, when Scherman launched Skylark Records. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s July 1951 and March 1952 directories (which include many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

WEST COAST PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889

Offices: Portland, OR

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in the portions of Oregon and Washington not already allocated to the Spokane Phonograph Company. Articles of incorporation were filed on January 26, 1889, by W. B. King, J. H. Thatcher, and F. R. Strong. Its sole director was Louis Glass, who was also president of the Pacific Phonograph Company.

The West Coast Phonograph Company commenced operation on February 4, 1889, but little was reported concerning its activities. Thomas Lombard's 1892 report to North American's board of directors stated that the company "seemed to have not attempted to do much business." Thus far, no evidence has been found to suggest that West Coast Phonograph produced original recordings for sale to the general public.

WEST COAST RECORDINGS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 20 Annie St., San Francisco

Pressing: Bishop Presses

Record Products: West Coast

Launched in early 1946 by trumpeter Lu Watters, whose traditional-jazz revival band was featured on most releases. Pianists Wally Rose (from Watters' band) and Brun Campbell (who claimed to have been Scott Joplin's only White student) made up the remainder of the West Coast roster.

The records were sold directly to dealers, bypassing distributors. Masters came from a mixture of studio and live recordings, the latter made at San Francisco's Avalon Ballroom beginning in April 1946. The initial releases were on sale by August 1946, the same month in which the company was first mentioned in *Billboard*. The last West Coast recordings were made in the Avalon Ballroom in February 1947. Many West Coast masters were subsequently leased to the Melodisc label in England, and they have since been widely reissued under various foreign and domestic labels in LP and CD formats.

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY (Cylinders)

Founded: 1888

Offices: 146 5th Ave., Pittsburgh (1888–9/1892); 214–215 Ferguson Block, Pittsburgh (from 9/1892)

Record Products: Cylinders

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in western Pennsylvania as well as all of West Virginia. The company was organized in early November 1888 and received its license from North American at the end of that month. Incorporators were P. C. Knox, F. L. Stephenson, J. H. Reed, Joseph S. Brown, and A. W. Patrick. Officers included Knox (president, replaced by George B. Motheral in January 1891), L. S. Clarke (vice-president), J. H. Friend (secretary), and Henry F. Gilg (manager). L. Halsey Williams, vice-president of the Eastern Pennsylvania Phonograph Company, was a major investor. Six-thousand shares of capital stock, with a \$50 par value, were offered for sale in December 1888.

Western Pennsylvania Phonograph exhibited successfully at Pittsburgh's Third Annual Industrial Exposition in September 1891. The *Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph* reported that the company's display was "surrounded all the time; some listening to music, others entertained by some interesting lecturer, while the solid business men of the community

were examining [the phonographs] preparatory to renting them for their offices." In addition to phonographs and records, Western Pennsylvania dealt in typewriters and mimeograph machines.

The company was very active in Wheeling, West Virginia, where representatives first demonstrated the phonograph to a specially invited group of businessmen on February 18, 1889. In March 1892 it was reported that one Mr. Jerrold, a company agent, had recorded some musical selections by the U & I Company in Wheeling. Jerrold also made recordings of student performers in that city. However, no evidence has been found that the company produced cylinders for sale to the general public.

By December 1891 *The Phonogram* was reporting that the company had placed "quite a number" of coin-operated phonographs in the larger cities, incorporating an attachment invented by L. S. Clarke (a Western Pennsylvania board member). Jerrold announced plans to place coin-operated phonographs throughout Wheeling in February 1892. No reports have been found of Western Pennsylvania's activities after mid-1892, and the company was not represented at the National Phonograph Association convention in 1893.

WESTERN RADIO FEATURES (Discs)

Record Production: 1946

Offices: 512 Hearst Building, San Francisco (1946–1950); Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco (1950)

Pressing: Allied Record Manufacturing

Record Products: Roundup Recordings

An artist-management company operated by country-music singer Dude Martin, Western Radio Features briefly produced the Roundup Recordings label (not to be confused with several later, similarly named labels) to showcase Martin and his Roundup Gang. The masters were sold to Gordon Burdge's newly launched Eagle label within a matter of months, and Martin went on to sign with RCA Victor.

The Roundup Recordings label resurfaced in *Billboard's* July 1950 directory, in care of Western Radio Features, by which time its office address was given as the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco, but no new releases appear to have been made. Western Radio Features' end came in September 1950, after Martin's wife sued for separate maintenance on grounds of cruelty and claimed her share in the company as community property. Western Radio Feature's brief reappearance in *Billboard's* March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The Roundup name was later used by an unrelated Houston label.

WESTERN RECORDING COMPANY — See Western Records

WESTERN RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1943–1954

Offices and Master Source(s): Northern Life Tower (1220 3rd Ave., Seattle); 2417 2nd Ave., Seattle (pressing plant, to c. 1950); 824 E. Pike St., Seattle (from c. 1950)

Pressing: 2417 2nd Ave., Seattle

Record Products: Masters for Down Beat, Linden, other independent labels; radio transcriptions; custom and special-use recordings

Owned and operated by Adolph Frederik Linden, who had a criminal history. First employed by the Puget Sound Savings & Loan Association, he married the bank president's daughter in 1910. Following his father-in-law's death in 1924, Linden assumed the presidency and became involved in some questionable investment schemes. In 1927 he formed the Northwest Radio Service and began purchasing radio stations, starting with KJR in Seattle. In 1928 he cobbled those stations together into the American Broadcasting Company (unrelated to the present-day ABC), which began carrying Columbia Broadcasting System programming on the West Coast late in the year.

At about the same time, it was discovered that Linden had been making large, unauthorized withdrawals from Puget Sound Savings & Loan for some years. Ordered to pay \$1.5 million in restitution, he resigned shortly before the bank filed for bankruptcy in August 1929. In the meantime, Linden's radio network was failing financially. After a long downward spiral, Linden was arrested in New York in February 1931 and was returned to Seattle, where he faced a grand jury investigation and three trials in connection with

Puget Sound's bankruptcy. Finally found guilty of grand larceny in 1932, he was sentenced to serve five to fifteen years in the Walla Walla State Penitentiary.

Linden was paroled in 1938, and in 1939 he rented a small space adjacent to the lobby of Seattle's Hotel Earl, where he offered personal-recording services. In 1943 he launched the Western Recording Studios in the same building as radio station KOL's studio, providing professional recording, production, and (from the mid-1940s) pressing services. Linden's son Jimmy served as the studio's recording engineer before leaving to work for KOL.

In 1946, Adolph Linden launched the Linden Record Company (*q.v.*) as a separate business. In or around 1950, he sold his pressing plant and relocated the Western Recording Studios, which he continued to operate into 1954.

WESTERN RECORDS / WESTERN RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – c. 1947

Offices: 5109-A Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, CA (to late 1946); 1215 S. Flower St., Los Angeles (from late 1946)

Record Products: Western

A country-and-western label originally owned by John W. Greene, a talent agent who managed Duncan Renaldo (*a.k.a.* The Cisco Kid) and other rodeo and cowboy-film stars in the later 1940s. The Western label was copyrighted in 1945. Greene's Western Records reportedly produced only four masters before being taken over in July 1946 by country-music artist Doug Venable.

Venable brought in his brother, A. W. (vice-president), Viva Ruth Liles (secretary-treasurer), and Lester Blackwell (distribution manager). Venable was featured on many Western releases, but he also signed several other artists, including Snuffy Smith and Jimmy Lawson. The label's oddest offering was an excerpt from Franklin Roosevelt's 1941 declaration of war, overdubbed with a rendition of "Home on the Range" by Venable's Bar-X Ranch Hands. Under Venable's management, new releases were limited to just two per quarter, and the company appears to have gone dormant in 1947.

WESTERNAIR RECORDS / CONSTELLATION RECORD AND DISTRIBUTING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1945 – 1946

Offices: 7350 Beverley Blvd., Los Angeles (from mid-1946); 11561 Ventura Blvd., Hollywood, CA (distribution)

Record Products: Westernair, Constellation

Westernair Records was launched in the autumn of 1945 by country-and-western singer and movie producer Cal Shrum, who was featured on many of the company's releases. Other incorporators included Walt Shrum, Joe Erwin, and Dean Watson. All but Watson also held executive positions with Shrum's affiliated Westernair Pictures. In late 1945 and early 1946, Shrum sent some of his performers overseas to entertain American troops.

Westernair's initial releases, by Shrum, Don Weston, and Britt Wood, appeared in October 1945. In the spring of 1946, Shrum changed the name of his movie and recording operations to Constellation Pictures and Constellation Record and Distributing Company, respectively. He starred in Constellation's first feature-length film, "Swing, Cowboy, Swing."

Bearing labels boldly proclaiming the records to be "From Hollywood," the initial Constellation releases were advertised in May 1946. Constellation was a cut-rate line, retailing for 55¢. The records were marketed primarily to jukebox operators with advertisements claiming that they were "jukebox-tested" and "nickle-nabbers." The catalog consisted largely of the same sort of country-and-western material that appeared on Westernair, along with a popular series that seems to have received little attention. The company continued to produce and market Westernair records as well, which were reduced from 75¢ to 55¢ following the introduction of Constellation.

Joe Erwin and Dean Watson left the business during the summer of 1946 to launch their own Silver Spur Records (*q.v.*). In August of that year, Cal Shrum liquidated Constellation Record and Distributing to concentrate on his movie business. The Constellation name was later used for an apparently unrelated label credited to Constellation Recordings (Los Angeles).

WHEELING RECORDING COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: From 1947

Offices: 75 13th St., Wheeling, WV

Record Products: Wheeling

Founded in 1947 by Andrew John Smik, Jr., doing business under his professional name of Doc Williams. A popular country-music artist on Wheeling radio station WWVA, Williams, along with his wife Chickie (*née* Jesse Wanda Crupe) and members of their Border Riders, were prominently featured on Wheeling records, along with other WWVA stars. Williams also owned Musselman's Grove near Altoona, Pennsylvania, an open-air venue where the Border Riders often performed.

The records originally were sold by Doc Williams' Country Store in Wheeling, but they later had national distribution as well. Wheeling had a minor hit in the autumn of 1949 with Chickie Williams' "Beyond the Sunset," which briefly made *Billboard's* country-and-western charts. In late 1949, Williams turned production of Wheeling records over to Rich-R'-Tone, and distribution to Palda, but he retained his financial stake in the company and continued to oversee the label's operation.

Williams reclaimed full control of Wheeling in 1952, following Rich-R'-Tone's merger with the Acme Radio and Record Corporation. He introduced a more modern label design and added LPs and 45s to the product line. Sporadic production continued into the early 1970s, when a "psychedelic" label design briefly appeared. Williams died in December 2011, but Doc Williams Enterprises (www.docwilliams.com) continues in business, offering a selection of books and CD reissues.

WHIRLING DISC

This Dallas company was listed in *Billboard's* 1949 label directory as the producer of Whirling records, but no reliable information has been found concerning its ownership or output. It is of no apparent connection the later New York-based Whirlin' Disc label.

WHITE CHURCH RECORDING COMPANY / K. C. RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1947 – 1949

Offices: 318 W. 10th St., Kansas City, MO; Chicago (branch office)

Record Products: D and D, Red Barn, White Church; Blackwood Brothers and other custom labels

Initially owned and operated by Delbert (Deb) Dyer, a "rustic" comedian who was working with John Lair's Renfro Valley Barn Dance operation at the time. Dyer originally operated as the K. C. Record Company, which was launched in late 1946 or early 1947 in affiliation with the Christian Education Service. The company produced the earliest version of the Blackwood Brothers label (credited to Christian Education Service), which unlike the later version does not appear to have been intended for sale to the general public.

Dyer launched the White Church Recording Company in mid-1947, at the same address as the K. C. Record Company. White Church was purely a religious label, and early releases stated that 10% of net earnings would go to "the work of the Lord." No information was forthcoming on how that was to be accomplished, and the claim was later deleted.

Dyer's new company continued to feature the Blackwood Brothers, a White gospel quartet that had developed a strong following through its broadcasts over radio station KMA (Shenandoah, Iowa). They reportedly were White Church's best sellers, and they became so popular that a second "Blackwood Brothers" group had to be formed to meet the demand for live appearances. The Blackwood Brothers and some other artists self-financed their White Church recordings, in return for which they were allowed to personally sell some of the records and keep the profits.

There were also releases by Black artists, most notably Lee Roy Abernathy and the Homeland Harmony Boys, whose "Gospel Boogie" reportedly sold 150,000 copies within a short time of its release. The recording was quickly licensed by King Records, and the tune (termed "an original jive spiritual" by *Billboard*) was covered on the major labels by artists ranging from Sister Rosetta Tharpe to Red Foley. Attempting a follow-up hit, White Church released Maggie Lee's "Look Out for Samson," which it advertised as "live-jived in the molten manner."

Dyer launched the companion Red Barn (country-and-western) and D and D (pop) labels

in the spring of 1948. The latter (unrelated to a later label styled "D & D") featured Chinese-American vocalist Dick Wong, who made his debut singing Dyer's "Rendezvous with a Rose." Although praised by a *Cash Box* reviewer as "the new velvet voice," Wong was reduced to a stereotype in D & D's advertising, which proclaimed, "Confucius say — Chinese Boy Sing American Love Song SWELL!"

Following the introduction of Red Barn and D & D, Dyer set up Tom and Deb's Music Syndicate to handle local distribution of his labels. By then, White Church products were also being handled by distributors in numerous major cities. In October 1948, Tom and Deb's Music ran a *Billboard* ad listing more than sixty disc jockeys who would "spin" their records.

Dyer resigned as president of White Church in February 1949. The company was purchased by Carl Rice, who turned its management over to P. M. Hewitt. Six months later, Rice sold the company to Sacred Records for \$25,000. Sacred moved the operation to its headquarters in Los Angeles but retained Hewitt and continued to produce the White Church and Red Barn labels into the 1950s. Following the sale, the Blackwoods took possession of the masters they had financed. The Red Barn Recording Company's brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

Dyer went on to launch a community country-music project in De Kalb, Missouri, which he modeled on the Renfro Valley Barn Dance. In 1953, Wonder House (Kansas City) published Dyer's *Satan's Secret Service—True Life Experiences*. Dyer taught music in his home studio in his later years. He died in April 1973.

WILLIAMS & RANKIN

The American Graphophone Company (Columbia) sued this Providence, Rhode Island, company in 1898 for selling counterfeits of its cylinders. An injunction was granted, and damages were settled out of court. Thus far, no evidence has been found that Williams & Rankin made original recordings.

WILLIAMS, J. MAYO "INK" (Discs)

Southern Record Corporation / Harlem Records, Inc. / "Ink," Inc. / Mayo Music / Ebony Records [II]

Record Production: 1945 – 1969

Offices: 3621 S. State St., Chicago (Chicago Music Company, 1923–1930); 307 Lenox Ave., New York (Southern Record Corporation, 1945–early 1947); 4823 Cottage Grove Ave., Chicago (Harlem Records, Inc., early 1947–1949); Ebony Records (417 E. 47th St., 1952–1970s)

Original-Master Source(s): Independent Chicago and New York studios

Record Products: Chicago, Cincinnati, Ebony [2], Harlem [2], Southern

J. Mayo "Ink" Williams was a key figure in the development of race records, beginning with his work as a talent scout and occasional session supervisor for the New York Recording Laboratories (Paramount) in the early-to-mid 1920s. In 1923 he formed the Chicago Music Company to purchase and copyright original songs recorded for Paramount. He left NYRL in 1927 to serve as front-man for the Chicago Record Company (*q.v.*), the makers of Black Patti records, then returned briefly after Black Patti failed later that year. In mid-1928 he accepted Jack Kapp's invitation to head the Brunswick-Vocalion race-record division, then followed Kapp to Decca Records in 1934, where he managed its race-record department.

After leaving Decca, Williams launched the Southern Record Corporation in early 1945, holding his first recording sessions in or around April. The company made its debut with the Chicago label, which was followed by Ebony label (not to be confused with Otis Rene's and Shelton Brooks' Ebony label of 1940–1941). Ebony was abandoned after six releases, although it would later be revived. Nineteen releases appeared on the Chicago label before it was replaced by the Southern label in March 1946.

Within several months of its introduction, Southern was joined by the Harlem label. By then, Williams was operating his own distribution company at the same Lenox Avenue address as his record business. In early 1947 he opened a branch distribution office in Chicago, operating as Harlem Records, Inc. He revived the Ebony label at about the same time, adding a "Harlem Series" logo for reissues from the Harlem catalog.

Williams also leased or sold his masters (including some that never appeared on his own labels) to other independent labels in the later 1940s, including Queen, Sittin' In With, and Aristocrat. Several masters that he sold to 20th Century were subsequently passed on to Apex and Gotham. However, his recording activities declined as the decade progressed. He discontinued production of his own labels in 1949, and in the autumn of 1950 he returned to Decca.

Williams resumed production of his own labels in 1952, with a revival of the Ebony label. Based in Chicago, the new Ebony Records was a small and underfunded operation offering material that increasingly revealed how out-of-touch Williams had become with current musical trends. A single 10" LP release, believed to been issued in 1954 is known; the first Ebony 45s did not appear until 1957. Several late Ebony releases were pirated from pre-World War II recordings on which additional instruments were overdubbed. Production was finally discontinued in 1969. By early 1973, Williams was giving away fifty leftover Ebony 45s with the purchase of fifty more at 10¢ each.

WILLIDA RECORDS (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – Early 1950s

Offices: 1595 Broadway (Suite 308), New York

Pressing: Allentown Record Company (PA)

Record Products: Hilarity Records; Kiddie Land, Small Fry, Willida (all children's)

Launched in late 1946 by Irving Bizman, W. F. Martin, and Julie Marvin, all of whom were executives with International Transcribed Shows (New York). Willida was primarily a producer of children's records. Its first release (a children's set narrated by Glenda Farrell) was announced in *Billboard* on January 11, 1947. The company made news in March 1947, when it was reported that Gloria Swanson would narrate Willida's "Joey the Jeep." The records were sold directly to dealers, bypassing distributors.

Willida owes inclusion here to its production of Hilarity, a short-lived label that specialized in comic and mildly risqué "party" records. Introduced in early 1949, Hilarity shared an office with Willida but did not credit the company on its labels. It appears to have been discontinued by the end of the year, and Willida was last mentioned by *Billboard* in July 1950. Its brief reappearance in that publication's July 1951 and March 1952 directories (which include many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded.

WILLOW WALK INDUSTRIES (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – 1947

Offices: 5339 Burlingame, Detroit

Pressing: Own plant — Rockwood, MI

Record Products: Regal [2] (possibly not produced); pressings for independent labels

Launched in February 1946 by former band leader Len Pensler, who owned an eight-unit pressing plant in Rockwood, Michigan. *Billboard* reported that Willow Walk was planning to press for other companies as well as produce its own Regal label. No information concerning the latter has been found thus far; it was last listed in *Billboard*'s February 1947 directory. There was no connection to the Hollywood-based Regal label (see Regal Records), which was produced at about the same time, nor to any other Regal label.

WINCHESTER SOUND (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1950 – 1951

Offices: 8919 S Winchester Ave., Chicago

Record Products: Winchester

A short-lived company of unknown ownership. Two Winchester records by Abigale and the Knightshades, apparently comprising Winchester's second batch of releases, were advertised in December 1950. The trade papers reported nothing further on the label, which was last listed in *Billboard*'s July 1951 directory. Its brief reappearance in *Billboard*'s March 1952 directory (which included many inactive or defunct companies) probably can be disregarded. The name was later used for an unrelated label based in Winchester, Virginia.

WINDSOR RECORDS (Discs)

Although Windsor Records' products were widely available through retailers beginning in the 1940s, they were intended primarily for use in dance-instruction classes, and thus are beyond the scope of this work.

WINSETT RECORDING LABORATORY (Discs)

Record Production: c. Late 1920s

Offices: Chattanooga, TN

Record Products: Dixie [1] (The "Dixie" Record); possibly masters for Bethlehem

An apparently short-lived venture of R. E. (Robert Emmet) Winsett, a Tennessee songwriter and music publisher who claimed to have composed more than a thousand gospel songs. The Winsett Recording Laboratory likely was launched in the later 1920s, after Winsett returned to his native Chattanooga from Fort Smith, Arkansas, where he had moved in 1923.

Winsett's Dixie label (styled The "Dixie" Record) depicts the first two bars of the chorus of Dan Emmet's "Dixie." No documentary evidence has been found thus far that Winsett operated his own studio; however, the few known Winsett masters have not been traced to other sources and apparently are were made by or for him. Inspected specimens appear to have been pressed by the Starr Piano Company. At least two Winsett masters are believed to have been used by the Atlanta-based Bethlehem label (*see* Bethlehem Music Company).

R. E. Winsett later hosted "The Winsett Radio Gospel Hour" on station WNOX (Knoxville, Tennessee). Possibly his best-known composition was "When I Take My Vacation in Heaven," which was widely recorded beginning in the 1920s. He died on June 26, 1952 and was posthumously inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame in 1973 and the Southern Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame in 2002.

WISCONSIN PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1888

Offices: 414 Broadway and 134 Main St., Milwaukee

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Phonograph was organized in Milwaukee during the autumn of 1888 and was exhibiting Columbia and Edison machines in its Main Street showroom by the summer of 1889.

William S. Burnett was listed as the company's superintendant in 1890. In August 1890 he applied for a patent on a coin-operated phonograph and two months later incorporated the obscure Wisconsin Automatic Phonograph Company. His daughter Winnie was described by the *Wisconsin State Journal* as "the only lady stockholder in the phonograph companies of the United States, she being one of the business heads" of Wisconsin Phonograph. John G. Frank was listed as president of the company in 1892.

Secretary Henry D. Goodwin reported in May 1890, "Our state business is worse than worthless. We would have been better off if our territory had comprised only Milwaukee." Goodwin complained at length about the cost of maintaining and repairing leased machines, and he was one of the first to lobby North American for outright sale of the machines. "If the instruments had been sold from the beginning," he told the First Annual Convention of Local Phonograph Companies in May 1890, "the business would be in good shape at this day." Goodwin was later proven correct. *The Phonogram* reported in late 1891 that Wisconsin Phonograph "since the beginning of the sale system [referring to the selling rather than leasing of machines] has made a great deal of money."

Thus far, no evidence has been found to suggest that Wisconsin Phonograph produced any original recordings for sale to the general public.

WOLF RECORDING COMPANY

Launched in 1948 by Jonas Williams, owner of Wolf's Record Shop (Oakland, California). Williams signed Pee Wee Crayton, who then signed with Modern Records while under contract to Wolf. Williams threatened legal action against Crayton and Modern Records, after which nothing further was reported on the case, and it is unclear whether any Wolf records reached dealers. The Wolf Recording Company name was also used in the 1950s

by an unrelated San Antonio company that specialized in records for the Mexican-American market.

WONDER TALKING MACHINE COMPANY — See Standard Talking Machine Company

**WOR ELECTRICAL RECORDING AND TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES /
WOR PROGRAM SERVICE, INC. / WOR RECORDING STUDIOS (Discs)**

Record Production: 1937 – 1947

Offices: 1440 Broadway, New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio at above address

Pressing: Clark Phonograph Record Company (to 9/1945); Abramson plant (Long Island City, from 9/1945)

Record Products: WOR Feature, WOR Recording; masters for numerous independent labels, including Blue Note, Comet, Dial, Keynote, Melrose; radio transcriptions, custom and special-use recordings

A division of Bamberger Broadcasting Service (Newark, New Jersey), radio station WOR first made its own recordings in mid-1936, for internal use, after installing two Presto instantaneous recording machines. Professional recording equipment was installed in 1937, at which point WOR Electrical Recording and Transcription Services was launched to provide complete production services for Mutual Broadcasting System stations (in affiliation with the WOR Artists Bureau), as well as custom recording services for independent producers.

The WOR Recording Studios were launched in early 1944 as the commercial recording division of WOR Program Service. Theodore C. Streibert and Herbert W. Schmid were listed as president and sales manager, respectively. Other key personnel included Nat M. Abramson (artists and repertoire manager of the Mutual Broadcasting System), Thomas W. Kelleher (manager of WOR's Recording Division), Herbert W. Schmid (manager of Feature Records).

The initial WOR Feature releases were advertised in April 1944, corresponding with the company's trademark-application claim that "Feature" was first used on April 13 of that year. Pressing initially was contracted to the Clark Phonograph Company, but in November 1944 Abramson opened his own pressing plant. It was almost immediately commandeered for war-related work and not finally released back to WOR until September 1945. In the interim, Clark continued to handle WOR's pressing.

WOR Feature records initially were intended for the jukebox trade. Abramson, who seemed to favor aging band leaders, signed Vincent Lopez, Jan Garber, Adrian Rollini, and others whose recording careers had begun in the 1920s. The companion WOR Recordings label was a short-lived line for the consumer market. Its most popular release was the two-disc "Voices of Liberty" set, cobbled together from excerpts of broadcasts by Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. The records could also be purchased separately; Roosevelt's reportedly outsold Churchill's by a wide margin.

During its first year on the market, WOR Feature averaged only two new releases every six weeks. Even with that modest output, the company was unable keep up with orders. It placed a full-page advertisement in the 1945 *Record Retailing Yearbook* thanking dealers "for the patience you've shown when the phenomenal response to feature records taxed our facilities." Undaunted, in April 1945 WOR authorized Abramson to spend \$100,000 over the next six months to build a large stockpile of masters for release after the war. The same report noted that those masters might be sold to another company, but an attempt by M-G-M treasurer David Bernstein to buy out WOR Feature Records was rebuffed. Although a rumor that the Feature label would be renamed Pilot proved to be untrue, Abramson did produce the Pilot Radio Corporation's Pilotone label, in conjunction with the WOR Artists Bureau.

WOR Feature records were last advertised in the summer of 1947. Operation of the station itself (which by then had expanded into television broadcasting) was taken over by General Tire's General Teleradio division of in 1949. In January 1952, the Bamberger Broadcasting Company sold WOR-TV and its interest in WOR AM-FM to General Teleradio.

WORLD BROADCASTING SYSTEM, INC. / WORLD TRANSCRIPTION STUDIOS (Discs)

Record Production: 1930s – 1948

Offices: 502 W. 57th St., New York (1930s); 711 5th Ave., New York (from early 1940s); branch offices in Chicago, Hollywood, San Francisco, and Washington DC.

Original-Master Source(s): Own studios — 502 W. 57th St., New York; 711 5th Ave., New York; 400 W. Madison St., Chicago; 301 E. Erie, Chicago; 555 S. Flower St., Los Angeles; also used Sound Studios of New York, Inc., and Electrical Research Products Studio (Manhattan and Bronx, New York)

Record Products: Masters for Decca, Elite, Hit, Liberty Music Shops, and other commercial labels; Associated, Muzak, and World transcriptions; custom, private, and special-use recordings

A major producer of radio transcriptions, headed by a group of highly experienced recording industry executives that included former Brunswick's Percy L. Deutsch (president) and Milton J. Rackmil (treasurer). Both held the same positions with the affiliated Electrical Research Products.

World Broadcasting's facilities included the Sound Studios of New York and Electrical Research Products studios. Both were leased for commercial recording sessions during the 1930s and 1940s. The World Transcription Group was formed as an affiliated company in 1938, also under Deutsch's management, after having lost Muzak as a client.

The World Broadcasting System's commercial clients were primarily small independent labels. The notable exception was Decca Records, which finally purchased World Broadcasting in 1943, and in turn leased its Chicago studios to Egmont Sonderling's United Broadcasting System in late 1946. World Broadcasting's remaining assets, including the World transcription library, were sold to broadcast producer Frederic Ziv in 1948.

WORLD RECORDS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1948 – 1951

Offices: 315 Warner Building, Nashville, TN

Record Products: World [2], World Records Inc.

Launched in the summer of 1948 by Jordan Stokes III. Distribution was handled by Volunteer Music Sales (Nashville).

The company's "Music for the World" slogan did not reflect its label's limited scope, which initially consisted of country-and-western (1500) and race-record (2500) series, both of which were announced in August 1948. These were followed by an apparently short-lived pop (1400) series. Each series had its own label design, and color schemes changed several times over the years. World Records was last listed in *Billboard's* label directory for July 1951 (which included many inactive or defunct companies), although no new releases had been announced in some time.

WORLD'S GREATEST MUSIC / NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR MUSIC APPRECIATION / MUSIC APPRECIATION PROJECTS, INC. (Discs)

Record Production: 1938 – 1941

Offices: 75 West St., New York (1938–mid-1940); New York (PO box number only, from mid-1940)

Original-Master Source(s): RCA Victor

Pressing: RCA Victor

Record Products: World's Greatest Music, World's Greatest Operas

A classical budget-label operation, conceived in late 1937 or early 1938 by Edward T. Ingle and Felix A. Grisette. Ingle had worked in NBC's promotions department, and Grisette had helped to organize the North Carolina Symphony Society, but neither had recording industry experience. Their idea was taken up by Jacob Omansky, the *New York Post's* business manager, who approached RCA Victor with a proposal. The *Post* would guarantee to reimburse RCA \$150,000 if the venture failed, and the compositions to be recorded would be selected by *Post* music critic Samuel Chotznikoff, a close friend of RCA president David Sarnoff.

RCA Victor agreed to make the recordings, provided that neither the company name nor those of their artists be revealed. The participating artists agreed to work anonymously for union scale and waive royalties. RCA, which also handled the pressing, was careful to avoid any markings on the masters that might reveal their source.

Marketing and sales initially were handled by the Publishers Service Company, Inc. (the *New York Post's* promotion firm), which took Omansky's suggestion that the records be used to boost newspaper sales. A coupon appeared daily in the *Post*. Forty-eight coupons plus \$1.93 in cash could be redeemed for one complete symphonic album, and also entitled the purchaser to place a \$5 deposit on a "free" electric turntable attachment that could be plugged into a radio receiver. The deposit was refundable only after a customer purchased all ten album sets.

RCA Victor's recording files reveal that the company provided the services of several of its well-known conductors, including Eugene Ormandy, Artur Rodzinski, Fritz Reiner, Alexander Smallens, and Fritz Stiedry. The first two releases (Schubert's eighth symphony and Beethoven's fifth) were recorded in a single session on October 17, 1938, at Philadelphia's Academy of Music, by an unidentified orchestra under Ormandy's direction.

On the same day, the first World's Greatest Music releases were announced in a nationwide newspaper campaign. Although no records had yet been pressed, readers were urged to reserve their copies immediately, or risk missing out. Sales were phenomenal once the records finally began shipping later that autumn, but the critics were ambivalent, complimenting the records' quality, but deploring the tawdry marketing tactics.

In an attempt to lend the enterprise an air of respectability, promotional duties were later transferred to the *Washington Star* in conjunction with a newly created non-profit organization calling itself the National Committee for Music Appreciation, which discontinued the garish advertisements, coupon schemes, and giveaways. It initially sold the World's Greatest Music records only to schools, libraries, and members of its local chapters, but later obtained the *Star's* permission to market the records to the general public in other newspapers, provided that it was done in a tasteful manner.

Dr. John Erskine took over as chairman of the NCMA in August 1940 and announced a new World's Greatest Operas series, which was produced anonymously by RCA under Charles O'Connell's supervision, subject to the same conditions as World's Greatest Music. Artists included Eleanor Steber, Norman Cordon, and Leonard Warren, none of whom received label credit. The series was officially unveiled at the NCMA's annual banquet on September 9, 1940, held at New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The opera series marked the end of RCA's involvement with the program.

The NMCA withdrew from the record business in March 1941, citing distribution difficulties. The World's Greatest series was taken over by Music Appreciation Projects, Inc., which was already marketing the cheaply produced Music Lovers Chest of Records. The remaining World's Greatest releases were pressed by various manufacturers from imported masters of generally lower quality than the original RCA series.

WRIGHT RECORD CORPORATION (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1951

Offices: New York (from 6/1948); 510 22nd Ave., Union City, NJ (from 9/1950)

Pressing: Meriden, CT (former Sonora plant, from 6/1948); Newark, NJ (former Majestic plant, from 8/1949)

Record Products: Varsity, Royale; Herald, Hit, Meriden, Sherwood, Varsity–Uncle Don (children's)

On June 1, 1948, Eli Oberstein resigned from RCA Victor, for which he had worked sporadically since 1931, and launched a short-lived business named Atlantic Sound, Inc. Unrelated to Atlantic Records, the company reportedly would operate on "a vast international scale," arranging foreign recording sessions and licensing foreign masters for U.S. companies during the American Federation of Musicians' second recording ban. Rumors were soon circulating that Atlantic Sound was little more than a smokescreen to cover yet another of Oberstein's cheap-label ventures, which proved to be the case.

Little more was heard of Atlantic Sound, but on June 16, *Variety* reported that Oberstein was setting up the Wright Record Corporation to resume production of his long-dormant Varsity and Royale labels. Oberstein initially planned to lease a portion of Sonora's Meriden pressing plant from its new owners, Milton Benjamin and Marie Reubens. However, by the time production got under way, Oberstein had purchased the plant outright, along with 250 Sonora masters and the accompanying album-cover artwork.

Retailing for 39¢ (reduced to 35¢ in 1949), the new Varsity records were among the cheapest discs on the market at that time. To keep his costs low, Oberstein bypassed

distributors and sold the records to dealers directly from the factory. Early releases featured little in the way of "name" talent, instead peddling sound-alike cover versions of current hits. A *Billboard* reporter observed, "artists on the label are completely unknown to any segment of the record-buying public." The remainder of the catalog was fleshed out with reissues (many of them pseudonymous) of recordings Oberstein obtained from Asch, Musicraft, Sonora, and other failing or defunct operations, most of his original Varsity and Royale masters having long-since passed into the hands of other companies (see United States Recording Corporation).

To avoid running afoul of the American Federation of Musicians' 1948 recording ban, Oberstein claimed he was obtaining dance-band recordings from undisclosed foreign sources, then overdubbing vocals by American singers, who were not bound by the AFM ban. This was a common practice among other companies during the second ban; however, Oberstein had made similar claims regarding his use of foreign masters during the first AFM ban, which had been proven to be false.

The first of the new Varsity discs went on sale in early September 1948, along with some children's records pressed from Sonora's "Uncle Don" masters. Oberstein had hired a special field-sales promotion team in July, all but one of whom he fired in November, after sales of the initial releases proved disappointing. Their place was taken by Joe Carlton, a former *Billboard* music editor, who achieved immediate results by staging a widely publicized two-day Varsity sale at Macy's New York department store, during which 37,000 discs were reportedly sold.

The success of the Macy's sale sparked demand for the discs among other retailers. As an incentive, in early 1949 Carlton offered a special set of "Hit Parade" discs (comprising a mixture of new and reissued material), which would be allocated only to Varsity's top-performing retailers. At the same time, Varsity discs were reduced to 30¢ each for jukebox operators, and Oberstein set up his own distribution network specifically to cater to them. Although all of this activity came at a time when record companies were struggling to cap prices at 75¢, it seems to have been largely taken in stride by industry veterans, who by then were familiar with Oberstein's pattern of boastful start-ups followed by disastrous failures.

In January 1949, *Billboard* announced a joint venture between Oberstein and band leader Horace Heidt to produce the latter's own label (see Magnolia Records Company). It was abandoned a month later, after Oberstein was unable to resolve his differences with Heidt's attorney. Undeterred, in June 1949 Oberstein entered into a joint venture with Columbia's Edward Wallerstein to revive the old Harmony budget label (dormant since 1932), for which Columbia would supply the masters and pressings and Wright would provide marketing and distribution services (see Harmony Records). By late 1949 the venture had collapsed amidst legal squabbling between the two parties, and Columbia officials ended the relationship in early 1950. Oberstein launched the probably fictitious Meriden Record Corporation at about the same time. Its cheaply produced Meriden label offered a mixture of Sonora reissues and some new pseudonymous issues.

In the meantime, the original 1939 trademark filing for Oberstein's Royale label had been republished on August 30, 1949, in the name of the Wright Record Corporation, in advance of the label's relaunch. As had been the case with the original version of Royale, the 1949 reincarnation was a more expensive line than Varsity, retailing for 75¢ and devoted largely to public-domain standards and classical material. At about the same time, Oberstein briefly revived his old Hit label, which failed to attract much interest. *Billboard* reported in August 1949 that Oberstein was buying up "a flock" of Majestic masters from Mercury Records, on a piecemeal basis, and had purchased the former Majestic pressing plant in Meriden, Connecticut.

Oberstein launched a 99¢ line of 10" classical Varsity LPs in early 1949, using imported recordings of the usual symphonic warhorses that he licensed from Selmar (Paris). During the summer of 1949 it was joined by a \$1.99 series of operatic highlight albums, using material from undisclosed Italian sources. Royale 45s and 10" LPs followed later that year. In March 1950, Wright began pressing records for the R. H. Macy department stores on the Herald label, named for Macy's flagship location on Herald Square (and unrelated to the later Herald Record Company). *Billboard* reported that the records would be in 10" LP format only, retailing for \$1.89. However, Wright also briefly produced Herald and other

78s for the discount-store and mail-order markets, including Montgomery Ward's Sherwood label. Releases in both formats were drawn from previously issued material, including Jan Peerce's widely reissued 1939 Royale recordings. In some cases, Oberstein took label credit as conductor on recordings with which he had nothing to do, using his old Elliot Everet pseudonym.

Oberstein rarely revealed the sources of his classical material, leading many to suspect that it was pirated. Researchers have established that much of the material he issued on Royale and associated labels beginning in the late 1940s was legitimately licensed from German broadcast companies, including Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk (Cologne and Hamburg), Sudwest Rundfunk (Baden-Baden), and Bayerischer Rundfunk (Munich). The latter included some of the same material that Mercury had licensed, although Oberstein's substitution of pseudonymous artist credits made the duplication less apparent. However, there is evidence that he used some unlicensed dubbings of commercial German and Soviet Russian recordings. In the 1950s, Oberstein was sued by London Records, Metropolitan Opera soprano Regina Resnik, and band leader Ralph Flanagan for unauthorized use of their recordings.

In September 1950, Oberstein moved his main office to New York and Wright's warehousing and sales offices to Union City, New Jersey, leaving only the manufacturing in Meriden. He dropped the Wright Record Corporation name in 1951 and merged his various interests into the newly created Record Corporation of America, which he took perverse pleasure in referring to as "RCA."

Oberstein's prolific later LP output, made primarily for the discount-store market, is beyond the scope of this work. He was still actively managing the Rondo and Rondolette labels when he died of a heart attack on June 12, 1960.

WRIGHTMAN, NEALE (Discs)

Neale Wrightman Publishers / Wrightman Music, Inc. / Wrightman Record Company / Wrimus Company

Record Production: 1946 – 1960s

Offices: 30 W. Washington St., Chicago (1944–early 1948); Los Angeles (early 1946–early 1948); 405 Katz Building, San Bernardino, CA (early 1948–mid-1950); 6811-B Hollywood Blvd., San Bernardino (mid-1950–1953); 5880 Hollywood Blvd. (Wrimus, 1953–c. 1960); 6175 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood (Wrimus, from c. 1960)

Record Products (78s): Wrightman, Owl, Robinet; custom labels; private recordings

Launched in the early 1940s, Neale Wrightman Publishers originally was headquartered in Chicago, with branch offices in New York and San Francisco. In early 1946, the main publishing operation moved to California, where Wrightman launched his eponymous label to promote the company's songs.

The Wrightman label's catalog numbers were followed by -P or -W suffixes, apparently to distinguish "pop" from "western." A large portion of the Wrightman label's output consisted of the latter, much of it by little-known or pseudonymous artists, the latter Sage Brush Sandy, Sweetheart Mary, and Utah Slim. The records were advertised as "Songs that satisfy by artists you will enjoy."

Wrightman added the Robinet label in 1947, followed by Owl (credited on the labels as a Wrightman subsidiary) in the early 1950s. Both featured undistinguished pop fare by obscure artists. Part of Wrightman's later output consisted of vanity issues, paid for by aspiring songwriters who were drawn in by Wrightman's small classified advertisements in *Popular Mechanics* and other magazines offering custom arranging, lead-sheet, publishing, and recording packages. Among them was Johnny Long, who recorded four self-composed titles for the Wrightman label in the WMC studios in Memphis. He later bought back the rights and reissued the records on his own vanity label.

In or around 1953, Wrightman launched the Wrimus Company, which produced 45s under the Wrimus and Neale labels. In addition to regular commercial releases, the company offered Wrightman's usual vanity publishing and recording services, along with merchandise ranging from bulk lots of used records to vibrating pillows. The last known release on Neale (believed to have been Wrightman's final label) appeared c. 1964. Wrightman filed his last song copyright in 1968.

WYOMING PHONOGRAPH COMPANY

Founded: 1889

A sub-company of the North American Phonograph Company, licensed to deal in Columbia graphophones and Edison phonographs in Wyoming. The company was organized in Cheyenne on June 27, 1889, at which time its officers included Thomas A. Kent (president) and E. L. Lindsay (manager).

In May 1890, Lindsay reported that the company had placed machines with local businesses on a trial basis, and was allowing them to send their dictation cylinders to a central office for transcription by a typist. The experiment was successful, resulting in the placement of thirty-one machines in Cheyenne, including three in the offices and home of Governor Warren. However, the company found it difficult to expand its business beyond the city. "A great many phonographs could be used on the ranches," Lindsay observed, "but it is impossible under the present system of rentals to place any great number of machines out, unless there is some provision made for an increase in rental [fees]."

In 1892, North American Phonograph's Thomas Lombard made the exaggerated claim that the Wyoming company had "never done any business," and that he did not foresee any great commercial possibilities for the phonograph in the state. After that, virtually nothing was reported concerning the company's activities, although it was still listed as a North American Phonograph licensee in 1893. Thus far, no evidence has been found to suggest that Wyoming Phonograph produced any original recordings

— Y —

YADDO (Discs)

Record Production: 1936 – 1941

Offices: Saratoga Springs, NY

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Yaddo

A secluded private retreat in Saratoga Springs, New York, devoted to nurturing American writers, painters, composers, and musicians, Yaddo was founded in 1900 by Spencer and Katrina Trask. Spencer Trask, who died in 1909, had been an early promoter of Edison's phonograph, and some brown-wax cylinders he recorded for private use in the 1890s were later deposited with the New York Public Library.

After years of excluding the public, Yaddo officials finally opened the grounds to a few reporters and selected guests in 1926. A *New York Times* reporter hailed Yaddo as a "new and unique experiment, which has no exact parallel in the world of fine arts," apparently unaware that the undertaking was approaching its third decade of existence. Not all were impressed; one *Variety* writer later dismissed Yaddo as "the scribblers' colony near Saratoga Springs."

Yaddo hosted its First Festival of Contemporary American Music on April 30, 1932, an event the board entrusted to Aaron Copland's supervision. With only one-hundred invitations issued and two critics in attendance, the festival received scant attention, and the few published reviews were not particularly supportive. Undeterred, Copland staged a second Yaddo festival, again devoted entirely to contemporary American works, with much the same result. He was in the process of planning a third when Yaddo's board asked him to step down.

When the Yaddo festivals resumed in 1936, without Copland's involvement, "Contemporary American" was purged from the title, and the offerings were expanded to include some esoteric foreign and traditional fare. At about the same time, it was decided to install a professional recording studio at Yaddo. Supervised by the New England Conservatory of Music's Quincy Porter, the studio originally was used only to make what were termed "study recordings," which were sold at cost to libraries and colleges. The performers were members of the resident Yaddo Music Group, who donated their time to avoid running afoul of union regulations. Forty-nine Yaddo study records were issued in 1936, and fifty-four in 1938, none of them for sale to the general public. Live recordings were also made of some festival performances, for non-commercial use.

Yaddo rarely sought publicity for itself or its visiting artists, but that policy was relaxed in 1938, when radio station WNYC (New York) broadcast that year's Yaddo Festival. Public response was so positive that in 1939 it was decided to make Yaddo recordings available to the general public, albeit in a modest way. Quincy Porter was granted a sole sales agency for selected recordings from the September 1939 and 1940 Yaddo festivals. Henry Cowell (a Yadoo associate and former editor of *New Music Quarterly*, who had recently completed a prison sentence for what were termed "morals charges") was marginally involved with production of the 1940 recordings. Critical reaction was mixed, with some reviewers applauding the effort but finding little to like about the material. The records were pressed and sold in small quantities, and for a short time they were listed for sale in Record Information Service's *Master Catalogue*.

Yaddo maintains a website documenting their history and current activities at <http://yaddo.org/yaddo/home.asp>.

YALE RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1946 – c. 1948

Offices: 87 High St., Montclair, NJ

Record Products: Yale

A short-lived venture possibly associated with Jack Lynch's East Coast Music Publications (Elizabeth, New Jersey). Yale's first known release, in the autumn of 1946, was by Shorty Warren and his Western Rangers, who were broadcasting over radio station WAAT (Newark, New Jersey) at the time. The label appears to have been discontinued by early 1948, by which time Warren had moved to Trope Records (*q.v.*), another small New Jersey label.

YERKES RECORDING LABORATORIES (Discs)

Record Production: 1924

Offices: Metropolitan Opera House (annex), New York

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio—102 W. 38th St., New York

Pressing: Own plant—Meadow & Creek Sts., Long Island City, NY

Record Products: Yerkes Dance Record

A short-lived venture of Harry A. Yerkes, a percussionist and band contractor whose prolific recording career began in 1906. Contrary to some modern accounts, he was not the same individual as Columbia sales executive H. A. Yerkes (the "H" in that case standing for Hulbert). At the peak of his career in the early 1920s, Harry Yerkes managed (but in many cases did not personally conduct) more than a half-dozen popular groups that bore his name, including a novelty jazz band, marimba band, saxophone sextet, and several dance orchestras. His S.S. Flotilla Orchestra, conducted by Richard Barton, reportedly spent \$25,000 on railroad fares in one year alone.

In November 1923, the trade papers reported that Yerkes had acquired the Fletcher Record Company's Long Island City pressing plant from the Columbia Music Roll Company, which had purchased it following Fletcher's bankruptcy. In December, Yerkes filed a trademark application for the illustration of a dancing couple that would appear on his label. In the same month it was reported that Yerkes had been released from his various recording contracts. *Billboard* for January 12, 1924, confirmed the cancellations and reported that Yerkes was preparing to launch his own record company with backing from the Buescher Band Instrument Company.

The Yerkes Recording Laboratories occupied the former Cameo Record Corporation studio, under the supervision of Wally Downey (possibly a typographic error, or pseudonym, for recording engineer Wallace Downing, a Cameo recording engineer; no other mention of a Wally Downey has been found in the trade papers of the day.) The master numbers are a continuation of Fletcher's New York Olympic series, which had reached at least the high 640s by the time he moved his studio to Chicago. All recordings were by Yerkes' own groups and were made for his label's exclusive use.

The impending release of Yerkes Dance Records was announced in *The Music Trades* and *The Talking Machine World* for December 1923, suggesting that the recordings were made during October–November 1923 (A claim in Johnson & Shirley's *American Dance Bands on Records and Film* that they are 1922 Grey Gull recordings — although the songs

are all mid-to-late 1923 publications — is obviously in error.) The records were not listed in the *TMW* advance bulletins but were advertised by several small retailers in February 1924, at three for a dollar.

Harry Yerkes was expelled from the American Federation of Musicians in March 1924. Approximately five Yerkes Dance Records (one of them unnumbered, and another a split coupling with separate catalog numbers on each side) were released before the company suspended operations, after which Yerkes had no further involvement with record production. Late in the year, he dispatched a large band to Australia while he prepared for a U.S. tour with a new "symphonic" dance orchestra which, in a departure from his earlier policy, he personally conducted.

YOUR RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1948 – 1951

Office: 910 Alberta St., Detroit

Record Products: Your Record

Launched in early 1948 by Detroit songwriter and band leader Carrie L. Hoffman, after dissolving her partnership with Marilou Dawn in the Unique Music Publishers and Recording Company, *q.v.* Hoffman produced a few inconsequential pop releases for the Your Record label from 1948 through 1951, employing obscure, apparently local artists. She also reissued at least one of Unique Music's Serenade discs. The company was last mentioned in *Billboard* in June 1951.

– Z –

ZARVAH ART RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: c. 1923–1924

Office: 616 W. 116th St., New York; 2196 W. 25th St., Los Angeles

Record Products: Zarvah Art Record

A division of the Zarvah Publishing Company, owned and operated by the husband-and-wife team of Myron Bickford and Ethel Lucretia Olcott-Bickford. The couple adopted the "astrological" names Zahr and Vahda, respectively, as a consequence of their association with astrologer Evangeline Adams. The Register of Copyrights rejected the Bickford's copyright application for "Zarvah" in August 1922, noting that a single word could not be copyrighted, and suggested they file a trademark application instead.

The manufacturer of Zarvah Art Records is unknown. The company's listing in the 1923 *Talking Machine World Trade Directory* states that it issued two records per month. Eleven Zarvah issues have been confirmed thus far. Aside from one issue credited to the Red and Blue Orchestra, all were by the Bickfords, as soloists or in duets. The records were being exported by 1923. The Kyoyeki Shosha Music House in Tokyo requested that a planned shipment be suspended following the devastating September 1 earthquake.

The Zarvah Publishing Company, and the Bickfords, remained active long after the record operation had closed. Myron is best-remembered for his four-volume *Bickford Mandolin Method*. Ethel, a pioneering female classical guitarist, published more than 160 compositions and was a key figure in the founding of the Los Angeles (later, American) Guitar Society. Correspondence preserved at California State University–Northridge shows that the company continued to publish and export sheet music as late as 1946, still specializing largely in mandolin and guitar arrangements. Ethel Bickford remained active in the local musical community until her death in 1980.

ZOMAR, KARL (Discs)

Columbine Records / The Karl Zomar Library

Record Production: Late 1940s – c. 1953

Offices: Springfield, MO (Zomar Library, 1930s–mid-1940s); 546 Emerson St., Denver (Zomar Library, from mid-1940s); 3120 N. Federal Blvd., Denver (Columbine Records, from late 1940s)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Pressing: Universal Plastics (Columbine records); Muzak (transcriptions)

Record Products: Columbine; custom-recording services, transcriptions, air-checks

Karl Zomar, Sr., was a humorist whose "Friendly Philosopher" radio program was syndicated in the 1940s. His essays were collected in a series titled *Scrap Books*. Most were self-published, but at least one volume was later reissued under the Mutual Broadcasting imprint. The Zomar Library was a music publisher and custom recording operation that offered complete script and program-production services for radio and television stations, as well as custom recording services in its own studio. Glen Jones managed the studio, organist Vera Burdette served as musical director, and in the late 1940s, Karl Zomar, Jr., served as script editor. The company's mailing address was that of Karl Sr.'s Denver residence.

Zomar entered the recording field in late 1947 or early 1948 with self-produced transcriptions of "The Friendly Philosopher," a program that had begun airing on WMC (Memphis) nine years earlier. He appears to have launched Columbine Records in late 1949, as a separate commercial recording operation. Its earliest confirmed releases were being offered for sale by February 1950. The Columbine label specialized in pop and country-and-western material by regional artists and did virtually no national advertising. The original label bore a dangerously close resemblance to the Columbia-CBS "microphone" design then in use. It was soon redesigned (whether under pressure from CBS was not reported), with a columbine blossom substituted for the microphone.

Zomar died on December 30, 1952. An anecdotal account suggests that his business was sold in 1954 to Aurelia (Vicky) Morosan (*née* Pasca), who subsequently launched Band Box Records.

ZORA RECORDING STUDIOS / ZORA RECORD COMPANY (Discs)

Record Production: 1940 – Early 1950s

Offices: 2711 E. Division, Detroit (from 1940); 1600 E. Outer Dr., Detroit (from mid-1946)

Original-Master Source(s): Own studio

Record Products: Zora

Founded in the early 1940s by John Dobranich, who specialized in recordings of Serbo-Croatian folk songs. Dobranich filed U.S. copyrights on the Zora Records name and label design on July 22 and September 30, 1940, respectively. Selling for 50¢ each, the records were intended for jukebox use. Operations were suspended in May 1942, after Dobranich joined the Army. The company resurfaced in 1945, with a listing in the *Record Retailing Yearbook*, although production had not yet resumed.

Billboard reported in May 1946 that Dobranich was had begun construction of a new building to house the Zora studio. However, resumption of production was inexplicably delayed for more than three years following the announcement. After several false starts, record production ("for the first time since before the war," as *Billboard* reported) finally resumed in July 1949. Zora records were last mentioned by *Billboard* in October 1952.

Company Genealogies and Timelines

Company Genealogies and Timelines

The following charts show company relationships among several key record manufacturing groups. Because of space limitations, the positioning of events relative to dates are necessarily approximate; specific dates will be found in the main text. For the sake of clarity, some sales or other company divisions that had no direct bearing on record production have been omitted.

A *solid line* (—) indicates direct lineage, usually through a sale, merger, or corporate reorganization. A *double line* (==) indicates a related company or subsidiary; a break in that line (≈) indicates affiliated but legally separate companies (e.g., the Universal Talking Machine Company, which was related to the Victor Talking Machine Company through Eldridge Johnson's majority stake in the company, and its use of Victor's facilities in later years, but was not owned by Victor). A *dashed line* (- - -) indicates either inactivity, or the production of goods other than records. A *bullet* (•) indicates a change of management, supplier, or output (when appearing within a line), or suspension of one or all operations (when appearing at the end of a line). *Boxes within boxes* indicate affiliated units within a larger organization.

Chart 1: Birth of the American Recording Industry

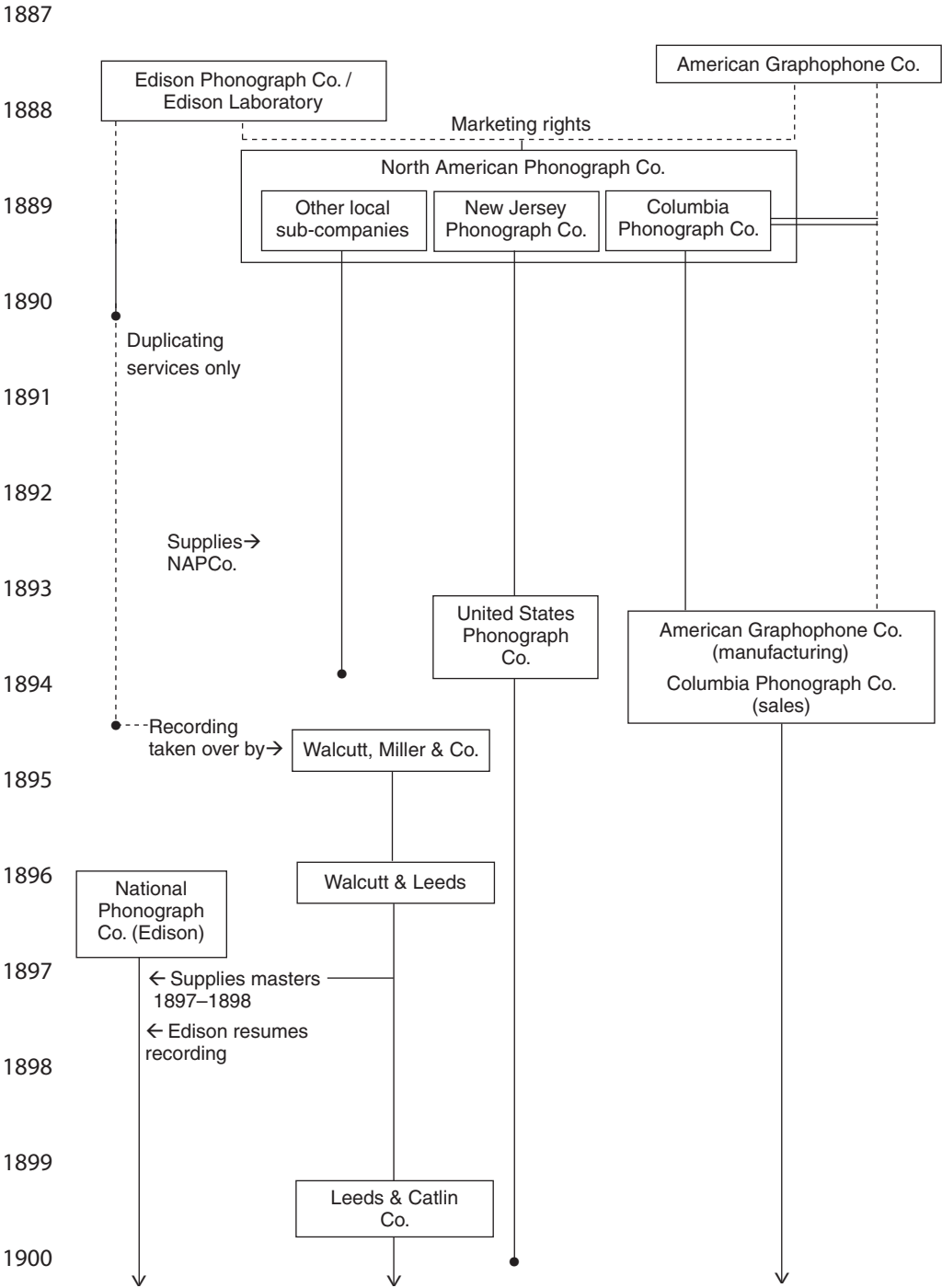


Chart 2: Early Cylinder Producers

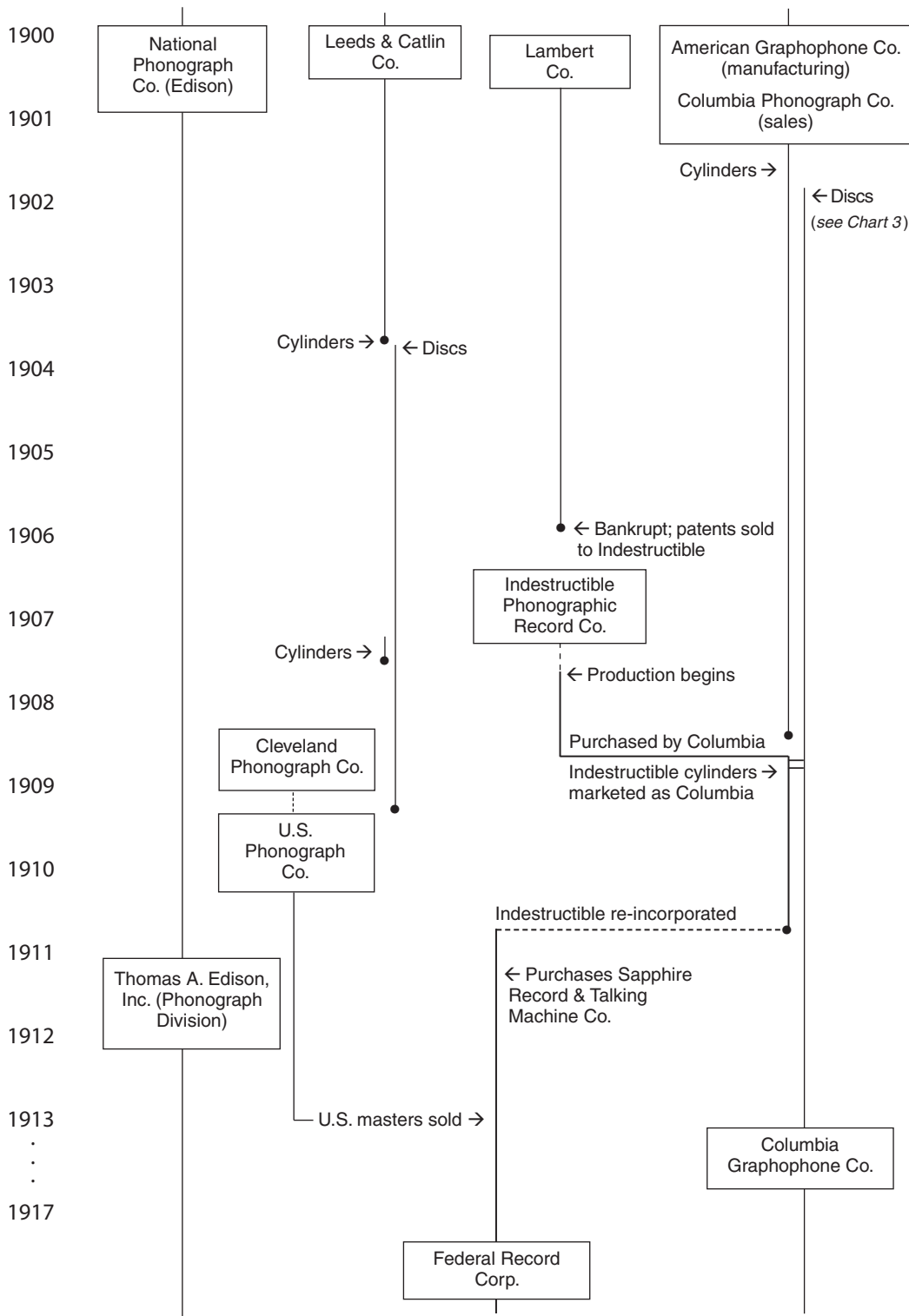


Chart 3: The Roots of Columbia

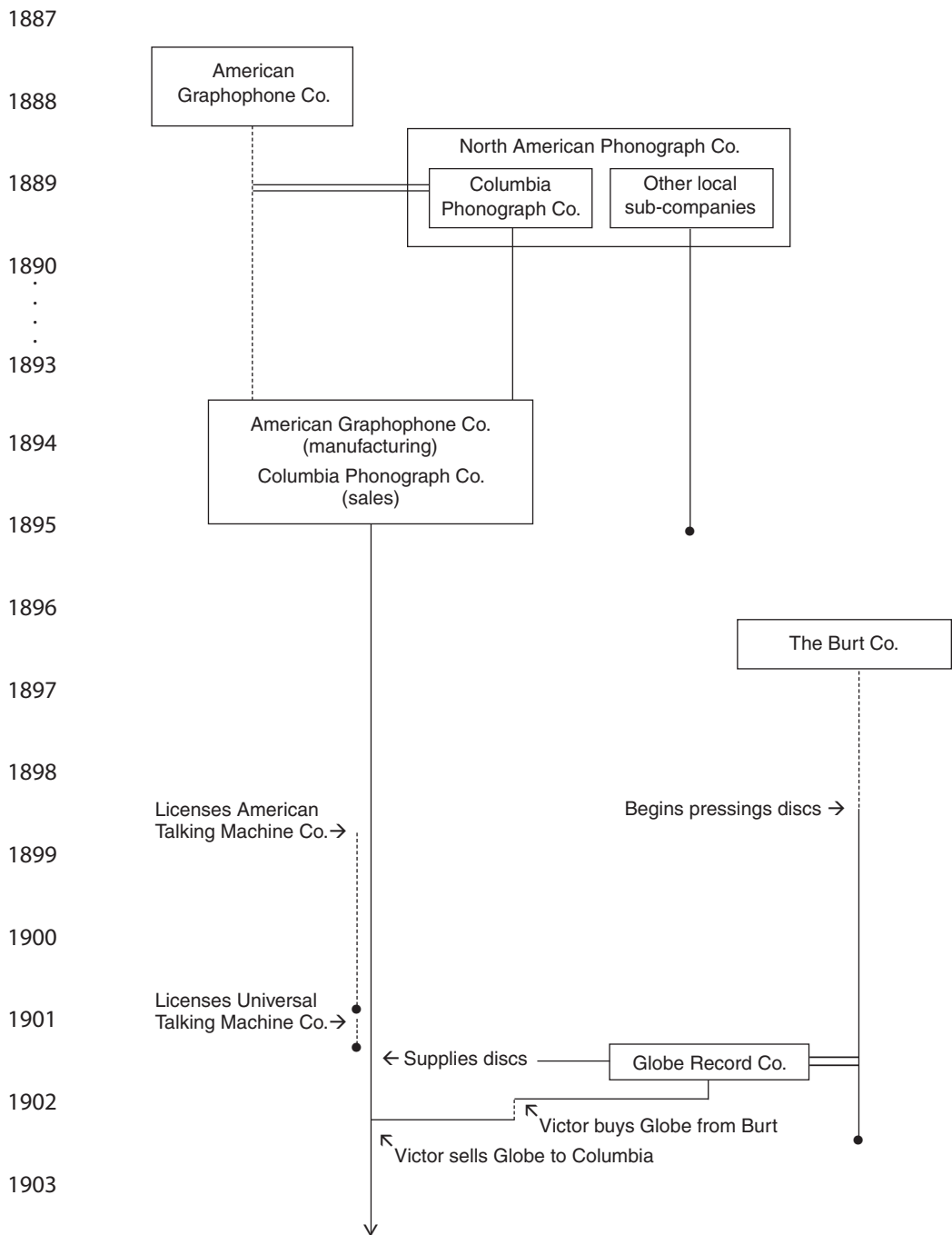


Chart 4: The Roots of Victor

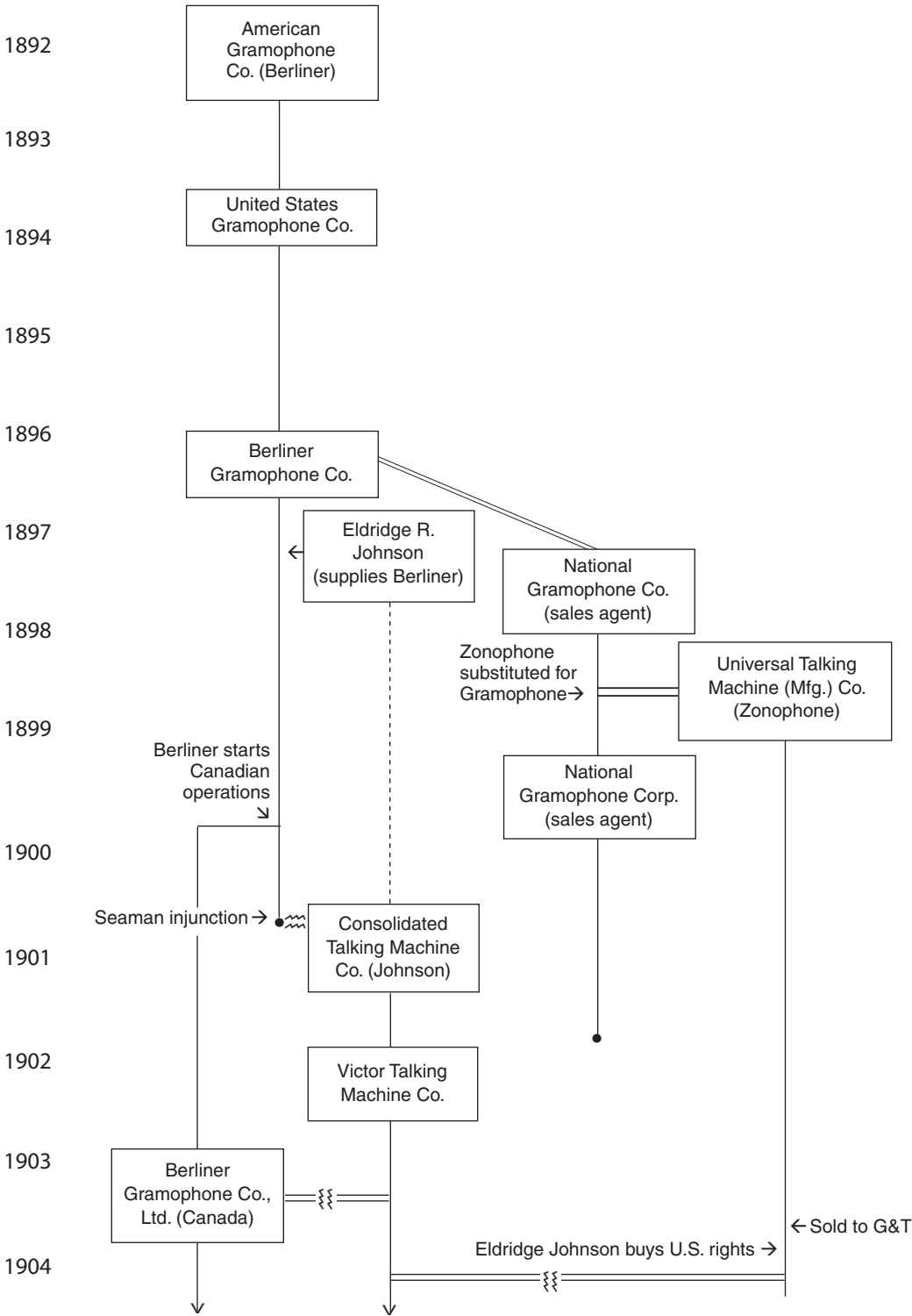


Chart 5: The Infringers

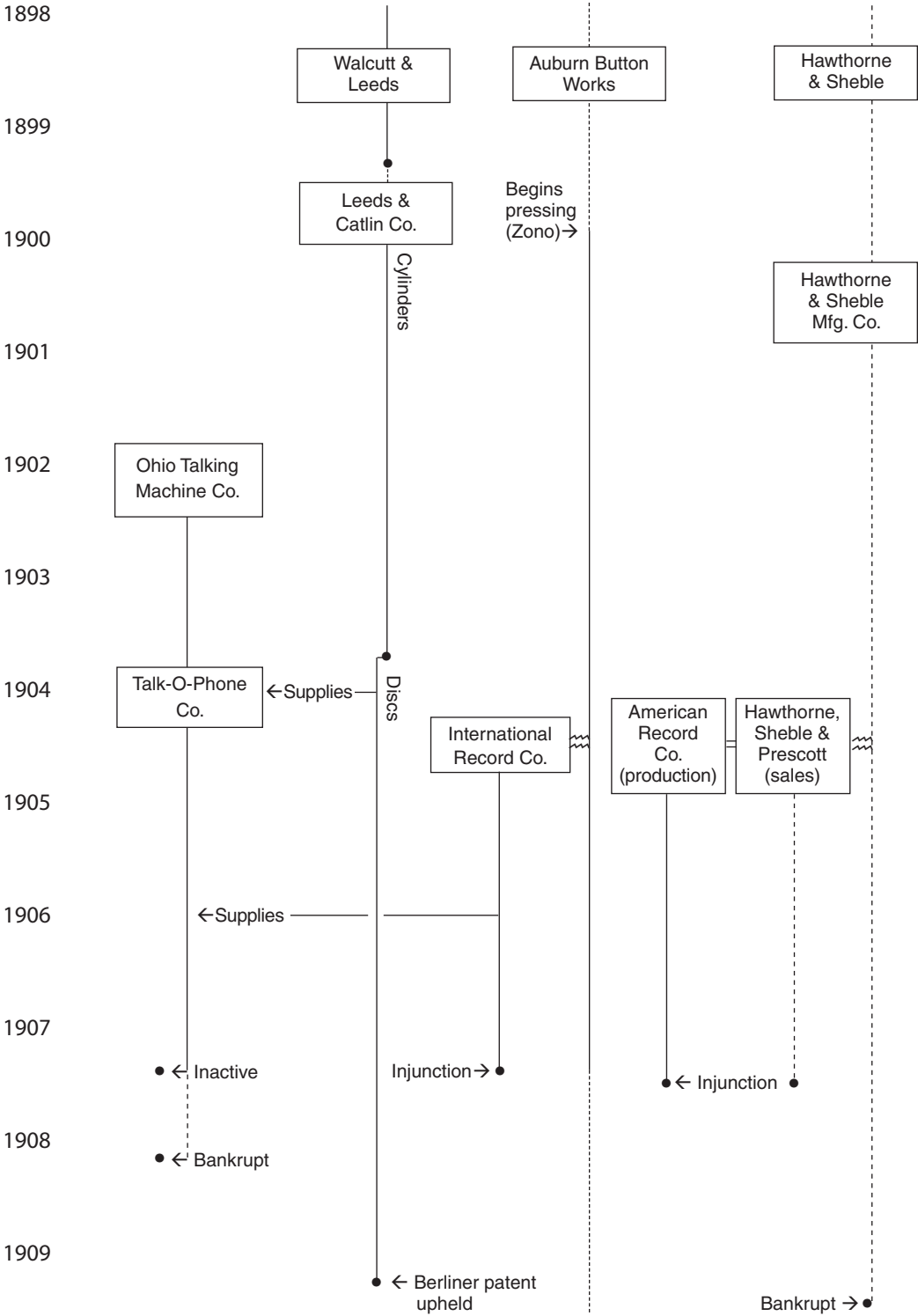


Chart 6: Paramount, Black Swan, and John Fletcher

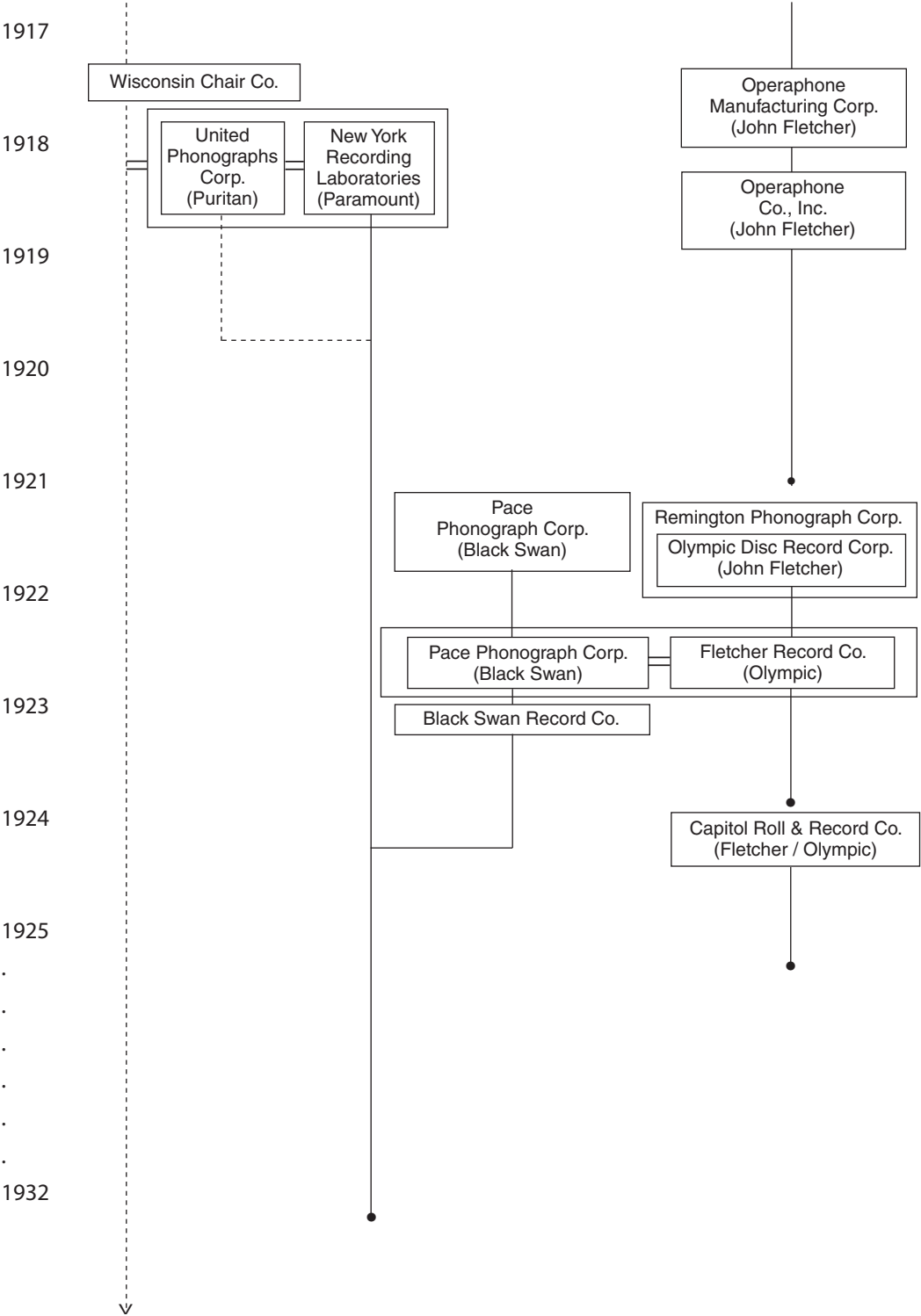


Chart 7: The Roots of the American Record Corporation

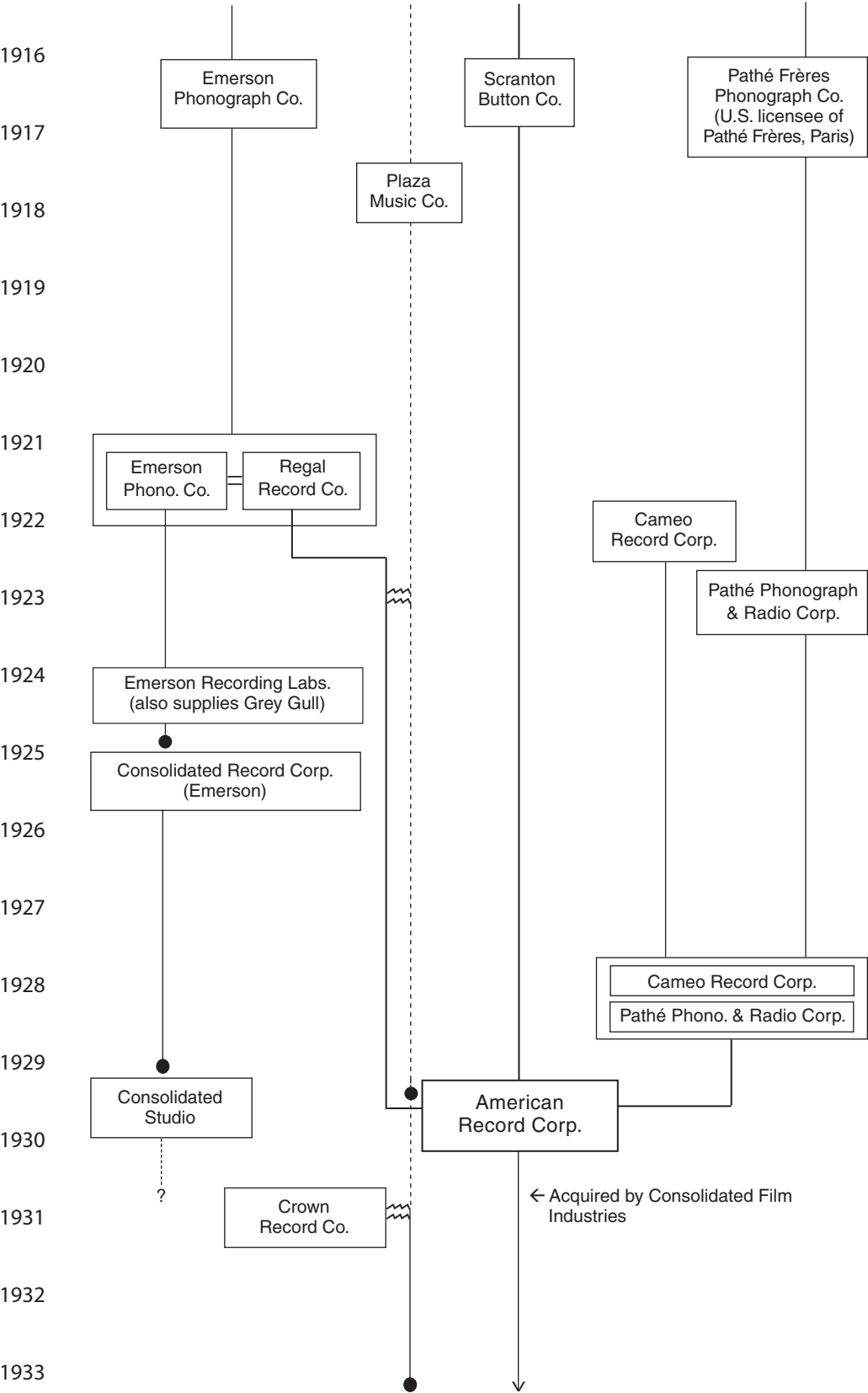


Chart 8: The Roots of Okeh and Gennett

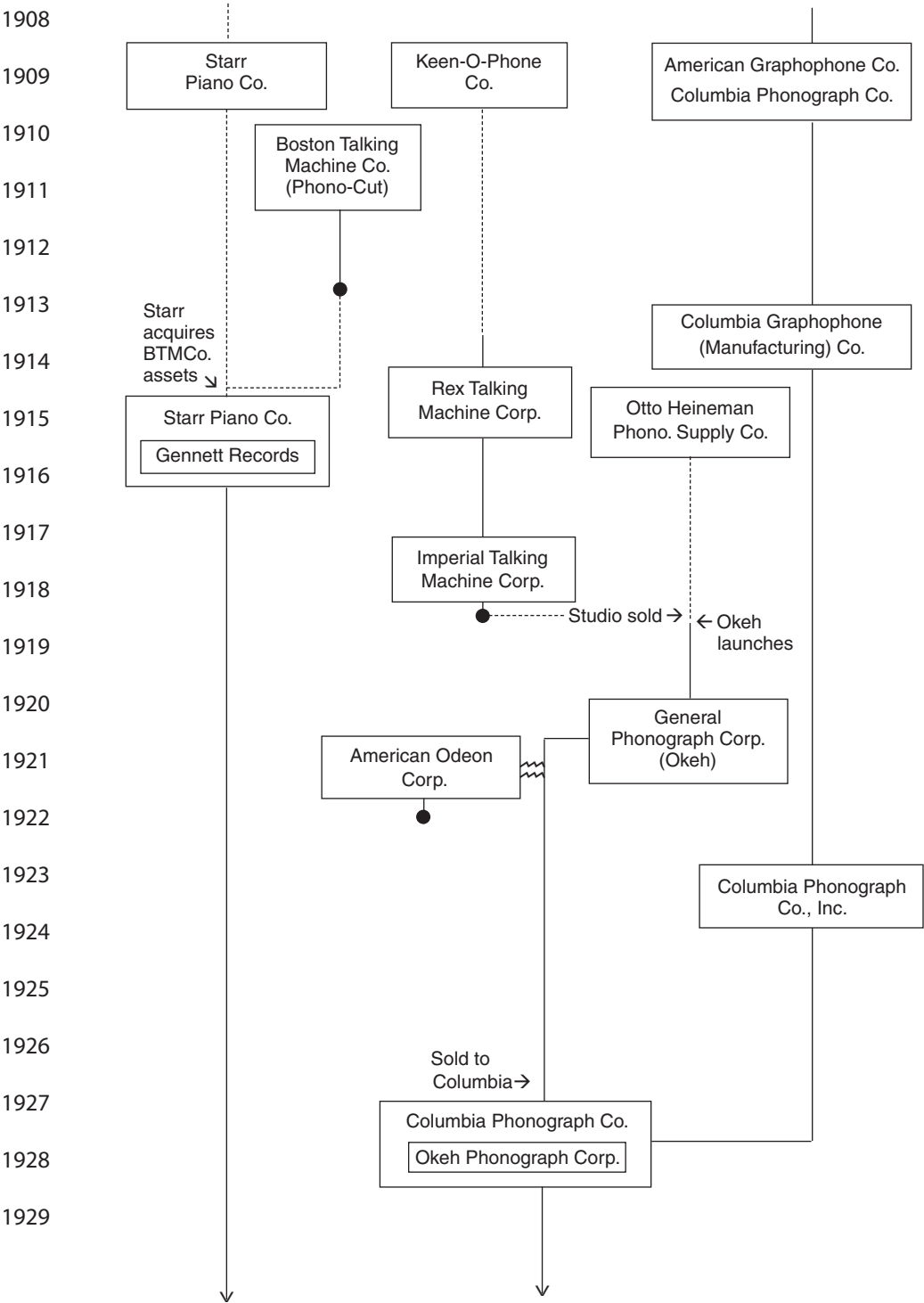
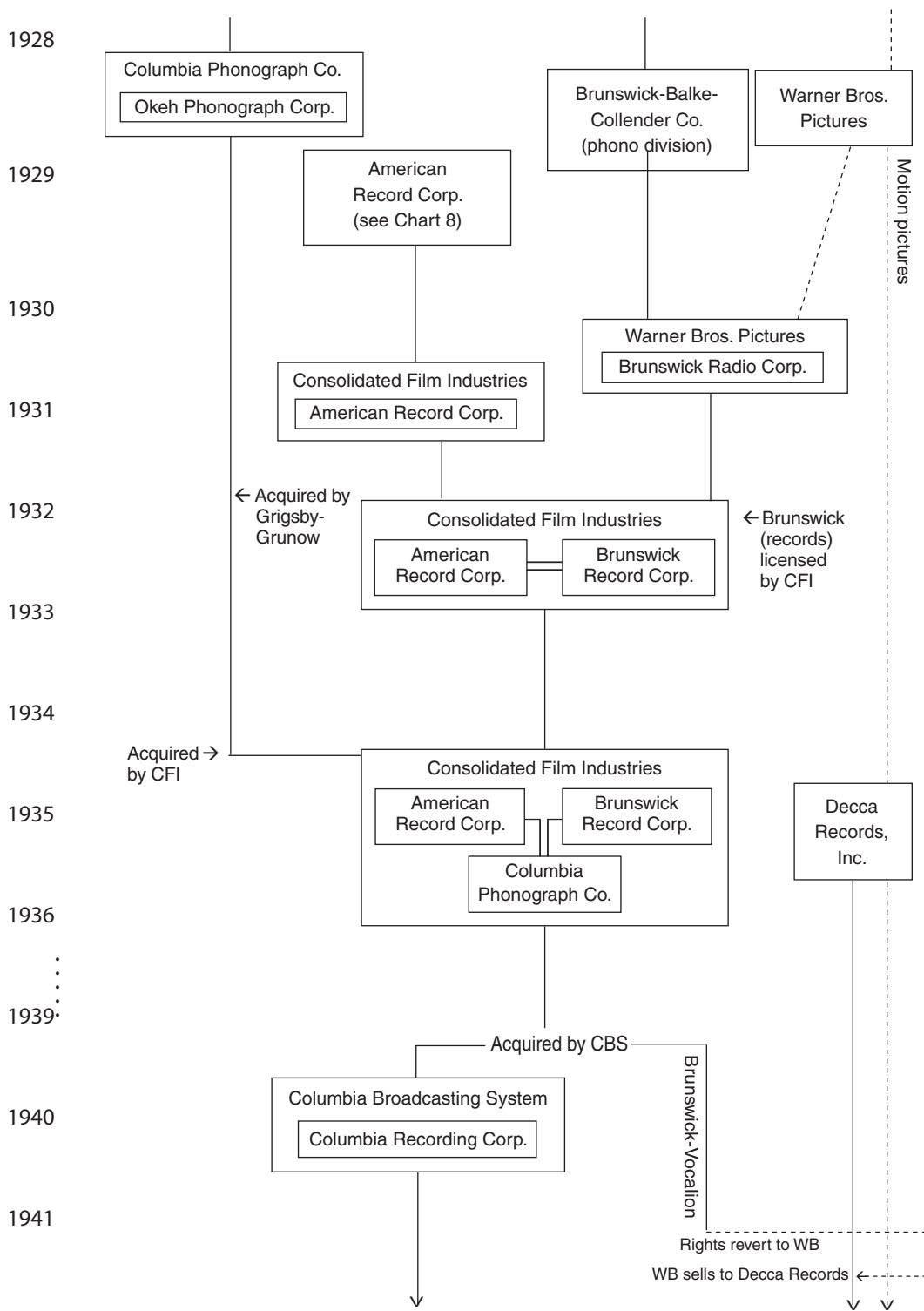


Chart 9: Consolidation in the 1930s



Glossary

Glossary

acetate Technically, a cellulose-derived compound employed used to coat aluminum- or glass-based recording blanks. Also used informally to refer to lacquer or other disc coatings, or to recordings made on blanks coated with those products.

acoustic recording A recording process in which sound is registered without electrical amplification, employing a mechanical cutter that is actuated by the direct action of sound waves transmitted via a horn or similar mechanical sound-collecting device. The earliest commercially developed recording process, and the industry norm through mid-1925. Originally referred to as mechanical recording, a more accurate (but now rarely used) description.

anonymous release A record issued without artist credit, commonly seen during the first fifteen years of commercial record production, and on occasion after that (for example, on "party" records and Little Wonder discs).

artificial reverberation A simulated echo effect, produced by mechanical or electronic means, and widely used beginning in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

bankruptcy The act of liquidating a company's or individual's assets to satisfy creditors' claims, either voluntarily or by court order. Depending upon the nature of the filing, a company might be closed, or might continue to operate while in bankruptcy. *See also* receiver.

bootleg record *See* counterfeit record.

broker In this work, an individual or organization that sells or licenses recordings it did not produce to manufacturers. Brokers usually dealt in existing masters during the period covered by this work, often obtained from defunct companies (*e.g.*, Earle W. Jones), but some also arranged for recording of new material for clients (*e.g.*, Joe Davis and Ed Kirkeby).

budget label Generic term for inexpensive, and usually cheaply produced, brands intended for sale in discount, variety, and other cut-rate outlets, or by mail-order. Often inaccurately referred to as "dime-store" labels.

catalog number The number under which a record is listed for sale (which on occasion may be the same as the master number). *Compare with* master number.

celluloid A thermoplastic compound derived from cellulose nitrate, widely employed in "unbreakable" cylinders (*e.g.*, Indestructible and the Edison Blue Amberol). Its use in discs (*e.g.*, Marconi) was much less common.

concurrent issue The release of a single recording on two or more different labels at approximately the same time, a common practice during the period covered by this work. *Compare with* reissue.

control number A number substituted for the actual master number (often assigned to distinguish masters obtained from an outside source), but not falling within the acquiring company's own master-number series. *Compare with* false master number.

cooperative A business owned and operated for the benefit of its members, who share costs and profits (*e.g.*, United Artist Records).

counterfeit record A pirated record made to duplicate the appearance of the genuine record from which it was copied, including an exact copy of the label and (if applicable) packaging. Also commonly referred to as a bootleg record. *Compare with* pirated record.

coupling *See* double-sided disc.

custom label A label usually financed by and intended for sale to a specific group, sometimes having limited distribution to the general public (*e.g.*, certain ethnic, religious, and Ku Klux Klan labels). *Compare with* private issue.

cylinder Any cylindrical sound recording, a format first produced commercially in 1888 (Edison's earlier tinfoil cylinder was not commercially viable), and abandoned for all but dictating-machine use in 1929. *Compare with* disc.

Delaware company A company incorporated in the state of Delaware for tax and legal purposes, but does not necessarily operate or have a physical presence in that state.

derivative label A label drawing its material from an outside source.

diamond cut A fine, vertically cut groove developed for Edison disc, intended to be played with a permanent diamond stylus.

dime-store label See budget label.

disc jockey copy A specially labeled pressing intended solely for radio play, usually given free of charge.

disc, or disk Any flat sound recording, a format first produced commercially in the late 1880s, and the industry standard after the early 1900s. *Compare with cylinder.*

distributor—The middleman between manufacturer and retailer, also known as a jobber or wholesaler. Sometimes bypassed by low-cost or independent labels in favor of direct-to-retailer sales.

double-sided disc A disc with playing material pressed on both sides, the industry norm after 1908.

dubbing The process of copying sound recordings from one source to another, or the end-product of that process. Dubbings can be made mechanically by pantograph, acoustically (*e.g.*, Edison's horn-to-horn dubbing process), or electronically (*e.g.*, modern LP, tape, Compact Disc, and MP3 transfers).

electrical recording A recording method employing a microphone and electrical amplification; the industry norm from mid-1925. *Compare with acoustic recording.*

embossed label A paperless label comprising characters that are indented into the record's surface and sometimes filled with pigment. Often used interchangeably with etched label.

etched label A paperless label comprising characters that are indented into the record's surface, with the addition of etched graphic elements or background areas that appear dull or frosted (*e.g.*, early versions of the Edison and Little Wonder labels). Often used interchangeably with embossed label.

etched master A master, usually of zinc, on which the groove is cut through a coating of fatty material to expose the metal and then etched by acid to set the groove. The resulting master can be played back directly or electroplated to produce a stamper. Developed by Emile Berliner and subsequently abandoned in favor of wax as a recording medium.

exploitation record A special issue usually intended to promote a movie or stage production.

false master number A number substituted for the original master number by its purchaser or licensor that falls within the acquiring company's own master-number series (*e.g.*, the substitution of Plaza-series master numbers on certain masters licensed from Pathé). *Compare with control number.*

holding company A company formed to hold a controlling interest in the securities of other companies (*e.g.*, the American Record Corporation).

horn A mechanical device (usually, but not necessarily, conical) used as a sound collector in the acoustic recording process, or as an amplifier when coupled to the reproducer of an acoustic phonograph.

instantaneous recording A recording made directly onto an acetate or other coated or disc, or uncoated metal disc (usually of aluminum or aluminum alloy) which can be played back immediately without the need for processing.

laminated pressing A multi-layered pressing in which a smooth playing surface is bonded to a coarser core material (*e.g.*, Columbia and Edison discs), a paper base (*e.g.*, Hit of the Week), or a printed insert (*e.g.*, Vogue picture discs).

lateral cut A groove of unvarying depth, modulated from side to side (often called the "zig-zag cut" in early reports). The industry norm for disc recordings (with some competition from the vertical cut) prior to the introduction of stereophonic recording.

lead-in groove An unmodulated groove on the outer rim of a disc, designed to lead the stylus to the playing area. Adopted in response to the needs of jukeboxes and automatic changers, and in general use by the later 1930s.

location recording A recording made outside of a company's permanent studios or usual area of operation, generally using portable equipment in a temporary studio.

manufacturer An individual or organization involved in the actual recording and/or pressing of records, as distinguished from master brokers, sales agents, distributors, or others who are not directly responsible for production.

master Technically, the original wax or other recording from which all subsequent working parts are made. However, use of this term has become less specific over the years, and is now commonly used in a looser sense to refer to the original recording as well as sub-masters or "mothers" generated from that master, and the resulting metal molds or stampers.

master (or matrix) number The number assigned the original wax or other recording or corresponding stamper. Master numbers usually were assigned at or near the time of recording, so are a more accurate indicator of recording dates than catalog numbers.

mechanical feed Any of several methods for propelling the reproducer (or in some devices, the turntable) by means of a feed-screw or similar device. Used on virtually all cylinder phonographs, and also adapted to disc use by several companies in an effort to circumvent the Berliner patent.

mechanical recording See acoustic recording.

mold A negative metal part, in the form of a tube, that is produced by electroplating a master or sub-master, used in the production of cylinder records. Its disc counterpart is referred to as a stamper.

mx. Standard discographical abbreviation for master (or matrix) number.

overdubbing The process of overlaying additional audio material on an existing recording, developed in the late 1920s but not widely employed until the later 1940s.

pantograph A mechanical transcribing device, widely adapted for cylinder duplication in the 1890s and later employed by Pathé for dubbing disc masters from cylinders, but generally abandoned after the introduction of electrical recording.

paste-over label A label affixed over another, often by a third party, usually used to disguise surplus pressings obtained from other manufacturers. Often employed in premium schemes, *q.v.*

personal recording See private issues

phonograph Technically, a machine for recording and reproducing sound on cylinders, as distinguished from a gramophone (a machine for reproducing discs). The distinction was largely lost by the 1920s in the United States, although not in England. In modern American usage (including this work), "phonograph" refers to cylinder and disc machines alike.

picture record A pressing in transparent plastic material laminated over a printed paper or metallic base.

pirated record A illegally produced record (usually produced by dubbing or by electroplating commercial pressings during the period covered by this work) to which the manufacturer does not own rights, using a label other than the one from which it was copied (*e.g.*, Cosmopolitan-label piracies from Columbia records). *Compare with* counterfeit record.

plastic Generic term for any synthetic thermoplastic material used in pressings during the period covered by this work, of which vinyl-based compounds were the most commonly employed. *Compare with* shellac.

premium scheme A marketing scheme in which one item is given away with the purchase of other merchandise, magazine subscriptions, etc. Widely employed in the early 1900s by companies that gave "free" phonographs to stimulate sales of records or other goods.

private issue A privately financed record made primarily for the edification of an artist, songwriter, etc. (often an amateur or semi-professional), and usually not intended for distribution to the general public or through normal commercial channels. Personal recordings were not listed the producing companies' catalogs and are not covered in this work. *Compare with* custom label.

promotional issue An advertising record, often bearing special labels and usually given free, or sold very inexpensively (*e.g.*, the 25¢ Columbia demonstration discs).

pseudonymous release A record issued with false artist identification, a widespread practice during the period covered by this work, particularly among the budget labels.

race record A term coined by Okeh in the early 1920s, and quickly adopted by others, for records marketed to Black customers, often segregated in separate catalogs during the period covered by this work. Generally superseded by the terms "sepia series" or "rhythm-and-blues record" in the 1940s.

receiver—One or more individuals appointed by the courts to manage the affairs of a business operating under bankruptcy protection, or to oversee the winding-down of a bankrupt company, depending upon the nature of the bankruptcy filing.

reissue A recording that is re-released after a significant period of deletion, often in a different format or under a different label than the original issue. Reissues may be re-pressings from original masters, or dubbings, the latter being far less desirable to collectors.

related labels Labels connected by a common manufacturer (*e.g.*, Paramount and Puritan) and/or sales agent (*e.g.*, Banner and Regal).

re-pressing A reissue pressed directly from an original stamper, or from a new stamper plated from an original master or sub-master. Re-pressings are sometimes visually altered by the removal of original markings, or the addition of new numbers, run-out or lead-in grooves, etc.

- reproducer** The mechanical pickup device employed by acoustic phonographs. It consists of a diaphragm (usually of mica or metal, but also of glass, wood, laminated paper, and other materials) clamped within a rigid frame and linked to a stylus by various means.
- run-out groove** An unmodulated groove extending from the end of the playing area toward the label of a disc. First used in the United States by Brunswick in 1920 (and much earlier by some European companies) and adapted by most companies within the decade.
- sales agent** The individual or organization responsible for marketing and selling a given brand. Sales agents are not necessarily the same as a record's manufacturer, although their names often appear on labels in place of, or in addition to, the manufacturers' (as in the case of Hawthorne, Sheble & Prescott, who were sales agents for good manufactured by the American Record Company).
- sample pressing** A pressing intended mainly for demonstration by sales personnel or distributors (as opposed to a test pressing, which is intended for internal evaluation). Sample pressings usually were made from the final working stampers, so appear more finished than test pressings, *q.v.*
- sapphire-ball cut** A relatively wide, vertically modulated groove originally used on cylinders and developed by Pathé for discs, played with a polished sapphire ball.
- shellac** As used in this work, a compound composed of shellac, binders, fillers, and dyes used in the manufacture of disc records prior to widespread adoption of vinyl and other plastics in the 1940s. Some "shellac" compounds, such as those developed by Columbia in the mid-1920s, were partially or wholly synthetic resins.
- single-sided** A disc with recorded material on one side only, the industry norm before 1909. Single-sided pressings continued to be made into the mid-1920s, but usually only for premium-priced classical lines.
- solid-stock pressing** A pressing made in homogeneous material, usually used in reference to shellac-based pressings. *Compare with* laminated pressing.
- special-use recording** Radio transcriptions, movie soundtrack discs, background music and sound-effects libraries, instructional records, and other recordings not intended for sale to the general public. Sometimes referred to as industrial recordings.
- stamper** A negative metal part produced by electroplating a master or sub-master, which is used to press a disc. Its cylinder counterpart is referred to as a mold.
- steel-needle vertical cut** A V-shaped vertically cut groove similar in dimensions to the ordinary lateral cut, intended for play with standard steel needles.
- sub-master** A positive duplicate of the original master, usually produced from the first stamper, that is used to generate additional stampers.
- take number or letter** A character indicating the version of a master, usually appended to the master number as a suffix. Some companies, like Aeolian, did not use take numbers or letters, but instead assigned a new master number to each take.
- test pressing** A pressing made for internal, client, or artist use in evaluating a recording prior to issue. True test pressings usually were made from a preliminary stamper, so do not show catalog numbers and often appear cruder than sample records (*q.v.*), with which they are often confused. Many have untrimmed edges, and most show engineer's handwritten data in the label area or on an extended outer rim, which usually were effaced or trimmed from the finished stampers.
- transcription** A recording made for radio broadcast or for use by a subscription service, such as Muzak. Transcriptions themselves were not sold to the general public, but the recordings they contained were sometimes licensed to commercial labels. RCA's Program Transcription were standard commercial releases, not true transcriptions. The term is used by some to refer to dubbed recordings.
- universal cut** A groove modulated in both the lateral and vertical planes to varying degrees, and thus playable on both types of phonograph. Employed briefly in the 1910s to skirt patents on the lateral cut, which it was held not to infringe. Physically, it is similar to the later stereophonic cut, although its stereophonic potential was not realized at the time.
- vertical cut** A vertically modulated groove (*i.e.*, one of constantly varying depth), once popularly referred to as the "hill-and-dale" or "up-and-down" cut. Originally employed in cylinders and later developed for commercial disc use by Pathé and others. Often classified by the stylus employed (diamond cut, sapphire cut, steel-needle cut).
- vinyl** A thermoplastic resin derived from vinyl chloride, first used for transcriptions in the early 1930s, then widely adopted for commercial pressings in the late 1940s, supplanting shellac. Often used incorrectly to refer to any plastic pressing material.

vulcanite A hard-rubber compound used briefly for pressing Berliner discs.

wax Generic term for the primary master recording medium used during the period covered by this book. The "wax" formulas used in master blanks and molded cylinders were carefully guarded trade secrets, and in some cases contained very little natural wax. Beginning in the late 1930s, wax was largely replaced as a recording medium by acetate- or lacquer-coated discs.

Label Concordance

Label Concordance

20th Century [1]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 20th Century [2]—*See* Balkan Record Company
 3 Deuces—*See* Roost Records, Inc.
 3 Deuces—*See* Three Minute Record, Inc.
 4 Star—*See* Gilt-Edge Record Company/4 Star Record Company, Inc.
 49Th State Hawaii Records—*See* 49Th State Hawaii Record Company
 7-11—*See* Aladdin Records

A

A-1—*See* A-1 Records of America
 Abbey—*See* Abbey Record Corporation/Abbey Records, Inc./Peter Doraine, Inc.
 Academy—*See* Artist-Band-Composer Company
 Ace [1]—*See* Ace Record Company
 Ace [2]—*See* Miltone Record Company; Roy Milton Record Company
 Ace (Canada)—*See* American Record Corporation
 Acetone—*See* Midget Music, Inc./Midget Music Productions/Fidelity Records [I]
 Acme [1]—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Acme [2]—*See* Celtic Record Company, Inc.
 Acme [3]—*See* Acme Radio and Record Corporation, *et al.*
 Acme (Germany)—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/
 Consolidated Studio; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; New York Recording Laboratories; Regal
 Record Company, Inc.
 Aco (Australia, England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Acompo—*See* Reeves, Hazzard E.
 Acorn—*See* Savoy Record Company
 Acro—*See* Remington Records, Inc.
 Acropolis—*See* Greek National Opera Records Company, Inc.; Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Actuelle—*See* Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Actuelle (England)—*See* Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Adam—*See* Admiral Records, Inc./Adam Records, Inc.
 Advance—*See* Advance Records
 Adelphi—*See* Songcraft, Inc.
 Admiral—*See* Admiral Records, Inc./Adam Records, Inc.
 Admiral Star Series (children's)—*See* Admiral Records, Inc./Adam Records, Inc.
 Adventure Records (children's)—*See* Adventure Record Company/Adventure Records, Inc.
 Aeolian-Vocalion—*See* Aeolian Company, The
 Aeroplane (Australia)—*See* New York Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Aetna—*See* Aetna Music Corporation
 Aguila Discos—*See* Aguila Record Manufacturing Company
 Ajax—*See* Ajax Record Company; Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories
 Aladdin—*See* Aladdin Records
 Alben—*See* Alben Record Company
 Albers—*See* Capri Records
 Alco—*See* Alco Recording Company
 Alector—*See* Hellenic Phonograph Company
 Alert—*See* Alert Records, Inc.
 Algene—*See* Algene Sound and Radio Company/Algene Recording Studios
 All Spice—*See* Swing Record Manufacturing Company
 Allegro—*See* Allegro Records
 Allegro Artist—*See* Allegro Records
 Allegro Holiday—*See* Allegro Records
 Allegro Junior—*See* Allegro Records
 Allen [1]—*See* Abbey Record Corporation/Abbey Records, Inc./Peter Doraine, Inc.
 Allen [2]—*See* Marshall Record Company
 Allied [1]—*See* Tanner Manufacturing and Distributing Company
 Allied [2]—*See* Allied (Phonograph And) Record Manufacturing Company
 All-Star—*See* Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation
 Alpha—*See* Alpha Record Company/Alpha Records, Inc.
 Alvin [1]—*See* Alvin Record Company
 Alvin [2]—*See* Alvin Records
 Ambassador—*See* Ambassador Records/Ambassador-Enterprise Records, Inc.
 Ambassador-Enterprise—*See* Ambassador Records/Ambassador-Enterprise Records, Inc.; Enterprise
 Records, Inc.
 Amco—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 American—*See* American Recording Company
 American Indian Soundchiefs—*See* American Indian Soundchiefs Corporation
 American Institute of Music Arts and Drama—*See* American Institute of Music Arts and Drama

American Music—*See* AM Records / American Music
 American Odeon Duplex Record (Export)—*See* American Record Company [I]
 American Odeon Record—*See* General Phonograph Corporation
 American Odeon Record (Export)—*See* American Record Company [I]
 American Record—*See* International Record Company [III]
 American Record Company—*See* American Record Company [I]
 American Recording Artists—*See* American Recording Artists / ARA Records
 American Talking Machine Record Disc—*See* American Talking Machine Company [II]
 American Vitaphone Record—*See* American Vitaphone Company
 Amfonola (Australia)—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Ammor—*See* Ammor Record Corporation / Ammor Record Company
 Amuke—*See* Amuke Record Company
 A-Musing—*See* Singer, Murray
 Angel Record Co.—*See* Angel Record Company
 Angelophone—*See* Angelico Company / Angelophone Records
 Angelus (Australia)—*See* American Record Corporation; Cameo Record Corporation; Crown Record Company; New York Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Animal (children's)—*See* Stapleton Industries / Lucky Music Corporation; Sterling Records, Inc.
 Ansa—*See* Amigo Music Publishing Company / Ansa Records
 Ansonia [1]—*See* Arto Company, The
 Ansonia [2]—*See* Ansonia Records, Inc.
 Apex—*See* Ballen Record Company / Gotham Record Corporation
 Apex (Canada)—*See* American Record Corporation; Compo Company, Ltd. / [H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; General Phonograph Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Apex Radia-Tone (Canada)—*See* Compo Company, Ltd. / [H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories
 Apollo [1]—*See* International Record Company [II]
 Apollo [2]—*See* Apollo Record Company [I]; United States Record Manufacturing Corporation
 Apollo [3]—*See* Apollo Record Company [III]
 Apollo [4]—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Apollo [5]—*See* Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Apollo [6]—*See* Apollo Records, Inc. / Apollo Music Enterprises / Rainbow Record Shop
 Applause—*See* Krantz Records
 ARA—*See* American Recording Artists / ARA Records
 Arcadia (Australia)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Arcadia Production, An—*See* Arcadia Records and Transcription Company, Inc.
 Arco [1]—*See* Arco Records [I] Discs
 Arco [2]—*See* American Record Company [III]
 Arden—*See* Arden Recording Company
 Ardene—*See* Ardene Record Company
 Ardyal—*See* Ardyal Records
 Aretino—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Ariel (England)—*See* General Phonograph Corporation
 Arion—*See* Arion Record Import Company; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Arista—*See* Arista Record Corporation
 Aristocrat—*See* Aristocrat Record Corporation
 Arkay—*See* Arkay Records
 Arlington—*See* Bandwagon Records, Inc. / Bennett Records
 Arrow—*See* Arrow Phonograph Corporation
 Art—*See* American Recording and Transcription Service / Art Records Mfg
 Art Floral Record Shop, The—*See* Joco Records
 Arthur Fields Melody Record—*See* Fletcher Record Company, Inc.
 Artiphon (Germany)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Artist—*See* Artist Records, Inc.; Cormac Records
 Artistic—*See* Artistic Records
 Arto—*See* Arto Company, The; Criterion Laboratories / Criterion Records, Inc.; Jones, Earle W.; New York Recording Laboratories; Newark Recording Laboratory
 Arvid—*See* Arvid Records, Inc.
 ASA—*See* ASA Records
 Asch—*See* Asch Recording Studios / Asch Record Company / Asch Records
 Asch Recording Studios—*See* Asch Recording Studios / Asch Record Company / Asch Records
 Asch-Stinson—*See* Asch Recording Studios / Asch Record Company / Asch Records; Stinson Records / Stinson Trading Company
 Atco—*See* Atlantic Records
 Athenian—*See* Athenian Record Company
 Atlantic—*See* Atlantic Records
 Atlantic Records for Children (children's)—*See* Atlantic Records
 Atlantis—*See* Mello-Strain Records, Ltd.
 Atlas—*See* Atlas Record Company
 Atomic—*See* Atomic Record Company / Atomic, Inc.
 Audience—*See* Audience Records, Inc.

Audola—*See* Recorded Voice Company Laboratories, The
 Austin—*See* Gene Austin Record Company
 Austral (Australia)—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/
 Consolidated Studio; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Emerson Recording Laboratories, Inc./
 Emerson Radio and Phonograph; New York Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Autograph [1]—*See* Marsh Laboratories, Inc.
 Autograph [2] (An Autograph Record)—*See* Dixie Records
 Autograph [3]—*See* Autograph Records
 Auto-Photo (children's)—*See* CA-Song Record Corporation/Auto-Photo Record Company
 Avalon—*See* Avalon Recording Company/Avalon Records, Inc.
 Avon—*See* Avon Records
 Ayo—*See* Ayo Records

B

B & R Records (cylinders)—*See* Burke & Rous
 (Baby) Dodds—*See* AM Records/American Music
 Bacchanal—*See* Bacchanal Recordings, Inc.
 Back Bay—*See* Back Bay Records
 Balcora—*See* Balcora Records Company
 Baldwin [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Baldwin [2] (Baldwin Disc)—*See* Baldwin Recording Studios, Inc.
 Balkan [1]—*See* Asllan, Aydin
 Balkan [2]—*See* Balkan Record Company
 Ballroom Disc—*See* Disc Company/Corporation of America
 Bama—*See* Pearson's Productions, Inc.
 Bandwagon—*See* Bandwagon Records, Inc./Bennett Records; Sterling Records, Inc.
 Bang—*See* Mayfair Record & Recording Corporation
 Banner [1]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Banner [2]—*See* American Record Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Banner [3]—*See* Banner Records, Inc.
 Banner (Australia)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Barthel—*See* Barthel Records/Barthel, Inc.
 Batt Masian—*See* Batt Masian Company
 Beacon—*See* Davis Record Corporation
 Bee Bee Bee Records—*See* Bee Bee Bee Records
 Bee Bee Recording—*See* Becker Recording Company
 Beeda (Australia)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Belgian Conservatory of Music—*See* Belgian Conservatory of Music, Inc.
 Bell [1]—*See* Arto Company, The; Bell Record Company/Bell Record Corporation; Consolidated
 Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio; Regal Record
 Company, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Bell [2]—*See* Bell Record Company, Ltd.
 Bell Novelty Records—*See* Bell Records, Inc.
 Bellbird (Australia)—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Belmont—*See* Ringle, David (Dave)
 Beltona (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated
 Recording Laboratories; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records
 Division)
 Beltone—*See* Beltone Recording Corporation
 Bel-Tone—*See* Bel-Tone Recording Corporation
 Bel-Tone Playhouse Series (children's)—*See* Bel-Tone Recording Corporation
 Belvedere [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Belvedere [2]—*See* Belvedere Music Company
 Bennett—*See* Bandwagon Records, Inc./Bennett Records
 Bernardo—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Besa—*See* Besa Records
 Best Loved Music Presentation, A—*See* Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.
 Bethlehem—*See* Bethlehem Music Company/Bethlehem Recording Laboratory
 Bettini (cylinders)—*See* Bettini Phonograph Laboratory
 Bibletone—*See* Bibletone
 Big Nickel—*See* Big Nickel Records
 Big Town—*See* Geddins, Robert L. (Bob)
 Bingola—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Bingola (children's)—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Biondo Special—*See* Arto Company, The
 Birch—*See* Birch Records
 Birdland—*See* New Jazz Record Company/Prestige Records
 Bissell-Weisert—*See* Bissell-Weisert Company
 Black and White—*See* Black and White Records/Black and White Recording Company

Black Patti—*See* Chicago Record Company; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Black Swan—*See* Pace Phonograph Corporation/Black Swan Record Company; Fletcher Record Company;
 New York Recording Laboratories
 Blackwood Brothers—*See* White Church Recording Company/K. C. Record Company
 Blazon—*See* Liberty Record Company [I]/Blazon Records
 Blu—*See* Blu Records/Blue Records
 Blue—*See* Blu Records/Blue Records
 Blue Ace—*See* Meltzer, Samuel
 Blue Bird—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Blue Bonnet—*See* Blue Bonnet Music Company
 Blue Chip—*See* Blue Chip Records
 Blue Danube—*See* Blue Danube Records
 Blu-Disc—*See* Blu-Disc Record Company
 Blue Label—*See* Blue Label Records
 Blue Note—*See* Blue Note Records
 Blue Ribbon [1]—*See* Rice Recording Company
 Blue Ribbon [2]—*See* Blue Ribbon Music Company/Blue Ribbon Records
 Blue Star—*See* Blue Star Records
 Bluebird—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Bluebird (Canada)—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Blu-White—*See* Blu-White Record Company, Ltd.
 Bob-O-Link [1] (children's)—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Bob-O-Link [2]—*See* Lincoln, Benjamin
 Bon Marche (Australia)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Boney—*See* Boney Records
 Bongo—*See* Bongo Record Company
 Bop!—*See* Bop Records
 Bornand Music Box Records—*See* Bornand Music Box Record Company
 Bost—*See* Bost Records Company
 Boston Symphony Record—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Bowmar—*See* Bowmar Records
 Bravo—*See* Spiro Record Corporation
 Bride and Groom—*See* FM Records/FM Recording Company
 Britannic (England)—*See* American Record Company [I]
 Broadcast (England)—*See* American Record Corporation
 Broadcast—*See* Broadcast Recording Studios/Broadcast Records
 Broadway [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories; American Record Corporation; Decca Records, Inc.
 Broadway [2]—*See* Appliances Company, The
 Broadway [3]—*See* Dana Records, Inc./Dana Music Company
 Broderick—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Bronco—*See* Bronco Records
 Bronze—*See* Bronze Recording Studio/Bronze Record and Recording Company
 Broome Special Phonograph Records—*See* Broome, George W.
 Brunswick—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company; Brunswick Radio Corporation; Brunswick Record
 Corporation; Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.; Decca Records, Inc.
 Brunswick (Australia)—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company
 Brunswick (England)—*See* American Record Corporation; Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company
 Brunswick (Germany)—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company
 Brunswick Hall of Fame—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company; Brunswick Radio Corporation
 Brunswick-Polydor—*See* Brunswick Record Corporation
 Bubble Books (children's)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Victor Talking
 Machine Company and Predecessor Companies
 Buckeye, The—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Buddy—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Bullet—*See* Bulleit, James
 Buster—*See* Buster Records
 Busy Bee—*See* American Record Company [I]; Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies;
 Hawthorne & Sheble (Manufacturing) Company; Leeds & Catlin Company; Universal Talking Machine
 (Manufacturing) Company
 Busy Bee (cylinders)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies

C

C & G—*See* Master Record Company/Swing-Master Record Corporation
 C & S Record—*See* Arto Company, The; C & S Phonograph Record Company
 Cadet—*See* Cadet Record Company
 Cadillac [1]—*See* Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation
 Cadillac [2]—*See* Cadillac Record Company [I]
 Cadillac [3]—*See* Cadillac Record Company [II]
 Cajun Classics—*See* Miller, J. D.; Swing Record Manufacturing Company
 California—*See* California Record (Manufacturing) Company

- Californian—*See* Californian Record Company
 Cameo—*See* American Record Corporation; Cameo Record Corporation
 Cameo Kid (children's)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Campus Christian—*See* Sacred Records, Inc.
 Canadian Music Lovers Library (Canada)—*See* Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories
 Candelario—*See* Candelario, J. S.
 Candy—*See* Lee Sales Company, Inc.
 Canzonet—*See* Canzonet Record Company
 Capitol—*See* Capitol Records, Inc.
 Capitol Americana—*See* Capitol Records, Inc.
 Capitol Criterion—*See* Capitol Records, Inc.
 Capitol-Telefunken—*See* Capitol Records, Inc.
 Capri—*See* Capri Records
 Caravan—*See* Music You Enjoy, Inc.
 Cardinal [1]—*See* Clarion Record Company; Criterion Laboratories/Criterion Records, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Cardinal [2]—*See* Cardinal Records, Inc.
 Carnival [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Carnival [2]—*See* Banner Records, Inc.
 Carol—*See* Relax Records
 CA-Song—*See* CA-Song Record Corporation/Auto-Photo Record Company
 Castle [1]—*See* Castle Records, Inc. [I]
 Castle [2]—*See* Castle Record Company/Castle Records, Inc. [III]
 Castle Records—*See* Castle Records, Inc. [I]
 Cathedral—*See* S. B. W. Recording Company
 Cavalcade—*See* Cavalcade Music Company/Corporation
 Cavalier—*See* Cavalier Recording Company
 Cava-Tone—*See* Geddins, Robert L. (Bob)
 Celebrity—*See* Davis Record Corporation
 Celebrity (England)—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Celesta—*See* Celesta Records Company; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Celps—*See* Celps Record (And Supply) Company
 Celtic [1]—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Celtic [2]—*See* Celtic Record Company, Inc.
 Central—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Century [1]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Century [2]—*See* Meltzer, Samuel
 Challenge—*See* American Record Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Champion [1]—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Champion [2]—*See* Decca Records, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Champion [3]—*See* Champion Record Company [III]
 Chance—*See* Chance Record Company
 Chappelle and Stinnette (C&S) Record—*See* C & S Phonograph Record Company
 Chappelle and Stinnette Singers Supreme Records—*See* C & S Phonograph Record Company
 Charm Records—*See* Charm Records, Inc.
 Charter—*See* People's Songs
 Chautauqua—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Checker [1]—*See* Cova Recording Corporation; Stanley Recording Company of America, Inc.
 Checker [2]—*See* Chess Record Corporation
 Checkered—*See* Artists Music Corporation
 Cherokee—*See* Cherokee Record Company
 Chess—*See* Chess Record Corporation
 Chicago—*See* Williams, J. Mayo "Ink"
 Chicago Gospel Tabernacle Records—*See* Marsh Laboratories, Inc.
 Chicago Gramophone Society—*See* Chicago Gramophone Society; Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Chief—*See* Chief Record Corporation
 Chord Records—*See* Cudahy Recording Corporation
 Cincinnati—*See* Cincinnati Record Manufacturing Company/Cincinnati Records; Williams, J. Mayo "Ink"
 Cinderella—*See* Prudentia Records
 Circle—*See* Circle Records/Circle Sound, Inc.
 Circle Document—*See* Circle Records/Circle Sound, Inc.
 Cireco—*See* City Sound and Recording Company
 Citation—*See* Citation Recording Company
 Citizen (England)—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Clarion [1]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Hawthorne & Sheble (Manufacturing) Company
 Clarion [2]—*See* Clarion Record Company; Criterion Laboratories/Criterion Records, Inc.
 Clarion [3]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies

- Clarion [4]—*See* Clarion Record Manufacturing Company, Inc./Clarion Records, Inc.
 Clarité (Australia)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Classic Record, The—*See* Sunset Record Company
 Claude—*See* Claude Record Company
 Claxtonola—*See* New York Recording Laboratories; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Clear Tone [1]—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Clear Tone [2]—*See* Miltone Record Company
 Cleartone—*See* Arto Company, The; Clarion Record Company; Criterion Laboratories/Criterion Records, Inc.; Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Clef [1]—*See* Clef Records, Inc.
 Clef [2]—*See* Grimes Music Publishers/Clef Publications
 Click—*See* Allied Recording Company; American Recording Company
 Clico—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Clifford (Australia)—*See* American Record Corporation; New York Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Cliftophone (England)—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company
 Climax [1]—*See* Globe Record Company [I]
 Climax [2] (Climax Double-Disk)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Climax [3]—*See* Blue Note Records
 Clipper—*See* Clipper Records
 Clipper Capers—*See* Linden Recordings/Linden Records
 Clover [1]—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Nutmeg Record Corporation
 Clover [2]—*See* Clover Records Company, Ltd.
 Club—*See* Club Records
 Co-Art—*See* Co-Art Records Company
 Coast—*See* Coast Record (Manufacturing) Company/Charles E. Washburn Company
 Cobra—*See* Cobra Records
 Cocktail Hour—*See* Eckart, Charles, Company
 Coda—*See* Spanish Music Center/Coda Record Company
 Co-Ed—*See* Sorority Fraternity Records and Publications/Mayhams and Co-Ed—*See* Records
 Coleman—*See* Coleman Recording Company/Coleman Enterprises/Coleman Records,—*See* Inc.
 Coliseum (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Collector Item—*See* Collectors Items, Inc.
 Collector's Item—*See* Lincoln, Benjamin
 Collectors Record Shop—*See* American Record Corporation
 Collegiate—*See* Bulleit, James
 Colonial [1] (Colonial Phono-Cut)—*See* Boston Talking Machine Company
 Colonial [2]—*See* Modern Music Records/Modern Records
 Colonial [3]—*See* Colonial Records [I]
 Colony—*See* Colony Record Company; Imperial Record Company [III]
 Colossal—*See* Colossal Records
 Columbia—*See* American Graphophone Company; Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Columbia Recording Corporation / Columbia Records, Inc.
 Columbia (cylinders)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Columbia Bubble Books (children's)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Columbia Entré—*See* Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.
 Columbia Masterworks—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.
 Columbia Symphony Series—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Columbia-Rena (England)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Columbine Records—*See* Zomar, Karl
 Comar—*See* Comar Records
 Comet—*See* Comet, Inc.
 Command—*See* Command Records
 Commodore—*See* Commodore Music Shop/Commodore Record Co., Inc.
 Concert [1]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Concert [2]—*See* Domino Phonograph Corporation
 Concert [3]—*See* Lyraphone Company of America
 Concert Hall—*See* Concert Hall Society, Inc.
 Concert Music Shop, Inc.—*See* Concert Music Shop, Inc.
 Concertone Records—*See* Classic Record Company
 Connorized—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Conqueror—*See* American Record Corporation; Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Consolidated—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Constellation—*See* Westernair Records/Constellation Record and Distributing Company
 Continental—*See* Continental Record Company, Inc.; Remington Records, Inc.
 Continental (pirate)—*See* Continental Record Company
 Continental-Elite—*See* Continental Record Company, Inc.
 Contract—*See* Currier Recording Company

Cook, The—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Co-Op—*See* Grimes Music Publishers/Clef Publications
 Coral—*See* Decca Records, Inc.
 Corax—*See* Jump Records; Turntable, The
 Cordion—*See* Scandinavian Music House, Inc.
 Cormac—*See* Cormac Records
 Corona [1]—*See* Rangel Music Company
 Corona [2]—*See* Heid, George, Productions
 Corona [3]—*See* Corona Records
 Coronet [1]—*See* Royal Record Company/Sepia Records, Inc.
 Coronet [2]—*See* Coronet Records [I]
 Coronet [3]—*See* Coronet Records [II]
 Coronet [4]—*See* Coronet Records [III]
 Cort—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Cosmo—*See* Cosmopolitan Records, Inc./Cosmo Records
 Coula Panhellenion Record—*See* Panhellenion Phonograph Record Company, Inc./Panhellenic Record Company
 Courtney—*See* Courtney Records
 Covered Wagon—*See* Covered Wagon Records, Inc.
 Cowboy—*See* Cowboy Record Company
 Cozy—*See* Cozy Records/John Bava Records
 Crenshaw—*See* Marsh Laboratories, Inc.
 Crescent [1]—*See* Domino Phonograph Corporation; Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation; Pathé Frères Phonograph Company; Rex Talking Machine Corporation
 Crescent [2]—*See* Jazz Man Record Shop
 Crescent [3]—*See* Crescent Music Corporation
 Crescent [4]—*See* Crescent Record Company
 Crest—*See* Alco Research and Engineering Company/Crest Recordings
 Critona—*See* Criterion Laboratories/Criterion Records, Inc.
 Crowmart—*See* Cro-Mart Recording Company
 Crown [1]—*See* Arto Company, The
 Crown [2]—*See* Hatch, Thomas W., Publisher; Marsh Laboratories, Inc.
 Crown [3]—*See* Crown Record Company
 Crown [4]—*See* Crown Records [I]
 Crown [5]—*See* Crown Records [III]/Crown Recording Corporation
 Crown [6]—*See* Crown Record Corporation
 Crown [7]—*See* Crown Records [II]
 Crown (Canada)—*See* American Record Corporation; Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Crown (England)—*See* American Record Corporation
 Crystal [1]—*See* Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Crystal [2]—*See* Crystal Record Studio
 Crystal Tone—*See* Crystal Tone Record Company
 Crystalette—*See* Crystalette Records of California/Crystalette Records, Inc.
 Csardas—*See* Continental Record Company, Inc.
 Cub (children's)—*See* Folkways Records & Service Corporation
 Cudahy Records—*See* Cudahy Recording Corporation
 Currie—*See* Currie, John, Enterprises
 Curry's (England)—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Cyclone—*See* Cyclone Records, Inc.

D

D & D—*See* White Church Recording Company/K. C. Record Company
 D & R—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Leeds & Catlin Company
 D & S—*See* Davis & Schwegler, Inc.
 D. Castellano—*See* Electric Phonograph Corporation
 Damon—*See* Damon Recording Studios, Inc./Damon Transcription Lab
 Dana—*See* Dana Records, Inc./Dana Music Company
 Dana Song-Story Series (children's)—*See* Dana Records, Inc./Dana Music Company
 Danceland—*See* Danceland Record Company
 Dance-Tone—*See* Dance-Tone Record Company/Dance-Tone Records, Inc.
 Dandy—*See* Emerson Recording Laboratories, Inc./Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation; Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio
 Dansrite—*See* B. J. Exploitation Company
 Dart—*See* Main Stem Music Shop
 Davega—*See* Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Davis—*See* Davis Record Corporation
 DC—*See* DC Records
 De Luxe [1]—*See* Victor Talking Machine Company
 De Luxe [2]—*See* De Luxe Record Company, Inc.; King Record Company/King Records, Inc.

Decca (Canada)—*See* Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories
 Debut—*See* Electricraft
 Decca—*See* Decca Records, Inc.
 Decca (England)—*See* Decca Records, Inc.
 Dee Gee—*See* Emanon Record Company
 Defiance (England)—*See* American Record Company [I]
 Delmac—*See* Delmac Record Company
 Delray—*See* Delray Recording Company/Paradise Recording Company
 Delta [1]—*See* Delta Records
 Delta [2]—*See* Bulleit, James
 Delta Jazz—*See* Session Records, Inc.
 Delvar—*See* Delvar Recording Company
 Derby—*See* Derby Records Corporation
 Dessa—*See* Malone, Idessa
 Dial—*See* Dial Records
 Diamond [1]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Diamond [2]—*See* Diamond Record Corporation
 Diana—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Diapason—*See* Diapason Records
 Dilila—*See* Tel-A-Vix Recording Studios
 Disc Jockey—*See* Popular Tunes
 Disc—*See* Disc Company/Corporation of America
 Disc-Co—*See* Disc-Co Recording Company
 Disco—*See* Disco Recording Company, Inc.
 Disco Americano (Italy)—*See* American Record Company [I]
 Disco Doble Columbia (South America)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Disco Gramofono (Spain/International)—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Disco Recordings—*See* Disco Recording Company, Inc.; Disco Recording Corporation/Disco Recording Studios
 Disco Zonofono (US export)—*See* Universal Talking Machine (Manufacturing) Company
 Discos Aguila—*See* Garten, Mauricio (Maurice)
 Discos Allegro (children's)—*See* Allegro Records
 Discos Azteca—*See* Discos Azteca
 Discos Cafamo—*See* Discos Cafamo/Montilla Records
 Discos Ideal—*See* Ideal Record Company, Inc.
 Discos Imperiales—*See* Imperial Record Company [III]
 Discos Mexico—*See* Bribiesca Recording Company
 Discos Taxco—*See* Taxco Recording Company
 Discovery—*See* Discovery Records, Inc.
 Discovery International Jazz Series—*See* Discovery Records, Inc.
 Discus—*See* Empire Record Company/Empire Record Corporation; Radio-Rundfunk Corporation
 Disque Gramophone (France)—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Disque International—*See* International Record Company [II]
 Distinctive Recordings—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Diva—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Dix [1] (Dix De Luxe)—*See* Dix Recording Company
 Dix [2]—*See* Dix Records
 Dixie [1] (The "Dixie" Record)—*See* Winsett Recording Laboratory
 Dixie [2]—*See* Dixie Records
 Dixie [3]—*See* Grecol Enterprises, Inc.
 Dixie [4]—*See* Comar Records
 Dixie Four—*See* Lowery Enterprises/Lowery-Newman Enterprises, Inc.
 Dixie Jamboree—*See* Tennessee Records, Inc.
 Dixieland—*See* Dixieland Records, Inc.
 Dolphin's of Hollywood—*See* Dolphin, John
 Dome—*See* Dome Records
 Domestic—*See* Domino Phonograph Corporation; Domestic Talking Machine Corporation; Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation
 Dominion (England)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation; Grey Gull Records, Inc.; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Domino [1]—*See* Domino Phonograph Corporation
 Domino [2]—*See* American Record Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Domino [3]—*See* Domino Records
 Domino (Canada)—*See* Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Donett Hit Record—*See* Donett Hit Record Company
 Doris—*See* Crystal Record Studio
 Dot [1]—*See* Dot Record Company
 Dot [2]—*See* Down Home Corporation
 Dot [3]—*See* Dot Records
 Down Beat—*See* Lauderdale, Jack

Down Home [1]—*See* Down Home Corporation
 Down Home [2]—*See* Down Home Record Company
 Down River—*See* Down River Records
 Down Town—*See* Geddings, Robert L. (Bob)
 Downbeat—*See* Swing Record Manufacturing Company
 DRC—*See* Disco Recording Corporation/Disco Recording Studios
 Dublin's—*See* Dublin Record Shop
 Dude—*See* Beck, Jim, Records/Jim Beck Recording Studios
 Dudley Records—*See* Dudley Records
 Duke—*See* Duke Record Company; Peacock Recording Company/Peacock Records, Inc.
 Dunn—*See* Music Enterprises, Inc.
 Duophone (England)—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company
 Duplex Record Co.—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Duquesne—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Durium—*See* Durium Products Corporation/Durium Products, Inc.
 Durium De Luxe—*See* Durium Products Corporation/Durium Products, Inc.
 Durium Junior—*See* Durium Products Corporation/Durium Products, Inc.
 Durium Mother Goose (children's)—*See* Durium Products Corporation/Durium Products, Inc.

E

E. Berliner's Gramophone—*See* Berliner, Emile
 E. O'Byrne De Witt & Son—*See* O'Byrne De Witt, Ellen
 Eagle [1]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company; International Record Company [I]
 Eagle [2]—*See* Eagle Record Company/ABC-Eagle Records
 Earl Fuller—*See* Arto Company, The
 Early American Dances—*See* Early American Dances
 Eastly—*See* Sonorous Music Company, Inc.
 Ebony [1] (An Ebony Record)—*See* Ebony Records
 Ebony [2]—*See* Williams, J. Mayo "Ink"
 Echo [1]—*See* Echo Recording Company
 Echo [2]—*See* Echo Records [I]
 Eddies's—*See* Eddie's Records
 Edison 24-Minute Record—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison 40-Minute Record—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Amberol Record (cylinders)—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Bell Winner (England)—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; New York Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Edison Blue Amberol Record (cylinders)—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Concert Record (cylinders)—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Diamond Disc—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Gold Moulded Record (cylinders)—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Grand Opera Record (cylinders)—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Needle Type—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Record (cylinders)—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Re-Creation—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Royal Purple Amberol (cylinders)—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Edison Standard Record (cylinders)—*See* Edison, Thomas A.
 Electra—*See* Marsh Laboratories, Inc.
 Electradisk—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Electric, The—*See* Emerson Recording Laboratories, Inc./Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation
 Electrola (Germany)—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Electron (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Electro-Vox—*See* Electro-Vox Recording Studios
 Elginola—*See* Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation
 Elite [1]—*See* Classic Record Company; Ideal Records
 Elite [2]—*See* American Elite, Inc.
 Emanon—*See* Emanon Record Company
 Embassy—*See* Embassy Record Company
 Embassy (Australia)—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Emcee—*See* Emcee Record Company
 Emerald [1]—*See* United States Record Manufacturing Corporation
 Emerald [2]—*See* Union of Irish Industries, Inc.
 Emerald [3]—*See* Emerald Record Company
 Emerson—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Emerson Recording Laboratories, Inc./Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation; Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio
 Empey—*See* Empey Records, Inc.
 Empire [1]—*See* Arto Company, The; Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation; Rex Talking Machine Corporation
 Empire [2]—*See* Empire Record Company/Empire Record Corporation

Empire [3]—*See* Empire Recording Studios
 Empire Sapphire Record—*See* Sapphire Record & Talking Machine Company
 Encore—*See* Encore Record Company
 Englewood—*See* Englewood Records
 Enterprise [1]—*See* Enterprise Records, Inc.
 Enterprise [2]—*See* Atwood, Harry G.
 Epic—*See* Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.
 Erno Rapee Melody Land—*See* Music You Enjoy, Inc.
 Eslava—*See* Eslava Recording Company
 Esquire—*See* Globe Distributors
 Essex—*See* Palda Record Company
 Ethnic Folkways Library—*See* Folkways Records & Service Corporation
 Etna—*See* Etna Recording Company, Inc.
 Evergreen—*See* Northwest Recording Studios
 Everstate—*See* Everstate Records
 Everybodys—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/
 Consolidated Studio; Everybodys Record, Inc.
 Excellent—*See* Electric Recording Laboratories [I]; Excellent Record Corporation
 Excelsior [1]—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Excelsior [2]—*See* Excelsior Records
 Excelsior (cylinders)—*See* Excelsior Phonograph Company/Excelsior & Musical Phonograph—*See* Record
 Company
 Exclusive—*See* Exclusive Records
 Exitó—*See* Seeco Records, Inc.
 Exner—*See* Exner Record Company/F. B. Exner

F

F and P—*See* F and P Records
 Fairview—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Fais-Do-Do—*See* Miller, J. D.
 Faith—*See* Faith Records
 Falcon—*See* Falcon Record Company/Falcon Recording Studio/Discos Falcón
 Famous [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Famous [2]—*See* Famous Record Company/Famous Records, Inc.
 Famous Record Co.—*See* Specialty Record Company, Inc./Famous Record Company, Inc., of New York
 Famous Singers Records—*See* Famous Singers Records, Inc.
 Famous Songs of Irish Freedom—*See* O'Dowd, Thomas
 Fanfare—*See* Fanfare Records
 Fantasy [1]—*See* Commercial Record Company
 Fantasy [2]—*See* Fantasy Records [II]
 Fargo—*See* Fargo Records
 Faultless Concert Record—*See* International Record Company [II]
 Favorite—*See* Favorite Manufacturing Company
 FBC Records—*See* FBC Distributing Company
 Feature—*See* Miller, J. D.
 Federal [1]—*See* Federal Record Corporation (Cylinders and Discs)
 Federal [2]—*See* King Record Company/King Records, Inc.
 Fentone—*See* Fentone Enterprises
 Fidelity [1]—*See* Midget Music, Inc./Midget Music Productions/Fidelity Records [II]
 Fidelity [2]—*See* Specialty Records
 Filmophone (England)—*See* American Record Corporation
 Fine—*See* Fine Recording Company/Fine Recording Studios
 Fine Arts—*See* Fine Arts Recording Company
 Fiskana—*See* Byers Recording Laboratory, Inc./Byers Studio; Fiskana; Radio Corporation of America (RCA
 Victor Division)
 Flame—*See* Lauderdale, Jack
 Flexo—*See* Warner, Jesse J.
 Flexo-Olympus—*See* Warner, Jesse J.
 Flint—*See* Flint Records, Inc.; International Recording Company, Inc.
 Flora—*See* Flora Records
 Florida—*See* Florida Records
 FM—*See* FM Records/FM Recording Company
 FM Record Co. Christmas Carols—*See* FM Records/FM Recording Company
 Folk Dance Record Service The—*See* Folk Dancer Record Service, The
 Folkraft—*See* Folkraft Records
 Folk-Star—*See* Goldband Record Company/Goldband Recording Studio
 Folkways—*See* Folkways Records & Service Corporation
 Fortune—*See* Fortune Records
 Fossey's (Australia)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Foto—*See* Miltone Record Company; Roy Milton Record Company

Fox—*See* Fox Record Company
 Fox Movietone—*See* American Record Corporation
 Fraad—*See* Rex Talking Machine Corporation
 Frank's Folk Tunes—*See* Frank's Folk Tunes Record Company
 Franklin [1]—*See* Savoy Record Company
 Franklin [2]—*See* Music Enterprises, Inc.
 Fran-Tone—*See* Fran-Tone Records
 Franwil—*See* Franwil Record Company
 Fraternity—*See* Fraternity Record Company; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Freedom—*See* Freedom Recording Company
 Friends of Recorded Music—*See* Friends of Recorded Music, The
 Frisco—*See* Music, Inc.
 Frolic—*See* FM Records/FM Recording Company
 Frontier—*See* Frontier Records
 Futurama—*See* Main Stem Music Shop
 Future Music—*See* Future Music Records

G

G & G—*See* Royal Record Company/Sepia Records, Inc.
 G B Record—*See* G.-B. Record Company
 G. I.—*See* G. I. Record Company/G. I. Records, Inc.
 Gaelic Record Co.—*See* Gaelic (Phonograph) Record Company, Inc.
 Gaiety—*See* Gaiety Record Company
 Gaiety (Australia)—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Gala—*See* Gala Record Company/Gala Record Corporation
 Galaxy—*See* Fantasy Records [II]
 Gamage (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The
 Gamut—*See* Gamut Records
 Gay Toons—*See* Carey Music Publishing Company
 Gayety—*See* Superb Record Company
 Geisha—*See* Hollywood (Phonograph) Record Company; Sunset Record Company
 Gem [1]—*See* Crown Record Company
 Gem [2]—*See* Royal Record Company/Sepia Records, Inc.
 Gem [3]—*See* Gem Records, Inc.
 General—*See* Reeves, Hazzard E.
 General Tavern Tunes—*See* Reeves, Hazzard E.
 General Topical Tempos—*See* Reeves, Hazzard E.
 General Voices From History—*See* Reeves, Hazzard E.
 Gennett [1]—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Gennett [2]—*See* Davis, Joseph M.; Gennett Recording Laboratories/Gennett Records
 Gennett Art Tone—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Giant Tone (cylinders)—*See* Excelsior Phonograph Company/Excelsior & Musical Phonograph
 Gibsonia (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Gilt-Edge—*See* Gilt-Edge Record Company/4 Star Record Company, Inc.
 Ginn & Company Music Appreciation—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Glo Tone—*See* Glo Tone Records
 Globe [1]—*See* Arto Company, The
 Globe [2]—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Globe [3]—*See* Globe Record Company [III]
 Globe (cylinders)—*See* Globe Phonograph Record Company
 Glory—*See* King Record Company/King Records, Inc.
 Gobbly Wobblyn (children's)—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Golam's Hymns—*See* Electric Recording Laboratories [I]
 Gold Medal—*See* Gold Medal Records, Inc.
 Gold Seal—*See* Gold Seal Record Company
 Gold Star—*See* Quinn, William Russell (Bill)
 Gold Tone—*See* Gold Tone Record Company
 Goldband—*See* Goldband Record Company/Goldband Recording Studio
 Golden—*See* Golden Record Company, Inc.
 Golden Crown Musicalphone—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Golden Dawn—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Golden Gate—*See* Golden Gate Record Company, Inc.
 Golden Jubilee—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Golden Rule—*See* Marsh Laboratories, Inc.
 Golden Tongue (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Goldora (Germany)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Gold-Rain—*See* Gold-Rain Recording Company
 Good Time Jazz—*See* Good Time Jazz
 Goodson (England)—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/
 Consolidated Studio; Cova Recording Corporation; Grey Gull Records, Inc.

Goody—*See* Goody Record Corporation/Gotham Record Company
 Gospel [1]—*See* Savoy Record Company
 Gospel [2]—*See* Gospel Recording Company; Lowery Enterprises/Lowery-Newman Enterprises, Inc.
 Gospel [3]—*See* Palda Record Company
 Gospel Herald—*See* Philadelphia Book Concern
 Gospel Trumpet—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Gospel Trumpet Company; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Gotham—*See* Ballen Record Company/Gotham Record Corporation; Goody Record Corporation/Gotham Record Company
 Gracelon (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Grafton (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Emerson Recording Laboratories, Inc./Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation; Federal Record Corporation; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Gramophone—*See* Berliner, Emile
 Gramophone Shop Celebrity Series—*See* Gramophone Shop, The
 Gramophone Shop L'Anthologie Sonore—*See* Gramophone Shop, The
 Gramophone Shop Varieties—*See* American Record Corporation; Gramophone Shop, The
 Grand [1]—*See* Grand Record Company
 Grand [2]—*See* Standard Phono Company/Standard Phonograph Company, Inc. [II]
 Grand Opera Disc Record—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Grand Pree (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Greek Record Company—*See* Greek Record Company; Marsh Laboratories, Inc.
 Gregorian—*See* Gregory Record Company *et al.*
 Gregorian Institute of America—*See* Gregorian Institute of America
 Gregory—*See* Gregory Record Company Et Al.
 Grey Gull—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Groovy—*See* Martin, S. W., Distributing Company
 Gru-V-Tone—*See* Oliver Record Company
 Guardsman (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Guild—*See* Guild Records, Inc.; Musicraft Records/Musicraft (Recording) Corporation
 Gulf—*See* Quinn, William Russell (Bill)
 Gurney—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)

H

H. I. R.—*See* Hollywood International Records
 H. K. S.—*See* H. K. S. Publishing Company
 H. M. V. Victor (Canada)—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 H. N. Society Records—*See* Hargail Records
 H. R. S.—*See* Hot Record Society/H. R. S. Recordings
 Hallmark—*See* Hallmark Pictures/Hallmark Productions, Inc.
 Hamp-Tone—*See* Hamp-Tone Records, Inc.; Musicraft Records/Musicraft (Recording) Corporation
 Hamp-Tone International—*See* International Records
 Happiness—*See* Happiness Records
 Hardman—*See* Hardman Record Company
 Hargail—*See* Hargail Records
 Harlem [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Harlem [2]—*See* Williams, J. Mayo "Ink"
 Harlem [3]—*See* Bacchanal Recordings, Inc.
 Harmograph—*See* Cameo Record Corporation; Jones, Earle W.; New York Recording Laboratories; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Harmonia—*See* Harmonia Record Corporation
 Harmony [1]—*See* Hawthorne & Sheble (Manufacturing) Company
 Harmony [2]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Harmony [3]—*See* Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.; Harmony Records
 Harmony Music—*See* Scandinavian Music Company
 Harms, Kaiser & Hagen (cylinders)—*See* Harms, Kaiser & Hagen
 Harper-Columbia (children's)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Hart-Van—*See* Hart-Van Record Recording Company
 Harvard—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Harvard Vocarium—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Haven—*See* Haven Records, Inc.
 Hawaiian Transcriptions—*See* Hawaiian Transcription Productions
 Hawaiian Transcription Productions—*See* Hawaiian Transcription Productions
 Headline—*See* Headline Record Corporation of New York
 Heart—*See* Ringle, David (Dave)
 Herald—*See* Wright Record Corporation
 Herschel Gold Seal—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)

Herwin—*See* New York Recording Laboratories; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 High Time—*See* High Time Records
 Highway—*See* Canzonet Record Company
 Hilarity Records—*See* Willida Records
 Hi-Lite—*See* Hi-Lite Recording Company
 Hill and Country—*See* Apollo Records, Inc./Apollo Music Enterprises/Rainbow Record Shop
 Hillbilly—*See* Gregory Record Company, *et al.*
 Hill-Billy Hit Parade—*See* Swing Record Manufacturing Company
 His Master's Voice (England/International)—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Historic Record Society—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Hit—*See* Classic Record Company; Wright Record Corporation
 Hit of the Week [1]—*See* Durium Products Corporation/Durium Products, Inc.
 Hit of the Week [2]—*See* Holyoke Plastics
 Hitch—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Hi-Tone—*See* Signature Record Company/Signature Recording Corporation
 Hits—*See* United States Record Manufacturing Corporation
 Hits By—*See* Classic Record Company
 HL—*See* Harry Lim Recordings
 Hokem—*See* Grimes Music Publishers/Clef Publications
 Holiday [1]—*See* Palda Record Company
 Holiday [2]—*See* Holiday Record Company
 Holiday [3]—*See* Holiday Records (of Hollywood)
 Hollywood [1]—*See* Hollywood (Phonograph) Record Company
 Hollywood [2]—*See* American Record Corporation
 Hollywood [3]—*See* Dolphin, John
 Hollywood Hot Shots—*See* Novelty Record Company
 Hollywood Rhythms—*See* Hollywood Rhythms Record Company
 Hollywood Star Records—*See* Hollywood Star Records
 Holmes Royal—*See* Holmes Royal Records Company
 Homestead—*See* American Record Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.; Crown Record Company
 Homochord (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Honky Tonk—*See* Roy Milton Record Company
 Hoosier—*See* Lowery Enterprises/Lowery-Newman Enterprises, Inc.
 Hootenanny—*See* People's Artists, Inc.
 Horace Heidt—*See* Magnolia Records Company, Inc.
 Hot Jazz Club of America—*See* Meltzer, Samuel
 Hot Record Society—*See* American Record Corporation; Hot Record Society/H. R. S. Recordings
 Hot Record Society Originals—*See* Hot Record Society/H. R. S. Recordings
 Hot Rod—*See* Tanner Manufacturing and Distributing Company
 Hot Shots From Hollywood—*See* Novelty Record Company
 Hot Wax—*See* Mellow Music Shop/Mellow Record Company
 Houston—*See* Houston Records
 Howard—*See* Howard Records, Inc.
 HTP Records—*See* Hawaiian Transcription Productions
 Hub—*See* Hub Records
 Hucksters—*See* Hucksters Recording Company, Inc.
 Hudson [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Hudson [2]—*See* Bandwagon Records, Inc./Bennett Records
 Humor—*See* Humor Record Company
 Hush-Hush—*See* Alben Record Company; Jubilee Records Company, Inc./Jay-Gee Record Company, Inc.
 Hytone—*See* Arto Company, The
 Hy-Tone—*See* Hy-Tone Recording Company/Hy-Tone Manufacturing & Distributing Company

I

Ideal [1]—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Ideal [2]—*See* Ideal Record Company, Inc.
 Ideal Sacred Record—*See* Glad Tidings Publishing Company/National Music Company; Marsh Laboratories, Inc.
 Ideal-Scala (England)—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio
 Imperial [1]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Imperial [2]—*See* Imperial Talking Machine Company
 Imperial [3]—*See* Imperial Records [I]
 Imperial [4]—*See* Imperial Record Company [III]
 Imperial [5]—*See* Imperial Records [II]
 Imperial (England)—*See* American Record Corporation; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; New York Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Imperial Folk Music—*See* Imperial Record Company [III]
 Impresario—*See* Impresario Records

Inco—*See* United States Record Corporation
 Indestructible (cylinders)—*See* Federal Record Corporation; Indestructible Phonographic Record Company
 Indestructible Disc Record—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Indigo—*See* Indigo Recordings, Inc.
 International [1]—*See* International Record Company [I]
 International [2]—*See* International Record Company [II]
 International [3]—*See* International Records
 International Record Collectors' Club—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; International Record Collectors' Club; Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Intro—*See* Aladdin Records
 Iragen—*See* International Records Agency
 Irish—*See* Celtic Record Company, Inc.
 Irish Music House, The—*See* O'Byrne De Witt, Ellen; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 IRRA—*See* Independent Record Releasing Association
 Island—*See* Island Music and Recording Company
 Israel—*See* Israel Record Company
 It's A Hit Record—*See* Tanner Manufacturing and Distributing Company
 (It's A) Natural—*See* Jubilee Records Company, Inc./Jay-Gee Record Company, Inc.
 (It's The) Phillips—*See* Memphis Recording Service/Phillips Recording Service
 Italianstyle—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Italianstyle Record Company; Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Ivory—*See* "Ivory" Recordings

J

J. O. B.—*See* J. O. B. Records
 J R Ranch—*See* Electricraft
 Jackie Coogan (children's)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Jade—*See* Castle Records, Inc. [II]; Sittin' In With Records, Inc.
 Jamboree [1]—*See* Jamboree Records, Inc.
 Jamboree [2]—*See* Tennessee Records, Inc.
 Jax—*See* Sittin' In With Records, Inc.
 Jay Dee—*See* Davis Record Corporation
 Jay-Dar—*See* Jay-Dar Recording Company
 Jay-Zee—*See* Blue Star Records
 Jazz at the Philharmonic—*See* Disc Company/Corporation of America; Mercury Record Corporation
 Jazz-Disc—*See* Jazz-Disc Records
 Jazz Information—*See* Jazz Information Records
 Jazz Ltd.—*See* Jazz Ltd.
 Jazz Man—*See* Jazz Man Record Shop
 Jazz Record—*See* American Jazz, Inc.
 Jazzology—*See* Jazzology Records
 J-B—*See* Bulleit, James
 Jedlicka Ceske Recordy (cylinders)—*See* Laborator Ed. Jedlicka
 Jel—*See* Gala Record Company/Gala Record Corporation
 Jet—*See* Jet Records
 Jewel [1]—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Jewel [2]—*See* American Record Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Jewel [3]—*See* Jewel Record Company [II]
 Job—*See* Bartlett, Raymond (Groovie Boy)
 JOB—*See* J. O. B. Records
 Joco—*See* Joco Records
 Joco-Western—*See* Joco Records
 Joe Davis—*See* Davis Record Corporation
 Jolley—*See* Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation
 Joy [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Joy [2]—*See* Singer, Murray
 Jubilee—*See* Jubilee Records Company, Inc./Jay-Gee Record Company, Inc.; Quality Records, Inc.
 Jugoslavia—*See* Jugoslavia Jewelry and Phonograph Company; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Juke Box—*See* Juke Box Record Company, Inc.; Sterling Records, Inc.
 Jump—*See* Jump Records; Turntable, The
 Junior Operetta (children's)—*See* Vulcan Record Corporation
 Jupiter—*See* Jupiter Records
 Just Jazz—*See* Sunset Recording Company
 J-V-B—*See* Von Battle Recording Company

K

Kalamazoo—*See* American Record Company [I]; Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; International Record Company [I]

Kalliope (Germany)—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Kangaroo—*See* Kangaroo Record Company
 Kappa—*See* Kappa Records, Inc.
 Karpathia—*See* Karpathia Record Company; New York Recording Laboratories; Rodeheaver, Homer A.
 Kaybee—*See* Hallmark Pictures/Hallmark Productions, Inc.
 Kayo—*See* Carey Music Publishing Company
 Keen-O-Phone—*See* Keen-O-Phone Company, Inc.
 Keith Prowse (England)—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Keltic—*See* Keltic Record Corporation
 Kem—*See* Kem Records, Inc.
 Key (England)—*See* American Record Corporation
 Keyboard—*See* Keyboard Record Company
 Keynote—*See* Keynote Records
 Keynote Manuscript—*See* Keynote Records
 Keystone—*See* Keystone Records; Tune-Disk Record Corporation
 KGU—*See* Hawaiian Transcription Productions
 Khoury's—*See* Khoury's Recordings
 Kiddie (children's)—*See* Remington Records, Inc.
 Kiddie Konzert Karton (children's)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Kiddie Land (children's)—*See* Willida Records
 Kiddie Records (children's)—*See* Music You Enjoy, Inc.
 Kiddie Time (children's)—*See* Alert Records, Inc.; Jubilee Records Company, Inc./Jay-Gee Record Company, Inc.; Singer, Murray
 Kildare (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The
 King—*See* King Record Company/King Records, Inc.
 King Jazz—*See* King Jazz, Inc.
 King Solomon—*See* Savoy Record Company
 Kismet—*See* Arts Recording Company; Kismet Record Company
 Krantz—*See* Krantz Records
 Ku Klux Klan Labels—*See* Ku Klux Klan-Affiliated Labels; Rodeheaver Recording Laboratories; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division);

L

L' Insuperabile—*See* Clano Company, J. J., Company/Verdi Music Shops (E. E. Verdi)
 L' Insuperable—*See* Clano Company, J. J., Company/Verdi Music Shops (E. E. Verdi)
 La Belle—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Fletcher Record Company, Inc.
 La Bonita—*See* La Bonita Records
 La Marr's Star Records—*See* La Marr Record Company; Melody Moderne, Inc./Memo Records Corporation
 La Patrie—*See* Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 La Voce dal Padrone (Italy)—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Laff—*See* Songcraft, Inc.
 Lakeside—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Lakeside (cylinders)—*See* Indestructible Phonographic Record Company; U. S. Phonograph Company
 Lamb—*See* Lamb's Recording Studios
 Lambert Indestructible Record (cylinders)—*See* Lambert Company, The
 Lamp—*See* Aladdin Records
 Lamplighter—*See* Lamplighter Records
 Lark—*See* Lark Record Company
 Lasso—*See* Lasso Record Company
 Latin American—*See* Latin American Records
 Laugh—*See* Songcraft, Inc.
 Laurent Ltd.—*See* Laurent Records, Ltd.
 Leader (England)—*See* American Record Company [I]
 Leda—*See* Leda Records Company
 Lee—*See* Lee Sales Company, Inc.
 Leeds Record—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Leeds & Catlin (cylinders)—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Lei—*See* Hawaiian Transcription Productions
 Lenox [1]—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.
 Lenox [2]—*See* Remington Records, Inc.
 Leonora (Australia)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Leslie—*See* Leslie Records, Inc.
 Levaphone (England)—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Lewis—*See* Lewis Records
 Liberty [1]—*See* Liberty Record Company [I]/Blazon Records
 Liberty [2]—*See* Liberty Record Company [II]

Liberty [3]—*See* Liberty Recording Company
 Liberty Music Shop(s)—*See* American Record Corporation; Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Decca Records, Inc.; Liberty Music Shop(s); Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Library of Congress Division of Music, The—*See* Library of Congress – Division of Music
 Life [1]—*See* Life Records
 Life [2]—*See* Life Record Company
 Lighthouse—*See* Good Time Jazz
 Limited Editions—*See* Concert Hall Society, Inc.
 Lina—*See* Lina Records; Seeco Records, Inc.
 Lincoln [1]—*See* American Record Corporation; Cameo Record Corporation
 Lincoln [2]—*See* Lincoln Records, Inc.
 Linden—*See* Linden Recordings/Linden Records
 Lindenberg—*See* Lindenberg Records
 Lindstrom (children's)—*See* General Phonograph Corporation
 Lindwood—*See* Lindwood Recording Company
 Lion—*See* Classic Record Company
 Lis'n—*See* Lissen Records, Inc.
 Lissen—*See* Lissen Records, Inc.
 Listen—*See* Electricraft
 Listen-Look Picture Book (children's)—*See* Music You Enjoy, Inc.
 Little Masters (children's)—*See* Music You Enjoy, Inc.
 Little Tots Nursery Tunes (children's)—*See* American Record Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Little Wonder—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Little Wonder Record Company
 Lloyds—*See* Apollo Records, Inc./Apollo Music Enterprises/Rainbow Record Shop
 Lloyd's—*See* Lloyd's Novelty and Curio Shop
 London (U.S.)—*See* London Gramophone Corporation
 Lone Star—*See* Lone Star Publishing and Recording Company
 Lonesome Ace—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Longines Symphonette—*See* Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.
 Lorelei—*See* Lorelei Recording Company
 Los Angeles—*See* Spinnet Records
 Lucky—*See* Stapleton Industries/Lucky Music Corporation
 Lucky 7—*See* Lucky 7 Recording Company
 Lucky Strike (Canada)—*See* Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Ludgate (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Lyric [1]—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Lyric [2]—*See* Rex Talking Machine Corporation
 Lyric [3]—*See* Jones, Earle W.; Lyraphone Company of America
 Lyric [4]—*See* Empire Record Company/Empire Record Corporation
 Lyric [5]—*See* Khoury's Recordings
 Lyric (Australia)—*See* Crown Record Company; New York Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Lyric (cylinders)—*See* Lyric Phonograph Company
 Lyric Music House (Australia)—*See* General Phonograph Corporation

M

M & L Sacred Records—*See* Moore & Layne Appliance Company
 M. G. Parsekian—*See* Parsekian. M. G., & Company
 MacGregor—*See* MacGregor, C. P.
 Macksoud—*See* Macksoud, A. J.
 Mac-Levin—*See* Fletcher Record Company, Inc.
 Macy's—*See* Macy's Recording Company
 Madison [1]—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.; Madison Record Company
 Madison [2]—*See* Bell Records, Inc.
 Maestro Music—*See* Maestro Music Company/Maestro Record Company
 Magnolia [1]—*See* National Radio Recording
 Magnolia [2]—*See* Magnolia Records Company, Inc.
 Main Stem—*See* Main Stem Music Shop
 Main Street—*See* Main Street Records
 Majestic [1]—*See* Majestic Phonograph Company, Inc./Majestic Record Corporation
 Majestic [2]—*See* Fletcher Record Company, Inc.
 Majestic [3]—*See* Eagle Record Company/ABC-Eagle Records; Majestic Records, Inc.
 Major—*See* Major Records
 Make Believe Ballroom—*See* Ammor Record Corporation / Ammor Record Company
 Maloof—*See* Maloof Phonograph Company
 Maloof Record De Luxe Orientale—*See* Maloof Phonograph Company

- Mandel—*See* Jones, Earle W.
- Manhattan [1]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
- Manhattan [2]—*See* Manhattan Music Corporation
- Manhattan [3]—*See* Miller Publications, Inc.
- Manophone—*See* Lyraphone Company of America; Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation
- Manor—*See* Manor Record Company
- Maple Leaf (Canada)—*See* Continental Record Company, Inc.
- Marathon—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio; Nutmeg Record Corporation
- Maratone—*See* Melmore, Inc.
- Marconi Velvet Tone—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
- Margo—*See* Margo Record Company
- Mar-Kee—*See* Mar-Kee Records
- Marlow—*See* Domino Records
- Mars—*See* Mars Records
- Marshall—*See* Marshall Record Company
- Martin—*See* Martin, S. W., Distributing Company
- Marvel [1]—*See* Marvel Record Company
- Marvel [2]—*See* Marvel Records
- Mary Howard Recordings—*See* Mary Howard Recordings
- Master [1]—*See* American Record Corporation; Master Records [I]
- Master [2]—*See* Master Record Company/Swing-Master Record Corporation
- Master [3]—*See* Bradley, Richard and Associates/Tower Records
- Master [4]—*See* Master Records [II]
- Master Tone—*See* Fletcher Record Company, Inc.
- Masterpiece—*See* Musicraft Records/Musicraft (Recording) Corporation
- Masterpiece (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
- Masterpieces of Music (Hamilton Ross)—*See* United States Record Corporation
- Masterpieces of Music (Remington-Morse)—*See* United States Record Corporation
- Mastertone—*See* Mastertone Record Company, Inc.
- Maunay—*See* Maunay Records
- Maxsa (France)—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; New York Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.
- Mayesh—*See* Electro-Vox Recording Studios
- Mayfair (children's)—*See* Mayfair Record & Recording Corporation
- Mayfair (England)—*See* American Record Corporation
- Mayfair Rec-O-Card (children's)—*See* Mayfair Record & Recording Corporation
- McCollister—*See* Raymor - McCollister Music/Raymor Record Company
- McKinley—*See* Rex Talking Machine Corporation
- Me Re—*See* Asllan, Aydin
- Mecca—*See* Batt Masian Company
- Medallion—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.
- Medico-Phone (cylinders)—*See* U. S. Phonograph Company
- Melben—*See* Melben Records
- Melford—*See* Melford Record Company
- Mello-Strain—*See* Mello-Strain Records, Ltd.
- Mell-O-Tone—*See* Everett, Buss, Music Studio
- Mellow—*See* Mellow Music Shop/Mellow Record Company
- Mel-Mar—*See* Mel-Mar Records
- Mel-O-Dee—*See* American Record Corporation
- Melodisc [1]—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.
- Melodisc [2]—*See* Melodisc Recording Company
- Melodograph—*See* Domino Phonograph Corporation
- Melody [1]—*See* Fletcher Record Company, Inc.
- Melody [2]—*See* Melody Records, Inc.
- Melody Land Record Book (children's)—*See* Music You Enjoy, Inc.
- Melody Lane Record Shop—*See* Melody Lane Recording Company
- Melody Trail—*See* Melody Trail Records
- Meloto (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
- Melotone—*See* American Record Corporation; Brunswick Radio Corporation; Brunswick Record Corporation
- Melotone (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
- Melotone (Canada)—*See* American Record Corporation; Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; Decca Records, Inc.
- Melotone (vanity label)—*See* Melotone Recording Studio
- Melrose—*See* Melrose Records
- Melva—*See* Clarion Record Company; Criterion Laboratories/Criterion Records, Inc.
- Memo—*See* Melody Moderne, Inc./Memo Records Corporation
- Menagerie (children's)—*See* Bandwagon Records, Inc./Bennett Records
- Mercer—*See* Mercer Records

Mercury—*See* Mercury Record Corporation
 Meriden—*See* Wright Record Corporation
 Merit—*See* Merit Records
 Meritt—*See* Winston Holmes Music Company
 Mermaid—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Mero—*See* Metro Records [II]/Mero Records, Inc.
 Mertone—*See* Mertone Recording Company
 Messiah Sacred Records—*See* Marsh Laboratories, Inc.; Schooler Record Company
 Meteor [1]—*See* Arto Company, The; Clarion Record Company; Criterion Laboratories/Criterion Records, Inc.; Jones, Earle W.
 Meteor [2]—*See* Chance Record Company
 Metro [1]—*See* Metropolitan Record Company [I]
 Metro [2]—*See* Rapoport, Maurice A.
 Metro [3]—*See* Metro Records [II]/Mero Records, Inc.
 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Metropole (England)—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Metropolitan [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Metropolitan [2]—*See* Ayo Records
 Metropolitan [3]—*See* Metropolitan Record Company [III]
 Metrotone—*See* Metrotone Record Company
 M-G-M—*See* M-G-M Records, Inc./Loew's, Inc.
 M-G-M Record—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 MHR—*See* Mary Howard Recordings
 Microphone (Canada)—*See* American Record Corporation; Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Mida—*See* Mida Record Company
 Midget—*See* Midget Music, Inc./Midget Music Productions/Fidelity Records [I]
 Midnight—*See* Dahl, John F., Recording Company
 Midwest—*See* Allender Record Distributors
 Mills "Perfeg"—*See* American Record Company [II]; Universal Talking Machine (Manufacturing) Company
 Miltone—*See* Miltone Record Company
 Minerva (Canada)—*See* American Record Corporation
 Mira—*See* Mira Record Company—*See* —*See* Miracle—*See* Miracle Record Company
 Miracle—*See* Miracle Record Company
 Mirror—*See* Mirror Recordings
 Mirror Tone—*See* Singer, Murray
 Mission—*See* Falcon Record Company/Falcon Recording Studio/Discos Falcón
 Mitchell—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.; Cameo Record Corporation
 Modern—*See* Modern Music Records/Modern Records
 Modern Music—*See* Modern Music Records/Modern Records
 Monarch [1]—*See* Victor Talking Machine Company
 Monarch [2]—*See* Monarch Records, Inc.
 Monarch Music Co.—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Mondri—*See* Mondri Records
 Monogram—*See* Ohio Talking Machine Company
 Montgomery Ward—*See* Decca Records, Inc.; Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division); United States Record Corporation
 Mood—*See* Mood Records
 Morrison—*See* Morrison Music Company
 Motif—*See* Motif Record Manufacturing Company
 Mozart [1]—*See* International Record Company [II]
 Mozart [2]—*See* Rex Talking Machine Corporation
 Murray Singer—*See* Singer, Murray
 Muse—*See* Cameo Record Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Musette—*See* United States Record Corporation
 Music Art—*See* Music Art Records
 Music Box [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Music Box [2]—*See* Rabson's
 Music for Society—*See* Music for Society Record Company
 Music Hour—*See* Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Music Mart—*See* Music Mart Records
 Music Master—*See* Ballen Record Company/Gotham Record Corporation
 Music of the Orient—*See* Maloof Phonograph Company
 Music on Parade—*See* Music on Parade Records
 Music Service Company—*See* Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Musicart—*See* Art Service Music/Musicart Records
 Musicraft—*See* Musicraft Records/Musicraft (Recording) Corporation
 Mutual—*See* Mutual Records
 Muzicon—*See* Serenade Recording Corporation

N

Nadsco—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Nassau—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 National [1]—*See* American Record Company [I]; International Record Company [I]
 National [2]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 National [3]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 National [4]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 National [5]—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio; Emerson Recording Laboratories, Inc./Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation
 National [6]—*See* National Record Company
 National [7]—*See* National Records Company
 National Music Lovers—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.; Scranton Button Works
 National Vocation, The—*See* National Vocation, The
 Nation's Forum—*See* Nation's Forum, The
 Nation's Forum (Irish Series)—*See* General Phonograph Corporation
 Natural—*See* Jubilee Records Company, Inc./Jay-Gee Record Company, Inc.
 Natural Hit!, A—*See* Natural Hit! Record Company, A
 New Bourbon—*See* New Bourbon Records
 New Comfort—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 New Emerson—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.
 New England (cylinders)—*See* New England Phonograph Company
 New Flexo—*See* Warner, Jesse J.
 New Jazz—*See* New Jazz Record Company/Prestige Records
 New Jersey (cylinders)—*See* New Jersey Phonograph Company
 New Music Quarterly—*See* New Music Quarterly Recordings
 New Music Recordings—*See* New Music Quarterly Recordings
 New Orleans—*See* New Orleans Record Shop
 New Orleans Bandwagon—*See* New Orleans Bandwagon
 New Phonic—*See* Cameo Record Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 New Republic—*See* New Republic Records
 New York Grand Opera Record—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Night Life in New York—*See* Musicraft Records/Musicraft (Recording) Corporation
 Night Music—*See* Night Music Recording Company
 Nightingale Parlor Grand—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Nipponophone (Japan)—*See* American Record Company [I]; Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Nocturne—*See* Brinckerhoff, E. V. & Company, Inc. Et Al.
 Noel—*See* Palda Record Company
 Norcross (cylinders)—*See* Norcross Phonograph Company
 Nordskog—*See* Nordskog Phonograph Recording Company
 North-American—*See* North-American Recording Company
 Notary—*See* Notary Records, Inc.
 Numelody—*See* Numelody Records
 Nu-Vogue—*See* Singer, Murray

O

O. T.—*See* Oklahoma Tornado Recording Company
 O'Byrne De Witt (Irish) Record—*See* O'Byrne De Witt, Ellen
 O'Dowd—*See* O'Dowd, Thomas
 Odeon (U.S.)—*See* American Odeon Corporation; General Phonograph Corporation; Okeh Phonograph Corporation
 Ogren & Uhe Artist Series—*See* Marsh Laboratories, Inc.
 Ohio Records—*See* Republic Records/Cecille Music Company
 Okeh—*See* Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.; General Phonograph Corporation; Otto Heineman Phonograph Supply Company; Okeh Phonograph Corporation
 Okla—*See* Music, Inc.
 Old Swing-Master—*See* Master Record Company/Swing-Master Record Corporation
 Old Timer—*See* Old Timer Record Company
 Oliver—*See* Oliver Record Company
 Ollie-T—*See* Oliver Record Company
 Olympic—*See* Capitol Roll and Record Company; Fletcher Record Company, Inc.; Olympic Disc Record Corporation
 Olympic (Australia)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Olympus Greek Record Company—*See* Greek Record Company
 Omar (Australia)—*See* Aeolian Company, The
 Once Upon a Time (children's)—*See* Mayfair Record & Recording Corporation
 Onix—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Opal—*See* Atwood, Harry G.
 Opera [1]—*See* Opera Record Company/Opera Recording Company

Opera [2]—*See* Opera Records
 Opera Disc—*See* Opera Disc Company
 Operaphone—*See* Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation
 Operaphone (Australia)—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Opera-Phone (Canada)—*See* Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories
 Opportunity—*See* Music Enterprises, Inc.
 Opus—*See* Opus Records
 Ora Nelle—*See* Ora Nelle Record Company
 Orchid [1]—*See* Orchid Records and Publications
 Orchid [2]—*See* Orchid Record Corporation
 Orient—*See* Maloof Phonograph Company
 Oriole [1]—*See* American Record Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Oriole [2]—*See* Oriole Records Corporation
 Oriole (England)—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company
 Ormsby Disc—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Orpheum—*See* Orpheum Record Company; Panhellenion Phonograph Record Company, Inc./Panhellenic Record Company
 Orpheus—*See* Orpheus Record and Transcription Company
 Orthophonic—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division); Standard Phono Company / Standard Phonograph Company, Inc. [II]
 Owl—*See* Wrightman, Neale
 Oxford—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Leeds & Catlin Company; Universal Talking Machine (Manufacturing) Company
 Oxford (cylinders)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Indestructible Phonographic Record Company

P

Pacemaker—*See* Pacemaker Record and Transcription Company
 Pacific—*See* Pacific Record Company
 Page—*See* Page Recording Company
 Pal—*See* Krantz Records
 Palda—*See* Palda Record Company
 Paling's (Australia)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Pan—*See* Arto Company, The
 Panachord (Australia)—*See* Decca Records, Inc.
 Panachord (England)—*See* American Record Corporation; Decca Records, Inc.
 Pan-a-Mer—*See* Pan-American Publications/Pan-Am Transcriptions
 Pan-American [1]—*See* Pan-American Record Company/Birwell Corporation
 Pan-American [2]—*See* Pan-American Publications/Pan-Am Transcriptions
 Panhellenion—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Panhellenion Phonograph Record Company, Inc./Panhellenic Record Company
 Paraclete Music Disc—*See* Evreinow, S. A.
 Parade [1]—*See* Parade Record Company [I]
 Parade [2]—*See* Parade Record Company (Inc.) [II]
 Paradise—*See* Delray Recording Company/Paradise Recording Company
 Paragon—*See* Paragon Records, Inc.
 Paramount [1]—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Paramount [2]—*See* Paramount Records
 Paramount [3]—*See* Paramount Recording Company
 Paramount [4]—*See* Steiner, John
 Paramount (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Paramount Black Swan Record—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Parkway—*See* Parkway Records
 Parlophone (England)—*See* General Phonograph Corporation
 Parlophone (U.S.)—*See* Okeh Phonograph Corporation
 Parody—*See* Parody Records
 Par-O-Ket—*See* Paroquette Record Manufacturing Company, Inc.
 Party Record Company—*See* Party Record Company
 Pastel—*See* Pastel Records
 Pathé—*See* Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Pathé Actuelle—*See* American Record Corporation; Pathé Frères Phonograph Company; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Pauli—*See* Royal Records
 Pavilon—*See* Pavilon Recording Company
 Peacock—*See* Peacock Recording Company/Peacock Records, Inc.
 Peacock (England)—*See* Decca Records, Inc.
 Peak—*See* Peak Records, Inc.
 Pearl—*See* Pearl Records
 Peerless [1]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Peerless [2]—*See* American Record Company [I]

Peerless [3]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Peerless [4]—*See* Universal Talking Machine (Manufacturing) Company
 Peerless [5]—*See* Reynard, James Kent
 Peerless [6]—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Pelican (children's)—*See* Apollo Records, Inc./Apollo Music Enterprises/Rainbow Record Shop
 Pelican (England)—*See* American Record Company [I]
 Penguin—*See* Penguin Recording Corporation
 Pennington—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Perfect—*See* American Record Corporation; Pathé Frères Phonograph Company; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Perfect (England)—*See* Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Perfectaphone (France)—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Perfection (cylinders)—*See* American Phonograph Record Company
 Perfection Phono-Cut—*See* Boston Talking Machine Company
 Personality Records—*See* Swing Record Manufacturing Company
 Pfau—*See* Pfau Sound and Recording Studios
 Phamous—*See* Phamous Records
 Phantasie Concert Record—*See* Clarion Record Company; Criterion Laboratories/Criterion Records, Inc.; Fletcher Record Company, Inc.; Lyraphone Company of America
 Pharos—*See* Pharos Record Company
 Phenix [*sic*]*—See* Ballen Record Company/Gotham Record Corporation
 Philharmonic [1]—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Philharmonic [2]—*See* Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.; Musicraft Records/Musicraft (Recording) Corporation
 Phillips—*See* Memphis Recording Service/Phillips Recording Service
 Philmos—*See* Philmos Recording Company
 Philo—*See* Philo Recordings
 Phoenix (England)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Phono-Cut—*See* Boston Talking Machine Company
 Phonograph Recording Company—*See* Phonograph Recording Company of San Francisco
 Phonola (Canada)—*See* General Phonograph Corporation; Heineman, Otto, Phonograph Supply Company
 Phonolamp—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Phonycord (England)—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Phototone—*See* Phototone Records
 Piccadilly (England)—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio
 Piccadilly (England)—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Pick-Up—*See* Swan Recording Company, Inc.
 Pied Piper (children's)—*See* Music You Enjoy, Inc.
 Pikes Peak—*See* Pikes Peak Records
 Pike's Talking Machine Co.—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Pilotone—*See* Pilot Radio Company/Pilot Radio Corporation
 Pioneer—*See* Pioneer Recording Company
 Pioneer (England)—*See* American Record Company [I]
 Pix—*See* Pix Records
 Pixie (children's)—*See* Music You Enjoy, Inc.
 Planet—*See* Planet Record Company
 Playa—*See* Pearl Records
 Playerphone—*See* Rex Talking Machine Corporation
 Playmore—*See* Electric Recording Laboratories [I]
 Playtime (children's)—*See* American Record Corporation; Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.
 Plaza—*See* Atlantic Records
 Pleasant—*See* Pleasant Records
 Plymouth—*See* Plymouth Recording Company
 PMD—*See* Evreinow, S. A.
 Polk—*See* Brunswick Radio Corporation
 Polo—*See* Polo Record Corporation
 Polonia—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; New York Recording Laboratories; Polonia Phonograph Company
 Poloron—*See* Poloron Records
 Polydor (Germany)—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company
 Polyphone (cylinders)—*See* Polyphone Company, The/The Talking Machine Company
 Popular (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Popular—*See* Popular Record Company
 Pop-U-Lar—*See* Artists Music Corporation
 Portland (England)—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Portrait—*See* Portrait Records
 Premier [1]—*See* Premier Record Company
 Premier [2]—*See* Premier Radio Enterprises, Inc./Premier Records
 Premium—*See* Premium Record Corporation

President—*See* President Records
 Prestige—*See* New Jazz Record Company/Prestige Records
 Preview—*See* Preview Records
 Primrose—*See* Primrose Records
 Princess—*See* Sapphire Record & Talking Machine Company
 Princess Grand Opera Record—*See* Sapphire Record & Talking Machine Company
 Prize—*See* Prize Record Company
 PRL—*See* Philadelphia Recording Laboratories
 Process—*See* Dome Records; Process Record Company
 Progressive—*See* Peacock Recording Company/Peacock Records, Inc.
 Prom—*See* Miller Publications, Inc.
 Prudentia—*See* Prudentia Records
 Public—*See* Public Records, Inc.
 Publix—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Puritan—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Puritone [1]—*See* Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation
 Puritone [2]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Pyramid—*See* Pyramid Record Company/Pyramid Records

Q

Q. R. S.—*See* Cova Recording Corporation; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Q. R. S. Company; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division); Stanley Recording Company of America, Inc.
 Quaker—*See* Quaker Music Company
 Quaker Music—*See* Quaker Music Company
 Quality—*See* Quality Records, Inc.
 Quartet—*See* King Record Company/King Records, Inc.; Super Discs

R

R. F. D.—*See* Regal Record Corporation
 Rabson's—*See* Rabson's
 Rabson's Music Shop—*See* Rabson's
 Racy Records—*See* Hollywood Specialty Recordings
 Radiex—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Radio—*See* Ekko Recording Corporation
 Radio Artist Records—*See* Herzog Recording Company/Radio Artist Records
 Radiodisque—*See* Radio-Rundfunk Corporation
 Radiofunken—*See* Radio-Rundfunk Corporation
 Radium (cylinders)—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Rafa—*See* Fargo Records
 Ragtime Records—*See* Ragtime Records
 Rainbow [1]—*See* Rodeheaver, Homer A.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Rainbow [2]—*See* Rainbow Records, Inc./Rainbow Recording Corporation
 Rainbow Sacred Records—*See* Rodeheaver, Homer A.
 Rampart—*See* Rampart Records
 Rancho Records—*See* Rancho Records
 Randy's—*See* Dot Records
 Range—*See* Fargo Records
 Rappolo—*See* Electric Recording Laboratories [I]
 Raven—*See* Raven Recording Company
 Raymac—*See* National Radio Recording
 Raymor—*See* Raymor - McCollister Music/Raymor Record Company
 Rayo Electrico Gennett—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 RCA Program Transcription—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Readaphone—*See* Harris Record Company/Harris Recording Laboratories
 Rebelle—*See* Rebelle Records
 Rec-Art—*See* Rec-Art Recordings/Rec-Art Studios
 Recola—*See* Recording Company of Los Angeles/Recola Record Company
 Record Changer, The—*See* Changer Publications, Inc.
 Recorded In Hollywood—*See* Dolphin, John
 Red Barn—*See* White Church Recording Company/K. C. Record Company
 Red Bird [1]—*See* Recordings, Inc.
 Red Bird [2]—*See* Globe Record Company [III]
 Red Bird [3]—*See* Red Bird Recording Studio
 Red Jay—*See* Red Jay Recording Company
 Redskin—*See* Redskin Records
 Reed & Dawson (cylinders)—*See* Reed & Dawson/Reed, Dawson & Company
 Reel—*See* Reel Records
 Regal [1]—*See* American Record Corporation; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Regal Record Company, Inc.

- Regal [2]—*See* Willow Walk Industries
 Regal [3]—*See* Regal Records
 Regal [4]—*See* Regal Record Corporation
 Regal (England)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Regent—*See* Regent Records; Savoy Record Company
 Regina—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Regis—*See* Manor Record Company; Regis Record Company/Regis Records, Inc.
 Rego—*See* Rego Records
 Reina—*See* Atwood, Harry G.
 Relax—*See* Relax Records
 Religious Recording—*See* Religious Recordings
 Religious Tone—*See* Supreme Records, Inc.
 Rem—*See* Rapoport, Maurice A.
 Rembrandt (England)—*See* American Record Company [I]
 Remick Perfection Record—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Remington [1]—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Remington [2]—*See* Remington Records, Inc.
 Remington Junior (children's)—*See* Remington Records, Inc.
 Rena (England)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Republic [1]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Republic [2]—*See* Republic Records/Cecille Music Company
 Request—*See* Request Records
 Resona—*See* Federal Record Corporation
 Revel—*See* Macy's Recording Company
 Rex [1]—*See* Rex Talking Machine Corporation; Imperial Talking Machine Company
 Rex [2]—*See* Rapoport, Maurice A.
 Rex (England)—*See* American Record Corporation; Decca Records, Inc.
 Rex Experiments in Modern Music—*See* Eily, E. A., Record Company
 Rhapsody [1]—*See* Rhapsody Records [I]
 Rhapsody [2]—*See* Rhapsody Records [II]
 Rhumboogie—*See* Rhumboogie Recording Company
 Rhythm [1] (Rhythm Records)—*See* Rhythm Records Company/Rhythmtone Records
 Rhythm [2] (Rhythm Recordings)—*See* Rhythm Recordings, Inc.
 Rhythm and Blues—*See* Modern Music Records/Modern Records
 Rhythm Club—*See* Music, Inc.
 Rialto [1]—*See* United States Record Manufacturing Corporation
 Rialto [2]—*See* Marsh Laboratories, Inc.
 Rialto [3]—*See* Rialto Records Corporation
 Ribbon—*See* Ribbon Records
 Rich—*See* Rich Publications/Rich-Art Enterprises, Inc./Rich-Art Records
 Rich-Art—*See* Rich Publications/Rich-Art Enterprises, Inc./Rich-Art Records
 Rich-R'-Tone—*See* Rich-R'-Tone Record Company
 Richtone [1]—*See* Rich Publications/Rich-Art Enterprises, Inc./Rich-Art Records
 Richtone [2]—*See* Richtone Record Company
 Rich-Tone—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Rico—*See* Rico Phonograph Company
 Rishell—*See* Rex Talking Machine Corporation
 Rite-A-Lyric—*See* Singer, Murray
 Riviera—*See* Rainbow Records, Inc./Rainbow Recording Corporation
 Rivoli—*See* Rivoli Records
 RMC—*See* Record Manufacturing Company
 R-M-P—*See* Radio Music Productions
 Robin Hood—*See* Robin Hood Records, Inc.
 Robin—*See* Robin Records Company
 Robinet—*See* Wrightman, Neale
 Rocket [1]—*See* Rocket Record Company
 Rocket [2]—*See* Rocket/Rockette Recording Company
 Rockette—*See* Rocket/Rockette Recording Company
 Rodeo—*See* Coast Record (Manufacturing) Company/Charles E. Washburn Company; Rodeo Records
 Roland—*See* Roland Records
 Rolin—*See* Rondo Records, Inc.
 Romeo (1924 - 1/25/29)—*See* American Record Corporation; Cameo Record Corporation
 Rondo—*See* Rondo Records, Inc.
 Roost—*See* Roost Records, Inc.
 Rosas—*See* Rosas Records
 Rose City—*See* Rose City Records
 Roundup Recordings—*See* Western Radio Features
 Roy Milton—*See* Roy Milton Record Company
 Roy Milton Record Company Hot Classic Series—*See* Roy Milton Record Company
 Royal (Canada)—*See* American Record Corporation
 'R-Tist—*See* 'R-Tist Record Company

Royal [1]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Royal [2]—*See* Clarion Record Company; Criterion Laboratories/Criterion Records, Inc.
 Royal [3]—*See* Royal Record Company/Sepia Records, Inc.
 Royal Roost—*See* Roost Records, Inc.
 Royale—*See* United States Record Corporation; Wright Record Corporation
 Royal-Tone—*See* Case Recording Company
 Royalty [1]—*See* Swing Record Manufacturing Company
 Royalty [2]—*See* Savoy Record Company
 Roycroft—*See* Cameo Record Corporation; Roycrofters, The
 RPM—*See* Modern Music Records/Modern Records
 Ruler—*See* J. O. B. Records
 Rumpus—*See* Rumpus Record Company

S

S & G—*See* S & G Records
 S. B. W.—*See* S. B. W. Recording Company
 S. D.—*See* Steiner, John
 Sabre—*See* Chance Record Company
 Sacred—*See* Sacred Records, Inc.
 Saks—*See* Saks Records
 Salabert (France)—*See* Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Salvation—*See* Ivory Recording Company/Ivory Records
 San Antonio [1]—*See* San Antonio Phonograph Company
 San Antonio [2]—*See* Starr Record Company
 San Fernando—*See* San Fernando Records
 Sapphire [1]—*See* Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Sapphire [2]—*See* Sapphire Record Company
 Sarco—*See* Goody Record Corporation/Gotham Record Company; Sarco Record Company
 Savana (England)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Savoy [1]—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Savoy [2]—*See* Savoy Record Company
 Savoy (Australia)—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Scala (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Scala Ideal (England)—*See* Emerson Recording Laboratories, Inc./Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Scandinavia—*See* Scandinavian Music House, Inc.
 Scandinavian Bell Ringers—*See* Wallin's Music Shop
 Schirmer—*See* Schirmer Records
 Schooner—*See* Schooner Records
 Schubert—*See* Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Scoop [1]—*See* Scoop Records
 Scoop [2]—*See* Scoop Record Company [I]
 Scoop [3]—*See* Jewel Record Company [III]
 Score—*See* Aladdin Records
 Scott Record—*See* Sunshine Phonograph and Record Company
 Scott Recordings—*See* Scott Record Company
 Security—*See* Security Records
 See Bee—*See* Bourne, C. H., Recording Company
 Seeco—*See* Seeco Records, Inc.
 Seeco Universal—*See* Seeco Records, Inc.
 Select—*See* Select Records, Inc.
 Selective—*See* Selective Record Company
 Selest—*See* Selest Records
 Sensation—*See* Sensation Record Company
 Sepia—*See* Royal Record Company/Sepia Records, Inc.
 Serenade [1]—*See* Unique Music Publishers and Recording Company
 Serenade [2]—*See* Serenade Recording Corporation
 Sergei Marinoff School of Classic Dancing—*See* Rodeheaver, Homer A.
 Service Stores Music Lovers Club—*See* Musicraft Records/Musicraft (Recording) Corporation
 Session—*See* Session Records, Inc.
 Session Reissue—*See* Session Records, Inc.
 Seva—*See* Seva Record Company/Corporation
 Seymour—*See* Seymour Records
 Shamrock Store—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Shannon—*See* Metropolitan Record Company [I]
 Sharp—*See* Sharp Record Company
 Shelby—*See* Shelby Recordings
 Shelton—*See* Signature Record Company/Signature Recording Corporation
 Showcase—*See* Roost Records, Inc.
 Siegel-Cooper—*See* International Record Company [I]

Signature—*See* Signature Record Company/Signature Recording Corporation
 Signature Hi-Tone—*See* Signature Record Company/Signature Recording Corporation
 Signet—*See* Signature Record Company/Signature Recording Corporation
 Silver—*See* Silver Records
 Silver Screen—*See* Hollywood (Phonograph) Record Company
 Silver Spur—*See* Silver Spur Records
 Silver Star [1]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Silver Star [2]—*See* Silver Star Record Company
 Silver Tongued—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Silvertone—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company; Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Federal Record Corporation (Cylinders and Discs); Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation; Regal Record Company, Inc.; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Silvertone Record Club—*See* Sears, Roebuck & Company - Silvertone Record Club
 Simfonia—*See* Simfonia Record/Recording Company
 Simolian (Australia)—*See* Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Singaphone (cylinders)—*See* U. S. Phonograph Company (U-S Everlasting)
 Sinn Fein Music House, The—*See* O'Byrne De Witt, Ellen
 Sir Henri—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Leeds & Catlin Company
 Sittin' in With—*See* Sittin' In With Records, Inc.
 Six Brown Bros. Saxophone Record—*See* Electric Recording Laboratories [I]
 Skate-Rhythm—*See* Glatfelter Recording Studio/Sky Records
 Skatin' Toons—*See* Carey Music Publishing Company
 Sky—*See* Glatfelter Recording Studio/Sky Records
 Skyline—*See* Music, Inc.
 Skyscraper—*See* Skyscraper Recording Company
 Slate—*See* Slate Enterprises, Inc.
 Small Fry (children's)—*See* Willida Records
 Smart—*See* Desert Recording Company/Smart Records
 SMC—*See* Spanish Music Center/Coda Record Company
 SMC Pro-Arte—*See* Spanish Music Center/Coda Record Company
 Sobie—*See* S. B. W. Recording Company
 Society—*See* Pan-American Publications/Pan-Am Transcriptions
 Society Recordings—*See* Society Recordings
 Sohag—*See* Sohag, Sarafian/Sokhag Record Company
 Sokhag—*See* Sohag, Sarafian/Sokhag Record Company
 Solar—*See* D-H Recording Company
 Solitaire—*See* Crystal Tone Record Company
 Solo—*See* Folkways Records & Service Corporation
 Solo Art—*See* Solo Art Recordings
 Sonare—*See* Electric Recording Laboratories [I]
 Sonart—*See* Harmonia Record Corporation; Sonart Record Corporation
 Sonata—*See* Sonata Records
 Song Bird—*See* Davis Record Corporation
 Song of the Month (vanity label)—*See* Song-of-the-Month Club
 Songcraft—*See* Songcraft, Inc.
 Songs from Renfro Valley—*See* Bell Record Company, Ltd.; Ekko Recording Corporation
 Sonora [1]—*See* Sonora Phonograph Company, Inc./Sonora Phonograph Corporation
 Sonora [2]—*See* Sonora Radio & Television Corporation/Sonora Record Company
 Sonora Play-Land (children's)—*See* Sonora Radio & Television Corporation/Sonora Record Company
 Southern—*See* Williams, J. Mayo "Ink"
 Souvenir—*See* Souvenir Records Company
 Special [1]—*See* Rodeheaver, Homer A.
 Special [2]—*See* Miltone Record Company
 Special Editions—*See* Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.
 Specialty [1]—*See* Specialty Record Company, Inc./Famous Record Company, Inc., of New—*See* York
 Specialty [2]—*See* Specialty Records
 Spin—*See* Spin Records, Inc.
 Spire [1]—*See* Spire Records Company, Inc.
 Spire [2]—*See* Spire Records, Ltd.
 Spiritual—*See* Miltone Record Company
 Spirituals—*See* Castle Records, Inc. [III]
 Spiro—*See* Spiro Record Corporation
 Splendor—*See* Electric Recording Laboratories [I]
 Spotlight—*See* Spotlight Records, Inc.
 Spotlite—*See* Spotlite Record Company
 Square Deal [1]—*See* International Record Company [II]
 Square Deal [2]—*See* Square Deal Recording Company
 Staff—*See* Malone, Idessa
 Stamps—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Stamps-Baxter Quartet—*See* Swing Record Manufacturing Company

Stanchel—*See* Stanchel Record Company
 Standard [1]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Standard [2]—*See* Hawthorne & Sheble (Manufacturing) Company; Universal Talking Machine (Manufacturing) Company
 Standard [3]—*See* Standard Phonograph Company, Inc. [I]
 Standard [4]—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division); Standard Phono Company/Standard Phonograph Company, Inc. [II]
 Standard International—*See* Standard Phono Company/Standard Phonograph Company, Inc. [II]
 Stan-Lee—*See* Lee and Roth Enterprises
 Star [1] (rubber-stamped generic)—*See* International Record Company [I]
 Star [2]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Hawthorne & Sheble (Manufacturing) Company
 Star [3]—*See* Star Records [I]
 Star [4]—*See* Star Record Company
 Star [5]—*See* Adventure Record Company/Adventure Records, Inc.
 Star [6]—*See* Star Records [II]
 Star (Australia)—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Star (Sweden)—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Star Melodies—*See* Star Melodies Music Publishers and Record Producers
 Star of David—*See* Rainbow Records, Inc./Rainbow Recording Corporation
 Star Talent—*See* Talent Records/Star Talent Records
 Starck—*See* Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Star-Disc—*See* Starlight Music Company
 Stardusk—*See* Bradley, Richard and Associates/Tower Records
 Starland—*See* Starland Record Company
 Starline—*See* Milwaukee Sound Service
 Starr [1]—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Starr [2]—*See* Starr Record Company
 Starr (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Starr (Canada)—*See* Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; Decca Records, Inc.; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Starr—Gennett (Canada)—*See* Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Steeple—*See* Sacred Records, Inc.
 Stellar—*See* Trans-Radio Productions/Stellar Records, Inc.
 Sterling [1]—*See* American Record Company [I]
 Sterling [2]—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio; Nutmeg Record Corporation
 Sterling [3]—*See* Juke Box Record Company, Inc.; Sterling Records, Inc.
 Sterling (Canada)—*See* American Record Corporation; Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Serno (England)—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Stinson—*See* Stinson Records/Stinson Trading Company
 Stork—*See* Stork Record Company
 Strand—*See* Clarion Record Manufacturing Company, Inc./Clarion Records, Inc.
 Strong—*See* Strong Record Company, Inc.
 Studio—*See* Studio Records
 Sullivan—*See* Sullivan Records
 Sultan [1]—*See* Sultan Recording Company/Tower Top Recording and Transcription—*See* Studio
 Sultan [2]—*See* Sultan Records
 Summit (Australia)—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Sun [1]—*See* Leeds & Catlin Company
 Sun [2]—*See* Sun Recording Corporation
 Sun [3]—*See* S. B. W. Recording Company
 Sun (Canada)—*See* American Record Corporation; Compo Company, Ltd./[H. S.] Berliner Recording Laboratories; General Phonograph Corporation
 Sun Jewish Records—*See* Sun Recording Corporation
 Sunbeam—*See* Sunbeam Recording Company
 Sunrise [1]—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Sunrise [2]—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Sunrise [3]—*See* Sunrise Record Corporation
 Sunset [1]—*See* Hollywood (Phonograph) Record Company; Sunset Record Company
 Sunset [2]—*See* Sunset Recording Company
 Sunshine [1]—*See* Nordskog Phonograph Recording Company; Spikes Brothers Phonograph Company
 Sunshine [2]—*See* California Recording Company
 Sunshine [3]—*See* General Phonograph Corporation
 Sunshine [4]—*See* Sunshine Recording Company/Sunshine Productions and Records
 Sunshine [5]—*See* Sunshine Recording Company/Sunshine Productions and Records
 Sunshine Gospel Record—*See* Emerson Recording Laboratories, Inc./Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation
 Super Disc—*See* Super Discs

Superb—*See* Superb Record Company
 Superior [1]—*See* Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 Superior [2]—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Supertone [1]—*See* Brunswick Radio Corporation; Capitol Roll and Record Company; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Supertone [2]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies; Grey Gull Records, Inc.; Pathé Phonograph and Radio Corporation
 Supreme [1]—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Supreme [2]—*See* Supreme Records, Inc.
 Supreme Quality—*See* Electric Recording Laboratories [I]
 Swan—*See* Swan Recording Company, Inc.
 Swank—*See* Singer, Murray
 Sweet-Tone—*See* Sweet-Tone Recording Company
 Swing—*See* Swing Record Manufacturing Company
 Swing Beat—*See* Lauderdale, Jack
 Swing Time—*See* Lauderdale, Jack
 Sylvan—*See* Sylvan Records
 Symphonola—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.
 Symphony [1]—*See* International Record Company [I]; Leeds & Catlin Company
 Symphony [2]—*See* American Recording Artists / ARA Records
 Symphony Concert Record—*See* Fletcher Record Company, Inc.

T

TAC Records—*See* Modern Record Company
 Takoma—*See* Electric Recording Laboratories [I]
 Talent [1]—*See* Talent Records / Star Talent Records
 Talent [2]—*See* Grimes Music Publishers / Clef Publications
 Talking Book (children's)—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.
 Talking Books—*See* Harris Record Company / Harris Recording Laboratories
 Talk-O-Phone—*See* International Record Company [I]; Leeds & Catlin Company; Talk-O-Phone Company
 Talk-O-Photo—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Talking Photo Corporation
 Tanner—*See* Tanner Manufacturing and Distributing Company
 Tara Irish Records—*See* Tara Irish Records, Inc.
 Teagarden Presents—*See* Bradley, Richard and Associates / Tower Records
 Tech-Art—*See* Tech-Art Recordings
 Technichord—*See* Technichord Records
 Teddy Bear (children's)—*See* Lincoln Records, Inc.
 Teddy Wilson School for Pianists—*See* American Record Corporation
 Teentimer Original—*See* Apollo Records, Inc. / Apollo Music Enterprises / Rainbow Record Shop
 Tele-Record—*See* Tele-Records, Inc.
 Tempo—*See* Tempo Record Company of America
 Tempofunken—*See* Radio Transcription Company of America, Ltd.
 Tempo-Tone—*See* Tempo-Tone Recordings
 Tennessee—*See* Tennessee Records, Inc.
 Tetrazzini Record—*See* Universal Talking Machine (Manufacturing) Company
 Texas—*See* Blue Ribbon Music Company / Blue Ribbon Records
 Texstar—*See* Texstar Records
 Theme—*See* Tempo Record Company of America
 Thomas—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Thrillwood—*See* Thrillwood Records
 Time—*See* Allender Record Distributors
 Timely—*See* Timely Recording Company
 Timely Tunes—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Tin Pan Alley—*See* Tin Pan Alley Records Company
 Token—*See* Token Records, Inc.
 Tom Tom—*See* Archuleta, Manuel, Production Enterprise
 Tone-E—*See* North-American Recording Company
 Top—*See* Top Record Company / Top Records, Inc.
 Top Ten—*See* Audience Records, Inc.
 Top Tune [1]—*See* Top Tune Recordings, Inc.
 Top Tune [2]—*See* Top Tunes Company
 Topical Tempos—*See* Commodore Music Shop / Commodore Record Co., Inc.
 Tops—*See* Tops Music Enterprises / Tops Records
 Torchies from Hollywood—*See* Novelty Record Company
 Tots 'n' Teens (children's)—*See* Regal Record Corporation
 Tower—*See* Bradley, Richard and Associates / Tower Records
 Town & Country—*See* Town & Country Record Company, Inc.
 Toy Graphophone Record (children's)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Toy Time (children's)—*See* Music You Enjoy, Inc.
 Trans-Radio Productions—*See* Trans-Radio Productions

Trell—*See* Trell Records
 Tremont—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Triangle—*See* Bridgeport Die & Machine Company; New York Recording Laboratories
 Trianon—*See* Trianon Record Company
 Tri-Color—*See* Garten, Mauricio (Maurice)
 Trident—*See* Trident Records Corporation
 Trilon—*See* Trilon Record Manufacturing Company
 Tri-State—*See* Tri-State Recording Company
 Triumph [1]—*See* Domino Phonograph Corporation; Rex Talking Machine Corporation
 Triumph [2]—*See* Harris Record Company/Harris Recording Laboratories
 Triumph [3]—*See* Damon Recording Studios, Inc./Damon Transcription Laboratory and—*See* Sound Service
 Triumph [4]—*See* Triumph Records
 Trope—*See* Trope Music Publishing and Recording Company
 Trophy—*See* Trophy Record Company
 Tropical—*See* Tropical Records Corporation
 Troppe—*See* Balkan Record Company
 Tru-Blue—*See* Tru-Blue Record Company
 Tru Tone—*See* Tru Tone Productions, Inc./Tru Tone Records, Inc.
 Trumpet—*See* Diamond Record Company, Inc.
 Trutest Recording—*See* Trutest Studios
 Tune-Disk—*See* Tune-Disk Record Corporation
 Turf Derby/Motorboat Race—*See* Gala Record Company/Gala Record Corporation

U

U. H. C. A.—*See* American Record Corporation; Commodore Music Shop/Commodore Record Co., Inc.; Decca Records, Inc.
 U. S. A.—*See* Regal Record Company, Inc.
 Ultra—*See* Ultra Record Company
 Uncle Wiggly (children's)—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Unique—*See* United Masters, Inc.
 Unison—*See* Unison Records
 United [1]—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 United [2]—*See* United Sound Studios / United Sound Systems Recording Laboratories
 United Artist—*See* United Artist Records
 United H. D. & C. Record Company—*See* United Hebrew Disk and Cylinder Company/United Hebrew Record Company
 United Record Company (cylinders)—*See* United Hebrew Disk and Cylinder Company/United Hebrew Record Company
 United Society of Christian Endeavor—*See* Rodeheaver, Homer A.
 United States (cylinders)—*See* United States Phonograph Company
 Unity—*See* Unity School of Christianity; Warner, Jesse J.
 Universal [1] (Discos Electricos Universal)—*See* International Phonograph and Record Company; Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division);
 Universal [2]—*See* Universal Recording Studios/Universal Record Company
 Universal [3]—*See* Globe Distributors
 Universal [4]—*See* Universal Recording Corporation/Universal Records
 Universal (cylinders)—*See* Universal Phonograph Company
 Universal Double Feature—*See* Universal Recording Corporation/Universal Records
 Universal Talking Machine Company—*See* Universal Talking Machine (Manufacturing) Company
 Universal Zonophone—*See* Universal Talking Machine (Manufacturing) Company
 University [1]—*See* University Records Corporation
 University [2]—*See* University Recording Company, Inc.
 University Records—*See* Aeolian Company, The
 Up-to-Date—*See* Blu-Disc Record Company
 Uptown [1]—*See* Lasso Record Company
 Uptown [2]—*See* Uptown Records
 Urab [1]—*See* Urab Recording Studio (United Recording Artists Bureau)
 Urab [2]—*See* Red Bird Recordings
 Urban—*See* Urban Record Company
 U-S Everlasting (cylinders)—*See* U. S. Phonograph Company
 Usiba (Poland)—*See* Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; New York Recording Laboratories; Regal Record Company, Inc.

V

Value—*See* Value Records
 Van Dyke—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Van-Es—*See* Van-Es Recording Company
 Vanguard—*See* Vanguard Records [II]

Vargo—*See* Vargo Record Company
 Variety [1]—*See* Cameo Record Corporation
 Variety [2]—*See* Master Records [I]
 Variety [3]—*See* Variety Records, Inc.
 Varsity—*See* United States Record Corporation; Wright Record Corporation
 Varsity—Uncle Don (children's)—*See* Wright Record Corporation
 Vaughan—*See* Vaughan, James D., Publisher
 Vega—*See* Vega Records
 Vel-Tone—*See* Sequoia Recording Company
 Velvet—*See* Velvet Record Company
 Velvet Face (England)—*See* Starr Piano Company (Gennett Records Division)
 Velvet Tone—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Verne—*See* Verne Recording Corporation of America
 Verne Latino—*See* Verne Recording Corporation of America
 Victor—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division); Victor Talking Machine Company and Predecessor Companies
 Victory Record Co.—*See* Victory Record Company
 Viking—*See* Nu-Phonic Corporation
 Village—*See* Bulleit, James
 Vim—*See* International Record Company [I]; Leeds & Catlin Company
 Viola—*See* Fletcher Record Company, Inc.
 Vitacoustic—*See* Universal Recording Corporation/Universal Records; Vitacoustic Record Company/Vitacoustic Records, Inc.
 Vitanola—*See* Arto Company, The; Vitanola Talking Machine Company
 Vitaphone—*See* American Vitaphone Company
 Vitaphone (Canada)—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Vocalion—*See* Aeolian Company, The; Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company; Brunswick Record Corporation; Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.; Decca Records, Inc.
 Vocalion (England)—*See* Decca Records, Inc.
 Voco—*See* Singer, Murray
 Vod-Vil—*See* Grimes Music Publishers/Clef Publications
 Vogue [1]—*See* Hollywood Recording Company
 Vogue [2]—*See* Vogue Recordings, Inc.
 Vox [1]—*See* Vox Corporation of America
 Vox [2]—*See* Vox Productions, Inc.
 Vulcan [1]—*See* Vulcan Record Corporation
 Vulcan [2]—*See* Vulcan Records

W

W and W—*See* W and W Recordings and Distributors
 Walcutt & Leeds (cylinders)—*See* Walcutt, Miller & Company/Walcutt & Leeds/The Walcutt & Leeds Ltd.
 Waldorf—*See* Atwood, Harry G.
 Wallace Reducing Records—*See* Clark Phonograph Record Company
 Wallin's—*See* Rodeheaver, Homer A.; Wallin's Music Shop
 Wallin's Svenska Records—*See* Rodeheaver, Homer A.; Wallin's Music Shop
 Wallis Original—*See* Wallis Original Record Company
 Ward's Trail Blazer—*See* Columbia Phonograph Company and Related Companies
 Watch Tower—*See* Columbia Recording Corporation/Columbia Records, Inc.; Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
 Wax—*See* Wax Records, Inc.
 Webster—*See* Webster Records
 West Coast—*See* West Coast Recordings
 Western—*See* Western Records/Western Recording Company
 Western Magic—*See* Swing Record Manufacturing Company
 Westernair—*See* Westernair Records/Constellation Record and Distributing Company
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 Wheeling—*See* Wheeling Recording Company
 White Church—*See* Sacred Records, Inc.; White Church Recording Company/K. C. Record Company
 White Eagle—*See* Continental Record Company, Inc.
 Willida (children's)—*See* Willida Records
 Winchester—*See* Winchester Sound
 Windsor—*See* Windsor Records
 Wise—*See* Emerson Recording Laboratories, Inc./Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation
 Wisla—*See* Polonia Phonograph Company
 Witness of God—*See* New York Recording Laboratories
 Wolf—*See* Wolf Recording Company
 Wonder Record—*See* Standard Talking Machine Company (New York)
 WOR Feature—*See* WOR Electrical Recording and Transcription Services/WOR Recording
 WOR Recording—*See* WOR Electrical Recording and Transcription Services/WOR Recording

World [1]—*See* Operaphone Company, Inc./Operaphone Manufacturing Corporation; Pathé Frères Phonograph Company
 World [2]—*See* World Records, Inc.
 World (England)—*See* Consolidated Record(ing) Corporation/Consolidated Recording Laboratories/Consolidated Studio; Emerson Phonograph Company, Inc.; Emerson Recording Laboratories, Inc./Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corporation
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 World's Greatest Operas—*See* World's Greatest Music/National Committee for Music Appreciation/Music Appreciation Projects
 Worth (Australia)—*See* Cameo Record CorporationWrightman—*See* Wrightman, Neale

Y

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 Yale—*See* Yale Record Company
 Yerkes Dance Record—*See* Yerkes Recording Laboratories
 Yorkville Phonograph Shop—*See* Radio Corporation of America (RCA Victor Division)
 Youngster (children's)—*See* Grey Gull Records, Inc.
 Your Record—*See* Your Record Company

Z

Zarvah Art Record—*See* Zarvah Art Record Company
 Zest—*See* Swing Record Manufacturing Company
 Zion—*See* Bell Records, Inc.
 Zip—*See* Swing Record Manufacturing Company
 Zonophone/Zon-O-Phone—*See* Universal Talking Machine (Manufacturing) Company
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About the Publisher

Mainspring Press was launched in 1999 to provide properly documented, peer-reviewed publications covering historic sound recordings and the early American recording industry. Its authors have included John Bolig, Alex van der Tuuk, Tim Brooks, Kurt Nauck, Paul Charosh, Raymond Wile, William R. Bryant, Brian Rust, and other respected researchers. Since 2020, Mainspring Press has been an all-digital, not-for-profit publishing operation, with regularly updated discographies hosted by the University of California–Santa Barbara's DAHR project (<https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/>). Mainspring Press maintains an active website, with new content posted regularly (<https://www.mainspringpress.org>), and a free audio streaming site (<https://78-records.com>).