

HOGAN BROTHERS KNEW THADDAEUS CAHILL

by

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As a result of the March 6 article in the Holyoke Transcript, Patrick Hogan of Tampa Street, South Hadley Falls and William Hogan of Southampton Street, Holyoke have shared their recollections of Thaddaeus Cahill, inventor of the Telharmonium, an early step in the evolution of electronic music.

When he was a youth of 17, Patrick Hogan worked as a mechanic in the Cabot Street factory along with fifteen others. He describes the Telharmonium as a huge, cumbersome machine with dynamos wired to a generator connected with a cylinder controlled by an organlike keyboard. There were times, he says, when the staff worked far into the night. He recalls, too, that the telephone company received many complaints about interference while the device was being developed.

According to Patrick Hogan, one of the machines was sent to Cincinnati. Another, shipped to San Francisco, was reported to have been destroyed in the earthquake of 1906.

He recalls that the expensive invention created interest in Japan and Germany and refers to the reputed close friendship between the inventor and a leading British scientist.

"Mr. Cahill was a very fine gentleman", he ^{hears} says. "Every day he would go through the ~~he~~ shop and speak to the men in a friendly way."

William Hogan as a boy of 15 was a telegraph messenger who delivered many telegrams to the unpretentious Cahill home on the corner of Hampshire and Walnut Streets. "When I rang the doorbell and came into ~~the house~~", he writes, "the house was all wired- phonographs, wires, horns, with some noise like crackling music. " He describes the Cahills as "very fine people, like Quakers."

William Hogan mentions also the Cahill invention of night lights for baseball games, eventually sold to the United States Navy. He feels that the Cahill brothers were ahead of their time with this project, since most people worked ten hours a day with little time left for evening recreation. A baseball pitching machine, however, achieved some degree of success.

The Hogans, now 82 and 79 years of age, are keen and alert, happy to recount some of their experiences of more than sixty years ago. How fortunate was Thaddaeus Cahill to have in his circle young men like these who recognized his quality and who have not forgotten him through six intervening decades!