

INGEKOMEN 11 APR. 1983

POSTMARKED 30 MAR '83

JAMES E. PIERCE
Rt. 1, Box 966
Smithfield, Va. 23430

Boxes on this route recently
re-numbered.

Ronald Weidmann
New York University

Dear Mr. Weidmann,

Hearing from you came as quite a surprise. I recall Mrs. Hoover, of the Smithsonian, very well. In May 1974 my wife, (now deceased) along with an old friend (also now deceased) attended a "Musical Week-end" there. During one of the sessions I casually inquired of Mrs. Hoover if she had ever heard of the Telharmonium. She was greatly interested. Asked me to write her anything I could recall about it & subsequently sent me a photostat copy of an article from Mc Clure's Magazine, July 1906. You may have, or could get from Mrs. Hoover, a copy of same. It described the invention in detail & included mention of my father, Edwin Hall Pierce, who was associated with Dr. Cabell in its development & was, I believe, the first to master playing it.

I remember Dr. Cabell very well (I would have been around 9 or 10 yrs. old at the time. Now 87) One of the most vivid recollections was the Sunday afternoon that he took us all out for a ride in his 1902 Cadillac. Our first ride in this comparatively new contraption.

(over)

I recall too, my father taking us older boys to the place where the pilot model was in operation & playing it for us to hear. There too, machinists were at work cutting the teeth in the various wheels for the one subsequently set up in N. Y. City.

I have no pictures of the instrument other than those in the McChes article. I do have a few pictures of my father from around that era & some other memorabilia not specifically regarding the Telharmonium. In an attempt to get some additional material for Mrs. Hoover I wrote my elder brother, now deceased, but then living in Calif. I have a letter from him telling of the chance meeting (he was with father at the time) that led to the association with Dr. Cahill.

(A rather strange coincidence. The telephone just rang. It was your associate in Norfolk checking to verify my telephone number. There is another James Percie listed. No kin of mine. My no. is 804-357-2621.)

I don't know how much value my recollections might add to your project but surely would enjoy meeting you & have no objection to a taped interview. I am marking the date of Apr 25th on the calendar so as to avoid possible conflict.

Perhaps your Norfolk associate may drive you out here in case you are not with a car. The enclosed directions will help to locate my place.

Sincerely yours

James E. Percie