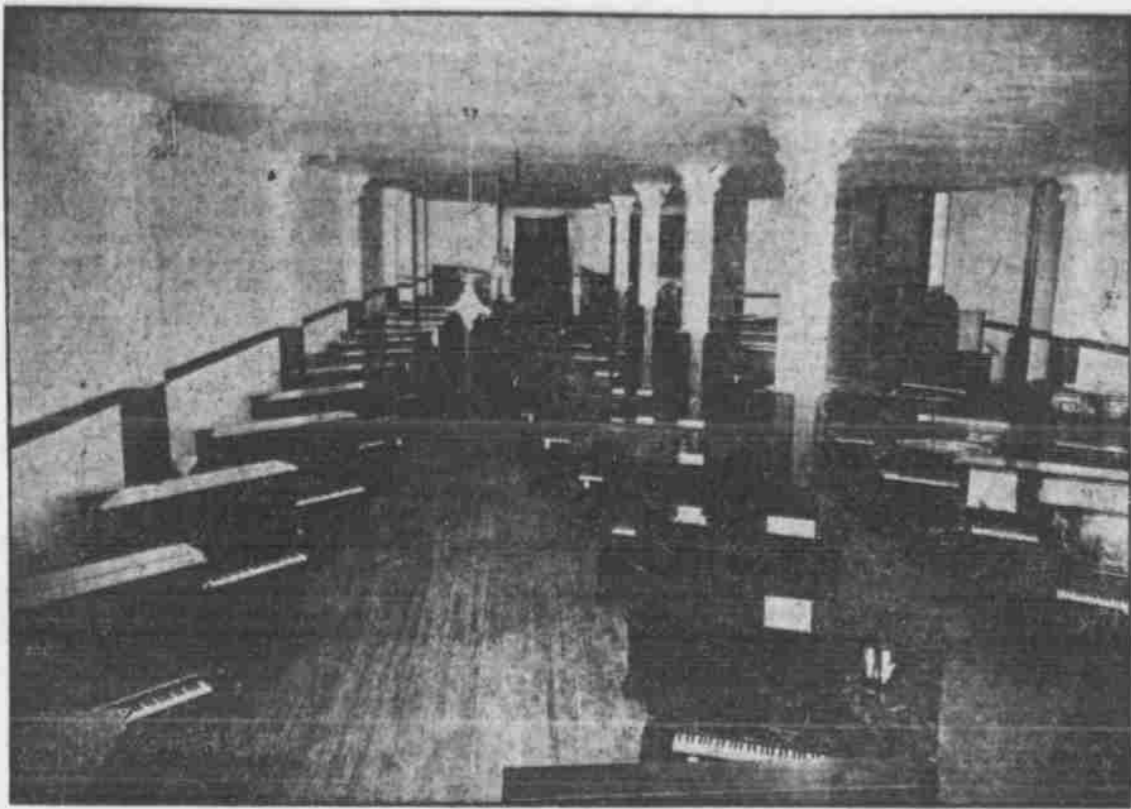


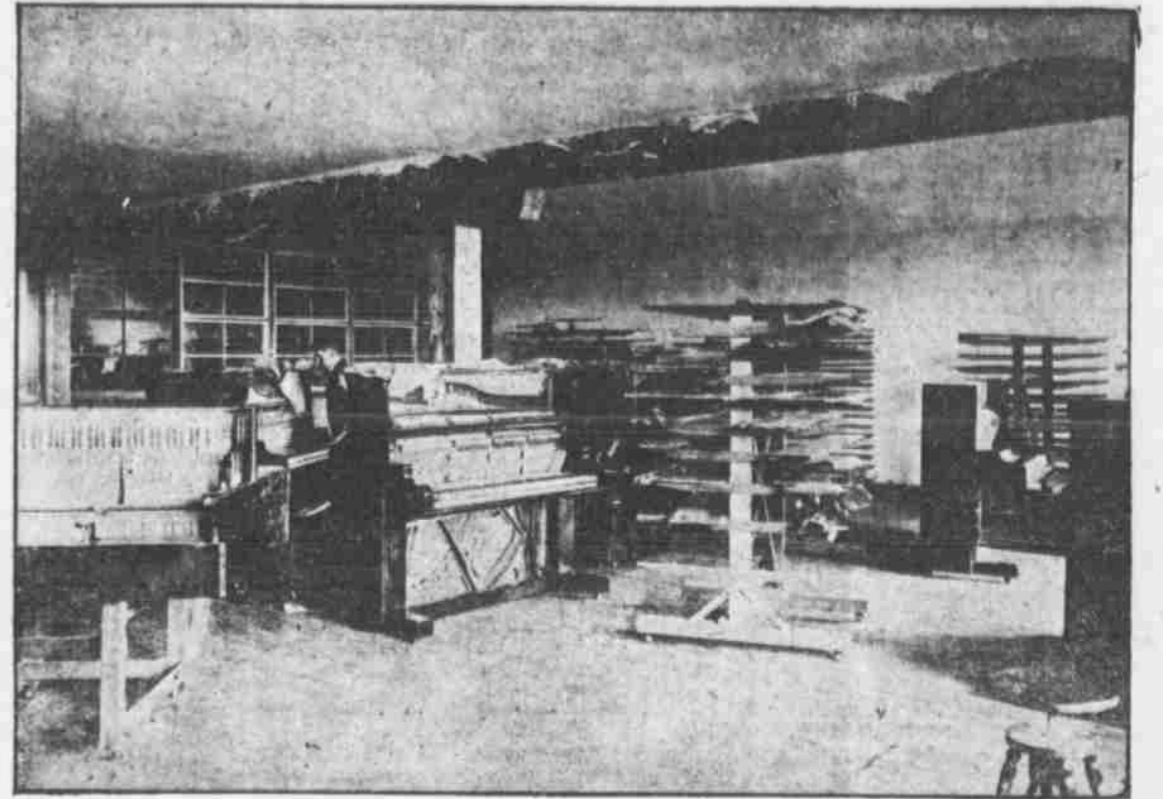
Palatial Home for the Piano Established by Enterprising Omaha Firm



ON THE MAIN FLOOR, OFFICES AT THE REAR.



SCHMOLZER & MUELLER PIANO COMPANY'S NEW HOME ON FARNAM STREET.



IN THE FACTORY—SECTION OF THE VARNISHING ROOM.

A NOTABLE event in the musical world of the west will be signalled in Omaha next Saturday, when the Schmolzer & Mueller Piano company, 1311 and 1313 Farnam street will formally throw open to the public its new salesrooms, factory and offices with receptions, concerts and souvenir distribution. It is not alone in the mere material consideration of the event that it becomes something of more than passing notice, but viewed from the standpoint of patriotic growth of nearly half a century, the opening of the Schmolzer & Mueller establishment is another indication of the great advancement of Omaha and the power of western brain and brawn. It is another object lesson in success—success attained by patient and earnest endeavor, with ability to do the things planned and an unwavering faith in the city and surrounding territory.

None can realize better what this new piano establishment really signifies than the sturdy pioneers who blazed the way half a century ago, when the arrival of the first piano or organ was an event in the little community. So when the old-timers wander through the five-story Schmolzer & Mueller building next Saturday they, more than any others, will be able to picture in their mind's eye the advance music has made in this western country, which is joining hands with the east in every line of human activity. As the younger generations will be imbued with a higher and deeper regard for music, which has added more to the sum total of human happiness than anything else.

Fruit of Much Experience.
It has taken the better part of a year to erect the building along lines suggested by years of experience and thought. The building stands on a lot 44x132 and is five stories in height, being constructed of brown pressed brick and the interior finished in the most pleasing style. The first floor is finished in a color scheme of white, and green, the decorations being in a soft shade of green, something quite new in this city. A passenger and freight elevator run between all floors. Two large windows face Farnam street, each window being capable of holding half a dozen pianos. The general salesroom and offices occupy the first floor.

The second floor is devoted to the development of music, an auditorium with a seating capacity of 500 occupying most of the floor. The auditorium has a concert stage and the chairs are of opera pattern. It is the purpose of Messrs. Schmolzer & Mueller to give the auditorium practically free of charge to local teachers who may wish to give recitals or concerts, providing no admission charge is made. At either end of the auditorium are six studio rooms. A \$2,000 vocalion will soon be placed in the auditorium. This instrument has a tone of rare sweetness and richness. This auditorium feature is of itself an interesting one. Some of the larger music houses in the east have free auditoriums, but it remained for Schmolzer & Mueller to introduce the feature to the west.

Sound Proof Parlors for Pianos.
The third floor is divided into fifteen rooms, each containing samples of the fifteen leading makes of instruments handled by the company. These parlors are elegantly arranged and are sound-proof, enabling a number of persons in different parlors to hear any particular piano. Aeolians or Pianolas at the same time without interruption. The piano parlors being the same size as an ordinary home parlor the patron is enabled to hear an instrument under conditions that are

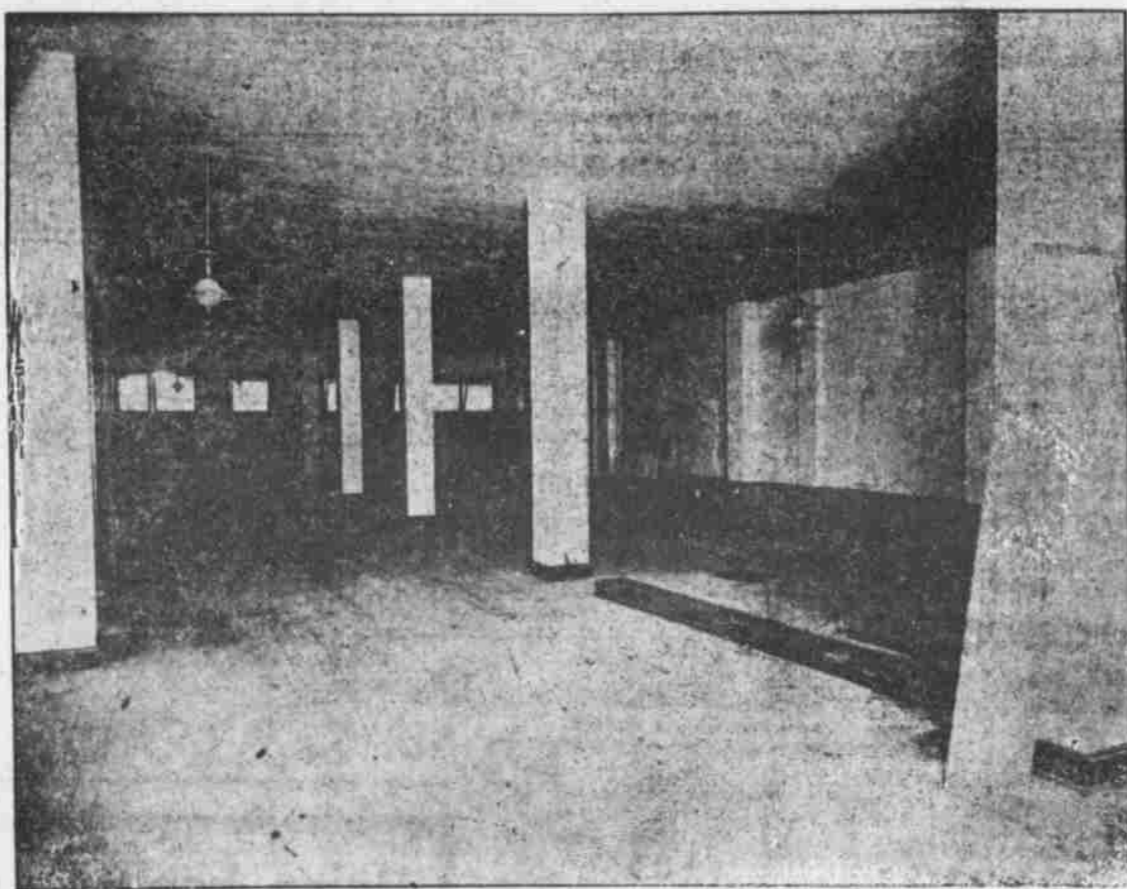
natural and can accurately judge tone qualities and make careful comparisons between fifteen celebrated makes of pianos. At first blush it might seem an expensive undertaking to devote an entire floor to such a purpose, but Mr. Schmolzer said it has been his experience that the end will justify the means.

The entire fourth floor is devoted to stock and exchange departments. On the fifth floor is the factory and finishing departments, where the Mueller piano is made. In the basement are the shipping room, storage room and steam plant. The entire building is so well lighted that stock may be shown as well in the evening as in the day. The building was arranged and erected to suit the public need—for the convenience of the buyer and for the economical handling of a large piano trade and it is the opinion of the firm that for its purpose the building is not excelled anywhere. The building has a floor space of 35,000 square

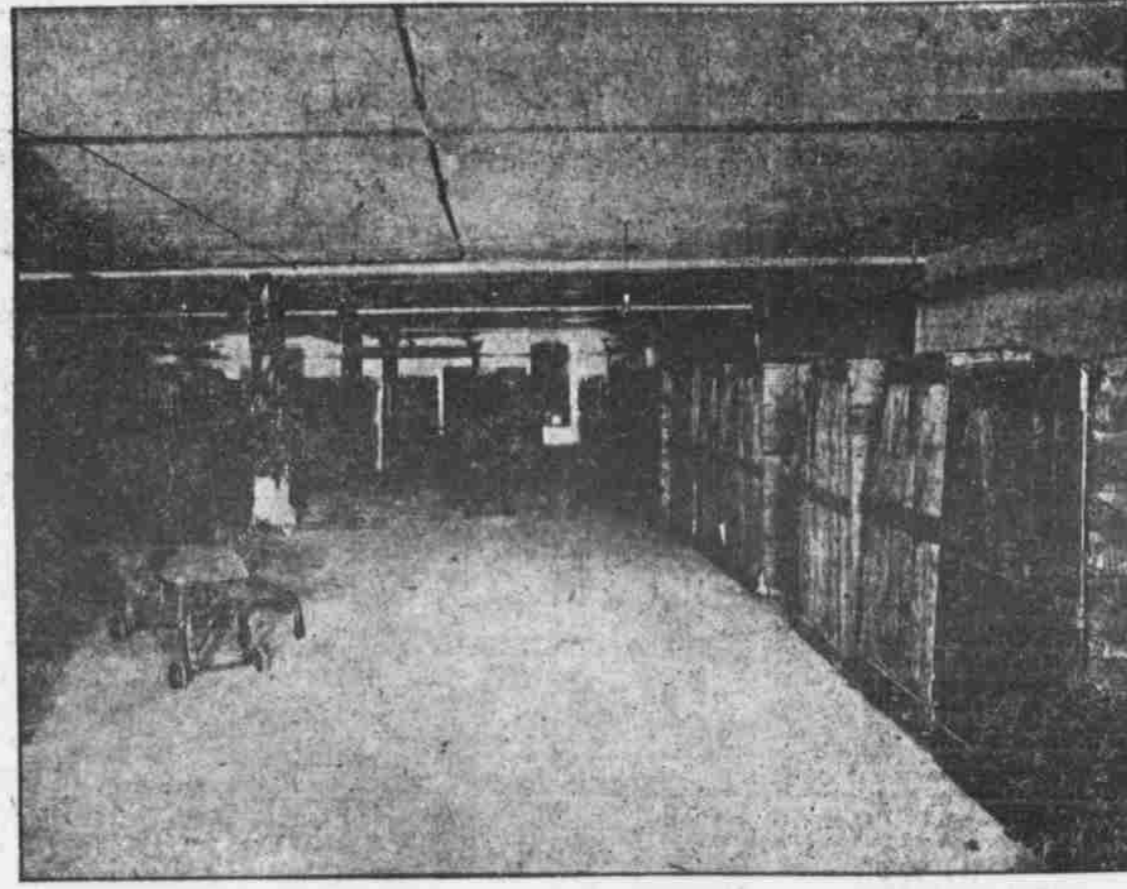
and Sioux City. The business last year amounted to nearly \$500,000.

As piano manufacturers they have learned to accurately compute the maker's cost on all purchases, an advantage which has contributed much to their success.

The piano being manufactured by this firm is known as the Mueller piano. Last year the firm turned out 400 of them. The first piano manu-



VIEW OF THE AUDITORIUM—UNFINISHED WHEN PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN.



IN THE SHIPPING DEPARTMENT.

fact, devoted entirely to the merchandising and manufacture of high grade pianos.

Growth of Firm.
The Schmolzer & Mueller Piano company has grown from a small business established by Joseph Mueller at Council Bluffs in 1859. Later he moved to Omaha and started the Mueller Piano and Organ company, which afterward became the Schmolzer & Mueller Piano company (incorporated), giving the firm the name of the oldest piano house in the middle west. Messrs. Schmolzer & Mueller believe their forty-seven years of fruitful experience in the piano trade have afforded them lessons which enable them to cater successfully to the great western trade. They figure that their large volume of trade, handled on a close margin, has an advantage over the retail piano business for the reason that in their business unusual economies are afforded in buying and selling.

The company has stores in Omaha, South Omaha, Lincoln, Council Bluffs

and in Nebraska was put on the market by this firm fifteen years ago and is in service now. That a piano would be made in Omaha some day was not thought of in the days when steamboats plied at this port.

Pianos in the Original.
In the east show window at the Schmolzer & Mueller store is shown the parts of a piano ready to be assembled. That the mass of wood, steel, wires, felt, carvings, ivory and other parts could be joined together to make an instrument which would give back the songs of the masters at the touch of a hand, seems hard to understand at first, but when the visitor makes a trip through the factory upstairs he is ushered into a new world of wonder. In the factory skilled piano makers work with the materials and from their handiwork comes beautiful instruments ready to join in the music of the world.

The Steinway piano heads the list of the many makes of high grade instruments handled by this firm. The

Steinway piano has the endorsement of many of the world's greatest artists. It has been spoken of as "The standard piano of the world." The new Steinway miniature grand piano is proving a popular little favorite wherever pianos are used. A neat compliment has been paid by the Steinway company to the Schmolzer & Mueller company in the sending of three Steinway art grand pianos to Omaha for the opening week. These instruments represent the creme de luxe in piano construction, being both works of art as well as having tones of rare richness. They represent a value of from \$2,000 to \$5,000 each.

Some Other Pianos.
Next to the Steinway the Schmolzer & Mueller company take pride in the Steger piano, which represents the ambitions of J. V. Steger, who founded the town of Steger, Illinois, now a place of several thousand inhabitants. The Steger company employs 2,800 people and sends pianos to all parts of the world. The Emerson, Hard-

stock of instruments ever before shown in a western city and be entertained with music and flowers.

Popularity of the Piano.
"The popularity of the piano is such that it is almost looked upon as a household necessity," says Mr. H. H. Rhodes, floor manager for the Schmolzer & Mueller company. "Not many years ago the piano was a luxury and found only in the homes of the well-to-do, but now it is everywhere. The millionaire and the mechanic alike have a taste for music, and this is best served by the piano. We sell to all. The man of means may want to adorn the music room of his mansion with an instrument costing as high as \$2,000, while the poor student, the shop girl for example, may not be able to pay above \$40 or \$50, but we can suit them both. The great bulk of pianos in use range in price from \$300 to \$600."

"The upright piano is the popular style, but the grand is the supreme effort in piano building. The square

made piano will endure anywhere. This is the secret of its supremacy.

How Pianos Are Abused.
"Many pianos are abused through ignorance rather than neglect and the owners wonder what is the matter, when the fault is generally due to some carelessness that might easily be obviated. Pianos are very susceptible to climatic conditions, or, rather, to atmospheric conditions. Alternations of heat and cold cause expansion and contraction of the woods and metals used in the instrument, and with varying effects, all of which are noticeable in the tone quality. The woods, of course, are more susceptible to the influence of moisture, while the metals are more easily acted upon by the changes of heat and cold. For example, we would not dare to put in tune all the pianos on this floor, and then mop the floor. The moisture would affect the tone of each and the work of attuning the instruments would have to be done all over again. We strive to keep the conditions in the

room even all the time, and the heating and scrubbing are done with the utmost care.

"I have seen pianos that had been utterly ruined in a home when the owners thought the instruments were getting the best of care. Often a piano will be placed against a wall through which the air ducts from the furnace are conducted. This nearly invariably results in a split sounding board. The heated air passes all winter through the walls, exerting a steady effect on the piano, and the sounding board is the part that suffers most. It is kiln-dried to the limit when it is placed in the instrument, and then it is fastened rigidly in position. When the further drying effect of the steadily applied heat is felt the sounding board must give somewhere, and being fast at the ends, nothing is left for it but to split. This doesn't always ruin the piano, but it does always have a bad result. It depends on the location of the split. Again, people will set a piano near a register, through which the hot air pours all winter long. This, too, has a bad effect on the instrument, and is soon noticed in the loose and rattling keys. Piano owners ought to keep these things in mind and not expose the delicate mechanism to too great strain from heat, cold or moisture.

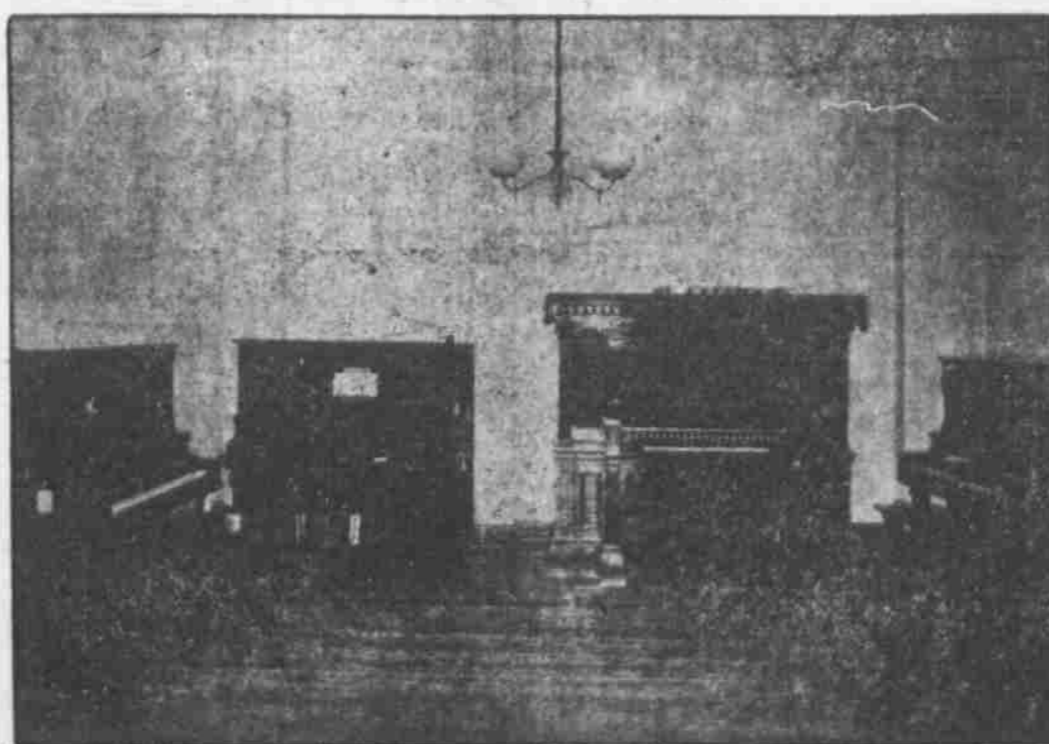
Material for Pianos.
"No material for pianos is to be had in Omaha. Only the best and most expensive of woods are used, and all the metals are prepared especially for pianos, so we are compelled to buy all our stock for manufacturing in the east. Our hardwood for cases and backs comes from Michigan. We use Michigan maple and oak for this purpose, and for the posts and pin blocks. The pin blocks are made from rock maple, several layers being glued together with the grain crossed so as to absolutely prevent splitting. The finer woods used for decorative cases, such as walnuts and mahoganies, are all imported. They are supplied to us from the importers direct. These have their headquarters in the east, although in Cincinnati are found the headquarters of the importers of some of the most expensive of piano woods. Piano lumber is the most costly known for it must be selected with the utmost care and be handled with the greatest skill in order to produce the perfection demanded for the instrument. No wood for any other purpose is so expensive in either quality or seasoning.

"The sounding boards are made from Vermont spruce, selected for the purpose. This is the best wood ever discovered for the use. It has the most resonance and is most desirable in other regards. The same quality that enters into the top of the violin is used for the sounding board of the piano.

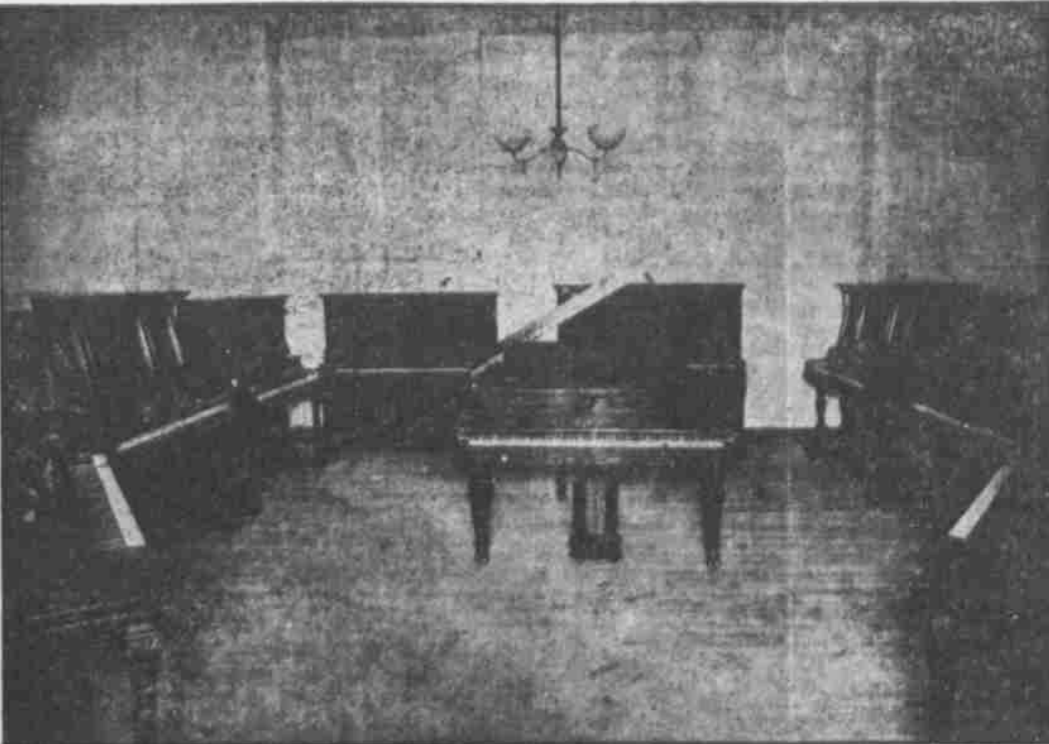
Workmen of Great Skill.
"In making a piano great skill is required of the workman. It might seem to the uninitiated that a cabinet maker of ordinary skill could make a piano, but such is not the case. We find that a good cabinet maker, whose skill has been demonstrated in that line of work, has to learn the business when he comes to work in a piano factory. The processes are very different and a much better grade of work is necessary. The piano maker must not only understand the working of wood in the highest degree, but he must have a further knowledge of strength, tension and acoustics, all of which are essential in the piano. These men are the kings of their craft, just as the piano is the king of modern music."



A STEINWAY PARLOR.



A PIANOLA PARLOR.



A STEGER PARLOR.