



AMICA International

Automatic Musical Instrument Collectors' Association

AMICA Articles

If you'd like to see some orchestrions (also known as nickelodeons, because it commonly cost a nickel to play them) like the one your great-grandparents might have enjoyed at their local watering hole:

An orchestrion

Orchestrions are the one-man-bands of the automatic music world. They are player pianos, with other musical instruments built in, and everything plays automatically. These instruments were once a common feature of public gathering places such as bars and cafes.



Photo and Instrument: Don Teach Shreveport, LA

Stained glass

Stained glass ornamentation such as this is a feature of many orchestrions.



Photo and Instrument: Don Teach Shreveport, LA

Coin-operated

Many orchestrions were coin-operated, the forerunners of the jukebox. When the price was a nickel a play, they began to be called nickelodeons, a name also used for movie house, and later, jukeboxes.



Photo and Instrument: Courtesy of Debence Antique Music World

Peek inside

Here's a peek of the works inside an orchestrion. A particularly interesting feature of this one is the loose loop of punched paper - the holes

