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# The Meachams, Musical Instrument Makers of Hartford and Albany

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THE many kinds of musical instruments made in the shop of George Catlin in Hartford, Connecticut, during the first decade of the nineteenth century provided excellent training and experience for several American makers. One of the young men associated with Catlin was John Meacham, Jr., who, with his younger brother Horace, established a successful business in Albany, New York. A number of interesting musical instruments bearing the marks "Meacham," "J. Meacham," "J. & H. Meacham," "Meacham & Compy," or "Meacham & Pond" are found in American collections. Unfortunately, the promise of these young musical instrument makers was never fully realized. Because of the location of their business, the War of 1812, and changing social and commercial conditions, their success was more a result of dealing in hardware and military goods than as skilled makers of musical instruments.

John and Horace Meacham were not recent immigrants with skills brought from Europe. Their family can be found for at least five generations in Salem, Massachusetts, and Enfield, Connecticut. Both were born at Enfield—John on May 2, 1785, and Horace on July 19, 1789.<sup>1</sup> The census of 1800 shows them living with the family at Enfield at that time. Their father, John Meacham, Sr., had already purchased property in Hartford in 1796, however,<sup>2</sup> and by 1798 a house and barn had been built there. Shortly after 1800 the family must have moved to Hartford.

1. Ida Meacham, "A Line of Meacham Descent," *Genealogy*, vol. 2, no. 15 (October 12, 1912): 322.

2. Hartford County, Connecticut, deed records, vol. 20, p. 131, and vol. 21, p. 366.



FIGURE 1. Oboe, "J. Meacham Jr., Hartford," ca. 1808. Photograph courtesy of the New York State Parks and Recreation Department.

The first evidence of the activity of John Meacham, Jr., in Hartford is a record of his purchase from George Catlin of a building "lately occupied by the grantor as a workshop" on July 20, 1807, for \$86.<sup>3</sup> His talent as a merchant rather than an artisan was already apparent, since he sold the same building four days later for \$130.<sup>4</sup> Meacham is also listed first among four associates of George Catlin in another real estate transaction the next year.<sup>5</sup> Although specific documentation is lacking, it is thought by this writer that John Meacham, Jr., worked with Catlin for several years, perhaps serving an apprenticeship with him as early as 1802. Catlin advertised for help in the January 4 *Connecticut Courant* of that year. It is not known if Horace also worked with Catlin or learned the trade from his brother, John.

Probably in 1806 or 1807 John began to make instruments on his own. We are fortunate in that two of these early instruments signed "J. Meacham Jr., Hartford" have survived. The first to be considered is a two-key boxwood and ivory oboe from the Letchworth State Park Pioneer and Indian Museum near Castile, New York (fig. 1). This is the earliest American-made oboe found so far. It clearly shows English ancestry, for it is almost identical to an oboe by Kusder, London, at the Horniman Museum illustrated by Anthony Baines in *European and American Musical Instruments*.<sup>6</sup> American bands

3. Hartford deed records, vol. 26, p. 315.

4. Hartford deed records, vol. 26, p. 319.

5. Hartford deed records, vol. 26, p. 506, and vol. 29, p. 33.

6. (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), no. 552.

tended to replace their oboes with clarinets during the early nineteenth century, so very few of the former were made. Although several makers are known to have advertised oboes or "hautboys" before the second quarter of the nineteenth century,<sup>7</sup> this instrument is the only known example from that time. It is 57.7 cm. long, and the bell without the ivory ring measures 5.2 cm. in diameter. Its shape is graceful, and its keys are nicely finished. It is unfortunate that the bell ivory is missing.

Another instrument from this period is a bassoon found by Mr. Richard Lottridge of Madison, Wisconsin. This instrument is in excellent condition and is complete with its original bocal. It is of proper dimensions, well proportioned, and has four brass keys. Three key flaps are of the unusual spade shape peculiar to the Catlin shop. The fingerholes are of fairly uniform size, the middle hole for the left hand being slightly larger and the third hole for the right hand slightly smaller than the rest. The shape of the wing is angular with sharp corners, and the bell section, rather surprisingly, has no flare at all. It gradually tapers from 30.4 mm. to 25 mm. throughout its length (fig. 2).

By 1810 it was probably evident that Hartford could not support every musical instrument maker trained by George Catlin, and over the next few years several of these young men sought opportunities elsewhere. The reasons for the Meachams' eventual choice of Albany are not known, but certainly the capital of New York State with river connections to the major port of New York City, and talk of canals north and west, could not have discouraged them. Albany had been much in the news because of Fulton's steamboat and the completion of new state capitol and city hall buildings.

Although the populations of Hartford and Albany were about equal in 1800 (5,347 to 5,289), Albany began to grow much faster and finished the decade at 9,356, compared with Hartford's 6,003. J. Munsell complained in the *Annals of Albany* that in 1809 Albany had

7. American makers advertising oboes or hautboys before 1825 include the following: Gottlieb Wolhaupter, *New York Gazette*, November 16, 1761 (Rita S. Gottesman, *The Arts and Crafts in New York*, vol. 1, 1726-1776 [New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1936], pp. 367-68); David Wolhaupter, *New York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury*, June 18, 1770 (Gottesman, p. 367); George Catlin, *Connecticut Courant*, June 23, 1800; Louis Alexander Peloubet, *Albany Register*, November 30, 1810; and Harley Hosford, *Albany Register*, May 21, 1813.



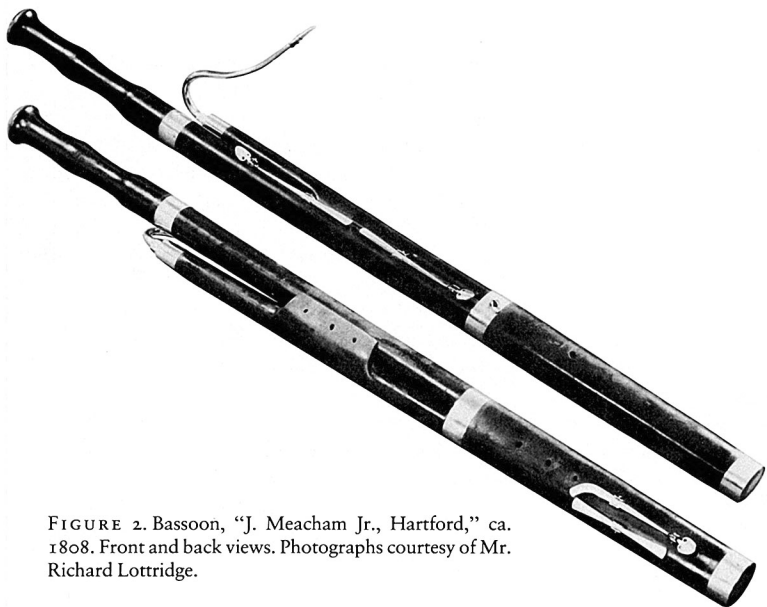


FIGURE 2. Bassoon, "J. Meacham Jr., Hartford," ca. 1808. Front and back views. Photographs courtesy of Mr. Richard Lottridge.

265 taverns and grogeries to 7,500 people.<sup>8</sup> This was a ratio even higher than that of New York City, indicating the bustling transportation hub that Albany was becoming.

John Meacham, Jr., remained in Hartford at least through part of 1810, as he and his family appear on the Hartford census for that year. Horace may have remained at least until spring of 1811, for a son, Roswell S., was probably born in Hartford on December 5, 1810;<sup>9</sup> and on March 14, 1811, Horace's wife, Sarah, inherited and sold some property from her grandfather.<sup>10</sup> It is possible that John went ahead to Albany in the summer of 1810 and that Horace

8. J. Munsell, *Annals of Albany* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1856), vol. 5, p. 22.

9. A birth record was not found, but Murray D. Smith, President of the Williamstown House of Local History, Williamstown, Massachusetts, where Roswell lived the last twenty-nine years of his life, writes in a letter of May 26, 1978: "such records as we have show that Mr. Meacham was born in Hartford, Connecticut."

10. Hartford deed records, vol. 32, p. 36.

followed the next year. In any case, the Meacham business in Albany could not have begun until late in 1810 and probably was not established until some time in 1811.

The Meachams were not without competition in Albany. Throughout the winter of 1810–11 Louis Alexander Peloubet advertised clarinets, hautboys, flutes, fifes, and bassoons; and in the first city directory of 1813 Harley Hosford is listed as a musical instrument maker just across the street from the Meachams. By 1814 Fred Hofmeister also advertised as an instrument repairer.

Musical activities in Albany during this period were somewhat sparse as reported in the newspapers, but several concerts were advertised offering vocal and instrumental music. On August 10, 1810, clarinet, violin, flute, and piano solos were mentioned;<sup>11</sup> in July and August of 1812 there were concerts at the Eagle Tavern including flute, violin, and vocal solos, and an overture, symphony, and march by full band;<sup>12</sup> and during the summer of 1813 a Mr. Mallet offered instruction on the pianoforte, harp, guitar, violin, tenor, and cello.<sup>13</sup>

In 1812 the first building used specifically for a theater was built, and it opened its first season on January 18, 1813.<sup>14</sup> A wide variety of other types of entertainment thrived in Albany, including such unusual diversions as the following, noted in the *Albany Register* of February 26, 1811: "Nitrous Oxide—chemical lecture. A large quantity will be prepared for the purpose of exhibiting its exhilarating effects . . . tickets 50¢"

The Meachams and other firms contemplating the business prospects in Albany needed no laughing gas to produce exhilarating effects. Already, improved water routes to Lakes Ontario and Champlain offered considerable trading prospects. The Hudson River was served by rapid and regular steamboat traffic, and in March of 1811 a state board of commissioners reported that a canal westward to Lake Erie was entirely feasible. The trading possibilities at Albany went far beyond local activities and interests.

11. *Albany Register*, August 10, 1810.

12. *Albany Register*, July 21, August 21, 1812.

13. *Albany Argus*, July 16, 1813.

14. Arthur James Weise, *The History of the City of Albany, New York* (Albany: E. H. Bender, 1884), p. 441.

The first advertisement placed in the newspapers by the new firm of J. & H. Meacham shows how well they understood these trading possibilities. One is not quite prepared for the jump in magnitude from the usual single craftsman's shop, as operated by all the other known musical instrument makers of this time in America, to a business offering instruments by the hundreds. The following two advertisements from the summer of 1813 show this contrast: first the ordinary sort of ad by Harley Hosford, and then the Meachams' first ad.

*Albany Register*, May 21, 1813:

Musical Instruments—H. Hosford, musical instrument maker, No. 97 State Street, two doors east of the Episcopal Church, manufactures and keeps constantly for sale, a large variety of musical instruments, among which are: clarinets, bassoons, flutes, bugle horns, fifes, cymbals, drums, violins, haut-boys, bassoon reeds, clarinet reeds, fiddle strings, etc. warranted equal to any of English manufacture. Bands supplied at the shortest notice and on reasonable terms.

Albany, May 17, 1813

*Albany Register*, July 30, 1813:

Albany Music Store. J. & H. Meacham respectfully inform the citizens and country at large that they still continue to manufacture musical instruments as usual on an extensive scale (at their stand in State St., No. 80). Bands of music from the country may be completely furnished with several different kinds of instruments the work of which will be warranted equal to any imported instruments. If any one should prove incorrect, it shall be considered as returnable. They have received of late, and have for sale:

300 best German violins  
150 bundles Italian violin strings  
4 gross bassoon reeds  
600 walking canes  
100 military drums  
300 field fifes  
200 German flutes &c. &c.

Albany, January 12, 1813

J. & H. Meacham were definitely after a broader market than that found in the city of Albany, and they probably came there because of the prospect that Albany would become a major trading center of New York State.

A few instruments which appear to be among the earliest made in Albany are signed "Meacham/Albany" or "J. Meacham/Albany." This would support the possibility that John came first, followed by Horace a few months or a year or two later. It may be that the 1813 directory entry and the advertisement placed in January of 1813 mark the arrival of Horace. The "J. Meacham" and "Meacham" instruments would then date from 1811 or 1812, before his arrival. Since John Meacham's father remained in Hartford, the identification "Jr." was no longer used.

Three instruments have been examined from the earliest period in Albany: a four-key bassoon, a one-key flute, and a five-key clarinet. The bassoon, now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, is very similar to the earlier Hartford example except that it has a flared bell. The flute, at Yale University, is of boxwood with ivory ferrules and a square block-mounted brass key (fig. 3). The clarinet, from the Allanson collection, is in C and is made of similar materials with five square keys mounted in blocks (fig. 4).

The war of 1812 was finally over early in 1815. It had slowed commerce for a time and delayed the planning for the Erie Canal, but the Meachams seem to have done fairly well during this period. Supplying instruments for military bands may even have improved their business, for in 1814 they purchased property at the corner of Lodge and State Streets for \$7,000.<sup>15</sup> It appears that this was already the location of their shop and that they merely purchased property they had been renting. No change occurred in their address. In 1814 they also began advertising pianos. The following appeared in the *Albany Register*, August 30, 1814.

#### Piano Fortes

The subscribers have received, of their selection, the following pianos viz:

- 4 from the factory of Geib & Son
- 3 from the factory of Kearsing & Son
- 3 of Broadwood and Sons from London
- 2 from a factory in Boston

Prices from 200-450 dollars; also a selection of piano music. J. & H. Meacham.

15. Albany County, New York, deed records, vol. 23, p. 232.

FIGURE 4. Clarinet in C, "J. Meacham, Albany," 1810-13. Photograph courtesy of Mr. Clifford Allanson.

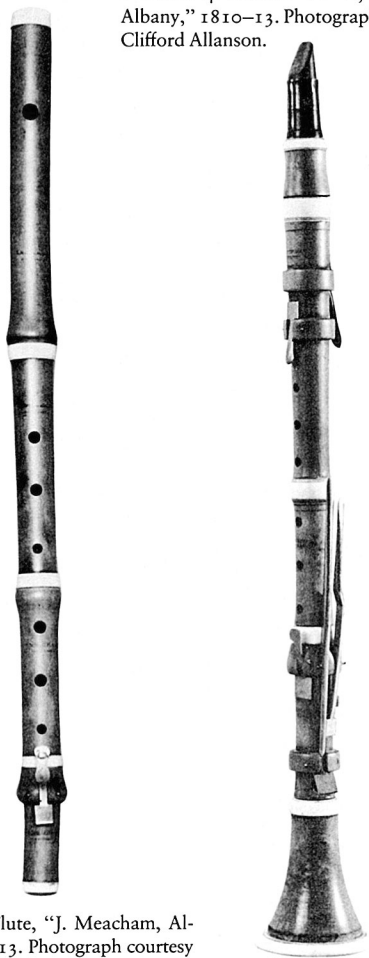


FIGURE 3. Flute, "J. Meacham, Albany," 1810-13. Photograph courtesy of the Yale University Collection of Musical Instruments.

The years 1815–20 were difficult ones for manufacturers in the United States, and significant changes occurred in the business of J. & H. Meacham. Up until 1815, and, in fact, dating back to the embargo which began in 1808, trouble with England, European wars, and the War of 1812 had restricted trade and encouraged American manufacturing. The Meachams' success must have come at least in part from this advantage. At the same time it became to some extent their undoing. Without the fertilization of ideas and developments which had occurred in Europe, the Meachams continued making one-key flutes, five-key clarinets, and four-key bassoons very much like those of the late eighteenth century. It was not until Sylvanus Pond became a partner in 1828 that they began to offer instruments with more advanced key mechanism. When, in 1815, imported instruments were again available, the Meachams probably found themselves outdated as well as undersold. The new tariff law of 1816 was of some help in regulating competition from abroad,<sup>16</sup> but soon after its effects were felt, the Panic of 1819 slowed American business and commerce.<sup>17</sup>

Although manufacturing became less profitable after the war, trading became more profitable. Europe, recovering from long years of war, needed American raw materials; and America, after years of restricted trade, was in the market for manufactured goods. Legislation authorizing the Erie Canal was passed in 1817, and construction began almost immediately. The Meachams, situated astride actual as well as proposed transportation routes, gradually became dealers more than manufacturers. It was simply more profitable to trade in large volume than to manufacture.

Very little evidence of the Meachams' activities was recorded during these years of change. Their directory listing continued as "musical instrument makers," but no advertisements were printed in the Albany newspapers until May of 1821, when the following appeared in the *Albany Argus*.

16. *United States Statutes at Large*, vol. 3, p. 310.

17. Dumas Malone, *Empire for Liberty* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1960), p. 416.

## Military Goods

J. & H. Meacham have just received an elegant assortment of military goods, among which are a great variety of officers' swords, gilt, plated and steel scabbards, very superior artillery and cavalry swords; horseman and pocket pistols, muskets, rifles, fowling pieces, sword belts, cap plates, red, white and black feathers and plumes, a great variety of military buttons, epaulettes, and all kinds of goods in the military line.

Companies completely equipped on the shortest notice, all kinds of country produce received in payment.

Albany, May 11, 1821

Another ad placed in the *Albany Argus* in the next year (May 7, 1822) gave a more balanced view of the business. In addition to a similar amount of military goods, this ad included the following:

Also common and patented six-keyed bugles, double bass drums with the bust of Washington in the center and all other kinds of drums; plain, eagle and ornamental painting, and all instruments for martial and bands of music; all of which are warranted and will be sold for cash or approved credit, at the New York prices.

Also pianos and an elegant organized piano forte. All orders promptly executed.

Thus, J. & H. Meacham had become dealers in military goods although they continued to manufacture and sell musical instruments as well. With the war over, military goods would not seem to have had much of a market, but New York continued to have an active militia. Under the Militia Act of 1792 every free, able-bodied, white male citizen between the ages of 18 and 45 was to be enrolled by the commanding officer in his area. In 1823 the enrolled militia in New York State numbered 146,709.<sup>18</sup> Arsenals were located at New York, Albany, Whitehall, Plattsburgh, Elizabethtown, Rome, and half a dozen other towns, most of which were on or near waterways linked to Albany.<sup>19</sup> Decked out in the old world finery Meacham was selling, these frontier militia units must have been something to see.

Known instruments signed "J. & H. Meacham, Albany" include a beautifully made boxwood and ivory flute and a matching piccolo in

18. F. S. Eastman, *A History of the State of New York* (New York: Augustus K. White, 1831), pp. 363-64.

19. Eastman, p. 364.

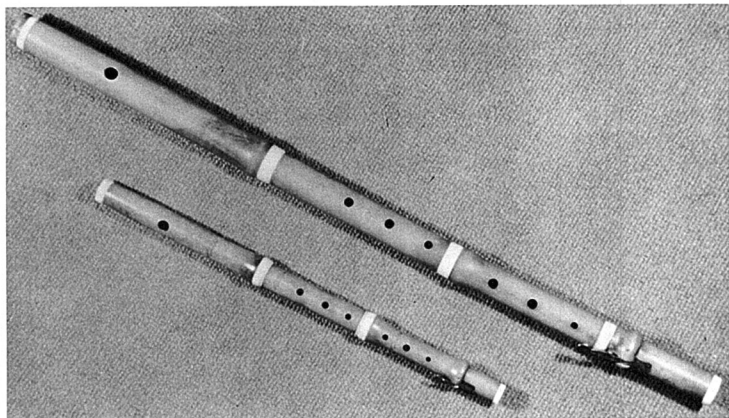


FIGURE 5. Flute and Piccolo, "J. & H. Meacham, Albany," 1813-27. Photograph courtesy of the Music Division, Library of Congress.

the Dayton C. Miller collection. Each has one square, block-mounted brass key, and both show an interesting feature of Meacham flutes. The knob left for mounting the D-sharp key is cut back on the lower side, giving what is called a "chair leg" shape instead of the usual more symmetrical design. George Catlin's flutes also have this feature. Two other similar flutes, one with a silver key, are in private collections. These instruments probably date from between 1813 and 1827 (fig. 5). A drum signed "J. & H. Meacham" is at the Maryland Historical Society.

Also known are four clarinets and a couple of flutes signed "Meacham & Compy/Albany" which were probably made in 1827 and 1828, although they may date from 1833 (the year in which Roswell S. Meacham took over the business) to 1836. Since they are five-key clarinets and one-key flutes, however, 1827-28 seems most likely.

A clarinet signed "Meacham & Compy, Albany" from the Allanson collection is no different from the clarinet mentioned earlier. It is in C, made of boxwood with ivory ferrules, and has five flat, square



brass keys mounted in blocks. It is 54 cm. in length excluding the mouthpiece and has a bell 7.4 cm in diameter. A clarinet in B flat matching this instrument is in the collection of Fred Benkovic (fig. 6).

Steamboat travel on the Hudson had improved until, by the early 1820s, four trips per week were scheduled to New York and back. In 1821 the steamboat *Chancellor* offered the innovation of a band of music aboard for the delectation of its passengers.<sup>20</sup> By 1822 cotillions (dances) as well as concerts were common. By October of 1823 the Erie Canal was open from Albany all the way to Brockport, about twenty miles west of Rochester, and in October of 1825 it was completed.

Possibly in anticipation of increased canal business, the Meachams purchased a hardware business on April 21, 1825, from Henry W. Delavan for \$18,000. Delavan had operated a hardware business at this address for many years. The Meachams were not successful in hardware, and this branch of their business was listed in the directories for 1827 only. The following advertisement from the *Albany Argus*, April 24, 1827, indicates that there was a third partner.

Notice—the subscribers have formed a co-partnership and will transact business under the firm of J. & H. Meacham & Co. at the store formerly occupied by Messrs. Henry W. Delavan & Co., 391 Market Street, John & Horace Meacham, Edw'd Corning.

J. & H. Meacham & Co. have received by late arrivals from England and France, a large assortment of hardware, saddlery, and military goods, which they offer for sale for cash or approved credit.

Albany, April 14

The Dibblee & Brown Collection at the Albany Institute of History and Art includes daybooks of several of the steamers and canal boats working on the canals and on the Hudson River. The cargo lists in these daybooks show only one entry for J. & H. Meacham. In April of 1825, on its second trip of the season, the sloop *Canal* brought six tons of wood up from New York for the Meachams. The shipping cost was \$12.72. Whether this was a shipment of imported woods for musical instruments or supplies for the Meachams' new hardware store is not known.

20. Cuyler Reynolds, compiler, *The Albany Chronicle—A History of the City Arranged Chronologically* (Albany: J. B. Lyon & Co., 1906), p. 434.

FIGURE 7. Flute, "Meacham & Pond, Albany," 1828-32. Photograph courtesy of the Henry Ford Museum.

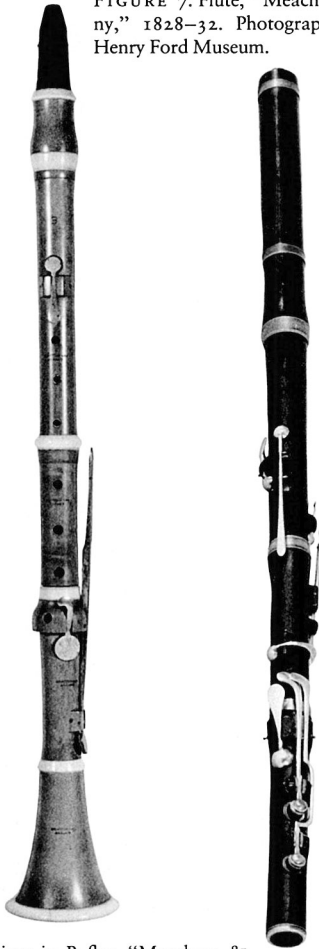


FIGURE 6. Clarinet in B flat, "Meacham & Co., Albany," 1827-28. Photograph courtesy of Mr. Fred Benkovic.

Although Daniel Spillane suggests that Sylvanus B. Pond (1792–1871) became a partner of the Meachams in 1825,<sup>21</sup> city directory and newspaper advertisements indicate that this partnership was not formed until 1828 and that from 1825 through 1827 the Meachams and Pond were in direct competition. Pond is listed in the directories beginning in 1819. From 1825 until 1827 he had a “military and music store” at 38 State, just down the street from the Meachams’ own “military and music store” at 84 State. The following advertisement from the *Albany Argus*, May 3, 1825, marks the opening of Pond’s Store.

New Military and Music Store

S. B. Pond

No. 38 State St., Albany

Is now opening and intends to keep constantly on hand a general assortment of choice military goods of fresh importation and the most modern patterns. Also an assortment of musical instruments together with a supply of music, blank music books and paper, Italian and English violin strings, canes, &c. Also an assortment of sportsmen’s ware consisting of rifles, English fowling pieces, powder flasks and horns, shot and ball pouches, game bags, fishing tackle, &c.

The above articles will be disposed of on the most accommodating terms, and the subscriber hopes to merit (as well as receive) the accomplishment of the many pledges which have been made him in view of his present undertaking.

Albany, May 3, 1825

No announcement of the beginning of the partnership of the Meachams and Pond has been found. Through July 24 of 1828, however, regular advertisements were placed in the *Albany Argus* by J. & H. Meacham, and beginning on October 11 similar advertisements appear, signed Meacham & Pond. The following is the earliest of these.

Gun Locks—150 doz. gun locks of assorted qualities, received by the latest importations, and for sale by Meacham & Pond, 84 State St.

Albany, October 10, 1828

Evidently the partnership was formed in the early fall of 1828 and continued until 1832. By 1833 Pond had moved to New York City,

21. Daniel Spillane, *History of the American Pianoforte* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), p. 138.

but during his years with the Meachams the musical side of their business improved. Pond was for many years president of the Albany Sacred Music Society and also foreman of the Volunteer Fire Engine Company No. 1. He ran for sheriff of Albany County on the Anti-Masonic ticket in 1829, but lost. He became well known as a composer of religious music after moving to New York in 1833.

With Pond's influence, and possibly with his capital as well, Meacham and Pond set up a piano manufactory which began operation in 1829. The following advertisement from the *Albany Argus*, December 5, 1829, announces the beginning of production.

Piano Forte Manufactory—The subscribers have recently employed a first rate piano forte maker from the manufactory of Broadwood & Sons, London, to superintend the above branch of their business, and are prepared to execute orders for grand, cabinet, harmonic, cottage and horizontal pianos.

They are now setting up several, and will finish them to suit the taste of the purchasers. They will warrant their instruments to be equal in tone, finish and durability to any of European manufacture. Ladies and gentlemen wishing to purchase will please leave their orders. Prices low and terms liberal.

On hand, for sale or hire, several first and second rate pianos. Also finishing a fine parlor organ, with book case and silk frame doors.

Piano fortes repaired and tuned on short notice.

Meacham & Pond, 84 State St.  
Albany, November 10, 1829

It is not known who the piano maker from Broadwood was, but also in 1829 or 1830 John Osborn, accomplished Boston piano maker, joined the firm. He appears in the city directories of 1831-32. His entry of 1832-33, however, suggests that he may have formed his own Albany firm under the name of Osborn and King after only a short time with Meacham & Pond.

Another improvement in the musical side of the Meacham & Pond business was the offering of more up-to-date woodwind instruments and possibly even a few brasses. The Meachams may have begun making or retailing these instruments even before Pond joined them. A letter, dated October 18, 1827, written by Edwin Sturdivent to his brother, Cullen F. Sturdivent, indicates that such instruments were available in Albany at that time. Edwin, a West Point Military Academy cadet who had passed through Albany on maneuvers, wrote:

“While in Albany I bought me a very fine flute 8 key’d (silver) for fifteen dollars the cheapest I think that I ever saw.”<sup>22</sup> But Sturdivent did not mention the Meachams, and the only known surviving instruments signed “Meacham,” “J. Meacham,” “J. & H. Meacham,” and “Meacham & Compy” are woodwinds with very simple key mechanisms. Instruments signed “Meacham & Pond,” however, include several six- and eight-key flutes and one very interesting key bugle.

The Henry Ford Museum has a cocus flute with pewter ferrules and eight silver keys that is typical of instruments sold by Meacham & Pond between 1828 and 1832. The keys are mounted in blocks, and the lower two are plug-type keys of the kind patented by Richard Potter of London in 1785. This instrument also has a metal-lined head and an adjustable stopper. It is much better in quality than earlier instruments made by the Meachams, with all of the improvements generally accepted by first-rate players of that time (fig. 7).

Also among the Henry Ford Museum’s collections is a key bugle with the interesting inscription “Meacham & Pond / Albany / for / J. D. Sheppard / Buffalo.” Sheppard opened a music store at Buffalo in 1828 and evidently purchased this instrument from Meacham & Pond. It was a common practice for retailers to purchase unmarked instruments and put their own name on them, but much less common to identify the source as well as the sales outlet. Since Meacham & Pond are not known to have made brasses, this bugle may well have been imported from yet another firm. If it was made in the United States, it is certainly one of the earliest American key bugles known. Its design, however, suggests European manufacture or possibly a European craftsman working here. The body of the instrument is of copper with brass trim and eight brass keys. It is in B flat and has its “pigtail” crook and what appears to be an original or at least contemporary mouthpiece (fig. 8).

The years 1831 and 1832 were notable ones in Albany for a number of widely divergent reasons, some of which had directly to do with Meacham & Pond. The Dewitt Clinton locomotive was tested and sent on its grand opening excursion in 1831. It opened a new era

22. Letter, Sturdivent to Sturdivent, October 18, 1827. Henry Ford Museum Bicentennial Collection, Dearborn, Michigan.



FIGURE 8. Key Bugle, "Meacham & Pond, Albany, for J. D. Sheppard, Buffalo," 1828-32. Photograph courtesy of the Henry Ford Museum.

of transportation even more important than the Erie Canal completed only six years earlier.

In the area of historic preservation, the restoration of the "Gansevoort drum" was completed by Meacham & Pond at a cost of \$17.46. A brass plate was also engraved with the history of the drum by the same firm for an additional \$9.18 in preparation for its display in the State House.<sup>23</sup> The inscription on the drum reads:

This drum was presented by Peter Gansevoort of the City of Albany, Counsellor at Law[,] to the Albany Republican Artillery Company on the 22nd, February 1832. This drum was taken from the enemy on the 22nd, August 1777 when the British Army under General St. Leger, raised the Siege of Fort Stanwix which fortress had been valiantly defended by the Garrison under the Command of Colonel Peter Gansevoort for 21 days.

John Iggett, Corporal  
Charles Sears, 2nd. Lieutenant  
John F. Strain, 1st. Lieutenant

23. Bill to Peter Gansevoort from Meacham & Pond. Manuscript 349, Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany, New York.

Curious as it may seem, with musical instrument makers and dealers in town since 1810, the first known band in Albany was organized by John Hughes in September of 1832.<sup>24</sup> It is ironic that John and Horace Meacham retired in that same year. Perhaps the organization of the band realized their twenty-year dream and left nothing more to work for. In any case, Roswell S. Meacham, son of Horace, took over the business in 1833. The following advertisement from the *Albany Argus* of February 13 indicates the change.

Military and Music Store—The subscriber will continue to prosecute the military and music business at 84 State St. in all its various branches. Military companies equipped with every article wanted. Bands of music furnished with every instrument necessary in making up full bands. Piano fortes brought to great perfection. Some beautiful specimens now on hand—the name of Meacham & Co. will be stamped on the instruments. Several apprentices wanted.

R. S. Meacham

In summary, the information found about John and Horace Meacham seems to place them among the many nineteenth-century woodwind makers of lesser importance. Very soon after their arrival in Albany they turned to interests other than the making of musical instruments. For a brief time around 1830, with the stimulus of the very musical Sylvanus Pond and the excellent piano builder John Osborn, they seemed destined to head a firm of significant piano builders. However, this phase of the firm's history was left to Roswell S. Meacham. Addresses given in the Albany city directories indicate that John and Horace Meacham continued some activity in the R. S. Meacham military goods and piano forte store after their retirement, but the nature of that activity is not known. John died on December 8, 1844, and Horace lived until 1861. In 1860 the firm was dissolved, and Roswell retired to Williamstown, Massachusetts. He died there on January 19, 1889.

### *Henry Ford Museum*

24. Howell & Tenney, *History of the County of Albany, New York* (New York: W. W. Munsell & Co., 1886), p. 748.

TABLE 1  
Known Meacham Instruments

1. Oboe, "J. Meacham Jr. / Hartford," boxwood with ivory ferrules and two brass keys, ca. 1808 (fig. 1). *Letchworth State Park Pioneer and Indian Museum near Castile, New York.*
2. Bassoon, "J. Meacham Jr. / Hartford," maple with brass ferrules and four brass keys, ca. 1808 (fig. 2). *Richard Lottridge Collection, Madison, Wisconsin.*
3. Bassoon, "Meacham / Al[bany]," maple with brass ferrules and four brass keys, 1810-13. *Metropolitan Museum of Art, 89.4.884, New York, New York.*
4. Flute, "J. Meacham / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and cap, one brass key, 1810-13 (fig. 3). *Yale University Collection of Musical Instruments, 432, New Haven, Connecticut.*
5. Clarinet in C, "J. Meacham / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and five brass keys, 1810-13 (fig. 4). *Clifford Allanson Collection, Delmar, New York.*
6. Piccolo, "J. & H. Meacham / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and cap, one brass key, 1813-27 (fig. 5). *Dayton C. Miller Collection, 346, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*
7. Flute, "J. & H. Meacham / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and cap, one silver key, 1813-27 (fig. 5). *Dayton C. Miller Collection, 1154, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*
8. Flute, "J. & H. Meacham / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and cap, one silver key, 1813-27. *Fred Benkovic Collection, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*
9. Flute, "J. & H. Meacham / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and cap, one brass key, 1813-27. *Ontario County Historical Society, Canandaigua, New York.*
10. Drum, "New Military Store / J. & H. Meacham / No. 84 State Street Albany . . .," 1813-27. *Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland. (Information supplied by Laurence Libin.)*
11. Flute, "Pond & Co. / Albany," pear or apple with metal ferrules added later and wood cap, one brass key, 1825-28. *Dayton C. Miller Collection, 1282, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*
12. Clarinet in C, "Meacham / & Compy / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and five brass keys, 1827-28. *Clifford Allanson Collection, Delmar, New York.*
13. Clarinet in C, "Meacham / & Compy / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and five brass keys, 1827-28. *Greenleaf Collection, Interlochen, Michigan.*



14. Clarinet in C, "Meacham / & Compy / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and five brass keys, 1827–28. *Robert Hunerjager, Three Oaks, Michigan.*
15. Flute, "Meacham & Co. / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and cap, one brass key, 1827–28. *Yale University Collection of Musical Instruments, 460, New Haven, Connecticut.*
16. Flute, "Meacham & Co. / Albany," cocus with ivory ferrules and cap, one brass key, 1827–28. *Clifford Allanson Collection, Delmar, New York.*
17. Clarinet in B flat, "Meacham & Co. / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and five brass keys, 1827–28 (fig. 6). *Fred Benkovic Collection, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*
18. Flute, "Meacham & Pond / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and cap, one brass key, 1828–32. *Smithsonian Institution Collection, 65.2700, Washington, D.C.*
19. Flute, "Meacham & Pond / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules, one brass key, 1828–32. *Frederick R. Selch Collection, New York, New York.*
20. Flute, "Meacham & Pond / Albany," boxwood, one brass key, 1828–32. *Dayton C. Miller Collection, 568, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*
21. Flute, "Meacham & Pond / Albany / Patent," boxwood with ivory ferrules and six silver keys, 1828–32. "Patent" probably refers to plug-type keys used here for low C and C sharp. *Greenleaf Collection, Interlochen, Michigan.*
22. Flute, "Meacham & Pond / Albany," rosewood with ivory ferrules and wood cap, six silver keys, 1828–32. *Dayton C. Miller Collection, 923, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*
23. Flute, "Meacham / and / Pond / Albany," cocus with silver ferrules and eight silver keys, 1828–32 (fig. 7). *Henry Ford Museum Collection, 78.64, Dearborn, Michigan.*
24. Flute, "Meacham / & Pond / Albany / Patent," rosewood with silver ferrules and wood cap, eight silver keys, 1828–32. *Dayton C. Miller Collection, 1162, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.*
25. Clarinet in C, "Meacham / & Pond / Albany," boxwood with ivory ferrules and five brass keys, 1828–32. *Yale University Collection of Musical Instruments, 522, New Haven, Connecticut.*
26. Key Bugle in B flat, "Meacham & Pond / Albany / for J. D. Sheppard / Buffalo," copper with brass trim, eight brass keys, crook and mouthpiece, 1828–32 (fig. 8). *Henry Ford Museum Collection, 77.68.5, Dearborn, Michigan.*