UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

DATE: 30 Sep 1985

REPLY TO ATTN OF: Museum Curator, HSTR

SUBJECT: Piano (Cat #497) tuning

TO: Catalog file #497

On this date, Mr. ~~Mikker~~ Milford Nace came to the home and tuned the piano. We asked him about the crack in the sounding board. He said it is very normal and most pianos have them.

When he removed the key strip, he found dates the piano was tuned. Starting at left side in pencil is "11-28-32" which is possibly when it was tuned at Jenkins music store or after it was delivered to the Trumans. Next, in pen, is: "Milford M. / Nace / December 28, 1978", Then in pencil: "pitch / raised / A 440 / O. Orlando Nace"

11-28-35
12-11-37
6-30-38
3-18-39
11-3-39
9-7-40
12-30-41
6-23-42
7-30-53
12-7-54
12-13-67
11-25-81

Steve Harrison

OPTIONAL FORM NO 10
REV 1-80
GSA FPMR 41 CFR 101-11 6
5010-114

GPO : 1984 O - 433-783

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

memorandum

DATE: 29 Nov 1985

REPLY TO ATTN OF: Museum Curator, Harry S Truman

SUBJECT: Piano (Cat. #497)

TO: Catalog file

I talked to J.W. Jenkins IV today. He lives at 432 W. 67th, Kansas City, Missouri, telephone 333-8627. Liz Safly, HSTL librarian had talked to John Steinway in New York who refered us to Mr. Jenkins who formerly owned J.W. Henkins Son Music Co. from whom the Trumans bought the piano.

John Steinway indicated that the piano, based on its serial Number (M/255 870) was shipped in late 1927 or early 1928. The Trumans gave this to Margaret for a Christmas present in 1932. The key strip has the dates the piano was tuned and the first is 28 Nov 1932.

Mr. Jenkins sold the business in 1973 and all the records went with it. The new owner went bankrupt. Mr. Jenkins went and asked is he could have the records (they had kept a record of every piano they sold!) and the man said sure, if he could find them but he tought they had been thrown out. Mr. Jenkins could not find them and does not have any now.

He remembers his father talking about selling the piano to Truman. He said that they did deal in used Steinways but he thought Truman would have bought it new. After 1929, they had a four floor warehouse full of pianos. "You couldn't give them away." Steinway stopped production for three years. It was really a buyer's market and it is very possible that Jenkins would have had a new piano, made in 1927, still in stock in 1932. Mr. Jenkins said they would have sold for about $1,000. Mr. Jenkins said it is "probable" that Harry bought it new.

I asked about their tuning practice at that time. He said it was standard to send someone to tune the piano a week or two after delivery, so the piano would adjust to the climate in the house.

I asked him about Orlando Nace's claim that ~~their~~ there was a piano in the home during the White House years. He said that he remembered picking one up after it had been in the home several years. He said that part of the sales pitch was that it had been in the Truman Home. He did not recall who had bought it or know where it is. Mr. Nace said it had been signed by Steinway (Theodore?). Mr. Jenkins said that was not uncommon and that they would sign them on request with the signiture usually being covered with lacquer to protect it. The request for the loaner piano did not come from Steinways or Truman but rather indirectly from someone who suggested to Jenkins "wouldn't it be nice ~~to~~ for the Senator (or Vice-president or President?) to have a piano in his home so they could play when they returned on trips from Washington?" Of course Jenkins suggested or offered one on loan.

Mr. Jenkins was going to telephone Bard ~~Pilard~~ Pollard (spelling?) who is retired and lives in Lexington, MO. He was with the Jenkins Music Co. a long time and might have some valuable memories for us. SEE BACK

Steve Harrison

OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10
REV. 1-80
GSA FPMR 41 CFR 101-11.6
5010-114

GPO : 1984 O - 433-783