The Amazing J. Lawrence Cook of Tennessee



Alan Wallace

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Presentation for SEMLA, 2009 New Orleans


Q·R·S
Word Roll
7971
"Boogie" On St. Louis Blues
Played by J. Lawrence Cook



How I “found” J. Lawrence Cook

The Pianola or Player Piano

Why J. Lawrence Cook was and still is Important

What and How He Accomplished His Work

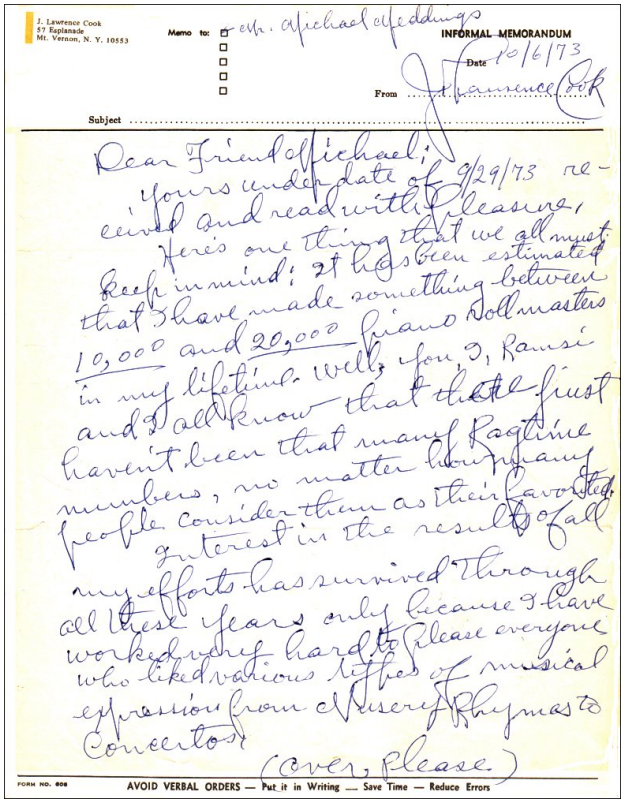
Examples and Rewards of My Quest!


Beckwith

Mr. Mike Meddings

Rugeley, Staffordshire, UK





J. Lawrence Cook
57 Esplanade
Mt. Vernon, N. Y. 10553

Memo to: Mr. Michael Meddings

INFORMAL MEMORANDUM

Date 10/6/73

From J. Lawrence Cook

Subject

Dear Friend Michael;
Yours under date of 9/29/73 received and read with pleasure.
Here's one thing that we all must keep in mind; it has been estimated that I have made something between 10,000 and 20,000 piano roll masters in my lifetime. Well, you & Ransi and I all know that the first haven't been that many Ragtime numbers, no matter how many people consider them as their favorites. My interest in the results of all my efforts has survived through all these years only because I have worked right hard to please everyone who liked various types of musical expression from Nursery Rhymes to Concertos.
(over, please.)

FORM NO. 808 AVOID VERBAL ORDERS — Put it in Writing — Save Time — Reduce Errors

One of Mr. Cook's letters to Mike Meddings in the 1970s.

Mike Meddings in Concert

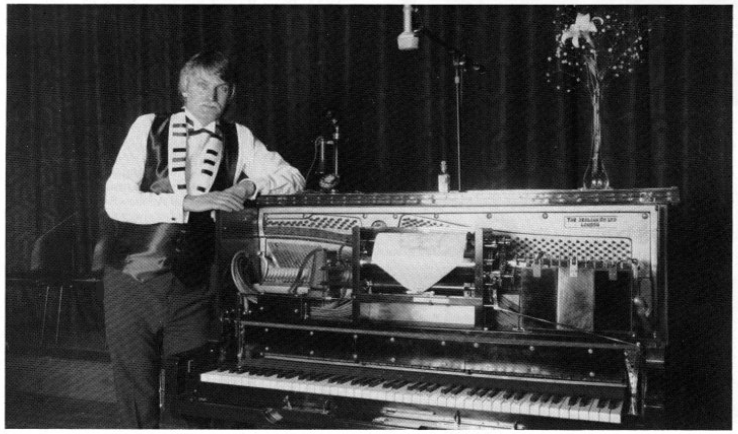
Music rolls with a live band – often featuring many works by Mr. Cook.

Monday, 20th July, 1987 — 7.30 p.m.

CIVIC HALL, ROTHER STREET, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Ragtime ... Blues ... & Hot Piano

featuring
MIKE MEDDINGS
and
THE ORIGINAL AEOLIAN SYNCOPATORS
with
NICK WARD — *Traps*



TITLE			*PLAYED BY*
GRANDPA'S SPELLS	Cincinnati	1924	*'Jelly Roll' Morton*
IF YOU KNEW SUSIE	New York	1925	*Victor Lane*
SWEET GEORGIA BROWN	Chicago	1925	*Pete Wendling*
PERFECT RAG	Richmond	1924	*Mike Meddings as played by 'Jelly Roll' Morton*
AH-AH	New York	1928	*Alan Moran*
SHEIK OF ARABY	Chicago	1921	*Zez Confrey*
SURPRISE ITEM			*George Gershwin*
CHICAGO (That Toddlin' Town)	Chicago	1922	*Max Kortlander*
KANSAS CITY STOMP	Washington	1938	*Mike Meddings as played by 'Jelly Roll' Morton*
CHONG (He came from Hong Kong)	Chicago	1919	*Osborn and Howe*
MR. JELLY LORD	Cincinnati	1924	*'Jelly Roll' Morton*
	INTERVAL		
AIN'T SHE SWEET	Chicago	1927	*Fred Parsons*
CAIRO	Chicago	1919	*Zez Confrey*
KING PORTER STOMP	New York	1939	*Mike Meddings as played by 'Jelly Roll' Morton*
TOM CAT BLUES	Cincinnati	1924	*'Jelly Roll' Morton*
I AIN'T GOT NOBODY	New York	1925	*Rube Bloom*
THE CANNONBALL	New York	1959	*J. Lawrence Cook*
IN THE JAILHOUSE NOW	Chicago	1924	*James Blythe*
CHARLESTON	New York	1925	*James P. Johnson*
BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME!	Turlock	1981	*Ralph Sutton*
I'M COMIN' VIRGINIA	New York	1927	*Thomas 'Fats' Waller*
JAZZIN' BABY BLUES	Chicago	1923	*J. Lawrence Cook*

29

UNIVERSITY OF ASTON
IN BIRMINGHAM

CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
THE STUDIO

MONDAY NOVEMBER 22, 1982
7.30 PM.



STEPPIN' ON THE IVORIES

Ragtime... blues... and stomps
on the pianola
presented by Mike Meddings

The Music Group is pleased to welcome again to the Centre for the Arts.....MIKE MEDDINGS, who has prepared a special programme of historic 'live performance' music rolls from his collection. The concert, complete with period instruments, together with associated memorabilia, features performances by Eubie Blake, 'Jelly Roll' Morton, Zes Confrey, Clarence Williams and other notable keyboard personalities whose roll recordings faithfully capture the spirit and originality of this fascinating musical era.

Once again, drummer MIKE HASLUM will accompany selected numbers from the programme.

The Centre for the Arts also extends a welcome to Tenor Banjoist GEORGE LINDER and Clarinettist JOHN OSBORNE who join the event as special guest artists.



The Player Piano was a major form of entertainment in the early 20th Century

THE WORLD-FAMED

"ANGELUS" GRAND & UPRIGHT PLAYER PIANOS

ARE A MASTERPIECE OF SCIENCE & ART

THE PERFECTION OF BOTH PIANO & PLAYER

responding to the most exacting demands, thus ensuring Artistic Supremacy.

THE HUMAN TOUCH OF THE MASTER HAND, controlling every gradation of Tone.

The SIMPLE, EFFECTIVE Patented Expression Devices include :

The GRADUATED MELODANT, which accentuates the Melody or Theme,

The PHRASING LEVER, which controls every variation of tempo,

The ARTISTYLE, the simple but infallible guide to musical rendition.
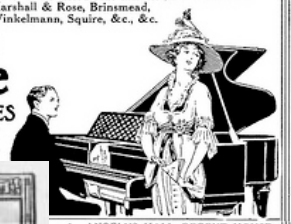
The Angelus Player-Pianos comprise Grand and Upright Pianos of the most artistic character, and include the Marshall & Rose, Brinsmead, Winkelmann, Squire, &c., &c.

THE PIANO WHICH INSPIRES :

Marshall & Rose

GRAND & UPRIGHT PIANOFORTES

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Established Dependability

The Beckwith Player Piano does its work satisfactorily at all times—it rarely requires any adjustment.

30 Days' Trial

Size, 5 feet 9 inches high, 5 feet 4 inches wide, 2 feet 3 inches deep.

Weight, boxed, about 1,000 pounds.

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Thousands of These Instruments Are Already in the Homes of Our Customers

THE Beckwith Player Piano, Style 20, offers unrivaled service and satisfaction. Its permanent reliability, years beyond time and faultless mechanical operation have been proved by almost every kind of test.

The Ease of Operation, the response of its fine action, its rare tone, all widen the margin between the ordinary player pieces and the Beckwith, which irresistibly charms all who see it and listen to the blending vibrations of its five scale.

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Direct From Factory. Shipped direct from our modern and well equipped factories, where the most scientific means are employed and the closest attention is given to quality of material and precision of workmanship, which result in great economies to us and to you.

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If at any time within one year from date of purchase this instrument proves unsatisfactory, it may be returned, and we will send back all the money you have paid on it, including freight and storage charges.

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THIS Player Piano contains the very latest first class equipment of levers, including pneumatic tracking device, automatic pedals, expression buttons, etc., and is easily operated even by a child. It has an 88-note mouthpiece, and any standard music rolls can be played on it.



Cabinet, Bench, Scarf, 20 Rolls of Music and Instruction Book included.

No. 46L820

Beckwith Player Piano, Style 20, including music cabinet and bench to match, also a silk plush scarf, instruction book and 20 rolls of carefully selected music, which includes a representative number of classical, semi-classical, popular songs and dance music, which, aside from being a good assortment, make it easy to thoroughly test the player piano. Furnished in mahogany, oak or walnut. Be sure to state choice of wood. Walnut is $5.00 extra.

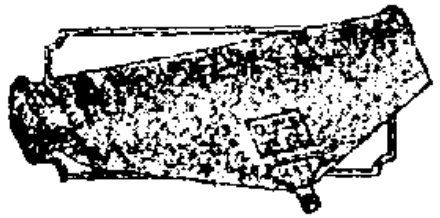
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At $8.00 a Month.

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Recent Recordings That Are Real Blues



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are Better

3707—Black Snake Blues

3724—My Man Just Won't Don't

3674—Dead Man Blues

3675—Midnight Mamma

3676—He's My Man

3572—Falling Rain Blues

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They Will Be Ready Soon on Q. R. S. Player Rolls

3788—Trouble in Mind | 3780—Love Story Blues

3784—Those Lonely Blues

SPIRITUALS NOW READY—Q. R. S. WORD ROLLS

3757—I'm Gonna Die With the Staff in My Hand

3639—My Lord's Gonna Move This Wicked Race

3551—All God's Chillun Got Wings (Heab'n, Heab'n)

3552—Git on Board, Little Chillun, (the Gospel Train)

3554—When All the Saints Come Marchin' In

RECORDING Q. R. S. ARTISTS

JELLY ROLL MORTON — CLARENCE WILLIAMS

SID LANEY — JAMES P. JOHNSON

J. LAWRENCE COOK — CLARENCE JOHNSON

LEMUEL FOWLER

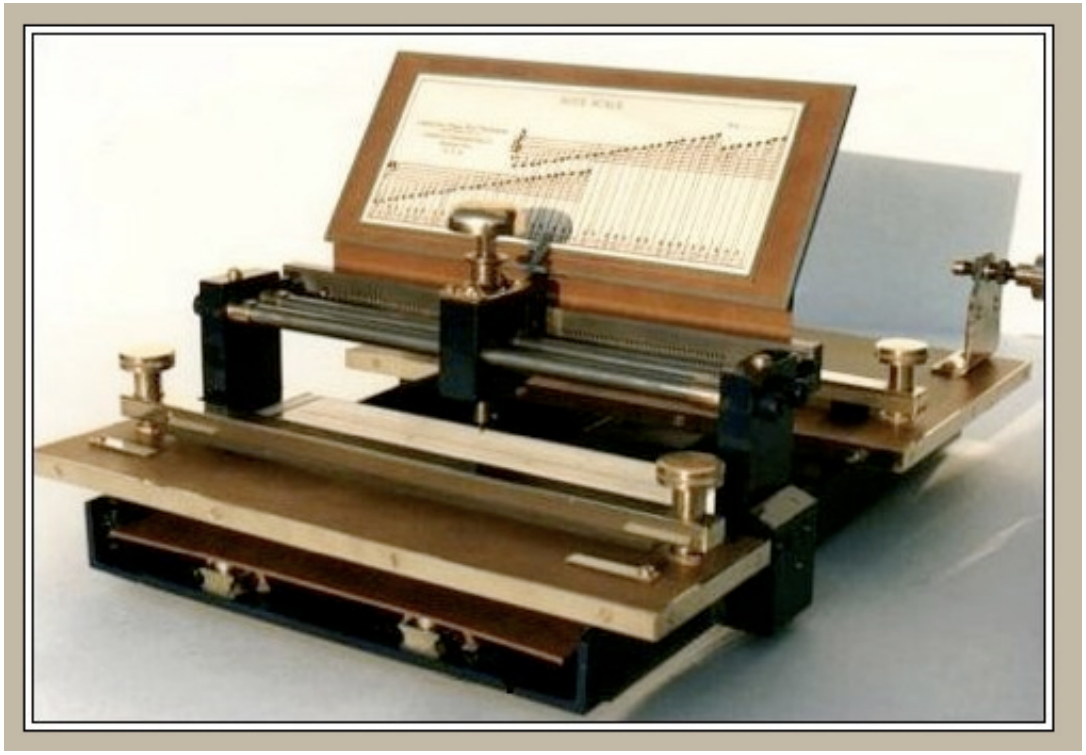
Creating a Piano Roll

- 1. Hand Perforating Machine

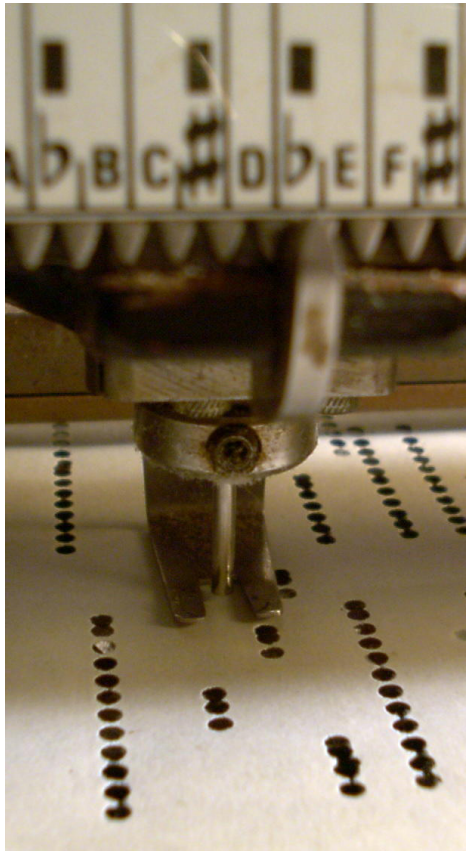


Creating a Piano Roll

- 1. Hand Perforating Machine



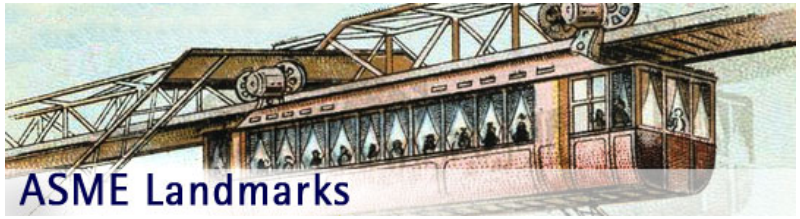
Piano roll punch made by Mike Meddings



Creating a Piano Roll

- 2. Marking Piano

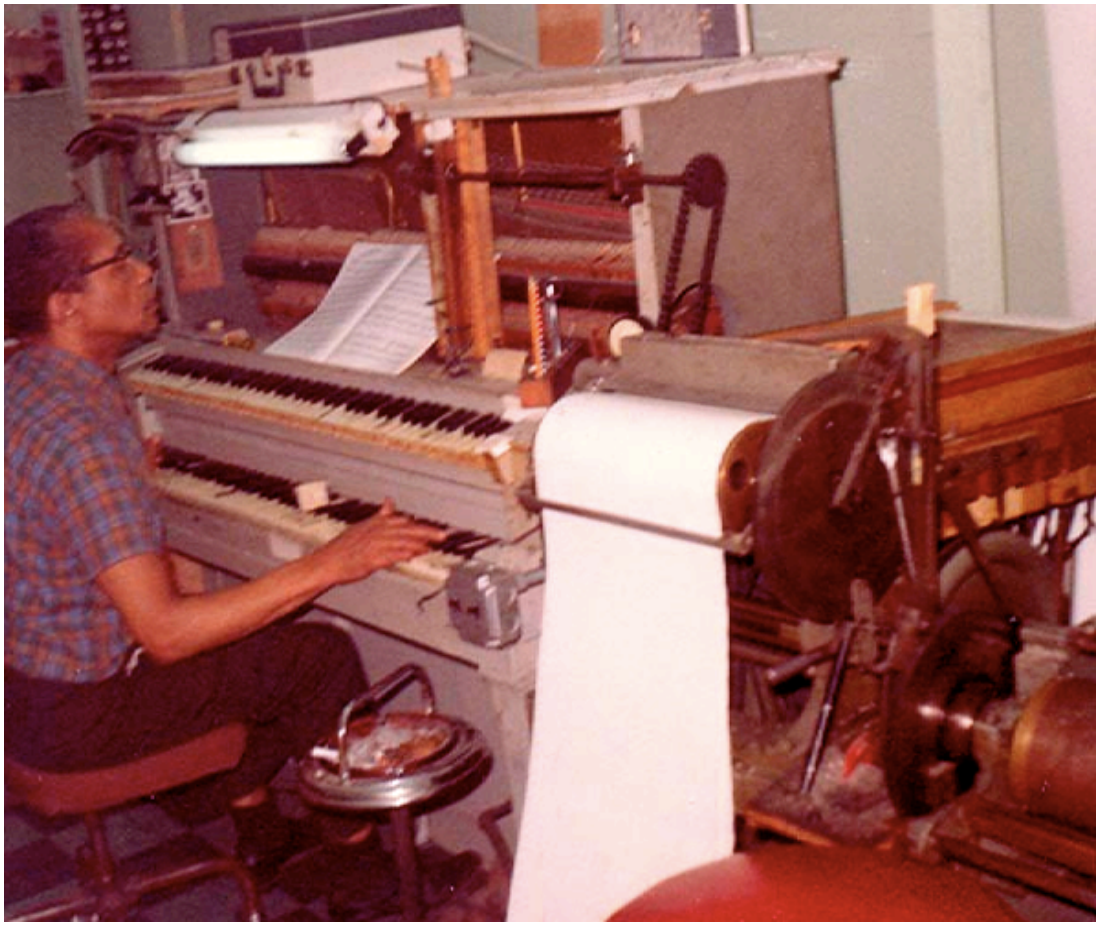




#161 Q-R-S Marking Piano
(1912)

Creating a Piano Roll

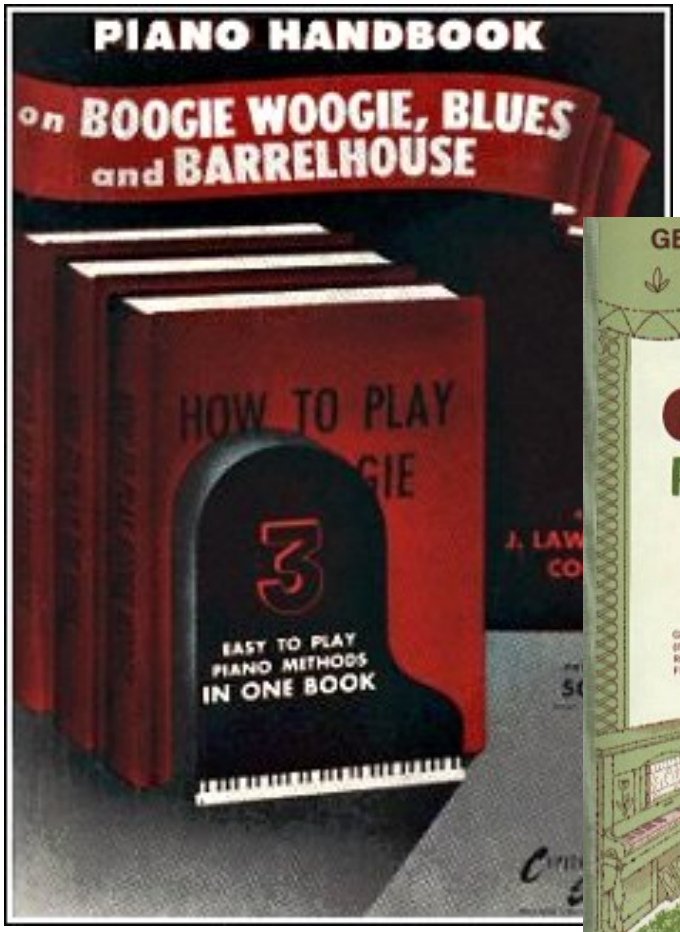
- 3. QRS Step-perforator & Recording Piano

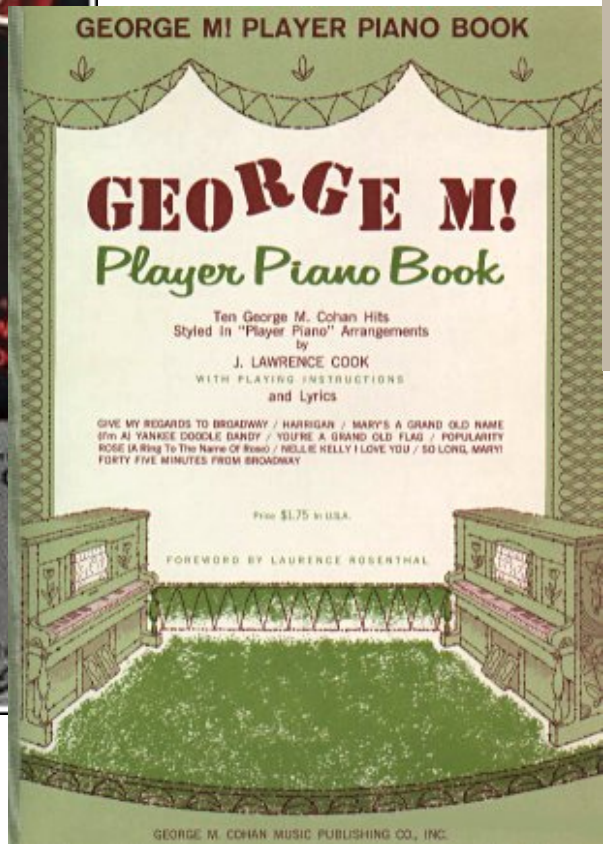


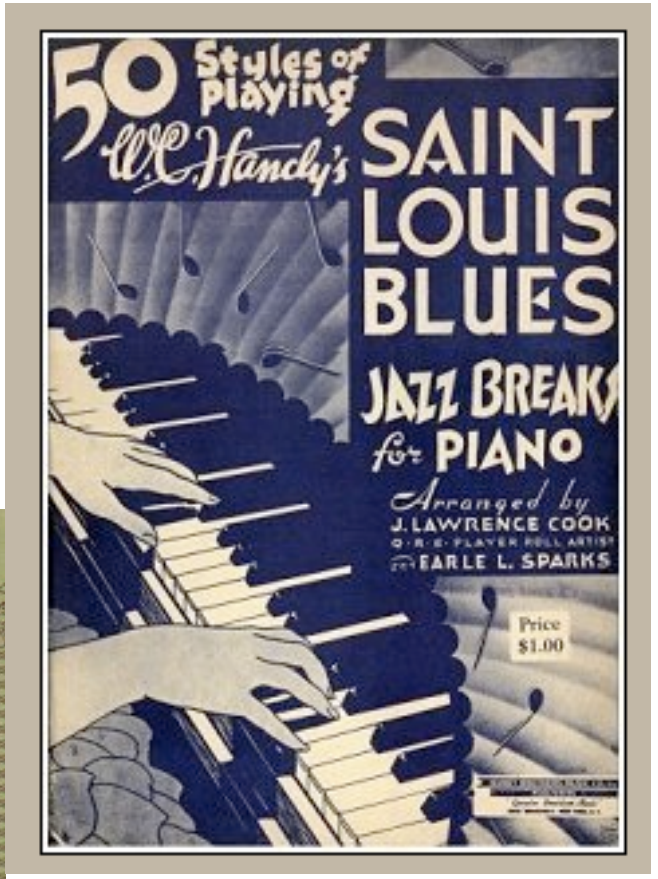
J. Lawrence Cook on “You Asked for It,” early 1950s.



Music Books


PIANO HANDBOOK
on BOOGIE WOOGIE, BLUES and BARRELHOUSE
HOW TO PLAY
3
EASY TO PLAY PIANO METHODS IN ONE BOOK


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GEORGE M!
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WITH PLAYING INSTRUCTIONS
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(I'm A) YANKEE DOODLE DANDY / YOU'RE A GRAND OLD FLAG / POPULARITY
ROSE (A Ring To The Name Of Rose) / NELLIE KELLY I LOVE YOU / SO LONG, MARY!
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W. C. Handy's
SAINT LOUIS BLUES
JAZZ BREAKS for PIANO
Arranged by
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EARLE L. SPARKS
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Recordings
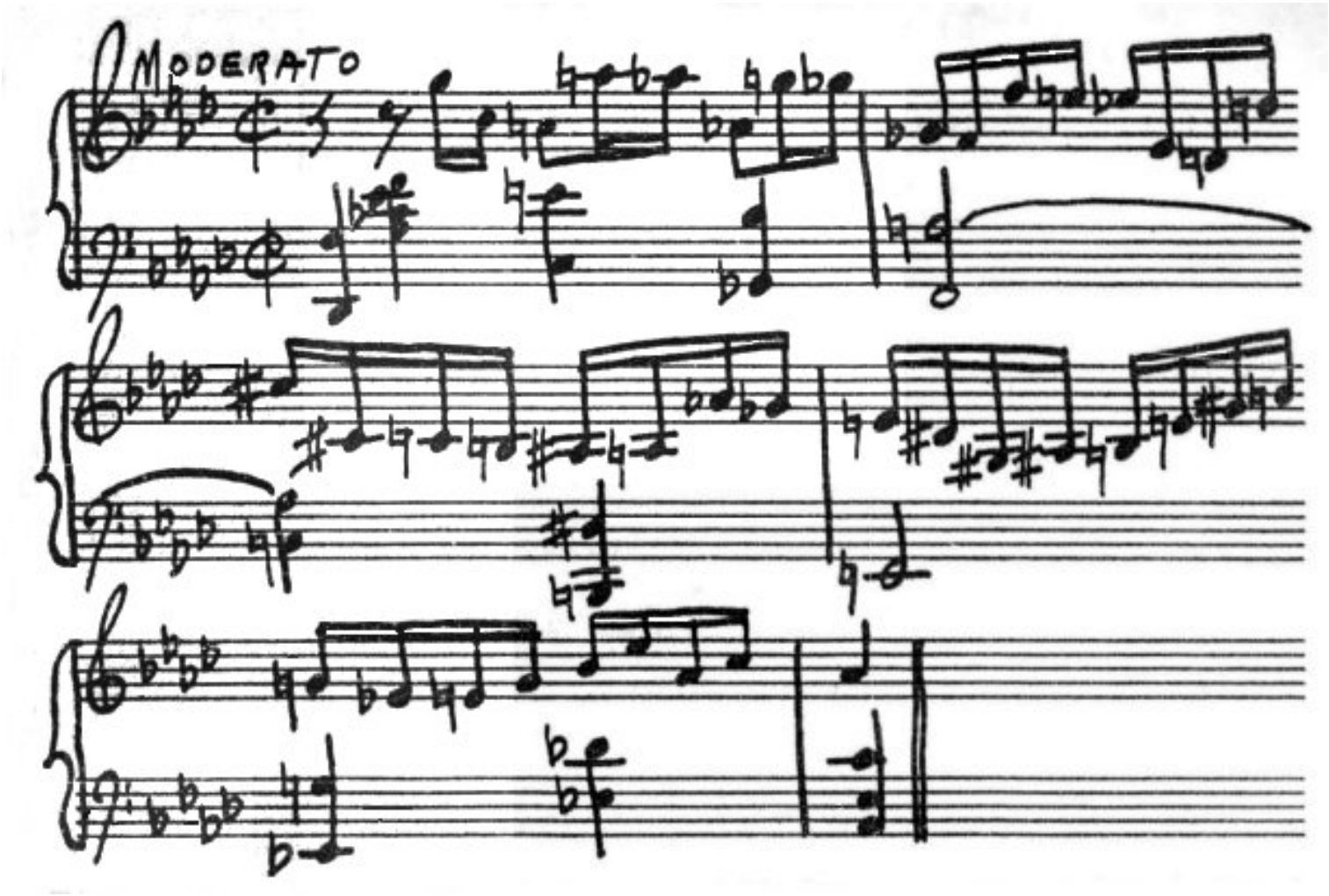

ABBEY
(G-927)
Marold
(ASCAP) 2:15
Recorded
at John's
Ice Cream Parlor
WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO
THE GOOD OLD DAYS?
(Don George-Bee Walker)
LAWRENCE COOK & THE NICKELODEON
Sung by
TONY MANGO
& THE SAPPHIRES


POPULAR FAVORITES
on the
PLAYER PIANO
by J. LAWRENCE COOK


STEREO
HI-FI
j. lawrence cook
PIANO-
ROLL
ROCK 'N
ROLL


HARMONY
Lp
ST. LOUIS BLUES
J. LAWRENCE COOK
A PIANO ROLL TRIBUTE TO W. C. HANDY

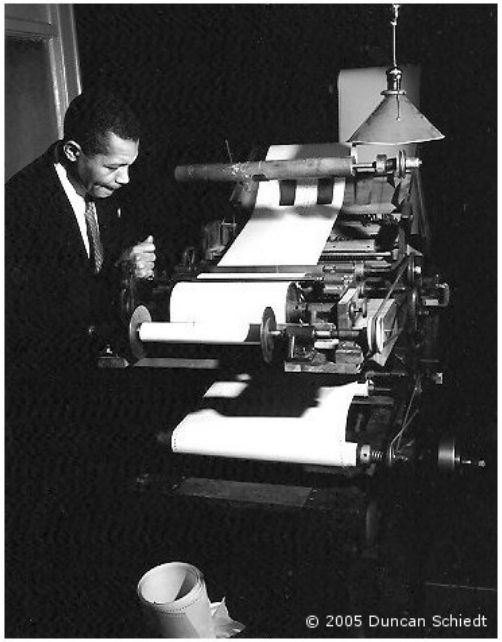
Between May 1941 and April 1943, J. Lawrence Cook wrote at least 16 articles on jazz piano technique for *The International Musician* (the official organ of the American Federation of Musicians).



1949
Photos by Duncan Scheidt
www.duncanschiedt.com











A Modern Recording of some of J.L. Cook's Finest Arrangements
Available from Shellwood Productions



The Very Thought of You
(YouTube Video)

Questions?



Alan & Mike, 2005

Ragtime · Blues · Hot Piano
International Researchers

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHERS

Laurie Wright · Prof. Lawrence Gushee · Roger Richard
Prof. James Dapogny · Mike Montgomery · Floyd Levin
Dr. Robert Pinsker · Prof. Alan Wallace · Dr. Philip Pastras
Michael Hill · Peter Hanley · Dr. Edward Berlin
Millie Gaddini · Brian Goggin · Butch Thompson
Karl Ellison · Ate van Delden · Mike Meddings

Selected Web Sources

Ragtime – Blues – Hot Piano

Monrovia Sound Studios

Mr. Mike Meddings, UK

The premier sight for information on both J. Lawrence Cook and Jelly Roll Morton.

QRS Music

Includes a link to a YouTube video on making piano rolls

ASME Landmarks

Great engineering achievements inclduding the QRS Marking Piano

Mechanical Music Digest

A moderated list about mechanical music