

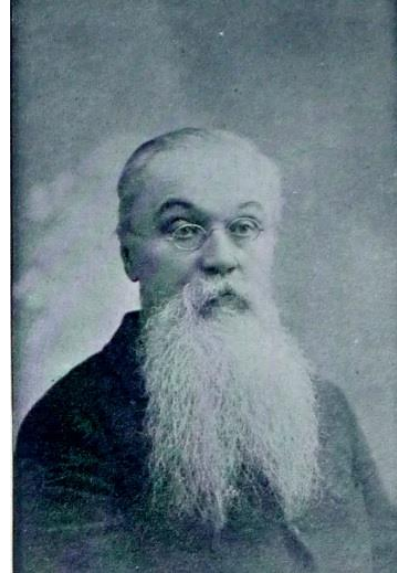
Johann Heinrich Hintermeister
1Apr 1835 – 10 Feb 1907

Founder of the Hintermister Organ & Piano Company
New York Hintermeister Clan

By Ed Hintermeister, Oakton, VA, USA. Updated Nov 2020

Johann Heinrich was one of three brothers who immigrated to America from Winterthur, Switzerland, and who started the New York clan of Hintermeisters. Johann was born 1 April 1835 in Switzerland, and was the second of four children born to Johann Heinrich Hintermeister (26 October 1806-26 February 1857) and Magdalena Maurer (16 August 1812-26 April 1884). Johann's parents were married about 1830, and Johann's father, Johann Sr., was a merchant of "Rosengarten" (which is the name of the house). Johann and his siblings are listed in order of birth as follows:

Maria Magdalena	5 October 1831-13 March 1896
Johann Heinrich	1Apr 1835 – 10 Feb 1907
August Friedrich	5 May 1838-11 September 1897
Otto Julius	12 January 1842- 5 October 1886



John Heinrich Hintermeister

The 1900 census shows that Johann immigrated to the United States in 1853. The records in Winterthur show that Johann's brother, August, came in 1872. Johann's youngest brother, Otto, is listed in the 1870 census, so probably arrive in America c. 1869. There is a discrepancy in the records as other records indicate that Otto came with his wife in about 1873. Maybe he went back to Switzerland, and arrived again in 1873.

Johann married Franziska (Frances) Alma German (Feb 1835-14 Dec 1906), who was from New York, and the couple had two children listed in order of birth as follows:

Johann Heinrich	Feb 1861-1921
Frederick August	10 Mar 1863-11 May 1934

According to a New York Times article dated 12 May 1886, Johann later married Anna M. Spargo (born 1869). Anna was the daughter of William Spargo, a piano and organ dealer, in Mahanoy, PA. Johann had met Anna in 1884 at the home of her parents when she was 15, and they secretly corresponded for two years. Johann and Anna eloped in 1886, and were married in Phillipsburg, NJ. Mr. Hintermeister was 55 and Anna was 17. Johann said he was divorced. The article goes on to say "Whether this is true or not has not been learned." Anna's death records indicate that she was actually born 17 Aug 1867, so she would have been 18 at the time of their marriage. From the second marriage, Johann had three more children, listed below:

William Tell	18 Nov 1888-18 Jul 1953
Otto M	19 Apr 1896- Unknown
Otis Earl	19 Apr 1896- 19 Jul 1974

Records show that a John Hintermeister, age 27 (born c.1836), from Ulysses, New York, was drafted into service for the Civil War on 1 Jul 1863. He is married, his occupation is musician, and he was born in Switzerland. This record matches with what we know about Johann.

Several years after arriving in America, Johann founded the Hintermeister Organ and Piano Company, Limited in Buffalo, New York. According to an article from an 1896 souvenir edition of the Oil City Derrick, Johann had been associated with the largest piano manufacturers in the world, prior to starting his own company.

Johann had previously been the general agent for the Ithaca Organ Company. It is assumed that Johann learned his piano building skills while working at this company. There was an apparent dispute as Johann instituted law suits in 30 Pennsylvania counties on foreign attachment to collect a claim of between \$30,000 and \$40,000 against officers of the company.

The exact date that the Hintermister Organ and Piano Company was started is unknown, but a personal letter written on company stationary, which has been passed down to current family members, indicates that the company was in business as early as July 1886. See Figure 1. The letter head states that J.H. Hintermister was chairman, and Otto J. Hintermister was secretary and treasurer. It should be noted that Johann and Otto have changed the spelling of Hintermeister to Hintermister on the letter head.

The Buffalo City Directory of 1885 shows that Otto J. Hintermister owned the Buffalo Organ Company located at 200 Terrace. This is the same address as listed on the letter head. Therefore, it is assumed that the Hintermister Organ and Piano Company had its start in 1885.

According to entries in the Buffalo City Directories, Johann's brother, August, was also involved in the music industry from 1881 to 1884. However, it appears that he only had a store that sold pianos and organs, and was not actually a manufacturer. An advertisement in the City Directory shows that A. Hinterminster (misspelled) was the sole agent at Deuther's Manufacturing Co, 104 Seneca Street. Frederick A. Hintermister, who is listed in the 1886 City directory, is probably Johann's son.

The following is a chronology of Hintermister listings from the Buffalo City Directories:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Entry</u>
1881	August Hintermister Pianos & Organs 104 E. Seneca
1882	August Hintermister Music Dealer 282 Ellicott St.
1884	Hintermister Music Store 104 Seneca
1885	Otto J. Hintermister Buffalo Organ Co. 198-200 Terrace
1886	Frederick A. Hintermister

In 1887, the Hintermister Organ and Piano Company moved to Oil City, Pennsylvania. Oil City is about 120 miles south west of Buffalo, and 70 miles north of Pittsburgh. Apparently, Johann thought that business would be better in Pennsylvania. The move of the piano manufacturing business from Buffalo to Oil City was funded by local Oil City capital, and the business was shown to be under the management of the patentee, J.H. Hintermister. In Oil City the company had the capacity to build six organs per week.

The following is a transcription of an advertisement that was placed in the Oil City Newspaper:

THE HINTERMISTER UNITED

PIANO AND ORGAN CO.

Manufacturers of the famous HINTERMISTER PIANOS and ORGANS, take pleasure and pride in announcing to the PUBLIC that a

HINTERMISTER PIANO or

HINTERMISTER ORGAN

Means PERFECTION and insures to the purchaser

ABSOLUTE SATISFACTION. WHY?

Because our instruments are MADE WITH THE GREATEST CARE from the BEST and THOROUGHLY SEASONED MATERIALS, and the MOST SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES by the carefully selected and COMPETENT WORKMEN. All of which justifies us to guarantee our instruments, both Pianos and Organs, for the term of Ten Years; and, further, We agree to keep the same in good repair and serviceable condition free of charge for the same length of time, which in itself is a great inducement to purchase our instruments, as no other reliable firm is willing to assume such a responsibility, which means FIFTY DOLLARS SAVED TO OUR PATRONS. A visit to our factory, where our work can be examined in detail, will demonstrate the truthfulness of our assertions.

Second Hand Instruments taken in exchange upon an equitable basis.

Terms always made acceptable and convenient for our customers.

We make it a specialty to repair and re-varnish Organs and Pianos at our factory and will call at anytime and make estimate of the cost of such work. Address

HINTERMISTER UNITED PIANO AND ORGAN COMPANY

505-511 WEST FRONT STREET, OIL CITY, PA.

We purchase all kinds of hardwood lumber, delivered at our factory and pay the highest price for the same.

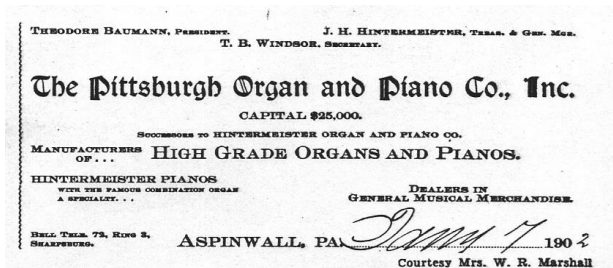
In 1898, J.H. Hintermeister erected a four story industrial building in Aspinwall, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh. The building was constructed of buff-brick and was located on Commercial Avenue. A showroom and shipping department for the Hintermeister Organ and Piano Company

was located on the street floor, while the pianos (only upright instruments) were manufactured on the second floor.

Several years later in about 1902, the company name was changed to "The Pittsburgh Organ and Piano Company, Inc." A business card from 1902 lists J.H. Hintermeister as treasurer and general manager, Theodore Bauman as president, and T.B. Windsor as secretary. Note that the spelling of Hintermeister has reverted back to the correct spelling. In 1903 the building floor space was doubled, so that the company could continue to manufacture the Hintermeister Piano, and also become dealers in other musical instruments.

The Michel Piano Atlas does not list any serial numbers for the Hintermeister Piano. It must be assumed, therefore, that the piano production was limited, and distribution was probably rather local.

In 1905, young Bill Hintermeister demonstrated the Hintermeister Piano Organ at the Pittsburgh Exposition. Bill (William) was the son of J.H. Hintermeister.



Apparently, the company went out of business sometime between 1909 and 1915 (Note, Johann died in 1907). The family then moved away from Aspinwall, but it could not be determined where they moved. After the death of Johann, his wife, Anna, remarried to Henry A Steinfeldt on 15 Nov 1919. Anna died in Los Angeles on 16 Dec 1941.

United Piano bought the remains of the Pittsburgh Organ and Piano company, and it is believed that United was in turn purchased by Steinway, However this could not be confirmed from the Steinway archives. In about 1973 or 1974, the Hintermeister Organ and Piano Company building was torn down.

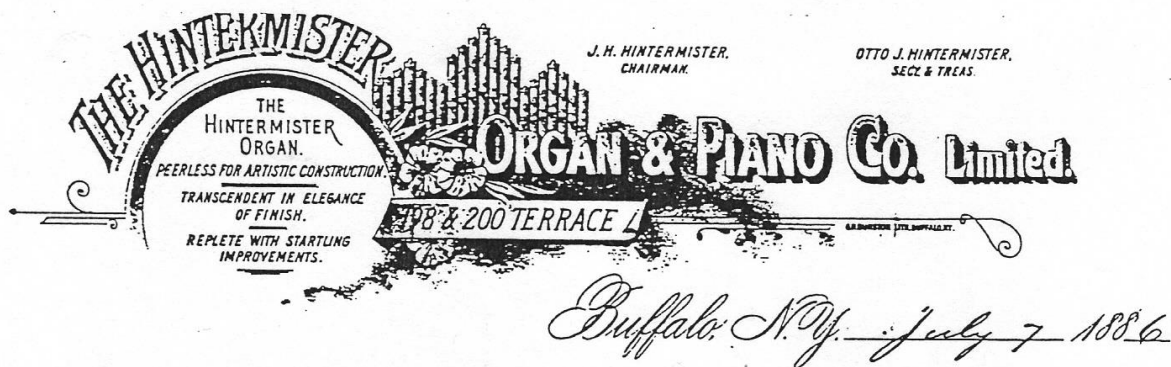


Figure 1. The Hintermeister Organ and Piano Company Letter Head

At the turn of the century, there were about 300 piano manufacturers in the United States, but now there are only five. Unfortunately, the Hintermeister Organ and Piano Company apparently met the same fate as many of the other companies. But fortunately, at least one of the Hintermeister Organs has survived over a century, and can be seen at the DeBence Antique Music World in Franklin, Pennsylvania. They have on display a Hintermeister Organ in working condition, which was

originally purchased in 1889 in Oil City. The DeBence Antique Music World is part of the Oil Region Music Preservation Museum.

Johann's Children:

J Henry Hintermister (Feb 1861- 1921)

The oldest son of Johann Heinrich Hintermeister (piano manufacturer), Johann Heinrich (Henry) Hintermeister was born in New York in 1861, as shown in the 1870 Tompkins County New York census. The 1880 census shows Henry was living in Hutchinson, TX, and employed by herding cows for the James H. Wright family. He was 19 years old and not married. It should be noted that the LDS summary for the 1880 census shows that Henry was born in New Mexico, however this is a transcription error, and in fact the original census document shows that Henry was born in New York.

It appears that the James H. Wright family that Henry worked for in 1880 moved to Hansford County by the time of the 1900 census, but without Henry. The Tax Rolls for Hutchinson County indicates that James Wright was there until 1884. There was no listing for Hintermeister. The marriage book for Hutchinson County begins in 1892, but no Hintermeisters are listed. There was a series of blizzards from 1885-1887 in the Texas Panhandle that could have made a cowboy or stockman to decide to move from the area.

Sometime before 1900, Henry moved to Minnesota. The 1900, 1910, and 1920 census for St. Paul, Ramsey County, MN, shows Henry is married to Brittianna (Brillie) M. Tener (born 12 Sept 1872 in Pennsylvania). Actual marriage date was found to be 8 Jul 1894. The couple has one daughter, Brillie J, who was born Jun 1896. Both of Brillie's parents were born in Ireland. Henry is employed as a lawyer. Brillie's father is presumed deceased by 1900, as her mother, also Brillie Tener is living with the family. Brillie past away on 5 Mar 1946. Henry past away in 1921, and is buried in Oakland Cemetery, Saint Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota.

Notes:

The Hintermeister Clan biographies are a work in progress. As more information is found or provided, the biographies can be updated.

Sources:

1. Pianos and Organs, Souvenir Edition of the Oil City Derrick, 1896 (Picture of J.H. Hintermister)
2. History of Venango County, Pa., 1890, P. 469.
3. Ralph and Terry Kovel, The Des Moines Register, Home and Family Section, 12 March 1975, P. 9.
4. Rachel L. Cook, Borough of Aspinwall Historical Book (Diamond Jubilee, a Picture Story), 1892-1967, pages not numbered (approximately one-third of way through book).