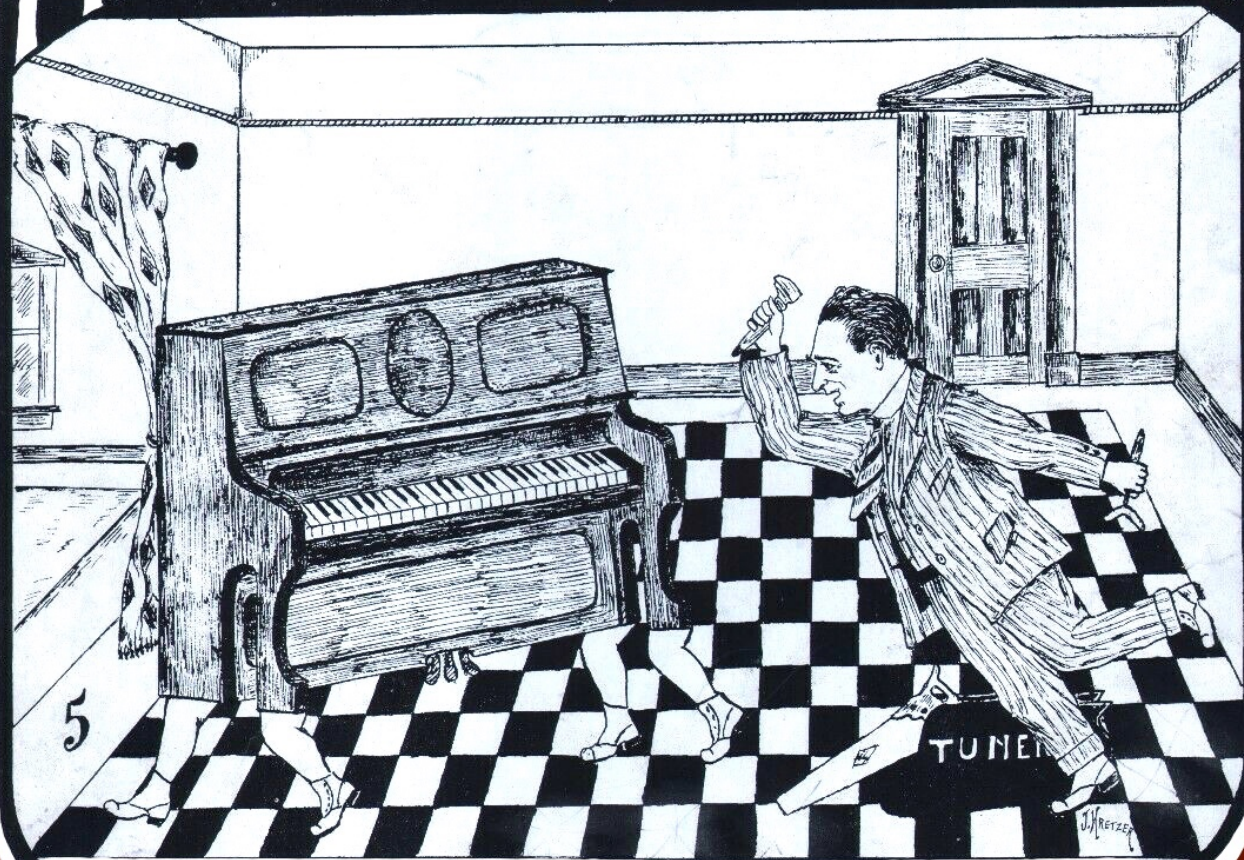




THE PIANO TUNERS WALKAWAY RAC



WILSON AND RABE MUSIC CO.

- Composers-Publishers -

— INDIANAPOLIS —

The Piano Tuner's Walk-A-Way

RAG

By
WILSON & RABE

Moderato

The musical score is written for piano and is in 2/4 time. It consists of four systems of music. The first system is marked 'ff' and includes dynamic markings 'f' and 'ff'. The second system is marked 'f'. The third system is marked 'f'. The fourth system is marked 'mf'. The score features various musical notations including eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and rests.

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Wilson & Rabe - America's Foremost Piano Tuners.

First system of musical notation, measures 1-4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 7/8. The music features a complex, syncopated melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. Measure 4 ends with a repeat sign.

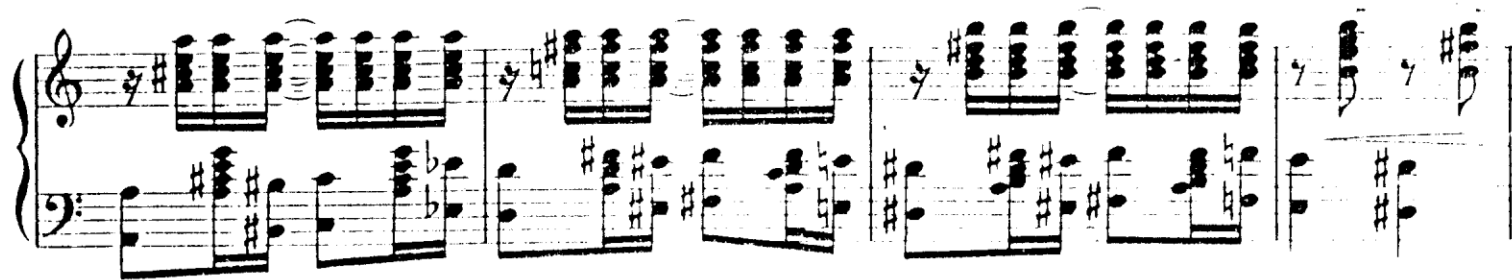
Second system of musical notation, measures 5-8. Measures 5 and 6 continue the previous texture. Measure 7 begins a first ending marked with a double bar line and a '1' above it. Measure 8 begins a second ending marked with a double bar line and a '2' above it. A forte (*f*) dynamic marking is present in measure 7.

Third system of musical notation, measures 9-12. Measures 9 and 10 are marked with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. Measures 11 and 12 are marked with an *8va* (octave up) instruction. The melody in the right hand is more active, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes.

Fourth system of musical notation, measures 13-16. Measures 13 and 14 continue the *8va* melody. Measures 15 and 16 show a change in the bass line, with a flat (Bb) appearing in measure 16. A repeat sign is at the end of the system.

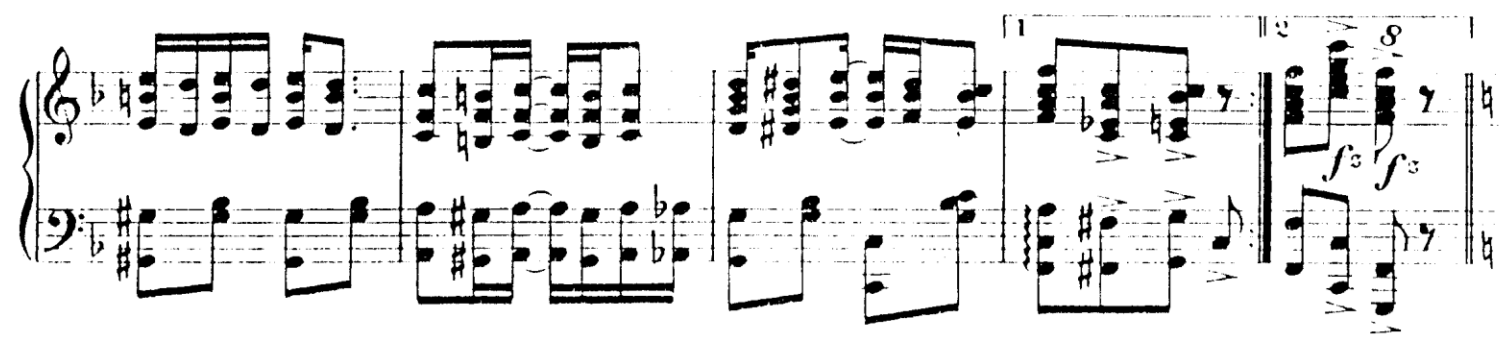
Fifth system of musical notation, measures 17-20. Measures 17 and 18 are marked *loco.* (ad libitum). Measures 19 and 20 are marked *8va*. The right hand continues with a melodic line, while the left hand provides harmonic support.

Sixth system of musical notation, measures 21-24. Measures 21 and 22 are marked *loco.* and *f* (forte). Measures 23 and 24 are marked with first and second endings, indicated by '1' and '2' above the staff. The system concludes with a repeat sign.





The first system of musical notation consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The music features a complex texture with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, suggesting a fast tempo. There are several measures with a '7' time signature, indicating a 7/8 or 7/16 time signature. The notation includes various accidentals and dynamic markings.



The second system continues the musical piece. It features a variety of note values and rests. There are two first endings marked with '1' and '2'. The notation includes a '7' time signature and a '7' measure. The music is written in a grand staff with a treble and bass clef.



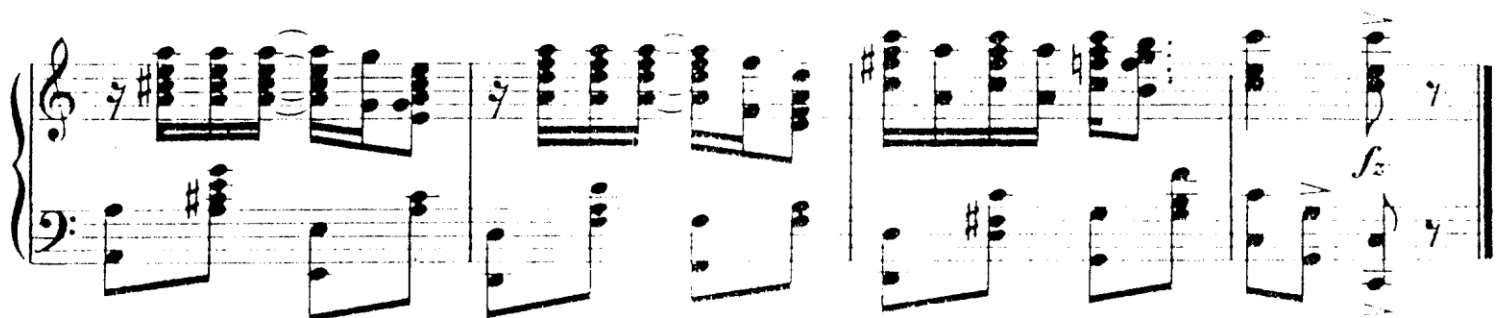
The third system of musical notation begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. It features a steady rhythm with eighth and sixteenth notes. The notation is written in a grand staff with a treble and bass clef.



The fourth system of musical notation continues the piece. It features a variety of note values and rests. There are two first endings marked with '7'. The notation is written in a grand staff with a treble and bass clef.



The fifth system of musical notation begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. It features a steady rhythm with eighth and sixteenth notes. The notation is written in a grand staff with a treble and bass clef.



The sixth system of musical notation continues the piece. It features a variety of note values and rests. There are two first endings marked with '7'. The notation is written in a grand staff with a treble and bass clef.

"The Piano Tuner's Walk-A-Way"

Ragtime Story

Introduction

So little was known about this rare, delightful rag—published by its composers, "Wilson & Rabe," 100 years ago in Indianapolis, Indiana—that ragtime historians didn't even know one composer's first name. Though my research has revealed more about these elusive men, it's raised other tantalizing questions that remain frustratingly unanswered.

Brief Bios: Wilson & Rabe

Birth to 1915

Orion Blair Wilson was born September 2, 1879, in Worthville, Kentucky, to John L. Wilson and Luella Goodman. He doesn't appear on the radar again until nearly 27 years later when he marries Mary McMullan (who was about five years younger) in Clark County, Kentucky on June 26, 1906. (If any children resulted from that union, they weren't in the 1910 or 1920 census.)

Shortly after his marriage, Wilson worked as an insurance agent, then a conductor, in Louisville, Kentucky. Around 1909 he moved to Indianapolis and worked a variety of jobs—"wagon driver for laundry," salesman, laborer and manager—before becoming a full-time piano technician, probably the same year PTWAW was published.

Richard "Dick" Rabe was born April 14, 1885, in Brandenburg, Germany. Although he immigrated to the United States (I don't know when), he was still not a US citizen the year the rag was published (he claimed German citizenship on his 1918 draft registration card).

According to "The Indianapolis Star" (November 28, 1915): "Mr. Rabe is well known in the West, where he has written and sung a number of songs." This may be exaggerated self-promotion, but it's probably at least partially true. What kind of venues did he perform in, and how frequently? Were any of his songs published? (If any were, none were officially copyrighted after 1898.) Were any of those songs ragtime songs?!

The "Bell of Bells" Waltz Connection

In November of 1915, Dick Rabe self-published—in Indianapolis—"Bell of Bells," a waltz "dedicated to the Liberty Bell" (see article cited above). It was copyrighted November 3, 1915, and the copyright office received two (probably published) deposit copies on November 27, 1915. Those dates are of historical interest because the sheet music's full page ad for "Piano Tuner's Walk-A-Way" (which completely reproduces the second strain) credits "Dick Rabe" as its sole composer!! Did Wilson really co-compose this rag or was Rabe taking undue credit?

Where's Wilson?!

"Seymour Daily Republican" (Seymour, Indiana)

Thursday, March 11, 1915, Page 1

JUST IN Notice Piano Owners. We tune, regulate, transpose, reface and adjust lost motion, sticking keys and squeaking pedals. We also clean pianos. Leave orders at Clark Davis' office or residence. DICK RABE, RICHARD DARE, America's Foremost Piano Tuners.

"Seymour Daily Republican" (Seymour, Indiana)

Saturday, March 13, 1915", Page 4

Notice Piano Owners. We tune, regulate, transpose, reface and adjust lost motion, sticking keys and squeaking pedals. We also clean pianos. Leave orders at Clark Davis' office or residence. DICK RABE, RICHARD DARE, America's Foremost Piano Tuners.

The ads above (transcribed from OCR text) are identical except for the words "JUST IN" appended to the beginning of the earlier ad—which implies that ad may be Rabe and Dare's first as a team. Though neither man appears in the two Seymour City Directories available online (1900 & 1915), the office and residence of Clark B. Davis referred to does.

Davis, Clark B.* (Emma), insurance and real estate, 719 N. Ewing; office, 21½ S. Chestnut.

1915 Seymour City Directory (excerpt), Seymour, Indiana, USA



Seymour, Kentucky (center), where Rabe advertised in March 1915, is 60 miles south of **Indianapolis** (top left), where both Wilson and Rabe lived in the fall of 1915, and is 50 miles north of **Louisville** (lower left), where Wilson lived just before moving to Indianapolis.

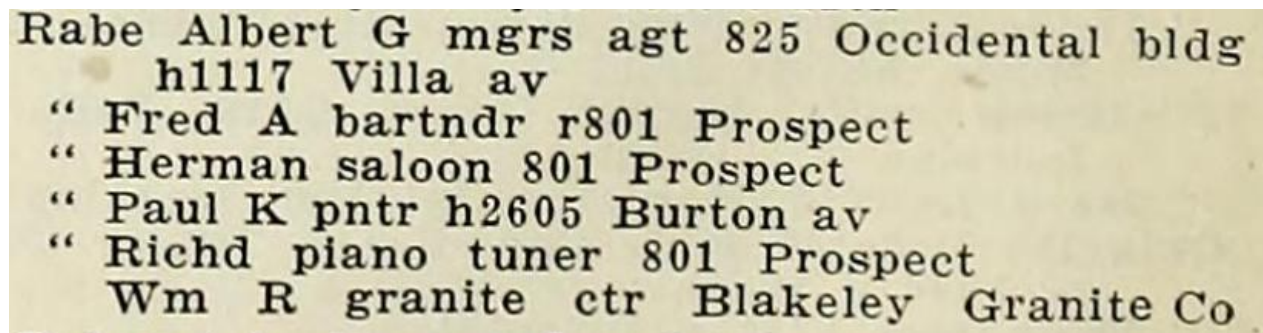
America's "Foremost" Piano Tuners Are...?

Despite the ads touting Rabe & Dare as "America's Foremost Piano Tuners," the bottom of the first page of "Piano Tuner's Walk-A-Way" advertises its composers "Wilson & Rabe" as "America's Foremost Piano Tuners"! Did Rabe and Dare (whom I can find no other trace of) go their separate ways, have a falling out, become a team **after** the Rabe & Wilson era, or, were

these piano technician “teams of two” interchangeable? The latter theory is supported by Rabe’s proclamation on the cover of “Bell of Bells” that he is: “Known as Dick Rabe, America’s Foremost and Fastest Piano Tuner.” (Interesting that Rabe is listed first in the ads, but second in PTWAW.)

Saloon Address—an intriguing clue

On the cover of “Bell of Bells,” Rabe’s address, 801 Prospect St., Indianapolis, is a saloon that by then had been owned and operated by Herman Rabe (1847-1930) for about ten years. Herman had emigrated from Germany in 1888 and appeared soon after in the Indianapolis City Directory. Dick may be Herman’s son (as Albert G., Fred A. and Paul K. are, according to the 1900 census), his nephew, or neither, but Dick designated Herman as his “nearest relative” on his 1918 draft registration.

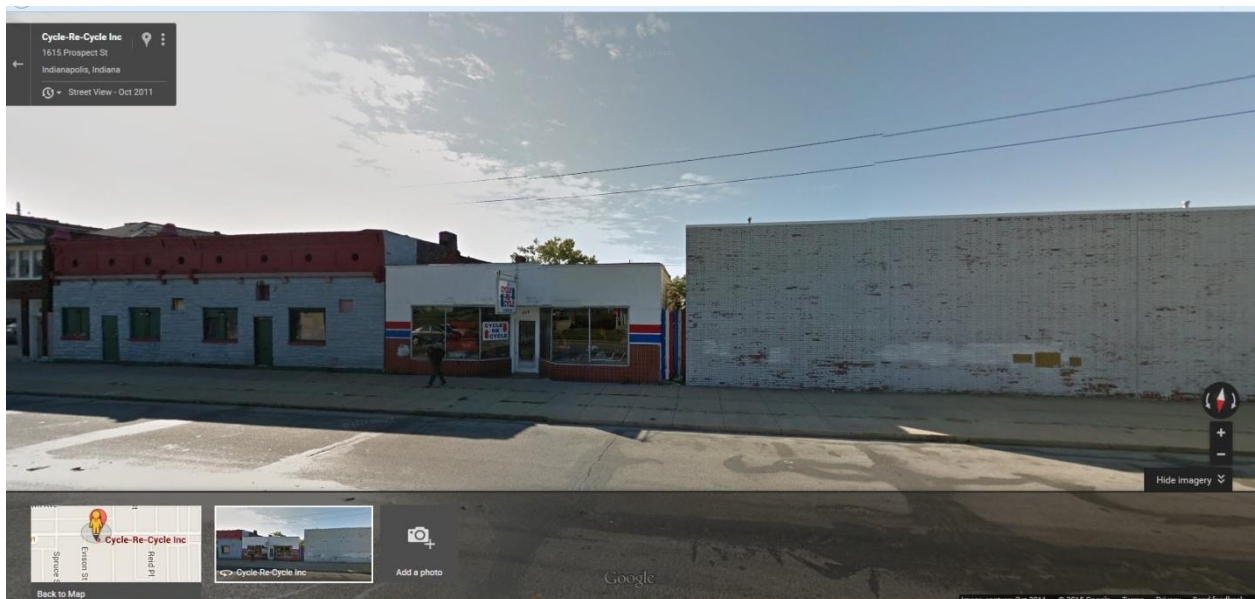


1917 Indianapolis City Directory excerpt

“Wilson & Rabe” Lost in the Mists of Time

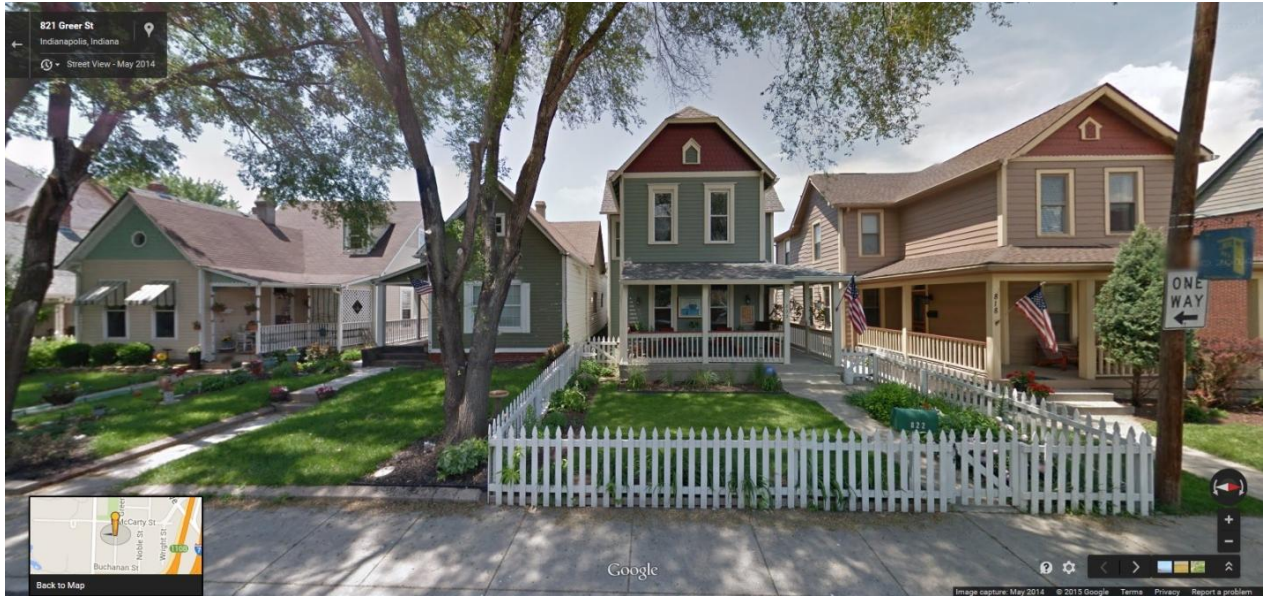
There was an 18 month recession in the US (and other countries) from January 1920 to July 1921. At its peak, unemployment jumped to nearly 12%. Business declined so much that prices plummeted (13% is a conservative estimate). Wilson disappears after 1921, Rabe after 1920.

By 1918, according to his draft card, Wilson was a “repairer & maker of musical instruments.” He later became a “musical instrument representative,” then, his profession was “music”—probably a music store, as the directories gave a separate address for his business. His last Indianapolis home address was 1618 Prospect. That neighborhood, in 2011, is pictured below.



1615 Prospect St., Indianapolis, Indiana (90 years after Wilson lived across the street)

In the 1918 Indianapolis directory Dick Rabe follows Herman Rabe (who must have retired as no profession is listed) to his new residence of 822 Greer St. On Dick's 1918 draft registration card, he states he's self-employed as a "Piano & Auto Mechanic" (interesting combination). Dick remained at 822 Greer St. until he left Indianapolis for parts unknown. Amazingly, I wasn't able to locate him in any US censuses between 1900 and 1940.



819 & 821 Greer St., Indianapolis, Indiana, today (across the street from 822 Greer St.)

It's my hope that both Wilson & Rabe thrived in the "Roaring 20's," survived the Great Depression unscathed, and lived long lives, but, so far I haven't been able to find any clue to their whereabouts or activities after 1921.

--Rob Crausaz

August 31, 2015