

Letter to the Editor . . .

Fred Dahlinger's article in the October 2009 *Carousel Organ* on Luigi Bacigalupo and his revelation that Luigi was in Leavenworth, Kan., and working for C.W. Parker from about 1915-16 to the end of 1919 put a whole new light on two style 165 rolls that have always puzzled serious collectors. Those two rolls can be seen in my online catalog at: <http://wurlitzer-rolls.com>, where they are called, erroneously, I now believe, the Bacigalupi Special roll and roll 6500.

We already knew, as Fred's article points out, that the Bacigalupi Special, even though a Play-Rite recut, is identical, note for note, to an original roll in Bill Black's collection which is labeled as being made at the C.W. Parker Factory, Leavenworth, Kansas, and numbered as "Roll #3." The Play-Rite recut was given the title "Bacigalupi Special" and issued with the comment: "This roll was not arranged by Wurlitzer. It was done by P. Bacigalupi who did band organ repair and music arranging in Los Angeles, CA, up through the 1950s. The arrangements are superb and are drastically different from Wurlitzer's."

We do not know the source of the Play-Rite recut or of the comment attached to it, but the attribution to P. Bacigalupi is clearly wrong, probably stemming from confusion with Luigi Bacigalupo. But the missing part of the puzzle, now provided by Fred's research, was any Bacigalupi/Bacigalupo/Parker connection. Not knowing that connection and misled by

the Play-Rite note and by the fact that the roll was a 165-scale roll, I looked in the wrong direction for answers. Clouding the picture was a probably-incorrect report that in the Depression years Wurlitzer had sold some roll-making equipment to Parker.

Six of the seven tunes on the roll date from 1914 to 1918; the other tune dates to 1854. Three of the tunes are also found on existing Wurlitzer rolls. I have never compared the Wurlitzer versions with the Parker/Bacigalupi versions, but that now cries out to be done. I strongly believe that they will prove to be different arrangements.

Fred has laid out the evidence for concluding that Parker roll #3 was hand-punched and not made on a Wurlitzer perforator. The images I have seen of Bill Black's copy of roll #3 (images provably not made with any magnification) show that it was produced using punches of significantly larger diameter than those on Wurlitzer's perforators.

So the clearer and more accurate picture now emerges of C.W. Parker having issued at least three style 165 rolls, using the talents of Luigi Bacigalupo and some kind of simple punching machine around 1919 in Leavenworth. Thanks, Fred and Bill!

But three rolls. What about the other two, or possible more?

The roll shown in my online 165 roll catalog as roll 6500 has troubled me for years. First, Wurlitzer did not usually start its roll numbering with xxx00 but with xxx01. Nine of the ten tunes on that roll date between 1917 and 1919; the tenth dates to 1897. Five of the ten tunes were issued by Wurlitzer on other

rolls, two of which tunes—and possibly three—are in entirely different arrangements. (Two of the repeated tunes are on lost rolls, and so can't be compared.) In the 1919 era Wurlitzer was issuing rolls 6501, 6502, and on, as "evergreen" rolls: rolls containing tunes of lasting popularity rather than hit tunes, rolls that could be stocked and sold for years to come. Why then does roll 6500 contain so many hit tunes of only passing interest and salability?

I have long thought that roll 6500 is not a Wurlitzer roll and that the number "6500"—which comes only from a type-written label on Ross Davis' copy—is wrong, a number assigned by Ross purely for convenience in shelving his rolls. But then whose roll, is it, if not Wurlitzer's? I think Fred has answered the question. Roll 6500 is a Parker roll. Perhaps Roll #1 or Roll #2, or even Roll #4. The exact number will probably never be known. But I do believe it is a Parker/Bacigalupo creation, not part of the Rudolph Wurlitzer Company's production, as has been assumed. Again, thanks, Fred!

Matthew Caulfield

P.S. Although it probably doesn't mean much, Jimmy Drew has in his 165 roll collection a variant recut of the "Bacigalupi Special" roll. It has a shorter version of tune 1, *Poet and Peasant Overture*, and adds Harry J. Lincoln's *Old Hickory* between tune 6 and what was tune 7.

It seems that every time a mystery is solved, another one crops up.

—Check out the COAA website at www.COAA.us—

Carousel Organ Advertising Rates (4 issues)

Business card (\$25.00); ¼ page (\$60.00); ½ page (\$100.00) and one page (\$195.00).

Color advertising: 1/2 page (\$125.00 one time only) and one page (\$195.00 one time only).

Send copy and payment to:

Angelo Rulli
4550 Evergreen Drive
St. Paul, MN 55127

651-775-7575

David E. Stumpf

Custom Made
Wurlitzer 125, 150, 165
Band Organ Rolls

810 Carl Avenue
New Kensington, PA 15068
724-337-8819