



Located close to Strathroy since 1983, Ralph has a natural interest in the local piano industry. Here is a brief article on Wright pianos. For more information read "Downright Upright" by Wayne Kelly (containing contributions from Clark Wright and Ralph Thorn), and "Zestful Lives" by Dr. Mary Wright.

The first Wright pianos were built in the rear of the E. J. Wright Musical Instruments store at 11 Front Street West. After their initial success the large brick factory was constructed on Oxford Street near Metcalfe Street West, opening in 1908 at the time when skilled labour was available due to a strike in Toronto.

Wright pianos used the highest quality parts available. Wright Piano Co. supplied piano cases to a prominent Toronto piano firm in exchange for cast-iron plates from that company's Hamilton foundry. Actions and keyboards were supplied by the Otto Higel Company of Toronto (King at Bathurst). Pianos were shipped throughout Ontario and to the west, local transport conducted by horse-drawn wagon from the Red Barn on McKellar Street. The company built uprights in the popular sizes of the period.

The factory suffered a total loss due to fire in 1924, bringing production to a permanent halt. After that date, Wright pianos were built to their specifications by other firms and sold from the Strathroy store.

The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc owns an example of the largest Wright piano model, an instrument that was used for many years at the Strathroy Library Auditorium. Rebuilt by Ralph Thorn in 1986, it has been used for many concerts and recitals. Pictures on this document are of that instrument.

