



Coming Home

THE FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY
CONVENTION

of the
ORGAN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

SARATOGA
SPRINGS
NEW YORK
25 to 30 JUNE 2006

by Stephen L. Pinel
General Chairman

PHOTOS *by* VICTOR HOYT



EACH MORNING OF CONVENTION 2006, Society members are urged to rise sharply at 6:30 a.m., take a glass of ice, and proceed downstairs out the back of the hotel, walking briskly toward the end of the parking lot. Across the street from the Old Bryan Inn, descend a flight of fifty-eight stairs through the thicket and into a clearing.

Directly in front of you is the High Rock Spring, which is protected from the elements by a Victorian pavilion. Almost two and a half centuries ago, Sir William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in North America, visited this very spot in 1771. In poor health, he was affectionately transported through the wilderness by the Iroquois Indians to the “Medicine Spring of the Great Spirit” to facilitate his cure. Now fill the cup from the spigot, momentarily pausing to allow the natural carbonation to bubble up against the sides of the glass, and, slowly, take the waters....

While novices to the springs initially grimace at the strong flavor of the minerals, if you follow this regimen daily, by the end of the convention you will be filled with extraordinary vigor and a youthful vitality. Taste the other spring waters as well—the old Congress, Columbian, and Deer Park Springs in the park, the Hathorn No. 1 at the corner of Putnam and Spring Streets, known as a digestive curative, and the Old Red Spring on Excelsior Avenue, with its high iron content, said to heal skin disorders. You will be joining a two-and-a-half-century ritual of physical renewal that has made Saratoga Springs one of the

most sought-after places of summer resort in the world. Many American icons drank these precious waters: George Washington, Philip Schuyler, Alexander Hamilton, Ulysses S. Grant, Diamond Jim Brady, Lillian Russell, Edgar Allen Poe, and Cornelius Vanderbilt. Even George Jardine—the famous New York organ-builder—took these waters in 1842.

Obviously, Saratoga Springs is more than salubrious springs. Founded by Gideon Putnam (1764–1812) in 1800, Saratoga Springs by the mid-nineteenth century had become a burgeoning urban community. Enormous Victorian hotels—especially the Adelphi (still in operation), Clarendon, Grand Union, Union Hall, and United States hotels—lined Broadway with block-long piazzas, and boasted hundreds of guest rooms, oversized ballrooms, and exquisite food. America’s most famous nineteenth-century bands and orchestras entertained summer guests daily after their morning spa treatments. Once Canfield Casino opened in 1870, John Morrissey (d. 1878) began a gambling operation that continued well into the twentieth century before government agents shut it down. Horse racing at *The Track* had its origins during the Civil War, and continues today as one of the

area's great pastimes. Saratoga Lake brings swimmers, campers and boating to the area, and nearby Mount McGregor provides opportunities for hiking and climbing. Today, Saratoga Springs is known for the Performing Arts Center—the summer home of the New York City Ballet and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Saratoga Springs literally comes to life after dark, with wonderful dining and exciting nightlife. Thousands of visitors promenade up and down Broadway, join friends in eateries and local pubs for libations, and relish in the delights of warm summer evenings. Saratoga Springs, one of New York State's greatest travel destinations, is the headquarters for the 2006 OHS convention.

Welcome members, friends, and colleagues to the fiftieth anniversary of the Organ Historical Society! On 27 June 1956, in the choir room of St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City, †Dorothy Ballinger, †Homer Blanchard, †Robert Clawson, †Horace Douglass, †Donald R.M. Paterson, †Albert Robinson, †Charlene and †Kenneth Simmons, Randall Wagner, and Barbara Owen—disparate folks connected only by their seminal interest in antique American organs—met to determine whether there was enough interest to form an organization. Later that day, the small troop toured a series of churches. After knocking on one rectory door, the housekeeper inquired “Who may I say is calling?” Dr. Blanchard piped up, and without a moment's hesitation asserted: “The Organ Historical Society!” Albie Robinson volunteered to mimeograph a newsletter, and, with these humble beginnings, the Society was up and running. During our convention, the actual golden anniversary falls on Tuesday 27 June, but we'll wait until Friday afternoon and evening for the real party—a formal banquet at the magnificent Hall of Springs, and the re-opening of the three-manual, 1882 J.H. & C.S. Odell organ in the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall.

Anniversaries are a time to pause, look back with thanks, acknowledge the graces of the present, strive to make things better tomorrow, and look to the future with hope. Obviously, much work for our Society remains. Choosing the theme *Coming Home*, the 2006 Convention Committee has put together an extraordinary conference, unique for its number of unaltered (or nearly unaltered) organs. Our best North American makers are represented by pristine examples of the work of Aeolian-Skinner, Augustus Backus, Giles Beach, Casavant Frères Limitée, Davis & Ferris, E. & G.G. Hook, Hook & Hastings, Hutchings-Votey, Geo. Jardine & Son, J.H. & C.S. Odell, Johnson & Son, Ernest M. Skinner, and Woodberry & Harris. We will savor a silent movie accompanied by a Wurlitzer in a restored 1920s

Page 13: *The former Cornwallville Methodist Episcopal Church on the grounds of the Farmer's Museum, New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown, New York. Opposite:* Mount Equinox in Southwestern Vermont as seen from Route 315 east of Rupert. **Above:** The 1849 Giles Beach organ at the Farmer's Museum will be demonstrated by Professor Eugene Roan of Westminster Choir College, and assisted by John Burkhalter, flute. **Photo credit:** Stephen L. Pinel



vaudeville theatre. And, if current plans come to fruition, we will hear two wonderful programs with orchestra. In addition to splendid instruments, some of America's leading performers are on the roster, including Diane Meredith Belcher, Antonius Bittmann, R. Jelani Eddington, Joan Lippincott, Christopher Marks, Thomas Murray, Dana Robinson, Paul Tegels, and Tom Trenney. Add to this delectable smorgasbord the delicious regional food and a memorable dinner cruise on Lake George—reputed to be the most beautiful lake in North America—as well as the awe-inspiring scenery of rural New York and Vermont. The 2006 convention will provide an opportunity to re-acquaint ourselves with colleagues, forge new friendships, and enjoy a *tour-de-force* program of integrity, featuring the best of our domestic organ landscape.

The Saratoga Hotel & Conference Center on North Broadway will serve as home. Renovated during the fall of 2005, this comfortable facility will be in perfect order when we arrive. Within easy walking distance of excellent restaurants, pubs, and shopping, the hotel is easily accessible by bus, train, or car, and there is plenty of free parking. A shuttle will connect you with the Albany International Airport, but advanced reservations will be necessary; check the registration brochure for updated information. The conference schedule, which runs



from late Sunday afternoon (25 June) to Friday evening (30 June), means that church musicians can attend the convention without missing Sunday morning, and no one who works a Monday-to-Friday job will have to take more than a week's vacation. Keeping in mind that convention-goers dislike being held captive for long days, the committee has scheduled a return to the hotel each afternoon except Monday, allowing time to freshen or rest before dinner. Those wishing to opt out of a day (or an evening) will have the opportunity. Please note one other difference this year: the convention has been shortened to five days and an evening; this will reduce costs, with fewer meals, fewer days in the hotel, and fewer days on buses.

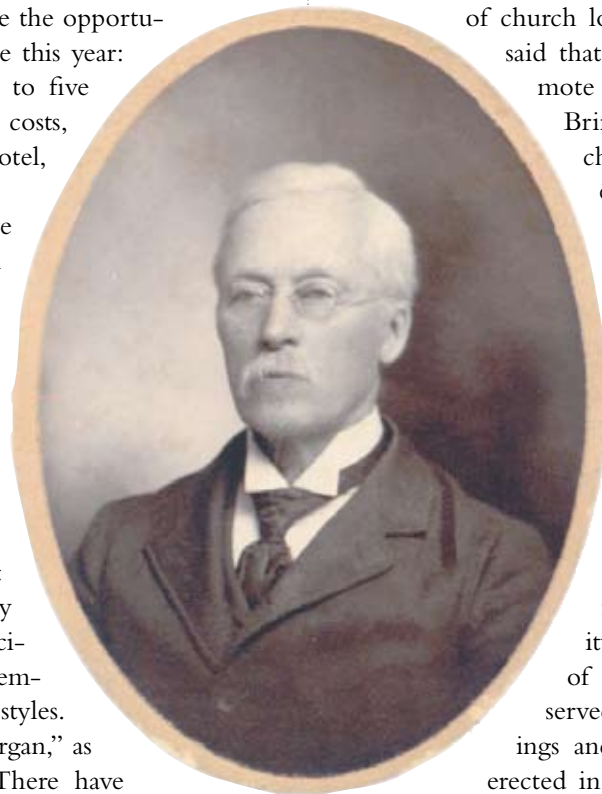
During the past half century, the Organ Historical Society has had an impact on the organ culture of this country and others. The British Institute of Organ Studies and the Organ Historical Trust of Australia—two of our sister organizations abroad—are in many ways modeled on the foundations we established during this past half century. To our credit, most in the profession do not view an old organ now the way they did in 1956. There is a renewed appreciation, a wider understanding, and a seminal respect for organs in different styles. There is no “Golden Age of the Organ,” as E. Power Biggs once proclaimed. There have been beautiful instruments made by conscientious and artistic craftsmen in every period, and one good Hook is not better than one good Skinner, any more than mechanical action is better than electric or tubular pneumatic actions; each is good for the music it serves. The Organ Historical Society has played a part in generating this larger, broader, and better understanding of the instrument in all its variety. These are great reasons to gather in Saratoga Springs as a Society, to rejoin our hands in solidarity, and to gaze boldly and proudly into the future. 2006—our Golden Anniversary year—is a time to celebrate this Society, and celebrate we shall!

SUNDAY

The conference kicks off with a presentation by Barbara Owen—one of our founders, and the Society's first president. Speaking at the hotel, she will reminisce about the early days of the OHS for those of us too young to remember. After a short ride, we will begin with a country barbeque on the original grounds of the Round Lake Camp Meeting Association. The caterers, Brook's House of Bar-B-Q of Oneonta, New York, are nationally renown for their succulent chicken. For

those preferring alternate fare, there will be choices, including salads, pasta, rolls, and juicy watermelon for dessert. Throughout dinner, the Round Lake United Methodist Church (two blocks away) will welcome OHS members at an open key-desk. Installed in March 1907, this two-manual J.W. Steere & Son tracker organ is unaltered except for the addition of an electric blower in 1932. Partially funded by Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919), this organ is accompanied by an amusing bit of church lore. When first approached, Carnegie said that Round Lake was too small and remote a hamlet to consider for a grant. Mrs. Brink, a stalwart Methodist and longtime church member, wrote a strongly worded letter back to Carnegie saying that “people in small villages like good music, too.” Immediately, the generous philanthropist sent Mrs. Brink a check for \$600, just under half the cost of the \$1300 organ, which was first used on Sunday morning 7 April 1907.

Round Lake was established in 1868 by Joseph Hillman (1823–90), an insurance broker and prominent Methodist churchman, who bought forty acres of property in the vicinity for religious purposes. Until the end of the nineteenth century, the grounds served primarily for Methodist camp meetings and revivals. The Auditorium structure, erected in 1876 (and enlarged for the Davis & Ferris organ in 1888), protected the faithful from the elements. There is no American organ anywhere that is more appropriate to initiate the Society's golden anniversary. The oldest large, nearly intact three-manual organ in the United States, this instrument was built in 1847 by a New York organ-building partnership known as Davis & Ferris (William H. Davis, 1816–88, and Richard M. Ferris, 1818–58). Ordered by the music committee of Calvary Episcopal Church in New York City, it was relocated in 1888 to the Round Lake Auditorium by Giles Beach (1826–1906), an organbuilder from Gloversville, New York, about whom you will hear much during this convention. While the instrument has had mechanical changes, virtually all of the sounding portions of the instrument (i.e.,



Opposite: The magnificent four-manual organ, Casavant Frères, Limitée, Opus 1420 (1931), at St. James' R.C. Church, Delaware Avenue, Albany, will be played on Tuesday evening by Diane Meredith Belcher, Professor of Organ at Westminster Choir College, Princeton, New Jersey. Above: Giles Beach (1826–1906). This original photograph is used through the courtesy of the Rev. Matthew B. Splittgerber, the Church Council, and the congregation of the Kingsboro Assembly of God, Gloversville, New York.



the wind system, chests, and pipework) are intact, providing us a “living” record of what a large urban organ of the time sounded like to its original listeners. The Davis & Ferris organ has many firsts in American organ history: the liberal use of zinc in its pipework; two enormous triple-rise reservoirs with inverted ribs; a Great chorus of doubled diapasons with two opens, two principals, and two mixtures; and a Swell box (with a hitch-down pedal!) with double-thick walls and four sets of shades. The firm was so proud of their use of zinc, that one stopknob is actually engraved “2nd Op. Diapason Zinc.” This very special organ and building have been tenderly cared for by Edna and the late Robert Van Duzee for nearly four decades, and in more recent times by Norman Walter. Both Edna and Norman (who have since married) have been longtime and influential Society members, and will warmly welcome the Society to Round Lake.

Romantic specialist Antonius Bittmann, who is originally from Germany, and The Mason Gross School of the Arts Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Mark Trautman, Music Director, will perform a program of nineteenth-century music, including the *Concerto in G Minor* by Josef Gabriel Rheinberger. For decades, the Auditorium and the Round Lake Festival Orchestra, directed by Glenn E. Soellner, has had a distinguished reputation for programming organ and orchestra repertoire. This instrument’s majestic sound merges perfectly with instruments, and Society members will have a firsthand opportunity to experience what all the fuss has been about. Following the concert, we will return to Saratoga Springs to visit the exhibits or enjoy an evening on the town.

MONDAY

Monday morning takes us to New York State’s *Leatherstocking Region*, of James Fenimore Cooper fame. Traveling west along the New York State Thruway, conventioners will savor the rolling hills of the Mohawk Valley, with the river on our right. The valley is still dotted by dairy farms, and we will see plenty of cows, horses, deer, and, if we are lucky, a flock of wild turkeys. Slowly, these large game birds are gaining in numbers in the region after near extinction a generation or two ago. The Mohawk Valley was once a bastion of family-owned farms, but the area has now seen better days, as large-scaled agriculture has moved south and west. One cannot help but be charmed by the many scenic vistas of this lovely, unspoiled countryside, calling to mind a simpler and more basic lifestyle than many of us have today.

Opposite and Above: *The façade and the keydesk of the 1847 Davis & Ferris organ at the Round Lake Auditorium. The instrument was moved to Round Lake in 1888 by Giles Beach. Antonius Bittmann, Music Director Mark Trautman, and the Mason Gross School of the Arts Chamber Orchestra will open the fiftieth-anniversary convention of the Society at Round Lake on Sunday evening.*



Our first stop will be Richfield Springs. Known in the nineteenth century for its white sulfur springs, the village became a spa like Saratoga Springs, but on a much smaller scale. Dividing into two groups, half of us will first visit the handsome St. John’s Episcopal Church on Main Street (Route 20), home of a magnificent and unaltered two-manual Hook & Hastings organ, Opus 1331, installed in March 1887. The striking board-and-batten frame building houses an elegant Victorian interior with a number of Tiffany windows, and virtually all of its original appointments. Donald K. Fellows, Director of Music at St. Paul’s Roman Catholic Cathedral in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, will demonstrate this wonderful organ. Take note of the fantastic front pipes, which remain in nearly perfect condition after a hundred and twenty years. If you have a moment, step back through the narrow hall behind the sacristy into the parish’s equally impressive chapel. This





lovely building is cared for by the Rev. John D. Bartle and a small but fervent congregation.

The other half of us will head east on Main Street to the Church of Christ Uniting (originally First Presbyterian), where former E. Power Biggs Fellow Michael J. Diorio will demonstrate a two-manual Farrand & Votey organ, Opus 761, installed in August 1896. Michael, formerly the diocesan organist at Trinity Cathedral in Trenton, New Jersey, is currently serving Washington Memorial Chapel in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. What is unique about this instrument is its case, which was designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933). The organ was ordered by Anita McCormick Blaine as a memorial to her deceased husband. James Blaine had been vice president of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad; he died suddenly in 1892 as a relatively young man, and after they had been married only three years. Newspaper articles relate that it took twenty men, carving full-time for six months, to manufacture the matching cases at the front of the room. The color scheme on the church's walls—intense Indian red and Persian blue—was also part of the original Tiffany scheme. The Farrand & Votey organ originally cost \$5430, and was an early all-electric action instrument. As with many transitional actions, it later failed and was re-electrified during the 1940s, reputedly by William H. Barlow of Utica, New York.

Opposite: *The two-manual organ, Farrand & Votey, Opus 761 (1896), at the Church of Christ Uniting, Richfield Springs, is housed in two marching cases designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933). This instrument will be demonstrated by 2004 E. Power Biggs Fellow Michael J. Diorio. Above:* *An 1850 painting, “Cooperstown from Three Mile Point” by Louis Remy Mignot (1831–1870) and Julius Gollman (d. 1898), is shown on a modern postcard.*

In 2001, the surviving material of the 1896 instrument was preserved in a rebuild by longtime OHS member Sidney R. Chase, of Worcester, New York. Before leaving, note the matching Tiffany chancel furniture, also a gift of Mrs. Blaine. Dr. Charles Schoenlein, an OHS member and a pillar of the greater Richfield Springs community, will welcome us as the church's representative. Following our stops in Richfield, a short bus ride will take us to the picturesque village of Cooperstown.

After breaking into four groups, we will enjoy the sumptuous luncheon buffet at the Otesaga Hotel, tour the Farmer's Museum, and hear the one-manual Giles Beach organ in the former Cornwallville Methodist Church. Afternoon events will be self-guided. The 1921 Otesaga Hotel, with its colonnaded portico, is stationed at the southern tip of Otsego Lake. Lunch will be served in the grand ballroom. After lunch, take a moment to walk out on the back veranda of the hotel, and spend a few moments in a rocker. The beauty and serenity of this panoramic scene is exquisite. Walk (about three blocks) or take the bus to the Farmer's Museum and tour the collections. The New York State Historical Association (established in 1899) has gathered an impressive collection of original buildings from around the state, and re-erected them on the Association grounds. Museum staff dressed in period costume will answer questions and demonstrate everyday tasks of farming life in rural, nineteenth-century New York. You may wish to visit the gift shop for books, postcards, or other souvenirs of country life.

At some point in the afternoon, meander over to the former Cornwallville Methodist Episcopal Church, where Professor Eugene Roan, formerly of Westminster Choir College, and his longtime colleague John Burkhalter will play a short program of mid-nineteenth-century American church music.

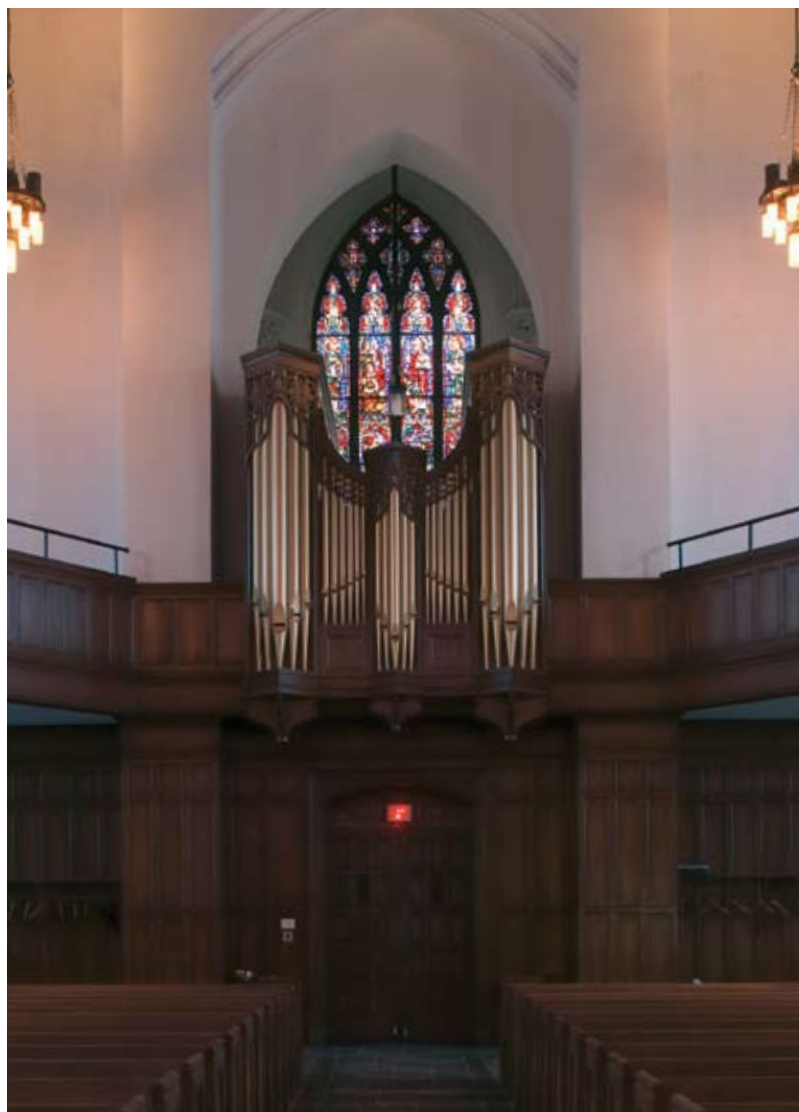


Built originally by Giles Beach in 1849 for Grace Episcopal Church in nearby Cherry Valley, the organ was lovingly restored in 1964 by Sid Chase. Besides its ingratiating allure, what makes this instrument salient is that it was probably Beach's first effort as an independent maker following his apprenticeship with Augustus Backus (1802–66) in Troy. The case is fashioned of butternut (a native Upstate New York wood often found in instruments of the region), and is in a vernacular style unlike anything built by Appleton, Erben, or the Hooks. Note the highly stylized end towers of the case, with their pointed pinnacles, which are reminiscent of the tower at the Kingsborough Presbyterian Church in Gloversville, New York, where Beach went to church as a youngster. Also notice the delightful acorn at the top of the central flat—a vernacular symbol of prosperity which replaced the ubiquitous bishop's mitre commonly found atop colonial instruments.

Some of you may wish to venture a bit farther than the Association grounds. A few blocks away, in Cooperstown center, is the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, and across the street from the Farmer's Museum is the Fenimore Art Museum, which houses the largest collection of Hudson River School paintings in existence. Their holdings include numerous canvases by Frederic Edwin Church, Thomas Cole, and Asher Durand. All these repositories have wonderful collections worth visiting. The Association also maintains an excellent research library whose reading room is open to the public five days a week for a modest fee. OHS member Katie Boardman and Carla Eckler of the Association kindly made the arrangements for our visit.

Late in the afternoon, we'll travel to Albany, where we will have supper at the Crown Plaza Hotel. After eating, you can take the bus or walk six blocks west to the Cathedral of All Saints at 62 South Swan Street. When walking you will observe some of Albany's more splendid architectural specimens. Proceed up State Street and note St. Peter's Episcopal Church on your right. Designed by Richard M. Upjohn (1828–1903), the building was completed in 1860. The handsome State Capitol Building is straight ahead, and was designed by Henry Hobson Richardson (1838–86). On your right in the next block is Albany's City Hall, another Richardsonian creation. The tower houses a forty-nine-bell carillon installed in 1927 that is still played entirely by mechanical action. The Masonic Lodge, behind City Hall, holds two nineteenth-century organs. In their Ten Eyck Room is J.W. Steere & Son, Opus 415/6 (1896),

Opposite: The splendid three-manual neo-baroque organ, Casavant Frères, Limitée, Opus 2819 (1966), at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Albany, will be played Tuesday morning by OHS National Secretary Stephen J. Schnurr. **Above:** A new Antiphonal case, designed by English organbuilder Stephen Bicknell, graces E.M. Skinner, Opus 780 (1930), at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Albany. Thomas Murray will play this wonderful four-manual organ for us on Tuesday morning.



and in the Weaver Room is Johnson & Son, Opus 442 (1875), both two-manual, mechanical-action organs. Continue walking up the right side of the Capitol Building. On your right is the enormous State Education Building, completed in 1913, and beyond the Capitol to the extreme left is the 1975 Empire State South Mall Complex. The two tall gothic towers of sandstone in the distance to the left belong to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, which was designed by Charles Patrick Keely (1816–96) and consecrated in 1852. This building originally housed one of Erben's largest three-manual organs, completed in November 1852. Turn right on South Swan Street, and the Cathedral of All Saints is on your right.

The Episcopal Diocese of Albany was established in 1868; the primary Bishop was William Crosswell Doane (1832–1913), who is still known today for the hymn text "Ancient of Days." An advocate of fine ecclesiastical music and a notorious high churchman, he was a man of great erudition. Doane was also very Catholic in his approach to diocesan organization, and saw the cathedral as the focal, spiritual, and ultimately phys-



ical center of his bishopric. When the time came to build a physical cathedral, Doane looked to the medieval examples in England and on the Continent for inspiration. After seeking proposals for two designs, the commission was awarded to Robert William Gibson (1854–1927), a relatively unknown Albany architect. Construction started in 1884, but the available funds were quickly spent. The building was completed to the triforium level, the clerestory continued in brick, and, ultimately, the roof was enclosed by timber in 1888. In 1902 J. Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913), a friend of the Bishop's, made a gift of \$200,000, and the chancel was completed and dedicated in 1904. Two western towers have never progressed beyond the foundation. At 260 feet long, All Saints was the first Anglican cathedral in the United States built on a scale comparable to that of the medieval structures of the Old World. Allen D. Carpenter, Administrative Assistant, and recent appointee Charles Burks, organist-choirmaster at the cathedral, will be our hosts.

The pro-cathedral (called the Foundry Chapel) originally had a two-manual organ built in 1881 by J.H. & C.S. Odell as their Opus 185. When the current Cathedral of All Saints was dedicated, the organ was enlarged to three manuals by adding a Solo division, and moved to the new building. Not voiced or intended for the space, it was never effective in the enormous church. In 1900, a contract was signed with the Austin Organ Company, and a new four-manual organ was erected under the supervision of Carlton Michell (1835–1921) in 1901. The organ had hardly been finished when it had to be dismantled for the completion of the chancel. Redesigned in 1904 under the direction of Robert Hope-Jones (1859–1914), who left Austin's employment before the organ was completed, the organ received a number of changes from its 1901 state, including reeds on twelve inches of pressure, a Willis-type pedalboard, and an added 32' Magnaton for increased power. A huge 32' Double Open Diapason of wood from the 1901 organ is still in use today. The instrument was revised again by Austin in 1927, and completely rebuilt under G. Donald Harrison (1889–1956) in the American Classic style in 1956, although the master builder did not live to see the completed instrument. In 1987 a new Antiphonal division was installed in the rear gallery by Austin Organs, Inc. The sound ranges from a mere whisper to a thunderous roar that is audible blocks away. We will be privileged to hear Dr. Joan Lippincott perform a varied program of large works. She is one of this country's great virtuosos, and, as former Head of the Organ Department at Westminster Choir College, she has taught two generations of loyal students. Following her concert, we will head back to Saratoga Springs.

Left: The three-manual Hutchings-Votey organ, Opus 1519 (1904), at the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Schenectady, will be demonstrated by 2006 Convention Committee member Alfred V. Fedak.

Opposite: The magnificent interior of this massive edifice, designed by architect Edward W. Loth of Troy, seats 2300 people.



TUESDAY

After breaking in two groups once more, we will return to Albany on Tuesday morning to hear two remarkable twentieth-century instruments: a three-manual organ designed by Lawrence Phelps (1923–99) of Casavant Frères, Limitée for St. Paul’s, and the splendid four-manual organ by Ernest M. Skinner at Westminster Church. The location of present-day Albany was “discovered” by Henry Hudson, a Dutch explorer in search of the Northwest Passage to China, when he sailed the *Halve Maen* up river from Manhattan in 1609. Representatives of the Dutch West India Company established a trading post (i.e., Beverwyck) for Beaver pelts at what later became Albany in 1614, six years before the Pilgrims landed. Because of its central location, Albany replaced Kingston as the capital of New York State in 1797. The city’s position on the Hudson River just south of the Mohawk made it an important transportation center. Robert Fulton (1765–1815) ran the first steamboat—the *Clermont*—from New York to Albany in 1807. In 1825 the Erie Canal opened, and in 1826 the Albany & Schenectady Railroad was granted a charter by the New York State Legislature. By the middle of the century, Albany was a major stop on the New York Central. Because of its wealth, the capital city had an illustrious organ history, reaching back to 1767, when David Tannenberg (1728–1804) built an organ for the German Reformed Church. During the nineteenth century most of the organs in Albany were built by Henry Erben, the Hooks, or William A. Johnson.

Aidan Cavanagh, the great Benedictine monk and post-conciliar liturgist wrote that “falsehood holds out against much in this world, but not against art!” The parable of the Skinner organ at Westminster Presbyterian Church is a classic example of this, as well as further confirmation of the Organ Historical Society’s validity on our fiftieth birthday. The contract for this luxurious, four-manual organ was signed 6 March 1929, and the installation occurred the following January. By the 1970s (like all organs of its kind), it needed cleaning, re-leathering, and renovations. Rather than repairing it, the congregation voted to acquire a state-of-the-art electronic instrument. “Bach Lives—by Computer” and “Technology Goes to Church” were the headlines in the Albany newspapers, and the marvel was dedicated on 22 May 1977. Two intuitive members of the congregation, Thomas and Ann Older, agreed to relocate the Skinner organ to their home on Washington Park, where the instrument resided for twenty-five years. By 2001 the tone of the electronic was grim and the circuitry undependable. Like any aging electronic gadget (how many readers still have their 1977 television, *Selectric II* typewriter, or first computer?) the twenty-four-year-old instrument was failing, and the congregation was forced to take action. Dr. and Mrs. Older graciously offered to return the Skinner to Westminster Church, and, without much hesitation, their gift was warmly accepted with heartfelt thanks.

Austin Organs, Inc., rebuilt the instrument, adding an antiphonal organ (in a case designed by Stephen Bicknell), and two-term OHS Vice President and 2006 Convention Committee member Scot L. Huntington did the tonal finishing. The organ was opened in a concert by organist John Weaver. In this triumph of truth over fallacy, Thomas Murray, Yale University Organist and a favorite OHS performer for more than a score of years, has agreed to play for us. Alfred V. Fedak, another 2006 Convention Committee member, and his wife Susan will welcome OHS members to Westminster Church.

When the Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza was erected during the 1960s and 1970s, St. Paul’s congregation lost their nineteenth-century building to eminent domain. The parish owned a three-manual 1915 Hutchings-Votey organ, which had been rebuilt by Ernest M. Skinner & Son of



Methuen, Massachusetts, in 1940. The congregation of St. Paul’s relocated to a new building, which was consecrated on 7 April 1966, on Hackett Boulevard. A history of the church relates that “The new church is a compromise between the contemporary and the traditional. Modern in exterior lines, it has a lofty nave, with windows in the sawtooth pattern of modern Coventry [Cathedral] in England, throwing light upon the altar.” The focal point of the building’s interior (in addition to the Altar of Sacrifice) is the spectacular reredos, which con-

Above: The keydesk of the two-manual organ built by Giles Beach in 1857 for the Kingsboro Assembly of God, Gloversville. The organ will be played by former OHS National Council member Sebastian Glück.

tains ecclesiastical symbols reminiscent of medieval times. Designed by H. Lee Hirsche, Professor of Art at Williams College, the design and fabrication of the piece, which represents the twelve apostles, took two years. Some of the original stained-glass windows from the former building are in the narthex. The church has excellent acoustics, and is home to a fine music program directed by organist and choirmaster Steven Rosenberry.

“The contract with Casavant Frères, Limitée, for Opus 2819, a substantial three-manual organ in neo-baroque style, was signed on 27 November 1963. The organist at the time, Clarence A. Hollister, requested “that the organ should be scaled and voiced in accordance with true classic traditions, with as much chuff, silver, coolness and fire as Casavant can produce.” Hollister was “highly pleased with the sound of Mar-



cussen organs and wants very much for the instrument in St. Paul’s to produce similar sounds.” The organ was dedicated by Vernon De Tar on 25 April 1966. Dr. Stephen J. Schnurr, Music Director at St. Paul’s Church in Valparaiso, Indiana, and two-term National Secretary of the Organ Historical Society, will play this superlative instrument for us.

About noon we will enjoy a box lunch at Peebles Island State Park, located in the middle of the Hudson River and opposite Waterford. The flow of the river changes direction here several times daily; even 150 miles north of New York Harbor, the Hudson River is still subject to the tides of the Atlantic Ocean. As the tide goes out, the river flows south, and when it comes in, it flows north. Walking across the

bridge toward Waterford, convention goers will inspect the first four locks of the original Erie Canal. Don’t miss an opportunity to visit this important relic of American commerce and travel. The mercantile affluence facilitated by the Grand Canal made “Gotham” the most important city in the world, and gave New York the moniker “The Empire State.” Many organs built by Erben, Hall & Labagh, Ferris, and others were sent to their destinations in New York, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and the rest of the Western Reserve through these four locks.

Following lunch, we will venture to Cohoes, New York, the original home of the Cohoes mastodon, the Harmony Mills, and the Great Cataract on the Mohawk River. The annual meeting will be held at the United Church of Cohoes (originally First Dutch Reformed), a large brick building of Romanesque design erected in 1860. Peter Krasinski will demonstrate the three-manual 1866 Giles Beach organ in the rear gallery. Although electrified and lacking its original wind system, the case, chests, and most of the pipework are intact. This is the only remaining three-manual organ built by a nineteenth-century Upstate New York maker. We will return to Saratoga Springs in the late afternoon, and after we have had a chance to relax, we’ll feast on prime rib at the hotel.

The evening event will take us south of Albany, to the magnificent Church of St. James on Delaware Avenue. Before entering the church, note the handsome neo-Dutch firehouse across the street, recalling the early days of Albany’s settlement by the Dutch. The Parish of St. James was established in 1913 and expanded rapidly during the second decade of the twentieth century. The spectacular edifice, designed by McGinnes & Walsh of Boston, was begun in 1927, and dedicated on 11 May 1929. Built of “seamfaced granite, Indiana limestone, and Tennessee marble,” the edifice has spectacular stained-glass windows designed by Charles J. Connick, with his characteristic emphasis on blue. With its eighty-five-foot ceiling and natural hard surfaces, the building has wonderful resonance.

The four-manual organ, Casavant Frères, Limitée, Opus 1420, is a first-class instrument by any standard. The organ was a gift to the church by several individuals in the parish, but, unfortunately, fate intervened. On 24 October 1929, “Black Thursday,” the stock market tumbled, ushering in the Great Depression. By the time the organ was completed, the original donors were unable to pay for it. Father Edward A. Riley, the pastor at the time, who already had an enormous mortgage on the building, was left holding the bag. The Casavant Brothers were more than gracious; the final payment was not made until 25 September 1943! The organ was first heard on Easter Day 1931, and the formal dedication was played by Pietro Yon (1886–1943) on 31 May of that same year. Energetic young virtuoso Diane Meredith Belcher, a professor of organ at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, will play this outstanding instrument for us. Sister Patricia



Houlihan, CSJ, the organist of St. James, will be our host for the evening.

WEDNESDAY

After spending Monday evening and all day Tuesday in the Capital Region, Wednesday's excursion will take us north-east into rural Washington County and southwestern Vermont. In many ways, this day will recapture the flavor of OHS conventions during the 1960s—*Coming Home*—or, “those good old days,” as some older members still refer to them. We won't have yellow school buses with no air-conditioning or bathrooms, however, though these were much a part of early OHS conventions.

Washington County is an area so rich in historical organs that we could spend several days touring here and still not see everything. Schylerville has three organs—a one-manual 1869 Geo. Jardine & Son organ at St. Stephen's Episcopal, a two-manual, 1756 organ by Richard Bridge of London (much rebuilt) at the Methodist Church, and a two-manual 1888 Felgemaker organ, Opus 497, at the Dutch Reformed Church. Greenwich has a two-manual 1883 Hook & Hastings organ, Opus 1146, in the United Church, and the empty case of Steere & Turner, Opus 32 (1870) in Bottskill Baptist Church. In Cambridge, there is a two-manual 1895 Emmons Howard organ in Embury United Methodist Church. First Presbyterian of Argyle has a two-manual 1898 Felgemaker organ, Opus 670. All the churches of Salem have old organs in various states of preservation. The Methodist Church has a two-manual 1892 Steere & Turner organ, Opus 339; First Presbyterian has a two-manual 1900 Felgemaker, Opus 696; and Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church has a two-manual 1901 Jesse Woodberry & Co., Opus 198. Newman Methodist in Shushan has a one-manual 1881 Steere & Turner, Opus 154, built for Emmanuel Reformed Church in Castleton, New York, and moved to Shushan in September 1912. Just north, in Granville, is an early Jardine from the late 1840s, and south, in Hoosick, at All Saints' Church is a two-manual 1870 E. & G.G. Hook organ, Opus 522. Unfortunately, there isn't time to visit these instruments; they are, however, a wonderful part of our upstate organ heritage.

Washington County is largely agricultural, the churches are tiny, and none of these localities have changed much in the last century or more. Today, two of the more distinctive products of the area are maple syrup and snappy cheese. You will

Above: Christ Church, Duaneburg, funded by James Duane (1733–97), then the Mayor of New York City, was erected in 1793. Left: The circa 1850 organ by Augustus Backus (1802–66) in Christ Church will be demonstrated by Derek Nickels and OHS National Councilor Allison Alcorn-Oppedahl. Opposite: The handsome, two-manual organ, Johnson & Son, Opus 843 (1896), at the First Baptist Church, Manchester Center, Vermont, will be played by Professor Grant Moss of Smith College.





***Above:** The keydesk of the three-manual Geo. Jardine & Son organ for St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Watervliet, New York, will be played on Friday by Randy Bourne. **Opposite:** The vast interior of St. Patrick's, Watervliet, was designed by architect Edward W. Loth of Troy, and has a one-hundred-foot ceiling.*





enjoy some breathtaking scenery, especially between Rupert and Manchester, and The Equinox at the base of Mount Equinox is one of New England's more cherished places. Because the venues are small, we will be breaking into four groups, and even then some people may have to stand. Even the Equinox cannot feed the entire group at once. The committee solved these logistical problems by having the buses leave in two shifts an hour apart. The first group leaves early, but gets back sooner; the second group leaves later, returning later. There will still be time to freshen and dress before an evening on Lake George.

All venues on Wednesday will be in rotation. St. Paul's, Salem, is our first stop. This lovely brick and stone church was consecrated in 1860; the tower and transepts were added during the 1880s as part of a planned enlargement that was never completed. The organ has been described by the Rev. E.A. Boadway as "one of the most important surviving E. & G.G. Hook organs of the pre-Civil War period." The instrument was built as Opus 189 in 1855 for the First Parish Church, Dorchester, Massachusetts. Moved to Salem by William J. Stuart & Brother of Albany in 1890, it was first played in St. Paul's on 23 February of that year. The woodwork above the flats is delightfully decorated with fruit, flowers, and shields, and below each impost is an open panel so the pipes appear to stand on balustrades. The organ's full principal chorus and pungent reeds are impressive. Lovingly cared for in recent decades by Robert C. Newton and the Andover Organ Company, it will be fully restored during the spring of 2006 by A. David Moore & Company of North Pomfret, Vermont. Paul Tegels, a Dutch native and faculty member at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, will demonstrate this organ. The Rev. Gary W. Kriss, Vicar, will welcome us to St. Paul's. As you leave the building, notice the charming little cherub window above the front door in the tower.

The itinerary continues with the United Presbyterian Church in Shushan, which houses a two-manual Woodberry & Harris organ, Opus 92, installed just before Christmas 1891. The tone of this lovely instrument is bold and fresh, and the organ is unaltered except for a modern wind system. Notice the elegant front pipes, stenciled in dark green, browns, and gold. Thomas Dressler of Albrightsville, Pennsylvania, and an OHS favorite in prior years, will play this lovely instrument for us. Edith Meikle, the organist of the church, will be our host.

Following lunch at the Equinox, we'll see two wonderful Johnson & Son organs in Vermont. First will be the United Methodist Church in Rupert. Both the building and the organ were a gift of Dr. Joseph Gould, a local physician who made

Left: The stunning two-manual organ built in 1865 by Giles Beach for the United Presbyterian Church, Schaghticoke, New York, will be played by Christopher Marks. Above: The recessed keydesk of the organ is fashioned of American black walnut.



money selling medicinal extracts. The amazing church interior in what is called the Adirondack Mountain Style is of milled white ash, which was brought to Rupert by horse and wagon from the southern Lake George region. The opera-house-style folding seats, rather than pews, are unusual. The two-manual organ, Johnson & Son's Opus 629 (1884), has brilliantly stenciled front pipes and a noble, round tone. Except for a modern wind system, the organ is intact. A longtime OHS advocate and frequent convention recitalist, Robert Barney, will demonstrate this organ. Kevin Bishop, the organist at the church, will be on hand to answer questions.

Our final stop is First Baptist Church of Manchester Center. This lovely church houses a two-manual organ, Johnson & Son's Opus 843 (1896), at the back of the room. Originally built for the Union Church in Proctor, Vermont, it was relocated to



Manchester in 1926 by members of the congregation. Restored by Robert C. Newton and the Andover Organ Company in 1974, the organ is known for its beautiful tone and majestic pipe stenciling. Dr. Grant Moss of Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, will play this lovely organ for us, and Jeffrey Linebeck, the church's organist, will be on hand to assist. Following our visit to these four instruments, we will return to the hotel in Saratoga Springs. Conventioneers will have time to freshen, grab a jacket, and take the bus to Lake George. *Le Lac du Sacrement* of the Lake George Steamboat Company is famous for its enjoyable dinner cruises. After returning to the hotel, we will enjoy another evening at the exhibits or on the town.

THURSDAY

On Thursday morning we will break into two groups; one will head to Gloversville and the Kingsboro Assembly of God, the other to Christ Church, Duaneburg. On this excursion, you will observe wonderful countryside west and south of Saratoga Springs. Of course, Gloversville is named for its glove makers. The 1875 *New York State Census* indicated that ninety percent of the working population of the city made their livelihood either as tanners or in a glove stitchery. Duaneburg was founded by James Duane (1733–97), a prominent lawyer, politico, and the first mayor of New York City (1784–89). He guided the young metropolis through reconstruction after the British occupation and surrender.

The Kingsboro Assembly of God (founded in 1793 as First Congregational Church, but known from 1853 to 1980 as First Presbyterian, after which it became the Assembly of God) was the Beach's family church. In 1826 Giles was baptized in the congregation's previous building, which stood across the street in the park, and, in 1851, he was married in the present stunning church, which was completed in 1838. The congregation had a small organ by the early 1840s (by an unknown maker), and after Giles completed his apprenticeship, he rebuilt the instrument. In November 1856 the congregation contracted with him for a larger organ, which was completed the following summer in what was likely his first two-manual instrument. The lowest pipe of the Fifteenth is inscribed: "CC 15th July 1857." Sebastian Glück, a respected organbuilder and skilled player, will demonstrate the instrument. Although not in great condition, the gentle, sweet tone of the organ is affirming and well worth

Above: The elegant two-manual organ, Johnson & Son, Opus 629 (1884), at the United Methodist Church, Rupert, Vermont, will be demonstrated by Robert Barney. Left: The keydesk of J.H. & C.S. Odell, Opus 190 (1882), at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall sits on a small balcony to the left of the case. Organist Dana Robinson, Conductor Lafranco Marchelletti, and the Franciscan Chamber Orchestra will play the Sinfonia Sacra by Charles Marie Widor for us on the closing night of the convention. Opposite: Hook & Hastings, Opus 1331 (1887), at St. John's Episcopal Church, Richfield Springs, New York.





hearing. We are grateful to Sebastian for his efforts in making the organ playable, and to Pastor Matthew B. Splittgerber, the Church Council, and the congregation of the Kingsboro Assembly of God for their gracious reception.

The other group will head to Christ Church, Duaneburg. Completed in 1793, this is the oldest church building in The Episcopal Diocese of Albany. Astonishingly, it managed to escape renovations by the tractarians during the Victorian and Edwardian eras. The eighteenth-century box pews, galleries on three sides, hourglass pulpit, and almost all of the original clear window glass survive. The organ, which originally stood in the gallery, was built in Troy by Augustus Backus. He established a shop there in the mid-1840s with ex-Appleton and Hook men, and was active until about 1852. No evidence has yet surfaced to date this instrument accurately, but stylistic elements—particularly the C-compass keyboard—suggest either 1850 or 1851 as the date of construction. The fake-grained case is especially elegant, with its flame carvings, and the original nameplate, mounted on the impost, reads “A. Backus, Troy, N.Y.” Only two other Backus organs are known. Derek Nickels and Dr. Allison Alcorn-Oppedahl, violin, two well-known and active OHS members from the Chicago area, will play a short program for us. The priest in charge, Rev. Shaw Mudge, is an advocate of local history, and happy to have the OHS visit this beautiful and historic location.

Following a box lunch, we will head to Schenectady. This urban center developed quickly in the nineteenth century because the Erie Canal flowed through the city center, and by the 1850s it was a major stop for the New York Central line. Train engines were actually built in Schenectady at the American Locomotive Works, and by the dawn of the twentieth century the city was renowned for the General Electric Company. That firm played a role in the construction of the Church of St. John the Evangelist. Just as public electricity was taking hold in urban centers across the country, St. John’s was completed in 1904. Electric lights were an important part of the design, just as gasoliers had been thirty and forty years earlier. This majestic ecclesiastical edifice, with a one-hundred-and-thirty foot ceiling, has recently been painstakingly restored by the congregation. It seats twenty-three hundred people, and the magnificent interior, pews, and stained-glass windows are

Left: The two-manual organ built in 1857 by Giles Beach at the Kingsboro Assembly of God, Gloversville, New York. Giles Beach was baptized in the former meeting house of the congregation—then the Kingsboro Presbyterian Church—and married in the current building in 1851.

Above: The 1866 three-manual organ built by Giles Beach for the United Church of Cohoes is the only surviving organ of its size by an Upstate New York maker. Peter Krasinski will demonstrate this instrument for us on Tuesday afternoon. Photo credit: Stephen L. Pinel. Right: The stately two-manual organ, Woodberry & Harris, Opus 92 (1891), at the United Presbyterian Church of Shushan, will be played by Thomas Dressler.





intact. In the tower is a 1925 chime of twenty-five tubes made by Deagen, as well as a bell cast in 1997.

The organ, Hutchings-Votey Opus 1519, was dedicated on 12 January 1904, by Belgian organist Auguste Wiegand (1849–1904). Felix Alexandre Guilment (1837–1911) played the instrument on his final American tour later that year. Still on its original windchests, this organ is a miracle survival of an early, all electric-action instrument. A new console was installed during the 1940s, but this three-manual instrument is largely intact in its 1904 state. The individual voices are of impeccable quality, and the cumulative effect of this instrument in the enormous space is aesthetically pleasing. The survival of this important organ is surely due to the dedication and hard work of its curator, Richard Campagnoni of Scotia, New York. Al Fedak will demonstrate the instrument for us.

The middle of the afternoon will find us at Proctor's Theatre on State Street. Opened on 27 December 1926, the building was intended for vaudeville, but as tastes changed, so did the programming. Today, Proctor's is at the center of the arts in Schenectady County, and it presents an extensive line-up of movies, dance, opera, and shows of all kinds, including Broadway. A trend-setting moment occurred on 22 May 1930, when an orchestra in the theatre was led by the image of a conductor projected on a seven-foot screen channeled in from General Electric, three miles away. This was the first public demonstration of television. During its heyday in the 1930s and 1940s, Proctor's hosted the foremost names of the Big Band Era—Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, and Benny Goodman, and renowned comedians Bob Hope and Red Skelton did regular appearances at Proctor's.

The three-manual Wurlitzer organ, warmly known as “Goldie,” was not heard until the day after the theatre opened. Costing some \$50,000, the *Union Star* said on 27 December 1927, “This organ is one of the largest outside New York City and will be

used for broadcasting as well as for furnishing music for the orchestra. The organist is Stephen E. Boisclair, widely known for his broadcasting.” We will enjoy a silent movie accompanied by the organ on our visit, and we will hear a demonstration on the instrument by R. Jelani Eddington, ATOS Theatre Organist of the Year for 2001. Goldie is currently looked after by a dedicated chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society.

After returning to Saratoga Springs, conventioners will have a few minutes to freshen and dress for the fiftieth-anniversary cocktail party at Canfield Casino. Located in Congress Park (an easy, five-block walk from the hotel), the gaming hall was built in 1870 at the height of Victorian extravagance, and it retains most of its original appointments. John Morrisey, the original proprietor, had a career as a prizefighter before settling in Saratoga Springs. He was also a state senator and a United States Congressman later in life. During the decades after the casino opened, some of the highest gambling stakes in the world were waged within its walls. On one summer day in 1902, John W. “Bet-a-Million” Gates lost \$400,000 at the race track during the afternoon, and that evening another \$500,000 gaming on the casino's second floor. Other famous Americans joined the fun, including Cornelius Vanderbilt, J. Pierpont Morgan, and members of the Whitney Family. The building is a spectacular architectural example: the bay window and other stained glass are by Tiffany, and the casino's dining room has glass ceiling panels. Following cocktails and *hors d'oeuvres*, conventioners will have dinner on your own in any of Saratoga's dozens of restaurants. The choices include steak, seafood, and other domestic standards, as well as a number of hyphenated-American establishments that offer ethnic selections.

That evening, Dr. Kelvin Hastie, a long-time OHS member and currently the National Secretary of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia, will present a lecture on Australia's historic organs. Featured in his presentation will be an introduction to the fabulous Sydney Town Hall organ—a five-manual, tubular-pneumatic instrument built by William Hill & Son in 1890, and which is perfectly preserved, including its original playing action! Most historians agree that more nineteenth-century British organs are preserved in Australia than in England, and since these builders influenced the makers here, this presentation will be rewarding to those who choose to attend it. Following the presentation, enjoy the remainder of the evening by walking down Broadway, or trying the spirits in a local pub.

FRIDAY

Friday morning will open at the hotel with a paper presented by James L. Wallmann. A corporate lawyer with Hanson Building

Above: Conventioners will enjoy cocktails and dinner aboard the steamboat Le Lac du Sacrement as she sails on Lake George on Wednesday evening. Opposite: The handsome tower of St. John's Episcopal Church, Richfield Springs, New York.





Materials America in San Francisco, he has been a member of the Governing Board of the American Organ Archives for many years, and is likely the world's authority on organ books. He will speak about the Society, and speculate on the challenges ahead for us. Next, we will venture to St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Watervliet. This splendid brick building was erected in 1890 as a copy of the Basilica of Our Lady, in Lourdes, France. The vaulted ceiling is 100 feet above the floor, and as soon as you enter the loggia outside the front doors of the church, you will gain an immediate perspective on just how huge this mammoth edifice is. The architect was Edward Loth of Troy, who made several trips to Lourdes to study his model. In the tower hangs the largest bell the Meneely Company of West Troy had cast to that date. Weighing 11,000 pounds and of seventy-seven percent copper and twenty-three percent block tin, the 1908 bell cost \$2,500, and rings an international pitch of B^b, bass clef.

The three-manual organ in the rear gallery was built by Geo. Jardine & Son, and was dedicated on 11 December 1890 in a recital featuring Edward G. Jardine. Clearly the rebuild of a much older instrument, Scot L. Huntington and Jonathan Ambrosino found the date 1867 and "Troy" on much of the pipework, but where the organ was previously is not known. The tone, while somewhat gentle in the huge space, is nonetheless beautiful. Randy Bourne, long-time Society member and a frequent OHS recitalist, will demonstrate the instrument. Thanks are extended to Father Edward Deimeke for placing this instrument at our disposal.

Lunch will consist of a summer cookout at the Spa State Park, just south of Saratoga Springs on Route 9. Giffie's of Clifton Park is known for their tasty burgers and hot dogs, but there will also be salads and plenty of other summer fare. There are a number of mineral springs in the park—the Spouting Geyser is perhaps the most famous—so lose the sodapop and take the opportunity to savor some of these youth-inducing waters.

After lunch we will break into groups and travel to Schaghticoke and Mechanicville. Schaghticoke, on the Hoosic River, is named after a local Indian tribe, and during the nineteenth century it was this country's primary producer of gunpowder. At the United Presbyterian Church, we will hear the best surviving example of Giles Beach's work. Built and installed in September 1865, this splendid two-manual organ, with its handsome tall case of black walnut, was impeccably restored in 1968 by OHS member Richard Hamar. The opening recital, played that year by Barbara Owen, made such an impression on the church people, that they still remember (and talk about) her to this day. The organ shows many Boston characteristics in its construction, and is an amazing survival of a fine New York State organ. We'll be treated to a program by Dr. Christopher Marks of Syracuse University, and among his selections is a commission written for the fiftieth anniversary of the Society by Al Fedak. Claudia Lee, clerk of the congregation, will be our host.

At the United Methodist Church of Mechanicville, we will hear Tom Trenney on an unaltered three-manual or-



Opposite: Breath-taking case details of J.H. & C.S. Odell, Opus 190 (1882), in the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall.
Above: The grand interior of the hall.





gan by the Skinner Organ Company, Opus 770. Installed as a memorial to Edward H. and Arthur L. Strang, the organ was dedicated at a service on 12 January 1930. Typical for Mr. Skinner, the quality of the individual voices is exceptional, and the total ensemble is wonderfully satisfying. The organ received some renovations by Leonard A. Carlson during the 1970s, but with no changes. Particularly comely are the two Echo stops, the Fern Flöte and Vox Humana, at the rear of the sanctuary. Also take note of the handsome stained-glass window. Known as the Howland Memorial Window, it was made and designed by Charles J. Connick of Boston; architects usually refer to it as “Connick Blue.” Dr. Alan C. Rhodes, the pastor, will welcome us. Following these recitals, we will return to Saratoga Springs, and conventioners will have time to dress before dinner.

Opposite: *The chancel of the Anglo-Catholic Cathedral of All Saints, Albany, is shown with an organ built by the Austin Company in 1904, and rebuilt by Aeolian-Skinner in 1956. Joan Lippincott, former Head of the Organ Department at Westminster Choir College, Princeton, New Jersey, will play for us on Monday evening. Above:* Proctor's Theatre, Schenectady, was built for Vaudeville in 1926 by Frederick F. Proctor. The Wurlitzer, affectionately known as “Goldie,” will be played by organist R. Jelani Eddington.

A cash bar at the Hall of Springs will begin the festivities of our anniversary. Staggered buses will run between the Hall and the hotel for those needing additional time to dress. Please note that appropriate attire is expected for this event (blue jeans or overalls are not appropriate!). Suits, white shirts and ties for the gentlemen, and evening gowns for the ladies are requested. The formal banquet will consist of a toast by Barbara Owen, followed by a sumptuous formal banquet accompanied by New York State wines. Following remarks by the president, we will proceed to the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall for the closing concert.

The *pièce de résistance* of the Society's gala, the “resurrection” of the Troy Music Hall organ after generations of silence, is a credit to the forethought, dedication, energy, and hard work of Scot L. Huntington and a group of very generous American organbuilders and a legion of enthusiastic volunteers from the local community. Many of you remember Scot's work on the E. & G.G. Hook organ, Opus 160 (1854), at the Church of St. Thomas Aquinas in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, for the 2000 OHS convention. That was a triumph for the Society, because we had the privilege of hearing a significant organ that had not been in playing condition for generations. This program at the Troy Music Hall will be no less of an event, and it will feature Dr. Dana



Robinson, one of the great American organists of his generation, and the Franciscan Chamber Orchestra lead by music director Lanfranco Marcelletti. The program has become a reality through the generosity of many people, including Scot, Dana, Laura C. Kratt (Executive Director of the Music Hall), Leslie Cheu of the Music Hall Foundation, Ann-Marie Barker Schwartz (Manager of the Franciscan Chamber Orchestra), Lanfranco, and Siena College, all of whom will contribute markedly to its success. This very special evening will represent the Organ Historical Society at its best, and it will be a fitting conclusion to our Golden Anniversary celebration. In our age of downsizing and minimalism—all characteristics of an anti-intellectual, anti-cultural, anti-organ, and ultimately, anti-Organ Historical Society culture, the fact that these diverse individuals and organizations can work so well together is an indication that not everyone endorses the pan-commercialism so prevalent in American society today. Your participation on this special evening, even if the organ is not functioning to its full potential, will be an extraordinary privilege.

Music Hall, as it was known in the nineteenth century, was a cultural gift to the people of the city by the Board of Directors of the Troy Savings Bank in gratitude for their liberal patronage. The magnificent structure designed by New York architect George B. Post is in the Italian Renaissance style. The first floor houses the bank's offices; the upper five floors comprise the Music Hall. Begun in 1871, the building was dedicated on 19 April 1875, with Theodore Thomas (1835–1905) leading

Above: This idyllic grouping in Cooperstown is a reminder of the agrarian way of life that was, until 1984, the lifeblood of the region.

the Thomas Orchestra. The building has always been revered for its outstanding acoustics, a fact usually attributed to the placement of the organ over the stage—apparently the scalloped shape of the organ floor focuses and projects any sound made beneath it, acting as an acoustical shell. By any standard, the Troy Music Hall is a fabulous venue, reminiscent of America's gilded age—a time when the country was enjoying unprecedented expansion in commerce, transportation, and manufacturing. The cost of the building, some \$435,000, was a staggering amount for the time. Along with Mechanics Hall in Worcester, Massachusetts, the Troy Music Hall is one of only two major nineteenth-century American concert halls with a period organ. What is different in Troy is that, while the 1864 E. & G.G. Hook instrument at Mechanics Hall is partly a reconstruction, the Troy organ is completely intact and fully restorable.

The three-manual instrument was built by J.H. & C.S. Odell, Opus 190 (1882), for the Fifth Avenue residence of William E. Belden, a notorious New York financier. Covertly working with Jay Gould and the infamous Jim Fisk, the three men artificially inflated the price of gold in September 1869, causing the stock market to crash. After thousands of Americans lost their life savings on what later became known as “Black Friday,” Belden, because of his involvement in the affair, was permanently banned from the Stock Exchange. This crude man had on-going legal problems with family, mistresses, and business associates, and squandered much of his later life as a defendant in New York's court system. Bankrupt by 1889, he was forced to sell the Odell, and, in 1893, he also lost his Fifth Avenue mansion. Good and evil make strange bedfellows—Belden's unprincipled behavior became Troy's and, ironically, our gain, when the bank's board acquired the organ. Had it remained on Fifth Avenue until 1893, it undoubtedly would have been seized by creditors.

The instrument was installed in the hall by the original makers in October 1890. Apparently the builders were concerned that the small scales of the pipework would be insufficient, despite the organ's ideal location high and centered over the stage. A number of alterations were made to increase its sound. The Great was enlarged from its 1882 state by the addition of a four-rank Clarion Mixture, a new (or re-voiced) Principal, Twelfth, and Fifteenth, and a new 16' Double Open Diapason (with open metal pipes all the way to the lowest note) was mounted in the center of the case. In the Pedal, a new 16' Double Open Diapason of wood was supplied, and the wind pressure for the 16' Trombone was increased from 4" to 6", ostensibly to match the 8' Solo Tuba (which was al-

ways on 6"). A further proposal by the Odell Brothers to add a 32' Subbass and a 10 $\frac{2}{3}$ ' Quint to the Pedal was rejected by the bank's board as too expensive, but would have added immeasurably to the instrument's total sound. Finally, a new and shallow case was built, and it was elegantly painted by Trojan Howard S. Dickson. The organ was inaugurated by Samuel P. Warren (1841–1915) of New York on 5 November 1890 before a capacity audience.

With a headline of "The Organ's Salutation!" an anonymous critic in the 6 November 1890 issue of the *Troy Daily Times* wrote: "Last night marked the beginning of a new musical epoch in the musical history of this city. It was also an event in the history of Troy's leading amusement-place. The grand organ which has been placed in Music Hall through the generosity of the management of the Savings Bank and the enterprise and supervision of some of Troy's best musicians, was formally inaugurated. The verdict of the large and appreciative audience that assembled was that the organ completed the desirable accessories of a music hall and was a noble addition to the musical resources of this city. Before the organ spoke for itself, it beamed a pleasant smile upon those who had come to hear its tones." For three decades afterwards, the organ was at the musical forefront of the city. Organ concerts were frequent, and even Alexandre Guilmant played the instrument in recital on one of his American tours.

In December 1924 the original Ross Water Engine and blowing apparatus (Troy-made, of course) were replaced with an electric Kinetic Blower by Arthur D. Beach (the son of Giles Beach), then a resident of the city. The Solo Tuba and Pedal Trombone were both voiced on 6" of pressure, but the Kinetic was only capable of producing a maximum of 4", so the two loudest stops in the organ were dramatically underwinded. At some point in the twentieth century (perhaps in 1924) the high-pressure reservoir and wind trunks were bypassed, although they remain, disconnected, inside the organ. By the 1960s, the leather of the main reservoir was in trouble, and thus this organ has really never been playable in living memory. Attempts were made by Scott Cantrell and others to use the organ during the 1979 Region II Convention of the American Guild of Organists, but those efforts failed to make the organ usable.

The primary reason the Organ Historical Society sponsors annual conventions is so our members can gather annually to hear instruments we might not experience otherwise. In recent generations, the Music Hall organ has been frequently talked about by organists, often in nearly mythological terms, and sometimes even garnering farcical legends like the "reeds were made in Paris by Aristide Cavallé-Coll!" Happily, the organ is one hundred percent New York made. So what does the organ in the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall sound like? Well, to answer that question honestly, no one knows quite yet. You'll have to register for the convention to find out.

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