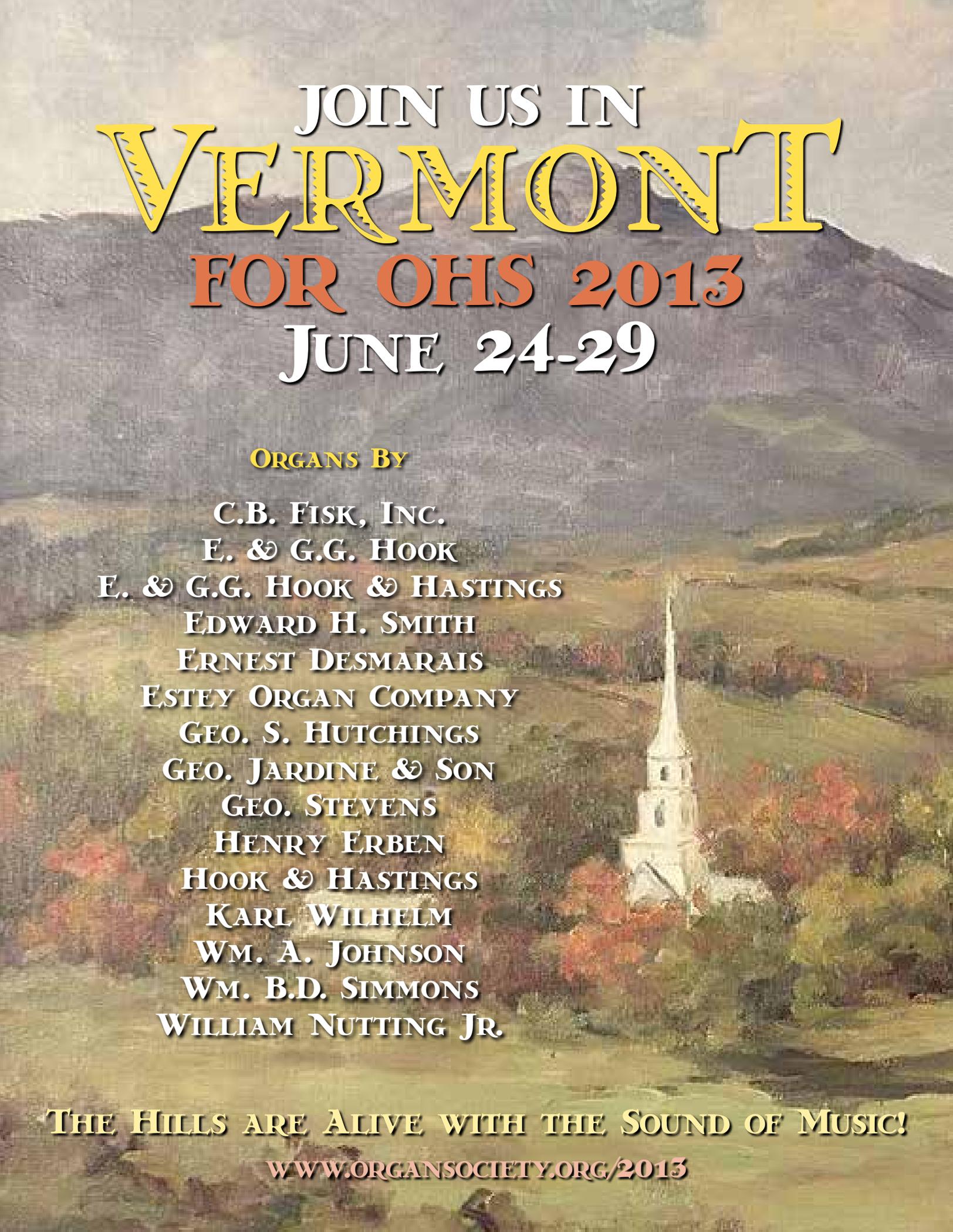


Volume 57, Number 1, Winter 2013

THE TRACKER

JOURNAL OF THE ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY





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FOR OHS 2013
JUNE 24-29

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VERMONT!

E.A. BOADWAY AND STEPHEN L. PINEL

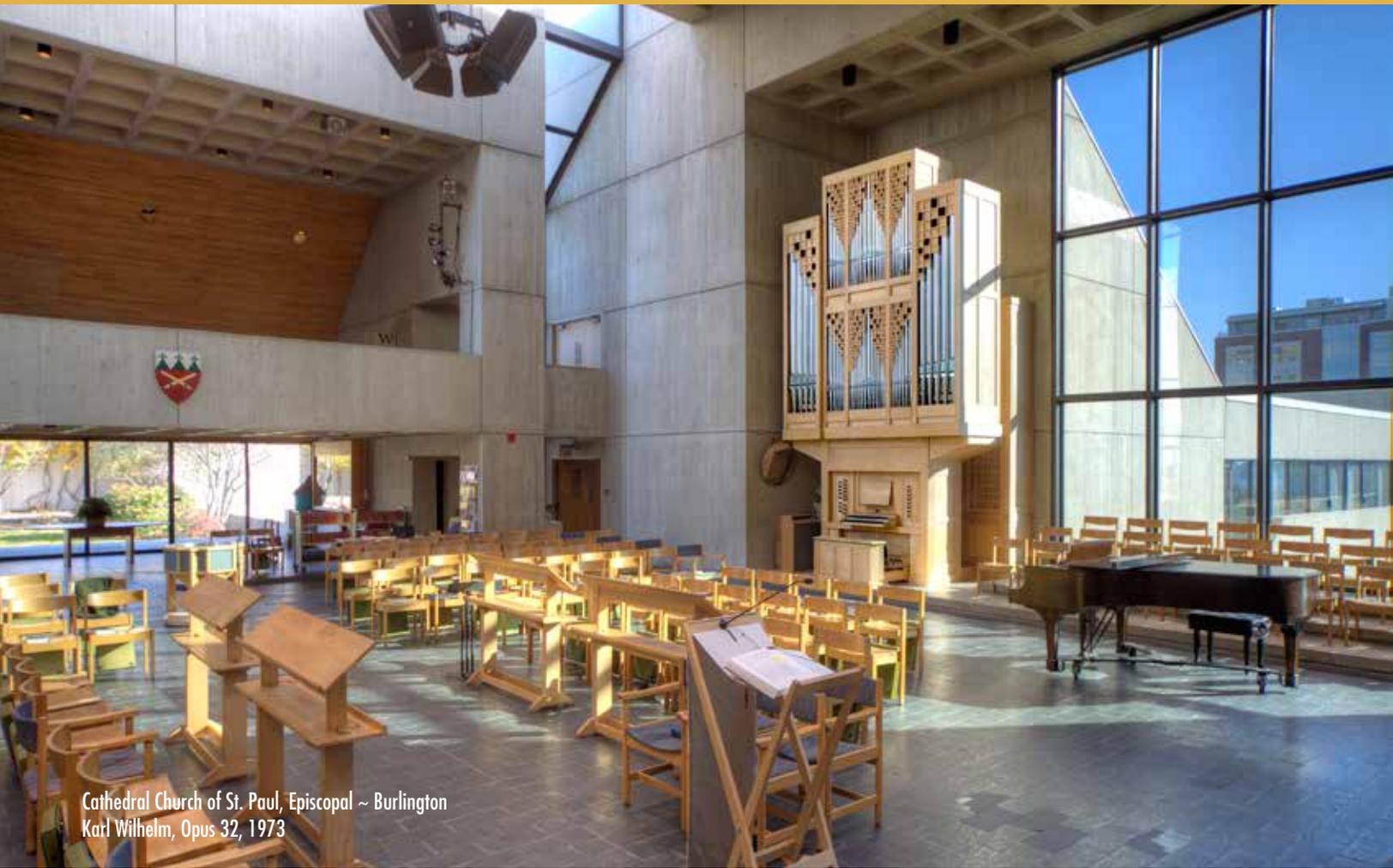
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ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S 58TH NATIONAL CONVENTION



VERMONT?



Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Episcopal ~ Burlington
Karl Wilhelm, Opus 32, 1973

EACH FEBRUARY IN THE LATE WINTER, as the sun rises higher in the sky and the days grow longer, a strange phenomenon occurs in the sugar maple (i.e., *Acer saccharum*), a tree indigenous to the Green Mountain State. While the nights are cold and the days warm, a sweet sap begins its journey up and down the mighty trunks of this revered species, known also for its spectacular red and orange colors during foliage season. Long before “white” Europeans settled the area that later became Vermont, the Abénaki Indians knew that this delectable sap was unmatched for its succulence and intensity. Some older residents of the state still call it “Vermont Scotch,” suggest-



ing that it compares favorably with Johnnie Walker Blue. For two and a half centuries, Vermont maple syrup has held a hallowed place among the harvest of the Northeast, and no trip to the Green Mountain State is complete without a generous shot of this mouth-watering delicacy on a piping-hot stack of griddle cakes or French toast. But a trip to Vermont offers far more than the tantalizing taste of “Northern Comfort.” No individual could possibly drive north on Interstate 89, passing the communities of Sharon, Royalton, Randolph, and Montpelier, and not be overwhelmed by the breathtaking beauty of the countryside. Vermont has one of

the smaller human populations of any U.S. state, so *Homo sapiens* have left a smaller footprint here than in most places. Sweeping vistas of unblemished scenery, pristine lakes, majestic mountains, and abundant wildlife have been untainted by humankind. You will see deer, ground hogs, pheasant, turkeys, and if you’re lucky, perhaps even a moose or a black bear. This is not to suggest that Vermont is uncivilized. There are a few commercial thoroughfares—Vermonters disdainfully call this “sprawl”—but it is not the norm. Montpelier is the only state capital in America without a McDonalds. Now isn’t *that* refreshing?

Vermont is also known for other hallmarks, including its covered bridges. These astonishing examples of country architecture—the “covers” keep snow and water off the wooden trusses—are engineered to support

2013 CONVENTION

twenty to thirty times their weight. They first appeared in the late eighteenth century and became increasingly common during the nineteenth. Today, 106 of Vermont's old covered bridges remain. Vermont is also one of the antique capitals of the world, with hundreds of shops located throughout the state. If you're a collector of virtually anything—coins, furniture, glass, postcards, pottery, rugs, or even stereoviews—there's a better-than-average chance you'll find a treasure somewhere in the state. Pick up a copy of *Antiques & Museums in and around Vermont*, the 2013 dealers' directory, or ring Mary Fraser at (802) 875-5944, and she'll be

happy to send you an advanced copy. (By the way, Vermonters still answer the phone when you ring. They are happy to speak to you, even if they've never met you!) Plan also to visit Ben & Jerry's for the best-ever "iced cream," the Cabot cheese factory for the state's tangiest cheddar, and Vermont Teddy Bears. In our age of government dysfunction, a sputtering economy, and life's uncertainties, Vermont is about basics. A trip to the Green Mountain State is just what the doctor orders!

Welcome, dear friends, to the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention of the Organ Historical Society, running between Monday, June 24, and Fri-

day, June 29, with an optional day on Saturday, June 30. After several urban conventions, many OHS members will relish a return to the picturesque villages of New England, where the Society got its start in 1956. We last visited the Green Mountain State in 1972, and while much has changed in the intervening forty-one years, the natural beauty, salubrious lifestyle, and splendid organs haven't. Plan your trip with a few added days either before or after the convention, and explore the many attractions available in one of the more sought-after travel destinations in the United States.

The convention will be based in Burlington, Vermont's largest city. It was named after the Earldom of Burlington, but is now usually referred to as the "Queen City." Burlington sits on the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, one of the most scenic in North America. It is also home to the University of Vermont (UVM), founded in 1791, and Champlain College. It is the seat of both the Episcopal and Roman Catholic bishops of Vermont. The city has two modern cathedrals; the former nineteenth-century buildings were destroyed by fire in 1971 and 1972. Today, Burlington is known for its sophisticated banking, business, education, finance, and law atmosphere, and for its many cultural offerings.

The charming and gracious Marilyn Polson, the organist of Bethany Church, Randolph, is our host, and the committee is comprised of E.A. Boadway, Lynnette Combs, Laurence W. Leonard, A. David Moore, Robert C. Newton, Carl Schwartz, David and Permelia Sears, John Weaver, and the author, with our Executive Director Jim Weaver and Convention Coordinator Dan Colburn advising. We may be "old-timers" from some perspectives, but we know how to throw a party!

Unitarian Church ~ Montpelier
Geo. Stevens, 1866



VERMONT?



Stowe Community Church ~ Stowe
Wm. B.D. Simmons & Co., 1864

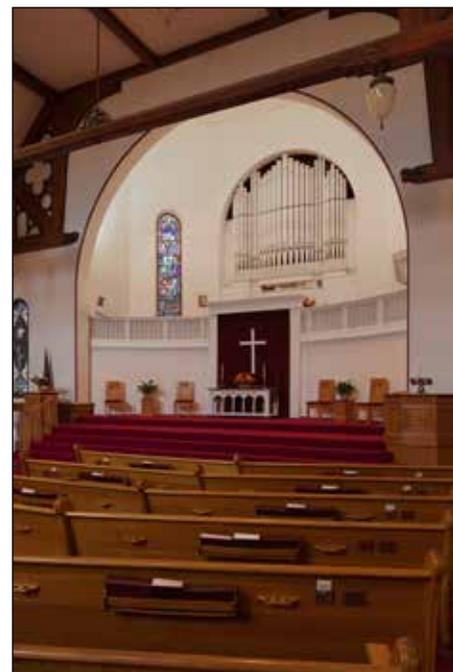
We'll be staying at the comfortable and modern Sheraton Burlington Hotel & Conference Center in the University District of the city. It is conveniently located one block off Exit 14 (Route 2) of Interstate 89, and is a pleasant, few-hour's drive from anywhere in the Northeast. Parking at the hotel is free! For those coming in from farther away, Amtrak's *The Vermonter* leaves Washington early in the morning, and after stopping in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Stamford, New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield, stops at Essex Junction in the evening near Burlington. The committee will provide a shuttle to the hotel on Sunday, but realize that if you take the train on Monday, the opening day of the convention, you will miss the evening event. For long-distance travelers, the Burlington International Airport offers flights to and from many locations. The Sheraton has complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport, but ring the concierge desk (802) 865-6600 at the hotel as you make your plans. A taxi from either



Grace Church, Episcopal ~ Sheldon
Henry Erben, 1833

the train station or the airport to the hotel runs about \$15. There is also *very* economical bus service (Greyhound) to and from Boston. No fooling, a one-way ticket bought in advance is just \$17. Go to www.greyhound.com for further information.

Unlike most states, even in the American Northeast, Vermont has had an active preservation movement since the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1907, the 1787 Rockingham Meeting House, one of the oldest ecclesiastical structures in the state, was restored. By the beginning of World War II, the state legislature had already enacted several commissions to encourage the preservation of Vermont's architectural heritage. Churches, downtown districts, libraries, railroad stations, and town halls were being preserved in Vermont at the very time these structures were lost to "renewal" in other places. Because of those efforts, many of Vermont's old organs have also survived. There are splendid examples by Henry Erben, the Estey Organ Company, Geo. S. Hutchings, Geo. Jardine



First Congregational Church ~ St. Albans
Hook & Hastings, Opus 1567, 1893

& Son, Wm. A. Johnson, Geo. Stevens, and the Hooks. It's been many years since a convention committee had such a smorgasbord of marvelous, historic instruments to choose from.

The convention opens on Monday evening, June 24. It features a program by the eminent American organist Joan Lippincott on the 3m 1976 Fisk organ at UVM. This remarkable organ did much to establish Charles Fisk's reputation as a visionary in the organ world. Based on a French Classic archetype, it was possibly the first American organ so conceived. Joan Lippincott has known, played, and recorded on Fisk instruments for decades, so she is the ideal artist to open the convention on this noteworthy organ. Following her recital, she will be the guest of the Society at a reception and book signing. The OHS will issue *The Gift of Music*, edited by Larry Biser, a *Festschrift* in her honor, and she will be available to inscribe copies of the book for her many admirers. She taught two generations of fiercely loyal



Bethany Congregational Church ~ Randolph
Geo. S. Hutchings, Opus 344, 1894

VERMONT?



Southwick Music Complex Recital Hall, University of Vermont ~ Burlington
C.B. Fisk, Inc., Opus 68, 1976

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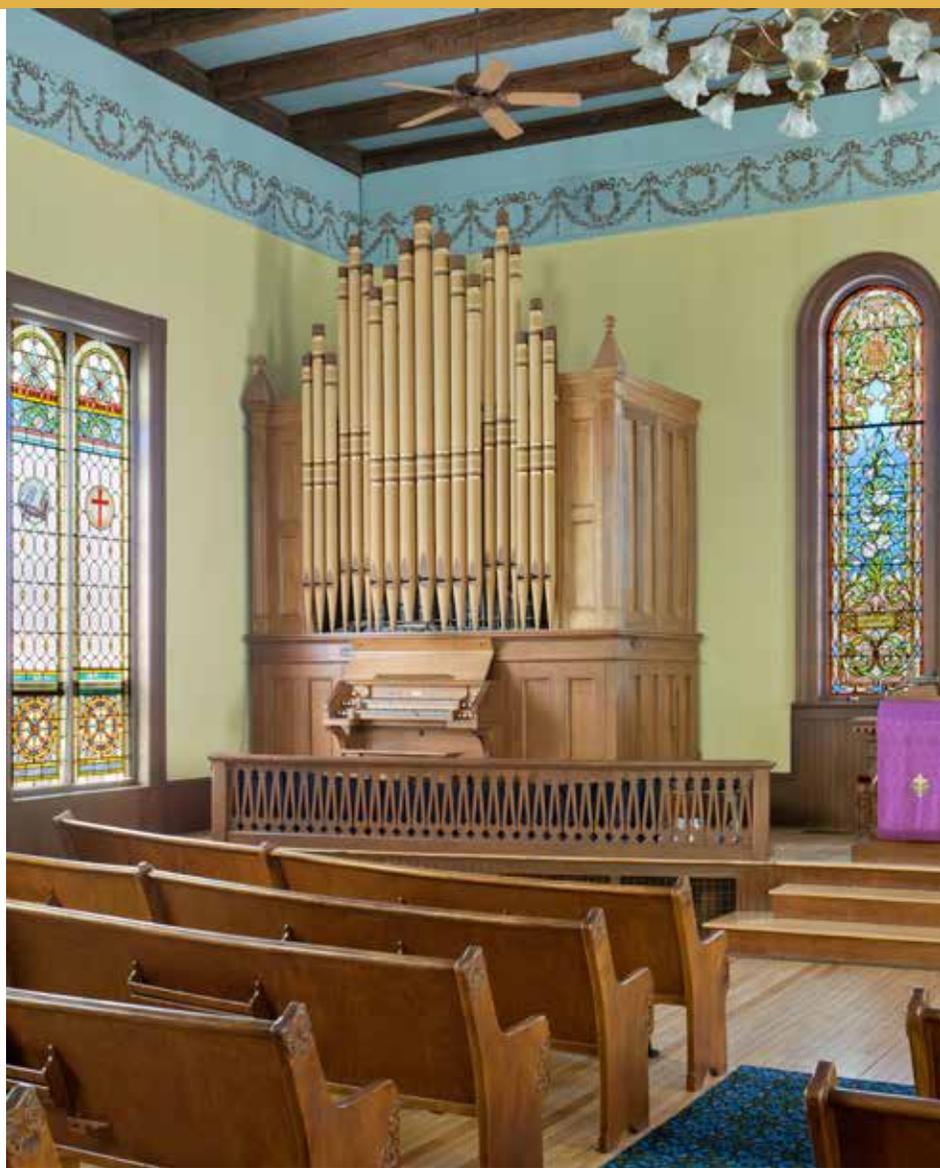
St. Paul's Church, Episcopal ~ Vergennes
E. & G.G. Hook, Opus 306, 1862

2013 CONVENTION

students at Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and later served at Princeton University. Her many recordings have received critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. Having already played at numerous OHS conventions and symposia in the past, Joan Lippincott has become one of the Society's more cherished performers.

Tuesday will take us to the lovely villages of Cabot, Greensboro, Hardwick, and Plainfield, where we will see and hear organs by E. & G.G. Hook & Hastings, Hook & Hastings, the Johnson Organ Company, and Edward H. Smith, one of Vermont's resident organbuilders. His 1889 organ in Hardwick is his only surviving instrument. Robert Barney, Lynnette Combs, Permelia Sears, and Rollin Smith, our distinguished director of publications, will demonstrate these instruments. Following dinner at the hotel, we will visit the chapel of St. Michael's College in nearby Winooski. Here we will hear a program of music for two chamber organs, reed organ, and strings, coordinated by David Neiweem, university organist and carillonneur (although the details are yet to be announced). After returning to the hotel in the evening, members may wish to socialize, visit the OHS store, and enjoy a cocktail in the hotel bar.

Wednesday is "Andover Organ Company Day!" Some of it will unfold in Montpelier, the capital city, where we will hear a fine, 2m 1866 Geo. Stevens organ in the Unitarian Church, and a visually striking, 2m 1884 Geo. S. Hutchings organ in the "chapel" of the Vermont College of Fine Arts. Carol Britt, the former chair of the Governing Board of the American Organ Archives, and Paul Tegels, the University Organist at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, will play for us. Both organs were beautifully renovated by Andover, and the illuminated front pipes in the col-



lege organ were among the first-ever re-stenciled façade pipes in the United States. This work was done by Robert C. Newton in 1979, and makes a striking appearance.

That afternoon, we will visit the Community Church of Stowe. This is the quintessential New England meeting house, often seen on Vermont postcards and in souvenir booklets. The organ, a 2m 1864 Wm. B.D. Simmons organ from Boston, has a checkered past. In 1917, it was moved from the gallery to the front of the room by an amateur, and in 1959, was severely rebuilt by Norman, Hill & Beard, compromising much of the original organ. In 2002, after coming precariously close to a rendezvous with the local

United Church ~ Cabot
Hook & Hastings, Opus 1699, 1896

dump, it was retained and this time was renovated properly. While Andover re-used all the remaining Simmons material, the finished organ is largely a new instrument in concept and sound. Bob Newton attended the Stowe church as a youngster and sang in Mrs. Gottlieb's children's choir. It was this organ more than any other that inspired him to spend his life as an organbuilder. The new 16' Trombone in the organ was a recent gift to the congregation from Bob. We will hear internationally acclaimed organist and current Vermont resident John Weaver on this impressive instrument.

VERMONT?



St. Mary's Episcopal Church ~ Northfield
E. & G.G. Hook, Opus 26, 1836

On Wednesday evening, we will head to the docks in Burlington for a dinner cruise on the *Spirit of Ethan Allen III*. Lake Champlain is known for its calm waters, and as the sun slowly sets over the Adirondack Mountains in New York State, we couldn't hope for a more enchanting ending to a fulfilling day. Attendees up for a little more socializing may visit the hotel lounge, cash bar, or stop by the OHS Store.

Thursday offers much in the way of fine old organs. Grace Church, Episcopal, Sheldon, houses the oldest "cathedral" organ in the continental United States. Built in 1833 by Henry

Erben of New York for St. Paul's Church, Burlington, the 1m organ was moved to Sheldon in 1869. Because of water damage, it was unplayable for three quarters of the twentieth century. Largely through the efforts of Erik Kenyon, then a twenty-two-year-old college student at UVM, the organ was beautifully restored in 2001 by Andy Smith and A. David Moore. The organ is unaltered, and is probably the oldest totally intact organ in the state. Just a few miles away is another elegant 1m Erben, built in 1837 for St. John's Church, Episcopal, in Highgate Falls. The handsome brick building, with a Palladian window in front, dates from 1831. Nestled among a grove of pine trees and with the parochial cem-

etry in back, this delightful setting alone is worth a trip to Vermont. The organ is unaltered, still hand pumped, and Richard M. Ferris (1818–58), the famed maker of the 3m 1847 organ in the Round Lake Auditorium, Round Lake, New York, signed the metal pipework. Organists Peter Crisafulli and Gregory Crowell, the former OHS director of publications, will play these organs.

St. Albans is known today for its impressive series of iconic buildings on the east side of Taylor Park, and historically for the St. Albans Raid. During the Civil War, in 1864, a small coterie of Confederate soldiers slipped down into Vermont from Canada, and robbed three banks in St. Albans. Surprised Vermonters, known for their anti-Confederate fervor, were outraged! We will hear three organs in St. Albans by Hook & Hastings, Geo. Jardine & Son, and Ernest Desmarais. The 2m 1889 Jardine at St. Luke's and the 2m 1892 Desmarais at Holy Guardian Angels R.C. Church are largely unaltered. The Desmarais is unique in that it is the only surviving instrument by its maker, a French-Canadian organbuilder from Montreal, who, early in 1892, lived in St. Albans. Rosalind Mohnsen, and a performer new to the society's roster, Québec native Isabelle Demers, known for her blazing virtuosity, will demonstrate these organs for us. We will also hear Christopher Anderson, a member of the OHS publications governing board, play the much altered but impressive 2m 1893 Hook & Hastings organ at the First Congregational Church. A refreshing return to the hotel follows.

That evening following dinner on our own, we will hear E. & G.G. Hook, Opus 342, 1864, a 2m organ at the First Baptist Church in Burlington. While the organ is tonally unaltered, its physical presence has seen a number of changes. Originally installed in a corner chamber without front pipes,



United Methodist Church ~ Northfield
Wm. B.D. Simmons & Co., 1855



Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Episcopal ~ Burlington
Karl Wilhelm, Opus 32, 1973

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the organ was moved to the center of the sanctuary in 1870, and was retrofitted with a handsome, black walnut case. In 1962, the front of the room was “modernized;” the Burlington newspaper proclaimed: “Something Old Becomes Something New!” The organ is now behind an unsightly screen, but despite the changes around it, is entirely intact. In 1996, it was beautifully restored by Russell & Co., Organ Builders, of Cambridgeport, Vermont. Ray E. Cornils, the organist of the City Hall in Portland, Maine, will be the performer for the evening. An early return to the hotel will provide opportunities for socializing, shopping in the OHS Store, and something to refresh the palate.

Friday’s tour to Northfield, Randolph, and Williamstown, will include a number of historically important organs by E. & G.G. Hook, Estey, Geo. S. Hutchings, William Nutting, Jr., and Wm. B.D. Simmons. Northfield is unique in that it has three second-hand, nineteenth-century-Boston organs, all in good condition. Several historians assert that the 2m 1855 Simmons in the United Methodist Church is the finest old organ in the state. It was built for the Brick Church in Montpelier (now Bethany Church), and was probably designed by John H. Paddock (1820–1903), a notable Vermont organist. In addition to its unusually large size, its tonal design is atypical for American organs of the period. The Great Mixture is divided into individual registers like an old Italian organ, and has independent Fifteenth, Seventeenth, Nineteenth, and Twenty-Second stops. This extraordinary instrument was beautifully restored in 1974 by A. David Moore, Inc., of North Pomfret, Vermont, and is much appreciated by everyone who hears it.

Across the street, St. Mary’s Episcopal Church houses an 1836 E. & G.G. Hook organ, Opus 26, built for



Holy Guardian Angels Church, R.C. ~ St. Albans
Ernest Desmarais, Facteur, 1892

St. Mark’s Church, Episcopal, in Warren, Rhode Island, moved to Northfield in 1892. It is believed to be the oldest extant 2m organ by the Hooks, and has a particularly elegant, five-sectional case. Recall that the Hooks were trained as furniture-makers before they became organbuilders, and their superb cabinet-making skills are plainly obvious by an examination of the case! The third instrument, a 2m 1865 Simmons, came to Northfield in 1886 from the College Street Church in Burlington, and is also a fine organ. James Cook, an OHS national councillor, noted

Dutch-American organist, Lubbert Gnodde, and the perennial OHS favorite, Lois Regestein, will demonstrate those delightful instruments for us.

Friday will also include a trip to Randolph. The township has an illustrious organ history, detailed in this year’s ATLAS, and has two important historical organs. The 2m 1894 Geo. S. Hutchings organ in Bethany Church was built for the Christian Church across the street (where Chandler Music Hall now stands), and was moved to Bethany in 1906 after the congregations merged. The organ was painstakingly restored in 1993 without alteration by Watersmith Pipe Organs, Inc., of Enfield, New Hampshire, and is played



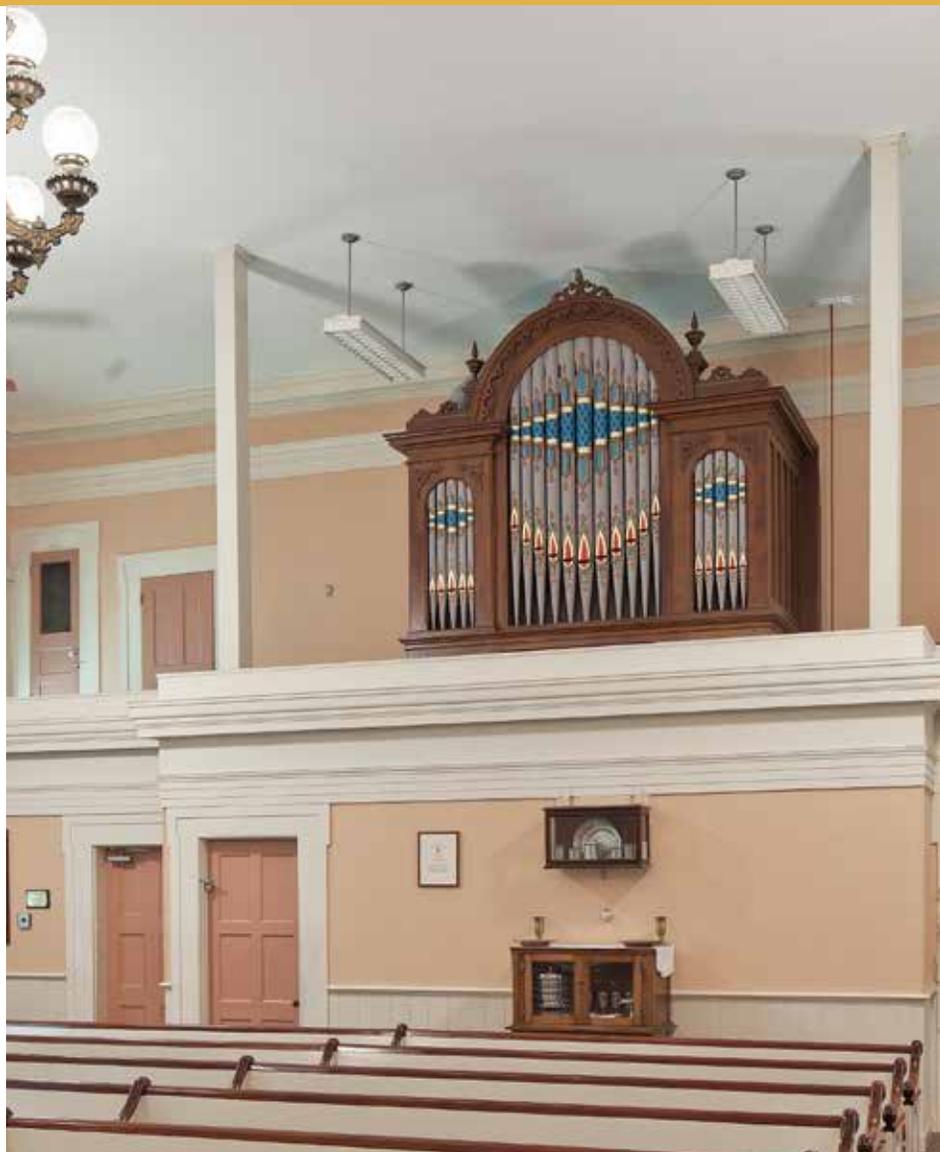
United Church ~ Randolph
Estey Organ Company, Opus 1008, 1912

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every Sunday by Marilyn Polson. This instrument also figured prominently in the upbringing of another Society member, Laurence W. Leonard, the well-known Estey historian. Larry grew up in Randolph, worked in his father's pharmacy, and learned to play on the instrument. The other Randolph organ is down the street in the United Church—a 2m 1912 installation by the Estey Organ Company, Opus 1008. Long-time and respected OHS members George Bozeman and Glenn Kime will demonstrate those organs.

Randolph has one other distinction for organ historians: William Nutting Jr.'s first organ shop was there. He built a number of organs in Randolph between 1840 and 1853, including a two-stop parlor organ for Ira Maurice Jones (1822–94), currently owned by Larry Leonard and on permanent loan to the Randolph Historical Society, and two organs for Grace Church, Episcopal, in Randolph Center. Nutting was Vermont's first full-time organbuilder, and the first notable organbuilder in all of Northern New England. This year's ATLAS will include a major section on his work.

Nutting's only surviving two-manual organ is currently in the United Federated Church of Williamstown. It was built in 1868 for the Unitarian Church in Keene, New Hampshire, and was rebuilt and relocated to the congregation's new building in 1895. In 1909, it was moved to the Methodist Church in Bellows Falls, and in 1938, to Williams-town. Through the remarkable efforts of Mrs. Florence Winters, the organist in Williamstown, she and her energetic committee raised \$100,000 by organizing Chicken Pie Suppers, concerts, and other musical events, and in 2005, had the organ restored by Robert C. Newton and the Andover Organ Company. Although now missing its original case, it is the largest surviving Nutting



organ. OHS national councillor Christopher Marks, will demonstrate this instrument for us.

The closing event of the convention will take place on Friday evening at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul in Burlington. The splendid 2m 1973 mechanical-action organ by Canadian organbuilder, Karl Wilhelm, of Mont St.-Hilaire, Quebec, will be played by noted organist James David Christie. The parish was founded in 1830, and its first Gothic style building was completed in 1833. The congregation has owned a number of notable organs, including an 1833 Erben (that we will hear in Sheldon), the first three-manual in the state by Wm. A. Johnson in 1867, and a large 3m Austin organ built in

Congregational Church ~ Orwell
E. & G.G. Hook, Opus 358, 1865

1913. That last organ was lost when the old cathedral was destroyed by fire in 1971. A new Cathedral was consecrated in November 1973. The Wilhelm organ was a gift to the congregation from the Episcopal diocese in memory of the Rt. Rev. Vedder Van Dyck, the fifth Bishop of Vermont, and was opened in February, 1974. The starkly modern building has excellent acoustics, and the organ has a warm and appealing sound in the space. The Wilhelm serves as a fitting conclusion to the convention, because while it embraces the historical traditions and classical ideals of the past, it is contemporary in appearance, place-

VERMONT?



United Federated Church ~ Williamstown
William Nutting, Jr., 1868



United Church ~ Greensboro
Wm. A. Johnson, Opus 253, 1868



Church of St. John the Baptist, Episcopal ~ Hardwick
Edward H. Smith, 1888

ment, and sound. The detailed chronology of the organs at St. Paul's is told in this year's Atlas.

For those who can stay another day, Saturday offers an optional tour of three more organs to the south of Burlington. Included is the remarkable Old Round Church in Richmond, housing a small unknown chamber organ, perhaps of New York or Pennsylvania provenance. The others are an impressive 2m 1927 organ by the Estey Organ Company, Opus 2691, at the United Methodist Church, recently restored by John Wessel; a second-hand 1m 1862 E. & G.G. Hook organ, Opus 306, at St. Paul's Church, Episcopal, both in Vergennes; and a trip to the Shelburne Museum, which houses a Derrick & Felgemaker "portable" in the relocated Charlotte Meeting House. Margaret Angelini, Demetri Sampas, Phil Stimmel, and Jim Weaver, our executive director, will demonstrate those organs.

One odd characteristic of thrifty, Yankee Vermonters is their propensity to retain "equipment" long after it passes out of fashion. "Make do, do

without, and use it up" is the erst-while adage! For Vermont's old pipe organs, this old-school approach has worked much to the Society's favor.



Another maxim of Vermont's way of life is painted above the pulpit of the Old West Church in Calais, and reads: "Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy fathers have set," a verse from Proverbs 22. For four generations now, conservation-savvy Vermonters have protected their cultural and architectural heritage, and old pipe organs have become a treasured part of this valuable legacy. To answer the inquiry posed as the title of this article, we can use a cliché from the recent political campaigns: "It's the organs, dummy!" The fact is that Vermont has more old and interesting pipe organs in a small geographical area than any other place the United States. The splendid organs, antiques, covered bridges, maple syrup, spectacular scenery, flourishing wildlife, and that the "Hills are Alive with the Sound of Music," offers plenty of incentive to register for the Society's Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention.

Grace United Methodist Church ~ Plainfield
E. & G.G. Hook & Hastings, Opus 699, 1873