



2015

**THE PIONEER VALLEY
WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS**

**THE ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S
60TH ANNUAL CONVENTION**

PHOTOGRAPHY LEN LEVASSEUR

2015

ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY • JUNE 28-JULY 3
THE PIONEER VALLEY - WESTERN MASS.



UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, SKINNER MEMORIAL CHAPEL ~ HOLYOKE
E.M. SKINNER, OPUS 179 (1909) ~ REBUILT BY MESSRS. CZELUSNIAK ET DUGAL, INC. (1993)

by Tom Stockton

The

BEST OF THE BEST IS ALL YOURS AT THE 2015 OHS convention! When it comes to natural beauty, art, history, architecture, organs, and diversions of all sorts, the Pioneer Valley has much to offer,

and it's all on the menu for you and your companions to enjoy from June 28–July 3, 2015. Headquarters will be at the Marriott Hotel in downtown Springfield, Mass.

A place of significant geological pre-history, the Pioneer Valley encompasses the majestic Connecticut River stretching from the rich, flat farmlands settled by Europeans in the 17th century, westward to the Berkshire Mountains and Tanglewood, summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Blessed with abundant natural resources and water power, the region helped make New England an industrial powerhouse of the 19th century — and affluent New Englanders did not stint on the architecture or organs that were donated to local churches! Found by rolling streams in sleepy villages are instruments of uncompromised quality, waiting to speak to a new generation of appreciative enthusiasts.

From this historic area, William A. Johnson, Johnson & Son, Steere & Turner, J.W. Steere & Son, Emmons Howard, and Ernest M. Skinner built organs of exceptional quality and delivered them to a nation-wide market. We will investigate a sampling of instruments by all of these local builders, plus some important examples from E. & G.G. Hook, J.H. & C.S. Odell, Hilborne Roosevelt, Casavant Frères, Andover, C.B. Fisk, and Richards, Fowkes & Co. In order to contrast styles and to show the evolution of a company's product over time, we have tried to include at least two instruments from each builder, as an educational experience for all.

Springfield is situated on the Connecticut River, conveniently at the intersections of major travel routes. Just across the Connecticut line is Bradley International Airport, serving generous plane schedules to Hartford and Springfield. By automobile, the city sits near the junction of routes I-90 and I-91. By rail, the city is at the junction of the historic Boston & Albany line and the New Haven line continuing northward through Massachusetts and Vermont. Amtrak operates trains daily in all these directions. The headquarters of Peter



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ~ MONTAGUE
WM. A. JOHNSON, OPUS 54 (1856)

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE ~ SOUTH HADLEY
C.B. FISK, OPUS 84 (1985)

Pan bus lines is in Springfield; and, the bus and train stations are about a half-mile from the convention hotel. As such, Springfield is easily accessible nationally and internationally, from Hartford, Boston and New York, Albany and Montreal.

Special attractions in the city include the historical and art museums, on a quadrangle between two Cathedrals, which includes also the city library and an outdoor sculpture memorial to Dr. Seuss (the native Theodore Geisel). The Springfield Armory Museum and the Basketball Hall of Fame are nearby. The greater Pioneer Valley is a veritable playground, with historic Storowton Village and Six Flags New England just across the river, and to the north, Old Deerfield with its museums and the Mohawk Trail out to Williamstown. Public transportation will get one around the city, the Valley, out to the Berkshire Hills, and beyond, if you plan efficient vacation time surrounding this convention. Springfield's notable display of fireworks over the Connecticut River will celebrate the 4th of July, just after our convention closes.

SUNDAY, JUNE 28

CONVENTION REGISTRATION WILL OPEN ON SUNDAY, WITH free time in the city and dinner on your own. Christ Church Episcopal Cathedral will offer Evensong before the dinner

hour. If subscriptions afford, there will be an optional bus trip to Stockbridge to visit both the Normal Rockwell and Daniel Chester French Museums. Sunday evening, **Christopher Houlihan** will present a thrilling concert on the 1929 Casavant Frères Ltée., Opus 1323 (IV/89) housed in the ca. 1861 Italianate Gothic-revival St. Michael's R.C. Cathedral — the architectural work of Patrick Keely. The exciting sounds of this impressive instrument, the largest pipe organ west of Worcester, will whet our appetites for the many musical treats ahead. Following the recital, the opening reception at the hotel will include OHS exhibits, a book-signing session, and the opportunity to greet acquaintances and make new friends.

MONDAY, JUNE 29

ON MONDAY, WE TRAVEL WEST ACROSS THE CONNECTICUT River and then into the Berkshire Mountains for a day filled with beautiful scenery, architecture, and music. The first destination will be the manufacturing city of Westfield, known as the "Whip City" for its once thriving whip-making industry, for two organ demonstrations, a lecture on organbuilders, and a glimpse at the former Ned Hedges pipe shop.

Beginning at the First Congregational Church in the Westfield Center Historic District, we will hear the 1977



OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY R.C. CHURCH ~ EASTHAMPTON
J.W. STEERE & SON, OPUS 504 (1902)



THE CHURCH ON THE HILL U.C.C. ~ LENOX
WM. A. JOHNSON, OPUS 281 (1869)

C.B. Fisk, Opus 71 (II/25), itself retaining some Johnson pipework from the previous instrument here. Then, we travel to nearby St. Mary's R.C. Church, dedicated in 1885, now housing the restored 1897 Casavant Frères Ltée., Opus 78 (II/17), saved from its original home in Pittsfield as that church closed. To appreciate more fully the Johnson organs presented during this week, we will hear a lecture by **Barbara Owen** on the Johnsons, and other Westfield organ-builders. The last Johnson factory, also used by the Skinner Organ Co., once abutted St. Mary's Church property.

After lunch, we travel to Lenox, in southern Berkshire County. Against the stunning backdrop of the Stockbridge Bowl, we will cross the grounds of Tanglewood, summer home of the Boston Symphony, to hear **James David Christie** and friends demonstrate the 1940 Aeolian-Skinner, Opus 1002 (II/32) in the Koussevitzky Music Shed. Then, A and B groups will exchange demonstrations of the 1893 Johnson & Son, Opus 805 (II/13) in the Unitarian-Universalist Church in Housatonic, and the 1869 Wm. A. Johnson, Opus 281 (I/9) in The Church on the Hill in Lenox.

After time for dinner-on-your-own in Great Barrington, we will finish the day with a recital by **Bruce Stevens** on OHS Citation #4 recipient, the 1883 Hilborne L. Roosevelt, Opus 113 (III/73) in the First Congregational Church. The sun will just have set over the western hills as we leave the concert, and the afterglow of the early-summer twilight will accompany us back to Springfield.

TUESDAY, JUNE 30

ON TUESDAY, WE TRAVEL NORTH INTO THE FERTILE PLAINS along the Connecticut River that first attracted European settlers early in the 17th century, and where tobacco was king for most of the 19th century. Wealthy colonial farmers and traders have left us some of the earliest architecture in the country; and, the prosperity that followed the Revolutionary War resulted in the building of fine Greek revival buildings, such as the 1821 South Deerfield Congregational Church. There we will hear a 1907 Emmons Howard (II/15) before crossing town to hear the only known surviving instrument by William Jackson of Albany, New York, the 1868 (II/12) organ in the Holy Name of Jesus National Catholic Church.

As we travel from South Deerfield to Sunderland, we will pass by a Paleo-Indian Clovis-era archaeological site near Mount Sugarloaf. This area of the Connecticut River Valley contains evidence of significant human habitation dating back 10,000 years. Generations of farmers turning over their fields in the spring have found many artifacts, including arrowheads; and in 1835, this river valley divulged some of the first dinosaur prints and fossils to be studied seriously in this country, as displayed at the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Museum in Old Deerfield.

The Sunderland Center Historic District, listed on the National Register, encompasses the traditional focus of this farming village and boasts many Greek revival, Georgian, and Federalist buildings. In the charming 1836 First Congregational Church, we will hear the 1871 J.H. & C.S. Odell,



UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH ~ HOLYOKE
SKINNER ORGAN CO., OPUS 322 (1921)

ST. MICHAEL'S R.C. CATHEDRAL ~ SPRINGFIELD
CASAVANT FRÈRES LTÉE., OPUS 1323 (1929)
REBUILT BY THEODORE GILBERT & ASSOCIATES (1982)

No. 109 (I/7), beautiful in its elegant simplicity. In A/B groups, others will travel up the river to hear the 1856 Wm. A. Johnson, Opus 54 (I/8), recipient of OHS Citation #10, in the 1834 Trinitarian Congregational Church in the Montague Center Historic District — the 19th-century center of this sprawling town, with an 1830s school and a ca. 1734 tavern surviving. Today's lunch will be included in this circuit.

Then, we leave the discreet elegance of post-colonial farmlands and travel south to the opulence derived from New England's Industrial Revolution. The fact is that in 1900, the city of Holyoke had more millionaires per capita than any other city in the United States. As a result of the water power generated by a creative canal system in the 1840s, and waves of new immigrants, the city became the center of the country's paper industry, earning it the moniker "Paper City", but also was home to the Skinner Silk Mills. The Holyoke Canal System is another of the Historic Districts we will see today; and although the decline of manufacturing in New England has not dealt kindly with this city, it remains the home of some wonderful architecture, including the imposing United Congregational Church of Holyoke.

We begin in the Skinner Memorial Chapel, hearing the 1909 E.M. Skinner, Opus 179 as rebuilt in 1993 by Messrs. Czelusniak et Dugal, Inc. (III/34). The Chapel organ demonstration will be on an A/B schedule with a visit to the Holyoke Heritage State Park and its ca. 1928 Merry-Go-Round, carousel #80 by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company, turning to the band organ #560, built by the Artizan Factories of North Tonawanda, New York. You can consider whether the wooden pipes of this Artizan instrument have a sweeter sound than the more forceful metal pipes used in Wur-

litzer Band Organs? Alternatively, the elegant parlors of the United Congregational Church will be available for rest and relaxation; although, conventioners may opt to take a stroll along the Canal Walk, or to pay a short visit to the Volleyball Hall of Fame (the game invented here).

Dinner this evening will be at the Log Cabin Restaurant, and will be an especially memorable event: perched just below the summit of Mt. Tom, we will enjoy our evening libations amidst panoramic views of the Pioneer Valley. Then, we will return to the sanctuary of the United Congregational Church to hear **Peter Sykes** performing his transcription of Gustav Holst's *The Planets* on Ernest Skinner's 1921 masterpiece, Opus 322 (IV/70), recipient of OHS Citation #75. Later this evening, we will return to a celebratory reception at the hotel, including a review of OHS offerings and new books published.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1

ON WEDNESDAY, WE WILL CIRCLE SPRINGFIELD MORE LOCALLY, beginning our day with a dip down into Connecticut. The town of Windsor is where tobacco first was grown in the Connecticut River Valley, in the 1630s. The broadleaf plants grown in this region were particularly desirable for the outer wrapping of cigars; and, the cultivation of tobacco quickly spread northward in the plains along the river, which, with the help of canals, had become navigable as far north as the Vermont border. In Hadley and Hatfield, Mass., tobacco was a money crop, supplanted later by asparagus and potatoes.

Our A/B schedule will alternate between the 1874 Johnson & Son, Opus 424 (II/20) in the Wesley United Methodist Church in Warehouse Point, and the 2014 Richards, Fowkes



ST. THERESA OF LISIEUX R.C. CHUCH ~ SOUTH HADLEY
CASAVANT FRÈRES LTÉE., OPUS 2791 (1964)



HOLY NAME OF JESUS P.N.C.C. ~ SOUTH DEERFIELD
WILLIAM JACKSON (1868)

& Co., Opus 21 (II/16) newly installed in the Somers Congregational, United Church of Christ. Then, we proceed northward to South Hadley, Mass. for lunch and the Annual Meeting. Afterwards, at St. Theresa of Lisieux R.C. Church, we all will draw big breaths during a hymn sing, accompanied by the 1964 Casavant Frères Ltée., Opus 2791 (III/46), a significant mechanical-action organ relocated here in 2008.

From South Hadley, it is a short and scenic drive over The Notch (in the Holyoke Range of mountains) to South Amherst. Again on an A/B schedule, we will hear the oldest surviving Casavant in the United States, the 1896 Casavant Frères Ltée., Opus 74 (II/16) in the South Congregational Church. This instrument is in sharp contrast to Opus 78 in Westfield, although they appear so similar on paper. The second venue in Amherst will be the Jewish Community Center, which is home to the 1900 Emmons Howard tracker organ (II/8), a simple but colorful example.

Supper will be provided at the Steaming Tender Restaurant, an H.H. Richardson building originally the Palmer train station on the B&A, and situated at the diamond of the New England Central and CSX railroads. Then, we move to the evening recital featuring **Rosalind Mohnsen**, a favorite OHS artist who will demonstrate the subtleties and resources of the 1892 Johnson & Son, Opus 781 (III/36) in the First Church of Monson, recently restored from tornado damage in June 2011. As we return to the hotel this evening, we can appreciate the enduring legacy of William A. Johnson as this instrument at Monson, built under the direction of his son William H. Johnson, is one of the larger examples surviving from their firm.

THURSDAY, JULY 2

WE START OUR THURSDAY BY TRAVELING NORTH AND WEST into the hill towns, for a day filled with adventure and contrast. The mountainous region west of the Connecticut River is very rural, but supports many small farming communities, notable for maple sugaring. We begin our day with an A/B schedule that will bring some participants to a very high elevation, in the Heath Center Historic District, where the 1835 Union Evangelical Church houses the oldest known surviving instrument by Wm. A. Johnson, his 1850 Opus 16 (II/14), here since 1914 in its third home, and meticulously restored by S.L. Huntington & Co. Others will stop at the First Congregational Church in Shelburne Center on the Mohawk Trail. There, we will celebrate the centennial of the 1915 J.W. Steere and Son, Opus 681 (II/10), with Pitman electro-pneumatic action, albeit with tubular-pneumatic stop action! Then, the groups reverse, before traveling south again to Northampton.

Dubbed by none less than Jenny Lind as "Paradise City", Northampton is the county seat for Hampshire, home to Smith College, and a thriving cultural and artistic community. The Northampton Downtown Historic District supports fascinating and unique galleries, myriad restaurants, and numerous boutique shops. In 1653, 24 persons petitioned the Massachusetts General Court for permission to settle "Nonotuck", as the region was known by the Native American inhabitants. In the 18th century, Northampton was home to the theologian and preacher Jonathan Edwards, author of famous sermons including "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Indeed, the Great Awakening began here, with a congregation that we will visit today.



WESLEY U.M.C. ~ WAREHOUSE POINT, CONNECTICUT
JOHNSON & SON, OPUS 424 (1874)

Lunch will be offered on a divided schedule, alternating with a demonstration of the 1890 Steere & Turner, Opus 305 (II/9) in the 1879 Annunciation R.C. Chapel in the Florence section of Northampton. Then, we gather together downtown, in the First Churches, U.C.C./A.B.C., to hear **Lorenz Maycher** demonstrate the 1936 E.M. Skinner & Son, Opus 507 (III/42), which stands behind a heroic 1889 Johnson & Son case. Their first substantial project from the Methuen factory, this instrument retained considerable Johnson pipe-work, and was inaugurated in a recital by Virgil Fox. This is the fifth meetinghouse of this congregation, which originated with the settlement of the city. The sandstone building has an impressive sanctuary furnished in cherry wood, with cast-iron columns, a bronze plaque to Jonathan Edwards, and two Tiffany windows including the very special *River of Life*.

We will return to Springfield briefly, to hear the 1963 Casavant Frères Ltée., Opus 2750 (III/29) in St. Paul's R.C. Church — a stark contrast to the 1964 Casavant heard in South Hadley! Supper will be served at The Warehouse? on the canal system in Holyoke, another iconic banquet facility, also serving casually as an industrial museum.

After dinner, we cross the Connecticut River just below the Holyoke Dam, traveling to the picture-perfect campus of Mount Holyoke College for the final evening performance of the convention — and what an evening it promises to be! Two organs of widely different character grace the Abbey Memorial Chapel at Mount Holyoke, and **Nathan Laube** will demonstrate both in exquisite style. The rear gallery organ, the 1985 C.B. Fisk, Opus 84 (II/36), is an Italianate instrument intentionally designed with modifications expressing the German Baroque aesthetic, including *Nachtigal*, *Glockenspiel*, and *Tympani*! The chancel organ, the 1938

E.M. Skinner & Son, Opus 511 (IV/55), recipient of OHS citation #74, is a fine example of the collaboration between Ernest Skinner and William Churchill Hammond, then College Organist, who also served the Second (now United) Congregational Church in Holyoke for 65 years. This evening's peerless double-bill of music, in such a beautiful setting, will be followed by another celebratory reception at the hotel, and the final sales at the OHS exhibits!

OPTIONAL DAY, FRIDAY, JULY 3

ON FRIDAY, WE TRAVEL YET FARTHER NORTH, CROSSING THE border into the "Granite State" of New Hampshire. Our A/B schedule will have some participants beginning in Hinsdale in the ca. 1835 First Congregational Church with a concert on the 1849 E. & G.G. Hook, No. 93 (II/24) built originally for the First Congregational Church in Springfield, Mass. The rest of the group will begin in the adjacent community of Northfield, Mass., where they will hear the 1842 E. & G.G. Hook, No. 48 (II/13), built originally for the First Unitarian Society in Springfield, and now found in the 1870 Romanesque Revival First Parish of Northfield, Unitarian. After exchanging recitals, we all meet in the Memorial Chapel of the Northfield Mount Hermon School to experience the 1970 Andover Organ Co., Opus 67 (II/37), a modern tracker organ already iconic as a polite neo-Baroque example.

After lunch, we return southward to Old Deerfield, which is a remarkable National Historic Landmark. This fertile part of the Connecticut River Valley was first settled by Europeans in the 17th century; but in 1704, French and Indian forces combined to attack and destroy the town, taking more than 100 captives in what became known as the "Raid on Deerfield." Today, Historic Deerfield is an authentic 18th-century New England village that functions as an outdoor history museum in which visitors can tour antique houses dating from 1730 to 1850, and a world-famous collection of early American furniture, textiles, and other artifacts. Our A/B schedule will allow free time in Historic Deerfield against recitals on the 2002 Richards, Fowkes & Co., Opus 13 (II/20) in the 1824 "Brick Church", the First Church of Deerfield.

Our final day will draw to a close as we make our way back to Springfield through the Main Street Historic District of Easthampton, where we will visit Our Lady of the Valley R.C. Church to hear the 1902 J.W. Steere & Son, Opus 504 (II/24), as rebuilt in 1989 from tubular- to electro-pneumatic action by Messrs. Czelusniak et Dugal, Inc. This church also boasts outstanding Connick stained-glass windows.

Whether you stay in Springfield for the July 4th festivities, or continue your travels elsewhere, we are confident that your visit to the Pioneer Valley will yield lasting impressions of the richness of political history, natural beauty, art and architecture, and the outstanding examples of organbuilding found here. We encourage you to join us for this 60th annual convention of the OHS, and the Society's first-ever study of the Pioneer Valley, a fertile crescent of organbuilding in the United States. As we listen to the surviving work, from large to small, from oldest to newest, we honor the memories of those fine craftsmen who contributed so greatly to our musical past and present; and, we celebrate the work and the musicianship of those who perpetuate this legacy for future generations!