

T H E T R A C K E R

Newsletter of the Organ Historical Society

Editor: Kenneth F. Simmons

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No. 1

LETTER FROM THE ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S PRESIDENT PRO-TEM:

I would first like to express my thanks to all those who came, some of them from great distances, to attend the meeting on June 24, and who, in their various ways, contributed so much to this meeting. I should also like to express my thanks for the vote of confidence given me in electing me president pro-tem. The interest shown in the Society at this meeting, and in correspondence I have had from those unable to attend, proves to me that what we are doing is not just a fad or passing fancy, but something important which will ultimately, I believe, be a great influence for good in the entire organ world.

Some very important issues came up at this June meeting, the resolution of which must perforce wait until the next annual meeting. We have committees working on these things, however, and we urge all members to feel free to express their individual opinions about these matters to the officers and committee members. It is important that we know how everyone feels, that we may administer the affairs of this Society to the satisfaction of all. We also need your continuing financial support to meet the expenses of our newsletter. If all goes well, it is our hope to have this paper printed eventually, instead of mimeographed.

We face a challenging year. This past year has shown great growth and progress. The coming year has even greater potential. We are a small voice yet, but there are significant signs already that this voice is being heard.

/s/ Barbara J. Owen

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THE ORGAN AT THE FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY, NEWBURYPORT -by Robert J. Reich

One hundred and fifty years ago, when many a metropolis of today was a mere village, Newburyport, Massachusetts, was already a thriving city, important as a fishing port and a shipbuilding center. Because of its prosperity and anticipated growth, Newburyport built churches in that period for a future which did not materialize. It is today a city of beautiful houses and buildings of many periods, some dating back to colonial times and, because it did not grow as expected, some old buildings are in use today which might otherwise have been replaced. This is true of churches and organs as well.

In 1801, the First Religious Society (now Unitarian) built a monumental classic-colonial church house seating nearly 1100 people. The first organ was a two manual instrument built in 1794 by Dr. Josiah Leavitt of Boston, and moved from the previous building.

In 1834, it was desired by two wealthy gentlemen of Newburyport that the largest and best organ in the country should be constructed for this church, and funds were provided by them for the purpose. An instrument was built by Joseph Alley, of Newburyport, later known for his euharmonic organ, and set up in place of the Leavitt

organ which went to the Unitarian Church in Eastport, Maine, where it burned in 1946.

Information about the 1834 instrument in its original form does not seem to have been preserved. Existing evidence in the case indicates that the console was recessed and had sliding doors. The Great wind chest, still in use, had 12 stops, including a four-rank mixture and a tierce, and only one stop lacked a bass of its own. The compass was 58 notes, from GGG to f3, lacking GGG#. The pedal compass is believed to have been 17 notes, GGGG to CC, lacking GGGG#. Little is known of the Swell except

THE ORGAN AT THE FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY, NEWBURYPORT (cont'd.)

that it appears to have had a tenor F chest, the basses being unenclosed on a separate chest.

In 1889, the organ was rebuilt by Geo. S. Hutchings. He changed the manual compass to 56 notes, CC to g3, the pedal compass to 27 notes, CCC to D₀, and lowered the pitch to A 435. The original pedal Double Open Diapason was kept from CCC and extended, and a 16 foot Bourdon added to the Pedal. A new Swell chest of 11 stops was added, on which all but one stop had its own bass. Except for the original Great roller board the action was made entirely new and a projecting console provided. The Great mixture was reduced to three ranks and lowered in pitch, and the independent Tierce omitted. The open flue pipes which had been cone tuned were slotted, thus raising the pitch of each pipe one whole tone. By shortening the compass to 56 notes and discarding the lowest two pipes of each rank, Hutchings was able to use only original pipes in many stops. Two new pipes were provided at the top of each flute rank, none of which was rescaled. The Hutchings specification was as follows:

GREAT:	8'	1st Open Diapason	56 pipes	original
	8'	2nd Open Diapason	56	original
	8'	St ^d Diapason (chimneys from G ₀ #)	56	original
	8'	Dulciana	56	new
	4'	Principal	56	bass original, new treble
	4'	Flute (chimneys AA#)	56	original
	2 2/3'	Twelfth	56	original
	2'	Fifteenth	56	original
	III	Mixture	168	lowest rank from original Sesquialtera, others from orig. Mixt.
	8'	Trumpet	56	new
	8'	Clarinet (T.C.)	44	original from TG
		(empty slide)	56	
SWELL:	16'	Bourdon Treble	44	New
	16'	Bourdon Bass	12	new
(en-	8'	Open Diapason (stopped bass)	56	original
closed)	8'	St ^d Diapason (chimneys from TG#)	56	original
	8'	Salicional (stopped bass)	56	new
	8'	AEoline (T.C.)	44	new
	4'	Principal	56	original
	4'	Violina	56	rescaled from original Dulciana
	4'	Flute (open wood)	56	original
	2'	Flautino	56	from original Tierce
	II	Dolce Cornet	112	partly from original Sesquialt.
	8'	Oboe	44	new
	8'	Bassoon	12	new
PEDAL:	16'	Open Diapason	27	lower 12 original
	16'	Bourdon	27	new
COUPLERS: Swell to Great, Swell to Pedal, Great to Pedal				

Bellows Signal - Tremolo

In 1956, the organ was rebuilt by the Adover Organ Co. of Methuen. The stop action was entirely electrified as was the pedal action. The manual tracker action remains unchanged. Six new pedal stops were added. Most of the original pipes were retained, being cleaned, repaired, deslotted, and fitted with slide tuners. All of the chorus stops and the reeds were revoiced. Except for the Dulciana, which was de-nicked in converting it to a Flautino, the nicking was not touched, although many stops were otherwise treated to give slight initial transient sounds. (There is evidence that Hutchings spent considerable effort to eliminate all such transient sounds by increasing the nicking and otherwise.) The wind pressure was lowered from three inches to two and three eights inches mainly in order to lighten the touch, the lower press-

THE ORGAN AT THE FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY, NEWBURYPORT (Cont'd)

ure apparently being the original.

A reflecting cabinet was constructed around the Great, and all interior surfaces and wood pipes were shellacked. Frontpipes of smaller scale were provided to improve the egress of sound. The case, made by Alley, is solid mahogany, five sectional, of finest construction and beautifully carved, and is unchanged. The present specification is as follows:

GREAT: 16'	Bourdon	56 pipes	from Hutchings Swell
8'	Diapason	56	Alley
8'	Stopped Diapason	56	Alley
4'	Octave	56	Alley
4'	Chimney Flute	56	Alley
2 2/3'	Twelfth	56	Alley
2'	Fifteenth	56	Alley
2'	Flautino	56	from Hutchings' Dulciana (rescaled)
1 3/5'	Tierce (T.C.)	44	from lowest rank Hutchings' Mixture
IV	Mixture	224	lowest two ranks are previous highest two, others are new
II	Cimbel	112	new
8'	Trumpet	56	Hutchings
SWELL: 8'	Diapason	56	Alley
8'	Stopped Diapason	56	Alley
8'	Salicional	56	Hutchings
8'	Voix Celeste (T.C.)	44	from Hutchings' AEoline
4'	Principal	56	Alley
4'	Flute	56	Alley
2'	Fifteenth	56	from Flautino
1 1/3'	Larigot	56	partly from old Cornet
II	Sesquialtera	112	partly from old Cornet
8'	Oboe	56	Hutchings
8'	Clarinet (T.G.)	37	Alley
PEDAL: 16'	Diapason	32 notes	27 old)
16'	Bourdon	32 notes	27 old) - top five common
8'	Octave	32 pipes	old Great 2nd Open Diapason
8'	Gedackt	32 pipes	from another organ
5 1/3'	Quinte	32 notes	from Octave
4'	Fifteenth	12 pipes	from Octave
4'	Gedackt	12 pipes	from Gedackt
2'	Twentysecond	12 pipes	from Octave

Tremolo to Swell

COUPLERS: Swell to Great reversible by toe stud, electropneumatic

the mixture compositions are as follows:

Great Mixture: CC - B₀ --- 19, 22, 26, 29
 c₁ - b₁ --- 15, 19, 22, 26
 c₂ - b₂ --- 12, 15, 19, 22
 c₃ - g₃ --- 12, 15, 15, 19

Swell Sesqui- CC - BB 22, 26
 altera: C₀ - B₀ 19, 24
 c₁ - g₃ 12, 17

Great Cimbel: CC - BB --- 36, 40
 C₀ - A₀ 33, 36
 A₀ - f₁ 29, 33
 f₁ - b₁ 26, 29
 c₂ - f₂ 22, 26
 f₂ - b₂ 19, 22
 c₃ - g₃ 15, 19

Swell Larigot: CC - BB 33
 C₀ - B₀ 26
 c₁ - g₃ 19

THE ORGAN AT THE FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY, NEWBURYPORT (Cont'd.)

It is hoped that funds will become available to provide a reed and a mixture for the pedal as well as the manual to pedal couplers. This rebuild is not intended as a restoration, first because too little is known of the original organ, and second, it is not felt that, as a rule, early 19th century American organs are incapable of tonal improvement. The intent was to make this the finest possible modern instrument within the limits set by the funds available.

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AN EARLY STUDIO ORGAN - by Edgar A. Boadway

I have the good fortune to be the organist at a church which possesses one of America's first studio organs. The 2-16 instrument was built for the Boston studio of Whitney Eugene Thayer (1838-89), by Hutchings, Plaisted & Co., of that city, in 1875 as Opus 54. It was used by Mr. Thayer for three years and then sold to the "independent Congregational society" of the Rev. W. H. H. Murray, which met in the Boston Music Hall. I have been unable to learn whether or not the organ was ever set up and used in that building, and perhaps it was stored for service in a future building which never materialized. In 1881, the organ was offered for sale, and was purchased for \$1,500 by the North Parish Universalist Church of Woodstock, Vermont. Samuel Brenton Whitney, a native of Woodstock, and the noted organist at the Church of the Advent in Boston, was the person who advocated the purchase of the organ, and he "opened" it on April 21, 1881. Replacing an 1858 gallery organ, the Hutchings-Plaisted was installed in a large recess at the front of the handsome Colonial church. The stoplist:

MANUAL I:

Principal or Open Diapason.....8' 61
 Gedekt or Stopped Diapason8' 61
 Dolce or Aeoline8' 61
 Octave or Principalm.....4' 61
 Lieblich Flöte or Flute d'Amour..4' 61
 Quinte or Twelfth 2 2-3' 61
 Super Octave or Fifteenth2' 61

Mixture II Fach or Sesquialtera II 122

MANUAL II: (enclosed)

Bourdon or Double Diapason16' 61
 Geigen Principal or Violin Diap.... 8' 61
 Salicional or Viol d'Amour 8' 61
 Traversflöte or Flute Harmonique... 4' 61
 Trompet or Oboe 8' 61
 Tremolo to Manual II (hitch-down)

"COLLECTIVE PEDALS:"

Manual I to Pedale and Principal 16'
 To Withdraw the Same
 Manual I Fortissimo
 To Withdraw the Same

PEDALE:

Principal or Sub Bass 16' 27
 Bourdon or Double Dulciana 16' Sw
 Violoncello or Octave 8' 27

COUPLERS:

Manual I to Pedale
 Manual II to Pedale
 Manual II to Manual I
 Terza Mano (G-G 4' hitch--down)

Manual 2nd. Forte (knob)
 Manual 2nd. Piano (knob)
 Signal
 Signal

The large black walnut case has three flats of Open Diapason pipes, and there are five floor-level access-doors. The console has very large round-shank knobs lettered in Old English, and the knobs for the Great and Couplers are in the left jamb. Apparently the amusing double-nomenclature for each rank is a product of Thayer's imagination, and it is the only organ I have seen with such lettering. Both the bench and the music desk are adjustable; the wooden swell pedal projects at the far right; the Swell keys overhang; and the pistons have labels above the Swell keys. Mechanically, the organ is in very good condition, and the type of action shows many advanced practices used by present-day European builders. The Swell Bourdon serves also as the soft pedal rank through a double-pallet system, and the lowest twelve pipes are unenclosed. The Great pipework is arranged in the usual manner, but that of the Swell is placed in the natural order. All of the stop action connects with the sliders at the bass end of the chests, and the Great pistons function through large metal rollers with prongs

attached to the sliders, The two rather useless Swell piston knobs act directly upon the shanks. Note the advanced manual compass for 1875.

Tonally, this organ is outstanding for the period, and the 908 pipes create such a tremendous volume that one wonders just what type of studio Thayer had--perhaps his neighbors forced him to sell the organ! The church is pleasantly resonant, and the organ has a very loud brilliance that is nevertheless refined. Full organ has a glorious "roar" that is not soft and silvery, but has a quality that shames every other Hutchings-Plaisted that I and others have visited. The Diapasons are of good spotted metal and the organ speaks on a 2 1/7" pressure. The two stopped flutes in the Great are outstanding, and have a tinge of chiffliness; the Pedal Violoncello is just what it is named, and speaks quite promptly. An elegant stop for solo use is the Mixture, which speaks at 19-22 throughout, and breaks back one octave at C².

The Swell is meagre, but contains the bare essentials. The Bourdon is perhaps misplaced, but is definitely needed for gravity in full organ. One of the best ranks is the 8' Trompet, a curious reed with very long resonators. It can serve as a Vox Humana with the shades closed, and Oboe with them partly open, and lastly a Trumpet that seems a whiff of eighteenth-century France. It is an outstanding organ that is much appreciated by the congregation, and their liking for it was greatly increased by the delightful recital presented by Miss Barbara Owen last August 18.

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PROGRAM OF THE OPENING OF THE ORGAN, April 21, 1881, Woodstock, Vermont:

Organ Solo - Fantasie in three movements	Berthold Tours
Mr. Whitney	
Vocal - The Lost Chord	Sullivan
Mrs. Mackenzie	
Organ Solo - Variations in A flat	Hesse
Mr. Whitney	
Aria - With Verdue Clad	Haydn
Miss Dewey	
Organ Solo - Fugue in C Major	Bach
Aria, from the Suite in D	Bach
Processional March.	Whitney
Mr. Whitney	
Cavatina.	Donizetti
Miss Dewey	
Organ Solo - Cavatina from Violin Duo	Raff
Vorspiel	Wagner
Andante in Gm.	Batiste
Mr. Whitney	
Vocal - Selection	
Mrs. Mackenzie	
Organ Solo - Selected	
Mr. Whitney	
Aria - Show Me Thy Way	Torrente
Miss Dewey	
Organ Solo - Vesper Hymn Transcription, including a grand display of the organ	

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CORRECTION:

In the last issue of THE TRACKER, Vol. 1, No. 4, July 1957 on page 6: Delete second sentence in the first paragraph. The organ is definitely dated 1836.

EXHIBITS AT THE NEW YORK CONFERENCE IN JUNE

These included scrapbooks kept by K. F. Simmons and B. J. Owen; a scrapbook kept by organ builder Clarence Morey of Utica 1905-1929, and owned by E. A. Boadway; color photographs of American organ cases of the 18th and 19th centuries taken by T.S. Eader; pictures of American organ builders collected by Miss Owen; nameplates owned by Miss Owen and Messrs. Boadway and Simmons; a photostat of the original Snetzler organ contract in the files of Trinity Church, lent by Robert Arnold; old issues of THE AMERICAN ORGANIST lent by L. P. Brown; and material from the files of the Morey Organ Co., of Utica, lent by Mr. Boadway.

Mimeographed material for distribution included a list of 18th and 19th century American organ builders and short bibliography of works relating to the history of the organ in America, compiled by Barbara J. Owen. Miss Owen provides the following additions to this list:

Bartholomay, F. A.: Philadelphia - "Builders of pipe organs since 1879."
 Beach, Giles (1826-1906): Gloversville, New York. Built 1840-1900.
 Bernard, Louis: New York. Built 1860.
 Brush, John J.: New York. Built 1860.
 Durkee, Alonzo: New York. Built 1860.
 Hammill, George: New York. Built 1860.
 Jackson, William, & Co.: Albany, New York. Built 1869.
 Morss, Richard P.: Newburyport, Mass. Built 1838.
 Riley, James: New York. Built 1860.
 Ritter, John: New York. Built 1860.
 Tucker, Walter G.: New York. Built 1860.
 Wilcox, D. A.: Vermont? Built 1858.

Copies of the original list are still available and may be obtained by sending 25¢ in cash to Miss Barbara J. Owen, P. O. Box 64, Portland, Conn.

Also distributed were copies of the Organ Description Form designed by Jean Pasquet. These are available without cost--just drop a postal to A. F. Robinson, Saint Cornelius Chapel, Fort Jay, Governors Island, New York 4, N. Y.

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NOTES, QUOTES and COMMENTS - by Kenneth F. Simmons

The Lititz Moravian Church was destroyed by fire this past summer. With it, of course, the Tannenberg spire and the large Tannenberg bellows in the attic were burned. I am happy to report that neither of the two Tannenberg organs were harmed. The original Lititz organ was safe in the attic of another building, and the Graceham organ was still safe in Graceham, Maryland, and had not been transferred to the new owner.

I spent a day in Lambertville, New Jersey, working on a 2-19, 1892, Hook & Hastings. It is an excellent organ, more brilliant and rich-toned than most organs of that period.

Robert J. Reich, 23 High Street, Methuen, Mass., has been doing some restoration on a small organ in New Hampshire, made by John Roberts of Frankfort, Pa. He would appreciate any information on the builder, and on any existing organs made by Roberts.

I played the 1876 Standbridge organ at the Old Pine Street Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia for a service recently. I regret that I did not spend a couple days work on the inside of that organ before playing the service. It is an interesting organ, rather spaciouly laid out, but has not had maintenance in years.

Ed Boadway writes: "I recently found a magnificent 3-52, 1880, untouched tracker Casavant in St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Quebec City. The Great has four mixtures, and there is a V rank Sequialtera in the Swell. Really worth a trip to see.

NOTES, QUOTES and COMMENTS (Cont'd.)

Also, the Kent-DeLord House Museum in Plattsburgh, New York, has a 1-5, Samuel Green, (London), built about the time of the Revolution, which I hope soon to restore."

The last Tannenberg organ which is in storage at the York County Historical Society, will be set up in their new quarters probably within the year. Unfortunately, through the years the pipes have been mutilated by repairmen so that the original tone can not be restored. However, I feel that it will be well worth the effort to see it reassembled. I know that due to their limited funds anyone who would like to help out by working in the reassembling job would be welcome. I shall be there if it comes at a time that I can get away from my regular work here.

Contributions to the Organ Historical Society continue to come in. Today there is a balance of a little over \$40. in the treasury. Even nominal amounts are welcome at any time: send them to K. F. Simmons, Treasurer, 20 Devonwood Road, Wayne, Pa.

Contributions in the form of articles, news items, and descriptions of old organs for publication in THE TRACKER are also earnestly invited. Submit these to me at the address given just above.

The Rev'd Robert Hunsicker, vicar of St. Paul's Chapel, New York, while visiting England recently, enquired into the matter of the organ which the Duke of Chandos had built in his private Chapel specifically for use by G. F. Handel. He reports that the Chapel is non-existent today, but that the organ was removed to a parish church somewhere nearby. Would any of our English correspondents care to enlighten us further on the subject? A photograph or two would be of great interest.

We regret the absence of an "Organs for Sale" list in this issue, but our plan is to feature this report in our next (the January 1958) issue. Meanwhile, all readers are urged to send information on this subject to Miss B. J. Owen, P. O. Box 64, Portland, Conn.

This issue of THE TRACKER is the first to contain pictures, another step in our growth and development. Comments are invited, and if donations continue to come in at the present rate we will be able to provide this feature in future issues also.

Please bear in mind that, in order to keep our expenses at a minimum, copies of THE TRACKER are mailed in unsealed envelopes without return address. At this postal rate neither return nor forwarding service is provided by the Post Office. It is imperative, therefore, that our mailing address file be kept up-to-date. Several reports have come in where copies sent were not received, and in almost every case it was a matter of incorrect address or removal from the address originally given. Make note now that if you should change your address you will be sure to notify the publisher: A. F. Robinson, St. Cornelius Chapel, Fort Jay, Governors Island, New York 4, N. Y.

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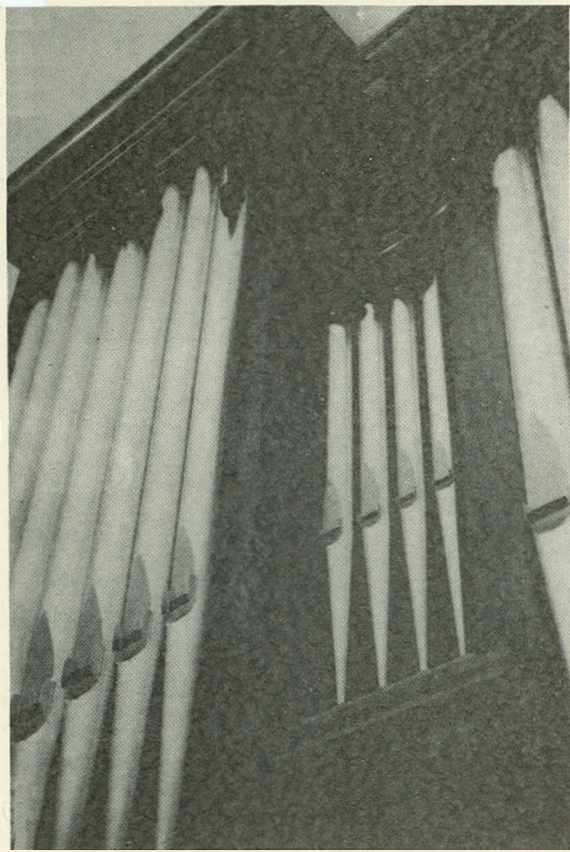
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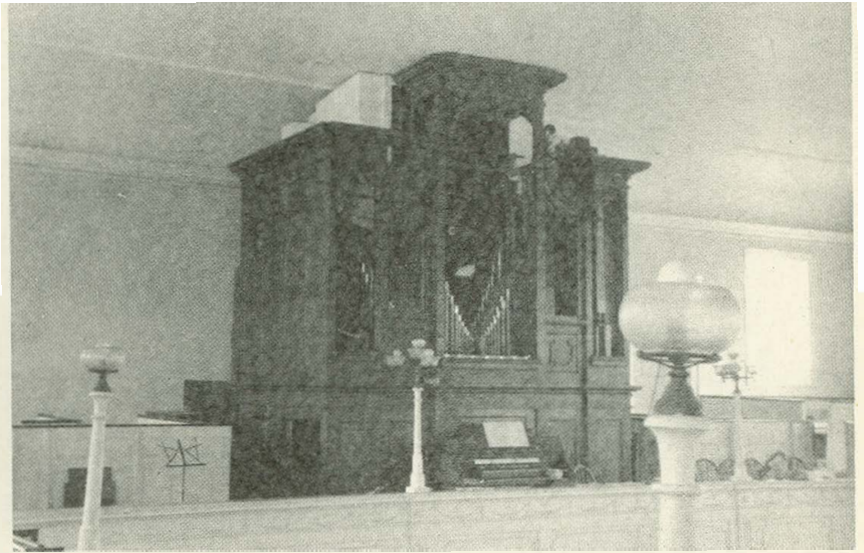
SOLI DEO GLORIA

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UNITARIAN CHURCH
NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS
SUBMITTED BY ROBERT J. REICH



Showing Great pipework in center Pedal Electric action division on left, bass of Great Bourdon on right.



Looking into organ room front left. From right (rear) to left. Trumpet Stopped Diapason, Tierce, 1V rank Mixture, Flute 4' Cymbel, Twelfth, Flautino, Fifteenth, Octave.

