



# THE TRACKER

Journal Of The Organ Historical Society, Inc.

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## Toward a Biography of Henry Erben

by John Ogasapian

### Part I

Without a doubt, Henry Erben was one of the most fascinating personalities of nineteenth-century American organ building. George Templeton Strong, the eminently witty and readable diarist of Victorian New York, found Erben of sufficient interest to have recorded several of their encounters in a fascinating but frustratingly brief vignette.<sup>1</sup>

The January 1910 issue of *The Diapason* contained an early attempt at a biographical article on Henry Erben. The late F. R. Webber published a somewhat fuller (but nonetheless, still sketchy) article in the December 1952 issue of the same journal,<sup>2</sup> and during 1974, *The Keraulophon* serialized the Erben chapter from Webber's brief and unpublished typescript on New York organ builders.<sup>3</sup> Even more recent work has been done by James Johnson for his 1968 Yale master's thesis.<sup>4</sup>

More current research has brought to light some new material on Erben (including a total of no less than three opus-lists from different periods), and while the definitive biological monograph or article on him is still not possible, nevertheless the outlines of such a study are beginning to emerge. The purpose of this and subsequent articles will be to put forth some of this new data, with the aim of clarifying background, solidifying dates, and illuminating events in relation to the life and career of Henry Erben.

### Family Background

Far more is now known of Henry Erben's family history than was available to Webber when he wrote. Erben's father, Peter, was born in 1771 and died in Brooklyn on April 30, 1861. *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography* places his birth in Philadelphia,<sup>5</sup> however, neither MacPherson's nor White's directories of that city list an Erben as resident during the approximate period.

Peter Erben's obituary notice in the *New York Daily Times* for May 4, 1861 (p. 5), refers to the deceased as "a native of this City, and the last but sixteen of the veritable Knickerbockers surviving." The cognomen suggests that Peter Erben was a member of one of New York's old Dutch families, however no record exists of any Erben resident in Manhattan before Peter himself appears in the 1795 di-

rectory. The State Archives record no Erben as having served in the New York militia during the Revolution, and the "List of Farms on New-York Island" of "E. Bancker, Surveyor in New-York," contained in the Bancker Collection of manuscripts in the New-York Historical Society, lists no land as owned by any Erben (or conceivable variant of the name), as of 1780.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, some indication of Peter Erben's whereabouts prior to his appearance in New York is suggested by the travels of his father-in-law, the Rev. John (Johann) Michael Kern. Kern was born in Mannheim, Germany, on August 31, 1730. He was educated at the University of Heidelberg, and in 1763 was summoned by the elders of the German Reformed Church in New York to become their pastor. The parish had been established in 1758 and was meeting for worship in a converted theater on Nassau Street, between John Street and Maiden Lane.

Kern arrived late in 1763 and was installed as pastor of the church on January 27, 1764. His leadership was apparently successful enough in its initial stages; early the following year the theater was demolished, and work began on a new edifice to occupy the site. However, the fires of discord between Lutheran and Calvinist flared up, in all likelihood fanned by Kern's quick temper. He left New York in 1771 to take charge of the Dutch Reformed Church in Montgomery (Orange County), New York. The ill-will persisted in his former parish, with litigation ensuing as to which of the factions rightly held deed to the property. The controversy continued well into the nineteenth century, even after the Nassau Street building had been sold, turned into a saloon, and finally, in 1847, demolished.

Kern remained in Montgomery until 1778; however, his pronounced Tory sympathies appear to have contributed to a new rash of difficulties in this latter parish. In 1778 he moved, by his own choice, to Halifax, Nova Scotia, refusing, according to legend to wear shoes aboard the ship, so that he might not carry so much as the dust of the rebel land with him. The July 24, 1880, issue of the *American Art Journal*, reporting Henry Erben's eightieth birthday,

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recounted a favorite story of his, incidental to his father-in-law's departure. A friend had sent the clergyman, aboard ship, a basket containing a loaf of bread and a pair of shoes, together with a remark to the effect that he might find himself in need of both among the British. In a state of dudgeon ill-befitting a man of his calling, Kern threw the basket and its contents overboard.

By 1787, however, he was again in the United States, this time serving as pastor of the German Reformed Church in Rheinbeck (Dutchess County), New York. The same year he moved to Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where he served churches for the remainder of his life. He died in Rock Hill, Pennsylvania, on March 22, 1788.<sup>7</sup> It is possible that Peter Erben, seventeen years of age at the time of Kern's death, was a native of Bucks County (which borders the city), rather than Philadelphia itself, and there chanced to meet his future wife, Elizabeth Kern.

Peter Erben's first entry in a city directory for New York—1795—lists him as a tanner. He does not appear in the 1796 directory, but is listed in 1797, again as a tanner. Both 1798 and 1799 directories carry him as a grocer, and it is not until his listing in the 1800 directory that he first appears as a musician or a music teacher. The inference may be drawn that this change of occupational listing coincided with his first position as a church organist; following such a theory, the position would have been assumed—allowing for a delay in printing the directory—in 1799.

Christ Church had been organized in 1794, and had completed its building, on the south side of Ann Street, east of Nassau, a year later. Apparently the parish procured a small organ of British manufacture for temporary use. It may be that Peter Erben's appointment as organist of Christ Church coincided with the church's 1799 contract for a new organ to be built by John Geib. In any event, the October 29, 1800, issue of the *Commercial Advertiser* contained a notice which offered for sale "A Church Organ, In Christ Church to be disposed of . . . built in London . . ." Interested parties were advised to contact either Geib or "P. Erben, Organist, George-street." This would appear to show clearly that Erben was organist of Christ Church. A further bit of circumstantial evidence occurs incidental to an article in the December 24, 1864, issue of *Dwight's Journal*, describing the dedicatory program for the Hall & Labagh chancel organ in Trinity Church. One of the participants in the affair was S. P. Taylor, characterized as the oldest living organist in the city. Taylor, it was reported, began his career at Christ Church in 1807—the same year that Erben assumed his (new) duties at St. George's Chapel.<sup>8</sup>

Little is known of the musical activity at Christ Church during the period of Erben's tenure. Allwardt cites a tradition that the parish was the first in the city to introduce Anglican chant, doing so in 1805.<sup>9</sup> Erben might well have had a hand in such an innovation, for during the period he was director of "The Society for Cultivating Church Music," a singing society, after the practice of the time, spon-

sored by Trinity Church. Two publications were completed by him during the same period: *Selection of Psalms and Hymn Tunes* (1806) and the *Suffolk Collection of Church Music* (1807).

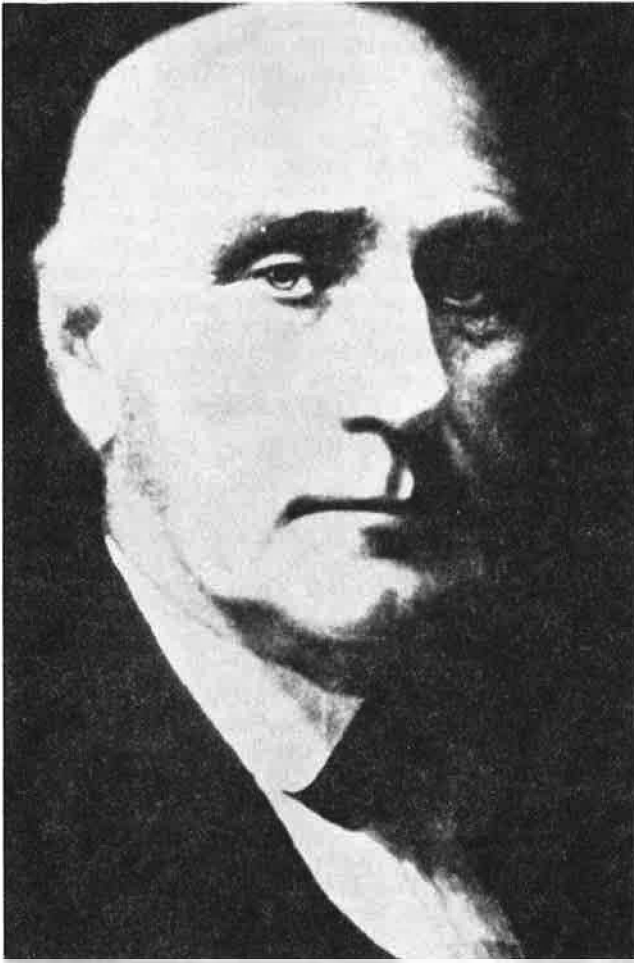
In 1807, Peter Erben became organist of St. George's Chapel, which incorporated as an independent parish in 1811. It is interesting that an attempt was made to introduce chanting into that church's services in 1813. The effort was stopped, after meeting severe resistance on the part of the congregation.<sup>10</sup> It may be no more than coincidence that Erben left St. George's that same year for a position at the newly completed St. John's Chapel, on Varick Street. He remained at St. John's until 1820, when he became organist of Trinity Church.

#### Thomas Hall and Henry Erben

Henry Erben was born March 10, 1800, the second of five children. Although nothing is known of his formal education, he probably received some practical musical training from his father, as did at least two of his siblings. Michael Erben, listed in subsequent directories as a "ship carver," was organist of St. Paul's Chapel from 1855 to 1868, and the "Mrs. Maria Hall, Volunteer," listed in the records of Calvary Church as having served as that parish's organist in 1842, may have been his older sister.<sup>11</sup> Another brother, Peter Erben, Jr., appears in the directories from 1836 to 1844 as a flour merchant, doing business on the waterfront. Of the fifth child, a daughter, nothing is known, except that Peter Erben, Sr.'s obituary notice in the May 2 and 3, 1861, issue of the *Times*, makes mention of his three sons and two sons-in-law, Thomas Hall and a Dr. John Pearse.

The organ for St. John's Chapel was built by John Lowe of Philadelphia in 1813, at a cost of \$6,000. The story of its journey to New York aboard the coastal packet, *Pennsylvania*, and that vessel's seizure by the British blockade—specifically the man-of-war, *H. M. S. Plantagenet*—has been recounted by Webber, among others. The documentation for the event is contained in the Vestry records of Trinity Parish. Berrian gives the figure of \$2,000 as the ransom paid the *Plantagenet's* captain by Trinity Parish.<sup>12</sup> Negotiations were carried on through Thomas Barclay, the British consul-general, who was the son of a former rector of Trinity. Lowe's apprentice, Thomas Hall, had been dispatched via overland coach from Philadelphia to install the organ. He had, of course, arrived in New York well in advance of the instrument, and was later to recall carrying the ransom, in Spanish dollars, from the Mechanics Bank down to the docks, under a flag of truce.<sup>13</sup> The organ was released on November 25, 1813. Meanwhile, Lowe himself had hurried from Philadelphia to be of assistance in the crisis. The mental strain of the situation and the physical demands of the journey evidently proved too much for him; he died shortly after his arrival, leaving Hall to set up the instrument with such help as Peter Erben, and possibly his thirteen-year-old son, Henry, might provide.

Hall himself is even more of an enigma than Erben. He first appears in New York directories in 1820, as Cameron has pointed out.<sup>14</sup> However, there



Henry Erben, about 1855.

is strong evidence that he was settled in the city four years prior to that entry. In an 1874 brochure and opus list,<sup>15</sup> Henry Erben dates the commencement of his apprenticeship with Hall as occurring in 1816. Sixteen years of age was a fairly normal (if not a bit ripe) point for such training to begin. Furthermore, Erben specifically describes his apprenticeship as lasting for five years, i.e., terminating, as such arrangements did by both law and custom, on his twenty-first birthday.

It can be shown that Hall returned to Philadelphia after Lowe's death, for the directory for that city for 1816 lists a Thomas Hall, an organ builder, at No. 269 South Front Street. The same issue lists a Thomas M. Hall, a merchant, at No. 263 High [now Market] Street. This would have been his father. Both names disappear from the 1817 and subsequent Philadelphia directories, and it can thus be inferred that the younger man moved to New York after his father's death, in 1816. It would appear that Hall was well established in New York by the time of his marriage to Maria Erben, March 18, 1818.

Upon "graduation" from his apprenticeship with Hall, Erben continued in his employ as a journeyman. The March 2, 1822, issue of *The Euterpeian* described a Hall organ, installed shortly before in

St. Paul's Church, Augusta, Georgia, "put up . . . by Mr. Henry Erben, who came for the purpose . . ."<sup>16</sup> In 1824 the two men formed a partnership. Erben's 1880 brochure and opus list<sup>17</sup> contains twenty-eight organs from the years 1824 through 1827, among them an 1824 instrument for St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie (which Erben was to "disown," in 1846, as being totally Hall's work). Not listed were organs built that same year for the Vandewater Street Presbyterian Church, reported in the January 1, 1824, issue of *The Lyre*, and for a Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina, reported in the June 1, 1824, issue of *The Lyre*.<sup>18</sup> The 1841 Erben in the First Chinese Presbyterian Church (formerly Sea and Land) in New York, bears the legend "Hall & Erben 1824" on its pedalboard and inside a wind-duct,<sup>19</sup> and its structure suggests that it was originally a single-manual organ, rebuilt by Erben in 1841. Of course, there is no way of ascertaining its original home.

Since there are some organs contained in both the 1874 and 1880 Erben lists, and the Hall list (as reconstructed from F. R. Webber's records by Donald R. M. Paterson), dating from 1824-27, as well as some listed by Erben that cannot be documented as belonging to the partnership, it is probable that Erben's list, drawn up some six decades later, contains some of both the Hall & Erben contracts and Erben's own work, undertaken by him on the side. Erben's acceptance of work under his own name, rather than directing it to the partnership, may have been the cause of the dissolution of the partnership, March 2, 1827.<sup>20</sup> The public notices give no reason for the action, however, if Erben did have the habit of accepting work in his own name (a violation both of law and of ethics), and Hall may have chosen to terminate the corporate relationship rather than to seek redress in the courts against a relative by marriage.

The terms of dissolution gave Erben control of the firm and responsibility for its debts. Surprisingly, Hall remained in Erben's employ for the next sixteen-and-a-half years, although he appears to have maintained separate shop facilities under his own name after 1837. An 1839 article in *The Musical Review* refers to Hall as Erben's "principal mechanic."<sup>21</sup> Edward Hodges, in his notebook on the Trinity Church organ, recorded that Hall "had in fact always been the actuary of the Erben concern."<sup>22</sup> Thanks to Cameron's discovery of a portion of the Hall, Labagh & Company letter file, we may read in Hall's own hand of his departure from the Erben establishment in October of 1843. It is suggestive of an interesting trait in Erben's personality that he first chanced to find fault with Hall's work coincidentally with the latter's formation, with John Labagh, of a competing firm, in 1846. The organ in particular was, of course, the instrument in St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, alluded to earlier.

During the years between 1827 and 1843, Erben's shop was twice devastated by fire. The first conflagration occurred on the bitterly cold night of January 3-4, 1835. Webber has recounted the rather entertaining story, reported in the January 5, 1834, issue of the *Commercial Advertiser*, wherein the



volunteer firemen, seeking to warm their hands, ignited barrels of pitch from Erben's stores somewhat close to his neighbor, the gas works. The workers in the latter establishment, becoming somewhat concerned (as might be expected), began to throw objects at the firemen, who promptly forgot the reason for their presence on the scene and began to retaliate against the gas-workers. This not-very-glorious chapter in the history of the New York Fire Department is headed, aptly (in the *Advertiser*), "Conflagration and Riot." Erben's losses were totally covered by insurance, and he was shortly back in operation. Said a notice in *The Evening Post* for March 10 of that year,

Organs.—The subscriber respectfully informs his friends and the public that his Manufactory of Church and Chamber Organs, which was interrupted by the fire, is again in complete operation at No. 88 Centre Street, where he is prepared to execute orders for organs, at the shortest notice and most reasonable terms. Messrs. Nunns, Clarke & Co., and Mr. Duncan Phyfe having kindly furnished him with a supply of their thoroughly seasoned lumber, enable him, (as heretofore) to warrant his Organs to be built of the very best materials.

#### HENRY ERBEN

Erben was not as lucky six years later. On October 7, 1841, a second fire destroyed the shop. A report in the October 16 issue of the *New York Observer* placed his loss at about \$40,000, of which only \$26,000 was covered by insurance. In that same issue of the *Observer*, Erben placed a paid notice to the effect that he had lumber and was ready to transact business as usual. However, according to Hodges, he had, in fact, been forced to the brink of bankruptcy, and for a while it appeared that Hall might gain control of the operation. With super-human resiliency, Erben rallied financial support, and Hodges surmised that it was Hall's disappointment at missing this opportunity that finally moved him to seek his fortune elsewhere.<sup>23</sup>

Hall continued in partnership with John Labagh until 1868, when James L. Kemp became a third partner. He retired sometime before May of 1872, for a dedication program for the organ in Clinton

Avenue Reformed Church, Newark, New Jersey, May 13, 1872, styles the firm as Labagh & Kemp. Hall died May 23, 1874, in New York.

#### Notes:

- 1 - George Templeton Strong, *The Diary of George Templeton Strong*, 4 vols., ed. Allan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas (New York: Macmillan, 1952.)
- 2 - F. E. Morton, "Henry Erben and His Work," *The Diapason*, I:2 (January 1, 1910), pp. 1, 3; and F. R. Webber, "Henry Erben, Organ Builder of a Century Ago and His Work," *The Diapason*, XLIV:1 (December 1952), p. 16.
- 3 - "Henry Erben's Superior Workmanship," *The Keraulophon*, VI:1-VI:7 (January to July 1974). (Published by the Greater New York Chapter, Organ Historical Society).
- 4 - James Johnson, "Henry Erben, American Organ Builder, A Survey of His Life and Work" (unpublished Master's thesis, Yale University, 1968).
- 5 - Ed. James Grant Wilson and John Fiske (New York: D. Appleton, 1888), vol. II, p. 362.
- 6 - See the *Quarterly Bulletin of the New-York Historical Society* for April 1917.
- 7 - Frederick Lewis Weis, *The Colonial Clergy of the Middle Colonies* (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1957), p. 251.
- 8 - "Choral Festival at Trinity Church," *Dwight's Journal of Music*, XXIV:20 (December 24, 1864), pp. 364-5.
- 9 - Anton Paul Allwardt, "Sacred Music in New York City 1800-1850" (unpublished SMD dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, 1950), p. 23.
- 10 - *Loc. cit.*
- 11 - See *THE TRACKER*, XI:2 (Winter 1967), p. 11.
- 12 - William Berrian, *Historical Sketch of Trinity Church* (New York: Stafford & Swords, 1847), p. 218.
- 13 - The reminiscence is in the untitled, unpaginated "Organ Scrapbook" in the New-York Historical Society.
- 14 - Peter T. Cameron, "A Chronology of the Organ Builders Working in New York City," *The Bicentennial Tracker* (Wilmington, Ohio: The Organ Historical Society, 1976), p. 82.
- 15 - Only known extant copy in the collection of Edgar A. Boadway, Claremont, N. H.
- 16 - "The Arts," *The Euterpeiad*, no. 25, vol. II (March 2, 1822), p. 195.
- 17 - Only known extant copy in the collection of the New-York Historical Society.
- 18 - I:8, p. 127; II:1, p. 6.
- 19 - I am indebted to Lawrence Trupiano for this information.
- 20 - The notice appeared in the *Commercial Advertiser* for March 3, 5, and 6, 1827.
- 21 - "Organ Building", June 1839, p. 52.
- 22 - p. 34. The notebook is in the Library of Congress.
- 23 - *Ibid.*, p. 37.

#### W. RAYMOND ACKERMAN

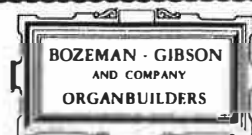
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# The Detroit Convention Report

Over 100 members and friends of the Organ Historical Society attended the 22nd annual national convention, this year in Detroit, Michigan, June 28 through 30. Among the distinguished conventioners was Dr. William H. Barnes, one of our Honorary Members, who was accompanied by his wife, Catharine. Dr. Barnes has just completed a new book, *My Recollections of Church Musicians*, which will be reviewed in the next issue of *THE TRACKER*.

The National Council met on Monday afternoon, June 27 (minutes appear elsewhere in this issue), and the Convention Chairman, William Worden and his wife, entertained the Council at dinner most graciously.

Monday evening a pre-convention recital was given by Huw Lewis, FRCO, at St. John's Episcopal Church, jointly sponsored by the AGO Regional Convention which was meeting concurrently. Unfortunately, we missed this program due to the fact that the National Council had to reconvene after dinner to complete its business prior to the Annual Meeting.

Tuesday morning the Annual Meeting for 1977 was held at the Cadillac Hotel (convention headquarters), the minutes of which appear elsewhere. As the very last act of business, President Laufman presented the Society's Outstanding Service Award to Norma Cunningham, Publisher of *THE TRACKER* and manager of the Society headquarters at Wilmington, Ohio. In his presentation, Mr. Laufman cited the many functions performed by Mrs. Cunningham for the Society, and his praise was heartily endorsed by a standing ovation of all present.

We boarded two buses about 11:30 A.M. and were served box lunches during the trip to the Ford Museum and Greenfield Village. There was no formal guided tour, so we spent about two hours in the Ford Museum—an enormous collection of just about everything *Americana* residing in a huge, rambling structure which bears the face of Independence Hall, Philadelphia. Inside we heard a demonstration by Rosalind Mohnsen on the 1-4 Jardine cabinet organ, saw an unplayable Nutter & Kitteredge (of Mt. Vernon, N.H.) having all wood pipes, an unplayable Sturdevant (of Meredith, N.H.) dating from 1848 which looks for all the world like a fussy big grand piano, and many other keyboard instruments. Among these was a fine Knabe grand piano which was beautifully played by Stephen Long.

Over in Greenfield Village we visited the reproduction of Thomas Edison's Menlo Park laboratory. On the second floor we found the E. M. Skinner reproduction of Hilborne Roosevelt's "Edison organ." After a careful examination of the instrument by all on the tour, we heard a demonstration by Lois Regestein who showed off the organ's tonal qualities to advantage. We saw many other things of interest

in this reconstructed village, most of which were reminiscent of the early 1900s.

Our buses brought us back to St. John's-St. Luke Evangelical Church in Detroit (UCC) where we were impressed with the unusual lighting arrangement and enjoyed James J. Hammann's late afternoon recital. Mr. Hammann (from Toledo, Ohio) played Merkel's *B Minor Sonata*, John Knowles Paine's *Prelude No. 1 in D flat*, and accompanied the Buck Festival Singers in Dudley Buck's *Festival Te Deum in E flat*, to the delight of all. We sang the hymn "Now Thank We All Our God" to the usual choral tune and, since the text was printed in both English and German, many sang in the latter tongue.

The ladies of this church served a bountiful dinner, after which we departed for St. Joseph's R. C. Church where Thomas M. Kuras, FAGO, of Detroit, played a splendid program assisted by Phillis Gehman, soprano, and Priscilla Post, violinist. The organ here is the 1973 instrument built by our Convention Chairman, William Worden. Retaining the original Odell case and ten ranks of pipes, Mr. Worden has provided this church with a wholly adequate organ of two manuals and 38 ranks.



William H. Barnes, honorary member of the Organ Historical Society, Inc.

Mr. Kuras' program included Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in E flat*, Karg-Elert's *Symphonischer Choral* on "Nun ruhen all Wälder," Ernst Pepping's *Concerto II*, Widor's *Symphony Gothique* and Durufle's *Fugue sur le theme du Carillon*, all of which proved popular with the large audience. We sang "Now rest beneath night's shadows" to the tune used in Karg-Elert's composition. There was an "afterglow" at headquarters with the AGO.

Wednesday morning began with a demonstration by Anne Parks on the 1973 2-35 mechanical action organ built by Gabriel Kney of London, Ontario. The very unusual church building has rather dry acoustics, but the organ possesses some beautiful individual voices. Dr. Parks played Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in B minor*, his chorale prelude on "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland," and Distler's *Orgelpartita* on the same chorale. We sang "For all the Saints" to the Vaughan Williams tune, and took our buses to Ste. Anne's R. C. Church for a Solemn Mass.

Ste. Anne's is a beautiful church with an 1887 Granville Wood organ which was rebuilt in 1940 by Casavant. Thomas Kuras was in charge of the music, providing Rheinberger's *Overture* for violin and organ (with Elizabeth Peterson, violinist) as the prelude. He then conducted the Detroit Philomusica chorus and orchestra in Rheinberger's *Grosse Messe* in C, Opus 169. William Worden served as a reader during the Mass. We sang "O God, our help in ages past" (to the St. Anne tune, of course!) and "Praise the Lord, Ye Heavens Adore Him" to *Hymn*. The whole Mass was glorious, and, when

there appeared to be no postlude, the congregation burst into a long round of applause in appreciation.

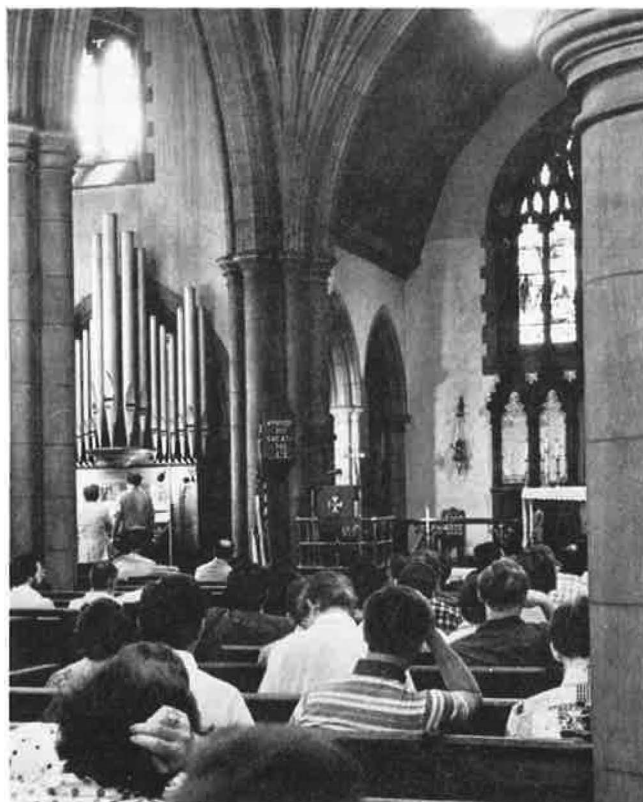
Our buses took us to Trinity Episcopal Church where we had a good lunch, and had time to explore this unusually fine building. A spiral staircase led to a belfry with 10 McChane (Baltimore) bells, operated by "umbrella handles." The 1892 Jardine appeared to be in fine condition, and we enjoyed John Courter's performance of Guilmant's *Improvisation on a Melody by Handel*, John C. Moller's *Presto*, Horatio Parker's *Arietta*, Gladys Jameson's *Two Appalachian Preludes*, Albert Alain's *Scherzo* and Franck's *Piece Heroique*. We sang "And have the bright immensities" to Handel's tune called *Halifax*.

Dr. Kim Kasling was to have demonstrated the 1891 3/34 Johnson organ at Cass Avenue Methodist Church, but was unable to be present. Edward Walsh, a young organist from Detroit, kindly replaced him and played Mendelssohn's *Prelude and Fugue in C minor*, three short pieces by Rheinberger, John Knowles Paine's *Prelude No. 2 in B minor*, and Franck's *Chorale No. 1 in E*. We sang "If thou but suffer God to guide thee" to the usual German tune.

It was announced that due to the incomplete condition of the restoration work on the Andreas Moeller organ at Most Holy Trinity church, we would not visit that location. Instead, a hymn-sing was organized with Edward Walsh playing the Johnson organ and leadership provided by Edna Van Duzee of Round Lake, New York, and Marice Stith of Ithaca, New York. Hymns included "Be Thou My



The Gabriel Kney organ of 1974, in St. Aloysius R. C. Church, Detroit, Michigan. This and the following photographs by J. Paul Schneider.



The Geo. Jardine & Son organ of 1892 in Trinity Episcopal Church, Detroit, Michigan.

Vision" (Slane), "Blessed Assurance," "Brightly Beams," "Be Still My Soul," "All Hail the Power" (Coronation), "Joyful, joyful," "Once to everyman" (Ton-Y-botel), "There's a voice in the wilderness," and "God of Our Fathers" (National Hymn).

We then rode to Trumbull Avenue Presbyterian Church and settled down to what was scheduled as a "panel discussion," but it turned out to be a lecture by the highly talented Thomas Kuras on the proper use of nineteenth century French and German harmoniums. The finest French instrument is the *Mustel*, for which Cesar Franck composed much material. For the German instrument by *Kunst*, Karg-Elert did likewise. These instruments are "cousins" to the American reed organ, according to Mr. Kuras, who gave detailed instruction and examples of the correct registration methods. He also named compositions by Vierne and Langlais who wrote for these instruments.

After the lecture, we had an ample meal, and enjoyed a delightful recital by Carol Teti on the Granville Wood organ, built in 1889. Although some of the music was marred by uneven wind in the Swell division, the warm tone of the organ was admirably demonstrated. Two chorale preludes by Bach were followed by Dudley Buck's *Chorale: Allein Gott in der Hoh sei Ehr'*, and two chorale prelude by Brahms. Then came Franck's *Prelude, Fugue & Variation*. After intermission we heard three chorale preludes by Anton Heiller, Arthur Foote's *Cantilena in G*, Gladys Fisher's *Chorale Prelude on "Evan,"* and Franck's *Chorale No. 3 in A minor*.

Again there was an afterglow at headquarters with the AGO.

Pressing business kept this writer from attending the final day of the 1977 convention, but the report continues by courtesy of Arthur Lawrence who modestly omits mention of the morning activities which included his demonstration-recital of Farrand & Votey, opus 816, at Holy Family R. C. Church in Detroit. Mr. Lawrence continues:

Thursday's afternoon activities began at Meadowbrook Hall, on the campus of Oakland University at

Rochester. Lunch was served in the elegant surroundings of the mansion's dining room; this Tudor-style home, built in the 1920's, was the former estate of Mathilda Dodge Wilson. For an hour or so, we toured the many rooms and corridors of the home in small groups, led by guides who were eager to relate the background of the mansion and the family who built it. All the while, strains of various choice period pieces were heard, as Thomas Kuras once again demonstrated his musical ability and flexibility by playing the large Aeolian home organ, Op. 1444. With something over 60 ranks, it is the largest house organ in Michigan. Its location in several parts of the building made it difficult to hear to good advantage in any one spot (especially at the console) but it seemed admirable for home entertainment.

A short drive in the rain took us to Varner Recital Hall at Oakland University. Here, in an auditorium of advanced state institutional style, a lovely 1975 Casavant tracker is perched in a side gallery, swallow's-nest style. This two-manual instrument of 21 stops was described in *THE TRACKER*, Winter 1977, p. 13. As that account predicted, the sight and sound of this organ was a strong contrast to the preceding. Kent McDonald, who had been scheduled to demonstrate the organ, was unable to be present; Donald R. M. Paterson of Cornell University graciously consented to improvise a demonstration. His extended improvisation was in a facile style which showed the various stops ably. We were grateful for this chance to hear the instrument.

Then we rode the buses east to New Baltimore, where Kristin Gronning Johnson gave a fine demonstration-recital on a one-manual Hinners of six stops, built c.1905, at St. John's Lutheran Church. Her program consisted of Johann Adam Reinken's *Fugue in G Minor*, George F. Bristow's *Moderato* (from *Six Pieces*, Op. 45, No. 1), and Cor Kee's *Een vaste Burg voor orgel manualiter*. She announced the registrations for each piece. This little organ filled the plain frame church with a fairly hefty sound. We sang "Immortal, Invisible" to the *St. Denio* tune.

We continued on to Marine City and had a plentiful dinner in the parish hall of Holy Cross R. C.



OHS conventioners entering Holy Family R. C. Church, Detroit, Michigan.



OHS conventioners having lunch at Meadowbrook Hall, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan.



The 1861 E. & G. G. Hook organ at Holy Cross R. C. Church, Marine City, Michigan.

Church. Afterward we moved into the packed church to hear Robert F. Bates play the final recital on a just-restored three manual E. & G.G. Hook of 1861. Formerly located in St. John's Episcopal Church in Detroit, the organ was moved to Marine City in 1904 and is the oldest American-built one in the state. In its restored state, with work and additions by Bozeman-Gibson and Co., 1977, this instrument was certainly the finest heard during the convention. With 33 stops and a handsome new Gothic Revival case, it was a treat both to see and hear. Mr. Bates' recital was a substantial one, artistically accomplished: J. S. Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in D Major*, BWV 532, César Franck's *Cantabile*, William Boyce's *Voluntary I in D Major*, Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Prelude and Fugue in C Minor*, and Max Reger's *Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue in E Minor*, Op. 127. The extensive Reger work brought the appreciative audience to its feet at the conclusion. For an encore, Mr. Bates played Bach: *An Wasserflussen Babylon*, BWV 653b. Thomas Kuras played splendid accompaniments to the hymns we sang afterward: "Lord Christ, when first thou cam'st" (*Bohemian Brethren*), "Let all mortal flesh keep silence" (*Piccardy*), and "Father, we thank thee" (*Rendez a dieu*). A church full of singing people brought the convention to a fitting close.

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## The Jardine We Once Had

by Thomas Patton

When I was appointed organist of Grace Church (Episcopal) in Haddonfield, New Jersey, about forty years ago, the organ was a tracker-action instrument built in 1896 by George Jardine and Sons.

The organ was originally hand-pumped, and throughout its lifetime the hand-pump mechanism was retained so that if the water power (installed in 1903) failed, or the electric motor (added in 1919) failed, the organ was still usable providing a young man with plenty of muscle could be induced to pump by hand.

The wind pressure was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and the upper work on the Great (4' Flute, Twelfth and 2' Principal) were big to go with the Great Open Diapason. The Pedal Bourdon was also loud and could not be used against any small combinations.

This organ was removed in the 1940s because the officials wanted the chamber (at the left of the chancel) for additional sacristy space. In its place is a pipeless substitute.

The specifications were:

Great	Swell (enclosed)
Open Diapason 8'	Bourdon Bass 16'
Melodia 8'	Bourdon Treble 16'
Dulciana 8'	Open Diapason 8'
Flute 4'	Salicional 8'
Twelfth 2 2/3'	Aeoline 8'
Principal 2'	Stopped Diapason 8'
Pedal	Violina 4'
Bourdon 16'	Flute Harmonique 4'
	Oboe 8'

There were the usual couplers, Swell to Great, Swell to Pedal, and Great to Pedal, and there was a Swell Tremulant.

The organ had a full, rich sound which carried well into the nave of the church.

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# Was the Cone-valve Chest a Mistake?

by Hans Gerd Klais

Translated from the German by Homer D. Blanchard

Based on a paper presented before the Association of  
German Master Organ Builders on June 10, 1976, in Fulda.

(Continued from the last issue)

What I have been trying thus far to outline in bold strokes I should now like to make a little more concrete. First I turn to the *Anleitung zur Kenntniss, Beurtheilung und Erhaltung der Orgeln* of Johann Christian Wolfram, which appeared in 1815. The book is interesting for, among other things, the fact that it formulates a definite tonal ideal that, if I may say so, later became a standard in the age of the cone-valve chest. I shall select from this work certain passages that seem to me to be significant: "If an organ has two or more manuals, then one gives the one more and stronger voices and calls it the Great manual (*Hauptmanual*)."<sup>14</sup>

Then Wolfram undertakes a division of the "pipe-work," among other things, into "main and filling voices." One should note the totally unbaroque nomenclature!<sup>15</sup> Among the filling voices Wolfram, moreover, reckons all the compound stops and mutations—there is no mention of the use of mutations as color stops and the principle of an instrument based on a tutti is quite clearly proclaimed. "In

every organ . . . the stops must form a harmonic whole among themselves."<sup>16</sup> "Brilliance, keenness, and fullness," these are the tonal ideals that are mentioned by Wolfram,<sup>17</sup> and in another place "gravity and dignity," which again corresponds to the baroque aesthetic.

Further: "One should not forget the gentle and beautiful voices."<sup>18</sup> And finally, what is especially interesting: "Of the reeds the Vox Humana and Trumpet may be the most passable for the manuals, although I [Wolfram] would not like to advise them at once, since they are seldom successful and more seldom stay in tune."<sup>19</sup> Lastly: "An instrument must get a penetrating foundation by means of powerful basses."<sup>20</sup>

Wolfram expressly calls the two strings Gambe and Violoncello respectively "one of the most beautiful organ stops of metal" and "one of the most beautiful Pedal voices."<sup>21</sup>

An analysis of the stoplist of an organ from the year 1826—built by Müller in Breslau for the Church

Johann Christian Benjamin Müller  
Breslau, Germany, 1826  
Kirche zu den Elftausend Jungfrauen  
II manuals, 27 registers, mechanical sliderchests

	Prinzipals	Flutes/Gedackts	Strings	Reeds
Pedal	Oktave 8'	Subbass 16'	Violon 16'	Posaune 16'
	Oktave 4'	Doppelflöte 8'	Gamba 16'	
Hauptwerk	Prinzipal 8'	Bordun 16'		Klarinette 8'
	Oktave 4'	Doppelflöte 8'	Gamba 8'	
	Quinte 2 2/3'	Portunal 8'		
	Superoktave 2'	Rohrflöte 4'		
	Mixtur V			
Oberwerk	Prinzipal 4'	Flauto major 8'	Salicet 8'	
	Superoktave 2'	Quintatön 8'	Vox Humana 8'	
	Mixtur III	Fl. traverso 4'	(labial)	
		Nassatquinte 2 2/3'		



of the Eleven Thousand Virgins there—will, as I believe, bring further clarity in connection with the tonal picture of the organ of the 19th century.<sup>22</sup>

Some cues relative to the discussion of this stoplist:

27 stops in carefully balanced distribution: 11 : 9 : 7 stops.

Hauptwerk: 5 Principals, 4 large-scale voices, 1 string, 1 reed

Oberwerk: 3 Principals, 4 large-scale voices, 1 string, no reed

Pedal: 2 Principals, 2 large-scale voices, 2 strings, 1 reed.

Relatively complete Principal chorus.

Relatively complete large-scale chorus with some peculiarities:

Portunal 8' with specially shaped block and mouth

2 Doppelflötes, each having two mouths  
labial Vox Humana 8'

Flauto traverso 4' overblowing.

Only two reeds, but these having a powerful sound.

Note the penetration of the strings as substitutes for Principals in the Pedal and Oberwerk.

The personal style of the organbuilder is recognizable. This is a matter of fundamental importance.

The stoplist shows, as I hope, a tonal picture that was able to be cultivated farther after the invention of the cone-valve chest. This was due to the technical possibilities of the new system, so completely different from the sliderchest.

The cone-valve chest offered the possibility of a larger complement of stops in the individual divisions than was possible at that time with the sliderchest. For example, according to the concept of the building contractor the organ built by E. F. Walcker in 1834 for the Paulskirche in Frankfurt was to be an especially beautiful and large, even colossal instrument. But the limitations of the sliderchest were revealed when it came to disposing big stops. The musical desires could not be completely realized. They required new constructions. Walcker solved the problem in 1842 with the cone-valve chest. The increase

in the number of voices in the individual divisions (insofar as one can speak here about this in the strict sense) led, among other things, to an extremely rich gradation of the 8' stops, and further to the inclusion of string stops: and this in turn was due to the fact that their voicing turned out to be more favorable on the cone-valve chest. Higher pitched stops, of course, react quite nervously to the cone-valve chest; one can say that they "chirp." One sometimes finds instruments with cone-valve chests where the stoplist has been changed in the baroque sense, where success was not achieved in integrating tonally the high Octave or mutation ranges.

The result, finally, was a rich tonal palette about the quality of which there can be no quarrel—and here again we must recall the names of those organbuilders to whom their era owed such significant organs. Before I come to other stoplists that in my estimation are good examples we must still mention that following tubular pneumatics and electropneumatics the organ layout was able to grow larger, but that it was also able to be shaped in its outgrowths in ways that were more foreign to the organ. Having said this I should like to let the matter rest. One must also not overlook the fact that the initial speech of the pipes of each key, but of different stops did not always occur simultaneously on the cone-valve chest as a result of its construction, nor can it, as a practical matter.

Here now once more the analyses of three stoplists:

The 1869 Walcker organ of St. Margarathen in Waldkirch was an instrument of 26 stops: Manual I: 13 stops, Manual II: 7 stops, Pedal: 6 stops. Cone-valve chests with mechanical action were used for all divisions.

Apparent at once is the tonal dominance of Manual I in the sense of a Hauptwerk, but a Hauptwerk in contrast to which there is no longer a Rückpositiv, perhaps, as a foil. Rather we find here as the second manual a Hinterwerk whose number of stops is barely more than half that of the first manual. The Pedal with its six stops must be called a veritable bass foundation from its disposition and tonal alignment.

Eberhard Friedrich Walcker & Cie  
Ludwigsburg, Germany, 1869  
St. Margarathen, Waldkirch  
II manuals, 26 registers, mechanical cone-valve chests

obl. = overblowing

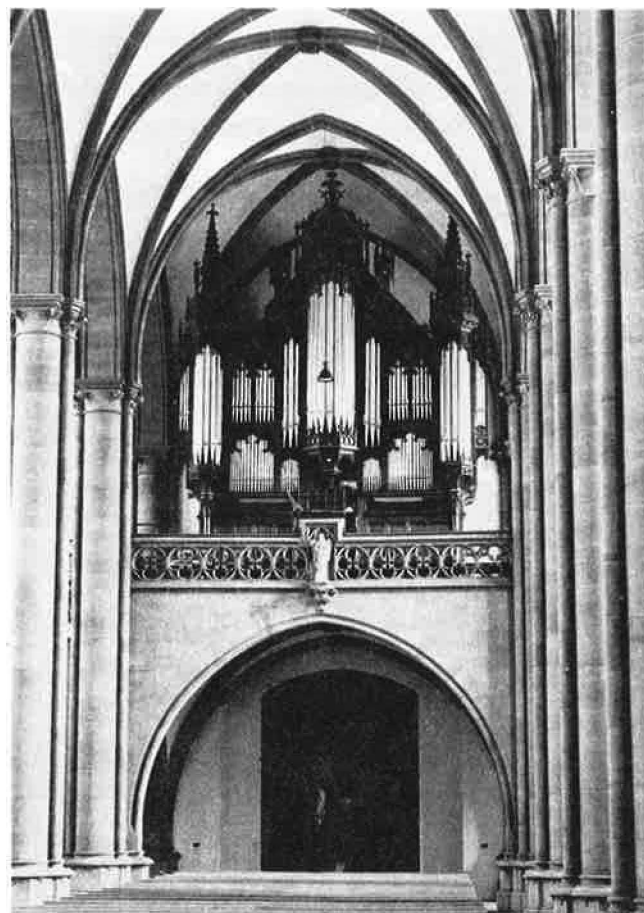
<u>Pedal</u>		<u>Manual I</u>		<u>Manual II</u>	
16	Violonbass	wood, open			
16	Subbass	wood, stopped →	16 Bourdon	wood	
8	Öttavbass	wood, open →	8 Principal	facade →	8
8	Gedecktbass	wood, stopped →	8 Gedeckt	wood →	8
8	Violoncello	wood, open →	8 Viola di Gamba	→	8
			8 Hohlflöte	wood, open - - - - - →	4
			8 Gemshorn (bass	from Hohlfl.) - - - - - →	4
			8 Dolce	#1-12 wood, open	4
			4 Octav	facade	
			4 Rohrflöte		
			2 Superoctav		
			V Cornett (from tg, 8')		
		2 2/3	Mixtur IV		
16	Posaunbass	wood - - - - - →	8 Trompette	(French) →	8
				Clarinette	#1-24 wood free reed

The arrows chiefly point out the equipping of the individual divisions—if I may call it that—with corresponding or related stops. It becomes obvious, furthermore, how much the second manual is a weakening, in the dynamic sense, in relation to the first one. In the manuals and in the Pedal large-scale flutes and small-scale strings are richly represented—quite in contrast to the reeds which, in point of numbers, are absolutely under-represented. The characteristics mentioned thus far would mark the instrument sufficiently as a romantic organ, even if the voluptuous disposition of the first manual—rightly called Hauptwerk—has not yet been set forth. Opposed to the well-developed Principal chorus there stands an equally well-developed wide-scale chorus, indeed one of greater numbers—where “opposed” is not to be understood as a tonal limitation. Both groups are to be thought of as complementary. The two strings (Viola di Gamba and Dolce) add themselves to the stoplist picture. Nor should one fail to mention the disposition of a Cornett V in the Hauptwerk, which is characteristic for this type of organ. All-in-all this is an impressive example of a romantic organ with cone-valve chests. The instrument was altered recently.

As the next example I choose the organ of the St. Marienkirche at Kaiserslautern, which my grandfather completed in 1904. In principle the same fundamental stoplist basics obtain here as in the organ at Waldkirch. As a result of the larger number of stops there is a further differentiation in the area of the individual stop groups both from manual to manual as well as within the manuals themselves. For example, within the third manual:

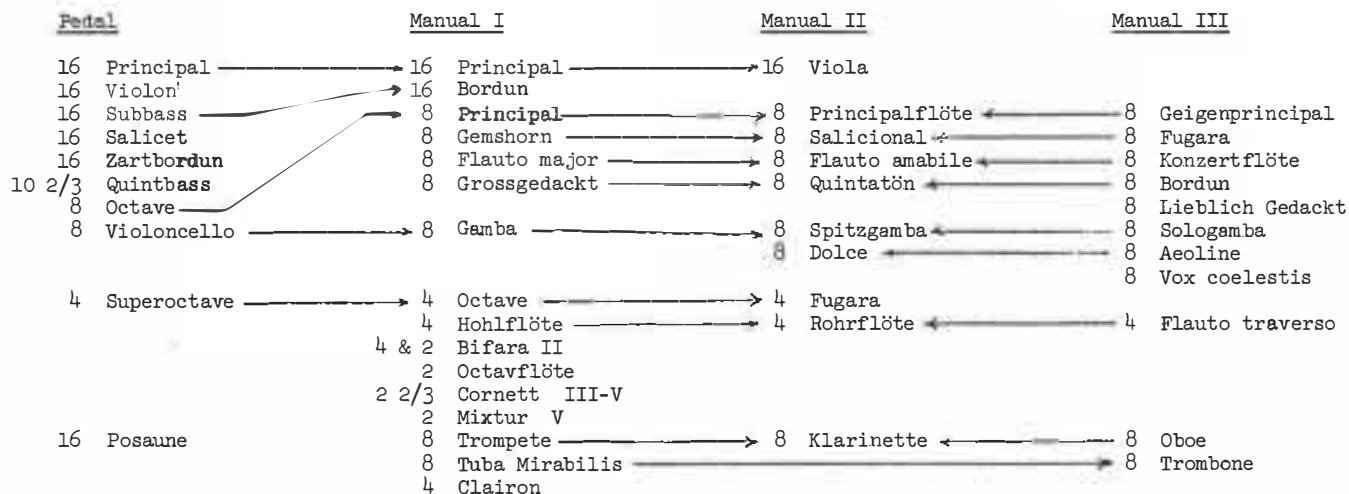
strong Principal	=	Geigenprincipal 8'
weak Principal	=	Fugara 8'
strong Flute	=	Konzertflöte 8'
weak Flute	=	Bordun 8'
very weak Flute	=	Lieblich Gedackt 8'
strong String	=	Gamba 8'
weak String	=	Aeoline 8'
solo String	=	Vox coelestis 8'

Johannes Klais, Sr.  
Bonn, Germany, 1904  
St. Marien, Kaiserslautern  
III manuals, 47 registers, pneumatic cone-valve chests



The 1904 Johannes Klais, Sr., organ at St. Marienkirche, Kaiserslautern.

The schematic with its arrows indicates the corresponding voices in the other individual divisions, including the Pedal.



	Pedal:	I. Hauptwerk:	II. Schwellwerk 1:	III. Schwellwerk 2:
16'	Principalbass	16 Principal		16 Salicional
	Subbass	16 Bordun	16 Liebl. Gedackt	
8'	Octavbass	8 Principal	8 Geigenprincipal	
	Cello	8 Fugara	8 Gamba	8 Violine
		8 Dolce	8 Salicional	8 Aeoline
	Undulating		8 Vox coelestis tc	8 Unda Maris tc
	Flutes, strong	8 Flaut major (obl.)	8 Konzertflöte	8 Starktongedackt
	Flutes, weak	8 Gedackt		8 Quintatön
4'	Octav	4 Octav	4 Fugara	4 Gemshorn (stringy)
		4 Octavflöte (obl.)	4 Traversflöte	4 Rohrflöte
2'	Divers		2 Piccolo	2 Flageolet
		2 2/3 Quinte		
		1 3/5 Terz	4 Cornett II-IV	2 2/3 Harm.aetheria III
Mixtures		2 Mixtur III-IV		
Reeds	16 Posaune			
	8 Trompete	8 Trompete	8 Tuba mirabilis	8 Clarinette
			8 Oboe	8 Vox Humana

As a final example let us look briefly at the Stahlhut organ in St. Eligius Church in Völklingen, built in 1927:

Note the differing characteristics of the individual manuals:

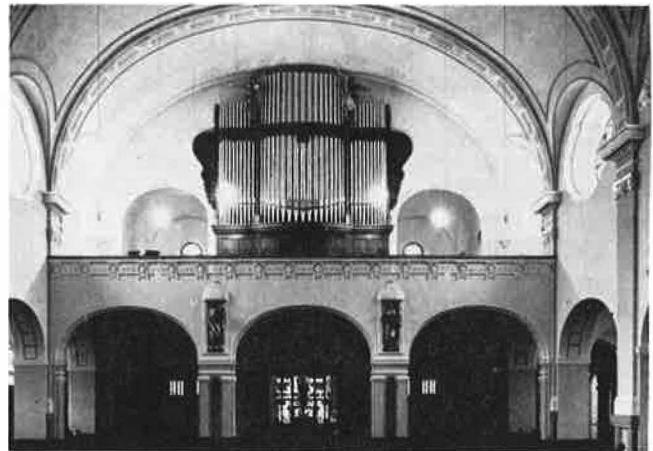
Hauptwerk: Principal chorus from 16' to Mixtur III-IV (2')

Swell 1: Flute chorus from 16' to Cornet II-IV (4')

Swell 2: String chorus from 16' to Harmonia aetheria III (2 2/3')

By adding a few stops the organ would also be well suited for baroque literature as far as the stoplist goes. Nevertheless the total result would remain unsatisfactory since the smaller stops particularly needed for the polyphonic baroque literature would not speak well because of the structural peculiarities of the cone-valve chest (nervous speech) and since tonal blend would be lacking because of the missing note-channels. This same thing speaks against the "bringing into line" undertaken on so many organs in recent years by altering the existing stoplists of "romantic" organs.

As I have said, the cone-valve chest made possible a larger dimensioning of the chests, hence an expansion of the number of stops. This led, in a positive sense, not only to an extraordinary tonal differentiation but also, in a negative sense, to the widespread abandonment of a divisional buildup oriented on a baroque model. These excrescences were favored, indeed were made possible, by pneumatic and electro-pneumatic actions. Thus they can only be



The 1927 Stahlhut organ in St. Eligius, Völklingen.

connected indirectly with the cone-valve chest. It seems to me to be of primary importance to keep this in mind. I do not wish to take up the slogan about the decline of the organ in this regard: no-one turned more strongly against decadent phenomena in organbuilding, which may be seen in an over-technicalized manner of construction as well as in provable tonal errors, than did the noted representatives of our discipline. The exaggeration, the overbreeding that a system experiences, cannot call this into question.

After troubled years of violent arguments the sliderchest was reintroduced into organbuilding. Its advantages in comparison with the cone-valve chest have been pointed out—quite especially as regards the interpretation of polyphonic, and that means for very many the real music of the organ, but also in regard to the initiation and cessation of pipe speech, primarily of smaller stops and pipes.

Now it is certainly not true that the discussion about the *only* proper windchest system has ceased. I permit myself the question, moreover, if that would be good.

Rather, we should warn against historic rigidity, against sterility, just as we should warn against a mania for experimentation for its own sake, which does not lead very far.

We also owe respect to organbuilders like Caavaillé-Coll, who went other ways in order to overcome the deficiencies of the sliderchests of that day, to be sure by, on the one hand, giving up the principle of the common note-channel for each division—the note channel was sub-divided into two or three sections, that is each division was given two or three pallet boxes with the possibility that that provided for using ventils (“on” pedals)—and on the other hand by the introduction of the Barker lever which, in contrast to the mechanical cone-valve chest of an Eberhard Friedrich Walcker, does not leave the mechanical action completely in step or even—conditionally—interrupts it.

So, just as it would be irresponsible to neglect these instruments or to “re-shape” them wherever possible, and I put the word in quotes, from my present point of view it would be just as irresponsible to alter organs in tone and technology that may be said to be representative of the so-called romantic epoch. This has happened often enough if people have thought it at all worthwhile to keep such organs from disappearing.

In summary I should like to say: it is not advisable to disqualify as being in some way degenerate a type of organ, characteristic of a definite time, whose technical and tonal formation is consistent in itself. We organbuilders are not the only ones who can learn from those great-name builders whose shops produced high grade instruments on the cone-valve system.

#### Footnotes

14. Johann Christian Wolfram, *Anleitung zur Kenntnis, Beurtheilung und Erhaltung der Orgeln* . . . (Gotha: C. Steudel, 1815), p. 102.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*, p. 286.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 168ff.
22. Based on Ernst Friedrich Richter, *Katechismus der Orgel*, 4th ed. by Hans Menzel (Leipzig: J. J. Weber, 1896), p. 129 who is citing Johann Julius Seidel, *Die Orgel und ihr Bau*, 2d ed. (Breslau: F. E. C. Leuckart, 1844), pp. 264-65.

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# Historic Recital and Presentation in New York City

One of the first churches visited during the first Convention of the Organ Historical Society was the Sea-and-Land Presbyterian Church in New York's Chinatown, the third oldest Protestant church building still standing in New York City. The organ there is Henry Erben's 1844 two-manual and pedal "G" organ.

On April 17, 1977, the Society co-sponsored an Historic Organ Recital and presented an Historical Plaque to mark the restoration of this instrument. The recitalist was Prof. Donald R. M. Paterson, Associate Professor of the Music Department at Cornell University, who played selections by Cabezon, Walther, Kerll, Pachelbel, Boyce, Handel, Mozart, and Bach. Larry Trupiano, a member of the OHS National Council, presented the Historic Plaque.

The church is now known as The First Chinese Presbyterian Church of New York City, located at 61 Henry Street. The order of service, both printed and spoken, was in Chinese followed by English translations. The Rev. Kyoji Buma, Associate Executive Director, GMAC, United Presbyterian Church, USA, gave the address, and Mr. Ho-Yin Tsui, chairman of the church's Board of Trustees, accepted the Plaque.

The church's choir was present to render J. Varley Robert's familiar anthem, *Seek Ye the Lord*, and the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's *Messiah*. The church was well filled for the service and program.

The above information was supplied by OHS member, Prof. Don Begenau, who attended. A photograph of the organ is on page 85 of *THE BICENTENNIAL TRACKER*. The following information was contributed by Barbara J. Owen for the first issue of *THE TRACKER*:

Henry Erben 1844 — specification: [as given in 1956]

<b>Great — 8 stops</b>		<b>Swell — 5 stops (2 bass)</b>	
Open Diapason (TG)	8'	Open Diapason	8'
Open Diapason Bass	8'	Stopped Diapason	8'
Dulciana	8'	Principal	4'
Stopped Diapason	8'	Cornet	2 rks
Flute	4'	Trumpet	8'
Principal	4'		
Twelfth	3'	Stopped Diapason Ch.	8'
Fifteenth	2'	Principal Ch.	4'
<b>Pedal — 1 rank</b>		Tremulant	
(No knob. Bourdon)			
<b>Couplers</b>		Compass of Great Organ:	
Couple, Great & Swell		59 notes	
Great & Swell, 8ves.		Compass of Swell Organ:	
Pedal		35 notes	
		Compass of Choir Bass:	
		24 notes	
		Compass of Pedal Organ:	
		20 notes	

This is a "G" organ, both Manuals and Pedals beginning at GGG. As the organ was not playing when seen, it was not possible to determine whether all the Great stops were full compass. Probably the Dulciana and Flute were not. The five treble stops of the Swell are enclosed in a small swellbox; the two "Choir bass" stops are on a separate chest, and unenclosed. They are extensions of two of the treble stops.

The organ stands in the rear gallery of the late-Colonial stone building, 1817-19, and has a handsome Georgian case of rich, dark wood built in five sections. The original graceful simplicity is in part spoiled by the later addition of two heavy carved pinnacles atop the corner towers, obviously built to conceal the tops of the Pedal pipes, also a later addition. This rank of Bourdon pipes, permanently on, is probably one octave, as the lower octave of pedal keys pulls down the upper octave, as if a P-P 4' were on. These have the effect of destroying the symmetry of the case, and making it top-heavy. However, it still stands as one of the best examples of Erben's artistic casework.

## Concerts at Methuen

Edward J. Sampson, Jr., President of Methuen Memorial Music Hall, Inc., has announced a special fall series of concerts to be held at Methuen, Massachusetts, using the great Walcker organ originally built for Boston Music Hall, and now located in Methuen Memorial Music Hall, on Mass. Route 28.

The summer series of recitals is widely known, and the fall series consists of four variety concerts on Wednesdays at 8:30 PM. The featured performers are:

- October 5 — John Skelton, organ, and Carolyn Skelton, harpsichord
- October 12 — Joel Moerschel, 'cello, Rita Moerschel, piano, and Ivar Sjöström, organ
- October 19 — Kenneth Wilson, organ
- October 26 — Phillips Academy Instrument Ensembles

There is an admission charge of three dollars for adults and fifty cents for children under 12.

The organ's history was partly given in an article published in *THE TRACKER* 11:1 (Fall 1966), and a picture of the instrument appears on the cover of *THE TRACKER* 17:2 (Winter 1973).

# Vintage Tracker In Tokyo

by Vernon Brown

In the 1920s Visitation R. C. Church, 2625 B Street, Philadelphia, purchased a used nine rank tracker organ for the "lower church." Where the organ came from is unknown, and efforts to trace the earlier history of the instrument and to establish the name of the builder have been to no avail. There is no nameplate and no evidence that the organ ever had one. The instrument was originally hand pumped, and the front pipes were originally painted brown and lavishly decorated in red, white, green, and gold.

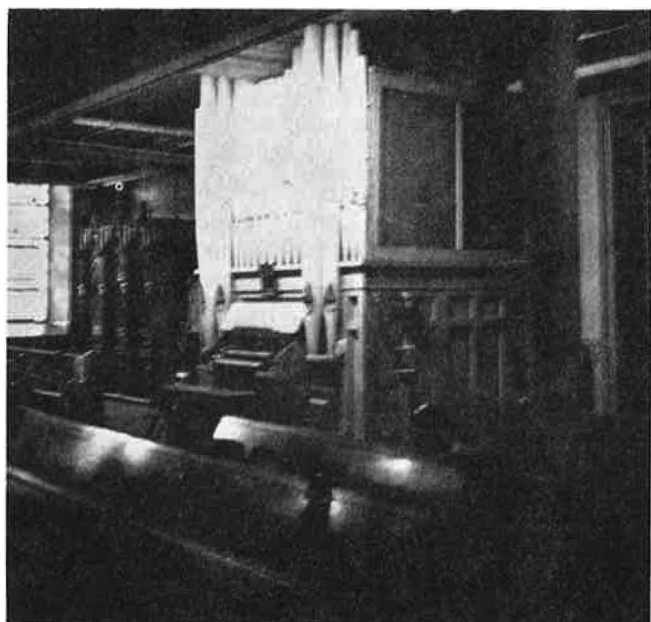
As erected in Visitation Church, the organ had oak paneling to the impost and a pipe fence with fifteen speaking and eight dummy pipes repainted pink. Two of the larger former front pipes were offset inside, and three others were mitred to fit under a ceiling beam.

The organ served the church for about fifty years. By 1973 it was in poor condition, funds for an overhaul were unavailable, and the church decided to replace it with a used electronic. The organ was sold to an organ company, and on August 31, 1973 it was disassembled and most of it stored in the church basement. It was to be rebuilt and, through the Organ Clearing House, relocated in a church in Massachusetts, but this did not materialize, and some months later I was advised of its availability and immediately bought it.<sup>1</sup>

The organ arrived here in twelve crates in October 1974, and the first job, that of scrubbing off

the layers of dirt—Philadelphia soot and years of good Catholic candle and incense fallout—began. With the help of Messrs. Wicks, Milne, Robertson, and Audsley,<sup>2</sup> the parts scattered in nearly every room of the house were sorted out and the fascinating puzzle of reassembly begun. The blobs of candle wax dropped by tuners and repair men before the days of electricity often served to identify which part of a component had been horizontal and uppermost, and conversely charred places indicated where candles had been set down too close to overhead woodwork.

The building frame was strengthened and braced to better distribute the weight and withstand earthquakes. The chests were lowered three inches to permit all pipes to stand under the eleven foot ceiling without mitering. The old reservoir, which, with its feeders, had completely occupied the lower part of the building frame, was discarded, and in its place are a new  $\frac{1}{4}$  HP Meidinger blower imported from Switzerland and a new reservoir just half the size of the original. The new reservoir, made from wood from the old one, is double rise without inverted ribs, as was the original. Inside the reservoir was the name Jonas(?) Mills in pencil, and on the end ribs of the reservoir, also in pencil, were "D. W. Herbert Director Sept. 20, 97" and "W. H. S. Oct. 2/97" and "W.H.S. Sept. 5/99."<sup>3</sup> The inside surfaces of the ribs were, to my surprise, colored red with what appeared to be a dye or flat paint of some kind.

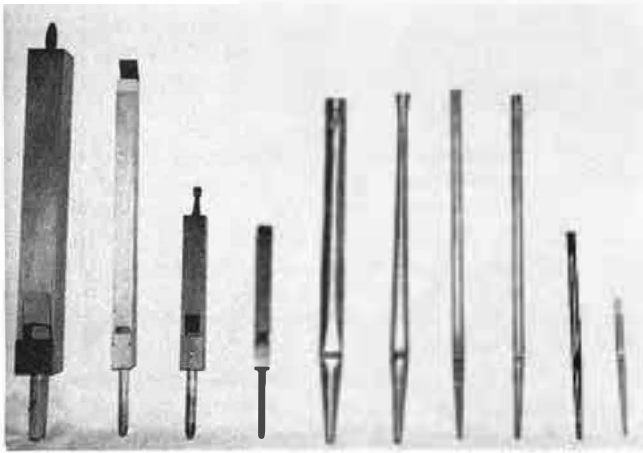


The organ in Visitation Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1973.



The console of the organ in Visitation Church, Philadelphia.





Pipework, left to right: tenor C Bourdon; middle C: Melodia, Stopped Diapason, Claribel Flute, Open Diapason, Bell Gamba, Voix Celeste, Fugara, Piccolo.

Most of the wooden parts of the organ had originally been coated with orange shellac, but some had been painted an ugly dark gray and others stained and varnished. Metal parts had been painted black or just left to rust. The shellac had deteriorated, and wherever possible, these surfaces were planed down to clean wood and given two coats of clear lacquer. Previously painted parts and parts which it was inadvisable to plane down were painted light gray. Metal parts were wirebrushed and given a coat of aluminum paint. Damaged screws were discarded, but the thousands of rusty but still usable screws, along with the ten brass screws in the key slips, had their heads wirebrushed and lacquered and their threads lubricated with wax.

The chests and rackboards were repaired—only minor repairs being necessary—and the pallets refelted and releathered. A number of pulldown wires were replaced, and all the old blotting paper gaskets replaced with soft goatskin. The pallet springs in the Swell and Great chests had the same tension, but because of a difference in leverage in the two actions, the Swell manual touch was noticeably harder than that of the Great. The springs were wirebrushed and painted, and the Swell springs were retensioned to give the same touch as on the Great. When the sliders were cleaned and re-blacklead, it was found that the Melodia slider had originally drawn in two parts, the bass octave separately, but the two parts had been nailed together at some later time. The slider was restored to its original condition, and a new stopknob and action was made for the bass octave of stopped pipes.

The metal pipes were washed and straightened, dents removed, open seams resoldered, loose languids glued with epoxy cement, a number of ears made to replace missing ones, and the pipes finally polished with brass polish and steel wool.

The wood pipes were re-glued where necessary, repaired with plastic wood, planed off, sanded, and lacquered. The lower seventeen Stopped Diapason pipes had been painted dark gray and were them-



The organ in the Brown residence, Tokyo, Japan, 1976. Relocated through the Organ Clearing House.

selves made up from two different sets. Under the dark gray paint of some was found a lighter gray, and on the front of these the pitch had once been neatly stenciled and *St. Dia.* written in flowing script. These pipes are large scale, and the lower octave is planted half on the Stopped Diapason toeboard, half on the Violin Open Diapason toeboard with conveyances between the two non-adjacent toeboards so that this lower octave serves both stops. Many of the stoppers were frozen tightly in place, but someone 124 years ago had found them too loose and had inserted folded newspaper shims under the leather to make them fit tighter; among the fragments was one with the date: September 12, 1853. From Tenor F the Stopped Diapason stoppers are little towers (pierced from Middle C) nicely carved out of solid wood, but the lower seventeen and all other stoppers on Swell and Great were crudely made; the inserted handles were just stubby square sticks with corners slightly beveled. These unattractive and hard-to-grasp handles were sawed off and forty-one new stopper handles were turned to replace them. All the stoppers had been painted black; with this paint removed, the stoppers were refinished in clear lacquer and finally releathered. The original wood pipe feet had at some time early in this century been replaced with metal tipped pipe

feet for ease in regulating. On each foot is printed PAT'D AUG. 9, '98, FEB. 19, '07.

The Bourdon pedal pipes, chests, and action had been removed by the former owner for installation in another organ before my purchase of the instrument, and the present tubular pneumatic pedal is from a 1914 Carl Barckhoff organ originally in the Griggstown, N. J., Reformed Church. The valves in the keychest and the two windchests were refurbished with new leather. Two new primary pneumatics were made, and all primaries recovered with zephyrskin. The secondaries, inside the windchests, were found to be in excellent condition and were merely painted with thinned rubber cement and dusted with talcum. New gaskets were made for windchests and keychest, and (alas) clear plastic tubing now replaces the original lead.

The keys of the straight flat pedal clavier, worn down badly, were recapped with maple and lacquered. The pedal frame was stripped of its imitation wood graining, stained, and varnished. On the manual a number of ivories were either missing, chipped, cracked, or worn paper-thin; fifteen were replaced along with all felt and bushing cloth. A few split keys were glued and straightened, and the leather (for coupler stickers) on the keytails was replaced.

Six stopknobs had their original ivory inserts; the others were either missing or had non-matching lettering or were celluloid reed organ stopfaces. The original lettering is an unusual (?) style best described as Old English but with the letters slanted to the right like italics. The newly engraved ivory inserts are a near match. The oblique-face stopknobs, now enameled black, are engraved W. BOYRER PAT. P. NOV. 9, 1869.

The Great action is fan backfall; the Swell action is fan tracker. Nine bass notes are transferred to the right end of the N-chests by rollerboards. All Swell trackers are new as are a few squares and one backfall. Swell is coupled to Great by short toggle-like stickers working in a sliding register between the manuals. Manuals are coupled to Pedal by stickers working in sliding registers under the keytails.

The swellbox was made of wide tongue-and-groove boards painted dark gray inside and out, and the metal swellshoe had C B SALEM O cast into it. The Barckhoff Church Organ Company was located in Salem, Ohio from 1882 to 1895, and although it is possible that Carl Barckhoff built or rebuilt the organ, it bears little resemblance to known Barckhoff organs. There are nine vertical swell shutters, and on one was written "H. M. Kress Feb 19th 1924" and "H. M. Kress Nov 19th 1926 Oh what a life is the organ business. It is the worst trade of all the trades. Poorest paid." Could this H. M. Kress have erected the organ in Visitation Church in the 1920s? Or did he only maintain the organ either before or after it was relocated in Visitation Church? I can find no mention of him as a builder.

Wood from the old swellbox was used to make a new and more spacious box utilizing the ceiling of the room as the top and one wall as the back. As the organ is now a chamber organ, it was decided to inclose the Great as well. Both boxes are lined

with one-half inch of sound absorbent fiberboard covered with varnished paper. Two new rubber covered expression pedals control the shutters through mechanical linkage.

The beater tremulant originally fastened to the building frame beneath the Swell chest was very noisy and difficult to regulate to a suitable beat. Removing the tremulant from the building frame, lengthening the wind line and adding two elbows helped, but finally the tremulant was removed to an adjoining room where it cannot be heard at all and where it provides a gentle and dependable beat.

The wind indicator is a celluloid-faced bar of wood working in a slot in the back of the (nameless) nameboard and visible through a cutout to the right of the couplers. It is original and operative. The Pedal Check is also operative---and convenient. The Bellows Signal stopknob now operates a mercury switch for the blower.

Although the organ did not have a Great to Pedal Reversible, inside the organ was a remnant of the action for such a pedal indicating that an ancestor of the organ was at one time so equipped. The remainder of the reversible action was constructed from the drawing on page 224 of William H. Barnes' *The Contemporary American Organ*<sup>4</sup> and a toe pedal provided.

The console was in poor condition, parts of it having been held together with metal mending strips and a large hole having been cut in one of the terraced jambs for a blower switchbox. A new console of more delicate proportions and with angled vertical jambs replaced the old one with its heavy oak key cover. The key cheeks, key slips, and name board of the old console were cherry and were retained, stripped of their finish, and a new console entirely of cherry built around them. The oak bench was badly split and had been repaired with common nails, metal angles, and pieces of two-by-four, but as the proportions and the decorative cutouts in the ends were unusually attractive, it was repaired and partially covered with cherry veneer. Console and bench were stained walnut and given two coats of shellac and two coats of satin varnish.

The new front with three towers and two flats is painted white with brown trim. Molding from the old impost decorates the bases and crowns of the towers and the quatrefoil panels above the console. The mitered front pipes were un-mitered and all paint removed from the front pipes before refinishing. As the bayleaf mouths, ears, and toes are of plain metal, they were polished, coated with clear lacquer, and then masked before spraying the zinc pipes gold. The front now contains the low seventeen pipes of the Open Diapason. The two pedal chests with their handsome, planed off, lacquered, and polished 1914 Barckhoff pipes stand uninclosed and visible at the sides of the room.

Although the organ was represented as complete, forty-four Melodia and two Celeste pipes were missing. When several months had passed and it became clear that the former owner had no intention of supplying the missing pipes, used pipes were purchased from another organ company through the classified

ads in *The Diapason* in order to complete the instrument. Two pipes of unknown origin now complete the Celeste, and the Great chest, with only slight difficulty, now accommodates an early Holtkamp Melodia. Because the new Melodia is very slightly wider than the original, it was necessary to move five of the tenor octave pipe feet off-center and to offset one pipe.

The pitch of the organ, established after some experimentation, is just a quarter tone flat from A440. As I did not trust my own ear to set the temperament, the first tuning was done with a borrowed Yamaha electronic tuner. I would have preferred to have the organ at A440 so that it could be played with other instruments, but the Violin Open Diapason is actually a Bell Gamba, ear tuned, with limited leeway in pitch possible, and to alter these pipes would involve a difficult cutting and resoldering job. The new Melodia pipes, though well made and still in generally good condition, had been sawed off and hacked about at the tops (with a broken bottle?) by generations of tuners and could not be tuned to the organ's low pitch. The pipes could have been moved up and one new pipe made, of course, but since the scale was already slightly larger than the original, the top of each pipe was sawed off and a new top glued on, at first overlength and then sawed off little by little so as to enable the pipes to be tuned with the metal shades at about forty-five degrees. These well-preserved pipes did not need planing off; they were merely sanded to remove the old shellac and then the old and new wood lacquered.

The console had an original Piccolo 2' stopknob, but nothing had been "prepared" inside. A suitable rank of 2' pipes was obtained, again from a *Diapason* ad, and an extension of the Great chest made to accommodate them. The Great now has four ranks instead of three, and the Piccolo stopknob is no longer just a dummy.

#### The present specifications:

Great		Pipes
8' Open Diapason	56	21 zinc, 35 plain metal
8' Melodia tc	44	Holtkamp. Chest marked Clarabella
8' Stopped Bass	12	Inverted mouth, original
4' Fugara*	56	Chest marked Gemshorn
2' Piccolo*	56	Spotted metal
Swell		
8' Violin Open Diapason*	44	Bell Gamba. Bass from Stopped Diapason
8' Stopped Diapason*	56	Wood, pierced stoppers from middle C
8' Aeoline*	56	12 stopped zinc, 44 spotted metal
8' Voix Celeste	44	Salicional pipes marked "Cel."
4' Flute Harmonic*	56	Claribel Flute. 12 stopped wood, 40 open wood, 4 open metal (none harmonic)
Pedal		
16' Bourdon	27	Carl Barckhoff
Couplers		Accessories
Great to Pedal		Tremulant
Swell to Pedal		Bellows Signal (blower switch)
Swell to Great		Pedal Check
		Wind Indicator
*Original ivory stopface		Expression pedal, Great
10 stops, 10 ranks, 507 pipes		Expression pedal, Swell
Wind 3"		Great to Pedal Reversible

The rebuilding/restoration of the organ took all spare and some not-so-spare time for over two years.

And I have not done it all unaided. The manual keys were replated and rebushed by a specialist. The new stopfaces were engraved by another specialist. As I have no lathe, the two new stopknobs and forty-four new stopper handles were turned in a furniture shop. The mitered pipes were un-mitered by our local tinsmith (and as zinc was not easily available, three pipes now have galvanized iron tops). Hiroshi Tsuji (of Tsuji Organ Company) voiced and regulated some of the pipes; some others (some of the most stubborn) were voiced by Barbara Owen. And I had the assistance of our neighborhood carpenter in constructing the new console and front. Following the example of the original builder, all new and rebuilt parts are put together with screws and are capable of easy and complete disassembly.

When and where was this organ built? I am told by reliable authority that much of the pipework dates from around 1850 and is of New York manufacture. But parts of the console could have been made no earlier than 1869, the Salem, Ohio swell shoe could have been made no earlier than 1882, and the inclusion of a Celeste in an organ of this size was uncommon before 1890.<sup>5</sup> Thanks to W. H. S. we know that the organ was in use in 1897. Thus, all things considered, I believe this organ was built some time between 1890 and 1897 using many pipes and parts from earlier instruments. The keytails have unnecessary cutouts where some mechanism once passed through, the backs of the cheeks have unused screw holes, and the Swell keyframe is drilled for three non-existent pistons. Some of the Open Diapason pipes are marked *Gr 15*, some are marked *Prin*, and many others have two pitch markings. The clips on the backs of the display pipes (for support in a front) had, on many of the pipes, been relocated twice, indicating that these seventeen pipes had been arranged in three different configurations before the present one, perhaps when the organ was relocated, or perhaps even before installation in this organ.

I am anxious to learn more about the origins of the instrument. I scan every stoplist and every photo in *THE TRACKER* for some similarity to the original stoplist, console, paneling, carving, pipe decoration, etc., thus far without success. Although the organ is undistinguished, just one of thousands of similar small late nineteenth century instruments, it has two features that I have never seen on any other organ. One is the choice of a Fugara as the lone 4' stop on the Great. And the other is the nomenclature Violin Open Diapason on a stopknob.<sup>6</sup> Is there somewhere another small organ with either or both of these features and with a known builder? The double rise reservoir without inverted ribs may provide an additional clue. Do the names Jonas(?) Mills or H. M. Kress or D. W. Herbert mean anything to anyone? If any OHS member can throw any light on the history of this instrument as a result of any detail I've mentioned here, I'd appreciate hearing from him.<sup>7</sup>

The organ is, as far as is known, the only playable example of 19th century American organ building in this country<sup>8</sup> and as such has attracted the interest of local and visiting organists. Although the console and front are new, tonally the organ is, for

the present at least, substantially as it was when it was built. Now, with a new lease on life, it will provide music not only for me and my family but also for the many others who will play and hear it in the years to come.

#### Notes

1. I had been searching for an inexpensive old organ to rebuild for almost ten years, and I had been on the Organ Clearing House waiting list for a suitable instrument since May 1973.
2. Mark Wicks, *Organ Building for Amateurs*, 1887, Organ Literature Foundation reprint. H. F. Milne, *How to Build a Small Two-Manual Chamber Pipe Organ*, 1925, Organ Literature Foundation reprint. F. E. Robertson, *A Practical Treatise on Organ-Building*, 1897, Organ Literature Foundation reprint. George Ashdown Audsley, *The Art of Organ Building*, 1905, Dover Publications reprint.
3. This graffiti was probably left by organ pumpers, but for the surfaces of the ribs to be exposed, the reservoir would have had to be full of wind. Did W. H. S. pump with one hand while writing with the other?
4. First published 1930. Ninth edition, Belwin Mills Publishing Corporation, 1971.
5. I believe the Celeste is original because there is no provision for bass pipes or for grooved or unison bass. Although table, slider, and the bottom part of the toeboard are drilled, the upper part of the toeboard and the rackboard have no pipe holes from CC to BB and show no evidence of having been altered.
6. The Bell Gamba pipes are actually marked *Violin*.
7. My address: Minami Aoyama 4-8-24, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107, Japan.
8. There is a small one-manual and pedal Hilborne Roosevelt (Baltimore, 1883) in St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Kyoto, unplayable for many years. There was once a twenty-two stop, twenty-four rank 1880 George S. Hutchings in a former Roman Catholic Seminary in Tajimi. The roof blew off in a typhoon years ago, and the organ suffered severe damage. The front pipes and some of the pedal pipes still stand along with the ruined chests. The rest has disappeared.

#### OBITUARY

Eugene M. Nye

In the passing of Eugene M. Nye of Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., on October 27, 1976, the organ world has lost one of its most brilliant exponents and one of its most ardent enthusiasts. Many erudite and informative articles have appeared over his signature in most of the trade journals, and his was a keen and perceptive insight into the many phases of the organ craft.

In addition to being an accomplished organist—he served with distinction several churches and posts in the Seattle area,—he was also widely experienced in the building, maintenance, and design of the instrument. His expertise and advice were constantly in demand all over North America.

He maintained a voluminous correspondence with contacts in many parts of the world, and in 1960 he undertook a comprehensive tour of Britain and Europe, examining organs and organ-building establishments in several countries. He developed extensive files of data concerning organs the world over. Indeed it was said of Gene Nye, that if there were an organ he hadn't heard about,—it didn't exist,—only hearsay!

Yet to be published is a manuscript of his creation on the work of Robert Hope-Jones; and at the time of his passing he was actively assisting the writer on another comprehensive project. Organists, builders, and friends in many parts of the world share with his wife and family the sense of deep loss in the untimely demise of this kindly, witty, and scholarly gentleman, whose place it will be impossible to fill.

—D. Stuart Kennedy

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## THE BICENTENNIAL TRACKER

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# Möller Tracker Is Restored

by Karl A. King

When I became organist at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Peabody, Kansas, an electronic substitute was in use and the 1897 Möller tracker organ stood silent as it had been for almost a decade.

Looking up some records, I found that this was probably the fourth oldest organ in the state of Kansas and, with the encouragement and assistance of the Rev. Esko Loewen, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen W. Copel, and a few others, we began a program of publicity and recognition for the organ.

The M. P. Möller Company of Hagerstown, Maryland, confirmed the fact that they built and shipped an organ to Peabody, Kansas, identified as opus #189, but they were unable to give the original specification. The action was, and still is, tracker.

The specification is:

Great		Swell	
8' Diapason	61 pipes	8' Stopped Diapason	44 pipes
8' Melodia	44 pipes	8' Viola	44 pipes
8' Dulciana	44 pipes	8' Salicional	44 pipes
8' Open Unison Bass	17 pipes	8' Stopped Unison Bass	17 pipes
4' Principal	61 pipes	4' Flute d'Amour	61 pipes
Pedal		Couplers	
16' Bourdon	30 pipes	Swell to Great	
		Swell to Pedal	
		Great to Pedal	

From my observation, I judge that this is the original stoplist. The organ was originally hand-pumped (and still may be), but an electric blower was added in a later period.

The original cost for this organ was \$1,000, and it was installed in a previous church building on the same site as the present St. Paul's. The only disaster which has befallen the instrument is that some well-meaning but ignorant church members took it upon themselves to paint the facade pipes with radiator gold. They were once banded.

As part of the publicity and recognition program, I played a recital on October 19, 1975, assisted by Velma J. Andersen, mezzo-soprano. Our program included works by Bach, Buxtehude, Mozart, Brahms, Langlais, and Widor. The church was filled, and the offering amounted to \$600. Many newspapers in south central Kansas carried articles both before and after the recital.

In January 1976, a program of restoration, cleaning, and repairing was begun. Under the supervision of the Rev. Mr. Loewen, four students from Bethel College spent the inter-term earning two hours of credit for the technical knowledge gained through the project. David Boldt, Carl Edwards, Jon Thiesen and Kathy Voran worked at releathering the reservoir, felting all needed places, adjusting the action, washing the pipes, and generally cleaning the interior.

Some of the ivory stop labels which were missing for years were found under the pedalboard. Other findings included an offering envelope of 1930 containing a five-dollar bill, a hairbrush, needle, thimble, thread, and, of course, old service bulletins.

The organ is now in first class condition and is becoming well known in the area. The acoustics of the church are excellent, permitting maximum enjoyment of the organ's sound.

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1-8 Koehnken & Grimm, c. 1875-85, above  
1-9 Koehnken & Grimm, c. 1890-96  
2-27 Carl Barckhoff, 1885  
2-30 Aeolian-Skinner (Harrison)

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## MINUTES OF THE OHS COUNCIL MEETING

June 27, 1977

Detroit, Michigan

The meeting was called to order by the president at 1:50 P.M. In attendance were council members George Bozeman, Homer Blanchard, Norma C. Cunningham, Thomas Finch, Alan Laufman, Lois Regestein, Albert F. Robinson, Donald C. Rockwood, Lawrence Trupiano, and James McFarland; and committee chairmen E. A. Boadway, J. Bryan Dyker, Randall McCarty, Culver Mowers, Robert Newton, Norman Walter, William VanPelt, and William Worden. Also in attendance were members Donald Pater-son and William Visscher.

The minutes of the council meeting of February 21, 1977, were read and accepted. Reports from the treasurer, editor, publisher, archivist, and all committee chairmen (except for the 1978 convention committee) were read and accepted with thanks. Items of note from the reports:

The report from the publisher of *THE TRACKER* revealed that the membership of the society for 1976-77 is 1066. A prize was awarded in the membership contest, since no one (other than our ineligible president who brought in 49 new members) signed up the minimum ten new members.

The audio-visual committee announced that the 1976 convention recording is now on sale, and that work is now in progress toward a new version of the slide-tape program.

The chairman of the extant organs committee announced that due to the fine recent efforts of two members of that committee (David and Permelia Sears) he was going to turn the chairmanship over to them. The Sears' have recently prepared lists of nine mid-western states comprising 54 pages and 1037 organs.

A new chairman for the historic organs committee was announced and approved: the Rev. Culver Mowers of Candor, New York.

The chairman of the historic organ recital series announced his resignation pending the selection of his replacement. Mr. Laufman appointed J. Bryan Dyker, currently of Millersville, Pennsylvania, to fill the position, and so Randall McCarty's resignation was accepted with regret and a vote of thanks.

The chairman of headquarters and foundation grants, after the announcement of much activity in the field of grants research, has resigned to take the position with historic organs, and the chairmanship of this committee was turned over to Alan Laufman.

The chairman of the advertising committee reported on the effectiveness of promotional ads placed in various national publications. Each ad was codified in such a way that when an order came in for a *BICENTENNIAL TRACKER* or Hymnlet it was possible to tell which advertisement had influenced the purchaser.

A preliminary report was tendered by the society's new public relations manager, William Van-

Pelt of Richmond, Virginia. Among his recent activities in promoting the society was the issuing of hundreds of press releases in anticipation of the Detroit convention. The council expressed its excitement over the possibilities for society promotion that Mr. Van-Pelt is exploring.

The report from the St. Louis convention committee (1979) indicated well advanced stages of preparation. Among organs to be seen are: several Pfeffer organs dating from 1862 to 1890, Kilgus dating as far back as 1879, two Gutav Treu organs, and the first U.S. installation by Hradetsky (1967, 2-28).

A discussion of advertising rates in *THE TRACKER* as to how they compare to the national norm was postponed until the next meeting. Council requested that a report to this effect be mailed to all council members by the advertising manager in time for study before the next meeting.

Requests from the general membership prompted council to pass the following motion: 'to inform the publisher that the former membership card policy has been reinstated.' This implies that the cards shall be mailed annually.

It was brought to council's attention that a new agreement has been reached with Xerox University Microfilms concerning back issues of *THE TRACKER*. In essence, until someone orders a complete set on microfilm, the issues will not be photographed, and we will not receive our gratis copy. Individual filmed volumes will be supplied upon request. The general agreement is much less stringent than the previous one, and meets with council approval.

It was voted that council mandated that all future convention booklets are to be published by the convention coordinator, with the assistance and approval of the research and publications committee; the convention committee to provide the text and suggested design (specifications and photographs) no later than February 1; they are to provide the schedule and programs no later than May 1, and the advertising manager is to provide the ad copy no later than February 1.

Council approved the publication as necessary of a typewritten, photo-offset supplement to *THE TRACKER*, to contain such items as convention news, summaries of committee reports, and "time value" material; this supplement to be sent out with, and as a part of regular printed issues. This decision is based on the fact that the delay between preparation for *THE TRACKER* and its receipt from the printer is frequently three months, whereas this newsletter could be prepared in less than two weeks and "stuffed" in *THE TRACKER* mailing envelopes at the last minute before mailing.

Council voted to require 'every chapter to supply free exchange copies of its newsletter to every other chapter library, and also to provide file copies to the president, secretary, archivist, editor and publisher of *THE TRACKER*, research and publications committee, and extant organs committee. Chapters may bill the national society for postage if deemed necessary.' Mr. Laufman appointed Lawrence Trupi-



and to look into the need for a chapter co-ordinating committee.

The following motion was carried, 'to approve the expenditure of \$200.00 for a booth at the 1978 AGO national to be manned by the Pacific Northwest Chapter.' Council also approved the rental of a booth at this summer's ICO in Philadelphia-Washington, D.C.

The following two matter-of-record motions were passed: 'that retained earnings be credited in the amount of \$1,849.99 for inventory revaluation as of May 31, 1977;' and 'that retained earnings be credited in the amount of \$5,307.89 representing the net income for the year ended May 31, 1977.'

At the suggestion of the headquarters and foundation grants committee, council voted to 'join the Foundation Center in New York City at a cost of \$200.00 for a one year trial period.' It is hoped that this computerized foundation grants clearing-house will aid the society immensely as it looks into possibilities for grants not only for its own operation, but for the restoration of organs as well.

The finance committee has asked that the mid-winter meeting be the time for committees to submit budget requests. It has also been requested that at the next meeting, and at all subsequent fall meetings, committee chairmen should include in their reports a list of those persons serving on the committee.

Council voted to adopt the budget (with amendments) as submitted by Donald Rockwood.

Council approved the following presidential appointments: as treasury auditors for the annual meeting, Thomas Finch and Martin Walsh; as election tellers, Stephen Long and Richard Boutwell; as chairman of this coming year's nominating committee, Richard Boutwell.

Council voted 'that Lawrence Trupiano be authorized to locate, if possible, the original chapter charters, or, if necessary, have new ones printed.'

After Alan Laufman pointed out the success that other organizations have with such a technique, it was decided 'to send out a letter with renewal applications to the effect that much is to be gained if each current member would sign up one new member.'

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 P.M. with the expression of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. William Wordon who served dinner to the council at 6:00 P.M. The next meeting will be held at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, November 26, 1977, with Culver Mowers as host. The exact location of the meeting will be announced at a later date.

Respectfully submitted,  
/s/ James R. McFarland  
Secretary

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June 28, 1977

Detroit, Michigan

The meeting was called to order by the president at 9:35 A.M. and opened with a moment of silence in honor of the passing of our honorary member, E. Power Biggs.

David Sears was appointed parliamentarian.

The meeting carried a motion to dispense with the reading of last year's minutes. The secretary recapitulated the events of the council meeting on the previous day.

Reports from officers and committee chairmen were presented and accepted with thanks. The readings of the extant organs and headquarters and foundation grants reports prompted spontaneous rounds of applause. It was noted that details of these reports will appear in the council meeting minutes.

The auditors reported that all was in order with the treasurer's reports, prompting the meeting to vote to close the books. A motion was entertained and carried thanking Donald Rockwood for his tremendous efforts on the behalf of the organization.

The following changes in committee chairmanships were announced: David and Permelia Sears are the new co-chairmen of extant organs; J. Bryan Dyker is the new chairman of the historic organ recital series; Culver Mowers will take over the historic organs committee; and Alan Laufman will head up the committee on headquarters and foundation grants.

Alan Laufman announced the appointment of William VanPelt as director of public relations. Mr. VanPelt then delivered an impromptu report on his recent activities concerning press coverage for the Detroit convention.

The election tellers completed their task and delivered the following results: president, Alan Laufman; vice-president, Thomas Finch; councillors, Robert Newton and Lawrence Trupiano.

Richard Boutwell's appointment as chairman of the nominating committee was announced.

In attendance at this convention was William H. Barnes, honorary member of OHS and one of our three patrons. He was introduced to the body whereupon he was given a round of applause in recognition of his contributions to the American organ world.

Mr. Laufman, then called for Albert F. Robinson to come forward to present the OHS Distinguished Service Award to this year's recipient. Mr. Robinson was last year's recipient, and the first to be granted the honor. Before the presentation was made, Alan Laufman made it very clear, once again, just how important "Robbie's" never-ending work for the society has been. With that, the award was then presented to Norma C. Cunningham, the pub-

lisher of *THE TRACKER*. It was noted that few people realize the extent of the work handled by Mrs. Cunningham above and beyond the call of publisher, including: membership secretary; the distribution of all society mail, incoming and outgoing; and seeing to the printing of such miscellany as membership cards, ballots, etc. A healthy round of applause for the labors of both of these distinguished members was given.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,  
/s/ James R. McFarland  
Secretary

# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TREASURER (as of May 31, 1977)

ASSETS —			
Cash in banks (checking & savings)		\$7,678.22	
Helen B. Harriman Foundation		637.46	
<hr/>			
TOTAL FUNDS ON DEPOSIT		8,315.68	
Office Fixtures & PR Display		392.90	
Inventories		23,215.09	
<hr/>			
TOTAL ASSETS		\$31,923.67	
<hr/>			
LIABILITIES		NONE	
RETAINED EARNINGS	\$24,765.79		
Adjusted inventory	1,849.99		
Net income for year	5,307.89		
<hr/>			
BALANCE		\$31,923.67	
<hr/>			
TOTAL LIABILITIES & RETAINED EARNINGS		\$31,923.67	
<hr/>			
RECEIPTS — Memberships	Expenses	Income	
EXPENDITURES —		\$11,338.00	
"The Tracker"	\$3,967.64		
Conventions	809.79		
Recordings	1,975.78		
Slide-Tape program		202.52	
Archives	140.89		
Special Projects	1,188.97	3,142.32	
Off. & Adm.	1,599.02		
Int. Exp. & Dividends	162.76	469.90	
<hr/>			
Totals	\$9,844.85	\$15,152.74	
NET INCOME FOR YEAR	5,307.89		
<hr/>			
TOTALS	\$15,152.74	\$15,152.74	

Respectfully submitted,  
/s/ Donald C. Rockwood  
Treasurer

## ROBERT GLASGOW

School of Music  
The University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I am currently in the final stages of a Ph.D. dissertation concerning American Organ Instruction Books in the Nineteenth Century. I noted, with considerable interest, a review by Robert Bruce Whiting regarding Gellerman's *The American Reed Organ* in *THE TRACKER* Volume 20, Number 1, Fall 1975, p. 21f . . . his review was excellent.

I congratulate you on the fine work you and the OHS are doing. I am sending in my membership at once and wondering where I have been. I have found a few more kindred spirits out here — there certainly is a gold mine of material around here waiting to be tapped! . . .

Sincerely,  
/s/ Margaret Sihler Anderson  
104 Maddaus Lane  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55416

Dear Sir,

I am an organ record collector, and most anxious to purchase any organ records that I do not already have. I do have the OHS '74 and '75 program excerpts.

Anyone having classical organ records for sale can call me collect 9 AM to 6 PM CST at 612-378-5478 M-F. I will pay whatever price it takes to acquire deleted and rare organ records.

Yours truly,  
/s/ E. Douglas Jensen  
9758 Rich Road  
Bloomington, Minnesota 55437

(Ed. note: the following letter was addressed to the Editor of *MUSIC* the AGO/RCCO Magazine, who kindly gave permission to include it in our columns.)

Dear Sir:

Albert F. Robinson's laudable historical survey of American organ builders in the June issue needs just a touch of correction and clarification in the section on the Estey Organ Company.

One of the neglected areas of American organ building history is the way the genealogies of organ firms interweave. Most firms, frankly, grew by way of secession. The tonal director (or equivalent position of the day) frequently struck out on his own, taking a few employees with him and—it has been admitted—more than a few of the older firm's ideas. Skilled experts often worked with more than one company, having a profound effect on American organ building as they passed from one employer to the next.

Will Haskell, superintendent of Estey, was the son, not the brother, of Charles S. Haskell. The latter (born 1835, died 1903) was my great-grandfather, related by blood to Frank and Hilborne Roosevelt and by marriage to Cyrus Curtis of Maine (and later of Philadelphia). C. S. Haskell was originally a New England cabinetmaker, whose maple and cherry furniture is now prized by collectors. Several commissions for organ cases interested him in organbuilding. He apparently was self-taught in the making of wood pipes, but learned metal pipe-

making and voicing from the Roosevelts and from the elder Odell. His *magnum opus* (now replaced) was in the Cathedral of Sts. Peter & Paul, Philadelphia, but many Philadelphia churches still have Haskell organs in good working order. He was a fanatic about quality workmanship, preferring tubular-pneumatic action with the console in close proximity to the organ case. His entire family helped out in the business: Will as voicer and heir-apparent; Gene as business manager; my grandmother Lillie and her sister Ruth as bookkeepers, and so on. One Haskell distinction was that a studio organ located in a barn in Camden, New Jersey was the first organ to be used in a phonograph recording (an early Victor disc).

Will Haskell (born 1870) was engaged by Estey to expand their pipe organ market. Many back-country New England churches still have durable, although tonally outdated Estey organs in perfect working order. Will continued the family preference for tubular-pneumatic action, claiming it was inherently more reliable than electric. (It has certainly proved more durable than the electro-pneumatic action of his time.) My great-uncle had perfect pitch and a remarkably sensitive ear, and was a born tinkerer, out of which emerged many significant organ inventions. Indeed, he recorded more patents in the field of the pipe organ than E. M. Skinner and Robert Hope-Jones combined, and it may not be unjust to point out that Haskell's innovations were less capricious and more lasting in benefit to the organ community than others of the period.

For example, the Estey Patent Bass pipe with its inverted, inserted column to give double the speaking length without changing the tone (as stopped pipes must) are prized by organ salvagers, and imitated by many builders to this day, where space is at a premium or the cost of full-length pipes is prohibitive. And the Reedless Reed pipes, which were flues giving faithful imitations of reeds such as oboe, clarinet, saxophone, etc., are still valued by those who have them for their consistent tone and ability to hold their pitch despite dirty air and temperature changes. Will was also the first to install tubular chimes in a pipe organ, was the first to include the organ harp stop (his original models use slate bars instead of metal), and built the first player organ mechanism in this country.

The influence of the Willis firm on both generations of Haskells was enormous. Vincent Willis, the celebrated reed voicer, worked with C. S. Haskell for a time in the 1880's. Will Haskell was constantly

working in parallel with Willis developments in England during World War I and the twenties. In fact, to hear an Estey by Will Haskell is to hear a small British choir organ of the same period. Uncle Will built essentially accompanimental organs for New England church services, and had no idea that recital demands would ever be made on the average church organ. This explains the mainly bland, dignified but unexciting tonal schemes of his work.

After his untimely death (a mechanic's consumption—he was found dead of a stroke in the pit of his garage after working all night on one of his treasured racing cars), Will Haskell's family moved to Miami Beach, where they were pioneers when most of the island was still covered by swamps and alligators. His widow lived until 1947, and his daughter until 1970. The Estey firm never recaptured its prominence after his death.

The luminous-stop console was not designed for the theater market. In fact, Will never made much of the theater business and often expressed his distaste for the high pressures and coarse voicing that were characteristically theatrical. (As far as I can determine, no Estey built under his hand was voiced on anything higher than five inches, and four was the rule—a far cry from the pressures used by the larger, better known builders of the same time.) In his elaborate, hardbound brochure, *The Philosophy of an Organ Builder*, Haskell explains that the luminous stop was invented to decrease the size of the console, to replace both knobs and tablets (neither of which he liked), to enable an organist to draw and retire stops with the same motion and without raising the hands from the keyboard, and to enable the organist to see exactly which stops were brought on by the pistons, crescendo, and sforzando mechanicals. Actually, the luminous stop console is very comfortable and easy to play, and greatly simplified the combination action required to operate the stops. Nothing simpler has yet been invented.

Since I came into the world in 1934, I never had the chance of meeting the organbuilding Haskells. But their history is part of our family folklore, and I grew up with it and the organ as naturally as other children grow up with dolls and bicycles. Thanks for this opportunity to shed a little light on this obscure corner of the American organ's noble past.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Robert M. Strippy  
Keller-Crescent Co.  
1100 E. Louisiana Street  
Evansville, Indiana 47711

### POSTCARDS IN COLOR

Organs seen at the 1976 Convention  
1816 C. Dieffenbach, Altalaha Lutheran,  
Rehobersburg  
1892 S. Bohler, North Heidelberg,  
Berks County

Send \$1.20/dozen or \$8.00/100 to OHS,  
P.O. Box 209, Wilmington, Ohio 45177

### THE HYMNLET

Compiled and Edited by Samuel Walter  
1976

\$2.00 each; 6-10 copies/\$1.50 each;  
11 or more/\$1.25 each

Send payment with order to OHS,  
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## NEW TRACKER ORGANS

### Abbott & Seiker Organ for Pressler Residence

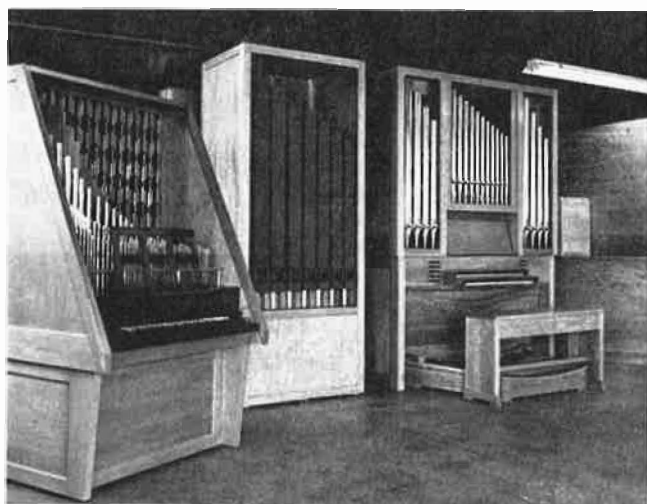
Abbott & Seiker, organbuilders, of Los Angeles, California, completed a two manual and pedal organ for the residence of Mr. James Pressler. The design is for twelve ranks, the manual divisions on tracker action, the pedal division on electro-pneumatic action. The pedal Bourdon, unified at 16', 8', & 4', is in a separate case placed to the left of the main case. All of the manual chestwork is completed, but the Positiv Terz 13/5 and the Great Mixture III pipework is to be added. Plans also call for the addition of a Spitzprincipal, unified at 8' & 4' on electro-pneumatic action, to be added to the pedal division. This will be in a separate case located to the right side of the main case, complementing the pedal Bourdon case.

Open house was held at the Abbott & Seiker shop on June 12, 1977 with music performed for two organs, using Opus #59, a one manual, six rank tracker positiv, and Opus #73, the Pressler residence organ.

Specifications for the James Pressler residence organ.

#### Abbott & Seiker, Opus #73 — 1977

Great		Pedal	
Rohrgedackt	8'	Bourdon	16'
Praestant	4'	*Spitzprincipal	8'
Auszug		Bassflöte	8'
(draws from Mixture)	1'	*Spitzprincipal	4'
*Mixture III		Flöte	4'
Positiv		Positiv to Great	
Gedackt (C-B common with Rohrgedackt)	8'	Positiv to Pedal	
Rohrflöte	4'	Great to Pedal	
Nasat	2 2/3'	Manual compass — 56 notes	
Blockflöte	2'	Pedal compass — 32 notes	
*Terz	3/5'	Manuals on 50mm windpressure	
*—Prepared		Pedal on 85mm windpressure	



The Abbott & Seiker shop, Los Angeles, showing (left) opus 59, and (right) opus 73, the James Pressler residence organ which was demonstrated during an open house June 12, 1977.

### Noack in West Seattle, Washington

A new organ has been built for the First Lutheran Church of West Seattle, Washington, by the Noack Organ Company of Georgetown, Massachusetts. The two manual and pedal mechanical (suspended) action organ is comprised of seventeen stops controlling twenty-two ranks, with a total of eleven hundred pipes. Installation and tonal finishing were supervised by Fritz Noack, founder and president of the Noack Organ Company. The case-work is of oak with the pipe shades and some detailing done in gold leaf. The mouths of the facade pipes are also gold leaf.

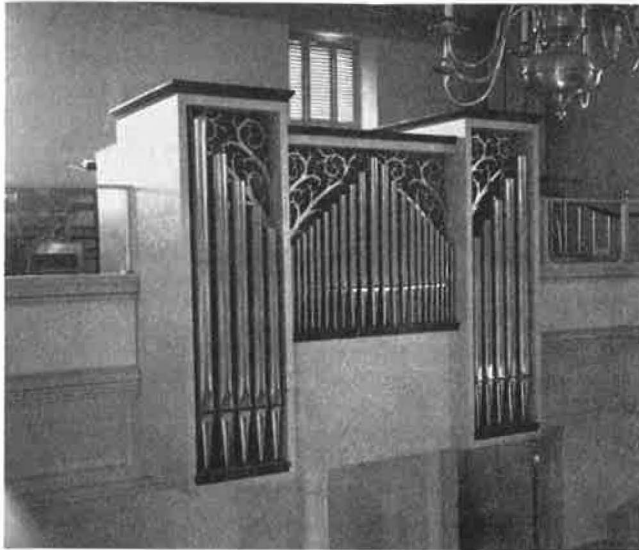
The organ was demonstrated by organist Nancy Granert at the Noack shop on September 2, 1976, and was dedicated at the West Seattle church by David P. Dahl on September 26, 1976.

The specification is:

Great		Positive	
Principal	8'	Stopt Diapason	8'
Chimney Flute	8'	Spire Flute	4'
Octave	4'	Principal	2'
Nazard	2 2/3'	Larigot	1 1/3'
Doublet	2'	Cremona	8'
Tierce	3/5'	Pedal	
Mixture VI		Stopt Bass	16'
Trumpet	8'	Open Bass	8'
		Choral Bass	4'
		Trombone	16'
		Trumpet (Prepared)	8'
Positive to Great			
Positive to Pedal			
Great to Pedal			
Tremolo			
Cymbelstern			



The 1976 organ for the First Lutheran Church of West Seattle, Washington, shown set up at the Noack Organ Company factory, Georgetown, Massachusetts.



The Lewis & Hitchcock one-manual instrument at the Presbyterian Church in Leesburg, Virginia.

#### Lewis & Hitchcock in Leesburg, Virginia

Lewis & Hitchcock, Inc. of Silver Spring, Maryland, announces completion of an organ for The Presbyterian Church of Leesburg, Virginia. A gallery installation in the recently restored historic 1804 building, the organ has at present only one manual; it is to be enlarged at a later date. The second keyboard is already in place.

The white-enameled Birch case with Walnut trim is fronted by pipes of the Principal stop. The console has stopfaces and natural keys of Cherry. All stops are divided; the Principal is exposed and the remainder of the pipework is enclosed. At present the Subbass is an extension of the Gedeckt.

The organ incorporated part of the 1946 Lewis & Hitchcock instrument, and was designed by George L. Payne, President of the firm. Mary Page Lay is Director of Music of the church.

The specification is:

Manual I		Pedal	
8' Gedeckt	56 pipes	16' Subbass	12 pipes
4' Principal	56 pipes	Manual I/Pedal	
4' Dolce	56 pipes		
2' Octavin	56 pipes		
1 1/3' Mixture II	112 pipes		
8' Trumpet	56 pipes		

#### DAVID GOODING

Lake Erie College  
Painesville, Ohio 44077

#### BOOK REVIEW

William H. Clarke. *An Outline of the Structure of the Pipe Organ* Organ Literature Foundation reprint of the 1877 edition. 128 pages, illustrated, soft-bound, \$8.00 plus 50¢ postage & handling from The Organ Literature Foundation, Braintree, Mass. 02184.

The Organ Literature Foundation continues to provide us with high-quality reprints of hard-to-find items, and Clarke's book should be of interest to all OHS members. William H. Clarke was a Boston organist and music educator who built organs in Indianapolis during the 1870's, edited and wrote numerous works for organ and harmonium, and in later years became well known as a writer of magazine articles and organ consultant. He had a thorough knowledge of the organ of his time which is amply displayed within the pages of this book.

Beginning with a six-stanza poem by Clarke in a style which is "purple Victorian" at its best, the author quickly gets down to business with a description of the church organ, its mechanism, and its pipes, all well-illustrated and described in detail. There is a 10-page list of commonly used stops, a revealing repertoire list, and a large number of sample specifications. Such subjects as tuning, scaling, compasses, and voicing are touched upon, and there is an interesting few pages on "Organ Music" which tells much about the practices of the time. At the end of the book, Clarke throws in a few advertisements for his Indianapolis organ factory, complete with testimonials and engravings of two of his instruments. All in all, this is a genuine and informative document from a very important period in American organ history which gives many insights into what organists and organbuilders thought and did then.

—Barbara Owen

#### Rosalind Mohnsen

St. Joseph's Church  
Belmont, MA 02178

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EST. 1877

**SAN FRANCISCO**

## Continuing our Heritage . . . .

### An Editorial

It was 1896 when the American Guild of Organists was founded by a group of church musicians centered in New York City, and six years later (1902) the first chapter, then known as the Pennsylvania Chapter (now Philadelphia), was chartered. Since then more than 150 chapters of the Guild have been organized and are flourishing.

Sixty years after the founding of the Guild, the Organ Historical Society was organized—again in New York City, and, as a matter of fact, during a National Convention of the Guild. Since 1956 the Society has grown from its first membership of ten to over 1000, with seven chapters chartered and more in the making.

But the work and study connected with the history of organs and organ building is only beginning to be developed, and the gradual expansion to other areas is a gratifying observation in view of some of the opposition which OHS members have encountered. In France there is now a similar organization to OHS, particularly devoted to the preservation of intrinsically historic instruments. Two years ago Dr. James Boeringer of Susquehanna University, upon completion of his studies in England, organized the International Committee for the Preservation of Organ History with members from Germany, France, Holland, and Britain and himself as the American representative. His group held a meeting during the recent International Congress of Organists held in Philadelphia, with encouraging reports from many quarters. And now we have word that the Organ Historical Trust of Australia has been organized at Victoria, N.S.W.

The common bond which links all of the above together is an almost unanimous set of aims which might be summed up as—

1. To generate a renewed interest in the pipe organ — its origins, its history, and its development down through the ages to today;
2. To stimulate concern among the general public over organs of particularly outstanding merit—both historical and musical—and to make every effort to preserve same;
3. To encourage scholarly research in many areas as yet untouched, and assist in the dissemination of same through publications, public lectures, demonstrations and seminars.

The methods by which these aims are achieved vary somewhat, although common practices are employed by all groups. The outstanding variance is the fact that in some countries governmental funds are available in certain instances of preservation. Holland is such an example, and there is similar legislation pending in Australia.

Obviously, OHS could accomplish wonders if the American government could be interested in our work, and perhaps this is a goal for the future.

But currently it is a matter of great encouragement that so many others are taking up the cause with enthusiasm and success. This is further proof that OHS is not laboring in vain, and that we are imparting our heritage to others.

## CLASSIFIED

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**FOR SALE**—*Historic American Organ Builders*, the seven articles from *MUSIC* 1976 bound together. \$1.25 by mail from author: Albert F. Robinson, 12 Kings Highway East, Haddonfield, N.J. 08033.

**FOR SALE**—50 used tracker organs, all sizes, varying condition. For list send 50¢ in stamps to Alan Laufman, Director, Organ Clearing House, P.O. Box 104, Harrisville, N.H. 03450.

**FOR SALE**—Antique Records, 78 RPM, Vinyl. \$3 each. 0-1002 Walter Baker, 1939 Moller, Philadelphia. 0-1003 Claire Coci, A-S, Westminster Choir College. 0-1004 Claribel Thomson, A-S in Philadelphia. Order from: OHS, P.O. Box 209, Wilmington, OH 45177.

**FOR RENT**—OHS slide-tape program "A History of the Organ in America from 1700 to 1900." Duration: 45 minutes. Full information and rates: Norman M. Walter, 25 Waterview Rd., West Chester, Pa. 19380.

**FOR SALE**—OHS Convention Programs, containing specifications and photos; Capital Dist., New York State 1967, Worcester, Mass. 1968, New York City 1969, Northern New York State 1970, Baltimore 1971, Central New Jersey 1973. 50 cents per copy. Order from OHS, P.O. Box 209, Wilmington, OH 45177, enclosing payment.

**MOVING?**—Don't miss your *TRACKER*. Send your old and new addresses to *THE TRACKER*, P.O. Box 209, Wilmington, Ohio 45177.

**ALBERT F. ROBINSON**  
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