



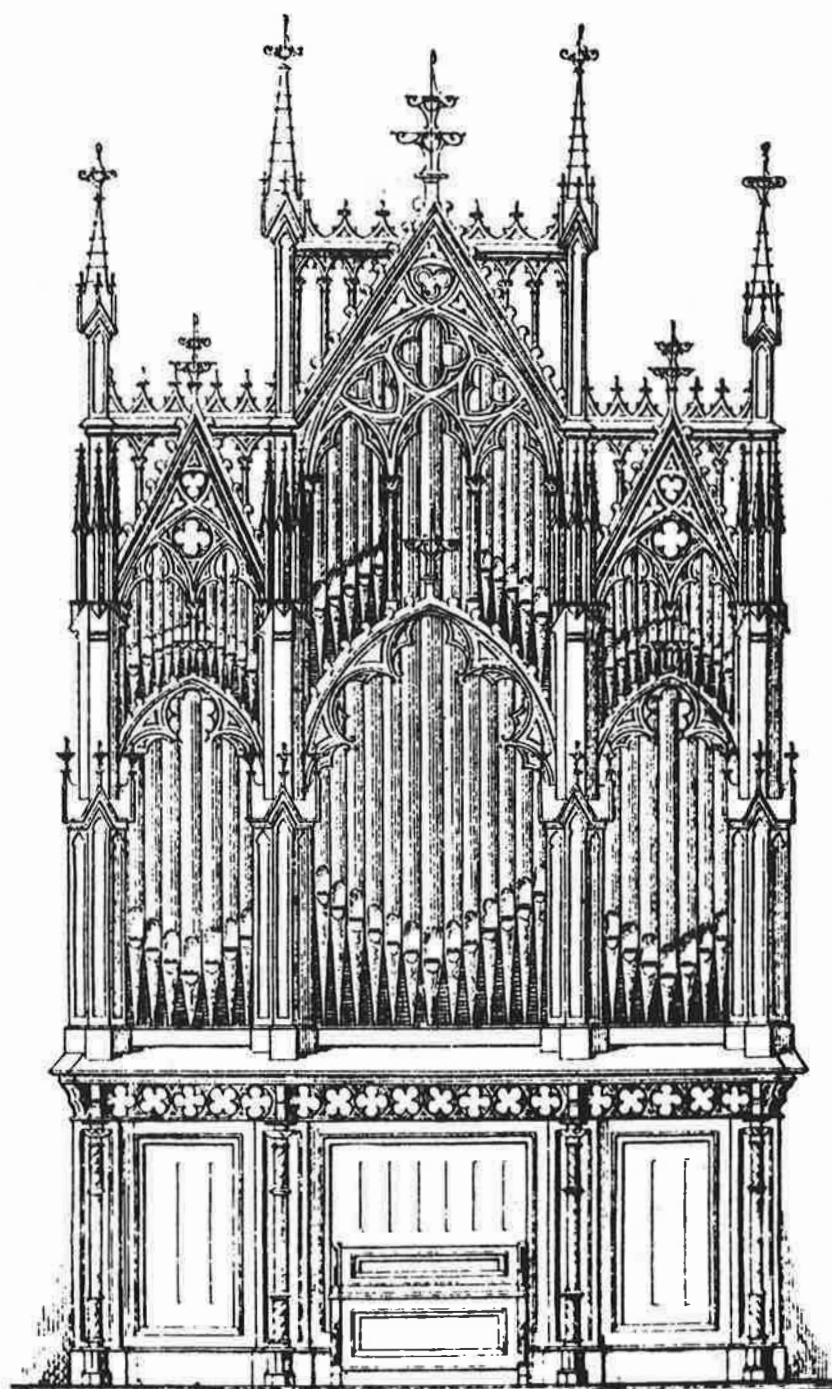
# THE TRACKER

Journal Of The Organ Historical Society, Inc.

Volume 25, Number 4

Summer 1981

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Generalagentur des Hoss Motors of Troy, N. Y. Sendet für P. eisiffen.

Carl Bardhoff, Orgelbauer, Salem, Ohio.

# The Organ Historical Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 209, Wilmington, Ohio 45177

with archives at Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio, and  
telephone at Lancaster, Pennsylvania: (717) 872-5190

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Donald R. Traser	Publisher
128 S. Laurel St., Richmond, VA 23220	
F. Robert Roche	Advertising
60 Part St., Taunton, MA 02780	

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Dana Hull	Historic Organs
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Box 44, E. Vassalboro, ME 04935	
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Earl Miller	Recital Series
Epiphany, 115 Jefferson Ave., Danville, VA 24541	
Alan Laufman (acting)	Research and Publications
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## Chapter Correspondents

Alan Laufman	Boston Organ Club
P.O. Box 104, Harrisville, NH 03450	
Anne L. Kazlauskas	Central New York
201 Center St., Ithaca, NY 14850	
Thomas A. Burrows	Chicago-Midwest
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Joseph Corkedale	Mid-Hudson
17 Innis Ave., Newburgh, NY 12550	
Randall McCarty	Pacific Northwest
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Burckert Cree	Pacific Southwest
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## Specialization . . .

### An Editorial

In this day and age of specialization in every walk of life it is only natural that OHS should conduct its share of this activity. True, some members have specialized from the very beginning of the Society, and it was recommended by our first Editor, Kenneth Simmons, in an early issue of *The Tracker*, that some should choose one builder or one phase of organ history for specialization.

Over the years a few members have done this. Elizabeth Towne Schmitt has worked tirelessly on the Schuelke firm's history, sharing several parts of this from time to time and summarizing the whole in our 25th anniversary issue. Homer Blanchard's keen interest in organ design and development has provided us with the masterpieces found in both the *Bicentennial Tracker* and our 25th anniversary issue. Kenneth Simmons shared his master thesis on "A History of the Johnson Family and Firm." Donald R. M. Paterson provided an interesting account of the organs built by William King. John Ogasapian has given us a remarkable insight into the complex story of Henry Erben. Jim Lewis has specialized in the history of Murray Harris. And there are others whose special interests have been expressed from time to time in articles and letters.

Ever since the St. Louis Convention in 1979 we have looked forward to a recording from our Audio-Visual Committee on the work of John G. Pfeffer, a relatively unknown midwestern builder. Norman Walter calls this "A Pfeffer Odyssey," and its early release may be anticipated by all members. In fact, Mr. Walter and other officials have discussed the possibility of issuing a whole series of recordings, each based upon a specific builder's work. This plan of specialization requires a tremendous effort and considerable funds. But the society needs to proceed with this and other plans which will increase its stature in the organ world and provide us with material and information which is unavailable anywhere else.

Some people call this "progress," but we prefer to think of it as a progressive step in the corporate effort of a society to develop its maturity, assist its members in research and studies, and generally benefit the entire music world.

Readers may well ask, "But how can I get involved in this development?" For one thing, if you are a specialist in any phase of organ history, write an account of your findings for publication in this journal. For another, support the OHS by buying the recordings we already have for sale. And finally, make that extra monetary contribution — by joining next season in a higher dues bracket, or by an out-and-out contribution to one of the several funds of OHS, or by a legacy in your will which will eventually help to keep our many projects alive. It's a little strange how death can perpetuate life!

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# THE TRACKER

Volume 25, Number 4

Summer 1981

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COVER — Carl Barckhoff's advertisement in a yearly journal called *Amerikanischer Kalender Fur Deutsche Lutheraner*, a German publication of Concordia Publishing House of St. Louis, Missouri. This ad appeared about 1887. Each issue contains religious matter including daily Bible readings, short articles, activities of the Lutheran Church in America and abroad, and a directory of the Lutheran pastors and teachers of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church.

The text surrounding the picture translates as follows: 'Carl Barckhoff, Organ Builder, Salem, Ohio. All work guaranteed for 6 years. Organ bellows driven by water pressure a specialty. General agency of Ross Motors of Troy, N.Y. Send for Pricelist.'

— J. Paul Schneider

“As Goes Maine . . .”

## 26th Annual National Convention Report

A nineteenth century adage rehearsed every national election year was: “As goes Maine, so goes the nation.” One might adapt this: “As was the 26th annual national OHS convention, so should all conventions be,” for it was indeed a model of good planning and splendid execution under the careful guidance of Brian Franck, chairman, and Alan Laufman, convention coordinator. Others who served on the committee include David S. Coco, Charles Ferguson, Carlton Russell, John and Linda Shortridge, and Margaret Stone. And church members, recitalists and demonstrators, bus drivers, caterers and University of Maine officials deserve great credit for their individual efforts in making this a most enjoyable convention. To all we extend a hearty “thank you.”

Each conventioneer was provided with a list of names and addresses of all of the pre-convention registrants which numbered well over 200 from all parts of America and Canada. The convention booklet, with 104 numbered pages, was by far the most complete and interesting yet published. It included a dedication to Barbara Owen, brief biographies of the builders, complete recital programs with thumbnail sketches of the recitalists, specifications of all organs visited, photos of the players and the instruments, and, of course, the convention schedule, which was followed with no substitutions or changes.

Another factor which provided much pleasure was the generally fine condition of every one of the organs we heard.

The National Council met at St. John's Roman Catholic Church in Bangor on Monday morning, June 22nd. Minutes will be published later, but it should be noted here that Norma Cunningham has resigned as Publisher and that Council appointed Donald Traser of Richmond, Virginia, to fill this vacancy. We learned that the increase-in-dues motion had passed, and adopted a new budget for the fiscal year with but few increases in allotments.

It was a distinct pleasure to meet our new Treasurer, Goss B. Twichell, of Wooster, Ohio, who had already met with and effected the change-over from Donald C. Rockwood, our treasurer for some thirteen years.

Monday evening's pre-convention recital was played by Rosalind Mohnsen of Belmont, Massachusetts, at the United Methodist Church in Orono on the completely rebuilt (by Berkshire Organ Company) Emmons Howard of 1891, formerly located in Bangor's Pine Street Methodist Church. Her program, of well chosen shorter works suited to this instrument, was handsomely performed for the packed audience. We sang “Mit Freuden Zart” with great gusto.

Tuesday morning began with the OHS Annual Meeting in the University of Maine's Hauck Auditorium. Minutes of this meeting will be published later, but a few items need emphasis here. We were delighted to meet all three of this year's selection for the E. Power Biggs Fellowships – David S. Coco of Brewer, Maine, Thomas Healey of Wollaston, Massachusetts, and

Philip T. Cooper of Bel Air, Maryland. The only previous EPB Fellow present was Patrick Murphy, Jr., of Haddon Heights, New Jersey. The OHS Service Award was presented to Helen Harriman of Sharon, Massachusetts, who served as Corresponding Secretary for a period of twelve years (1964-1976), performing not only the usual duties attached to that office but in many instances those of public relations officer (before we discovered William Van Pelt!), columnist for *The Tracker*, and friend. As already mentioned, the dues increase was approved by the membership in the ballots cast, and the majority expressed a desire to retain the present convention date schedule. President Mowers and Vice-President Bozeman were re-elected for another two-year term, and the new Councillors are Kristin Johnson and William Van Pelt III.

Following the Annual Meeting a new slide-tape presentation called “Our American Organ Heritage,” created by Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Riley, was shown. This splendid production shows some twenty-two organs beginning with Snetzler and including examples of Tannenberg, Goodrich, Appleton, Doll, Dieffenbach, Hook & Hastings, Erben, Jardine, Ferris & Stuart, Pomplitz, Johnson, and Miller. Except for recordings by James Darling, E. Power Biggs, and Thomas Murray, all of the sound was provided by Mr. Riley. It is hoped that from this a new OHS slide-tape program may become available because the old one has now been withdrawn by act of National Council and is no longer obtainable.

It was noted that five of the original founders of OHS (1956) were present at this convention, namely Barbara Owen, Homer Blanchard, Donald R.M. Paterson, Randall E. Wagner, and Albert F. Robinson. It was also noted that four former presidents attended, namely Barbara Owen, Donald R.M. Paterson, Edgar A. Boadway, and Alan Laufman.

F. Robert Roche, chairman of advertising in *The Tracker*, made an earnest appeal to all present for business card ads. He stated that one page of ads accounts for two pages of text, and that with more ads the issues can once again revert to 28 or 32 pages, instead of the present 24 pages.

### The Tuesday Tour

At the Community Church in Stockton Springs, the first visitation, we began with a short hymn-sing led by Stephen Long with Samuel Walter's justly famous piano accompaniments. There were hearty renditions of “There is Sunshine in My Soul,” “A Mighty Fortress,” and “We've a Story to Tell to the Nations.” Elizabeth Sollenberg, assisted by trumpeter Allen Graf-fam, gave an interesting demonstration on the 1847 Hook (the oldest organ of the convention) and its use with trumpet. We concluded this visit with “Sine Nomine.”

The next demonstration was given by William Aylesworth at the First Congregational Church in Searsport where the 1906 E.W. Lane organ appeared to be in prime condition. The well-

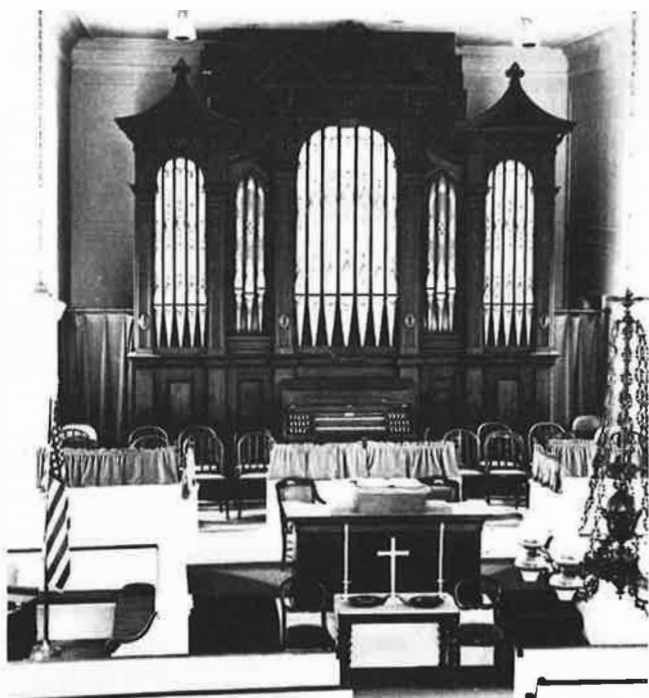
chosen program featured good, clean playing and we sang "Be Thou My Vision" to the Irish tune.

The young virtuoso, Paul Havenstein, gave a clever demonstration on the 1879 Hamill organ at the United Methodist Church in Belfast, using his own compositions and including his impression of theatre-organ playing. We sang "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" to "St. Anne."

After a steamed-clam and boiled lobster dinner at the First Church in Belfast, our Vice-President, George Bozeman, Jr., of Deerfield, New Hampshire, together with the Haydn Festival Orchestra with Lois Regestein providing harpsichord continuo, and George F. Holmes, baritone, presented a "grand concert" in the same church. This concert was made possible in part by a grant from the Maine State Commission on the Arts and Humanities. With the organ in the rear gallery and the orchestra down front, we were literally enveloped with the glorious sound of Handel and Haydn concertos, and organ and harpsichord solos. The baritone sang in the piece called "Reflections on an Early American Hymn *Distress*" by a native Belfast composer, Gladys Pitcher, who was present and received our plaudits. The organ, in this instance, was hand pumped throughout, and was the first and oldest (1848) of the five Stevens organs heard in this convention. We sang "Tallis' Canon" as it should be sung.

### The Wednesday Tour

After a two-hour bus ride, we arrived in Machias where, at the Centre Street Congregational Church, Marion Anderson gave a demonstration of short selections on a medium size Stevens organ of 1867. We sang "O God of Love, O King of Peace" and moved on to East Machias where, in the First Congregational Church, an 1872 Stevens in mint condition was heard in a recital by David Bergeron, a Maine native now serving in Revere, Massachusetts. The Langelais pieces seemed unsuited to this organ, but the Franck and Mendelssohn were ideal



The 1872 George Stevens organ at First Congregational Church in East Machias, Maine.

and very well performed. We sang "Ye Holy Angels Bright" to "Darwall's 148th."

Susan Armstrong of Waterbury, Connecticut, gave a demonstration on the little 1850 Erben organ at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Woodland. The romantic-style piece by Parker was hand-pumped, while the rest of her program used the electric blower. Her selections afforded a very good range of registration, and we sang "Rise Up, O Men of God."

On the Canadian border is the town of Calais with its huge Georgia-Pacific plant. Here at the Second Baptist Church Earl Miller of Danville, Virginia, gave a demonstration of the 1884 Hutchings organ. Of his selections, we found the Faulkes "Canzone in A minor" quite delightful and the "Liberty March" by Frysinger (from a 1918 issue of the *The Etude*) amusing. We sang two hymns here, both composed by the Rev. Hartley Carmichael, from a collection compiled for St. Paul's Church, Richmond, Virginia, in 1900. The texts were "Look, Ye Saints" and "Fierce Was the Storm and Wind."

After a fine church supper, we enjoyed a fine recital by Charles Page of Springfield, Massachusetts, who played the large 1873 Stevens organ in the First Congregational Church. His program had great variety and total finesse. We accorded him a standing ovation and sang "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven."

Thursday morning's opener was a lecture with slides by Barbara Owen on George Stevens. She proved that she had done her homework well with the following facts:



Detail of the elaborate decoration of the facade pipes in the 1872 George Stevens organ at East Machias, Maine.



The 1850 Henry Erben organ at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Woodland, Maine. It was moved three times and still serves well. The arches atop the case are recent additions. Photos by William Van Pelt.

George Stevens, oldest of 12 children, was born in 1803 in Norway, Maine. He was apprenticed to William Goodrich in 1820 in Boston, and was joined by a younger brother, William. He formed a partnership with M.R. Gayetty in 1833, which lasted until the latter's death in 1839. In 1844 he set up a factory and home in East Cambridge, Massachusetts, and built a three-manual organ for the Winthrop Church of Charlestown in 1850. About this time he entered politics, serving as alderman and mayor, and later became head of a bank. The earliest of his organs of which we have knowledge is in the Howard Street Church at Salem, built in 1838. He is remembered for his rather simple, straight-forward instruments which were less costly than those of his competitors and built primarily to accompany congregational singing. He was conservative in his designs, and the 1848 organ at the First Church in Belfast, Maine, is considered one of his best examples (see p. 44 of the Convention booklet). He died in 1894.

At the conclusion of the lecture, Madeleine Gaylor conferred a laurel wreath on Miss Owen amid great applause.

#### The Thursday Tour

Boarding our fleet of four buses, we rode to Orrington where, in the United Methodist Church, Nina Hollifield, of Revere, Massachusetts, gave a short demonstration using pieces by Bach and Brahms on the 1852 Holbrook organ. We sang "The Church's One Foundation," and then Samuel Walter added piano accompaniment as we sang "The Old Rugged Cross" with President Mowers directing.

Lois Regestein, who has graced six of our annual convention programs, presented another fine recital at Bucksport's Elm Street Congregational Church on the 1863 E. and G.G. Hook organ. It had that "great Hook sound" and this was exploited fully in selections by Bach, Vivaldi, Scheidt, and others. Parker's *Introduction and Fugue* was composed at Blue Hill, Maine, and von Suppe's *Light Cavalry Overture* was a refreshing delight.

At the First Baptist Church in Blue Hill, Barbara Owen demonstrated the attractive 1867 Stevens organ with a program of works by Charles and Samuel Wesley. We learned that these composers were brothers, nephews of John Wesley. Dr. Alexander McCurdy, one of Miss Owen's organ teachers, was present and was introduced. We sang "Amazing Grace."

Returning to Bangor, we enjoyed a fine roast prime rib of beef dinner at St. John's Church, and greeted Joseph Blanton of Albany, Texas, our newest Honorary Member. (Others were Dr. Albert Schweitzer, F.R. Webber, E. Power Biggs, William H. Barnes, and currently Dr. M.A. Vente of Holland).

The final recital program (at St. John's) was played by Karel Paukert, a native of Czechoslovakia who is now chairman of the organ department at Cleveland Institute of Music. He was joined by his wife, Noriko Fujii, soprano, in selections by Daniel Pinkham, Marcel Dupre, and Witold Lutoslawski. Of the organ selections, we were all stunned by Michel Corrette's *Grand jeu avec le Tonerre* and thoroughly enjoyed the *Toccata and Fugue in F minor* by Bedrich Antonin Wiedermann. The capacity audience joined heartily in "Alleluia, Sing to Jesus" to the Welsh tune, "Hyfrydol," and Mr. Paukert played in encore in the form of an improvisation on this tune.

And so, another convention program becomes part of OHS history. It was one which will be long remembered by all who attended. It seemed to make a most favorable impression on the people of Maine whom we encountered. We have not tried to give a complete, detailed report but rather refer you to the excellent convention handbook (mailed to all members of the Society) for the programs and organ specifications.

We noted an inscription in the pulpit arch of the Elm Street Congregational Church at Bucksport, and believe it should be directed to every OHS member: WHAT MEAN YE BY THIS SERVICE.

— Albert F. Robinson

#### Susan Armstrong

Church of Saints Peter and Paul

67 Southmayd Road  
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# Tennessee's Oldest Organ

by Thomas S. Eader

The James Hall organ in St. James's Episcopal Church, Greeneville, Tennessee, is not only the oldest organ presently known in the state of Tennessee, but it is also, apparently, the oldest Baltimore built organ to survive.

St. James's Episcopal Church was formed in 1842, and plans for the construction of the building were begun in 1848, to be placed on a parcel of land given by Dr. Alexander Williams from a portion of his extensive garden about halfway between the main house and stable, seventy-five feet off the principal street of Greeneville. The building was completed before August 11, 1850, when it was consecrated by the Rt. Rev. James H. Otey, first Bishop of Tennessee. The organ was in use at the consecration service.

According to memoranda in possession of the church, written by William D. Williams (son of Dr. Alexander and Catherine D. Williams) and by Margaret D. Williams (daughter of William D. Williams), Dr. Williams authorized the purchase of the organ and commissioned Mr. William G. Thomas (a Baltimore native) to make the purchase. Mr. Thomas was a teacher in Salem, N.C., where Catherine D. Williams had gone to school. Mr. Thomas asked his sister-in-law, Miss Ann Wethered, still then in Baltimore, to examine and approve the organ, evidently set up and finished in the shop of James Hall, awaiting a purchaser. The organ was taken apart, crated, and shipped by coastal steamer to Charleston, and then to Hamburg, S.C. (across the river from present day Augusta). Mr. Jim Allen took his ox team, wagon, and help from Greeneville and brought the instrument back from Hamburg. When it arrived, Mr. P.G. Rosenblatt, a leading musician in Greeneville, assembled it and afterwards maintained it for as long as he lived. It had cost \$350 plus \$50 freight. William D. Williams paid the freight, and Thomas D. Arnold (later General Arnold) contributed \$50 toward the purchase. Presumably, Dr. Williams paid the rest as there are no records of other contributors.

The organ, with the rest of the church, suffered the abuses of the Civil War and a long period of neglect during the years following when the congregation was without a resident minister. During this time the congregation virtually died away.

During the war, one incident connected with the church is of interest. A Northern sympathizer informed General Alvan C. Gillem's forces that Confederate General John H. Morgan (of Morgan's Raiders fame) was staying at the home of Dr. Williams. A detail slipped past Confederate guards and in the early dawn of September 4, 1864, surprised General Morgan. It is told that he dressed quickly, fled the house with his boots under his arm, and made his way into the garden. He took refuge under the church, which instead of a foundation wall, rested on brick piers. The donated church lot, being only three feet larger around than the building, was close by a grape arbor. After pulling his boots on, General Morgan attempted to get to his horse in the stable at the far end of the garden, but was seen,

shot and killed as he passed through the grape arbor. Today, the Parish House and parking lot occupy this site.

In 1889, Dr. Samuel Ringgold, Rector of St. John's in Knoxville, was appointed Dean of the East Tennessee Convocation, and set about reviving the Greeneville congregation. In his report he stated that he had rounded up sixteen persons to make up a congregation and had persuaded them to begin repairs to the church. He also wrote: "There is a very sweet-toned organ, the only one in the town." In 1890 the Rev. William G. Wells came to be missionary to Greeneville and surrounding towns and the congregation began to come to life again. The same year Mr. Pilcher from Louisville, Kentucky, came to do restoration work on the organ.

For ninety-nine years the old organ stood to the left of the chancel and was hand pumped. When the congregation celebrated its centennial by a general renovation of the building, the organ was moved to the gallery, and an electric blower was added. Mr. Alfred Kargaard of Ashville, N.C., supervised this work, and at the same time did some maintenance work of an unspecified nature. A few years later a new organ was placed in the gallery and the old organ, no longer in good playing condition and tune, was lowered, intact, to the present location at the rear of the nave. It was used, however, at anniversary services and at Christmas.

In 1973 the present Rector, the Rev. R. Alan McMillan, wrote to the Organ Historical Society for information on the organ, which bears a brass nameplate: "James Hall - Baltimore." The letter was forwarded to me. My article, "Baltimore Organs and Organ Building," was sent which indicated that the oldest known Baltimore organ was a one manual by August Pomplitz, dated 1853. The Greeneville James Hall, unknown to me when I wrote the article, is at least three years older. In time, restoration was planned and was finally completed in the fall of 1980, as a memorial to Jane Rutan Chalmers.

James Hall, ca. 1850  
St. James's Episcopal, Greeneville, Tenn.  
VR-4. R-4. S-5.

MANUAL: V-4. R-4. S-5. Encl.	"Swell" - a stop to hold open the Swell shades.
8 OPEN DIAPASON 16' 37m	Foot lever: to control the Swell shades.
STP. DIAPASON BASS 17sw	Foot lever: Onoroff adding and subtracting the 4' and 2' stops.
STP. DIAPASON TREBLE 16' 37wm*	
4 PRINCIPAL 5sw 49m	
2 FIFTEENTH 54m	

\* - "wood bass, metal Rohrflute treble"

The case, in the Gothic style, is of poplar and pine, grained in imitation of oak. A recessed keyboard, covered by a pair of doors, slides out into playing position. A simple sticker and backfall action gives a light touch. Some long while after 1890,

turning slides were poorly fitted to the metal pipes, which were trimmed at that time. In the restoration, tuning slides were properly fitted and some holes and seams were soldered. A few metal pipes are old replacements, presumably by Mr. Pilcher in 1890. The bellows was releathered and a new silent blower was installed under a nearby stair landing. Both hand pumping and electric blowing are noiseless and both draw air from the same room as the organ. The former blower was in the crawl space beneath the church and open to the winter air. Pipes and the entire interior of the organ had been carefully cleaned since 1973 by the Rector, so little further cleaning was required. Some pipes were adjusted for proper speech. Some wooden pipes required seams to be reglued and stoppers releathered. Three new walnut stop knobs had to be made to duplicate original ones, and five new ivory labels were supplied from England

to duplicate script on the single remaining label. A newly fashioned music rack of walnut matches the interior wood of the keydesk. The case graining was carefully cleaned (one half had been previously been partly and painstakingly restored by the Rector) and reshellacked. Front pipes, all wooden dummies, were gessoed as necessary and new gold applied. A careful tuning revealed a bright full, rich sound, indeed as sweet as noted in 1889. The tone is perfectly suited to the beautiful and acoustically alive interior which seats about ninety.

Now in excellent playing condition, and well into its second century of use in its original home, the organ is being used more often and is a source of pride for the congregation, not large, but strong and growing after one hundred and thirty years.

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## William B. D. Simmons Organ Placed in Danville, Virginia

by Earl L. Miller

What may well be the last instrument built by Wm. B.D. Simmons was dedicated on March 22, 1981, at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church in Danville, Virginia, in a concert sponsored by OHS as one of the Historic Organ Recital Series. The story of this instrument finding its way to Danville is interesting and resembles the age-old "good overcomes evil" format.

Sacred Heart Church is a small but well-proportioned Gothic-style building built in 1939. It seats about 200 and has stone floors and walls, a wood ceiling and no carpeting. When the building was opened it was served by an Everett Orgatron, an early electrification and amplification experiment using a suction reed system; it worked, more or less, until 1979 when it died.

The church had wanted to improve its musical situation and knew that the organ was one of the drawbacks. Unfortunately, members had been told that their church could not have a pipe organ, could not afford one, and that they needed at least two manuals and many stops to supply their needs. We all know what was recommended. Many of the members of the congregation were unhappy about this advice as they wanted to have a pipe organ.

While in New England, this writer visited the Andover Organ Company shop in Methuen, Massachusetts, and mentioned the Sacred Heart Church situation. Andover had an instrument which had been rescued from vandalism and total destruction, and brought to Methuen in 1971 by the Organ Clearing House. The price for reconditioning this organ was competitive with the cost of a new electronic substitute, and this information was sent to the then rector of Sacred Heart Church. He had already begun negotiations with a major electronic instrument company, and had made a down payment on the smallest model of this company's computer instrument which, he understood, was to be a custom instrument but was, in fact, a stock model.

When this writer returned home with first hand information on the Simmons organ, the people of Sacred Heart Church were disheartened to find out that they could have had a real pipe organ. But as it turned out, a new priest came to Danville not long after the organ negotiations took place. This was OHS member, Father Michael Duffy. Father Duffy had experience with tracker action instruments and is a musician in his own right. On his second day in town this writer received a call from him which began, "Is there any way we can get rid of this electronic and get a real tracker action organ?" This would be music to any OHS member's ears! The electronic replacement was not yet paid for and, of course, had not arrived.

After some rather ugly experiences, including legal threats from the electronic dealer, the church managed to cancel the

contract, losing the down payment in the process. Sacred Heart Church then signed for the Simmons organ.

It arrived in March, 1981. The congregation had already begun experiencing the sound of a pipe organ with a loaned three-stop positive, built by Leonard Berghaus of Melrose Park, Illinois. A small choir was formed to assist in leading the singing. This writer was asked to act as organist "whenever available" and the major musical service was established on Saturday night. From the first appearance of the positiv, the congregation began singing and hasn't stopped! After the Simmons found its place in the gallery, the positiv was moved to the front of the church where it remains on loan, making it possible for a variety of musical situations and for double organ concerts. Danville now has two churches with double organ capabilities—Sacred Heart and Epiphany Church which has a 3m E.M. Skinner, Op 682, 1928, and a 3m Andover tracker, Op. 83, 1978.

The Simmons organ was originally located in the Universalist Church of South Acton, Massachusetts. It arrived there in 1878, but a hand written note in the bellows reads: James A. Young, Boston, Massachusetts, November 1, 1875. Simmons died in 1876; thus he may have worked on this organ. It may well have been the last instrument built by his company which closed in 1878.

The OHS visited the organ during the 1961 Convention in Boston, and it was in good condition then, but some vandalism occurred after the church closed in the 1960s. The mute zinc case pipes were badly damaged, as were many of the speaking pipes. The Hautboy had some pipes that looked as though they had been walked on. The majority of the rebuilding work was carried out by John Morlock and Dennis Olsen of the old organ department of the Andover Organ Company. They were assisted by Peter Cameron and Robert Crowley at Methuen, and Dan Mace and Carlton Landrum in Danville.

Several stops were slightly altered and one was added at the request of this writer, as acting organist for the parish, in consultation with Robert J. Reich and Donald H. Olson.

The pedal pipes were originally located on the back of the instrument. Because access to the balcony is a stairway behind the organ at Sacred Heart, the pedal division was rearranged to make the organ shallower. The 4' Principal, voiced as a quiet string, was revoiced to better serve as the 4' element of the Principal chorus. An independent 2' stop, using pipes from a ca. 1854 Geo. Stevens organ, was added using the stop knob of the old Hautboy bass. The Mixture was redesigned to better serve the instrument, taking into account the independent 2' stop. All who have played it find that the instrument is true to its original builder and the alterations do not adversely affect the 19th century tonality of the organ.



The 1877 Wm. B.D. Simmons organ in Sacred Heart Church, Danville, Virginia. Photo courtesy William Van Pelt.

The organ's sound can best be described as "bold." There is little obvious "chiff" although the instrument is extremely articulate. The action is light and responsive, and the variety of tonal colors seems to be endless. It is a fine example of what can be done with a one manual organ.

The facade pipes were decorated in the Victorian style by Danville artist Cynthia Durham. The basic off-white pipes are highlighted with gold, red, and green bands, small "flowers" and gold mouths. The feet of the pipes are a "rusty red."

The dedication concert was played by this writer, assisted by 16-year-old trumpeter James Sprinkle of the Danville Early Music Ensemble, and 12-year-old soprano Mary Chandler Freed, soloist of the Parish Choir of Epiphany Church, Danville. The music included two sonatas by Gottfried Reiche, a trumpet sonata by Jean-Baptiste Loeillet, organ works by Gade, Batiste, Bach, Guilman, Gervaise, Mendelssohn's "O for the Wings of a Dove," two congregational hymns and an improvisation. Interestingly enough, after the concert and reception, OHS member James Carmichael climbed up on the bench and played Tournemire's "Victimae Paschali," and Vierne's "Carillon de Westminster." They worked!

The organ is always open and Father Duffy encourages all visiting organists to come and play the instrument. It is the only pipe organ in a Roman Catholic Church in a seven county area. It is the second "used organ" to find its way to Danville through the Organ Clearing House. Perhaps this is the beginning of a new trend.

William B. D. Simmons, ca. 1877  
Sacred Heart R. C., Danville, Va.  
V-9. R-10. S-10.

PEDAL: V-1. R-1. S-1.  
16 SUB BASS 27sw

MANUAL: V-8. R-9. S-9. Encl.  
8 OPEN DIAPASON BASS

12sw  
OPEN DIAPASON  
TREBLE tc 46m  
STOP'T DIAPASON 18sw  
40ow Melodia pipes  
DULCIANA tc 46m  
(#1-12 ex Stop't Diap.)  
4 PRINCIPAL 58m  
FLUTE 17sw 41m ob  
2 FIFTEENTH 58m  
II MIXTURE 116m (1 1/3)\*  
8 HAUTOBOY 49mr 9m, full  
length, bass mitered

COUPLER: Manual to Pedal.  
Tremblant.  
Bellows Signal (operates  
blower).  
Pedal Check.  
Crescendo: Manual piperwork,  
in original location to  
right of pedal clavier.  
Wind Pressure: 3".  
Manual Keys: ivory, ebony  
sharps.  
Pedal Keys: cherry, walnut.  
Case: solid walnut.  
Stop Knobs: rosewood, ivory  
faces.

New Mixture composition:

\* Original Mixture Composition: 1-18: 19-22  
19-51: 12-19  
52-58: 8-12  
1-19: 12-22  
20-58: 12-15

Earl L. Miller is the musical director of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, director of the Danville Early Music Ensemble, acting organist of Sacred Heart Parish, an arts columnist, and the chairman of the Historic Organ Recital Committee of OHS.

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# William Mason as an Organist

by Elfrieda A. Kraege

When William Mason wrote his autobiography, *Memories of a Musical Life*, in 1901, he certainly did not have the needs of researchers for *The Tracker* in mind! His fame as a pianist and as a member of musical circles in the nineteenth century is often mentioned, but even in his own lifetime the fact that he was a competent organist as well was a surprise to some contemporaries. A few general biographical and musical facts about him, to start with, will be useful to put this little-documented organist phase in context.

William Mason was born in Boston on January 24, 1829, the third son of Lowell Mason and Abigail Gregory Mason. Interestingly, in spite of Lowell's professional and financial success in music, he did not especially want his sons to follow him in it. He hoped that William would become a clergyman. As time passed, the boy's fondness for music and his undoubted ability convinced his family that a musical career was well chosen.

Before he was two years old, William picked out the time beat of a melody he heard, and his parents noticed that he was more interested in harmonies than in melodies themselves. He especially liked minor thirds and harmonies in the minor mode. He preferred improvisation to serious study, and this continued until he became convinced that serious study was worthwhile. When he was 17 or 18, his father promised him a grand piano if he would learn Bach's *Fugue in F sharp major*, and he learned it. (It was said that the only other musician in America who could play it without the music was Stephen Henry Cutler, organist of Trinity Church.) William's earliest instruction came from his mother, but with his family he must have received all the help he needed. George James Webb and Lowell Mason had founded the Boston Academy of Music in 1833, and on February 10, 1841, at the Academy was given the first performance in America of Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*. Mr. Henry Schmidt, conductor on that occasion, was William's piano teacher, and his pupil mentions him as very influential in his early training. William also refers to Leopold de Meyer, European pianoforte virtuoso, as a performer he strove to imitate, although there is no indication in his biography that de Meyer ever gave him instruction.

In May 1849, William Mason sailed for Bremen on the steamer *Herrman* for further musical study in Europe. Returning to America in 1854, one of his first visits was to the home of George James Webb in Boston. In 1846 at age 17, William had first met Mr. Webb's daughter Mary, then not yet 14. He fell in love with her immediately, he said. They became good friends. But with nineteenth century strictness, the parents did not allow the young couple to correspond while William was in Europe. Five intervening years did not change the young man's feelings, and they were married March 12, 1857.

William's first major musical enterprise in 1854 was a concert tour, to Chicago and back, stopping in various cities on the way. William's memoirs comment that this may have been the first American concert tour of a pianist without a singer or some

other musician to give variety to the concerts, a daring experiment at the time. Events proved it successful enough. However, William found himself rather bored with traveling and with playing the same selections over and over. He soon settled down in New York and pursued his interest in the introduction of eminent European composers, particularly Brahms and Schumann, to American audiences. With Theodore Thomas and others he inaugurated in 1855-1856 the "Mason and Thomas Soirees of Chamber Music," a series of matinees which became very popular and were carried on for several years, until about 1868.

After a few years, Mason moved to Orange, New Jersey, where several of his family and associates had preceded him. He came to New York almost daily to teach, an activity he preferred over performing himself. He also composed a number of compositions for piano, perhaps about 50, but only one or two arrangements for piano and organ seem to have been written. He also wrote some hymn tunes and instruction manuals. He was famed as a teacher.

Eventually Mason returned to New York City, where he died on July 14, 1908. His wife had died in 1881, and two sons also predeceased him. He was survived by his daughter Mina Van Sinderen, to whom his autobiography was dedicated.<sup>1</sup>

---

The first mention of William playing the organ was at the age of seven, when his father set him on the bench at the organ of Bowdoin Congregational Church in Boston and let him play the accompaniment to the choir as they sang the tune *Boylston*. In about 1842 he was sent to study with the Rev. T. T. Thayer, Congregationalist clergyman at Newport, Rhode Island, whose church had an instrument of 12 or 14 stops. William Mason played the organ regularly at church services there. When he returned to Boston, he became organist at a Congregational Church in Winter Street, where Lowell Mason was conducting the music. He was at that time in his late teens, and was also playing in public at Boston Academy of Music events.

In such an organist-filled environment as Lowell Mason's world in Boston of the 1840s, it might seem rather academic to wonder who gave William his organ lessons. In Europe his teachers were first in Leipzig, piano under Moscheles, harmony under Moritz Hauptmann, instrumentation under E. F. Richter; later he went to Prague and studied piano with Alexander Dreyshock; also in part of 1853-1854 he worked with Franz Liszt at Weimar. Specific organ study is not mentioned in any of the biographical material available, but someone like Moritz Hauptmann (who held a position at the Thomasschule at Leipzig, once held by J. S. Bach) would certainly have encouraged his young student in organ-playing. Liszt, too, often thought of as a composer of brilliantly technical piano compositions, had a profound interest in church music, owned an organ himself, and composed organ music. Moscheles was an organist as well as a pianist. Certainly Mason developed fine organ techniques somewhere, and his technique on the piano was legendary.

During his first stopover in Boston in 1854, the big new Hook organ at Tremont Temple was attracting attention. William stopped in to see it, and this account is given:

The return and expected public professional appearance of William Mason is exciting much talk and interest among most musical people here, and not only among musicians but among all classes. Some few of our leading amateurs have accidentally heard him play (he seldom or never, I believe, gives anyone an opportunity to hear him play, if he can avoid it). They tell wonderful stories of his touch, his power, his exquisite taste, his execution, his genius, etc. In fact they are driving us less favored mortals who have not heard him nearly frantic with their portrayals of his entrancing powers. Mr. Mason happening in at Tremont Temple a few days since, was besought by a few organists present to give them a specimen of organ playing upon the instrument there. He complied, and astonished the audience, proving himself to be as good an organist as pianist.<sup>2</sup>

He began on Oct. 7, 1855, as organist at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church at Nineteenth Street, New York, where his father was the musical director. Those were the days when the Rev. Dr. James Waddel Alexander and Lowell Mason were making their all-out effort to promote congregational singing, and the church had installed a large Jardine organ.<sup>3</sup> After Alexander's death in 1859 (Lowell Mason had withdrawn in 1856 or 1857), the church was financially hard pressed, and was forced to ask William to take a reduction in salary, but "\$100 more than they felt able to pay any other organist" because they were so pleased with his musicianship. Mason continued there for a time, but finally resigned in May 1860.<sup>4</sup>

A *Dwight's* review in 1861 was as follows:

Mr. William Mason, a son of Dr. Lowell Mason of Boston, is one of our most talented organists. His merits as a pianist are well known and appreciated by all lovers of classical music, but it is not generally known that he also stands in the front ranks as a performer upon the organ. His playing belongs to the strict school of sacred music, and he ignores entirely the modern secular style, as inappropriate to the service of the church. He formerly played at the late Rev. Dr. Alexander's Church (Presbyterian) in Fifth Avenue, but is now temporarily engaged at the New Jerusalem Church in 35th Street, of which Mr. Silver is pastor. The services of this Church do not admit largely of musical display, although more is perhaps attempted in this particular one than in many of the same denomination. The opening voluntary is always extemporized by Mr. Mason; then follows a motette, selected from the highest compositions of this class - sung by the quartette choir of amateurs; after which follow chants, at the close a hymn intended to be congregational. The congregation is dismissed without a closing voluntary. Of Mr. Mason's capabilities, the 'Diarist', in *Dwight's Journal of Music*, has thus spoken:

"Some two years since a small party remained in Dr. Alexander's church, in New York, after service, and William Mason extemporized upon the organ. That it impressed me strongly is clear from the fact that, notwithstanding all the great organ playing I have heard before and since, that half hour's performance remains fresh and vivid in my memory. In nine cases out of ten, you know beforehand what is to come in an organ voluntary, just as you know how nine out of ten newspaper stories are to end - or, if your ear is disappointed, it is because the organ knows not where to go nor what to do next. But Mason's themes were so fresh, his episodes so unexpected

yet so pleasing, the forms adopted so varied - now a solo with answering chorus from the vox celestis, now the full rolling masses of tone from the grand organ, and at last a fugue moving onward with stately steps - that the ear was constantly and delightfully disappointed, the fancy continually excited, and the musical sense filled with enjoyment."<sup>5</sup>

Although William Mason had been brought up in New England Congregationalism, he later became a Swedenborgian, and remained one all of his life. Probably his interest in this church began with his wife and father-in-law. Early in George Webb's Boston years, he was organist at the Old South Meeting House. Not having duties following the singing, Webb would slip out of the services to go to hear the Rev. Thomas Worcester preach at the New Church. The Old South people objected to this, and Webb acquiesced, but at the end of his agreed upon year, he resigned to take the organist position at the New Church in Boston.<sup>6</sup>

Mary Webb Mason had as a girl been one of the leading voices in one of her father's large antiphonal choruses in Boston, and in New York she was soprano in the Swedenborgian Church quartet. The *American Musical Directory* gives the following summary of the Swedenborgian Church in New York, 1861: "First (New Jerusalem), E. 35th Street between Lexington and Fourth Avenues. Quartet choir. William Mason; organist and conductor. Size of organ, 2 banks keys, 24 stops. 2 octaves pedals. L. V. Stuart, 1859."<sup>7</sup>

Not a great deal could be found about the organs at this church. On November 13, 1888, "an inaugural organ recital was given at the Church of the New Jerusalem of this city by Frank Taft, organist. The instrument was manufactured by Reuben Midmer and Son of Brooklyn." The 1917 Midmer catalogue lists the church with a three manual organ.<sup>8</sup>

The church at 112 E. 35th Street, New York, now has an old organ with the name plate "The Hall Organ Co., West Haven, Conn."<sup>9</sup> This company was first founded in New Haven and became the Hall Organ Company about 1912. *Diapason* issues of the period 1915-1930 show the Hall Organ Company to have been a busy builder of the period.

The dates of William Mason's service at this church were not found, but it is known that he moved to Orange, New Jersey, sometime during the 1860s.

The Lowell Masons, Sr. and Jr., were active in the formation of the Valley Church in Orange, now known as the Highland Avenue Congregational Church. For some years William assisted there as voluntary organist without compensation. The church started with a reed organ, but in 1868 an Odell organ, Opus 69, was ordered and installed. To help raise money for it William Mason and Theodore Thomas gave one of their concerts March 12, 1868, in Orange, and netted about \$500 of the \$4800 cost.<sup>10</sup> The still existing Odell contract, dated Feb. 21, 1868, shows that Lowell Mason, Jr., was one of the signers for the church. The following account appeared shortly after the first use of the organ on August 1, 1868.

The new organ placed last week in the Valley Church is a very fine instrument. Saturday afternoon last we were permitted to listen to an exhibition of its capacities and powers under the accomplished hands of the organist of the church, Mr. William Mason, and greatly enjoyed the delicacy, elasticity, sweetness, and power of tone displayed. There are several new and beautiful musical combinations in this organ, which are arranged with great mechanical skill. On Sabbath last the organ was used at the regular

Sunday services in the church. A number of persons of musical tastes from other churches were present. The universal testimony was that it was a superior instrument, probably the finest in the state. The services were impressive, aided greatly by the grand music from the excellent organ. It is finished outside in blue and gold and corresponds in its exterior decoration with the interior of the church, which in the main is tastefully and cheerfully decorated and handsomely furnished. The church is a very imposing one, and will seat about 750 persons.<sup>11</sup>

In an Odell brochure of about 1874 this letter from William Mason, dated in New York, Feb. 8, 1869, appears:

Messrs. J.H. and C.S. Odell. Gentlemen: It gives me great pleasure to be able to say that the organ built by you for the Orange Valley Church gives thorough satisfaction. I regard it as a very fine instrument in all respects. Your open Diapason deserves especial mention as it is very powerful without being harsh, and the tones are uniformly smooth without undue softness; this is universally acknowledged as being the most important stop in an organ, as it forms a solid and satisfactory groundwork for all the other stops. Your Trumpet also is very good, the tones being smooth and equal, thus rendering it useful as a solo stop, at the same time when used with the full organ it greatly enriches the tone and adds to the full chorus effect. The other stops are each and all excellent in their various departments, their accuracy in tone, in tune and individuality being remarkable. Your new compositions provide very great facilities, and owing to the mode of their construction, it is almost impossible that they should become disordered. Your action, too, I think, is unsurpassed, being light, even, and elastic, yet presenting just sufficient resistance to the fingers to be pleasant. I am yours, very truly, William Mason.

At the Valley Church, William Mason played the organ and his father led the congregational singing. William played a prelude, improvised during the offertory, and at the close would play a long and sometimes elaborate improvisation. When he would begin, the people would calmly resume their seats and listen, perhaps allowing the Sunday roast in the oven to wait a little longer. The pastor was The Rev. George Bacon, one of the sons of Dr. Leonard Bacon who had been a great friend of Lowell Mason. After George became a doctor of divinity, William teased him a great deal. Dr. Bacon had his revenge, however, in sending a letter to Yale University documenting William Mason's contributions, and getting him a doctorate in music. So the new doctor either had to use the title, or show disrespect to its grantors in New Haven!<sup>12</sup>

There is a mention in the same article of John Paul Morgan, a well known organist of the period, hearing Mason improvise and enjoying it so much that he wrote a letter to the *Evening Post*, telling of the various things that Mason did with a theme, and expressing great pleasure at his musicianship. Unfortunately, research has not turned up this letter, although various clues were followed in a two-hour search through *New York Evening Post* microfilm. This perhaps would have been a particularly valuable source of information, coming from a fellow organist of great ability.

In 1870 there was a spate of organ-building in Orange, with organs being placed by Henry Erben in St. John's Catholic Church, Calvary Methodist Church, Central Presbyterian Church, and First Presbyterian Church. We digress here to give a short account of one of these organs not connected with our story, for it comes from an Orange newspaper of the time, only available on microfilm. "An elegant organ presented to the Central Presbyterian Church by A.A. Knight, Esq., was opened on

Sunday last. It is from the well known manufactory of Henry Erben Esq. It is 15 feet high, 2 [sic] feet wide, and (illeg.) feet deep. It has 10 stops and over 700 pipes. It is of the Gothic style corresponding with the church."<sup>13</sup>

Another of these churches, the First Presbyterian, had installed its first organ in 1851 — one by Henry Pilcher which had been in use in another church, which one unknown. (It had not been in Duane Street Presbyterian, New York, a forerunner location of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian, which sold the First Presbyterian its pulpit and some furniture in the same year.) This organ was the first regular instrument at First Church. In 1870 the church had the Erben organ installed, at a cost of \$7,000. A notation at the time said, "New Organ. A slight extension of the organ loft of the First Presbyterian Church is being made this week to make room for the new organ which is expected to be put up before next week, the 20th. It will be the largest organ at present in Orange, and will cost \$7,000. The manufacturer, Mr. Erben, states that it is of the same style and quality as one recently built by him for a church in Yonkers, for which was paid \$7,500."<sup>14</sup>

If the newspaper carried a dedicatory program, it has not turned up in research. A large concert was given on Apr. 20, 1870. We reproduce part of the review of the concert, that dealing with the organists. It should be noted that the Mr. Morgan mentioned was not the John Paul Morgan mentioned elsewhere in this article.

If it was desired to test the powers of endurance of the instrument, certainly Mr. Morgan's violent pedal exercise, complete victory over the blower in the variations on "America" and general boisterous use of the organ, were calculated to provoke the admiration of the audience and confidence in the work of the builder. We do not think, however, that it was grand to make so loud a noise, simple as the expression of such a doubt may be. The overture to "Poet and Peasant" was ruined through lack of proper delicacy of treatment.

In striking contrast was the previous performance of Mr. William Mason. His improvised effort was in his own peculiar, graceful, flowing, and power-acquiring method, embracing two or three familiar themes, and ending in a masterly fugue. It was to be regretted that another opportunity was not afforded this gentleman, whose appearance and performances are always gladly hailed by the admirers of the unostentatious and true in music, which by many are preferred to mere racket and expenditure of force.

Mr. Charles Schuyler played the accompaniments to the vocal parts and a *Romanza* by Schumann, receiving hearty and well merited applause and a recall. The accompaniment to *Home Sweet Home* was charmingly executed. Although a stranger, the welcome this gentlemen received was assurance of appreciation and favor. Apparently familiar with the organ, he plays alike with delicacy and strength. It is hoped that the music loving public may hear him again at an early day.<sup>15</sup>

Later recitals on this organ were given by organists J. Rowland Mix and Dr. James Flint. The instrument may have been superseded by an Odell organ built in 1915, but the 1969 church history does not mention any later Odell. It may have been a listing confused with that of another church. Whatever organ was there was completely burned in a fire of April 1927, along with a smaller chapel organ.

When the church rebuilt on a nearby site in 1928, a four manual Aeolian organ with Echo Organ was installed at a cost of \$37,500. An Austin organ replaced it in 1968, at a cost of \$80,000. In 1928, the church also installed a two manual Estey

organ, a gift from Mr. and Mrs. Raymond T. Crane as a memorial to the parents of Mr. Crane.<sup>16</sup>

A concert on the Valley Church organ had been given a month before that at First Church, on March 16, 1870. The purpose of this concert was to raise money for a chime of bells for the church. Mr. S.P. Warren, one of the organists, was said to have been "connected so flatteringly by the press with the recent series of organ recitals at Association Hall." The program follows:<sup>17</sup>

# **Organ and Choral Concert in the Orange Valley Church, Wednesday Evening, March 16, 1870**

## **Part I**

- |    |                            |                      |
|----|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Organ Voluntary            | Mr. William Mason    |
| 2. | Chorus, Blessed is the Man | Orange Choral Union  |
|    | Mendelssohn                |                      |
| 3. | Organ Solo, Toccata in F,  | Mr. Samuel P. Warren |
|    | Bach                       |                      |
| 4. | Solo, He Was Despised,     | Mrs. Jennie Kempton  |
|    | Handel                     |                      |
| 5. | Chorus, To God on High,    | Orange Choral Union  |
|    | Mendelssohn                |                      |
| 6. | Organ Solo,                |                      |
|    | 1. Prelude in E, Freyer    | Mr. Theo. F. Seward  |
|    | 2. Moment Musicale,        |                      |
|    | Schubert                   |                      |

## **Part II**

- |     |                            |                      |
|-----|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 7.  | Chorus, The Heavens are    | Orange Choral Union  |
|     | Telling, Haydn             |                      |
| 8.  | Organ Solo, Air and        | Mr. Samuel P. Warren |
|     | Variations in A, Hesse     |                      |
| 9.  | Solo, Bless the Lord, Oh,  | Mrs. Jennie Kempton  |
|     | My Soul, Rossini           |                      |
| 10. | Chorus, Happy and          | Orange Choral Union  |
|     | Blest, Mendelssohn         |                      |
| 11. | Organ Improvisation        | Mr. William Mason    |
| 12. | Old Hundred                | Conductor,           |
|     | Be Thou O God              | Mr. C. Hoffman;      |
|     | Exalted High               | Accompanist          |
|     | And as Thy Glory           | Miss Fannie R.       |
|     | Fills the Sky -            | Pinckerton           |
|     | in which all are requested |                      |
|     | to join.                   |                      |

This concert was highly praised in every particular, with special notices on Mr. Mason and Mr. Seward as follows:

[The singer's] success was no doubt owing in great measure to the artistic aid of Mr. Mason, who performed the accompaniment with scrupulous regard to the dramatic demands of the composition. Mr. Theodore F. Seward, whom we have not had an opportunity of hearing before as an organist, played a Prelude by Freyer and a charming "Moment" of Schubert's — the latter certainly the popular organ solo of the evening. It is a matter of some surprise that this gentleman's services have not before been demanded.<sup>18</sup>

The bells for which the concert helped raise the money were placed in the church steeple, and were first rung on June 18, 1870.

Because these two concerts had been well received, both First Church and Orange Valley Church offered more music, the First Church in a mixed program schedule, and the Valley Church in a series of six organ recitals for which the programs were advertised in the *Orange Chronicle* issues on the dates given. Subject to small illegibilities in the newsprint or copy, the programs are given here.

## **Series of 6 Organ Recitals at the Orange Valley Church, 1870, on Saturday afternoons.**

**May 14, 1870. Mr. Samuel P. Warren**

- |    |                                   |                              |
|----|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. | Sonata in A                       | Mendelssohn                  |
| 2. | Fugue in E-Flat                   | Bach                         |
| 3. | Andante                           | Dussec (transcribed by Bach) |
|    |                                   | Krebs                        |
| 4. | Prelude in A Minor                | Beethoven                    |
| 5. | Adagio Cantabile, from            | Best                         |
| 6. | Theme and Variations in A         | Schumann                     |
| 7. | Sketch (illeg.), from Opus 56, #4 | Weber                        |
| 8. | Jubel-Ouverture                   |                              |

**May 21, 1870.**

*Mr. Charles B. Schuyler, playing #2, 3, 4, 6.*

*Mr. William Mason, playing #1, 5*

- |    |                               |           |
|----|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Improvisation in strict style |           |
| 2. | Toccata in F                  | Bach      |
| 3. | Andante from Symphony #1      | Beethoven |
| 4. | Romanze from Symphone #1      | Schumann  |
| 5. | Improvisation in free style   |           |
| 6. | Martha Overture               | Flotow    |

**May 28, 1870.**

*Mr. Samuel P. Warren, playing #2, 3, 4, 6*

*Mr. William Mason, playing #1, 5*

- |    |   |             |
|----|---|-------------|
| 1. | Introduction Extempore                    |             |
| 2. | Theme and Variations in A-flat            | Hesse       |
| 3. | Fugue in G Minor                          | Bach        |
| 4. | Andante and Allegretto                    | Mendelssohn |
| 5. | Improvisation on "Last Rose<br>of Summer" |             |
| 6. | Egmont Overture                           | Beethoven   |

**June 4, 1870**

*Mr. John P. Morgan, playing #2, 3, 4, 5*

*Mr. William Mason, playing #1, 6*

- |    |   |        |
|----|---|--------|
| 1. | Improvisation in strict style                       |        |
| 2. | Prelude and Fugue in E-flat                         | Bach   |
| 3. | A. Prelude and Choral on "Dundee"                   | Morgan |
|    | B. Prelude and Choral, Jesu Meine Freude            | Ritter |
| 4. | Andante from Sonata in E-flat                       | Fink   |
| 5. | Sonata in D Minor, Opus 2                           | Ritter |
| 6. | Improvisation in Free Style,<br>"Home, Sweet Home." |        |

**June 11, 1870.**

*Mr. Samuel Warren, playing #2, 3, 5, 6*

*Mr. William Mason, playing #1, 4*

- |    |   |             |
|----|---|-------------|
| 1. | Introduction Extempore                        |             |
| 2. | Prelude and Fugue in A Major                  | Bach        |
| 3. | Allegretto from Symphony in<br>Hymn of Praise | Mendelssohn |
| 4. | Improvisation on Russian<br>National Hymn     |             |
| 5. | Fantasia on O Sanctissima,<br>Sicilian Hymn   | Lux         |
| 6. | Overture, "Magic Flute"                       | Mozart      |

June 18, 1870

Mr. Samuel Warren, playing #2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Mr. William Mason, playing #1, 7

1. Introduction Extempore
2. Andante from Sonata no. 4 Bach
3. Fugue in E-flat Minor Handel
4. Fantasia in A Minor Richter
5. (Illeg.) Vogt
6. Schiller, March, transcribed by Best Meyerbeer
7. Improvisation on Familiar Melodies

The last chronological reference to churches served by William Mason shows him playing at times at the New Church (Swedenborgian) in Orange. He joined that church on Oct. 20, 1867, but did not attend its morning services regularly until after his father and brother died. His wife was active there, teaching in the Sunday School. On one occasion she organized a musical and theatrical affair from the proceeds of which funds an organ and furniture were purchased. This was some years before their building was constructed in 1887-1889, and this was probably only a small organ used in their rented quarters. Nothing has been found on the organ placed in their new building, but in 1916 a two manual Estey was placed in the church to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the congregation. It is described as having about eight ranks and tubular-pneumatic action.<sup>19</sup>

An obituary written by the minister of that church in 1908 is the last account of William Mason as an organist.<sup>20</sup>

After the death of his father and brother, Mr. Mason became a regular attendant upon our services, identifying himself fully with the New Church society and accepting office in it. He even volunteered to take the position of "assistant organist," which meant that he would play voluntaries for us whenever he could conveniently, but that he should have no responsibility in reference to it. The life and inspiration of the voluntaries he gave us are things never to be forgotten. The power of superb improvisation was a special feature of Mr. Mason's art. I recall with pleasure to this day his playing the voluntary at one of the Sunday School Christmas celebrations. He had placed before him the carols and other Christmas music which the children were to sing, and from them he improvised a voluntary which could rightly be compared to an overture in opera, anticipating the spirit and the life which were to be brought out later by the children themselves, and actually making the melodies of the carols and hymns a part of this improvised opening music.

Mr. Mason was undoubtedly one of the finest pianists and organists this country has produced. His rendering of music — to use the words which in an article in the *Century Magazine* he applied to the playing of Paderewski — was "quivering with life." But to my mind the distinguishing feature of his greatness was his marvelous directness and simplicity. He was entirely free from the appearance of self-consciousness, and from the sphere of unapproachableness with which great artists are often environed. I have known him to play at concerts which but for his presence would have been quite inferior. Most artists of his grade would not have allowed themselves to be thus made use of. But he acted from the kindness of a sympathetic heart.

One of the most impressive features of Mr. Mason's art was the high ideals he entertained in respect to its proper realization, and the inflexible fidelity with which he held to them. His improvisations were never a wandering about in the realms of musical harmony, like a kind of aimless sauntering, ready either to continue indefinitely, or to stop at any moment. Rather Mr. Mason's improvisations were

organic units. They had distinct themes, with beginnings, middle points, and ends.

A story which he once told me will illustrate this. He had been requested to play at a church wedding, and was told that a ten minute opening voluntary would be the amount required. He chose a theme which could be elaborated in about that time, but at the close of his rendition of it, was informed that the bridal party had not yet arrived. He changed the key to his voluntary and worked out the theme again. Still they were not ready. He then, to use his own expression, "turned it upside down and worked it through backwards." But no arrival. He finally resorted to the exercise of all his ingenuity to work out his theme in all sorts of possible variations, feeling sure that if any musician were in his audience, he would be laughing at the player's discomfiture. In all this, it probably never occurred to Mr. Mason as a suggestion to be for a moment entertained, to change his theme. Such a course would have seemed to him an infidelity to the high standing of his art.

William Mason seems not to be typical of certain organists of his period, who would yield to popular tastes in such ways as imitating thunderstorms and battles on the organ. He had developed a love for the great European composers, and used his arts to stimulate an interest in such music among his hearers. His technique is often mentioned, but there is not enough information to determine how his playing would compare with that of the greater organists of the twentieth century. It is of course noted that his improvisations must have been significant, because of their being constantly mentioned by knowledgeable critics. The man was, as noted, rather modest and quiet about his ability. No composition of his for organ alone has been located, but he did write one or two pieces for organ and piano.

We are fortunate to have available some stoplists of organs mentioned in this article, including two of a later period which are now quite old but still in use. For convenience the stoplists are grouped here. It is especially interesting to have available the data on the original Valley Church (Highland Avenue Congregational Church), Orange, 2 manual Odell tracker, Opus 69, and on its rebuilding by that firm in 1928, Opus 584. The case of the organ as it now exists is one half from the original organ, with the other side built to match it.<sup>21</sup>

J.H. & C.S. Odell, Opus 68, 1868  
Orange Valley Congregational, Orange, New Jersey  
Now Highland Avenue Congregational  
V-26. R-29. S-29. P-.

<p><b>PEDAL:</b> V-4. R-4. S-4. 16 GD. DBL. OP. DIAP. w BOURDON sw 8 FLUTE w VIOLONCELLO m</p> <p><b>GREAT:</b> V-12. R-14. S-12. 16 DBL. OP. DIAP. m 8 OP. DIAPASON m CLARINET FLUTE w KERAULOPHON m DULCE m 4 PRINCIPAL m FLUTE HARMONIC m 2½ TWELFTH m 2 FIFTEENTH m III SESQUIALTERA (1½') m 8 TRUMPET mr CREMONA mr</p>	<p><b>SWELL:</b> V-10. R-II. S-13. 16 BOURDON BASS sw DBL. DIAPASON w 8 OP. DIAPASON m ST. DIAP. BASS sw ST. DIAP. TREB. sw DULCIANA m VOX CELESTE m 4 PRINCIPAL m 2 FIFTEENTH m II CORNET (3') m 8 CORNOPEAN mr BASSOON BASS mr HAUTBOY tc mr Tremulant</p> <p><b>COUPLERS 4:</b> Ped.: G.S. Gt.: S-8-4 Fixed combinations 8. Crescendos 1: S. Reversibles 1: S/G. Bellows Signal</p>
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**J.H. & C.S. Odell, Opus 584, 1928**  
**Highland Avenue Congregational, Orange, N.J.**  
**V-29. R-31. S-36. P-2097.**

**PEDAL:** V-2. R-2. S-7.  
 32 Resultant  
 16 1st OP. DIAP. 32w (1)  
 Dbl. Op. Diap (G)  
 [2d Op. Diap]  
 BOURDON 32sq (1)  
 Bourdon (s) [Dolce  
 Bourdon]  
 8 Dbl. Op. Diap. (G)  
 [Octave]  
 Bourdon (S) [Liebl.  
 Gedeckt]

**GREAT:** V-9. R-9. S-9.  
 16 DBL. OP. DIAP. 73m (1,2)  
 8 OP. DIAPASON 73m (1)  
 DOPPEL FLUTE 73sw dm  
 CLARINET FLUTE 73m (1)  
 GAMBA 73m (1)  
 DOLCE 73m (1,3)  
 4 OCTAVE 73m (1)  
 HARMONIC FLUTE  
 73m (1,2)  
 8 TRUMPET 73mr

**SWELL:** V-10. R-12. S-11.  
 16 BOURDON 73sw (1)  
 8 OP. DIAPASON 73m (1,2)  
 ST. DIAPASON 73sw (1)  
 DULCIANA 73m (1,2)  
 VOX CELESTE tc 61m (1)  
 4 ROHR FLUTE 73  
 III DOLCE CORNET 183m (1)

**8 CORNOPEAN** 73mr  
**OBOE** 73mr  
**VOX HUMANA** 61mr  
**CATHEDRAL CHIMES**  
 20 tubes  
 Tremulant

**CHOIR:** V-8. R-8. S-9.  
 8 VIOLIN DIAP. 73m (4)  
 MELODIA 73w  
 VIOL D'ORCHESTRE 73m  
 DOLCE D'AMOUR 73m  
 UNDA MARIS tc 61m  
 4 FLUTE D'AMOUR 73  
 2 FLAUTINA 61m (5)  
 8 CLARINET 73mr  
 CONCERT HARP 61 bars  
 Tremulant

**COUPLERS 17:**  
 Ped.: P-4. G. S. C.  
 Gt.: G-16-4. S-16-8-4.  
 C-16-8-4.  
 Sw.: S-16-4.  
 Ch.: C-16-4. S.

Combons: G-4. S-4. C-3.  
 Tutti-3 + 0 by "pedal pistons"  
 (6)  
 Crescendos 3: S.C. Register.  
 Reversibles 2 (by ped.):  
 G/P. Sforz.  
 Indicator Lights 3: Tutti  
 pistons.  
 Indicators 2: Wind. Reg. Cresc.

(1) = old pipes from 1868  
 (2) = new bass  
 (3) = new metal bass  
 (4) = old Sw. Principal 4' with new bass  
 (5) = old Sw. Fifteenth 2'  
 (6) = original contract states: "In operating Pedal Pistons  
 all stop action is automatically cancelled (without affecting  
 the position of the stop registers) thereby  
 allowing the performer to prepare in advance and  
 while playing, any combination desired which may be  
 brought into operation at the desired moment by  
 pressing the Release [O] Piston." The adjustable Tutti  
 pistons apparently silenced the stop controls and  
 superimposed their own settings. Pressing the Release  
 Piston [O-piston] then restored whatever registration  
 was drawn on the stop controls, which could have  
 been changed in the meantime while the Tutti combination  
 was taking over.

**Estey Organ Co., Opus 1556, 1917**  
**Orange Society of the New Jerusalem Church, Orange, N.J.**  
**V-9. R-9. S-9. P-506.**

**PEDAL:** V-1. R-1. S-1  
 16 BOURDON 30sw

**GREAT:** V-4. R-4. S-4.  
 8 OP. DIAPASON 61m  
 CLARABELLA 61w  
 DULCIANA 61m  
 4 PRINCIPAL 61m

**SWELL:** V-4. R-4. S-4.  
 8 GEDACHT 61sw  
 SALICIONAL 61m  
 4 FLUTE D-AMOUR 61wm  
 8 OBOE tc 49m (1)  
 Tremolo

**COUPLERS 7:**  
 Ped.: G.S.  
 Gt.: S-16-8-4.  
 Sw.: S-16-4.  
 Crescendos 1: S.  
 Reversibles 1: G/P

(1) May well be labial [HDB]

**Henry Erben, 1870**  
**First Presbyterian, Orange, N.J.**  
**V-27. R-31. S-28. P-1638.**

**PEDAL:** V-4. R-4. S-4.  
 16 GD. DBL. OP. DIAP 27ow  
 BOURDON 27sw  
 8 VIOLONCELLO 27m  
 4 MELODIA FLUTE 27ow

**GREAT:** V-13. R-15. S-13.  
 16 DBL. OP. DIAP. 58m  
 8 OP. DIAPASON 58m  
 ST. DIAPASON 58wm  
 MELODIA 58wm  
 GAMBA 58m  
 DULCIANA 58m  
 4 PRINCIPAL 58m  
 WALD FLUTE 58w  
 2 2/3 TWELFTH 58m  
 2 FIFTEENTH 58m  
 III SESQUIALTERA 174m  
 8 TRUMPET 58mr  
 CLARINET tc 46mr

**SWELL:** V-10. R-12. S-11.  
 16 BOURDON 58sw  
 8 OP. DIAPASON 58m  
 ST. DIAP. BASS 12sw  
 ST. DIAP. TREB. tc 46sw  
 VIOLANA 58m  
 VIOL D'AMOUR 58m  
 4 HARMONIC FLUTE tc 46m  
 III CORNET 174m  
 III CORNET 174m  
 8 CORNOPEAN 58mr  
 HAUTBOY tc 46mr  
 Vox Tremolo

**COUPLERS 3:**  
 Ped.: G.S.  
 Gt.: S.  
 Fixed combs.: G-3.  
 Bellows Signal.

**Hall Organ Co., 1919**  
**Swedenborgian Church, New York, N.Y.**  
**V-36. R-38. S-39. P-.**

**PEDAL:** V-3. R-3. S-6.  
 16 OP. DIAPASON  
 BOURDON  
 VIOLONE  
 Liebl. Gedeckt (S)  
 Op. Diapason [Gross  
 Flute]  
 Bourdon [Tibia Clausa]  
 Violone [Violoncello]

**GREAT:** V-10. R-10. S-10.  
 16 OP. DIAPASON  
 8 1st OP. DIAPASON  
 2nd OP. DIAPASON  
 DOPPEL FLUTE  
 GROSS FLUTE  
 GAMBA  
 DULCIANA  
 4 PRINCIPAL  
 FLUTE HARMONIC  
 8 TUBA

**SWELL:** V-16. R-18. S-16.  
 16 LIEBL. GEDECKT  
 8 OP. DIAPASON  
 ST. DIAPASON  
 CLARABELLA FLUTE  
 VIOLE D'ORCHESTRE  
 VIOLE CELESTE

2 FLAGEOLET  
 III DOLCE CORNET  
 8 CORNOPEAN  
 OBOE  
 ORCHESTRAL OBOE  
 VOX HUMANA  
 Tremolo

**CHOIR:** V-7. R-7. S-7.  
 8 OP. DIAPASON  
 MELODIA  
 QUINTADENA  
 KERAULOPHON  
 DOLCE  
 4 FLAUTO TRAVERSO  
 8 CLARINET  
 Tremolo

**COUPLERS 21:**  
 Ped.: G-8-4. S-8-4. C-8-4.  
 Gt.: G-4. S-16-8-4. C-16-8-4.  
 Sw.: S-16-8-4.  
 Ch.: C-16-8-4. S-16-8-4.  
 Combons: GP-5. SP-6. CP-5  
 Tutti-4.  
 Crescendos 4: G. S. C. Reg.  
 Reversibles 2: G/P. S/P.

Stoplist courtesy of John Lemley, organist.  
 Source does not give number of pipes nor pipe materials.

**Notes**

1. The general biographical data come mainly from these two sources:

A. William Mason, *Memories of a Musical Life* (New York: AMS Press. Reprint of 1901 edition, New York).

B. "Dr. William Mason," *New York Musical Press*, 7/10, July 1873, pp.97-98. This reference and several others are due to the kindness of a fellow researcher, Kenneth Graber, St. Olaf's College, Northfield, Minnesota, whose great generosity made several obscure references available.

2. "Musical Intelligence, Boston," *New York Musical Review and Choral Advocate*, 5/18, 3 Aug. 1854, pp. 306-07. This article also has a reference to the Hook organ at Tremont Temple as appearing in an article in "The Evening Traveler of the 18th inst." *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 19 Aug. 1854, p. 159 and 26 Aug. 1854, p. 166-7, have data on stoplist and description.
3. Elfrieda A. Kraege, "The Early Organs of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church," *The Tracker*, 18:2(Winter 1974):3-4
4. Session Records, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, May 1860, Vol. II, p. 210-11.
5. "Church Music in New York," *Dwight's Journal of Music*, 19/1, 6 Apr. 1861, p. 4.
6. Ednah Silver, *Sketches of the New Church in American* (Boston: 1928) pp. 143-45, 246-248.  
An undated "Organ Scrapbook" in the New York Historical Society has clippings on (pp. 67-8) the opening 3 Dec 1864 of a Hook organ, with stoplist, in "South Congregational Church, Boston," and (p. 108) stoplist of the Hook organ in Church of New Jerusalem, Boston. Webb is mentioned in the latter as having worked on the specifications.
7. Thomas Hutchinson, *American Musical Directory* (New York: 1861), p. 233.
8. Letter from Peter Cameron to author, 12 Aug. 1980, gives quotation as from *The Musical Courier*, 5 Dec. 1888 and adds the fact on the Midmer catalogue.
9. The stoplist of the organ was furnished by the current organist, Mr. John Lemley. The last minute discovery of its stoplist in *The Diapason*, 1 Dec. 1919, shows little if any change since that time
10. *A Century of Service for Christ, 1860-1960, The Highland Avenue Congregational Church, Orange, New Jersey and Celebration of the 35th Anniversary of the Orange Valley Church, Orange, New Jersey, 1860-1896* have data on the general history of the musical beginnings in this church. The latter has a picture of the organ as originally built in 1868. *The Orange Journal* weekly issue following this concert had a review of it. It was a chamber music concert, not an organ concert.
11. Article, *Orange Journal*, 8 Aug. 1868, vol. XV:6, p. 2. *The Orange Journal* and *The Orange Chronicle*, cited in these footnotes, were two small weeklies of 2-3 pages each at the time. As far as has been learned, they are available only at the Orange Public Library, and on microfilm. Ms. Ingrid Meyer, reference librarian, was very helpful in locating material on the various Orange churches and in working out how to find things on the rather complex microfilm reader.
12. William Smythe Babcock Mathews, "William Mason: Teacher, Musician, Composer, Man: An Outline," *The Musician*, 13/9, Sept. 1908, p. 422.
13. *Orange Chronicle*, 14 May 1870, p. 3. Peter Cameron, Letter to author 27 Oct. 1980, mentioned the other organs noted in the paragraph.
14. *Orange Chronicle*, 16 Apr. 1870, p. 2. The stoplist for the First Presbyterian Church organ by Erben, given later in this article, was found in the "Organ Scrapbook" at the New York Historical Society, p. 89.
15. *Orange Chronicle*, 23 April 1870, p. 2.
16. Section on "Music," 250th Anniversary, *First Presbyterian Church in Orange*, 1969, unpagued.  
The stoplist for the 1928 Aeolian organ was found in *The Diapason*, 19/6, 1 May 1928, p. 2. Picture of its console, *The Diapason*, 20/1, 1 Dec. 1928, p. 9. An inaugural recital mentioned as planned for 19 Dec. 1928, but no account found.
17. *Orange Chronicle*, 12 Mar. 1870, p. 1.
18. *Orange Chronicle*, 19 Mar. 1870, p. 2.
19. William R. Stickel, organist of the church, letter to author 8 Nov. 1980, gave the stoplist which appears in the group at the end of the article.
20. Charles H. Mann, "William Mason," *New Church Messenger*, 29 July 1908, PP. 74-75.
21. Odell Opus 69 from *The Keraulophon*, Mar-Apr. 1980, p. 8. Source cited is a program in the Warren Collection, Library of Congress. Opus 584 from archives of J.H. & C.S. Odell & Co.

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	<hr/>
	1304

It is our special privilege each year to list those members of the Society who have contributed beyond the regular dues to become Patrons, and Sustaining and Contributing Members, as well as to recognize our Honorary Members and the 1980-1981 Fellows. The Society is grateful to these who have shown their trust and confidence in the Society and its work.

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

A condensed account of the OHS "statement of condition" by the out-going treasurer as of May 31, 1981:

<b>Assets</b>	Total cash in checking accounts	\$12,284.65
	Total in four "funds"	1,909.43
	Equipment & other assets	1,140.43
	Inventories	38,157.06
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$53,492.17</b>
<b>Liabilities &amp; retained earnings</b>		
	Liabilities	
	(Copying of Truitt books)	1,370.57
	Retained earnings	52,121.70
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$53,492.17</b>

## Statement of Income & Expenses 6/1/80 - 5/31/81 -

	Expenses	Income
Receipts - Memberships		\$17,860.25
Expenditures -		
1. <i>The Tracker</i>	\$10,677.26	
2. Conventions	370.37	
3. Recordings	320.87	
4. Slide Film/Audio Visual		173.22
5. Historic Organs	250.50	
6. Archives	64.10	
7. Special - Sale "Diapasons"		1,381.76
Sale lists, booklets, etc.		614.60
Donations to Funds		710.00
Recital Series	1,919.00	
Publicity Ads	1,369.18	
Research, etc.	1,053.62	
Advance St. Alphonsus	600.00	
8. Office & Administrative	6,904.71	
9. Savings dividends		1,315.96
10. Public relations	548.36	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$24,429.38</b>	<b>22,407.20</b>
Net loss for the period ended May 31, 1981		2,022.18
	<b>\$24,429.38</b>	<b>\$24,429.38</b>

Respectfully submitted,  
/s/ Donald C. Rockwood, Treasurer

## MINUTES OF THE OHS COUNCIL MEETING

May 9, 1981  
Ithaca, New York

The meeting was called to order by the president at 9:15 A.M. In attendance were council members Homer Blanchard, Norma Cunningham, Dana Hull, Culver Mowers, William Van Pelt, Lawrence Trupiano, Randall Wagner, and James McFarland. Albert Robinson was represented by proxy to Norma Cunningham. Also in attendance were Alan Laufman, Mrs. Homer Blanchard, and Ann Kazlauskas.

President Mowers reiterated that the sole function of this meeting was to provide time for a discussion on goals and directions for the future operation of the OHS. As no action was anticipated as a result of this meeting, and council intended to lay a lot of possibilities on the table for future action, the meeting was conducted informally.

The discussion was led by William Van Pelt and Randall Wagner who, together with Stephen Long, prepared an outline prior to the meeting.

During the course of the meeting some items of discussion precipitated the need for official action. Emerging from a "Committee of the Whole" council passed the following motions:

1. 'that the OHS adopt an active membership drive involving premiums, details to be determined and executed by a committee chaired by William Van Pelt.'

2. 'to authorize moving the OHS telephone from Worcester, Massachusetts to Millersville (Lancaster), Pennsylvania, at a cost not to exceed \$250.00.'

3. 'appointing a committee consisting of Alan Laufman, Randall Wagner, Norma Cunningham, and Lawrence Trupiano to solicit a proposal from *The American Organist* for mutually beneficial publishing arrangements and coordination of publication of OHS time-value material.'

4. 'to suspend all required mailings of chapter newsletters and reimbursement for same. Newsletter subscriptions to the following: President, Archives, Historic Organs Committee, Editor, Secretary, Public Relations Director, Extant Organs Committee, and Chapter Coordinator, shall be channeled through the office of the Coordinator as a budgetary item.'

5. 'to appoint a committee to propose revisions to the OHS By-Laws consisting of Lawrence Trupiano, Dana Hull, and Homer Blanchard.'

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 P.M. with a vote of thanks to our hosts, Culver Mowers and St. John's Church.

Respectfully submitted,  
/s/ James R. McFarland  
Secretary

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I want to acknowledge receipt of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary issue of the *The Tracker* and to thank you most heartily for the guiding influence here expressed to make this a very outstanding work! I have scanned the various articles saving details for further delightful pursuit. The handsome cover with the Akron Johnson is great. It is nice to have the large 3m Hook and 3m Johnson organs represented in this issue, and interesting to read the article on F.R. Webber. I am anxious to read on!

The Winter issue of *The Tracker* arrived a few days ago and is another issue of great interest. I enjoyed the article on Trinity Chapel—Edward Hodges' "Memo Book." I recall many radio broadcasts of this organ some years ago . . .

With best wishes to you and again in appreciation for your outstanding contributions in the field of music.

/s/ Paul Schneider  
4512 Hawthorne Lane  
Okemos, Michigan 48864

---

Dear Sir,

It was with a sense of reluctance to leave, yet deep feelings of fulfillment, that I left the 1981 OHS Convention in Maine, my first in three years as an OHS member. I long anticipated a chance to attend and now, even though I'm exhausted after a great vacation centered around the convention, I can only regret that there was so little time to share new friendships, ideas, interests, lives, and stories . . . I met a lot of very wonderful and exciting people, heard some magnificent organs, enjoyed some superb recitals and musical events, and left the final concert at St. John's in Bangor with a deep sense of spiritual fulfillment and refreshment I needed and had not felt in a long time. My spirit soared!

It was indeed exciting and very pleasing to witness firsthand what the OHS is; the people I knew previously only by name in organ journals around me to meet and to see and realize what we've accomplished, as well as taking part in some of the activities I've pledged my support and faith in. I think we can all be very proud of being a group of people who work together tirelessly and unselfishly to preserve and restore and study and cherish an important part of our American heritage.

In this age where "I" or "me" or "myself" seem to be the words to live by, I have seen the OHS as "us" or "we"—united to educate others about organs, to study, save, and share these rich and varied musical treasures. It is indeed a privilege and an honor to be a part of the OHS and work in our God-given mission of today to save and restore and cherish the past, keeping ever in mind the future we leave a heritage for. Best wishes and warmest regards for all fellow OHS members after a great convention. I can hardly wait for '82!!

Sincerely,  
/s/ Steven A. Protzman  
303 East Main  
New London, Iowa 52645

---

Dear Sir,

I've just received the spring issue of *The Tracker* and was very pleased to see The Buyers Guide to the Piano, Organ and General Music Trades, etc., and was wondering if you could direct me to a complete copy of the Guide.

I'm particularly interested in the section "some Standard Brands of Musical Instruments" and the list of organbuilders

with the comments included about reputations and financial assets.

Yours truly,  
/s/ Peter O'Hearn  
The Carey Organ  
Company, Inc.  
108 Jefferson Street  
Troy, New York 12180

---

Dear Sir,

One of your past general letters suggested OHS members, as able, contribute literarily to *The Tracker*. Having very recently completed an informal monograph devoted to Josef Rheinberger, a composer shamefully neglected by all musicians, may I present OHS the enclosed good carbon copy of this account.

Inasmuch as no comprehensive outline of Rheinberger's career appears to exist in English, and since the monograph includes considerable German-source material, knowledge of him will perhaps be increased for whoever has occasion to look through it.

This study is not definitive, but it does incorporate more Rheinberger data than can be found in the standard musical references.

Two errors of fact in E. Power Biggs' article (*The Tracker*, Winter 1974) have been corrected: namely, Fanny Rheinberger was not 17 years older than her husband—only approximately six-and-one-half; and there are 20 organ sonatas—not 18.

With all best wishes for your journal's continued success.

Sincerely yours,  
/s/ Willard Luedtke  
103 West 70th Street  
New York, New York 10023

---

Dear Sir,

Volume 20, Number 4, Summer 1976 issue of *The Tracker* contains an understandable error on p. 10. It is easy for pictures to become exchanged in the printing shop. Since I have three independent pictures of the Gottfried Silbermann organ in the Freiberg Dom, I can prove that this organ appears over the left caption. . . .

I wish you well with *The Tracker*. However, I predict a very dull future for it until it becomes more friendly and less professional.

Sincerely,  
/s/ Walter W. Felton  
3337 Military Road  
Washington, D.C. 20015

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Dear Sir,

To my delight, the long-awaited Twenty-fifth Anniversary issue of *The Tracker* arrived. I immediately set aside what I was doing to read Dr. Blanchard's article.

I have one correction to make in my article on Wm. Schuelke. In the last paragraph on page 60 a line has been dropped from the text. It should read "All references to the Wm. Schuelke Organ Co., however, are changed to read 'Max Schuelke Organ Company'." Eight sample organ specifications are added to the catalog."

Sincerely,  
/s/ Elizabeth Towne Schmitt  
1100 Joyce Avenue  
Rolla, Missouri 65401

Dear Sir,

I thoroughly enjoyed the cover picture on the Anniversary issue, and am busily reading Peter Cameron's article at the present time. I am hoping eventually he will get around to the Presbyterian churches in New York as well as the Reformed, since the story of how the churches delayed getting instruments for a long time is quite interesting.

May I please reluctantly mention some corrections in my own article: Page 102 - Cincinnati had an Eclectic Academy, not an Electric one! In the first column of page 104, the negative was left out of "I have heard a louder chorus..." (footnote 21.) Just about across from that, the first "26" footnote should be "24" instead, in the first paragraph under Andover Seminary.

Best wishes,  
/s/ Elfrieda A. Kraege  
P.O. Box 1303  
Grand Central Station  
New York, New York  
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## BOOK REVIEWS

*250 Jaar Orgelmakers Vermeulen 1730-1980*, Weert 1980, 132 pp., ill., Dutch guilders 32,50 or German Marks 30 (postage free), obtainable from Gebr. Vermeulen, P.O. Box 201, 6000 AE Weert, Netherlands, or from Jos. Vermeulen, Wageweg 5, Alkmaar, Netherlands.

The preface of this splendid jubilee-book is, in my opinion, marked by an absolutely superfluous attempt to excuse the kind of organs that those two Vermeulen firms built during the first half of the 20th century. I myself mentioned in my own contribution, "Speculations at the Occasion of a 250 Year's Jubilee," that the Vermeulen organ builders worked "in the spirit of their century." I wish to return to this subject and I am glad, also, for that reason, that the editor of *The Tracker* invited me to write this article. I happen to know that both firms never completely gave up the techniques of the old handicraft and that these circumstances enabled them to alter their course drastically in the years after 1960. Moreover, if the Vermeulens had *not* adapted their work to the general way of organ building in the first half of the 20th century, they never could have survived; the 250 years' jubilee never could have been celebrated.

I will not re-narrate the family's history, but I cannot avoid referring to some main points. The first mention of a Jan or Joannes Vermeulen, organ maker at Nederweert, dates from 1730. It is not improbable that this organ maker was active many years earlier, but there is, up until now, no older information at hand. Nederweert is a small village near the medieval city of Weert, situated between the now big cities of Eindhoven and Roermond. The political evolution of the Weert area was remarkably complicated during many centuries; only since 1839 has Weert definitely been a part of the territory of the present kingdom of The Netherlands. I think it is not superfluous to write this, as not only foreigners but even the Dutch often do not have the slightest idea about the subtle, but nevertheless sometimes important varieties of Dutch culture. In this area, politically not clearly marked, an organ maker's house arose that oriented itself, quite logically, to the demands of the surroundings, i.e., the provinces of Noord-Brabant and Limburg of the present kingdom of The Netherlands and the province of Limburg of the present kingdom of Belgium. This house's organ makers were inspired by great artists in Liege and Brussels in Belgium, the Rhine area in Germany, and several good organ builders in Dutch Brabant. We cannot pretend that the Vermeulens reached the level of the superb organs by the Picard or König dynasties or by Matthias Verhofstad (d. 1731), but on the other hand, it is sure that this house's products were good instruments with fine cases. These organ makers very often also were excellent carvers and joiners.

The Vermeulens and the related families of Beerens and Van Dinter had their living in Weert to the end of the 19th century. There was one exception - Matthieu van Dinter, emigrated to the United States, and set up in own firm at Detroit in 1869. Matthieu's son, Louis Hubert van Dinter, went to Mishawaka, Indiana, in 1874, whereas his son John van Dinter (born 1889) was the last organ builder of that family so far as is known. I especially mention these Van Dinters as readers of *The Tracker* may be able to trace hitherto unknown organs by the Van Dinter family. Who knows about Van Dinters now living in the United States? The Weert organ builders certainly are eager to learn more about this side-branch of their family.

In 1897 Jos. Vermeulen, one of the Weert organ builders, went to Alkmaar in order to assist the widow of Lodewijk Ypma (d. 1887); he became her partner and, after her death, the suc-

cessor and proprietor of the former Ypma firm, to which he gave his own name of Jos. Vermeulen. The Ypma family continued its activities as piano dealers up until the present day. At first the ties between the old Weert and the new Alkmaar firms were close. Gradually both firms have grown apart. This is logical, because the Alkmaar workshop continued the traditions of the former Ypma house, whereas the Weert branch maintained their southern course. Though the 250 Years Jubilee is applicable for the Weert family only, the jubilee book also mentions the activities of the Alkmaar house.

The book is, however, much more than a genealogical book. It gives wide attention to the activities of the Weert Vermeulens and puts them in the context of contemporary organ building in the southern Netherlands provinces. Here one can read very interesting chapters about the history of organ building in a wide circle around Weert. Relatively little information is at hand about the work of the first four generations, but what is known gives certainty about the high qualities of their work. I mention, e.g., the organs in the former St. Pieter's Church at Rekem (1775, Belgian Limburg), Soerendonk-Maarseheze (1843-46, Dutch Brabant), and Molenbeersel (1886, Belgian Limburg).

The chapter written by J.J. van der Harst deals with the activities of both the Weert and Alkmaar firms as restorers of historical instruments; it clearly demonstrates how both branches have been able, after several decades of so-called "decadent" organs, to return to the qualities of the *artisanat* (handwork) of former times. This return has been possible only because the old abilities have never completely vanished. It is only natural that the return to those old techniques and abilities have been a benefit for the building of new organs, too.

We owe this book to an initiative by the Weert family; several researchers offered their contributions, but the bulk of the book was written by J.W.P. (Paul) Peeters.

—Maarten Albert Vente

N.B. Of additional interest to OHS members is the fact that two Vermeulen organs exist in Seattle, Washington, site of the 1982 Annual Convention.

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| John Fesperman: *Organs in Mexico*. Raleigh: Sunbury |  
Press, 1980. 109p., \$18.50.

In the first brief chapter of her now well-known book on American organ history, Orpha Ochse makes several tantalizing references to early organs in Mexico. To those whose curiosity was, like this reviewer's, aroused by these references, John Fesperman's latest book is a definite "must."

Based on several years of research which involved exploratory trips to Mexico and included a close involvement with the recent restoration of the monumental organs of Mexico City Cathedral, this book opens a door on a rich and hitherto little known heritage of organ history. Historical documents are quoted at length, and a number of historic organs are discussed in detail, particularly the Mexico City instruments and the 18th century organ at Taxco. There is a highly informative chronology of Mexican musical history, and a checklist of known 17th, 18th, and 19th century organs and cases. Likewise useful is a glossary of Spanish organ terminology, and an exhaustive bibliography.

The many pictures (nearly 50) constitute a real bonus. Most were taken by Scott Odell of the Smithsonian staff, who accompanied Fesperman on his research trips, and many are in

color. They show not only the often flamboyant Mexican organ cases, but also interesting details of keydesks, pipework, bellows, and action.

The author, while he surely has made the most significant contribution thus far to our understanding of it, does not presume to have rung all the changes on the vast subject of organs in "New Spain." Indeed, just as Ochse opens her book with the merest glimpse of what might be in store in Mexico, so Fesperman ends his account with the hint of as yet unexamined and undiscovered treasures in Peru and Ecuador. Clearly, the OHS needs an active branch south of the border!

— Barbara Owen

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| Robert Bruce Whiting: *Estey Reed Organs on Parade*. |  
The Vestal Press, Box 97, Vestal, New York 13850. 150 |  
pp. ill. \$15.00.

From the vast store of his knowledge and his outstanding collection of reed organ catalogs and literature, Professor Whiting here shares his experiences in the romance of fact-finding in this field, and, in this instance, his specialization with Estey reed organs.

Complete with a history of the company, the reproduction of six outstanding catalogs, an organ method and a construction book, the material is augmented with special brochures on duo-manual organs, reeds, studio photographs, and a list of serial numbers of the tremendous output of the Estey firm which exceeded half a million!

The catalogs were naturally handsomely illustrated with engravings by Richardson, Harley, Mugford, Dickinson and others (later by photographs) of the many models produced. There are pictures of the various manufactories, musical excerpts, reproductions of fascinating advertisements and cards, and even a cartoon or two to bring a smile of reminiscence to those who might recall the heyday of the parlour organ and reveal to younger generations some of the glories of that time in our cultural history.

The introductory chapter reveals all of the details of the lawsuits and litigations which beset the Estey family from 1876 to 1883 when the sensational case was brought before the U.S. Supreme Court. The account includes the five generations of the Estey family which were involved from the beginning in 1846 to the close of reed organ construction in 1961.

Beautifully printed in soft-bound cover, this book is a credit to its author and the publisher alike. Every OHS member will enjoy owning a copy.

— AFR

*W. Stnauss*

*Sthaca, N.Y.*

SAMUEL WALTER  
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New Brunswick, N.J. 08901



## RECORD REVIEWS

*Sing Unto the Lord* — Marice Stith, trumpet, Gerald Wolfe, organ. Redwood Records, 8 Redwood Lane, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850. R.R. 700 Stereo, \$7.98.

Remembered as trumpet soloist at many OHS conventions, Marice Stith is director of bands at Cornell University and also conducts the Chancel Choir at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Ithaca, New York. Mr. Wolfe is the church's organist, and this recording was made in the church. Mr. Stith, a remarkably talented man who studied for the ministry before entering music, writes:

I am involved in the biggest project of my life. Our church organ is falling apart. I am trying to save it and it is going to cost \$150,000 to have Dick Strauss rebuild it and convert it to a tracker. So, the Lord willing, I am going to raise that amount. My first effort is through this record . . . which contains many of the songs that people have most often asked me to play in church over the past forty years. I will not keep a penny from the sale of this record; it will all go to our church organ fund . . . I pray that you will like the record and sing along with me in praising God.

Here, then, is a record with a divine purpose. The selections include Malotte's "Lord's Prayer," Yon's "Gesu Bambino," Adam's "O Holy Night" and "The Holy City," "If with all your hearts" from Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, "I Know That My Redeemer Liveth" from Handel's *Messiah*, Mrs. Knapp's "Open the Gates of the Temple," Granier's "Hosanna," and an original composition by Mr. Stith, "My Hand in God's." The organ is a 1958 Pels, 4m 54rks.

The playing is masterful yet personal with exquisite tone, and the recording is excellent. Here is a fine gift for everyone. Let us help Marice achieve his goal.

*Simon Preston, Organ, Recorded in Westminster Abbey* — Reubke Sonata "The 94th Psalm" and Max Reger Toccato and Fugue, and Fantasia on a Chorale. Arco division of Decca, ZRG 5420 Stereo.

On this imported disc is given one of the most stunning performances of the Reubke Sonata we have ever heard. Recorded when Simon Preston was sub-organist of Westminster Abbey, the brilliant performance of this difficult score comes through with remarkable presence and clarity. The 1937 Harrison and Harrison organ has four manuals and 84 speaking stops, not really large by American standards, but rich and opulent in tone colors and effective in the acoustically satisfying Abbey.

The Reger pieces, while less exciting than the Reubke, are both brought to brilliant climaxes. The chorale is *'Straf' mich nicht in deinem Zorn*, a paraphrase of Psalm 6, with a tune by Johann Rosenmüller.

Here is a valuable addition to any record library.

*Record catalogue* — Andrew Perault International 1980, Winooski, Vermont 05404. \$1.75 860 pp. ill. Over 200 record and tape labels.

As record catalogues go, this is one of the most complete and clear that we have encountered. The entire foreword is printed in four languages, English, French, Spanish and German, and the records are listed by composer. The appendix consists of a classification under some 56 headings — *Accordion, Antique, Baroque, Brass*, etc. Under *Historic Organs* we find all

of the records of E. Power Biggs' Historic Organs labels, but none of the OHS titles appear. None-the-less, the book is a useful bargain.

*Grand Organ — Sydney Town Hall*: Robert Ampt, Sydney City Organist, playing the 5-m, 127 stop Wm. Hill & Son (England) organ in the Town Hall at Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

This famous organ, completed in 1889 with tubular-pneumatic action, was the "largest in the world" at that time. It has never been rebuilt nor modernized, although it was "restored" in 1973 by Roger H. Pogson. The magnificent case (with 35 separate flats of metal pipes!) was designed by Arthur Hill and is still a most impressive sight. The organ was then, and still is, a "romantic" instrument, containing four eight-foot open diapasons in the Great, two 32-foot open diapasons in the pedal (one of wood, one metal), and a Pedal Contra Trombone at 64-feet, made of wood. The sound of the instrument, as transmitted on this recording, is almost overwhelming, and the sterling performances by Mr. Ampt afford maximum display of the organ's best features.

Two chorale preludes by Max Reger serve as quiet preludes—"Mit Fried und Freud ich fahr dahin" and "Morgenglanz der Ewigkeit." Then the Liszt *Prelude and Fugue on B.A.C.H.* astounds us with its dramatic power and colorful contrasts. The first movement from Widor's *Symphony No. 6* (Allegro) is perhaps the least interesting rendition here, but Franck's *Pièce Heroïque* comes off in the grand manner and with great finesse.

To capture the true sound of this organ must have been a monumental task, but the results on our Stereo equipment prove that the Australian Broadcasting Commission has some splendid technical operators in Rupert Mazlin and Phillip Ulman, and we can thank the producer, David Hinder, for providing this superb recording of one of the great organs of the world.

*The French Romantics: Vol. I John Rose*. The Great Organ at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newark, New Jersey. Towerhill Records T-1001 Stereo. 1976.

Among the young American organists holding a rank of great distinction is John Rose, college organist at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, and formerly organist at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Newark, New Jersey. His frequent recitals, brilliant organ technique and warm personality contribute to an enviable reputation in the organ world.

That Mr. Rose is a master of the French Romantic Style is proven in this disc on which we hear performances of Gigout: *Grand Choir Dialogue*, Franck: *Prelude, Fugue and Variation*, Mulet: *Carillon-Sortie*, and Vierne: *Symphony No. 3*, all performed with polish and elan.

The organ at Sacred Heart Cathedral, built by Schantz in 1955, has nine divisions—five in the gallery and four in the chancel, all played from one four-manual console located in the gallery of the neo-French Gothic building. There are 140 ranks, and the sound is glorious, the selections included here giving ample opportunity for a good display of both solo stops and various ensembles. In addition to our compliments to Mr. Rose, we should shower the producer and engineer, Michael Nemo, with praise for capturing so much of the organ's voice here.

John Rose was one of the recitalists during the Central New Jersey OHS National Convention in 1973.

—AFR

## Recordings and Publications of The Organ Historical Society, Inc.

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<i>An Evening at Woolsey Hall</i> , Charles Krigbaum (\$13.00 to non-members)	10.00
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<i>The Tracker</i> , Anniversary issue, 25:1(Fall, 1980), 110 pages	25.00
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<i>The Bicentennial Tracker</i> , edited by Albert F. Robinson, 1976, 200 pages, index	10.00
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<i>The Hymnlet</i> , compiled and edited by Samuel Walter, 1976	2.00
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Convention Programs, containing specifications and photographs, each, Capital District, New York State, 1967 Worcester, Massachusetts, 1968 New York City, 1969 Northern New York State, 1970 Baltimore, 1971 Central New Jersey, 1973	.50
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Postcards in color of organs seen at the 1976 Convention, 1816 C. Dieffenbach, or 1892 S. Bohler \$1.20/doz. or \$8.00/100	
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<i>The Tracker</i> , back issues, each, or \$12.50 per volume (some duplicated)	3.25
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## CLASSIFIED

CENTRAL N.Y. STATE CHAPTER OHS requests information on organs built by Frank Beman (1855-1944) of Binghamton, especially locations past or present, and persons to contact. Reach OHS tel. (717) 872-5190 or send materials to Gale Libent, OHS Chapter Secy., 401 W. Court St., Rome, N.Y. 13440.

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