

Volume 31, Number 1, 1987

# THE TRACKER

JOURNAL OF THE ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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Virginia, 1979		to be announced

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## A Lesson from Boston

EVERYWHERE THERE IS CHANGE, and everywhere things which were once thought valuable and beautiful are being challenged. Change is inevitable, and not everything can be kept to the ends of time. But we do need some reminders that we, in our self-indulgent arrogance, are not the top of the pile, not the best result of an inevitable upward spiral towards perfection, but simply other men at another time, who would do well to look about us and see, and appreciate, on what splendid foundations our feet are resting.

The story of an organ under siege is a sad one, but not unique; the historic Hook pipe organ and Boston's Immaculate Conception Church are not the first fine instrument or beautiful edifice to be tried on the balance-beam of practicality. But this organ and this church *are* unique: the room an architecturally noteworthy and acoustically sumptuous space; and the instrument, the very best remaining of its kind, specifically designed for and artistically wedded to this church.

The organ's clear, heroic voice might fool you into thinking that it is in some historic European cathedral, where such trying circumstances as these would probably never have been allowed to come about. However, this organ and its church are all-American and they are the most prominent examples of their type.

"The Immaculate's" massive gray-granite exterior has already won for itself distinction as an official Boston landmark, and though it stands far from the usual tourist routes and in recent years has been used only occasionally for public events, the church is still revered by any who have ever seen it, by art historians, architects, Catholics from all over Boston, and musicians.

Built by the Jesuits in 1861 as the cornerstone of the new Boston College, the Immaculate Conception Church was designed as an environment for religion *and the arts*, and the arts are indeed well served in the building. As noteworthy as is the exterior, the interior is (or was) breathtakingly awesome, handsome in the extreme, probably the best surviving example of Jesuit Baroque architecture in the United States. Its elegant columns, richly sculpted plaster, ornate carvings and woodwork, and painted decorations fuse into a unified artistic statement beneath the room's lofty barrel-vaulted ceiling. This church excites appreciation and, once viewed, is not soon forgotten.

Imagine this lofty, huge, but humanly proportioned room, a light-filled space, capped with an intricately arcaded, vaulted ceiling, its arches richly embellished with scrolls, plant leaves

## GUEST EDITORIAL

and cherubs, with religious sculptures and paintings by artists whose works may be found in the Vatican and in the dome of the United States Capitol. Imagine such a monumental scene, yet so delicately decorated.

In this superb room, where art, architecture, and acoustics are perfectly balanced, a major contributor to the exceptional aesthetic equation is the Hook pipe organ. Unlike too many other instruments of its era, this one still speaks with historic authority, and, fortunately, has been maintained in a manner keeping with its importance. Elias and George Hook saw this instrument as their answer to a European challenge, and they spared neither expense nor effort in their rebuttal. What they built for this space has been making its musical point with vigor since 1863.

The decision to close and revise the church's interior has been seen as a disfigurement and robbery of a priceless, irreplaceable piece of Boston history, the destruction of an architecturally significant and superb space the likes of which are hardly common anywhere and, in Boston, unique. National news stories have already detailed how the Jesuits themselves, perhaps anticipating opposition to their plans, began to dismantle the interior of their church even as petitions were circulating to call for the room's protection as an official landmark. It is unfortunately no secret that this remarkable space, which as recently as early October was in virtually spotless, original condition, now looks like the scene of some horrible vandalism. Most depressing, beyond this destruction, is knowing that the vandalism was done on purpose by agents working for the Jesuits themselves.

A struggle is underway, involving many factions and raising many questions, questions of practicality versus sentimentality, beauty versus cost. Who actually owns a piece of landmark property? To what extent is property private, and to what ends can or must government go to preserve a heritage for the greater good of the People? Should you wish a detailed accounting of this very complex situation, I recommend you read an excellent article in the December 7, 1986, edition of the *Boston Herald Sunday Magazine*, which has been reprinted by the Society and sent to all members with this issue of *The Tracker*.

Old churches and old organs are not necessarily, simply by reason of age, always worthy of preservation. But highly regarded masterpieces should be seen as gifts worthy of cherishing. They should not be victim to careless, erroneous malevolence.

Michael Barone, Pipedreams

## FEATURE REVIEW

# The Organs of Mexico City Cathedral

REVIEWED BY SUSAN TATTERSHALL

**Dr. Dirk Andries Flentrop**, *The Organs of Mexico City Cathedral*, translated by John Fesperman. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology, No. 47 (Smithsonian Institution Press), 1986. 53 pp., paperbound.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE Netherlands as Dr. Flentrop's contribution to *Visitatio Organorum*, a tribute to Dr. Maarten Vente, this article has now been published in English as a monograph, No. 47, in the Smithsonian Institution's series, *Studies in History and Technology*. This is very good news for English-speaking aficionados of beautiful organ books, and especially for admirers of any or all of the avatars of the Iberian organ.

There is a preface by Mr. Fesperman and a dedication to Dr. Vente by Dr. Flentrop. The six-page text is accompanied by 22 pages of pipe scales (organ builders, take note!), 19 pages of excellently reproduced photographs, and four pages of technical drawings. The drawing of the Gospel organ reproduced on the cover is a masterpiece of draftsman's skill and deserves special mention.

Mr. Fesperman is the author of *Organs in Mexico* (Raleigh: The Sunbury Press, 1980) and *Flentrop in America* (Raleigh: The Sunbury Press, 1982). Dr. Flentrop was closely involved with organs from the Iberian traditions long before his firm began the restoration of the organs in the Mexico City Cathedral, having restored several organs in Portugal with the Gulbenkian Foundation. I would say, therefore, that there are not two other men at the moment more qualified to bring this book to fruition.

Although the text is short and straightforward, it includes a list of significant dates in the life of the cathedral, some important facts taken from historical documents about the origins of the organs, stoplists for both, some remarks on the problem of dating the organs, an account of restoration procedures, and comments on salient characteristics of their construction. These things along with the photographs of the inscriptions found in the windchest of the Gospel organ combine to provide the reader with an excellent general orientation to the history of these exceptional instruments. But perhaps the

most significant contribution this small book will make is to put to rest once and for all the controversy surrounding which organ is which.

It sounds absurd, but this problem apparently stems from a mistake in Toussaint's *La Catedral de Mexico y el Sagrario Metropolitano* (1948) which confused Gospel and Epistle sides of the *coro* (in English, "choir," which in great Iberian cathedrals is in the center of the church, surrounded on three sides by high stalls, the fourth side being a great screen through which the main altar is visible; three tribunes are thus created). Pat Keleman, in *Baroque and Rococo in Latin America* (1951), continues the error, stating that Nassarre was the builder of the organ "on the Gospel side—the right as one enters the building."<sup>1</sup> The labelling of photographs in his book follows this error, assuring us that it was not simply typographical. Much later, Jorge Velasco, writing in 1975<sup>2</sup> states that the 27-note solo manual pertains to the earlier, imported organ, included, he postulates, to provide the organ with a division at correct pitch, since the *Cabildo* had asked in its letter to Spain that the *Organo Mayor* be pitched a tone lower than normal to accommodate the indigenous voices which were lower than their Spanish counterparts. Sr. Velasco is a resident of Mexico City and surely knows that the organ with the solo manual is the one on the Gospel side of the *coro*; he has followed Keleman in assuming this one to be the elder, imported organ. To round off this merry farce, Michael Drewes, an amateur organophile and an officer of the Mexican government department which funded and oversaw the restoration also says that this solo manual belongs to the older imported organ. He, however, claims that it was added in 1817.<sup>3</sup> He, too, knows quite well which organ has the solo manual; he, too, assumed that the organ on the Gospel side was the older one. Admittedly, part of the confusion stems from the inscription "1696" carved in the doorway under the Gospel organ, and this leads to the mistaken caption on S. Schaper's otherwise perfect drawing "*Organo Evangelio—1696*." In fact, the date refers to the completion of the choir stalls, which were carved by Juan de Rojas, the same artist who carved the facade of the Epistle organ.





*The Epistle organ, choir side. Above left, the Epistle organ from the Nave*



*The Gospel organ, choir side*

Fesperman gets the correct organ in the correct tribune in his book on Mexican organs mentioned above. He uses "North organ" and "South organ" to distinguish them, a designation I find difficult to use because of one's needing to know beforehand which way is east. In this instance, further complications result from the fact that the cathedral is built on a north-south axis, and therefore the organs are, actually, West and East organs.

For once and for all, here it is: On the *right* as you face the main altar, that is, the *Epistle* side of the *coro*, is the earlier, mostly imported Spanish organ first heard in 1696. On the *left* as you face the main altar, that is, the *Gospel* side of the *coro*, is the later, domestic, Mexican, cum-solo-manual, organ.

Unanswered, however, are questions of the authenticity and originality of the older organ: ostensibly, it was imported from Spain in 1696, and about 40 years later, a Mexican organ-builder made another to match it. But does the cathedral indeed house one Spanish organ and one Mexican organ? Or does it house two organs whose parts intermarried as freely in 1736 as did the conquistadors in the 16th century? Since many parts of the "Spanish" organ were made in Mexico, can it be said ever to have been completely Spanish? Dr. Flentrop is vague on this point, and I must confess, I had hoped to see the problem given more attention than it received in this book (hereafter referred to as *The Organs*). Most of the important facts that have come down to us from historical documents are indeed contained in this report, but historical documents are notoriously, frustratingly vague or imprecise, and in the end, only demontage and close inspection of an instrument can reveal the details we need to know to come to any conclusions. When Dr. Flentrop says on page four that "a careful historical investigation might clarify both the dating and the history of these instruments," we can only hope that the person who eventually publishes such a

study was in the Flentrop workshops when the organ was under restoration.

Thus, I would like to have a look at this problem because I think it presents a fascinating instance of cultural and material interplay. Although my inquiries into this matter have led me to a different conclusion than Mr. Fesperman gives in the Abstract of *The Organs*, I rely heavily on the original documents he reproduces in his study, *Organs in Mexico*, as well as the information presented in Dr. Flentrop's report. I also rely on my own experience in Tlaxcala State, Mexico, where I have restored several organs over the past five years.

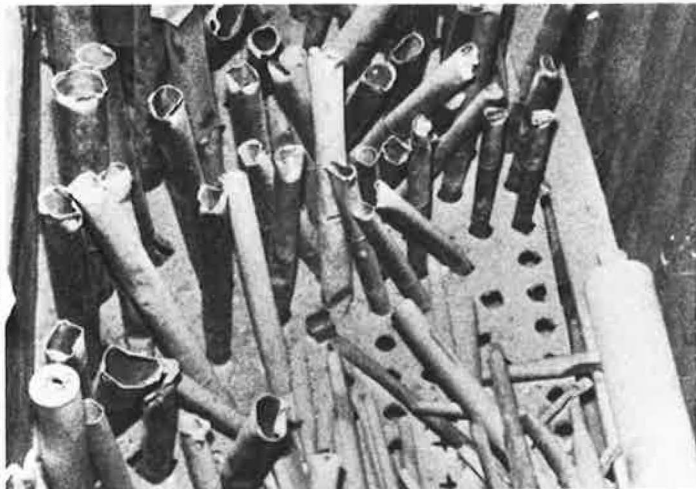
We will start with an extremely interesting letter from Tiburcio Sans, the organbuilder sent from Spain to erect the organ (built by Jorge de Sesma), to the *Cabildo* of the Mexico Cathedral (not to Spain as stated in *The Organs*, p. 3). For 4,000 pesos he was to see to the construction of the organ case, and for 8,000 pesos he was to erect it and "make chests and two bellows and the *contras* (essentially a subbass stop) and 400 mute pipes for the facade and tune it to the Spanish pitch" (Fesperman, pp. 93-95). Sans complains that he was told to tune it according to the musicians' wishes, that he did so to their approval, that he took the pedal pipes out and cut them to pitch, and that now the *Cabildo* wants him to raise the organ's pitch yet another *punto* (whole tone) so that it has the same pitch as that of the Chapel of His Majesty (May God keep him!). He wants an advance of 4,000 pesos as recognition of all the work he has already done, having already raised the pitch of the organ a semi-tone and added<sup>4</sup> an *Octava* rank to the *Corneta de Ecos*, and finished the front of the organ case, and having made a second time the necessary cuts in order to take out the pedal pipes to tune them. He goes on to request that if he is to raise the pitch of the organ yet again as the *Cabildo* wishes, that once the organ is finished and approved that they award him a bonus since he has had so many expenses in hiring so many master craftsmen, and since, after all, it was not his fault if the pitch was wrong. (Here, of course, he is laying the blame right in the lap of the *Cabildo*!)

It is interesting that although the letter ordering the organ from Spain requests that the *cadereta* be pitched differently from the *Organo Mayor*, Sans' travail in raising the organ to pitch indicates to me that the organ arrived with the requested low pitch and that, in the end, it was decided to bring the whole organ to normal Spanish pitch. The whole erection process took a few years, and a considerable number of Mexican craftsmen and their apprentices had to have been involved. It seems highly probable to me that thirty-five years later, when Nassarre proposed to build a twin organ, many of the same people were still around to help him. Perhaps Nassarre himself worked as a journeyman on the Sesma/Sans Organ.

As far as we know, the cathedral had either an organ of 78-stops (according to Flentrop) or 76-stops (according to Velasco), tuned to the Spanish king's chapel pitch when José Nassarre enters the story in the 1730s. Nassarre had made a good reputation with the grand organ he finished in 1730 for the Cathedral of Guadalajara: it cost 20,000 pesos and contained 2,226 pipes. The *Cabildo* in Mexico City asked him to *arreglar* (Velasco's term meaning to repair, arrange, regulate) to the old organ a *cadereta*. When that work was done (May, 1734), it was decided to work with him on a plan for a new organ for the Gospel side of the *coro*. The Archbishop participated personally in these discussions, and the final outcome was to award Nassarre a contract, giving him 30,000 pesos to build a new organ and 8,000 pesos to modify the old organ so that it was exactly the same as the new one. On 23 October 1736 the *Gazeta de Mexico* crowed, "The two sumptuous organs of this city were presented today . . ." We can be sure that because Nassarre, living and working in Mexico at a time of nascent nationalistic sentiment, had had the last word in the affair, that Creole pride was at a new height that day. Indeed, the *Gazeta* article speaks of the organs as if they were both never before seen!

To state the problem as succinctly as possible: Just how old and how new was the Epistle organ that day? Simply reading the information presented so far, it is impossible to tell, al-





*Main division, Epistle organ, before restoration*

though I think we can be rather sure that the case of the newer organ was modeled after Juan de Rojas' case. Although the 1688 letter to Spain ordering the organ states that the space for the organ is 15 *varas* high and 9 $\frac{1}{4}$  *varas* wide, the *Gazeta*, in 1735, says that the cases are 17 *varas* high and 11 *varas* wide. Possibly, both cases were enlarged or, just as possibly, the *Cabildo* sent incorrect measures in 1688.

Dr. Flentrop poses some of these conundrums on page 4 of the text under "Dating the Cathedral Organs." The text is somewhat confusing in this section, but it is worth going through carefully.

In the first paragraph, he states that the inscription in the main windchest of the Gospel organ confirms Nassarre's authorship of that organ. No inscription exists in the chest of the

Epistle organ. This alone would convince me that Nassarre felt himself to be the creator of only one of the organs.

In the next paragraph is this curious statement: "An inspection of the instruments supports the assumption that the Gospel organ is the older of the two. On both keyboards it lacks great C<sup>#</sup>. The Epistle organ has a complete great octave, an indication that it was built at a later time." Checking these sentences against the original version in Dutch, I detect a more hesitant and speculative tone [*"dat het Evangelieorgel het oudste zou kunnen zijn"* or "that the Gospel organ could have been the oldest"], but the paragraph is confusing and would have been greatly helped by some clarifying information from Dr. Flentrop or a translator's note.

The subsequent paragraph yields, "From the manner of construction of the two organs, it is certainly not clear which is older." Juxtaposed with the previous paragraph, this sentence is bewildering, although on its own, it seems to be a fair enough assessment of the situation. Although Dr. Flentrop remains aloof from a final conclusion about dating the organs (or parts of the organs), John Fesperman, in the abstract at the beginning of *The Organs* is unequivocal: "A brief description of the first cathedral organ . . . is followed by a detailed account of the two existing organs. . . . Both instruments were probably made in Mexico by José Nassarre, a Spanish builder, and both were complete in 1735-1736." In *Organs in Mexico*, Fesperman is also definite: "At present it is clear that both the organs now in the cathedral are the work of José Nassarre and both were completed in 1735. It is also clear that at least one substantial instrument existed at least by 1696 and that it was totally rebuilt and probably greatly increased in size by Nassarre in 1736."<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Fesperman has been close to the restoration project; and yet, having looked at available information and having seen the organs, I would be inclined to disagree with his con-



*A view of both organs; Gospel is on the left.*



*The Gospel organ, nave side*



clusion. For what it is worth, I want to present my line of reasoning here, with the hope that the reader finds it worthwhile, even if only as a beginning list of questions that a thorough historical study will need to answer.

First, the *cadereta* that Nassarre supposedly built for the Epistle organ: I have not seen the original documents, but I do know that at that time in Spain, it was customary for organ-builders to compete for larger contracts by making a *cadereta* of a given size. The builder who produced the most sonorous, ingenious, and beautiful result was awarded the contract, and he then incorporated that trial *cadereta* into the larger organ. In 1730, the Epistle organ already had its exterior and interior *caderetas*: Why would Nassarre have built a new one? What was done with the old one? Or is it not possible that Nassarre was to *arreglar* a new, separate *cadereta* as proof that he was competent to build the Gospel organ? I do not see mention in any of the accounts of payment to him for that first work, only the awarding of the contract. He might then have incorporated the *cadereta* into his new grand organ. I cannot help but notice that the *cadereta* interior of the Gospel organ differs from its corresponding division in the Epistle organ in containing a trumpet. That trumpet is not included, by the way, in the organ plan on page 53, although it is listed in the stoplist on page 2. Was there also a trumpet in the Epistle organ which is now absent?

Secondly, Dr. Flentrop and Jorge Velasco both state that the Epistle organ in 1696 had over 75 stops. It now has 78: In what way could it have been "greatly increased in size"? What evidence came to light in the restoration on this subject?

Thirdly, the queer item in this whole equation concerns the difference in compass between the lowest manual octaves of the two organs. Rather than assuming that an organ without a great C<sup>#</sup> must be older than an organ with one, it is more to the point to ask why great C<sup>#</sup> was left out in an organ we know to have been built later. The question that haunts me is that if Nassarre built both organs, why did he build one with and one without the C<sup>#</sup> and then sign the latter. It is not simply a matter of keyboards being unlike; the chests must correspond to this key arrangement as must pipework, rollerboards, channel boards (the boards that rest on edge on the chest and convey air through gouged-out grooves covered with sheepskin to the facade pipes and horizontal reeds), and this on two manuals! As a corollary, the manner of joining the two halves of the *Organo Mayor* chest-complex is different for each organ: the Gospel organ chests are joined with tubing; the Epistle organ chests are simply butted together.<sup>6</sup> I cannot believe that a man who economizes a great C<sup>#</sup> in that way (and it is a sensible way: Mexico was musically more conservative than Spain) would take pipework out of the existing Epistle organ, discard the great C<sup>#</sup> and then replace the pipework with newly made pipes. This would mean needlessly making approximately 45 of the biggest pipes necessary to the organ.

To begin to answer these questions, a complete list of any inscriptions found on the pipes would be necessary. Marked pipes are extremely rare in Mexico, and unmarked pipes are extremely rare in Spain. Of the 50 or so organs that I know in Tlaxcala State, only one has any inscriptions on the pipes and these are the numbers 1 to 45, not letters. Spanish pipes of that period often carried a number system where 1 is equal to C, 1<sup>#</sup> = C<sup>#</sup>, continuing 2, 3b, 3, 4, 4<sup>#</sup>, 5, 5<sup>#</sup>, 6, 7b, 7; and very often pipes are marked "OM" for *Organo Mayor* and "cad." for *cadereta*. The construction of pipes themselves would have to be carefully observed also. I know a group of organs in Seville dating from the early 18th century where it is evident that the languids have been routinely nicked with a nicking plane before assembly of the pipe. It would also appear that mouths were frequently cut higher in Spain than in Mexico at that time.

Fourthly, money: Nassarre was paid 20,000 pesos for the Guadalajara organ which had 2,226 pipes. He was paid 30,000 for the Mexico City organ which had 3,350 pipes. Proportionately speaking, that looks just right. There could not have been much money left over to completely dismantle and rebuild the Epistle organ in the bargain. He was paid 8,000 pesos to make

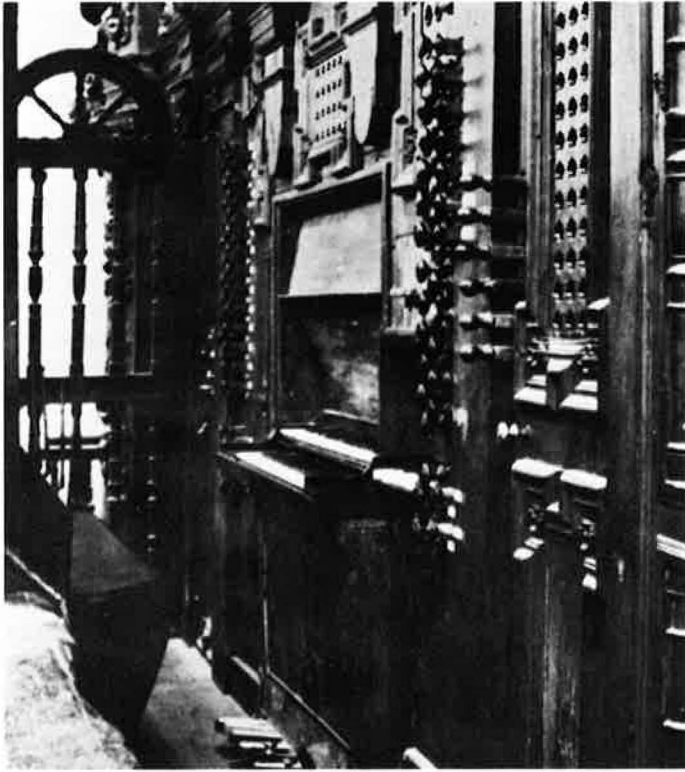
the older organ exactly like the newer one.<sup>7</sup> As we know, they are not identical twins. But as an organbuilder, I can imagine that simply tuning the old organ to match the new one and the ensuing repair of pipe-work, bellows, and windlines, and the addition of a rank or two would be worth 8,000 pesos. After all, forty years earlier, Sans had been paid that same amount to make two bellows, some chests (which I assume to be the pedal chests), 400 mute pipes, and all the tuning. Given even modest inflation, that amount in Nassarre's day would hardly have covered taking the organ down to small parts, redistributing it into two organs, and putting it back together again.

I have no doubt that the construction of the organs looks so similar as to seem to be from just one man. If you have seen the new (i.e., post-fire) choir stalls in the Mexico City Cathedral or read accounts of the early post-conquest years when Spanish culture and religion were establishing themselves in Central America, you know what a mind-boggling talent Mexican handworkers have for copying. Bernal Diaz, Motolina, Mendieta, Torquemada—all early chroniclers concur admiringly on this phenomenon. It would have been a simple task for woodworkers to have copied the Epistle organ, wood for wood, piece for piece. The resulting likeness would be all the easier to achieve given the facts that Spain imported woods and sheepskins in great quantities from her colonies, and an organ made in Spain at that time was as likely to be made with Mexican materials as with Spanish. Both *cedro rojo* and *caoba* were used extensively in organs from Catalonia to Andalusia. Furthermore, given the proximity of the two building dates, many craftsmen could have worked on both organs. Given our distance today from both dates, how can we tell that two stopknobs were turned at a distance of forty years from one another?

Cultural attitudes play their part, too. Ever since the conquest, the ideal was to copy the Spanish model. In 1735 there



The Gospel organ, looking toward the altar



Key desk, Gospel organ

was just a beginning of feelings of cultural identity, distinctness, and pride on the part of Mexicans. Nassarre might have simply told his men to copy the Epistle organ (it would have been highly unusual for him to have had workers who could read a formal plan) yet allowed himself to deviate from the model in including “improvements,” such as the tubing that connects the chests of the *Organo Mayor* (was his a conscious effort to make them earthquake proof? Had there been problems with the Epistle chests even then as a result of earth tremors?), the manually operated pedal division, the trumpet in the *cadereta* interior, and the other deviations from the Epistle stoplist.

At any rate, I would suggest that Sesma and Sans be given credit for the following elements of the Epistle organ: keyboards, chests, key action, stop action, pipework, case design, general tonal design and disposition.

Alas, what we will never know is whether or not Nassarre changed the tonal quality of the Epistle organ substantially by revoicing it. Although I have not encountered any documents which suggest that the Epistle organ was found to be unpleasant musically, I tend to think that something of the sort may have happened. Whether musical necessities or cultural politics dictated the solution, the instructions to Nassarre to make the organs *en consonancia* and *iguales* were explicit. In my experience, the garden-variety Mexican organ of the period is brighter, fuller, more open-throated in all flue ranks (having far fewer but far raunchier reed stops) than its Spanish counterpart, in which flue stops that range from smooth and subdued to downright lugubrious play yin to the reed stops’ biting, sabre-thrust yang. Archival research might greatly add information; one might then uncover just why the *Cabildo* wanted the Epistle organ changed at all.

It is exciting to remember that the first organ presided over some of the most gloriously musical years the Cathedral ever experienced and that the building of the second one (or rebuilding of both, whichever you prefer) was an affirmation of a new cultural consciousness which may have coalesced partly because of the brilliance of Mexico-born and Mexico-trained musicians. In 1688, Antonio de Salazar was appointed Chapelmaster, and at his urging the choir books received desperately needed attention. He may even have been the one who urged the importation of an organ from Spain. What those choir-books

contained were works by such great composers as Guerrero, Morales, Palestrina, Victoria, and Hernando Franco. Salazar and Matheo Dallo y Lana collaborated with the noted poetess Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz in composing *villancico* cycles, great theatrical events in which polyphonic songs on vernacular texts were interspersed with the lessons on Nocturns of feast days. These productions often included dancing, costumes, and props, and certainly gave the organist ample opportunity to use the bird-calls, tremolos, bells, and drum-stops on the organ. They remained all the rage right into the late 18th century. Other Mexican composers (Lopez Capillas, Manuel Zumaya, Gutierrez de Padilla) achieved fame during this time. In other words, an active musical program involving performance of sacred Latin favorites as well as contemporary “religious theatre music” existed at the Cathedral between 1688 and 1735, and apparently a large concentration of a certain stratum of the population participated knowledgeably in these performances.

It is also exciting to think of the cross-cultural interchange that these organs represent. The first, Spanish organ was likely built with imported woods and skins; its case and many of its internal parts were made in Mexico. Many Mexican craftsmen were employed under the direction of a Spaniard, and, as far as we know, it was the first representative in Mexico of the newest trend in Spanish organbuilding—horizontally placed facade reeds. Yet by 1730 the domestic product had credibility (remember that organs had been built in Mexico since the 16th century), so much credibility in fact that when it was planned, the *Cabildo* decided to augment the price of the organ by 27 percent in order to bring the Spanish organ into conformity with it. Artistically, Mexico was beginning to find its own identity.

I appear to have strayed from the subject. But this is the sort of book that makes one think and probe and reason, and the organs of the cathedral are the sort of instruments that make one dream and imagine and wonder. Personally, I found *The Organs of Mexico of Mexico City Cathedral* also to be an inspirational tract: it is a celebration of the restorer’s art. The fire in 1967 did extensive damage, and the years between then and the start of the restoration could only have drained the organs of more pipes and parts. The “before” and “after” photos in this book are a testament to Flentrop Orgelbouw’s restoration team, a witness to their competence, their finesse, their sensibility, and—in the case of the installation crew—may I say, their immense intestinal fortitude. Because I have heard these glorious instruments several times since their restoration, I salute Dr. Flentrop for undertaking such an enormously difficult task (simply dealing with Mexican officialdom ought to earn one a Nobel Prize) and achieving such a patently successful result. I salute all those whose handwork contributed to the healing and resurrection of these beauties, and I warmly salute John Fesperman for bringing this miracle so lovingly to our attention.

#### Notes

1. Second Dover edition, p. 236.
2. “Organos Barrocos Mexicanos,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Esteticas*. Mexico: *Unam*, 1975.
3. “Los Organos de la Catedral Metropolitana de Mexico su Historia y restauracion,” *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Esteticas*. Mexico: *Unam*, 1979.
4. I differ from Fesperman who translates “enchado . . . en” as “thrown in” or “added” rather than “thrown out.”
5. p. 36. In *Organs in Mexico* Fesperman states that nothing is known about Nassarre’s origins, but as he is called a “Spanish builder” in the abstract, perhaps some information has come to light. If not born in Mexico, he certainly worked in Mexico most of his professional life.
6. The chests are chromatic and divided in front (*coro*) and back (*aisle*) halves. Only the front half-chest has a pallet box. Rubin Frels and Ted Blankenship made repairs on the Epistle chest after the restoration when the cathedral was shaken by an earthquake. The two half-chests had parted and air leaks were serious. The Gospel chests suffered no such problems, apparently thank to the tubing. Did Nassarre realize that a different system was necessary in an earthquake-prone country? By the way, neither organ suffered damage in the recent earthquake of September, 1985.
7. Velasco, p. 89.



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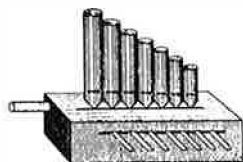
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## LETTERS

Editor:

There was one definite mistake in the review of the OHS Iowa Convention, *The Tracker*, 30:3.

The organ in the beautiful St. Mary's Church of Dubuque, Iowa is *not* a rebuilt tracker. Built in 1965, it was a totally new instrument utilizing only those ranks of pipes from the former Hook organ which could best fit into the scheme of the specification, developed after much consultation with the diocesan music commission. It was designed and installed within the limits of the existing casework, not a small task in itself. I know whereof I speak, as until retiring about two and one half years ago, I was owner of the company which accomplished the work, The Lima Pipe Organ Company.

The 1986 Organ Handbook (page 69) makes a similar mistake, even though my description of the organ and its action is printed exactly as I had submitted it, in response to a request for such information by Mr. Van Pelt.

In closing, may I say that I feel the sarcasm inherent in the expression "electrocuted" organ makes it totally inappropriate for the pages of a journal with the stature of *The Tracker*. Having spent over 47 continuous years in the field of pipe organ building, I have come to appreciate and admire any well-built and properly designed organ, regardless of the style of action.

Respectfully,

Earl J. Beilharz

Editor:

Congratulations on still another beautiful edition of *The Tracker*. Although we don't say so often enough, we are very grateful to you for the work you do!

We do need, for the record, to make one revision in the Convention Report. In the last paragraph under Tuesday (St. Mary's Church, Iowa City), I had written "Unfortunately, the refurbishing also included new wall-to-wall carpeting." Somewhere along the way the words "and deletion of pipe organ decorations" got added to my sentence. That is not correct. When I lived in Iowa City in the mid-1970's, St. Mary's organist, Connie Dautremont, invited me to see the organ. At that time the organ was very dilapidated but the pipes had long since been painted the current gold color.

I know this is a nit-picking detail, but if someone wishes to study the organ down the road, we should have accurate information available in *The Tracker*.

Cordially,

Marilyn Kay Stulken

Editor:

The Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians met in plenary session at The Cathedral of St. James, Brooklyn, NY, January 5 through 8, 1987. Over 40 Cathedral musicians and liturgists representing 35 major Cathedrals in the United States discussed a wide range of issues relating to the musical and liturgical practice of the American Cathedral Church.

Among the major topics of discussion and resolutions, two major resolutions were adopted. "The Conference of Roman Catholic Cathedral Musicians will award a commission to a composer to be selected by a CRCCM sub-committee, for a setting of the proper texts and acclamations of the Mass of Chrism, that liturgy unique to the Cathedral Church. This music will be composed and available by Holy Week of 1988." "The CRCCM resolves that the particular attributes of the worship space should be an issue of special consideration and priority. Therefore, be it resolved that the reverberant acoustical environment of the worship space is the very sounding board of liturgical music itself. . . . Therefore, we urge all those charged with the design, building, and restoration of worship spaces to consult with the appropriate professional liturgists and musicians, and to take as paramount priority the musical and acoustical imperative."

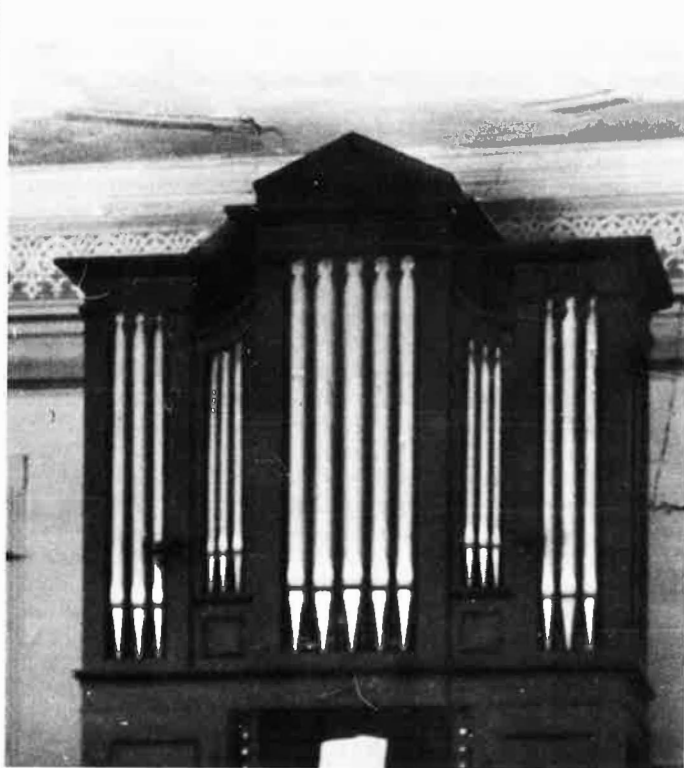
The work of our Conference is beginning to flourish and make a real impact on Roman Catholic music in this country.



All musicians of American Roman Catholic Cathedral Churches are invited to membership in the CRCCM. Interested persons should contact me or Leo Nestor at 730 North Wabash, Chicago, IL 60611.

*Richard Proulx*

COURTESY WENHAM HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION



1851 Parkman & Greenwood, First Church, Wenham, MA.

#### Editor:

The accompanying photograph shows the first organ in the First Church in Wenham, MA (Congregational). It was bought in 1851 for \$700 from Parkman and Greenwood. It was replaced in 1910 by Estey, a partial gift of Andrew Carnegie. From 1863 to 1913, the organist was Benjamin H. Conant who left a large collection of glass plate negatives, from one of which this picture was made, by courtesy of the Wenham Historical Association where the Conant Collection is now housed.

The *History of the Organs of First Church in Wenham*, by Rupert B. Lillie, published by the church, 1979, contains the following stoplist:

Great, 58 notes, GGG-f<sup>3</sup> without GGG#

8' Open Diapason	49 pipes
8' Stopped Diapason Treble	} 58 pipes
8' Stopped Diapason Bass	
4' Principal	58 pipes
4' Flute (metal)	47 pipes
2' Fifteenth	58 pipes

Swell, 35 notes, tenor G-f<sup>3</sup>

8' Open Diapason	35 pipes
8' Stopped Diapason (wood)	35 pipes
4' Principal	35 pipes
8' Hautboy	35 pipes

Pedal, 18 notes, GGG-C

16' Subbass	12 pipes
-------------	----------

Upper notes of pedal keyboard couple down an octave

Great keys permanently couple to pedal

Great Forte Pedal

Single Feeder

The church records contain no indication of where Parkman (given as Parkinson in other sources) and Greenwood were located and no other instrument of their manufacture is known to this writer. Anyone who knows anything of them is requested to inform me at 16 Ditson Place, Methuen, MA 01844.

Robert J. Reich

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## REVIEWS

**Lemare Affair.** *The Original Concert Music of Edwin Henry Lemare.* Frederick Hohman, organist. Church of the Epiphany, Washington, D. C. Organ by Aeolian-Skinner, 1968. Pro Organo Records and Tapes, Midtown Plaza Station, Rochester, New York 14604-0642. Recording No. 7007.

Edwin Henry Lemare was one of the more colorful organ personalities at the turn of the century. The author of the notes included in this cassette tape goes so far as to liken Lemare's fame with more recent celebrities such as the Beatles, Burt Reynolds and Johnny Carson. It would probably be more accurate to compare him with Liberace. Lemare's music has a predilection toward the flamboyant. His works, both programmatic and formal in structure, are entertaining, yet admirable for their musical qualities. They are enhanced here by the playing of Mr. Hohman.

Mr. Hohman's playing is full of the showmanship and rubato so appropriate for this music. His adeptness at registration, consistent throughout this recording, is most apparent in the subtle works, such as *Rondo Capriccio*, *Lullaby*, *Bell Scherzo*, and the *Andantino in D-flat*. These pieces, often snubbed by the ecclesiastically oriented organ world, are true delight. It is no wonder Mr. Lemare garnered such large audiences with gems like these. The *Andantino*, written in 1888, was transformed into a popular song, "Moonlight and Roses." The *Rondo Capriccio*, wistful and lighthearted, stands out as a piece that should find its way into more concert programs.

The more serious works on this recording provide adequate contrast to the previously mentioned piece. The *Concertstücke #1* (in the form of a Polonaise) and the *Concertstücke #2* (in the form of a Tarantella) are well-constructed and virtuosic. The *Fantasia and Fugue in E* and the *Toccata and Fugue in D*, the two substantial works presented here, are perhaps the least fulfilling. Lemare seems more at home in the freer forms. Indeed the *Fantasia* and *Toccata* are in line with the other works. The fugues, in both cases, are not particularly imaginative or soundly constructed. The subjects are rather generic. Mr. Hohman's playing does shadow the weakness of the writing. The subjects are uniformly and carefully articulated, building to a sonic climax. Mr. Lemare's work might suffer in the hands of a lesser artist. His reputation suffers none in this outing.

Pro Organo has done a fine job with this offering. The little cassette container is jammed with interesting notes, including the specification of the Aeolian-Skinner organ. The author is not named on the insert, but one might suspect that this writing also is to Mr. Hohman's credit. The instrument serves these pieces well. This reviewer prefers mixtures which do not overwhelm the foundation stops in the forte sections, as at the end of the *Fugue in D*. Mr. Hohman has presented one of the more enjoyable additions to the organ enthusiast's collection recently heard. The *Lemare Affair* is an appropriate title. I think you'll love this one!

Karl Loveland

**Music for Organ by Harold Stover.** Harold Stover, organist. Table Eight Music Co., 12 W. 96th St., New York, NY 10025. \$11.75 postpaid.

Reviewers and audiophiles are often wary of recordings by a musician of his own works, especially one who labels himself as a "self-taught composer." In this recording, the music is often self-indulgent and difficult for the listener to appreciate. As it is with much of the contemporary music for organ, these pieces are often constructed as a vehicle for the sounds of the instrument, rather than on the principles of good compositional technique. Though the works included on this recording are of a programmatic nature, without the program the listener would be lost in the cacophony, and frankly, regardless of study, may be confused anyway.

The *Scotland Variations* (1982) are based on the psalm-tune "Brother James' Air." This familiar tune is only recognizable in short instances, as the composer points out in the notes. The piece is earmarked by a constant drone in imitation of bagpipes. The variations are not notable and left no impression on this reviewer. The *Five Preludes on American Folk Hymns*



(1978) are somewhat more interesting. The best among these is "Sion's Security" (Toccata). This piece has direction, fulfilling its programmatic goal: "... the heavenly city on earth that they had sought to build rises before them in fearful grandeur." The other movements include: "Rise My Soul" (Sarabande), "Morning Trumpet" (Scherzo-Fanfare), "Suffield" (Processional), and "Gentle Stranger" (Noel).

The final offering on this disc, *Sinfonia* (1984), leaves this reviewer unaffected. The piece is outlined by a program: "After the death of a friend, a 'Prelude' full of old unanswered questions of purpose and future, and four succeeding movements, each a vignette in a different attitude toward the search. [sic]" Here more than anywhere the music is self-indulgent. Intended to evoke various emotions, the movements are wandering, unfocused and uninspired. Following the "Prelude," the other movements are "Waltz for the Flute Stops," "Furioso," "Stasis," and "Final."

In addition to unsatisfying musical contents, this disc is of poor recorded quality. A hiss is so audible during the softer passages of side one that it almost obscures the sound of the organ. This is altogether annoying and amateurish. The album was pressed from a Direct Metal Master by Europadisk, traditionally a company which produces recordings of a superior quality. Since there is virtually no running noise on the album, it is apparent that the fault lies with the engineer.

The organ at Second Presbyterian Church in New York City, built in 1978 by James A. Konzelman of Bayonne, New Jersey, incorporates the windchests and selected ranks of pipes from Austin Op. 1640, originally installed in 1929. A full stoplist is provided on the jacket, carefully denoting the stops retained, restored and/or rescaled by Konzelman. The organ sounds undistinguished on this recording. Because of the poor recording quality, it is perhaps better to reserve judgment.

Mr. Stover will not receive accolades for this recording, but he should be reassured. His music, while not particularly inventive or inspired, is of a learned and serious vein, not to be grouped with the cheap "movie-music" which has crept into the market of late. Perhaps in a program featuring other contrasting works, any one of these pieces could be better appreciated.

*Karl Loveland*

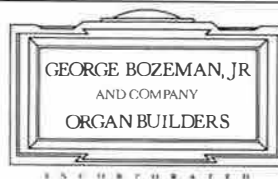
Michael Murray Plays Bach Prelude and Fugue in C Minor, S.546; Prelude and Fugue in G, S.541; Prelude and Fugue in A Minor, S.731; Toccata, Adagio, & Fugue in C, S.731 Telarc LP and CD (which also includes 4 short Bach chorale preludes not on the LP)

Michael Murray has made a new recording featuring four of the major free works of Bach on the von Beckerath Organ at St. Andreas-Kirche, Hildesheim, West Germany. Produced using the latest digital technology as well as direct metal mastering, the recorded sound of this magnificent organ is superb. Mr. Murray's performances, while note perfect, are hindered by a playing style that is unceasingly legato, and rhythmically metronomic. This is intention rather than accident, as Mr. Murray has written articles about the interpretation of Bach's organ music as taught to him by the late Marcel Dupré. If one is convinced that this approach is correct, then this recording is for you. However, if one finds the legato touch monochromatic and unable to delineate the motivic elements that form the architectural material of the music and if one also finds the metronomic pulse putting musical phrases into strait-jackets as this reviewer does, then steer clear of these performances. It seems a shame that Mr. Murray took all of the trouble to record these works in Europe on a sensitive mechanical-action organ, when he then ignored the musical possibilities afforded to him by such an instrument. It's a bit like hiring a fine French chef and then insisting that he only prepare beans and franks.

*James Hammann*

Marian Ruhl Metson plays music of Ernst Bacon and John Cook on Bozeman-Gibson Opus 23 (1983) at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Brookline, Massachusetts. Available from Bozeman Organ Co., RFD 1, Deerfield, NH 03037, for \$10 postpaid.

A less fortunate side-effect of the Renaissance and Baroque revival which swept American musical culture following the Second World War has been a near total disinterest in music of



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contemporary composers. Organists, more than other instrumentalists, are particularly guilty of this, and rarely venture into the realm of contemporary composers. An exception is OHS member Marian Ruhl Metson. A superb new release from Raven Records presents a modern work by Ernst Bacon (b. 1898) and two shorter ones by John Cook (1916–1984). They are played by Metson in a musical and convincing manner in one of the nicest recordings to come across this reviewer's desk in some time.

*Spirits & Places* (1975) of Ernst Bacon is a series of twelve movements, the titles recalling specific geographical places throughout the United States from Maine to California. Each movement is further enhanced by a short selection of literature or poetry, mostly by American authors. There is an astonishing variety of moods and ideas, and they provide the composer ample opportunity to demonstrate his imagination and skill.

The work begins with "Uncompaghre, a Colorado peak," where the use of shifting thirds with a weighty organ sound produce a robust and solid sonority reminiscent of the majesty of the subject. Though not indicated on the jacket, "Plymouth Rock," is based on the *Old Hundred Twelfth*, a psalm-tune written anonymously about 1550. There are the unforgettable and colorful "Rattlesnake Bar" with its jagged and energetic rhythms and the serene and listful "Cabin in the Rain," which builds to a climax and then retreats back as it begins. Other movements include the wonderful "Amherst," and my favorite, "Junction of the Hoosick and Waloosac Rivers," from New York State not far from where I grew up. Each movement uses different compositional techniques which provide continuous variety. Never once does the writing become tedious and there are no gimmicks; it is quality, inventive, writing from beginning to end. It also provides Metson with many opportunities to exhibit her considerable musical and technical ability, which is always refined and in excellent taste.

The gem of the Cook pieces is the *Improvisation on "Veni Creator Spiritus."* It is based on the Gregorian Hymn of First Vespers for the Feast of Pentecost, and has proved to be one of the most loved of all plainsong hymns. Cook begins softly with descending scale motives recalling the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. Metson plays these in a free and elegant manner. The work builds to a full-organ climax which suitably finishes the recording. The other work is a set of variations on *Alles ist an Gottes Segen*.

The organ, Bozeman-Gibson Opus 23 (1983), is the ultimate un-neo-baroque instrument. It is full-bodied (with two 16-foot stops on the great—essential for the music of any period), rich, colorful, and eminently satisfying. Marian Metson uses the organ's variety of sounds to the music's advantage. A photograph of the case appears on the jacket cover in striking color. There are excellent notes on the composers, artist, and the organ, and the design is done in William's Van Pelt's usual artistic manner. An astonishing amount of material is included on the back of the jacket: extensive notes, the organ stoplist, and all registrations used on the recording. The recorded sound is bright, clear, and free of surface noise.

Recording projects of twentieth-century organ music are often losers for the performer, the producer, and the organ-builder, because few buy them. This recording is first rate, from the jacket design, to the playing, to the recorded sound. It is a credit to all concerned and should be enjoyed by anyone who likes organ music. It deserves a full four-star rating. Congratulations to Metson, Bozeman, and Van Pelt.

Stephen L. Pinel

**New Publications**

**Fritz Schild:** *Zur Restaurierung der Orgel in Hohenkirchen* (Berlin: Pape Verlag, 1980), 46 pp.

**Uwe Pape:** *Die Orgel der Ev.-luth. Kirche in Cadenberge* (Berlin: Pape Verlag, 1984), 75 pp. Available from the Organ Literature Foundation.

These two attractively formatted booklets represent numbers three and four of Pape Verlag's on-going series of historic organ monographs dealing with a wide variety of important



German organs. The 1694 Kayser organ in Hohenkirchen, with its marvelous "wedding cake" case, is one with which I am personally familiar. But even if I had never seen it, the wealth of detailed photos (interior and exterior), many taken during its recent restoration by Führer, would provide me with important information about it. All aspects of its history and construction are given in detail: documentation from church records, details of the restoration process, stoplist, pipe scales, and temperament. The same is true of the 1692 Klapmeyer organ in Cadenberge, recently restored by Janke—an instrument I have not seen, yet have full historical and technical details on, thanks to this carefully researched and documented study. In addition to all of the details in the Hohenkirchen monograph, the Cadenberge booklet also contains considerable information on the builders and rebuilders who worked on this particular organ. So exemplary are these well-focused studies of individual organs that one wishes earnestly that something comparable were available with regard to historic American instruments.

**J. R. Knott:** *A Study of Brindley & Foster, Organ Builders of Sheffield 1854-1939*. Published 1985 by the author, 101 Highcroft Crescent, Bognor Regis, W. Sussex, England. 131 pp. £12 postpaid. Available from the author.

The production of this study is not as elegant or professional as that of the Pape monographs—it is in fact reproduced from typescript—yet it is in every other way a first class publication. As an updated and revised version of the author's earlier study of this builder, it contains an impressive number of new drawings (some from the elegant pen of Herbert Norman), photographs, and reproductions of advertisements and other printed material. In addition to a detailed history of this important and sometimes controversial firm, it includes a complete opus list and a number of representative stoplists.

**The Organ Club Diamond Jubilee 1986** (London: The Organ Club, 1986), 96 pp. £5 postpaid. Available from Philip Weston, 36 Fortismere Ave., Muswell Hill, London N10 3BL, England.

It has been a while since England's Organ Club has produced one of their "handbooks," but this one was surely worth waiting for. Gracing its cover is a splendid color photo of the imposing "Victorian baroque" case of the 1834 Hill organ in Birmingham Town Hall, recently restored by N. P. Mander. One of my few criticisms of the booklet is that it nowhere contains any historical note or description of this important organ—although for some reason it does include a description of a concert hall organ in Helsinki! There is really very little else to criticize, however. Of interest to players are interviews with Gillian Weir and the indefatigable Lady Jeans, as well as an essay by Jonathan Rennert on "The British Organist's Widening Perspective." Cecil Clutton has contributed an interesting article on historical influences in English organ building, Michael Gillingham a thoughtful report on restoration, and John Norman a dispassionate account of "The Battle of the Actions." Of particular interest to Americans who have followed recent accounts in *The Diapason* of Andrew Carnegie's organ benefactions in America is an article by Colin Menzies on his organ gifts in Scotland, his homeland. The booklet is lavishly illustrated, with a center section of European organs in color.

Barbara J. Owen

## OBITUARY

Organbuilder Robert K. Hale, 89, of Short Falls, NH, died February 9, 1987. A native of Eureka, KS, he was a 1915 graduate of Salina (KS) High School. He attended the University of Kansas, the American Conservatory, Chicago, and studied organ with Marcel Dupré. He was a theatre organist in the days of silent films in many movie halls in Kansas and later in New York City. He also worked for Estey Organ for many years. He operated his own business, the Organ Loft, in Epsom, NH, where he built and restored pipe organs and sold Pembroke Organ Kits.

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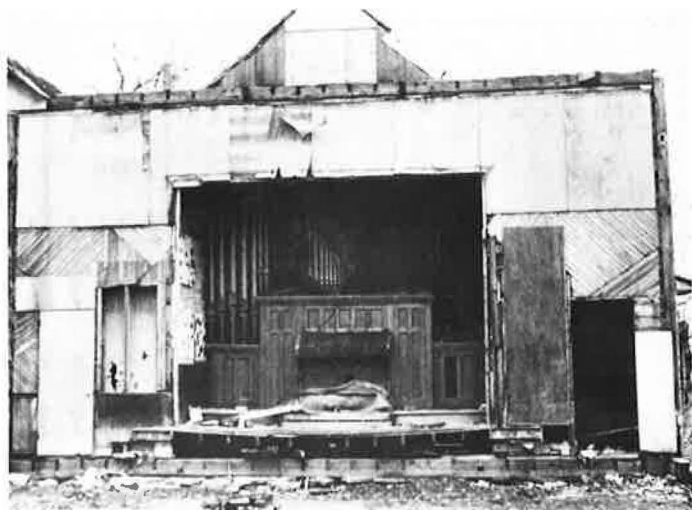
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1909 Steere & Turner in partially demolished church

## ORGAN UPDATE

**D**RIVING THROUGH WAYLAND, NY, in 1978, David Storey made a double-take as he spied the partially demolished Methodist Church. On the remaining choir platform stood a two-manual pipe organ. He stopped, talked to the owner who lived on adjacent property, and played the 1909 Steere & Turner 10-rank tracker after pumping its bellows. Reported to the Organ Clearing House, the instrument was salvaged and has been installed by Baird Industries at Trinity Episcopal Church in Upper Marlboro, MD. Oak case sides were built to match the front, and tonal changes included removal of a second 16' pedal bourdon in favor of an 8' Diapason, removal of the Great 8' Diapason and Dulciana in favor of an 8' Trumpet and two-rank Mixture (thus basing the Great on the 8' Melodia) and replacement of the Swell Aeoline with a Fifteenth. All but the Open Diapason were originally enclosed in a single swell box which has been modified to enclose only the second manual division. OHS member Peter Ziegler was the organ committee's consultant and also provided volunteer labor as did other church members under Mr. Baird's supervision.

CLEVELAND FISHER



St. John's, Broad Creek

The reservoir bears the date 1817 and the signature of Jacob Hilbus and, though the case is similar to the Hilbus organ at the Smithsonian Institution, the interior is unlike it. Other evidence implies that the works came from England in 1794. A bill of lading bearing that date for the importation of an English instrument exists in the papers of a family, and the inventory of the estate of a family member who died before 1817 lists the instrument. The account of an organ at the family's church appears about a decade after the estate list, so the organs are believed to be the same. The instrument is owned by Rock Creek Parish and is on long-term loan to St. John's. OHS members Jim and Ron Baird releathered the reservoir, covered the keyboards with ivory, restored and refinished the solid

mahogany case which has walnut trim and which was missing parts of its base, fragments of pipe shades, chunks of facade columns, etc. The firm is fabricating a two-tiered pediment which appears in early photographs but is now missing. Portions of the frame which had been extensively damaged by termites were replaced.

Baird Industries is restoring two Wurlitzer band organs retrieved several years ago from the boardwalk at Tom's River by OHS member Ruth Charters, whose grandfather had owned them. One is now owned by the Bairds, and the other will be delivered to a customer in Fredericksburg, VA.

Harry Ebert of Pittsburgh relocated in 1986 the 1874 John Roberts 2-13 from the Swedenborgian Church in Pittsburgh to the Swedenborgian Church in Urbana, OH. The organ was retabbed.



1889 Felgemaker

The J. F. Nordlie Co. of Sioux Falls, SD, presented an open house on January 22 for the restored 1888 A. B. Felgemaker organ from Thankful Memorial Parish in St. Elmo, near Chattanooga, TN. The instrument was built for an Episcopal parish in Nashville and moved to St. Elmo without changes in 1923. Parishioners had removed one fold of the double-rise reservoir and its feeders and had recovered the keyboard with plastic before the Nordlie firm was commissioned. The firm retabbed the Great windchest and repaired the others, did not install slider seals, retained the original stoplist and pipes, retained the original cone tuning and pitch, releathered the altered reservoir, and reinstalled the organ in February. A dedication concert is planned for August.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Houston acquired three years ago an ca. 1901 Bates & Co. 2-14 that had been stored for many years by a Houston antique dealer. The handsome instrument of unusually wide construction came from Abertillery, Monmouthshire, in England near the Welsh border and was probably rebuilt to two manuals from an original one-manual design according to Roy Redman who will rebuild the organ.

George Bozeman, Jr., & Co. has restored the 1891 Hook & Hastings 3-29 at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church on Capitol Hill in

Washington, DC. A week-long series of recitals occurred January 13-19, 1986.

A centennial concert and rededication of Johnson op. 657 was conducted at the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Allegan, MI, on November 9, 1986, where David Schrader played works by Sweelinck, Cabezon, Frescobaldi, Jehan Alain, J. S. Bach, and Franck on the 2-9 instrument, which remains original other than the substitution of a 2' stop for an original Dulciana.

The City of Minneapolis has budgeted \$250,000 to remove and store the huge 1928 Kimball at the 8,000-seat Minneapolis Auditorium, which will be demolished in March, 1988, to make way for a Convention Center to be built on the same site. Through the dedicated lobbying efforts of many and especially the organ enthusiasts in the Twin Cities, the city plans to save the organ and to install it in an 8,000-seat auditorium within the Convention Center, which will have partitions to allow expansion to 24,000 seats. The projected cost is \$1.12 million, \$750,000 of which is being sought from private donors. This happy fate for the instrument was set on October 24 when a public concert played by Edward Berryman and Robert Vickery drew about 1,500 attendees who paid \$5 each to hear it. An advertising firm is planning the fund-raising campaign that will kick off a concert series on April 26 with an event dubbed "Sing To Save a Community Treasure" and involving combined choirs from several churches. The series planned by Philip Brunelle, Michael Barone, and Edward Berryman will include a solo organ recital, a silent film festival, and an organ and orchestra event at dates to be announced.



Console, 1928 Kimball

The organ contains 9,999 pipes according to 1928 newspaper accounts which describe its first performance as having been preceded by a parade led by an elephant to symbolize the 160-stop "Voice of Minneapolis." Included in its specification are 24 ranks of mixtures, two open wood 32' flue stops and a 32' Bombarde, mutations from 10 3/4' through 1 1/4', numerous percussions, and the larger of two consoles that contains five manuals: Great, Choir, Swell, Solo, and Bombarde.

The solo division of the 1923 E. M. Skinner op. 371 at St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in St. Paul, MN, has been refurbished by Samuel Koontz of Ann Arbor, MI. The work begun in July, 1986, was completed in August. Pending are releathering and refurbishment of the other divisions and enlargement (in the style of E.



Steere & Turner, Trinity Church

An ornamented case panel from the 1921 Philipp Wirsching organ built for U. S. Attorney General Harry Daugherty has been donated by Charles Wirsching, the grandson of Philipp, to the OHS Archives. The organ was never shipped to Mr. Daugherty, who served under President Warren G. Harding, because of his conviction in the Teapot Dome Scandal. The organ was stored at the plant for several years, then broken up for parts. The ornamental parts were stored by the family.

The organ at St. John's Episcopal Church in Broad Creek, MD, has been restored by Baird Industries of Morrisville, near Bealeton, VA.



M. Skinner's work of the period) that will fill space designated in the original design of the organ. The original console was replaced by the M. P. Möller Co. in 1950.



1907 Hinners

David Wigton of Detroit has rebuilt and installed Hinners op. 730 of 1907 at St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church in Southfield, MI, where it replaces a Kilgen unit organ. Constructed for St. Jacob's Lutheran Church in Anna, OH, the instrument was replaced there by a Page theatre organ in 1934 and moved to St. Nicholas' Roman Catholic Church in Miller City, OH, where it was supplanted by an electronic in 1974. A picture of the organ as located in St. Nicholas' Church appears in 28:4:10.

Samuel Koontz has restored the 1927 Casavant 3-40 at Marygrove College in Detroit. The instrument is mechanically and tonally original, with full choruses in the manual divisions.

An 1857 Henry Pilcher organ with original manual stops 16' Bourdon through Tierce, was restored for St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Lawrenceville, VA, where it was dedicated in January, 1984, in a concert played by James S. Darling. Research by Michael Friesen and Elizabeth Towne Schmitt indicates that the instrument is one of two built for display at an event called the St. Louis Fair, and is entered on the firm's ledgers as the 24th organ built after the nomadic Pilcher family's move to St. Louis. It appears to have served at least four other churches following its tenure at the fair: Calvary Free Church Episcopal (location unknown), First Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville, IL



1857 Pilcher

(moved there in June, 1862, according to Pilcher records), and the Methodist Church (now Baptist) in Minier, IL, since 1903 and from which was removed for relocation to the Lawrenceville church. Members of the disbanded Methodist congregation believe that it came from a church in Mason City, IL, and a Pedal pipe bears the name of that town.

Believed to be the largest E. M. Skinner organ built in the Dorchester plant, op. 352 of 1922 in the Cleveland Public Auditorium comprises 149 ranks and five manuals (one of three five-manual instruments by Mr. Skinner). The organ is used occasionally for meetings at the 12,700-seat facility, but Samuel Koontz, who recently inspected it, reports that it is, "Horribly out of tune," yet in very good mechanical condition. The organ is dirty, with Pedal reeds suffering the worst from dirt. Plasterers apparently damaged some upperwork in the Echo Division. A Klann console was installed in 1971 as a stopgap measure, and the original EMS console was carefully stored. A Christmas concert featuring the organ may occur.



1892 Felgemaker

Lance Nicolls of George Bozeman, Jr., & Co. has rebuilt the 1892 Felgemaker op. 526 from First United Methodist Church of Conneautville, PA, for the Plainfield, NH, Community Baptist Church. The 2m organ lost several of its eight ranks of pipes, its case, and reservoir when it was removed from the Conneautville church in 1969 by the Tellers Organ Co. and relocated in the organist's home. There, it was flooded when the bathroom on the story above malfunctioned. Lance Nicolls obtained it in 1978 and stored it until a home was found in 1983 by the Organ Clearing House. Completed in 1984, it has a new case, new Pedal chests, and 11 ranks.

The January 25 issue of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reported interest in making useful again the 1930 E. M. Skinner 4-94, op. 816, in Severance Hall, home of the Cleveland Orchestra. The organ is completely original but has been unused since 1977. The tone opening in the ceiling above the fly space is blocked by an orchestra shell placed in the acoustical renovation of 1958, and the organ has been heard through speakers since. Enormously scaled and heavily blown, according to Samuel Koontz, it may sound better now

than before the hall was acoustically improved if a simple orifice could be opened in the acoustical shell when the organ is to be heard. The Holtkamp firm suggests keeping the organ intact but moving it to achieve egress. In recent years the orchestra has used a Rodgers. The organ speaks on 7-10" wind throughout and on 20" for the Tuba. The Great 8' Diapasons are scaled 40, 42, and 44.



Vogelpohl & Spaeth

A rededication recital for the 1912 Vogelpohl & Spaeth 2-9 at Zion Lutheran Church in Delmont, SD, is planned for the Fall. The organ was refurbished in 1986 by the J. F. Nordlie Co. of Sioux Falls, retaining all original material and the stoplist. The feeders and reservoir still function on their original leather.

George Bozeman, Jr., & Co. has rebuilt with tracker action the Andover Organ Co. op. 38 electropneumatic organ at South Congregational Church in Andover, MA. Designed in 1962 by Charles Fisk while he was President of Andover, the organ combined parts of the existing organ (itself a Harry Hall using some old pipes) into an in-

strument with a new case designed by the late Leo Constantineau, electropneumatic slider chests for the existing Great and new Ruckpositiv, new Pitman chests for the Pedal, and the existing Swell on electropneumatic vent chests. An Austin-like console previously installed by the Laws firm and many 19th century pipes remaining from previous rebuilds were retained in the Fisk design. New England organ historians are still unravelling the early history of the instrument. As rebuilt by the Bozeman firm, the organ has mechanical key action throughout (except for a few notes of one pedal stop), a new slider chest for the Great, a new 3m console with solid state combination action including numerous pistons and eight channels of memory, a new wind system, and revoicing throughout with some new pipes. The Swell, previously located in a chamber in the tower behind the case, has been moved to the lower part of the case on a slider chest rebuilt from the Andover Great chest.



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1912 Wirsching, Eugene Clarke residence

## ARCHIVIST'S REPORT

The recent contribution of materials collected by Philipp Wirsching to the OHS Archives includes significant resources on this important nineteenth-century maker. The collection was given by OHS member Charles P. Wirsching (Philipp's grandson) of River Forest, Illinois. Most of it had been stored in the attic of a Salem, Ohio, relative for nearly 60 years. The accumulation includes 76 photographs (factory, work crew, installations, and members of the Wirsching family) in addition to company correspondence with noted people like George Ashdown Audsley, Richard Keys Biggs, and Clarence Eddy. It includes promotional materials: the 1888 Wirsching Company Catalogue (in English and German), newspaper clippings, and flyers. The gem of the collection is perhaps Philipp Wirsching's tool chest, containing nearly all of his voicing tools. Additionally, there are original copies of patent letters and a substantial deposit of dedication programs. The OHS is grateful to Mr. Charles Wirsching for securing these items in our Archives.

Philipp Wirsching (b. Bensheim, Germany, 7 Feb. 1858; d. Salem, Ohio 10 Dec. 1926) apprenticed to August Laukhuff in Germany before emigrating to the United States where he

settled in Salem, Ohio, in 1886, and established the Wirsching Organ Company. The firm was in business only seven years before it fell prey to the Panic of 1893. From 1894 to 1898, Phillip worked for Farrand & Votey and later for Kimball. By 1899 he was back in business in Salem. This continued until 1904 when the factory was destroyed by fire. With the financial aid of several prominent Salem business partners, he reorganized and continued to build instruments until 1919, although plagued by financial problems. An article by OHS member Robert Coleberd entitled, "Philipp Wirsching: The Consummate Builder," in *The American Organist* (Oct. 1968) presents an excellent survey of his career, and further details are in an article by Albert F. Robinson in *The Tracker* (24:1:6).

While a partial opus list of Wirsching organs circulated for many years, numerous important contracts were unknown. The following list, albeit still incomplete, adds information gleaned from the collection. This includes dates from letters of testimonial (which Wirsching apparently liked), newsclippings, dedication programs, and excerpts from catalogues. One unidentified clipping states that Wirsching had built 16 organs by 1892. If that is true, the following seems to represent the majority of the early contracts. The list was first compiled by Alan Laufman working from notes by Robert Coleberd in 1974. We owe thanks to them for their efforts. *Stephen Pinel*



Phillip Wirsching, 1908



The Wirsching crew, ca. 1888

### LIST OF ORGANS

#### Philipp Wirsching Organ Company Salem, Ohio, 1887–1893, 1899–1919

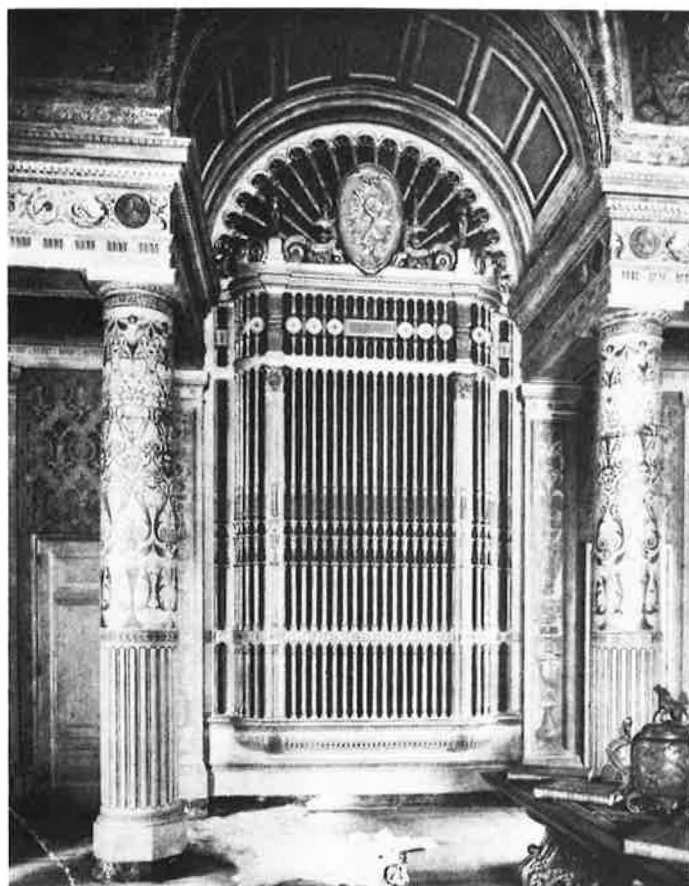
2	1910	CO	Denver	Iliff School of Theology
2		CO	Pueblo	St. Patrick's R. C.
2		CT	Greenwich	Seymour J. Hyde res.
		CT	Middlebury	Westover School Chapel
3		CT	New Haven	First Presbyterian
2		CT	Warehouse Point	Amusement Park
2		CT	Waterbury	Miss Hillard's School
3		GA	Atlanta	Grand Theater
2		IL	Chicago	Queen's Theater
2	1891	IL	Chicago	Railroad Chapel (Presbyterian)*
2	1891	IL	Galesburg	First Baptist
3	1917	IL	Park Ridge	St. Mary's Episcopal
2	1911	IN	Indianapolis	First Church of Christ
3	1911	IN	Terre Haute	Central Christian
2	1913	IA	Monticello	Methodist Episcopal
2		KY	Ashland	First Presbyterian
		MA	Boston	?
2	1911	MI	Grand Rapids	Second Reformed
2	1918	MI	Monroe	Trinity Evangelical Lutheran
2	1888	MI	St. Joseph	Methodist Episcopal
2	1914	MN	New Ulm	Dr. Martin Luther College
2	1916	MN	St. Paul	Emmanuel Evangelical Lutheran
3	1915	MN	St. Paul	St. John's Evangelical Lutheran
		NE	Omaha	?
3	1909	NJ	Hoboken	Our Lady of Grace R. C.
2		NJ	Mendham	Franklin Murphy res.





1908 Wirsching in the Palace of the Maharajah, Mysore, India

2	NJ	Jersey City	St. Aiden's R. C.
2	NJ	Newark	Governor Franklin Murphy res.
2 1914	NY	Allegheny	St. Bonaventure's R. C.
4 1912	NY	Brooklyn	St. John's Chapel, Queen of All Saints
2	NY	Roslyn, L.I.	Parish Church
2	NY	Yonkers	Eugene Clarke res.
3	NY	New York City	Edgar Mills res.
2 1905	NY	New York City	Steinway Hall
2 1906?	NY	New York City	Steinway Hall
2 1912	NY	Rochester	St. Bernard's Seminary Chapel
2	NY	Wellsville	Christian Temple
2 1912	OH	Akron	Market Street Christian
2 1888	OH	Ashland	Methodist Episcopal
3 1888	OH	Cleveland	St. Bridget's R. C.
2 1888	OH	Cleveland	St. Paul's German Church



Music Room, residence Franklin Murphy

2	OH	Cleveland	Zion Church
1889	OH	Dayton	Christ Church
2	OH	Dayton	St. Agnes
2	OH	Germantown	Methodist Episcopal
2	OH	Salem	A. K. Mansfield res.
2	OH	Salem	Church of the Savior Episcopal
2	OH	Salem	Emmanuel Lutheran Church
2 1891	OH	Salem	First Baptist
2 1906	OH	Salem	First Presbyterian
2 1887	OH	Salem	Methodist Episcopal
2 1911	OH	Salem	Methodist Episcopal
2 1890	OH	Salem	St. Paul's R. C.
2	OH	Sebring	First Methodist Episcopal
2 1888	OH	Warren	First Presbyterian
1888	OH	Wooster	St. James' Episcopal
2 1911	OH	Youngstown	Grace Evangelical Lutheran
2 1916	OH	Youngstown	St. Edward's R. C.
2 1914(?)	OH	Youngstown	St. Joseph's R. C.
2 1913	PA	Allegheny	St. John's Evangelical Lutheran
3 1913	PA	Allegheny	St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran
2	PA	Braddock	Cristal Theater (sic)
2 1890	PA	Braddock	Methodist Episcopal
2 1919	PA	Butler	St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran



The voicing room, Wirsching shop

2 1912	PA	Cressona	St. Mark's Reformed
2 1913	PA	Duncannon	Methodist Episcopal
3 1892	PA	East Pittsburgh	St. Peter and Paul's Church
2 1914	PA	Evans City	St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran
2 1915	PA	Johnstown	St. John Gualbert's R. C.
3 1918	PA	Pittsburgh	Brushton Avenue Theater
3 1909	PA	Pittsburgh	Christ Evangelical Lutheran
	PA	Pittsburgh	First Unitarian
2	PA	Pittsburgh	First United Presbyterian
3 1893	PA	Pittsburgh	Fourth Avenue Baptist
2 1916	PA	Pittsburgh	Herron Avenue Presbyterian
2 1900	PA	Pittsburgh	Knoxville Methodist Episcopal
2 1911	PA	Pittsburgh	St. Kirian's R. C.
2 1890	PA	Pittsburgh	St. Stephen's Episcopal
2 1907	PA	Philadelphia	St. Ludwig's R. C.
3	PA	Reading	Calvary Reformed Church
3 1893	PA	Reading	Holy Cross Methodist Episcopal
2 1903	PA	Slatington	Slatington Baptist Church
2	PA	Varona	Methodist Episcopal
2	PA	West Newton	Evangelical Lutheran
2 1913	TN	Nashville	Immanuel Baptist
2	VA	Norfolk	Soldier's Home Protestant Chapel
2	VA	Norfolk	Soldier's Home Catholic Chapel
2	DC	Washington	Edson Bradley res.
2 1915	WV	Wheeling	Second United Presbyterian
2	WI	Oconomowoc	St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran
1908	India	Mysore	Palace of His Highness, The Maharaja

Organs built during Philipp Wirsching's semi-retirement:

2 1921	NY	Brooklyn	St. Ephraim's R. C.
3 1922	NY	Geneva	St. Peter's Episcopal Church

\*See The Tracker 15:1:11

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# The Legacy of Everett Titcomb

By Susan Ouellette Armstrong

**T**HE MUSICAL PRESENCE of Everett Titcomb (1884-1968) loomed large in church music in the first half of the twentieth century. As organist-choirmaster of Boston's Church of St. John the Evangelist for fifty years, he played an important role in shaping the church music of Boston. But his contributions go far beyond Boston's boundaries. His life-long interest in liturgy and chant contributed to new standards of quality and authenticity in performance practices in liturgical music. His early fascination with Renaissance polyphony put him in the vanguard of American musicians studying and performing this music. He was also a prolific composer for both organ and choir, and many of his compositions are among the well-loved repertoire of organists and choirs across the country. Indeed, Everett Titcomb set a high standard of excellence in church music to which cause he remained faithful all his life.

Howard Everett Titcomb was born to George Howard Titcomb (1844-1928 and his wife, Sarah Ella Prime (1850-1941) on June 30, 1884.<sup>1</sup> The Titcombs, whose forebears had settled in Massachusetts as early as the seventeenth century and had played important roles in local history,<sup>2</sup> lived in a modest house at 85 Market Street in the small working-class town of Salisbury Mills (now Amesbury), Massachusetts, where Everett's father ran a butcher-shop. Mrs. Titcomb, an amateur pianist, made time for music for her children amid her housewifely chores. Indeed, Everett and his two older sisters continued to make music a very large part of their lives.

Everett received his first formal musical instruction at home from his sister Ruth, ten years his senior (1874-1934), who later maintained a local piano and voice studio and also served as the organist-choirmaster in several area churches. His other sister Mabel (1876-1955) was a violinist and played in several professional ensembles.<sup>3</sup> Everett's musical talent apparently surfaced early. He recalled being lifted to the piano bench to play for family friends as early as four years of age.<sup>4</sup> Under Ruth's tutelage, he made his public debut in several recitals at Amesbury Town Hall.<sup>5</sup>

Titcomb's association with church music and the Anglican faith began as a child. Although his family was associated with the Unitarians, Everett was brought into the Episcopal church very early. Through the pervasive influence of a neighbor, Charlotte Spaulding (known affectionately to the community



Everett Titcomb

as "Mother"), he joined the boy choir of St. James' Episcopal Church in Amesbury at the age of nine.<sup>6</sup> Singing in the boy choir was a part of his musical education until a changing voice led him in a new direction, playing the organ for Sunday School. By the time he was fourteen, he had become parish organist at St. James' which had a few years earlier installed George S. Hutchings Opus 272 (1892) of two manuals and sixteen stops. A destructive fire in 1899 burned St. James' Church, along with other buildings in Amesbury.<sup>7</sup> Young Everett was then recruited by Market Street Baptist to become organist there.

Everett's musical talents were well known in the community. Forrest Brown, the principal of Titcomb's high school, was the first to commission a composition, a song for Titcomb's graduation class in 1902. For the words of the song, he chose the traditional text, "Under the Greenwood Tree." Many years later, in 1918, Brown again asked Titcomb for a composition, this time for a benefit. Everett responded with a popular-style World War I song, "So Long, Bill."<sup>8</sup>

Once Titcomb had graduated from high school, he seems to have been ready to move beyond the confines of small-town life. The opportunity came when a clergyman visiting in Amesbury heard Titcomb play and offered him a position at the Church of the Messiah in Auburndale, a suburb of Boston. Titcomb eagerly accepted the position at the Church of the Messiah and, in September of 1902, he took an apartment in Boston's south end and set up residence in the city which would be home to him for the remainder of his life.<sup>9</sup> Apparently a college education was not deemed necessary for Everett by his family or by himself, his having been reared where the strong working-class values of the community eschewed the expense of a formal collegiate education. Everett had already learned his "trade."

As he settled into the new duties at Church of the Messiah, he continued to study music. For a brief time he studied organ with Samuel B. Whitney (1842-1914) at Boston's Church of the Advent. Whitney, an active Episcopalian and one of the founders of the American Guild of Organists, was a prominent Boston teacher and composer.<sup>10</sup> Whitney also led the Church of the Advent in a program of liturgy and music that set a high standard, one which no doubt influenced Titcomb greatly. Titcomb also pursued piano studies with T. P. Currier, another prominent Boston musician who had been a student of Edward MacDowell. Somewhat later Titcomb studied organ with J. B. Whalen, organist of the Church of the Immaculate Conception where he later recalled the thrill of playing the magnificent Hook & Hastings, Opus 1959 (1902), the electrification of the legendary 1863 E. & G. G. Hook, Opus 322.<sup>11</sup>

PHOTOGRAPHIC COPIES BY RICHARD OUELLETTE



The choir of St. James, Amesbury, 1898, when Titcomb was a chorister

A very important musical connection which grew out of Titcomb's appointment to the Church of the Messiah was the friendship of Horatio Parker (1863-1919) whose family was deeply involved in the life of the parish in Auburndale. Horatio's father, an architect, designed a chapel for the church. His mother, who had served as organist for the parish, rented rooms to Everett for a while so that he could be nearer his work at the church. Even though Parker was well-established in his musical career and twenty years older than Titcomb, who was just beginning his, the two men became friends.<sup>12</sup>



*Church of the Messiah, Auburndale, 1920s*

The meager salary paid Titcomb here forced him to supplement his income by taking a job at a Waltham department store as a sheet music "demonstrator." The job, however, was short-lived because he not only detested it but his finances improved with his increasing popularity as a teacher of piano.<sup>13</sup>

It was also during his Auburndale years that his interest in the rituals and liturgy of Anglo-Catholicism became the focus of his attention, perhaps because of the influence of Samuel Whitney and his visits to the Church of the Advent. Despite the "low" church practices of St. James' in Amesbury and Messiah in Auburndale, where the congregation strenuously objected to some of his "Catholic innovations,"<sup>14</sup> Titcomb seems to have been inextricably pulled toward Anglo-Catholicism.

Titcomb's dedication to the boy choir at the Church of the Messiah resulted in a flourishing program. Frequently he took the boys into Boston to Sunday evensong services, especially to the Church of the Advent, where music was performed that was rarely heard elsewhere in Boston.<sup>15</sup>

Auburndale also provided the setting for musical composition on a regular basis. One of his early works, a setting of the "Magnificat," was destroyed by an embarrassed Titcomb when told that passages of it sounded reminiscent of Puccini's newly composed *Madama Butterfly* (1904).<sup>16</sup> He was more pleased, however, with a setting of the "Te Deum," which was his first published composition, brought out in the Parish Choir Series.

After seven years in Auburndale, Titcomb knew he needed a change and new challenges. By the fall of 1909 he had accepted an appointment at Christ Church, Andover, Massachusetts, which had George Hutchings Opus 159 (1886) of two manuals. He had serious misgivings about the liturgy and the services at Christ Church which he later said were "lower even than those at Trinity Church in Boston."<sup>17</sup>

This change in church positions led also to a change in residence, which was, as it turned out, a fortuitous one and was to give a new substance to his life. He moved to 105 Pinckney Street in Boston which was located near the Church of St. John the Evangelist, a church which was run by the fathers of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, to whom Titcomb quickly became known. He was asked to play for some weekday Lenten services, making known his considerable musical abilities. In

the fall of 1910, he was offered the position of organist-choirmaster, and he eagerly accepted over the objections of his friends who felt the parish had no future for him. He believed otherwise:

Musically it was not a step in advance, for the choir and music here had been greatly neglected; but there was something else, the atmosphere of Catholic worship, and the real presence of Almighty God. I knew that these were the essentials, and felt that given time enough and the opportunity, I could build up an efficient choir and render music which was beautiful and of artistic merit . . . without sacrificing that quality of devotion and worship.<sup>18</sup>

It was the Church of St. John the Evangelist that Titcomb would serve for fifty years, and this little church would become within two decades a leader in the United States in the revival of plainsong and of Renaissance polyphony.

The Church of St. John the Evangelist had been founded in 1883 as a mission church on Bowdoin St. by the Society of St. John the Evangelist, better known as the "Cowley Fathers" after the English village near Oxford where the Society was founded on St. John's Day, December 27, 1866, as yet another manifestation of the Oxford Movement. The fathers lived in a monastery nearby and were an integral part of the parish community. They also maintained a mission house within the complex which would eventually provide a residence for Titcomb. The Society was at the time still a part of the Church of England, and some of the fathers as well as the superiors were English.

The initial months were not easy for Everett in his new post at St. John's. The volunteer choir was composed of five men and twelve boys with undistinguished voices, who knew only the Merbecke and the George Woodward (1848-1934) settings of music for the Eucharist. Because of the connections of the fathers to the Church of England, *Hymns Ancient & Modern*, the standard Church of England hymnal, was used. Early on Titcomb chose a Eucharist setting by Richard Redhead (1820-1901) for a Christmas liturgy, only to have the superior, apparently offended and unsympathetic, stop the choir in mid-measure, an experience Titcomb stated was the beginning of the end of this choice of Victorian settings. Another time he introduced a Gregorian Creed which proved too melismatic for congregational singing, and again the Superior exclaimed, "We cannot have music like that—terrible, terrible, it is like the Church of the Advent." Fortunately for Titcomb, this superior was transferred just four months after Titcomb began the job at St. John's.

The superior's successor, Father Bull, supported the use of plainsong from the beginning of his appointment. In fact, he actively sought support for chanting, pleading with the communicants in a letter of May, 1911, to be patient and openminded. Further, Bull, with Titcomb's cooperation, established the use of a mass ordinary published by the Plainsong and Medieval Society.<sup>19</sup>



*Christ Church, Andover*

Titcomb's early involvement with Roman and Anglican chant at St. John the Evangelist led to his desire for authenticity in its execution and, hence, to a life-long study of the most appropriate and most effective methods of chanting. In 1913, Titcomb made the first of a series of five trips to England and the continent to visit monasteries for the purpose of observing and studying chant. Especially influential was a visit to Solismes, where he met Dom Moquereau (1849-1930), who was one of the influential champions of plainchant. This visit particularly confirmed Titcomb's instincts that chant should have dynamic contrasts and that the music was meant to serve the text, naturally stressed to avoid the monotony of vernacular English.<sup>20</sup>

Titcomb stressed that music was an integral part of the liturgy and that the choir had no room for "prima donnas." He once exclaimed to make his point about texts: "Cows moo, birds twitter, sheep bleat, but human beings are meant to speak words! Words are not just mere sounds; words have meaning!"<sup>21</sup>

The succeeding superiors tended to be very supportive of Titcomb's attempts to provide authentic music for the liturgies. Father Powell, installed in 1916, introduced the three long services of *Tenebrae* to be sung during Holy Week. Like his predecessor, Powell added to the liturgical repertoire by acquiring copies of the Sarum chants published by the Plainsong and



*Titcomb in his early days at St. John's*

Medieval Society in England. This ancient English rite was entirely sung, including alternate verses of the Psalms, the antiphons, responses, "Benedictus," "Christus factus est," and "Miserere." Father Powell insisted, however, that the music at the regular liturgies be kept congregational, a disappointment to Titcomb who refused to use translations from the Latin.<sup>22</sup>

Titcomb began training the volunteer choir at St. John's initially with simple part singing. He spent countless hours at the Boston Public Library searching for appropriate repertoire from the anthems and motets of the English and continental Renaissance which he copied tediously by hand since these works were not yet readily available in published form.<sup>23</sup> This nearly pioneering effort to teach the choir this repertoire would provide Titcomb with some of his most frustrating times as well as some of his greatest rewards.

Titcomb was a proficient pianist and played much of the standard nineteenth and early twentieth-century repertoire. His skills as a sensitive accompanist led to his musical collaborations with the rather well-known singer Grace Leslie (1888-1979), a resident of his native Amesbury. It was for her that Titcomb composed several songs—some published, others remaining in manuscript.<sup>24</sup> The songs, based on a variety of texts generally with themes of love, are basically conservative musically and in the art-song tradition.

In 1921, Titcomb had been director of music at St. John's for more than ten years. He became discouraged and depressed that the music program was not progressing to meet his expectations. The depression became serious enough to bring on drastic weight loss. A trip to England in 1922 did much to lift his spirits as did the realization that far more experienced and professional choirs often had difficulties with the same repertoire.<sup>25</sup>

By 1924, Titcomb had sufficiently established his musical program at St. John's to attain the respect of the Cowley fathers. The new superior, Father Burton, himself a musician, almost immediately gave Titcomb free reign with the music, a prerogative not withdrawn for the next thirty-five years. Of Father Burton Titcomb wrote, "I shall never forget his kindness and complete understanding of the situation, nor my joy at the realization that at last I could at least make a beginning towards some of my dreams."<sup>26</sup>

The neighborhood around St. John's had begun the shift from residential to commercial, creating a shortage of talented boys to recruit for the choir. Since women were not yet sanctioned for the choir, Titcomb sometimes hid women behind a screen to provide vocal augmentation, a guise that was not noticed by the congregation. Eventually they were permitted to take their places in the choir, a move not popular with all the parishioners. Shortly after women were allowed in the choir, a woman approached Titcomb following a Sunday service and demanded, "Get those screechers out of here, or you won't get any more of my money."<sup>27</sup>

Other changes were also underway at St. John's. The interior was renovated during 1930 to the plans of the famed church architect Ralph Adams Cram, a parishioner and member of the Sunday evening choir. At this time the Hutchings organ was relocated to the gallery. The choir continued to grow to more than thirty voices. With the addition of women and the increase in size of the choir, though still volunteer, Titcomb experimented carefully with new repertoire which fit his augmented forces.

According to Richard Grant, Titcomb's assistant from 1952 to 1956, Titcomb's volunteer choir was exceptional because of the time Titcomb devoted to individual private singing lessons without a fee:

The Friday night rehearsals from 5:30 to 7:30 were legendary. People came directly from work to practice for two hours and it was a hard working rehearsal and Everett was demanding and his temper was short. Many choir members were on the receiving end of this. He got away with it because everyone knew that he was sincere and loved his work and had tremendous love for people. The choir felt this and the results were fantastic for an all-volunteer choir. The [music]—motets, anthems, chant and difficult polyphony that they sang—was unusual. The standards were high . . . I met my wife, Evelyn, in Everett's choir. Everett provided the money to buy the engagement ring since I was penniless at the time . . . I will never forget him.<sup>28</sup>

Teaching was a major activity for Titcomb. In addition to his work with private students, he began teaching piano at Boston University in 1930 and taught intermittently (1930-34 and 1944-59) until his retirement in 1959. In 1944 he began teaching courses at Boston University in liturgical music, including Roman and Anglican Chant and Renaissance polyphony. He also served as acting head of the organ department when his friend, organist Francis Snow, was ill.<sup>29</sup> In 1939 Titcomb also began teaching his course in liturgical music at the New England Conservatory and later added a course in choir training.

The Wellesley College Summer Conference, an institute for clergy, church workers, and musicians, offered Titcomb a missionary's chance to teach more church musicians about liturgy, plainsong, choral technique, and special courses on the services of Morning and Evening Prayer. For almost a decade from 1935 he took a very active part in this conference, serving also as acting dean and as director of the Conference Chorus.<sup>30</sup>

This exposure to other church musicians as well as his growing reputation in the Boston area led to his participation in





*The Church of St. John the Evangelist with Hutchings Op. 210 on left*

a number of conferences and festivals. He was also appointed to the Joint Commission on Church Music of the Episcopal Church where he was able to bring his ideas of music in liturgy to bear on other aspects of liturgy and worship.<sup>31</sup>

Titcomb's composing became prolific in the decade between 1932 and 1942. His rather straightforward choral compositions, with texts based on hymns and themes from the liturgy and usually within the abilities of the average church choir, proved to be very popular with choirs around the country. While many of these compositions are particularly appropriate for liturgical churches, many of them cross denominational lines into musical ecumenicism. The polyphony that Titcomb so loved is very much in evidence in many of the anthems or "motets."

Several published anthems proved extremely popular. In 1936 "I Will Not Leave You Comfortless" from *Eight Motets* (1934) was chosen for performance at the annual choir festival in London and was sung by four-thousand choristers. It was the first time a composition by an American had been included in the festival.<sup>32</sup> Another extremely popular anthem, "Behold Now, Praise the Lord," (1938) was sold with full rights for the small sum of \$25.00 because his reputation as a composer had not yet met his reputation as a liturgical musician. The anthem sold thousands of copies, and Titcomb was unable to receive any royalties on it until 1959, a fact which did not fail to cause chagrin.<sup>33</sup> The anthem "Jesus, Name of Wondrous Love" (1947) soared in popularity because of two performances in nationwide broadcasts of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Titcomb later confessed that he had spent less time working on it than any other of the anthems he had written. It was composed as a favor for a friend, Roy Carlson, an organist and organbuilder who fixed Titcomb's oven door at his summer cottage. The oven-door fell off its hinges and while Titcomb was struggling with it, Carlson happened to stop in and graciously repaired it. Titcomb later offered the anthem to return the favor, nicknaming it the "oven-door" anthem.<sup>34</sup>

Titcomb was much beloved by his choir and fellow musicians and was something of a *bon vivant*. He enjoyed cooking and often served up elegant dinners to the choir men. In return they were sometimes asked to sing parts of a composition in progress, Titcomb making corrections or rewriting on the spot.<sup>35</sup> Beyond the professional relationships, he was good friends with many of Boston's prominent church musicians, many with whom he worked in various festivals, programs, and workshops.

In addition to his European tours for study and pleasure, Titcomb enjoyed spending portions of his summers in the country or at the shore, having owned cottages at Provincetown and Camp Hedding at Epping, New Hampshire. Titcomb purchased the Hedding cottage in 1947 and spent several summers there composing at his Steinway which he had brought to the camp for that purpose. A number of compositions were inspired there including his *Hedding Suite* for flute and piano or organ. He

also established at one point a week-long summer camp for St. John boys where, amid the fun of an outing, they could learn music and about music.<sup>36</sup>

The reputation of his choir at St. John's was, by the late 1930s, firmly established. In 1938, the group took as its name "Schola Cantorum," the ancient name from early Christian days of the "singing school." It was under that name that the choir frequently presented concerts of liturgical music in Boston area churches and institutions such as the Boston Public Library, the Museum of Fine Arts, Gardner Museum, King's Chapel, St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Church of the Advent and in New York City at St. Mary the Virgin. Titcomb also directed other groups from time to time such as the student and evening choirs of Christ Church, Cambridge, where Titcomb's close friend George Faxon was the organist. Titcomb organized an annual musical festival for the Feast of St. Gregory and fostered participation by Boston churches such as Trinity and Church of the Advent. In 1947 Titcomb became conductor of the Canterbury Club which supplied music for the evening services at Trinity Church, again accompanied by Faxon. Indeed, Titcomb and Faxon had a strong personal and professional rapport. Faxon has said of Titcomb: "His inspiration has meant everything to me, and has been largely responsible for my staying in the field of church music."<sup>37</sup>

As Titcomb's reputation grew through his many varied musical activities and compositions, offers of large salaries came from churches throughout the country, including Boston's St. Paul's Cathedral and the Church of the Advent, all of which he turned down. Asked why he chose to remain in such an unpretentious position, he answered:

## The Organ at St. John the Evangelist

**S**T. JOHN'S HAS AN illustrious organ history. The first organ was built by Thoma Appleton in 183 when the church was owned by the Bowdoin Street Congregational Society and Lowell Mason (1792-1872) was the music director. In 1864, the congregation of the Church of the Advent occupied the building. After several instruments, Samuel B. Whitney, Titcomb's former teacher, recommended the current instrument, George S. Hutchings, Opus 210 (1890), which was installed in the chancel on the Gospel side of the altar near the pulpit.

Titcomb disliked the organ's mechanical action and considered it "a real blessing" when the instrument was electrified. He later described the organ as a "lumbering old instrument with rattling heavy, tracker action, notes forever sticking, and a pedal keyboard upon which it was necessary to jump to make the notes sound. [It had] wheezy bellows, pumped by a water motor which sometimes froze up in the winter, and at all times was likely to start up with a rush and would thump and bang as if the roof had fallen in" (Bonney, p.15). During 1930, Titcomb implemented its removal to the rear gallery when it was electrified by the Hook & Hastings Co.

On June 15, 1952, shortly after the close of the service, the panelled ceiling designed by Ralph Adams Cram (1862-1942) collapsed, filling the instrument with dirt and debris. Later, during one of the summers Titcomb was in England, and Cowley fathers had the exterior of the building sandblasted. Once again the organ was filled with dust since no one thought to cover the instrument. When Titcomb returned, he was very angry. On another occasion, the interior of the edifice was painted, and the workmen were not instructed regarding the front of the case and its facade pipes. In a letter to his assistant, he wrote, "As I recall all the cream colored paint and the gilding of the show pipes was gone . . ." (Letter from Titcomb to Sally Slade Warner, Dec. 7, 1966) Within a few decades, the electric action began to fail. Six years after Titcomb's death, in 1974, the organ was returned to tracker action by Philip A. Beaudry & Co. and continues to serve the church.

I can do as I please here. The fathers give me an entirely free hand. To a man of my temperament, that is worth more than the high salaries of the world. Then I like Boston and Boston ways. You know they are different from the rest of the United States—even the weather is different.<sup>38</sup>

Because of changing demographics and the intervention of World War II, interest in Sunday evening services had begun to wane at St. John's as it did in many places across the country. To counter the trend, Titcomb invited friends to sing for the evening service which was preceded by an organ recital. Women were frequently invited to play these recitals though they were excluded from the exclusively male Sunday Evening Group, as the choir was called. The group grew from a few men, mostly students, to about thirty friends and colleagues. The recital and service were followed by a social hour and supper where the women were allowed to prepare the food. The tradition of the Sunday Evening Group continued until 1957.

In addition to his teaching and composition, Titcomb wrote several articles on church music for *Cowley* magazine. He also wrote two treatises, *Anglican Ways* and *Choirmaster's Handbook*, which serve as vehicles for his ideas on liturgical music. He asserts that chants are more effective without organ accompaniment. When accompaniment must be used, he suggests the accompanist should avoid doubling the chant melody because the doubling destroys the natural flow of the text. (On at least two occasions, Titcomb used a harp to accompany the chants.)<sup>39</sup> He also stresses the importance of good hymn playing. The tempo of the hymn, for instance, should be appropriate to the text of the hymn: "A Lutheran Chorale should not be taken at the tempo of a Maypole dance . . ."<sup>40</sup>

Many of those who heard Titcomb play services report that he was a brilliant improviser and that improvisation was very much a part of his style. He would, for instance, take a musical motif from the proper of the mass and weave it into an appropriate improvisation for the service. Many of his compositions for the organ reflect this characteristic of his musical talent. These compositions, often based on plainsong melodies, develop in a quasi-improvisatory style that is appropriate for a given liturgy. There is no record of his having given an organ recital. Obviously, pyrotechnical performance of the organ repertoire was not one of his abiding interests.

By mid-century "Uncle" Everett, as he was affectionately called, was among the better known American church musicians. In 1950 Titcomb and the choir of St. John's presented a program for the national convention of the AGO, meeting in Boston, who honored him with a full house. The same year, he was honored in a series of monthly concerts, sponsored jointly by the New England Conservatory and Boston University to recognize New England composers. In 1959 the Boston Chapter of the AGO and the St. Cecilia Society recognized Titcomb's achievement with a special ceremony at the First Baptist



St. James, Amesbury, with Kimball-Frazee organ, using Hutchings facade

Church in Boston. Possibly the greatest honor came in 1954 when Nashotah House, the Episcopal seminary in Wisconsin, awarded Titcomb the honorary degree of Doctor of Music for his outstanding contributions to church music.<sup>41</sup>

As early as the mid-1930s, Titcomb began to be plagued by loss of equilibrium, having to grasp repeatedly a music stand or other object to regain his balance. Finally, deteriorating health made necessary his retirement in 1959 from St. John's. On Sunday, within the Octave of All Saints' Day, 1960, Titcomb conducted a final service at St. John's, exactly fifty years after he had begun in 1910.<sup>42</sup> Titcomb's failing equilibrium coupled with vision and hearing impairment had become such a problem that it was necessary for him to push a chair in front of him to get around the apartment. Stairways were almost impossible for him to manage. To facilitate his mobility, the Cowley fathers moved him and his life-long companion, Chester Bonney (1892-1983), who had shared his residence since 1911, from their Mission House quarters to another building equipped with an elevator. Although the move was done for his own well-being, he resented the involvement of the fathers. By this time he was a semi-invalid and was constantly attended by Bonney.

Titcomb made a final trip to Amesbury on May 12, 1963, where he was honored with a performance of his compositions at St. James' Church, the place of his first appointment. Among his organ compositions performed by Robert McDonald were the *Suite in E Major*, the "Improvisation on *Tonus Peregrinus*," "Festive Flutes," *Advent and Christmas*, and "Toccata." Selections of choral music included the motets "I Will Not Leave You Comfortless" (1934), "My House Shall Be Called" (1934), and "Sing We Merrily" (1959), and the anthems "O Love, How Deep" (1952), "Jesus, Name of Wondrous Love" (1947), and "Come, Ye Faithful" (1942). The tribute concluded with a performance of Titcomb's *Victory Te Deum* (1944).

After a long illness, Everett Titcomb died on December 31, 1968. A choir of fifty, consisting of the *Schola Cantorum* augmented by former members and students sang a requiem mass at St. John the Evangelist. The Ordinary and Proper of the *St. Dunstan Kyrial* was sung in plainsong. His own anthem, "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men" (1945) was sung under the direction of Sally Slade Warner. The organ voluntaries consisted of Titcomb's "Elegy," "Requiem," and "Credo in Unum Deum."<sup>43</sup>

Titcomb's life and work are testimony to his vision that the worship of Almighty God can only be accomplished with the finest of what human beings can produce. Titcomb's life-long dedication to church music left a legacy of excellence that might well serve as a model for future generations of church musicians.



Schola Cantorum at the Cowley monastery

## NOTES

1. The date of Everett Titcomb's birth was incorrectly entered in the Birth Records of Amesbury, Ma., which recorded it as June 3. The error was not discovered by Titcomb until he was making application for a passport. June 30 is the correct date. See Chester E. Bonney's *Recollections of Everett Titcomb*, unpub. ms., p. 2.
2. Everett Titcomb, "Choirs and Church Music Through the Ages," *The Church Militant*, 63 (Feb., 1960).
3. Bonney, p. 2.
4. Robert Taylor, "Organists Honor Everett Titcomb," unidentified newspaper clipping at Phillips Academy, Andover, Ma.
5. *Amesbury News* (June 24, 1902), p. 2.
6. Everett Titcomb, "Forty Years at St. John's," *Cowley* 23 (Autumn, 1950), p. 71.
7. *Amesbury Daily News* (May 13, 1963), p. 1. Also, *Boston Organ Club Newsletter* 17 (Sp/Sum, 1981) p. 17
8. Ned Brown, "Along the Banks of the Powow," *Newburyport Daily News* (Feb. 1, 1960), p. 3.
9. Taylor, n.p.
10. Barbara Owen, *A Century of American Organ Music 1776-1876*, II (Miami, FL: McAfee Music Corp), p. 6.
11. Bonney, p. 3.
12. Bonney, p. 3. See also, *BOC*, 15 (Sept.-Dec., 1979, p. 21).
13. Bonney, p. 3.
14. Bonney, p. 3.
15. Bonney, p. 5.
16. Bonney, p. 8.
17. Bonney, p. 2.
18. Robert Cheney Smith, *The Shrine on Bowdoin Street: 1883-1958* (Boston-1958) p. 45.
19. R. Smith, pp. 45-47.
20. Bonney, p. 28.

21. "Director of the Schola Cantorum, Cowley, 23 (Autumn, 1950), p. 83.
22. Bonney, p. 20.
23. Bonney, p. 24.
24. "Everett Titcomb Dedicated Early Songs to Mrs. Leslie," *Newburyport News* (June 19, 1969).
25. Bonney, pp. 68-69.
26. R. C. Smith, p. 45.
27. Titcomb, "Forty Years . . .," p. 77.
28. Richard Grant, letter to author (Feb. 8, 1986).
29. Barbara Owen, "Organ Pedagogy in Boston: Boston University's Continuing Role," *The American Organist*, 19 (June, 1958), p. 38.
30. *Wellesley Conference Catalogue*, Wellesley Archives, 19
31. David Dillon, "Mission Church of St. John the Evangelist," ms., p. 26.
32. Dillon, p. 26.
33. Sally Slade Warner, interview (Dec. 23, 1985).
34. Bonney, *Recollection*, "Epilogue," p. 2.
35. George LaFlamme (a choir member), interview (Dec. 30, 1985).
36. Dillon, p. 14.
37. Bernard Eugene Smith, *Titcomb, Man & Musician*, master's thesis, Union Seminary, New York, 1953, p. 6.
38. Gilbert M. Titcomb, *Descendants of William Titcomb of Newbury, Massachusetts, 1635* (Iowa: Amundsen Publishing Co., [n. d.], p. 139.
39. Bonney, "Epilogue," p. 5.
40. E. Titcomb, *Anglican Ways* (New York: H. W. Gray Co., 1954), p. 21.
41. R. C. Smith, p. 74.
42. Sally Slade Warner, who was Titcomb's assistant at the time of his retirement, assumed his duties and continued to serve St. John's until her recent retirement after thirty years, preserving the long tradition initiated by her mentor.
43. "Everett Titcomb," (obituary), *The American Organist* 52 (Feb., 1969), p. 22.

## A PARTIAL CATALOGUE OF WORKS BY EVERETT TITCOMB

### Choral Music

- Adeste Fidelis*: C. F. Peters No. 6399 (1962); SATB, organ or piano, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, ad. lib.
- Alleluia, All The Earth Doth Worship Thee*: B. F. Wood Music Co. No. 570 (1941); SATB, organ or piano
- Alleluia, O Come Let Us Sing*: Harold Flammer No. 84919 (1967); SATB, organ or piano
- Antiphon of Spring*: Summy/Birchard (1962) and Harold Flammer (1964); SATB, organ or piano
- Ave Verum Corpus Christi*: ms. (1936); SATB, a capella
- Ave Verum Corpus Natum*: McLaughlin & Reilly No. 1745 (1951); SATB, a capella
- Behold Now, Praise the Lord*: B. F. Wood Music No. 457 and Mills Music No. 64133 (1938); SATB, organ or piano, also SA or TB
- Behold Now, Praise the Lord*: B. F. Wood Music and Mills Music No. 64158 (1940); TTBB, organ or piano
- Behold, O God, Our Defender*: H. W. Gray (1961); SATB, organ or piano
- Be Joyful, O Daughter of Syon* (Christmas): Carl Fischer No. CM-437 (1934); SATB, a capella, from *Eight Motets*
- Benedictus Es, Domine in C Major*: Carl Fischer No. CM-509 (1937); SATB, organ or piano
- Benedictus Es, Domine in E flat Major*: Carl Fischer No. CM-6833 (1955); SATB, organ or piano
- Calm on the List'ning Ear of Night*: Hollis Grant, Providence (1954); SATB, organ or piano
- Christmas Story — Cantata*: J. Fischer No. 9456 (1963); SATB, Junior Choir, s., t., & b. solos, organ
- Christ, Our Passover* (Easter): Carl Fischer No. CM-439 (1934); SATB, a capella, from *Eight Motets*
- Christ the Lord is Risen Today* (Easter): C. F. Peters No. 6388 (1962); SATB, organ or piano, 2 trumpets ad. lib.
- Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies*: Richler Music (1968); SATB, organ or piano
- Come, Ye Faithful* (Easter): B. F. Wood Music No. 591 (1942); SATB, organ or piano
- Communion Service in C Major*: H. W. Gray (1952); SATB, organ or piano
- Communion Service in D Major*: (*Missa Brevis* without Creed): B. F. Wood Music No. 645 (1945); SATB, organ or piano
- Communion Service in G minor*: H. W. Gray No. 2724 (1962); SATB, organ or piano
- Communion Service in f minor* (*Missa Salve Regina*): B. F. Wood Music No. 480 (1939); SATB, a capella
- Eternal Praise*: B. F. Wood Music No. 689 (1948); SATB, organ or piano
- God is Gone Up* (Ascension): H. W. Gray No. 2192 (1952); SATB, organ or piano
- Hark! the Sound of Holy Voices* (All Saints): H. W. Gray No. 2362 (1954); SATB, organ or piano
- Herald of Good Tidings* (Advent): C. F. Peters No. 6653 (1964); SATB, organ or piano, 2 trumpets ad. lib.
- Hosanna to the Son of David* (Palm Sunday): J. Fischer No. 8738 (1953); SATB, a capella
- Hymn of Gladness*: Harold Flammer (1962); SATB, organ or piano
- I Will Always Give Thanks*: Harold Flammer No. 88677 (1962); SATB, organ or piano
- I Will Not Leave You Comfortless* (Whitsuntide): Carl Fischer No. CM-441 (1934); SATB, a capella, from *Eight Motets*
- Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love*: B. F. Wood Music No. 669 (1947); SATB, organ or piano; also SAB
- Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee*: Mills Music (1965); SATB, organ or piano
- Jesus, Word of God* (English version): McLaughlin & Reilly (1968); SATB, a capella
- Kyrie—Missa Regina Coeli* (with Sanctus & Benedictus): ms. (1935); SATB, a capella
- Lead Us, Heavenly Father*: Harold Flammer (1965); SATB, organ or piano
- Let the Words of My Mouth* (Introit or Response): H. W. Gray No. 2601 (1959); SATB, organ ad. lib.
- Let Saints on Earth*: C. C. Birchard No. 2100 (1955); SATB, organ or piano
- Let Us Bless the God of Heaven* (Trinity): Carl Fischer No. CM-442 (1934); SATB, a capella, from *Eight Motets*
- Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*: B. F. Wood Music No. 646 (1945); SATB, organ or piano
- Light of Light*: Summy/Birchard (1953); SATB, organ or piano
- Magnificat in G—Mode VI*: Boston Music No. 3032 (1958); Unison & parts, organ or unacc. ad. lib.
- Magnificat—Tone VIII*: ms. (1933); SATB, a capella
- Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis*: Carl Fischer No. CM-543 (1939); SATB, organ or piano
- Mass No. VII* (by Lotti, arr. Titcomb): ms. (1934); SATB, a capella
- Mass* (by Morales, arr. Titcomb): ms. (1935); SATB, a capella
- Mass in C Major*: J. Fischer No. 8758 (1953); SATB, organ
- Missa Christe Dei Soboles* (by de Lassus, arr. Titcomb): ms. (1939); SATB, a capella
- Missa Salve Regina* (*Communion Service in f minor* without Gloria): ms. (1936); SATB, a capella
- Missa Sanctae Crucis*: Carl Fischer No. CM-430 (1934); SATB, a capella
- Missa Sancti Francisci*: ms. (1933); Two equal voices, a capella
- Missa Sancti Joannis Evangelistae*: Carl Fischer No. CM-444 (1935); TTBB, a capella
- Morning Hymn/Awake My Soul*: Summy/Birchard (1955); SATB, organ or piano
- Alma Redemptoris* (by Suriano, arr. Titcomb): ms (no date); SATB, a capella
- My House Shall Be Called of All Nations* (Dedication): Carl Fischer No. CM-443 (1934); SATB, a capella, from *Eight Motets*
- Nowell* (Christmas): B. F. Wood Music No. 682 (1948); SATB, organ
- Now Let Heaven and Earth* (by Crueger, arr. Titcomb): B. F. Wood Music (1943); SATB, organ or piano
- Nunc Dimittis—Tone III*: ms. (no date); SATB, a capella
- O Be Joyful in the Lord*: Carl Fischer No. CM-6708 (1954); SATB, a capella
- O For a Closer Walk*: Abingdon Press (1962); SATB, organ or piano
- O Give Thanks*: Carl Fischer (1964); SATB, organ or piano
- O God, Our Help*: Harold Flammer (1967); SATB, organ or piano
- O Harken Thou*: Carl Fischer No. CM-7168 (1959); SATB, a capella
- O Love How Deep*: H. W. Gray No. 2226 (1952); SATB, organ or piano



*O People of Syon*: Concordia Publishing No. 98-1084 (1955); SATB, organ or unacc. ad. lib.  
*O Quam Suavis*: ms. (1936); SATB, a capella  
*O Sacrum Convivium*: ms. (1936); SATB, a capella  
*Panis Angelicus*: McLaughlin & Reilly (1937); SATB, a capella  
*Praised be the Lord*: C. C. Birchard No. 2507 (1952); SATB, organ or unacc.  
*Rejoice in the Lord*: Harold Flammer (1966); SATB, organ or piano  
*Rejoice We All, and Praise the Lord*: H. W. Gray No. 2382 (1959); SATB and soprano solo, organ (2 trumpets, 2 trombones ad. lib.)  
*Rejoice Ye With Jerusalem*: Concordia Publishing No. 98-1101 (1955); SATB, organ ad. lib.  
*Ride On, Ride On in Majesty* (Palm Sunday): Carl Fischer No. CM-6468 (1948); SATB, organ or piano  
*Sanctus and Benedictus/Missa de Regine Coeli*: Carl Fischer No. CM-434 (1934); SATB, organ  
*Say to Them That are of a Fearful Heart* (Advent): Carl Fischer No. CM-436 (1934); SATB, a capella, from *Eight Motets*  
*Sing Unto the Lord*: H. W. Gray No. 2343 (1954); SATB with baritone solo ad. lib., organ  
*Sing We Merrily Unto God*: H. W. Gray No. 2590 (1959); SATB, a capella  
*Sing Ye to the Lord* (Ascension): Carl Fischer No. CM-440 (1934); SATB, a capella, from *Eight Motets*  
*Songs of Praise*: J. Fischer (1963); SATB, organ or piano  
*Te Deum*: Parish Choir Series (no date, ca. 1907); SATB, organ or piano (first published work)  
*Thanksgiving*: C. F. Peters No. 6890 (1965); SATB, organ or piano, brass quartet ad. lib.  
*The Eyes of All*: Carl Fischer (1964); SATB, organ or piano  
*The Lord is My Strength*: Harold Flammer (1964); SATB, organ or piano  
*The Lord Reigneth* (Feast of Christ the King): H. W. Gray No. 2446 (1956); SATB, organ  
*The Lord is My Shepherd* ("Crimond"): H. W. Gray No. 2809 (1963); SATB with solos and descant ad. lib., organ  
*The Ninety-Eighth Psalm*: H. W. Gray No. 2499 (1958); SATB, organ  
*The Souls of the Righteous* (All Saints): H. W. Gray No. 2866 (1984); SATB with soprano solo, organ  
*The Spirit of the Lord*: Abingdon Press (1962), also in ms. arr. Max Miller; SATB, organ or piano  
*The Strain Upraise of Joy and Praise*: B. F. Wood Music No. 775 (1960); SATB and treble choir, organ  
*Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness*: B. F. Wood Music (1961); SATB, organ or piano  
*This is the Day*: Abingdon Press (1962); SATB, organ or piano  
*Thou Must Leave* (by Berlioz, arr. Titcomb): B. F. Wood Music (1945); SATB, organ or piano  
*To Calvary*—Cantata (Lent or Holy Week): H. W. Gray (1960); SATB with youth choir ad. lib., organ

*To the Name That Brings Salvation*: H. W. Gray No. 2408 (1956); SATB, organ  
*To The Prince of Peace* (Christmas): C. F. Peters No. 6987 (1966); SATB, organ or piano, brass quartet ad. lib.  
*Unto Us a Child is Born* (Christmas): H. W. Gray No. 2715 (1961); SATB with youth choir ad. lib., organ  
*Victory Te Deum/Te Deum Laudamus*: B. F. Wood Music No. 637 (1944); SATB, organ  
*We Have Seen His Star* (Epiphany): Carl Fischer No. CM-438 (1934); SATB, a capella, from *Eight Motets*  
*While Shepherds Watched* (Christmas): B. F. Wood Music (1943); SATB, organ or piano

#### ORGAN MUSIC

*Adore Te Devote*: Belwin No. T264, and Mills Music (1943) from *Two Communion For Organ*  
*Advent and Christmas* (Two Short Pieces for Organ): Carl Fischer P3058 (1962)  
*Allegro Marziale* (Melody "Old 100th"): Harold Flammer No. HH-5007 (1962) from *Three Short Pieces*  
*Alleluia, Pascha Nostra* (Easter): Belwin No. T265, and Mills Music (1938) from *Four Improvisations On Gregorian Themes*  
*Aspiration*: Belwin Mills No. 869 (1959)  
*Ave Verum*: Belwin No. T267 and B. F. Wood No. 7573-3 (1943) from *Two Communion For Organ*  
*Benedicta Tu*: Belwin No. T268, H. W. Gray No. 794, Novello and Co. (1953)  
*Cantilena*: H. W. Gray from *Suite in E major* (1955)  
*Cibavit Eos*: Belwin No. T272, and B. F. Wood (1938) from *Four Improvisations On Gregorian Themes*  
*Credo in unum Deum*: Belwin No. T269, and B. F. Wood (1940) from *Three Short Pieces On Familiar Gregorian Melodies*  
*Crimond, Voluntary One*: Belwin No. T270 (1967)  
*Elegy* (In Paradisium): Belwin No. T271 (1957) and H. W. Gray  
*Fantasy On A Mediaeval Hymn Tune*: H. W. Gray, in the *Anthology Of British and American Composers*  
*Festive Flutes* (Vocem Jocunditatis): Belwin No. T284, and H. W. Gray No. 847, and Novello and Co. (1958)  
*Gaudeamus* (All Saints): B. F. Wood, and Mills Music (1938) from *Four Improvisations On Gregorian Themes*  
*Hosanna*: Belwin No. T273, and B. F. Wood (1957)  
*Improvisation On the Eighth Psalm Tone*: Belwin No. T274, and H. W. Gray No. 867, and Novello and Co. (1959)  
*Improvisation On the Hymn Tune "Oriol"*: Carl Fischer Inc. No. N4169-4 (1962)  
*Improvisation on "Laetabundus"* (Come Rejoicing): Harold Flammer, Inc. No. 3875 (1961)  
*Improvisation—Toccata On "Tonus Peregrinus"* (Irregular Psalm Tone): Harold Flammer, Inc. No. HH5015, and Belwin No. T275 (1962)



The Titcomb family home, Amesbury

*Maestoso* (Theme from "Ave Maris Stella"): Flammer No. HH500 (1962) from *Three Short Pieces*  
*Moderato* (Melody from a psalm tune by Bourgeois): Flammer No. HH500 (1962) from *Three Short Pieces*  
*Organ Voluntary On Gregorian Themes* (uses Gradual, Alleluia and Sequence for Easter): Gregorian Institute of America No. G950 (1962)  
*Pastorale*: H. W. Gray No. 881, and Belwin No. T276 (1962)  
*Pentecost* (themes: Veni Creator, Veni Sancti Spiritus, and Spiritus Domine): Mills Music, B. F. Wood No. 7680-7, and Belwin No. T277 (1949)  
*Prelude in a*: Mills Music, and B. F. Wood No. 7511-4 (1942)  
*Prelude On a Hymn Tune By R. R. Ferry* ("Full of Glory"): McLaughlin and Reilly Co. (1963) in the anthology *Gloria Deo*, No. 4  
*Puer Natus Est* (Christmas): Mills Music, and B. F. Wood, Belwin No. T278 (1938)  
*Regina Coeli*: Mills Music, B. F. Wood, and Belwin No. T279 (1940)  
*Requiem*: H. W. Gray (1949) in the *Modern Anthology Rhapsody On Gregorian Motifs* (themes: Alleluia, and Salve Regina): H. W. Gray No. 840, and Belwin No. T281  
*Scherzo In d*: B. F. Wood, and Mills Music No. 7512-5 (1942)  
*Sortie*: Carl Fischer Inc. No. P3116 (1967)  
*Suite In E*: Belwin No. T283, and H. W. Gray (1955)  
*Three Short Pieces* (Maestoso, Moderato, Allegro): Harold Flammer, Inc. No. HH-500, and Carl Fischer Inc. No. N4541 (1962)  
*Three Short Organ Pieces* (themes: Regina Coeli, Credo In Unum,

Vexilla Regis): Mills Music No. 46006 and Belwin No. T286 (1962)  
*Three Short Postludes* (Maestoso, Allegro, Andante): Carl Fischer Inc. No. P3105, and Belwin No. T287 (1962)  
*Toccata* (Salve Regina): H. W. Gray No. 790, and Belwin Mills No. T288 (1953)  
*Two Communion* (Adore Te Devote, Ave Verum): Belwin No. T289, and Mills Music (1943)  
*Vexilla Regis*: Belwin No. T290, Mills Music, and B. F. Wood No. 7467-3 (1940) from *Three Short Pieces On Familiar Gregorian Melodies*  
*Wedding Day* (O Perfect Love): Belwin No. T291, and H. W. Gray No. 880 (1961)  
*Wedding Processional*: Abingdon Press No. APM-304, and Belwin No. T292 (1963)  
**Miscellaneous:**  
*Hedding Suite* for flute and piano (or organ) (Allegro—Menuette—Andante: Vivace): Cundy-Bettoney Co. (1960)  
*Valse Humoresque* (piano): C. W. Thompson (1915)  
*Satyr's Fountain* (piano): G. W. Schirmer (1928)  
**Books, Articles and Pamphlets**  
*Anglican Ways*: A handbook for Choirmasters and others interested in the Services and Liturgical Music of the Anglican (Episcopal) Church. (Originally pub. in a shorter version as *The Choirmaster's Notebook*.) H. W. Gray Co. (1954)  
"Recollections—Fifty Years As Choirmaster: State Of Music and Choir"; *Cowley Magazine* (1910), Vol. IX, Np. 34.  
"Choirs and Church Music Through the Ages," *The Church Militant*, February, 1960.

#### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the many people who have assisted in the research for this documentary of the life of Everett Titcomb, particularly Sally Slade Warner who worked with Titcomb for many years. She was a valuable aid in answering questions and guiding me to resource materials. She also provided numerous letters from her private collection to be used with the research. Many other people assisted as well, including Willard Flanders, George Faxon, Richard Grant, Thomas Hill, George LaFlamme, Forrest Mack, Barbara Owen, Stephen Pinel, Kenneth Starr, and Gerald Fosbroke. And, of course, my husband, Richard Ouellette, was an untiring source of help and encouragement.



1835 Joseph Alley, First Religious Society, Newburyport, MA; also, bottom right

# Joseph Alley and Richard Pike Morss Early Organbuilders of Newburyport

BY BARBARA J. OWEN



*Joseph Alley*

**N**EWBURYPORT MAY HAVE HAD an organbuilder as early as 1769, when Benjamin Johnston (1742–1818), the son of Thomas Johnston (ca. 1708–1767), moved there from Boston. Although some sources maintain that, like his father, Benjamin also built organs, no proof has been found. It is more likely that he only assisted Thomas as a general apprentice in the senior Johnston's multi-faceted trade of organbuilding, engraving, japanning, and heraldic painting. The only recorded work of Benjamin in his adopted home at the mouth of the Merrimac River included engraving, heraldic painting, and portraiture. He had a small framing and glazing shop, and, while unproven, it is not totally impossible that he may have crafted a small chamber organ at some time, even if only for his own use.

The first person definitely recorded as having built an organ in Newburyport, however, was Joseph Alley. He was born in Kennebunk, Maine, the son of Josiah O. and Nancy G. Alley, and his mother was French, a native of the Isle of Ferry. Most sources give his date of birth as March 4, 1804, although a family genealogy gives the year as 1802. Apparently having lost his parents at an early age, he was raised by Judge Bourne of Kennebunk, who may also have introduced him to organbuilding, for in February of 1826 a "Doct. Bourne" of Kennebunk is recorded as having set up and tuned an organ in the First Parish Church of Portland; this was very likely the same person who was Alley's guardian.<sup>1</sup> At the age of 18, young Alley made a reed organ for an individual in Portsmouth, N.H.<sup>2</sup> He may well have been the "Mr. Allen" who is recorded as having built some small organs for churches in western Maine during this period.

According to his obituary, Alley came to Newburyport in 1826<sup>3</sup>, and his work soon attracted the notice of some local businessmen, notably William Balch (himself an amateur musician), and Henry Titcomb. These men, particularly Balch, capitalized Alley's early work, for he was probably not in any position to finance the starting of his business himself. Balch would advance funds to procure materials and build an organ, which would then be advertised and sold to a nearby church. In other words, Alley essentially built his organs—the early ones, at least—on speculation. Balch later subsidized the making of twelve pianos, but "they were too well made for those times and it was not a successful business venture."<sup>4</sup> Balch himself owned





**1794 Josiah Leavitt, Boston**  
**First Religious Society, Newburyport, MA**  
 Stoplist from *Newburyport Herald*, March 9, 1880

**MANUAL**

8' **Open Diapason**  
 8' **Stop Diapason**  
 4' **Principal**  
 4' **Flute**  
 2⅓' **Twelfth**  
 2' **Fifteenth**  
**Cornet/Sesquialtera**  
 8' **Trumpet**

**Nomenclature in bold type is copied from the source.**

one of these pianos, and another was purchased by George and Hannah Marshall, who ran a tavern in the famous Lord Timothy Dexter house.

By 1834 Alley had built "two or three" small church organs.<sup>5</sup> Identification of these is difficult because many area churches financed the purchase of organs in this period by selling "stock" in them to be repaid as "rent" over a period of years. Payments to organbuilders do not appear in the treasurers' records of churches, and often the first indication that a church has acquired an organ is the sudden appearance of payments to organists and organ blowers.

Newburyport churches known to have acquired organs in the 1826–34 period include the North Congregational Church (1828) and the Old South Presbyterian Church (1828). Both of these were probably Alley's work. In August of 1828 Capt. John H. Titcomb proposed to the proprietors of the North Church the purchase of "the Organ completed for the use of the Parish."<sup>6</sup> In September of the same year the proprietors of the Old South Church discussed whether to "purchase the Organ now in the . . . Church."<sup>7</sup> It is noteworthy that in both instances the references are to completed instruments, one (possibly both) already in the building, perhaps on trial. This seems to indicate that they were among the organs built by Alley on speculation, with Balch's financial support. If so, it accounts for two of the "two or three" mentioned in 1834. A very good candidate for the third is found in nearby Haverhill, where in 1830 the Unitarian Church acquired an organ apparently by the same sort of "stock" or "rental" arrangement of financing used in the Newburyport churches. No builder's name is mentioned, but a few years later, in 1838, a payment was made to Joseph Alley for tuning, and it is highly likely that he was the builder.<sup>8</sup> Balch was a Unitarian, and may well have had connections with people in the church.

He had also decided that it was time for his own church to have a larger organ. The original instrument in the First Religious Society had been built by Josiah Leavitt of Boston in 1794 and was the second organ to be placed in a Newburyport church. It had served in the old Market Square meeting house and had been moved to the new building on Pleasant Street in 1801. Although of a single manual of seven stops,<sup>9</sup> it was

**1835 Joseph Alley, Newburyport, MA**  
**First Religious Society, Newburyport**

Reconstructed Stoplist

<b>GREAT</b> 58 notes, GGG, AAA – f <sup>3</sup>	<b>SWELL</b> 37 notes, F <sup>0</sup> – f <sup>3</sup>
8' <b>First Open Diapason</b>	8' <b>Open Diapason</b>
8' <b>Second Open Diapason</b>	8' <b>Stopped Diapason w&amp;m</b>
8' <b>Stopped Diapason w&amp;m</b>	8' <b>Stopped Bass 2lw</b>
8' <b>Dulciana</b>	4' <b>Principal</b>
4' <b>Principal</b>	4' <b>Flute ow</b>
4' <b>Flute chimney</b>	2' <b>Fifteenth</b>
2⅓' <b>Twelfth</b>	<b>III Cornet</b>
2' <b>Fifteenth</b>	8' <b>Hautboy</b>
1½' <b>Tierce</b>	
<b>III Sesquialtera</b>	
8' <b>Trumpet</b>	
8' <b>Cremona 37 pipes</b>	
<b>PEDAL</b> 12 notes, CC – C <sup>0</sup>	
16' <b>Sub Bass ow</b>	

possibly the largest organ Leavitt ever built and was housed in a handsome case: "Round the top of the pipes were festoons of crimson silk; above them, in large gold letters, was the motto, 'Praise Him with Organs'."<sup>10</sup>

Balch, however, was "desirous of having Mr. Alley build the largest and best organ in the country,"<sup>11</sup> and with Henry Titcomb furnished the necessary funds. Possibly also begun on speculation, the resulting organ was sold before its completion to the First Religious Society, to which Balch and Titcomb belonged, with the understanding that the price should be the actual cost (presumably Alley's backers were loath to make a profit from their own church). The Leavitt organ was advertised for sale in the late spring, and the new organ was supposed to be completed by October, but it may not have been actually finished until early in 1835. The cost was said to have been \$3,750.00, but it may have been more.<sup>12</sup>

One wonders whether Alley travelled to Boston to see some of the larger new organs there, for the handsome mahogany casework owes much to the designs that builders such as Appleton had developed by cross-fertilizing the design of the 1822 Elliot organ in the Old South Church with the local Greek Revival idiom. Alley's organ was rebuilt by George S. Hutchings in 1889, at which time some changes were made and the short-compass Swell was replaced by a full-compass Swell on a new chest, but most of the original pipes were retained, and from them it is possible to reconstruct the probable original stop list.

In 1830 Alley married Lucy B. Knowles of Seabrook, and the union proved highly productive, eventually resulting in at least thirteen offspring, eleven of whom were still living at the time of Alley's death in 1880 (one died in infancy). William Balch's eldest daughter Sarah (later Mrs. Frederick Beck), took an interest in the welfare of the growing Alley brood. Sometime around 1840, at her suggestion, a Boston merchant named Sturgis, who also seems to have subsidized some of Alley's work, told Alley "to build just such a house as he would like and he would pay all the bills."<sup>13</sup> Alley by no means took undue advantage of the offer, but built a simple two-story, six-room-plus-attic Greek Revival house at 2 Congress St. where he lived for the rest of his life. Alley's workshop, which included at least two employees, was originally at the foot of Market Street. Around the time that the organ for the First Religious Society was built he moved his workshop to a large frame storehouse on Brown's Wharf, where he remained until 1865.

Alley was by all accounts a scrupulously honest and fair individual, and this, along with the unquestioned high quality of his workmanship, seems to have won him the continued support of businessmen such as Balch, Titcomb, and Sturgis. The 1830s and 1840s appear to have been a period of considerable activity for Alley. If indeed he had built only four church organs (and perhaps some unrecorded chamber organs) by the end of 1834, his production must have picked up thereafter. Two decades later he is said to have built "in all thirty-four organs, some of large size."<sup>14</sup> Only a handful of church organs can be positively or speculatively identified from this period, however. In 1838 the South Church in Newburyport replaced their 1828 instrument, which must have been quite small, with a larger one identified in the church records as being Alley's work. This organ, which had cost \$1,400 plus the old organ, was taken in trade when a larger organ was purchased from E. & G. G. Hook in 1866. Another local instrument which may have been his work was installed early in 1841 at the Belleville Congregational Church. Probably it was quite small, for at the time of its destruction by fire in 1867, it was valued at only \$800.00.<sup>15</sup>

Alley is believed to have built several organs in Maine and one has been positively identified. It was installed in 1846 in Christ Episcopal Church, Gardiner, Maine, and may well have been the second largest organ he built. After its completion in Brown's Wharf workshop, it was exhibited in the traditional "open house" manner and "pronounced by competent judges to be one of the very best of these noble instruments ever con-

structed.”<sup>16</sup> One of the “judges” was Moses D. Randall, organist of the First Religious Society. The case was “in the Gothic style, and painted in imitation of oak.”

The interior of this organ was replaced and presumably destroyed in 1941, but the “Gothic” case remains in the church (housing a Möller organ) and is one of only two known remnants of Alley’s work, the other being the organ in the First Religious Society of Newburyport. Church records of towns in the Newburyport area may someday yield information about pre-1850 organs and identify the makers of a few instruments which cannot presently be attributed to a particular builder. These include the organ built in 1840 for the First Baptist Church of Haverhill (destroyed by fire in 1849); the organ known to have been in the First Parish Church of Newbury in 1849–50; the chamber organ belonging to Capt. James Horton of Newburyport which was loaned to the Main Street Congregational Church of Amesbury in 1854; and an organ dating possibly from 1845, known to have been in the Congress Street Baptist Church of Newburyport when it was sold in 1877. It is probable that some of these were by Alley, but even if all were, it would still leave nearly twenty instruments unaccounted for.

Not long after the completion of the Gardiner instrument, events radically changed the course of Alley’s life and work. Before discussing this phase of Alley’s career, however, some attention must be paid to Alley’s chief competitor in the pre-1850 period, Richard Pike Morss.

Morss was born in Newburyport on March 10, 1812, the son of Dr. James Morss, rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. In 1828, at the age of fourteen, he became organist of his father’s church, playing on the old “Brattle” organ, the small four-stop English chamber organ acquired in 1756 from King’s Chapel in Boston. He held the position for a decade, returning to it 1843–46, and again in 1855.

It has been assumed that young Morss apprenticed with Joseph Alley, whose workshop was but a few blocks walk from the rectory, although he is mentioned in a newspaper article of 1835 as have been “self taught, with an ear and taste peculiarly suited to [*organbuilding*], and a fondness devoted and untiring.”<sup>17</sup> His first known organ was built in 1833 for his father’s church and first used on Christmas Day of that year.<sup>18</sup> It probably had only one manual, but presumably more stops than the “Brattle” organ which it replaced. Morss rebuilt the

BARBARA OWEN



*Casework of 1846 Alley, Christ Church, Gardiner, ME*



*1838 Morss now in the Seabrook Historical Society, Seabrook, NH*



**1846 Joseph Alley, Newburyport, MA  
Christ Episcopal Church, Gardiner, ME**

**GREAT 58 notes**

**SWELL 37 notes**

8' Open Diapason Bass & Treble	16' Double St. Diapason
8' 2d Open Diapason 47w	8' Open Diapason
8' St. Diapason w&m	8' St. Diapason
8' Dulciana 37 pipes	8' Swell Bass 21 pipes
4' Principal	4' Principal
4' Flute 37w	III Cornet
2 3/4' Twelfth	8' Hautboy
2' Fifteenth	
8' Trumpet 47 pipes	
8' Cremona 37 pipes	

**PEDAL 17 notes**  
16' Sub Bass 12 pipes

**"Couplet to connect the Main Organ with the Swell"**

"Brattle" organ with a new case in mahogany veneer, new bellows and action, and a new keyboard, the last purchased from Calvin Edwards of Portland, Maine. The rebuilt organ was first offered to the South Church, but as it was probably constituted no improvement on that church's 1828 organ, it was declined.<sup>19</sup> It was finally sold in 1836 to St. John's Church in Portsmouth, N.H. for use in a chapel. In the early 20th century it was moved to the main church, and in 1965 restored by C. B. Fisk in the form in which Morss had left it.

Another rebuilding project by Morss had a less happy fate. When the 1794 Leavitt organ was removed from the First Religious Society in 1834, Morss acquired and rebuilt it with the addition of two stops and sold it to the First Parish Church of Belfast, Maine. It was shipped down the coast on the schooner *New Packet* which, alas, was shipwrecked off Franklin Island in May, 1835, with a total loss of ship and cargo. An account of this appearing in the handbook of the 1981 OHS convention assumes that the "Newburyport organ builder" referred to in the church history was Alley and that it was a new organ. That account also states, "As it was not to have been paid for until it was delivered, the church suffered no financial loss."<sup>20</sup> The same obviously, could not be said for Morss! A writer in the *Herald* expressed the hope "that they will still encourage the indefatigable efforts of our native townsman, as we can ensure them, from what he has already produced, an instrument second to none in point of tone, utility, beauty, and strength, when compared with any, at the same valuation in New England."<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, the Belfast church rather ungratefully bypassed New England entirely and purchased what may have been an already-completed organ from Henry Erben of New York, which arrived rather speedily in July of 1835.

No record has been found of the number of instruments Morss built or rebuilt in his lifetime, but two others are definitely attributable to him, and an additional two are almost certainly his work. In 1838 he was commissioned by Dr. Edward Dearborn and Mary Knight to build an organ costing about \$700.00 for the Line Congregational Church in Seabrook, N.H.<sup>22</sup> The organ remained in use there until about twenty years ago, when the three churches in Seabrook merged to form Trinity United Church, and the organ was moved to the

**1838 Richard P. Morss**

**Seabrook, NH, Historical Society, 1986**

**Line Congregational Church, Seabrook, NH**

Nomenclature reconstructed; existing labels spurious

**MANUAL CC - f<sup>3</sup>**

8' Open Diapason from TF
8' Stopped Diapason W to middle C, chimney flutes to top
8' Dulciana from TG
4' Principal
2 3/4' Twelfth
2' Fifteenth

**Principal Check** see text

**PEDAL 13 notes GGG-GG**  
5 pipes, GGG-BB, CC-GG coupled to manual; GGG plays 10 3/4' note  
Nomenclature reconstructed; existing labels spurious

church's parish hall. In the summer of 1986, it was moved across the street to a more desirable location in the former Baptist Church building, now the Seabrook Historical Society, and restored by the writer. Save for the addition of an electric blower it is unaltered, and a testimonial to Morss' excellent craftsmanship. There is no swell enclosure, but the organ has a rather ingenious "machine stop" which puts on or silences the upperwork and is adjustable in that the 4' Principal can be added or subtracted by a "Principal Check" knob. While the key compass is CC-f<sup>3</sup>, the 13-note pedalboard has a GGG-GG compass with the notes below CC playing an extension of the Stopped Diapason, perhaps to allow for the playing of music requiring the "long compass."

In the same account that credits Alley with the building of 34 organs by 1854, Morss is cited as the builder of the organ in the Prospect Street (Fourth) Church, whose proprietors in April of 1839 "voted and gave their permission that an Organ be placed in the meetinghouse and to make such alterations as is necessary to secure it."<sup>23</sup> This organ, too, seems to have been purchased by the "stock" method, for references to payments continue until 1847. Morss himself was organist of the church for at least the year of 1842. Nothing is known about the size or disposition of Morss' organ which disappeared when a sizable William Stevens organ was purchased by the church in 1864.

At least two other organs can probably be attributed to Morss. A photograph of the interior of St. James Episcopal Church in Amesbury taken late in the 19th century shows a small organ very similar in appearance to the Seabrook and rebuilt "Brattle" organs. It was at first assumed to be the 1833

COPY BY BARBARA OWEN



*The Morss organ at St. James, Amesbury, apparently acquired before 1847, was replaced in 1892.*

organ from St. Paul's in Newburyport since the two churches had close ties, and when St. Paul's Church purchased a new Hamill organ in 1866, "the old organ was removed from the loft over the vestibule and sold."<sup>24</sup> However, more recently Susan Armstrong discovered proof in the Vestry Minutes that St. James Church had in an older building an organ which was moved to a newer one in 1847 and is the instrument in the photograph. The style of the case and the connection with St. Paul's Church weighs strongly in favor of its having been Morss' work, although the actual date of its building is not known and it disappeared when the church bought a new Hutchings organ (Op. 272) in 1892. The other organ which has a strong Morss connection was installed in 1852 in the new building of the Whitefield Congregational Church, and almost immediately thereafter payments to Morss are found in the treasurer's records for tuning and "reping" the organ, although this too was an organ paid for by the "stock" or "rental" method. One unspecified payment was made to Morss' brother, Edward Bass Morss, who may have helped Richard on occasion — his name is found inside the "Brattle" organ.<sup>25</sup>



The same 1854 account which credits Morss with building the organ in the Prospect Street Church refers to him as “formerly in the business” of organbuilding.<sup>26</sup> His name does not appear in the city directories until 1855, at which time he is listed as “organ and pianoforte tuner” with a workshop on State St. and a home on the corner of Eagle and Carter Streets. Possibly the economic climate and competition from the large Boston firms made him decide against continuing as a builder. The Hall & Labagh letters now in the OHS Archives reveal that as early as the spring of 1844 Morss was seeking other alternatives. Apparently he had written to Hall (and perhaps other builders) seeking employment, but Hall was not at all encouraging:

You are no doubt aware of the competition that has sprung up within the last few years has reduced the price of organs so much that it is hardly worth while to go intensively into the bus[iness] of building so that for the pres[ent] at least I shall not think of making any additions to my establishment.<sup>27</sup>

Morss obviously elected to remain in his native city, and perhaps the addition of piano tuning to his occupation is what made this economically feasible. He seems indeed not to have built any organs after the early 1850's, although payments made to him in 1859 by the Second Presbyterian Church suggest that he helped Hook install the organ there.<sup>28</sup> Like Alley, he had connections in Maine and may have developed a tuning route in that state, for in June of 1855 he is recorded as having

tuned the Appleton organ in the Unitarian Church of Bangor.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, he may have been on a tuning trip when he died suddenly of unspecified causes in Portland on October 23, 1860. His funeral was held two days later in St. Paul's Church.<sup>30</sup>

Alley outlived Morss by a score of years, but his life and work were also changing during the 1840s and 1850s. He is said to have built 34 organs by 1854, but his obituary in 1880 credits him with only four more than this. Competition from Boston may well account for a good part of this situation—most of the organs installed in Newburyport churches after 1850 came from George or William Stevens or the Hooks—but Alley's involvement with the ill-starred Euharmonic Organ was surely a factor also.

Until well into the 1840s the standard tuning for organs in England and America (save for the small German-speaking enclave in Pennsylvania) was a modified form of meantone. As early as the 1830s piano tuners were experimenting with “well-tempered” tuning systems such as Young's and Lord Stanhope's, but in this same period Thomas Appleton of Boston carefully copied into his account book the meantone tuning scheme used by the English builders Flight and Robson. Henry Knauff of Philadelphia is said to have begun using equal temperament in 1847, followed by William B. D. Simmons of Boston in 1849, and by the mid-1850s this tuning was routinely used by all the east coast organ builders and piano tuners.

Just as we today must take time to adjust our ears to tunings other than equal temperament, so must the transition from meantone to equal temperament have required getting used to. Indeed, with its complete lack of any pure intervals other than the unison, equal temperament must have been disturbing to many. It is not surprising, then, that this transition period saw a rash of experimentation in England and America with keyboard instruments (organs in particular) which would preserve the pure thirds of meantone and even add the pure Pythagorean fifths while accommodating the remote keys and chromaticism which increasingly characterized 19th-century music and cause the meantone “wolf” to howl his worst.

The wolf seems to have been tormenting Alley's ears as early as 1842, according to an account given much later by Charles Hodge Hudson, William Balch's nephew and sometime clerk. Hudson, examining an organ just completed in Alley's workshop, commented that building such a fine instrument



The 1838 Morss keydesk. The 13-note pedalboard is above left.



1867-88 Alley reed organ in H. W. Poole's "euharmonic" keyboard design of 37 keys to the octave

must afford great satisfaction. To his surprise, Alley retorted, "Satisfaction? I have no satisfaction in it . . . because it is imperfect." The imperfection was not in the construction, but in the tuning: "Everybody says it is not possible to make an organ that can be played in perfect tune. I don't believe it, but I don't know how to do it."<sup>31</sup> Hudson put Alley in touch with his brother Henry, then a student at Cambridge College with an interest in musical physics. A lively correspondence ensued which came to a dead end when Henry discovered that others had tried and failed to make a keyboard instrument that played in pure intonation.

Matters might have ended there had Alley not a few years later come in contact with a brilliant young engineer named Henry Ward Poole. Born September 13, 1925 in Danvers, Mass., Poole entered Yale University at the age of fifteen, where he devoured books in the college library at a rate that alarmed both the librarian and his professors. He excelled in scientific subjects, and after graduation worked as a geologist, surveyor, mining engineer, and astronomer. As if this were not enough, he became interested in music and began to build a chamber organ for himself at his home in Danvers. This progressed well until metal pipes were needed, and for these he went to the organ builder in nearby Newburyport. Very likely Alley discussed with this young scientist his dissatisfaction with impure tuning, for Poole began to read up on the subject and quickly plunged into scientific experiments with "monochords, and horns."<sup>32</sup>

Soon Alley and Poole were collaborating on an instrument which both hoped would realize their shared dream of perfect intonation, although one wonders what (if any) financial backing they may have had. According to one account, it "was built quietly, and at some personal sacrifice."<sup>33</sup> Their instrument, christened the "Euharmonic Organ," was completed in the fall of 1849, the same year which saw the completion of a similar project by Dr. Perronet Thompson of England.

The Euharmonic Organ had a normal keyboard, but each stop had 36 pipes to the octave, and keys could be changed by the use of "selector" pedals: "When a modulation was made to another key, the pedal of that key was pressed, which raised the former pedal and brought under the player's control all the pipes needed in the new key."<sup>34</sup> A complex design for the selector mechanism involving direct connection to the keys was patented on July 3, 1849, but from the description of the completed organ, it would seem that a simpler system of chest sliders was employed. This had in fact been advocated by Dr. Edward Hodges in correspondence once in the Library of the Yale Music School and now apparently lost. In this same correspondence Hodges repeatedly raised questions about the limitations on keys (you could not go beyond five flats or sharps) and chords ("What kind of flat 9th do you get?") and wondered whether there would be a momentary cessation of sound when the selectors were operated.<sup>35</sup> Thomas Hall, in a letter of 1850, mentions a visit Poole had made to Hodges to discuss the Euharmonic Organ: ". . . whenever Dr. Hodges pointed out difficulties in the modulations which were not provided for by Mr. Poole he would reply, 'Oh but on my organ I would play that chord so' doing it in direct violation of the rules of harmony and musical grammar."<sup>36</sup> Hodges remained as skeptical as he had been in his letters to Poole, and Hall observed that "although Dr. Hodges would by no means wish to have an Euharmonic Organ in his church, yet he would like to see one put up somewhere as a matter of curiosity and where he might go and amuse himself with it."

The completed organ was set up in Rev. James Freeman Clarke's Indiana Place Chapel in Boston, where it was regularly used for fifteen years, and where, for a short time at least, it was indeed a matter of curiosity which was visited by a number of musicians and journalists eager for novelty. It is not known whether it was actually sold to the church or simply loaned by the builders. It had a simple Gothic-style pine case





*Unidentified organ installed second-hand in People's Methodist Church, 1862, probably the work of Alley*

grained to imitate walnut which was nine feet square and sixteen feet tall, but contained only the following stops:

MANUAL	PEDAL
8' Open Diapason	16' Double Stopped Diapason
8' Stopped Diapason	
4' Principal	
8' Trumpet	

It is said to have been later rebuilt by William Stevens and sold to some other church.

Many who heard or played the Euharmonic Organ praised its purity and the fact that it remained in tune remarkably well. The most vocal proponents were, interestingly, scientists, perhaps justifying H. B. Saroni's opinion that "The nature of the invention is such that it has a peculiar attraction for all those who want to reduce our musical system to mathematical certainties."<sup>37</sup> Organists tended to approach it with some caution. W. S. B. Mathews found it "extremely delightful," but A. U. Hayter disapproved on the grounds that "it obliged him to be too careful,"<sup>38</sup> although the organ builders Hook and Appleton were said to have "candidly acknowledged . . . its merits" and piano manufacturer Jonas Chickering even "believed that it would supersede the common organ."<sup>39</sup>

Although it received considerable attention and press coverage in 1850, interest in the Euharmonic Organ rather quickly died down as the musical world turned its attention to newer curiosities. Alley and Poole had of course hoped for orders to come flooding in, but this did not occur. In 1852 Poole tried to interest the trustees of Boston Music Hall in an Euharmonic Organ with no success. Only one church—the North Church in

New Haven—is known to have shown serious interest in an Euharmonic Organ, but perhaps due to the cost or the question of whether a large enough instrument could be built in this manner, they eventually opted for what Poole termed an "old style" organ, built by Hall & Labagh.<sup>40</sup>

Nonetheless Alley and Poole were already at work on a second Euharmonic Organ, slightly different from the first and having 38 pipes to the octave. Put on display in the Newburyport City Hall, it was offered to a local church in 1854 but refused, and in 1856 Poole tried unsuccessfully to sell it to a Boston church. In autumn of the same year Poole departed, having secured an engineering position in Mexico. Alley was left to cope with the unsold organ and with criticism. Some of this criticism appeared in a New York periodical shortly after Poole's departure, and Alley responded with a passionate rebuttal which showed that he brooked no compromise with what he termed "the Divine Code." After addressing every comment and criticism in minute detail, he concluded by referring to equal temperament as "one of the many inventions that man has sought out to evade the truth, and the trouble of complying with the laws of Nature."<sup>41</sup>

To how many churches he offered the second Euharmonic Organ is unknown, but a letter of May, 1863, survives in the records of Central Church, Lawrence, Mass., which describes the instrument:

My organ is still in City Hall unsold. I should be very glad to sell it, my price for it is two Thousand Dollars, it has cost much more than that, its high /sic/ is 16 feet width 11 feet 4 inches depth and 7 feet

2 inches, it has six stops.

Open Diapason  
Principal  
Dulciana  
Fifteenth  
Trumpet

The key board is from G to F 59 keys the Dulciana a half stop 3 octaves, the Trumpet one Octave short, it has no Swell no Sub Bass.<sup>42</sup>

This organ was still in City Hall in 1867, but by 1889 it was reported that "it was finally disposed of to a religious society in Boston."<sup>43</sup> Which one it was is, alas, unknown.

Although Poole had departed and no customers seemed forthcoming, Alley was plainly and even stubbornly committed to the Euharmonic Organ, which he believed in with all his heart and soul. From 1851 to 1865 he is listed in the City Directory as "enharmonic [*sic*] organ builder," and on an 1856 topographical map of Essex County his building on Brown's Wharf is identified with the legend: "Jos. Alley, Invent. & Build. of Euharmonic Organs." Although the numerical difference between the 1854 and 1880 accounts of his output suggests that he may have built four organs between these dates, another source states that by 1869 his work consisted only of making organ pipes and that "he gave up the building of Organs because he could not construct instruments so very imperfect, and has for years been making perfect pipes for the organ manufacturers of other cities to put out of tune to meet the demands of the 'Wolf.'"<sup>44</sup>

Of all Alley's many children, only his eldest son, Joseph Jr., (b. 1832) entered his profession, working for his father as a pipemaker from 1855. His son Frank (1842-1902), a bookkeeper by profession, inherited his father's love of music and was choir director for several years at the First Religious Society, and another son, Henry (1835-1908) achieved fame as an apiarist, being the first in the world to successfully breed queen bees. In 1866 Alley gave up his Brown's Wharf workshop but continued to make pipes with Joseph Jr. in a shed behind his Congress St. home. In July of 1871 he was tragically deprived of his only helper when his son's mutilated body was found floating in the Merrimac River—a mysterious death that was apparently never solved.

Poole made a sudden reappearance in 1867, with a design for a new keyboard having 37 keys to the octave, which he patented the following year. He seems to have wanted his old collaborator to build a pipe organ to his scheme, but Alley was plainly in no position to do so, having given up his large

workshop a year earlier. He did build a modest reed organ with the new keyboard, however, and after its completion Poole departed for Mexico again, never to return.

It is not known whether Alley tried to sell the reed organ, but in any event he did not, and it was still in his possession at the time of his death. His son Frank later lent it to Prof. Charles R. Cross at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and its later history is not known.

One of the criticisms of the earlier Euharmonic Organs was that the number of keys in which they could play was limited, and that chromatic passages were difficult to negotiate. In an article written in 1877, Alley noted that with the new keyboard one could play easily in 26 major and 13 minor scales.<sup>45</sup> Word of the reed organ crossed the ocean, and Alley was invited to exhibit it at the Crystal Palace in London. He was unwilling, or, more likely, unable to do this, although he cherished the honor of the request. The novel keyboard did have some influence on other experimenters, however. Collin Brown of Glasgow used an adaptation of it in several instruments, one of which is currently in a museum in Tacoma, Washington, and a simplified version, called the "Harmon" was made in the 1880s by J. P. White, a Boston piano tuner. His third such instrument is now owned by the New England Conservatory of Music, but is presently unplayable.

Joseph Alley's death from heart failure on March 8, 1880, ended the final chapter of Newburyport's organbuilding history, although in the real sense it had ended a quarter century earlier. Richard Pike Morss had, even before his death in 1860 at the age of 48, given up organ building for what was probably the more secure profession of a tuner, and Alley's almost fanatical preoccupation with the unsuccessful Euharmonic Organ brought his own building career to an end at about the same time, even though he continued to make pipes for other builders. With the exception of Alley's large organ in the First Religious Society and Morss' small instrument in rural Seabrook, all of the local work by these builders was replaced by larger instruments in the decade 1859-69 when a record fourteen organs were installed in Newbury and Newburyport churches. Only one of these was second-hand. Installed in 1862 in People's Methodist Church, its picture suggests that it was locally-made, possibly by Alley, but its provenance is presently unknown, and it was in turn replaced by a larger second-hand organ in 1910. It represents one of several unanswered questions in the work in progress on Newburyport's early organ history.

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# The 1987 OHS Convention

by Alan Laufman



*First Religious Society, Newburyport*

**N**EWBURY, BYFIELD, AMESBURY, Haverhill, Portsmouth, Ipswich, Essex, Manchester, Gloucester. The names are evocative, suggesting to us as they did to the early settlers, places in England. The land north of Boston, around Newburyport, Massachusetts, seems timeless; it is, more accurately, as though caught in a different time. To be sure, Interstate 95 slices through it, a reminder of the present, but even a few hundred feet from the highway, a visitor may feel as though the year might be 1687, not 1987. In a mysterious, even slightly unsettling way, the countryside itself is different from the surrounding area. It seems curiously veiled; the very light is secretive, reserved.

The region is beautiful: gently rolling downs, ancient farms, woodlands, salt marshes, and old port towns. Boston, thirty miles to the south, is close enough to be convenient but far enough away not to impinge on the rural atmosphere of the district. It is in this lovely setting of Essex County, Massachusetts, that the 1987 OHS Convention is scheduled to meet, 10-14 August.

We will visit instruments built by most of the major Boston builders of the last half of the nineteenth century, as well as those built by some lesser-known artisans, and several imports, the most famous being the much-travelled "Brattle Organ."

Newburyport itself was an early center of organbuilding as described in this issue by Barbara Owen, though few examples of work from the period remain. The convention will start Monday evening, after several pre-convention events, with a recital on the organ in the Unitarian Church of Newburyport. As far as we know, it is, even though much altered, the only extant work of Joseph Alley, an early Newburyport builder.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL VAN PELT



*Newburyport organs: above, 1867 Wm. Stevens at Belleville Congregational; right, 1866 E. & G. G. Hook, Old South Presbyterian (Stoplist, p. 42)*









ca. 1874 Geo. Stevens, St. Patrick's, Hampton Beach, NH

Dating from 1834, it was rebuilt in 1889 by Geo. S. Hutchings, his opus 187, and altered again in 1956 and 1974. The handsome Alley casework is intact, and many Alley ranks survive. (The organ is described in *The Tracker*, 2:1.) Later in the convention we will visit a small organ built in 1838 by another Newburyport builder, Richard P. Morss, and now in the Historical Society building in Seabrook, New Hampshire, where it was recently relocated and restored by Barbara Owen. She will present a lecture on early organs and organbuilders of Newburyport during the convention.

One group of Boston builders labored (in the words of Barbara Owen) "in the shadow of the giants." Our survey of their work will include an 1865 S. S. Hamill, now in West Newbury, but built originally for the Congregational Church in Groveland, and the 1908 J. D. Brennan organ that replaced it there. J. D. Brennan was a successor to Geo. H. Ryder. (The Brennan organ, a well-made tracker, underwent tonal alterations by Wilson Barry in 1970.) We will visit a dandy little Geo. H. Ryder organ in Byfield, opus 32 (1875), an instrument which might well have taken its inspiration from S. S. Hamill, who specialized in "Giant Organs." The Ryder organ has but five ranks; listening to it with your eyes closed, you might well suppose that it has twice or three times that. Joel Butler was an early partner of Geo. H. Ryder; his elegant 1876 instrument in

the Congregational Church in Georgetown, somewhat altered tonally by the Andover Organ Co. in 1967, has some Ryder characteristics.

Two of the major builders, George Stevens and his brother William, working in East Cambridge, built rather conservative instruments in the period from 1833 to 1892, and we will visit several of those. One of the most unusual is the 1867 William Stevens organ in the Belleville Congregational Church in Newburyport. Although it was electrified some years ago and has undergone substantial tonal alteration, its spectacular Moorish Revival case alone is worth a visit. A completely original William Stevens organ of 1863 is in St. Anna's Chapel at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Newburyport. The large one-manual instrument is enclosed in a chamber behind a simple grille; there are no display pipes.

St. Patrick's Church at Hampton Beach houses a handsome George Stevens organ built around 1874 for some other church; research thus far has failed to reveal its original home. We know little about the New England organbuilding career of John Roberts, who later worked in Philadelphia, but it is possible that he may have worked with George or William Stevens before striking out on his own. We will visit his small organ of 1853, built in Cambridgeport, at the Trinity United Church in Seabrook, New Hampshire. The Congregational Church in Lanesville is the home of a c. 1855 Stevens & Jewett organ built originally for Trinity Congregational Church in Gloucester. It was somewhat altered tonally by C. B. Fisk around 1965; we will visit it during the optional Friday tour.

Another major Boston builder whose work we will see on Friday is William B. D. Simmons. Sadly, little of his often innovative work survives anywhere, and the large two-manual instrument of ca. 1850 which we will see at the Temple Ahavath Achem in Gloucester, is unused, mostly hidden behind a screen

1866 E. & G. G. Hook, Boston, MA, Op. 396			
1973 Restored by Andover Organ Co., Methuen, MA			
Old South Presbyterian Church, Newburyport, MA			
GREAT 56 notes		SWELL 56 notes	
16 ft. Bourdon Treble TC w	8 ft. Op. Diap. TC m	8 ft. Op. Diap. TC m	
16 ft. Bourdon Bass 12w	8 ft. Æolina 56w&m	8 ft. Æolina 56w&m	
8 ft. Op. Diap. 56, 1-20 in case	8 ft. St. Diap. Treble TC w	8 ft. St. Diap. Treble TC w	
8 ft. Keraulophon Treble TC m	8 ft. St. Diap. Bass 12w	8 ft. St. Diap. Bass 12w	
8 ft. Keraulophon Bass 12m	4 ft. Violina 56m	4 ft. Violina 56m	
8 ft. Viol da Gamba TC m	4 ft. Flauto Traverso 56w	4 ft. Flauto Traverso 56w	
8 ft. Melodia TC w	2 ft. Piccolo 56m	2 ft. Piccolo 56m	
8 ft. St. Diap. Bass 12w	8 ft. Oboe TC m	8 ft. Oboe TC m	
4 ft. Octave 56m	8 ft. Bassoon 12m	8 ft. Bassoon 12m	
4 ft. Flute Harmonique 56m	8 ft. Clarionet TC m	8 ft. Clarionet TC m	
2 1/2 ft. Twelfth 56m			
2 ft. Fifteenth 56m			
II Mixture 112m			
8 ft. Trumpet Treble TC			
8 ft. Trumpet Bass 12			
8 ft. Krum Horn TC m			
PEDALE 25 notes		Tremulant	
16 ft. D'ble Op. Diap. 25			
16 ft. D'ble St. Diap. 25			
		COUPLERS	
		Swell to Great	
		Great to Pedale	
		Pedal Check	
		Bellows Signal	
		Swell to Pedale	
		PEDAL MOVEMENTS	
		Great, Piano, Forte	

and barely playable, but still worthy of a visit. The nearby Our Lady of Good Voyage Church houses an essentially new mechanical-action organ built by Jeremy Cooper in 1982, using many parts relocated through the Organ Clearing House, including some pipes from an 1849 E. & G. G. Hook, opus 95, and a ca. 1860 Simmons case.

Other new organs to be visited are a 1974 C. B. Fisk, opus 62, at Ascension Memorial Episcopal Church in Ipswich; a one-manual 1985 Darren Wissinger at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Lanesville; a 1974 Andover, opus 74, at the Congregational Church in Rockport; and a 1987 Jeremy Adams instrument at the Village Church in Annisquam.

The most famous of the imported organs we will visit is the so-called "Brattle Organ," built around 1700 in England. For many years at King's Chapel in Boston and later at St. Paul's





*1861 Hook, Op. 298, Manchester, MA*

Episcopal Church in Newburyport, it is now housed at St. John's Episcopal Church in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where it was carefully restored by C. B. Fisk in 1965. Extensive research thus far has failed to reveal the original builder. A more recent import is the ca. 1905 Geo. Kilgen & Son instrument at Sacred Heart Church, Amesbury. Relocated through the Organ Clearing House from a church in Minnesota, the organ was completely restored by Thomas Rench in 1985. Yet another recently relocated instrument is at St. Anne's Church in Salem. This 1885 W. K. Adams & Son tracker was removed by the Organ Clearing House from a closed church in Providence, Rhode Island, and was rebuilt and enlarged in 1986 for the Salem church by the Hawkes Organ Co. Still another transplanted instrument is the 1896 Hook & Hastings, opus 1730, built for the Universalist Church in Arlington, Massachusetts, relocated through the Organ Clearing House, and rebuilt by the Andover Organ Co. in 1965 for the Unitarian-Universalist Church in Haverhill.

Among the major Boston firms must be numbered Geo. S. Hutchings and its predecessor, Hutchings, Plaisted & Co., and of course E. & G. G. Hook (and its successor firms), to whose work we will devote almost an entire day. In addition to the Hutchings rebuild of the Alley, mentioned above, we will visit a transplanted Hutchings, Plaisted & Co. instrument, opus 60, (1875), at Immaculate Conception Church in Newburyport. This instrument, built for a church in the Roxbury section of Boston, was relocated through the Organ Clearing House and installed in its new home by Henri Lahaise & Sons in 1980. We will also hear the 1893 Geo. S. Hutchings, opus 321, rebuilt by C. B. Fisk in 1961, in Independent Christian Church in Gloucester.

The "Hook day" will include a visit to the Essex Institute in Salem, where we will hear George G. G. Hook's "opus 1," built in 1827, and have the opportunity to browse through a special

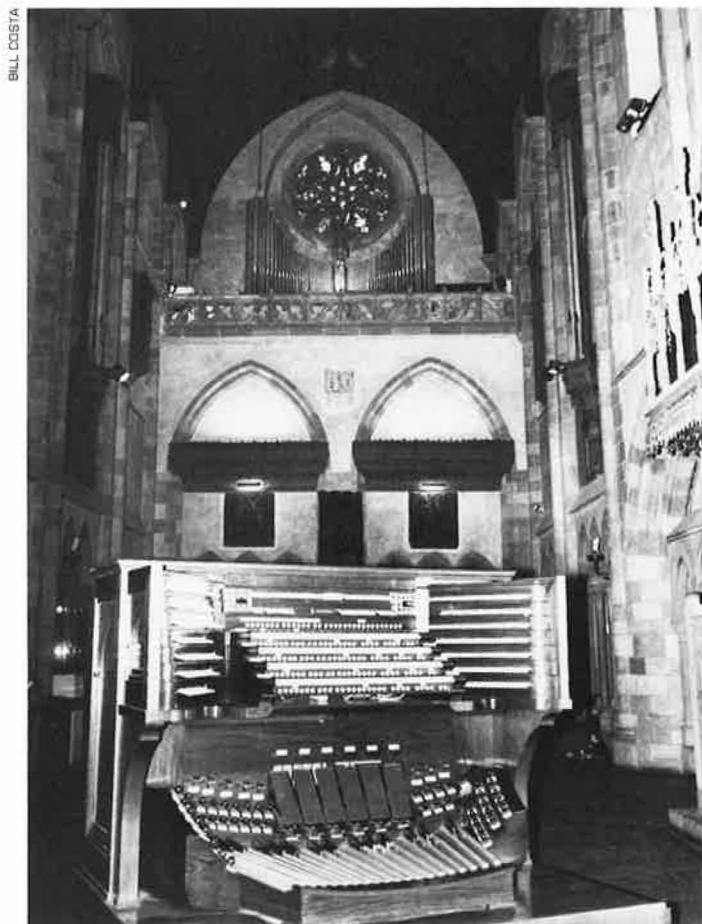
Hook exhibit. Other Hook organs scheduled for visits that day are opus 298 (1861), in the Congregational Church at Manchester, Massachusetts; opus 406 (1867), in the Methodist Church in Ipswich; and opus 925 (1878), in the Village Church, Nahant (an E. & G. G. Hook & Hastings with wonderfully fanciful carvings on the case). The day will end with a major recital on opus 396 (1866), a large two-manual instrument faithfully restored by the Andover Organ Co. at the Old South Presbyterian Church in Newburyport.

Other instruments which we will visit from the later period of the Hook firm, include an 1885 Hook & Hastings, opus 1267, restored by George Bozeman, Jr., & Company after a fire; and a 1916 Hook & Hastings, opus 2377, tonally altered by C. B. Fisk in 1963, in the Pigeon Cove Chapel at Pigeon Cove. Yet another is a transplant, Hook & Hastings opus 1622 (1894), recently relocated through the Organ Clearing House from Ticonderoga, New York, to Trinity Congregational Church in Gloucester and enlarged for that church by the Hawkes Organ Co.

There are, alas, virtually no E. M. Skinner organs left intact in the area; we will have to wait for the Bay area Convention next year to see those. But we will visit an unusual 1913 Estey organ, opus 1108, at the Masonic Hall in Haverhill, and of course we are looking forward to hearing the famous Hammond Castle organ in Gloucester, recently equipped with a new console built by the E. M. Skinner Co. of East Kingston, New Hampshire.

We will have two educational slide lectures during the Convention: one by Barbara Owen, referred to earlier, and another, presented by Susan Armstrong-Ouelette, on composer and organist Everett Titcomb, given at St. James Episcopal Church in Amesbury, his home parish. We will also hear a concert by the Apollo Consortium, given at the 1785 Rock Hill Meetinghouse in Amesbury.

Now, all this may seem like a bit much, until you consider that included above are an optional tour on Monday the 10th and an organ crawl on Friday the 14th. For those who still have



*Organ of the Hammond Castle, Gloucester, with new console*



**Right:** 1875 Hutchings, Plaisted at Immaculate Conception Church, Newburyport, as installed by Henry Lahaise & Sons. **Below:** 1885 W. K. Adams, rebuilt and enlarged by Tim Hawkes in 1986 for St. Anne's, Salem. **Far right:** 1982 Jeremy Cooper in Simmons case at Our Lady of Good Voyage, Gloucester. **Bottom right:** 1878 E. & G. G. Hook & Hastings, Op. 925 in the Village Church, Nahant, with the crest of the donors, the Appletons, in detail.

not had enough, we will arrange another tour on Saturday, to visit two player organs in Boston, an E. M. Skinner and an AEolian, beautifully restored by Nelson Barden and located in his studio, as well as the 1983 Bozeman-Gibson & Co. organ, opus 23, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Brookline. Other organs available for visits that day include two Clearing House instruments: an 1865 E. & G. G. Hook, opus 523, restored by Richard Nickerson in 1985 at the first Parish Church in Arlington, as well as a 1985 Angerstein & Associates retrackerization and tonal reconstruction of an 1899 Geo. S. Hutchings, opus 495, at the Pleasant St. Congregational Church in Arlington.

Headquarters for the 1987 Convention is Governor Dummer Academy in Byfield, Massachusetts, a boarding school founded in 1763. The school has an ample exhibit area and a large dining hall. The living quarters are simple, but clean, neat, and comfortable (unlike some dormitory facilities we have had to use in the past). Accommodations are limited; there are two hundred beds on campus, and we have reserved all of them. They will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis.









Newburyport is a colonial seaport city that has been restored to reflect the opulence of its Federal period. As a charming town of cobblestone lanes and elegant buildings by the water, it attracts many tourists to its small hotels and inns every summer. Thus, registration for the convention requires an immediate response for the limited dormitory space or for accommodations at a non-convention hotel or inn. Please consult your registration packet, which will be sent in May, for details.



1867 Hook, Methodist Church, Ipswich, below, in its original setting; above, after "colonialization"

1875 Hutchings, Plaisted & Co., Op. 60, Boston  
1980 Revised & installed by Henri Lahaise & Sons  
Immaculate Conception Church, R. C., Newburyport, MA

<b>GREAT</b> 61 notes	<b>PEDAL</b> 27 notes
8 ft. Open Diapason 61m	16 ft. Bourdon. 27w
8 ft. Dolcissimo 61m	8 ft. Flote 27w
8 ft. Melodia. 61w	<b>Pedal Check</b>
4 ft. Octave. 61m	<b>COUPLERS</b>
4 ft. Flute d'Amour 61w&m	Swell to Great.
2 1/2 ft. Octave Quint. 61m	Great to Pedals.
2 ft. Super Octave 61 m	Swell to Pedals.
II-III Mixture new 147m	Swell to Great 4'
8 ft. Trompete. 61m	<b>PEDAL MOVEMENTS</b>
<b>SWELL</b> 61 notes, enclosed	2 disconnected Gr. piano
16 ft. Bourdon Treble. TC 49w	& forte pedals
16 ft. Bourdon Bass. unenc. 12w	Great to Pedal reversible
8 ft. Violin Diapason. 61w&m	Swell Tremolo (h. d.)
8 ft. Salicional. 49m, 1-12 from Vio. Dia.	
8 ft. Stopped Diapason. 61w&m	
4 ft. Flute Harmonique 61m	
2 ft. Flageolet 61m, old 4' Spitz Viola	
8 ft. Oboe. TC 49m	
8 ft. Bassoon 12m	

Your 1987 Convention Committee has planned a week of varied fare, designed to illustrate many different styles of organbuilding in a part of the country rich in organ history. The region offers many other attractions as well, and you may well want to plan on spending additional time in the area. We look forward to welcoming you.







1785 Rock Hill Meeting House, Amesbury

## MINUTES

### National Council Meeting Newark, NJ

20 February 1987

**Call to Order** The meeting was called to order by the President at 10:00 a.m. Present were James Hammann, Dana Hull, Richard Jones, Scott Kent, Barbara Owen, John Panning, Roy Redman, Elizabeth Schmitt, Executive Director William Van Pelt and Archivist Stephen Pinel.

**Report of Secretary** The minutes of the previous meeting of 16-17 October were altered by deleting the second sentence of the Research and Publication paragraph ("It suggests . . . society."); the Minutes were approved as altered (m-Redman, s-Owen, v-unan).

**Report of Treasurer** David Barnett submitted a detailed report showing continued improvement in the Society's finances and the current membership figure, now at 2,374. The motion to accept was carried (m-Jones, s-Hammann, v-unan).

**Report of Executive Director** Bill Van Pelt outlined his efforts to publicize the plight of Immaculate Conception, Boston. He also noted that the advertising format of *The Tracker* may be changed from two columns to three. A discussion ensued regarding possible ways to shorten the delay in the production of *The Tracker*.

#### Reports of Councillors

**Organizational Concerns** John Panning presented a report detailing proposed amendments to the current Bylaws. After lengthy discussion it was agreed that John will tabulate all the additions to the proposed amendments from this meeting and mail them to the members of Council for approval before ballots are mailed to Society membership.

**Education** Roy Redman presented a report from Julie Stephens announcing this year's E. Power Biggs Fellows: Todd Sisley of Ann Arbor, MI and Brian Bagdanowitz of Fort NJ. Earl Miller also submitted a report listing the two recent concerts in the Historic Organ Recital Series. Bill Van Pelt noted that a new slide/tape program is being put together.

**Research and Publications** In connection with the operation of the Research Committee, it was moved, "that all Archive Fellowship Grant applications be forwarded to Stephen Pinel, and that he appoint a committee to review them for approval" (m-Owen, s-Schmitt, v-unan). Reports indicating normal activity were received from the di-tors off *The Tracker* and the Organ Handbook. The next installment of the Editors Series is about to be released.

**Conventions** Two motions were approved regarding the Society's Conventions: "that a letter of appreciation be sent to the Iowa Chapter and a request be made for the surplus funds" (m-Redman, s-Schmitt, v-Y: Hammann, Jones, Kent, Owen, Redman, Schmitt; Abs.: Panning); and "that the Convention Policy and Management Manual be revised to define all pre- and post-Convention activities as part of the actual Convention" (m-Kent, s-Owen, v-unan).

**Finance and Development** Jim Hammann was notified that our NEH grant application has been turned down. We will submit a new application this year. A possible PBS documentary about the OHS and its work was shelved by WGTE-TV, Toledo, OH; Jim is investigating other possibilities for this project.

**Historical Concerns** Barbara Owen presented a report from Timothy Smith, new chair of the Historic Organs Committee, as well as the information that the new Southwest Extant Organs list is in the final stages of production. Stephen Pinel outlined recent acquisitions by the OHS Archives. In this connection, it was moved "that Council extend warm thanks and appreciation to Westminster Choir College for their invaluable assistance in the building up of the OHS Archives" (m-Redman, s-Owen, v-unan).

#### NEW BUSINESS

In response to a request for temporary loan of materials from the Archives, it was moved "that, in this circumstance, Council regretfully declines the request of William Czelusniak for archival materials until specific guidelines can be formulated for the loan and display of such materials" (m-Jones, s-Owen, v-unan).

The American Institute of Organbuilders has expressed an interest in depositing its Archives in OHS Archives; Jim Hammann will pursue this.

It was moved that Council resolve itself into a committee of the whole (m-Owen, s-Kent, v-unan). Council left the committee of the whole with the motion, "that, in view of the lateness of the Nominating Committee report, write-in candidate petitions be accepted until 45 days following the publishing of the slate to the membership" (m-Hammann, s-Owen, v-unan).

**Adjournment** The next meeting will be held immediately before the Newburyport Convention, 10 August 1987. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

John A. Panning, Secretary





Built into a 1901 Hook & Hastings case at First Baptist, Newton, Massachusetts, by the Andover Organ Company last year, this 1865 E. & G. G. Hook will be heard at the OHS Convention, August 10-15. Turn to page 40 for a preview.