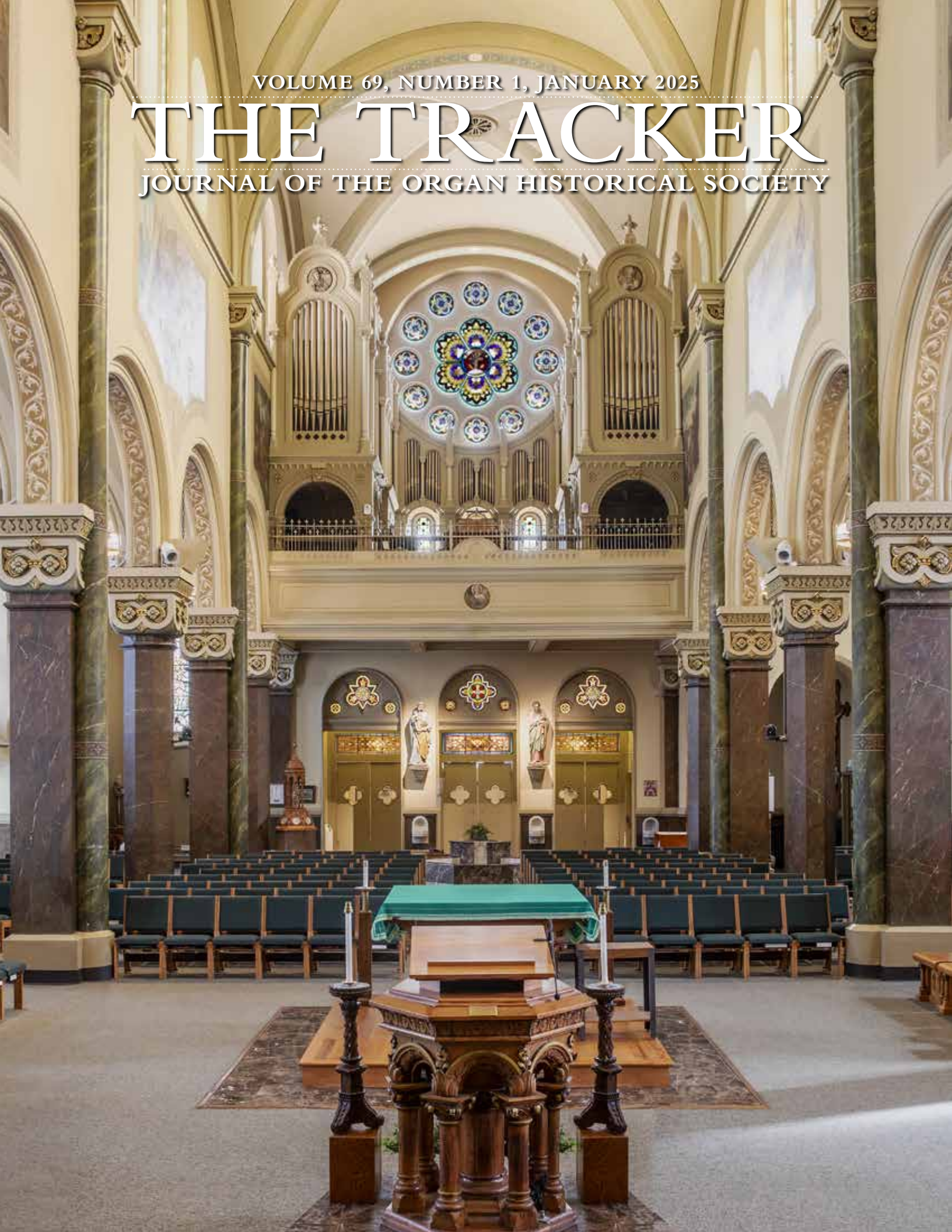
VOLUME 69, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 2025

THE TRACKER

JOURNAL OF THE ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY





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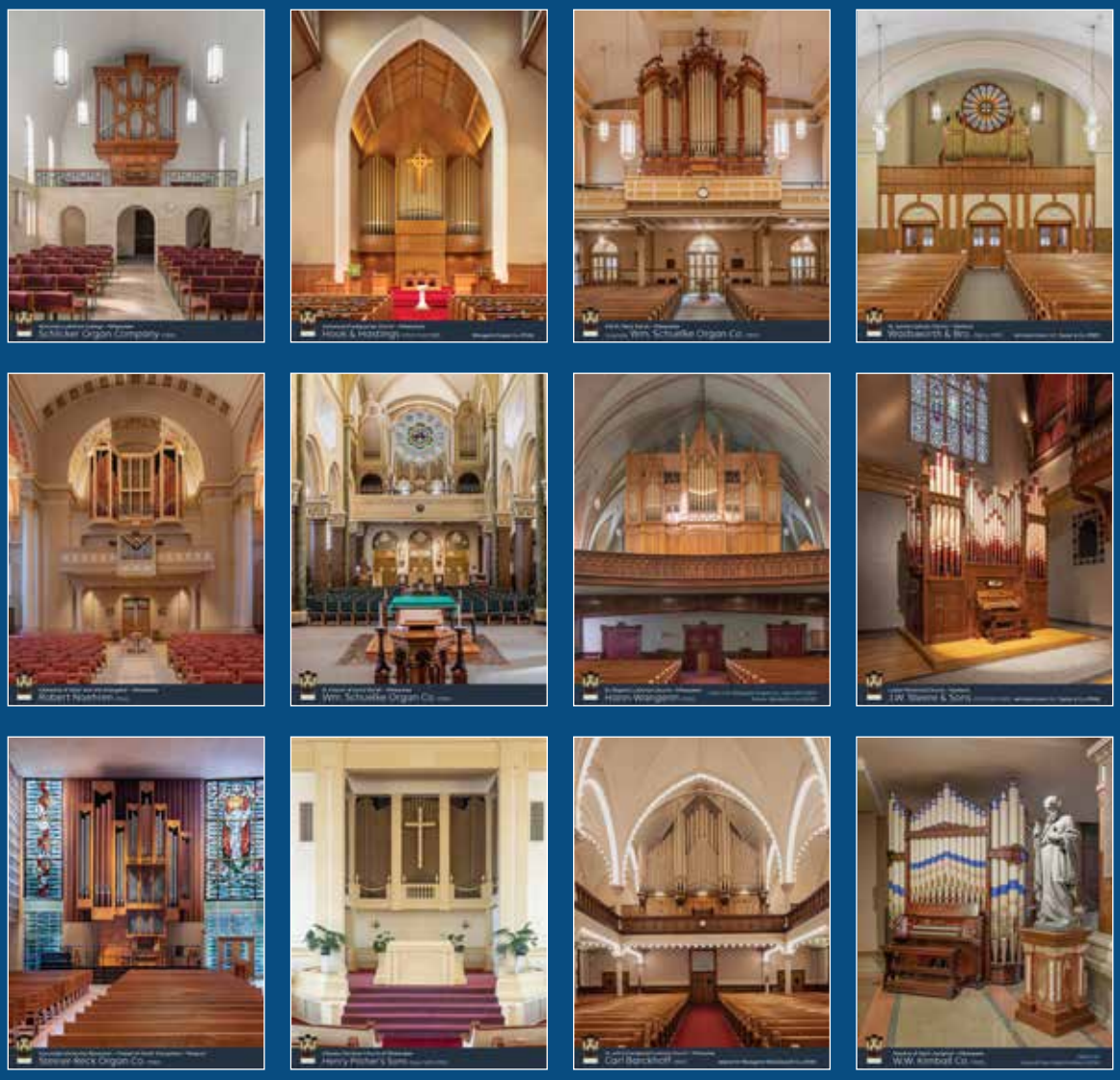
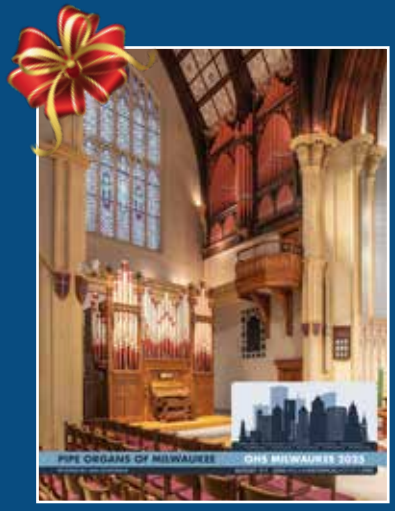
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU REGISTER

- Registration is only available online (no paper forms or call-ins)
- Each registrant must supply a working email address, telephone number, and an emergency contact
- Trip insurance is highly recommended
- New this year: the OHS is offering a 50% deposit and final payment by June 1
- Convention hotel is the Drury Plaza Hotel. Hotel registration includes daily breakfast

2025 PIPE ORGAN CALENDAR





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THE TRACKER
VOLUME 69, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 2025

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ON THE COVER

The Wm. Schuelke Organ Co. (1885) at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This organ will be featured during the OHS 2025 convention in Milwaukee.

PHOTO LEN LEVASSEUR

EDWARD McCALL

From the CEO



The passing of Barbara Owen on October 14 is cause for great sadness and reflection. Barbara enjoyed a life well lived, and as members of the OHS, we owe her more than just gratitude. We owe a pledge to continue in her footsteps, to preserve and protect the legacy she leaves, and to stay true to the mission that she and her comrades established so many decades ago.

I did not know Barbara nearly as well as many of you, but I was privileged to meet and interview her in the fall of 2020 and to spend a subsequent afternoon with her in Massachusetts with a lobster-roll lunch in the fall of 2022. It was clear to me that although she was small in stature, she was grand in intellect, values, and fidelity. Let's talk about those qualities and how they fuel the work of the OHS.

The Organ Historical Society, your National Institute for the Pipe Organ, has, among its ranks, members whose passion for research, history, and detail have created a treasury of books and articles that is the pride and joy of our Library and Archives. Rollin Smith, of course, leads the way in this regard, but he is joined by a long list of others, including Stephen Pinel, Sebastian Glück, Barbara Owen, Bynum Petty, Scot Huntington, and many more. The Library and Archives already holds an impressive collection of intellectual property and is growing by leaps and bounds.

The Publications Committee, led by Christopher Anderson of Southern Methodist University, offers the Rollin Smith Research Grant, which states:

> In support of its mission to enrich public knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of the pipe organ, the Organ Historical Society invites applications for its 2024 OHS Research Grant. An annual grant of up to $2,000 supports research projects related to the pipe organ—its builders, construction, history, styles, reception, composers, repertories, organists, performance practice, and more. The grant may be used to cover travel, housing, and other research-related expenses.

Values, those fenceposts that guide our conduct—how we navigate the world and interact with others—were central to Barbara Owen's life. They are what lead the OHS as well. What are those values, and how do we express them? Here is a list of the *values* at the forefront of our work:

- Education
- Research
- Scholarship
- History
- Restoration
- Preservation
- Documentation

The Organ Historical Society of the 21st century is not at all what the founders might have predicted in 1956, but I am certain that it is an organization of which they would be very proud. In the past six years alone, the OHS has

- produced The Kaleidoscope of Colors online video convention;
- hired one full-time and two part-time archivists;
- created online access through ArchiveSpace;
- established the Sustaining Membership option;
- inaugurated the James M. Weaver Prize in Organ Scholarship;
- revised and revamped the OHS Biggs Scholars Program;
- retooled the former citation program as the National Historic Pipe Organ Registry;
- redesigned and strengthened the viability and visibility of the Pipe Organ Database;
- re-opened the online OHS catalog, which had closed in 2017;
- established the Barbara Owen Fund for Education;
- and initiated the process of restoring a mid-19th-century cabinet organ.

All this has been accomplished while maintaining the regular work of producing annual conventions, publishing a quarterly journal, hosting organ recitals at our headquarters in Villanova, handling member inquiries, responding to research requests, acquiring and processing new collections for the Archives, creating finding aids, planning for future conventions, being faithful stewards of our finances, courting new donors, seeking major foundation donations, and strategizing for the future.

During my important time with Barbara, it was clear that her life was characterized by fidelity. She was dependable, faithful, loyal, and trustworthy. She committed her life to music, especially music in the church. Her passion for the pipe organ and its history were driving forces in her everyday life. So it is with the OHS.

Take another look at the list of accomplishments above. In every instance, we strive to remain faithful to the mission. The OHS holds high the truth that the pipe organ is a cultural and historical icon of the American story. Everything we do, write, say, demonstrate, and communicate is grounded in this truth.

I believe that as members, we are not seeking something in return when we pay our dues or donate to the OHS, regardless of the amount. Rather, your dollars convey a message of communion with those who also believe this truth. The pipe organ is more than an instrument. Its place in American society is as important today as it was 200 years ago. For those who study, perform, research, write, and appreciate, our mission is to make that sentiment a reality.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the 2024 Annual Fund. It is never too late to send a donation that supports our operations in Villanova.

May you have a new year filled with joy, peace, and good health. I look forward to seeing many of you in Milwaukee this coming August.

BARBARA OWEN FUND

AS OF DECEMBER 2024

OHS now is able to offer free memberships to those studying organ at the high school, undergraduate or Masters Degree level, made possible through the Barbara Owen Fund for Education. Do you know a student or teacher who may be interested in this program? Register easily through the OHS website, https://OrganHistoricalSociety.org/BarbaraOwenFund/. Consider making a donation to help OHS reach the next generation of organists, organbuilders, and organ scholars. Thank you!

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April issue closes . . . . . February 1
July issue closes . . . . . May 1
October issue closes . . . . . August 1
January issue closes . . . . November 1

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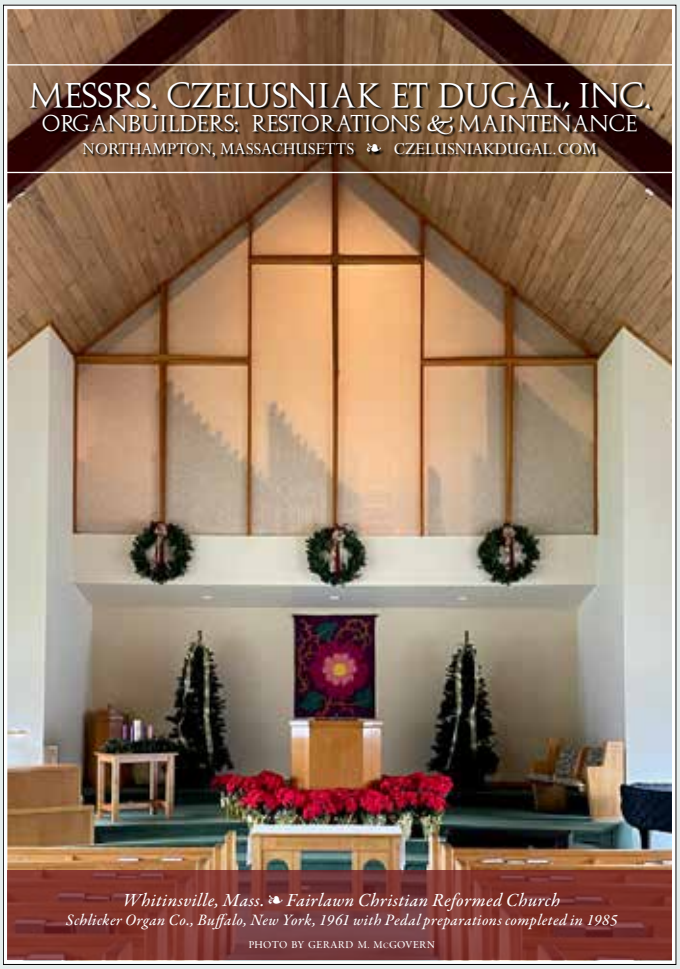

Whitinsville, Mass. ❧ Fairlawn Christian Reformed Church
Schlicker Organ Co., Buffalo, New York, 1961 with Pedal preparations completed in 1985
PHOTO BY GERARD M. McGOVERN

Scattered leaves ... from our Scrapbook

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—Richard Brasier, Royal College of Organists
NOTES December 2024

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Barbara Owen's Early Career

MATTHEW M. BELLOCCHIO



Oil painting of Barbara Owen in her early 20s by Mildred Jones. This painting is now at OHS Headquarters in Villanova.

Much is known about Barbara Owen's distinguished career as an organbuilder, scholar, and historian, her 39-year tenure (1963–2002) as director of music at the First Religious Society in Newburyport, and her subsequent 22 years as a steadfast church member. But little has been written about her early musical career before her Newburyport years.

As she did with many friends, Barbara exchanged emails with this writer on numerous topics. The mention of an organ, a church, or a person from her past would unleash a thoughtful, well-written missive with some occasional bits of personal information. It is from such emails that this brief sketch of her early career has been stitched together.

Barbara J. Owen was born in 1933 in Utica, N.Y., to Welsh immigrants, David and Vera Owen, the oldest of their three daughters.[1] In her early elementary-school years the family moved to New Haven, Connecticut, where they attended Plymouth Congregational Church.[2] The church's joint music directors at the time were William and Priscilla Mague.[3] Barbara sang in the youth choir and credited the Magues with her choice of college: "They were Westminster Choir College grads, as was their successor, so it's no surprise that at least three church members, including me, ended up there."[4]

After graduating from Westminster, Barbara held church positions in central Connecticut and southeastern Massachusetts.

> I graduated from Westminster Choir College in 1955, and not long after was back in Connecticut with a good church position at First Congregational in Portland, with two good choirs, a music-loving minister, and a small Aus-

1. Obituary, *The Daily News of Newburyport* (October 23, 2024).

2. The late-19th-century building, located at 1469 Chapel St., was sold to the Temple Kezar Jewish congregation in 1949, and the congregation merged with the Center Church on the Green.

3. Their youngest child, Benjamin Goddard Mague (1949–2022), attended Colby College and received a master of music degree in organ from the University of Wisconsin. He worked for 47 years at the Andover Organ Company, eventually serving as its president.

4. Email from Barbara Owen to Matthew Bellocchio, July 5, 2022.



The ca. 1834 E. & G.G. Hook in the Berkley Congregational Church, Berkley Mass. PHOTO *William T. Van Pelt*

> tin. But in the summer of 1958 the WCC alumni director passed on to me an inquiry from a larger church, which had a unique problem. For many years they had the same music director (who had recently died) and only a quartet (that was apparently also in the senior citizen category) and there was some desire to have a choir. They also had a good Sunday school, and since I've always been a big advocate of youth choirs I saw some potential there. That was First Baptist in Fall River,[5] and by September I was there and already rounding up people for two choirs. The minister was very supportive. What I soon discovered was that the kids were better than the adults in learning and singing more difficult music. The result, as I was soon told, of a really good public school music program. They could all read music, which not all the adults could! So I've always been a supporter of youth choirs and public school music.[6]

It was during her time in Fall River that Barbara discovered and documented some notable historic organs in southeastern Massachusetts, including the ca. 1834 E. & G.G Hook organ in the Berkley Congregational Church, the oldest surviving Hook church organ.[7] Decades later, Barbara demonstrated the Berkley organ during the OHS 2005 Southeastern Massachusetts Convention, when it was awarded OHS Historic Organ Citation No. 333. On November 14, 2021, at a meeting of the Southeastern Massachusetts AGO Chapter, she spoke about her discovery of this organ. Eventually, she decided to leave Fall River and move farther north to shorten her college commute.

> But by then I was still the president of the OHS and had been organ crawling around New Haven before I even graduated from high school, and continued doing so (now that I had a car) when back in Connecticut. Finding myself in a new geography, I spent some spare time roaming around the area south of Boston, sometimes with Bob Reich[8] and Ed Boadway,[9] who were then located north of Boston. We even discovered a builder then new to us—

5. The church's instrument is Austin Opus 1197, 1924.

6. Email from Barbara Owen to Matthew Bellocchio, August 16, 2021.

7. Pipe Organ database, Instrument ID: 4091.

8. Robert J. Reich (1929–2023), Andover Organ Company president (1961–1997).

9. Edgar A. Boadway Jr. (1936–2016), an employee of Andover Organ Company from 1962 to 1966.



Nov. 2021, Berkley Congregational Church. L to R: Barbara; Bro. Roger Chingas FSC, SE Mass AGO Chapter secretary; Matthew Bellocchio



Craigville Tabernacle interior

> Holbrook—and documented some of his organs. I was getting more and more interested in historical research and what it tells us. Thus, late in 1960, I enrolled at Boston University for a graduate degree in musicology. At first, I thought I could commute from Fall River, but this was in the days before interstates and I soon realized it couldn't work. So, I regretfully gave up a really good church, moved much closer to Boston, and took a Sunday-only church in Hingham. Still south of Boston but only barely, and with no time for organ crawling (well, exception on an occasional break in Boston). I also had a summer job for a few years at the Craigville Inn on Cape Cod.[10]

It was a summer job at the Craigville Retreat Center in Centerville[11] on Cape Cod that engendered the first of many "organ transplants" in which Barbara would be involved. The Center was started in 1872 by what is now the United Church of Christ. Originally a tent site for religious camp meetings, it soon became a village of summer homes, and the wooden Tabernacle was erected in 1887.

> It was 1961, and I had moved to a tiny flat near Boston in the fall of 1960 to begin studying for a master's degree in musicology at Boston University. In the pre-interstate days I had soon realized that I couldn't commute from Fall River, so had to quit my church there and take a cheaper Sunday-only church closer by. But I also needed a summer job and signed up for one in Craigville to do office work and provide Sunday music in the Tabernacle. When I got there, the only instrument was a broken-down upright piano. But Bob Reich, who had only recently arrived at the Andover Organ Company, told me he knew of an organ being given away. So I approached my boss and essentially announced that the Tab [*sic*] needed an organ and I knew where one was available for free. Within a week I got the details from Bob, rounded up a few other college students, borrowed an old truck they had and headed for Wellesley College where the organ was, sight unseen.
>
> Bob had said it was a two-manual Hook & Hastings but we didn't know it was located on the third floor until

10. Email from Barbara Owen to Matthew Bellocchio, Aug.16, 2021.

11. Centerville is one of the seven villages in the Town of Barnstable, Mass.

A PROGRAM OF VICTORIAN ANTHEMS
by the
DUDLEY BUCK QUARTETT
at the
CRAIGVILLE TABERNACLE
10:00 A.M., Tuesday, June 21, 1966
E. A. Boadway, Manager and Librarian

Elizabeth P. Krueger, Director and Alto
Robert J. Reich, Organist
Mary Louise Graves, Soprano
Philip A. Beaudry, Tenor
Robert C. Newton, Bass

• • •

Prelude: "Coronation March"	Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1864)
Mr. Beaudry, Organist	
"From the Rising of the Sun"	Henry Wilson (1828-1878)
"O God, the Protector" (Quartet in Canon)	Dudley Buck (1839-1909)
"The Singing of Birds" (Easter Cantata)	George William Warren (1828-1902)
"O Come Hither"	William Henry Walter (b. 1825)
Encore! "Arise! Shine! for thy light is come"	Dudley Buck

THE TABERNACLE, CRAIGVILLE

E. & G. G. Hook & Hastings, Boston, Massachusetts, Opus 1018, 1881; tonal changes by Barbara J. Owen, Pigeon Cove, Massachusetts, 1966.

GREAT			SWELL		
Open Diapason	8′	58	Stopped Diapason (TC)	8′	46
Melodia	8′	58	Unison Bass	8′	12
Octave	4′	58	Flute	4′	58
Mixture	II-III-II	149	Nazard (TC)	2 2/3′	46
			Fifteenth	2′	58
PEDALE			Swell to Great Unison		
Sub Bass	16′	27	Swell to Great Octaves		
			Great to Pedale		
Manual compass: CC-a³, 58 notes			Swell to Pedale		
Pedal compass: CCC-D, 27 notes			Tremolo removed in 1960		

Originally built for a studio in Billings Hall, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts, the organ was moved to the Tabernacle and set up by volunteers in 1960, the entire job costing $87.00. The chests are chromatic; the Swell is behind the Great; the pedal keyboard has radiating sharps, unusual in a Hook & Hastings organ of the period; the pedal pipes are divided at each side and were once rather pleasingly displayed; the three flats of the walnut case contain 17 Open Diapason basses and the lowest 4 Octave pipes; there are key-depth adjustment screws in the key cheeks. Recent tonal changes include a Mixture of mongrel sources in place of a 58-note 8′ Dulciana, a Nazard in place of a 46-note 8′ Viola, and a Fifteenth in place of a 58-note divided 8′ Oboe and Bassoon. The Dulciana and Viola pipes are in the two "new" Swell stops. The organ was relocated by the Organ Clearing House.

OHS 1966 Craigville Tabernacle concert program from the 1966 OHS convention handbook

> we got there. Bob was there, with some pipe trays, and we had brought some bureau drawers for smaller pipes and some assorted tools. Fortunately, as I later learned, stock model Hook & Hastings are probably the easiest to take apart and put back together. It came with a blower, which the local electrician hooked up, and by the middle of August I was playing services on it until the place closed in early September and I went back to BU. But I was back for the whole summer in 1962, doing the office and playing the services, and in my spare time finishing my thesis on my portable typewriter on the back porch. BU mailed me my diploma in August because I couldn't get back to Boston for the August graduation event. I went back in the summer of 1963 and even organized a music summer conference, which continued for a few subsequent years run by others. The organ helped to make that possible, so I'm really quite pleased to know that it is still getting good use and being well cared for.[12]

The instrument was E. & G.G. Hook & Hastings, Opus 1018, 1881, originally installed in a studio in Billings Hall at Wellesley College. Barbara later made some tonal changes to it in 1966, while she was working as a voicer at C.B. Fisk.[13] In June of that year, the Tabernacle and its organ were used for the opening concert of the OHS 1966 Cape Cod Convention in "A Program of Victorian Anthems" sung by the Dudley Buck Quartett (see program).

On July 14, 2022, the Craigville Center marked its 150th anniversary with a recital played on the Tabernacle organ by Michael Shake, director of music at First Presbyterian Church in New York City. A video of the recital was later posted on YouTube.[14] A link to the video, sent by this writer to Barbara, elicited a cheerful email with details of the organ's move, quoted above.

One year after the organ's move, Barbara relocated to Newburyport, on the North Shore of Massachusetts.

> I was offered work north of Boston in 1962 and am still here. So you can see that my time south of Boston was pretty short. And a bit long before an AGO chapter was formed there. When I lived there, I attended meetings of the Providence chapter.[15]

The rest, as they say, is history.

Matthew M. Bellocchio first met Barbara Owen on a bus ride during the 1973 OHS Convention. Thereafter, they stayed in touch by phone, conversations at Boston Organ Club meetings, and eventually by email. Bellocchio is a senior manager at Andover Organ Company and president of the Methuen Memorial Music Hall, where Barbara served as a trustee for 34 years (1989–2023). It was at Barbara's invitation that Matthew Bellocchio became a Music Hall trustee in 2017.

12. Email from Barbara Owen to Matthew Bellocchio, Sept. 26, 2022.

13. According to handwritten addenda on a typed stoplist tacked inside the organ case, Barbara renovated the organ in May 1984, and she and Jeremy Adams releathered the bellows in May 1985.

14. https://youtu.be/LSX0GMBMxog.

15. Email from Barbara Owen to Matthew Bellocchio, Aug. 16, 2021.

We Remember Barbara

On the passing of Barbara Owen, my mind is flooded with memories. Perhaps I first met her when, as I remember dimly, she was visiting Texas, driving about in her Volkswagen Bug, in the early 1960s. Or it may have been in 1967 when I met Charles Fisk and Fritz Noack at the old Andover shop in Methuen. I was on my way to a year in Vienna. Fritz promised me a job when I returned, so I was happily settled into the New England organ scene. I saw Barbara frequently when we gathered with other organbuilders to sing madrigals with Charles Fisk conducting. A sheet of plywood lying on sawhorses in the old Gloucester shop was our music rack.

I can still remember the tang of the sea when Pat and I joined Barbar and Yuko Hayashi on a picnic on the granite rocks of Rockport. Back then, the Harvard Organ Club would arrange an organ crawl every month or so, and Barbar would be along, often as the one who organized it. Of course, she was in attendance at the annual Organ Historical Society conventions. I served on various committees with her. If there was an open house for a new organ at the Fisk, Noack, Andover, or my shop, Barbar would be there.

She is no longer with us in person, but her spirit remains powerful. Every precious old organ that exists to warm our ears is still playing because of Barbara Owen's faithful work. We'll miss you, Barbar, but we'll feel your presence when we hear the fruits of your labors.

George Bozeman



Barbara and organbuilder George Bozeman, photo taken in her living room in November 2023 by OHS member Marian Ruhl Metson, who had facilitated the meeting of the two life-long friends. Marian Metson is one of the contributors of a tribute later in this issue.

Barbara Owen: organbuilder, organ historian, librarian, organist, biographer, mentor. These are just some of the labels one can attach to this amazingly gifted New Englander. I first got to know Barbara in the 1970s when I was doing a master's degree with Joan Lippincott at Westminster Choir College in Princeton. Barbara had also studied at Westminster, and on meeting me, claimed to have discovered an organist and scholar with interests and a passion for learning like hers. She did not hesitate to offer her mentorship and support. She probably introduced me to Charles Fisk (with whom she had worked for almost 20 years), Fritz Noack, and Yuko Hayashi, and to many of the folks then active in Boston and environs. Over some five decades our paths crossed repeatedly.

Barbara was a keen advocate for the founding of the Westfield Center by Edward Pepe and me, and she was responsible for at least two of the Center's publications. Appearing in 1986, *Charles Brenton Fisk: Organ Builder* was a two-volume set, the first volume a collection of essays that Barbara helped edit, the second her biography and documentation of Fisk's work and writings. Her illustrated *Timeline of the Organ: 2600 Years of History* was published in 1995. These publications represent only a fraction of her output, however. Whose organ library does not contain *The Organ in New England, The Organ* (co-authored with Peter Williams), *The Mormon Tabernacle Organ, The Registration of Baroque Organ Music, The Great Organ at Methuen,* or *The Organ Music of Johannes Brahms*?

Barbara was a dear friend. I visited her often in Pigeon Cove and later in Newburyport, and she was a frequent guest in Chester, Mass. She taught me how to eat lobster (it helped that she had cats who loved the remains), she traveled with me on organ tours in Europe and Mexico, and she was a happily met fellow attendee at organ concerts, workshops, and conventions. Her passion for the organ and its music was deep, erudite, and infectious. How grateful I am to have known her.

Lynn Edwards Butler,
Vancouver, B.C., and Oaxaca, Mexico

Barbara Owen was one of Charles Fisk's first hires after he set up his company in Gloucester in 1961, and she was the last survivor of that original crew. She was indispensable to Charlie in those early years be-

cause of her knowledge of the organ and her numerous contacts. She did most of the local tuning and maintenance for Fisk, so as a young apprentice in the early 1970s, I often accompanied "The Barbar" (as Charlie affectionately called her) on those trips. I remember well that she would stress that "tuning the organist" was just as important as tuning the pipes. Although this struck me as a derogatory statement at first, I came to realize that she was stressing the importance of educating organists about the ins and outs of organbuilding and in building a bond between the musicians and the organbuilder—we learn from each other. This was my first glimpse of Barbara's calling. In all matters, she was very free with her advice and training to me and others in the workshop.

Several years later, she took a sabbatical from Fisk to write her first book, *The Organ in New England,* which gave further confirmation of her true calling. Her work with Fisk lasted about another year after she returned from her sabbatical, and she then devoted the rest of her life to education and the writing of books to further increase the understanding of music and our beloved pipe organ.

I will be forever grateful to Barbara for stressing the important role that organbuilders have in educating others—it is not enough just to build wonderful instruments. This is a lesson that I continue to preach in Japan.

May you rest in peace, Barbar, after having given so much of yourself to the people who shared your love for music and the pipe organ.

Steven Dieck,
Chairman of the board, past president, C.B. Fisk, Inc.



Charles Fisk and Barbara on her birthday, 1975



Barbara and co-workers at the old C.B. Fisk shop



Barbara at C.B. Fisk, Opus 79, First Presbyterian Church, Charleston, West Virginia

Barbara owen was known to many Australians who enjoyed her company at organ conventions in the United States, as well as from her two visits "down under."

In 1992, I was asked to review Barbara's book *The Mormon Tabernacle Organ* for the Organ Historical Trust of Australia (OHTA). I sent her a copy of the review, and this led to much trans-Pacific correspondence and an invitation for Barbara to attend the 1994 OHTA conference in Victoria. She willingly accepted and was engaged to be the keynote speaker and to play short recitals on two old rural trackers. Barbara's friendliness and wonderful sense of humor were clearly apparent, and her instinctive propensity to soak up and apply knowledge was evident in her perceptive questions and comments about Australian instruments. Barbara subsequently invited me to stay at her home in Newburyport and to deliver a lecture on Australian organs to her local AGO chapter.

Barbara accepted a second invitation to visit Australia in 2005 and attended the OHTA conference in Sydney and the Hunter Valley, involving the provision of papers and recitals. Among the 70 instruments she heard or played in Australia, Barbara was delighted to see many historic organs preserved, including fine examples of the work of local firms and notable British builders, such as Hill, Willis, and Walker. Barbara reviewed both Australian conferences for *The Tracker,* employing her usual engaging writing style.

Universally respected for her scholarship and passionate advocacy for the instrument, Barbara was a trailblazer who made an incomparable contribution to the American organ world. We were honored that she generously made time to travel to Australia and that she greeted us so warmly when we visited the United States. We have been saddened to learn of her passing.

Kelvin Hastie, *Sydney, Australia*

The organ world and especially those of us close to Barbara Owen have lost a beloved friend and colleague. On a very personal note, I first met Barbara when I was 14 years old, and she has been a close friend and mentor throughout my life. I grew up in Gloucester, Mass., home of the C.B. Fisk organ shop, and as a teenager was a frequent visitor, learning about the instruments, playing them as they were set up in the shop, and observing Barbara, who worked there as a voicer. Before I was old enough to drive, Barbara invited me to accompany her to performances at the Methuen Memorial Music Hall, Harvard University's Memorial Church, and many other venues, far too numerous to list here. Particularly memorable were Anton Heiller's dedicatory recital on the Fisk at Memorial Church, and hearing Joan Lippincott at my first-ever Methuen recital. It was thanks to Barbara that I was invited to perform at numerous Organ Historical Society conventions and at Methuen. Thanks to Barbara, I became an AGO member as a teenager and have been an active member ever since. We are both proud alumnae of Boston University, and she encouraged me as I pursued study in Paris with André Isoir and Jean Langlais.

Barbara's contributions as an author, scholar, and music editor have benefited hundreds, if not thousands of organists who have read her books and articles and played organ repertoire that was previously unknown to many of us. She wrote books on diverse subjects, including a study of Baroque organ registration, a biography of E. Power Biggs, a study of Brahms's organ music, and a book on organ composers in New England, 1860–1920. Barbara's work in helping establish the Organ Library at Boston University is of major importance to me, since I was the first doctoral candidate to use resources at the library as the basis for my dissertation, a study of the music commissioned and premiered by E. Power Biggs during his career.

Barbara was always very generous with her time and always ready to help a colleague or encourage a young organist. She has been a cherished friend and mentor to me for all of these years. She visited in my home many times, and I in hers, always ready to enjoy a great dinner and conversation together. We shared a love of cats, and there were always one or more feline friends who would also enjoy our visits. I am deeply honored to have been asked to offer a tribute to her. I was privileged to visit with her during the summer as she recovered from a broken hip, and I last saw her just four days before her death. Barbara will always remain a cherished friend, and I celebrate her incredibly well-lived life. Rest in peace, dearest Barbara, and may your memory be a blessing to all who knew and loved you.

Eileen J. Hunt,
President, the American Guild of Organists

How can small words take adequate measure of a giant? It will take a great tome of small words to take full measure of Barbara Owen, a legend in her own time. Although humble in demeanor, the woman known affectionately as Barbar by a legion of friends and colleagues, leaves behind a monumental legacy of good works and influence that reaches across all aspects of late 20th-century organ culture. Even members of the organ community who did not know her personally will, through some aspect of the organ profession, have benefited from her work.

Barbara was born in Utica, N.Y., of good thrifty Welsh stock, and was the eldest of three sisters. Her family moved to New Haven, Conn., when she was eight. She was therefore a transplant, but she embraced all things New England as if she had been native born, especially the customs and lifestyle peculiar to the coastal fishing villages extending from Cape Cod up to Maine, which shaped her inimitable personality.

Barbara was a true renaissance woman with a range of interests and skills that span the breadth of our modern organ world: architecture (especially the period between 1700 and 1900), art history, church music, literature, organ pedagogy, performance practice, and even the regional cuisines of New England. Her library occupied a corner of every room of her home, including the attic, and her office was overloaded with file cabinets containing a lifetime of research devoted to the American organ and especially the work of New England's builders. Her master's thesis on the history of the organ in New England was the first academic research paper on Amer-

ican organ history and became the basis for her seminal book *The Organ in New England*.

But her interests and output did not stop there, with volumes devoted to E. Power Biggs, the music of Johannes Brahms, and the registration of Baroque organ music, a companion book to the New England organ history devoted to its contemporary performers and composers, and countless organ monographs, including one on the organ of the Tabernacle at Temple Square in Salt Lake City and a sociological assessment of the great Boston Music Hall organ now at Methuen. When the country was in a frenzy over the 1976 Bicentennial, Barbara compiled and edited four volumes of early and obscure American organ music at a time when only a couple of heavily edited volumes of colonial music were available. At the 1976 Bicentennial AGO National Convention in Boston, Barbara lectured and demonstrated the same music on an E. & G.G. Hook & Hastings organ with a Choir division containing colonial-era pipes from Samuel Green. I first met her at that event as a teenager and felt like I had met a national celebrity.

Barbara's formal music training at Westminster Choir College (she was a student of Alexander McCurdy) and Boston University gave her a solid training as a church musician. She worked as a voicer with C.B. Fisk for nearly two decades and privately worked on small projects of her own, often in collaboration with colleague organbuilders. In an era when organbuilding was a man's world except for the ladies in the pneumatic-valve leathering departments, Barbara, along with fellow independent builders Dana Hull and Susan Tattershall, called themselves the H.O.T. Sisters—the first independent women organbuilders in America. With her background as a performer and church musician, historian and researcher, musicologist, and capable organbuilder, Barbara had a unique big-picture experience with the organ as an inclusive entity matched by no other figure in our modern world.

Barbara brought this unique perspective to the table as an organ consultant to countless churches that acquired fine instruments as a result. As a fellow member of the Boston AGO Organ Advisory Committee, I witnessed her in action on many occasions. I learned from her that the cardinal rule of consulting was to educate the church committee about the complicated subject that is "the organ." She would guide her charges to make their own decision rather than tell them what builder to choose. Countless churches throughout New England now have new or repurposed legacy instruments because of her sage council.

Barbara was a willing mentor to young musicians and organbuilders, giving advice or opening doors. When I applied to C.B. Fisk as a young organbuilder just out of college, no position was immediately available, but Barbara suggested that I apply to A. David Moore, a former Fisk employee. Thus began a three-year apprenticeship.

I became interested in antique organs and the OHS while I was a teenager, having become a member in 1974. I wrote a letter to OHS luminaries Barbara Owen, Alan Laufman, and Ed Boadway describing the old organs that had crossed my path that might be unknown to them. The only one of the three who answered was Barbara, who shared what she knew of the organs I described (particularly the organs in the central New York, where we both had familial connections). In the early months of my Vermont apprenticeship, she was passing through the area and showed up at my door unannounced one Saturday morning. This was shortly after we had met at the Boston convention, and while she didn't remember me, she remembered my letter and wanted to meet me. I was still young enough to be overwhelmed by having a celebrity such as herself at my table, and we shared a dish of tea while we discussed organbuilding, organs in upstate New York, and historic organs in general. The memory of her generous mentoring of my interest in historic organs has remained with me to this day. This meeting began a decades-long friendship. When I had a question about a builder or an instrument, she was only a phone call or email away. An irreplaceable resource has been lost.



Barbara and Ed Boadway

But it is Barbara's connection to the formation of the OHS that has affected the greater organ culture in America for the past 60 years. She humbly insisted that no one person was responsible and that the ten founders deserve all the credit, but the founders whom I knew personally said that Barbara was the catalyst and the glue that held the fledgling organization together in its early days as a club and served as its first president once it had formally organized. Barbara was only 23 at the time of the first gathering in the meeting rooms of New York's St. Bartholomew's Church, scarcely older than the youngest attendee, then 18. In the waning years of the 1950s and early '60s, a core group of intrepid organ hunters would spend their free time driving around a county in the days when churches didn't lock their doors. Thus Barbara, Bob Reich, Ed Boadway, and Alan Laufman started compil-

ing lists of what they were finding and using a manual typewriter with sheaves of carbon paper, each circulating the results of their findings to the others. The seeds were now being laid for what eventually became the regional Extant Organ Lists that have grown into the Organ Database. Barbara was a frequent contributor to *The Tracker* during its first decade, when every article, reprinted history, and organ description was new information for an audience thirsting for knowledge about our rich organ history.

Barbara would tell researchers and writers "Tell me a story," and she was one of the finest storytellers I knew. Her writing and lecturing style was immediately approachable, frequently turning a potentially dry subject into a page-turning narrative. No word was wasted or superfluous. Her final book, *Pioneers in American Organ Music,* which she wrote during the COVID shutdown, is an especially compelling read. Barbara once remarked about her life that when it came to the organ, she would always be the student. In actuality it was we who were the students gathered at the foot of Barbara's pen, while she was the teacher lighting the way.

I remember with fondness my Barbara memories: the occasional conflicting date or fact in a lecture, an upside-down image in slide presentation (years before PowerPoint), or the blurry and crooked B&W photo from her trusty Brownie used to accompany an article. Solid New England fish chowder was standard fare for me at her Newburyport table, and I never failed to see her constant presence at every organ concert of note in Boston. In the past few years, we have marked the passing of many luminaries in the organ world, but Barbara's passing seems to carry more sting. It is not simply the passing of a life-long friend, but the passing of a legend leaving behind footprints too large for any mere mortal to fill. She had a more comprehensive big-picture view of American organ history than anyone else I know, and a great deal of that remembered history goes with her.

The OHS produced a Festschrift in Barbara's honor in 2005 as the opening celebration of the OHS's 50th anniversary. Its preparation was one of the best-kept secrets in a business that has none, and its presentation to Barbara at the 2005 convention took her completely by surprise. It was the only time I ever saw her speechless—at least temporarily. In my presentation speech I called her "the mother of us all." Her immediate response was "I'm not anyone's mother: it was a whole group of us." I beg to differ. It may have taken a village to get the OHS off the ground, but Barbara was its spiritual creator and driving force. The OHS is one of Barbara's most compelling legacies, her published works going hand in hand with the OHS mission to collect and disseminate organ history and documentation and to raise an awareness of the historic organ.

Standing all of 5′ 5″, she was indeed one of the tallest giants I knew. Where would our organ world be without Barbara's vision in 1956, and how poor would be our knowledge of our rich organ culture without her thoughtful research and publications? Barbara is the yardstick against which the rest of us will now be measured, and some of us would be fortunate to be half as productive. I will miss her dearly.

A giant once walked among us and touched our lives. We shall not see her likes again.

Scot L. Huntington



This fond tribute is a compilation of notes from those who worked with "BJO" at C.B. Fisk. Barbara worked with Charles Fisk from 1961 to 1979, which covers some 39 organs in the Fisk opus list. Stephen Paul Kowalyshyn joined the firm in 1972, and Robert Cornell in 1970 (both are still very much with the shop). Stephen Paul offered the following reminiscences from those early years:

He remembers being "thrilled to see her initials with Charlie's on the letter inviting him to stay at the end of his tryout period," because "she was likely more famous than Fisk was at the time."

The first Sunday Stephen Paul was in Massachusetts for his tryout, Barbara took him to her church in Newburyport to sing in the choir, and after church they drove to the dedication of Opus 57 in Willimantic, Conn. (Others have testified that she normally drove like a "bat out of hell.")

Shortly thereafter, in another "motherly" gesture, she took him to a bookstore, where she bought him one of the Adelle Davis nutrition books, presumably so he would eat better. She also cared enough about the young intern to make gentle comments warning him about possibly manipulative influences from those who might take advantage of him in one way or another.

"She generally did office work in the mornings and voicing work in the afternoons." She also worked in the drafting room. The late Esther Wideman (a Philadelphia organist who brought both Stephen Paul Kowalyshyn and Willard Martin to the shop for their initial interviews with Charles Fisk) "noted with amazement and approval that a woman was working in the drafting room, laying out a windchest."

Robert Cornell recalls that Barbara was initially hired to keep the books and run the office, but because she was an organist, was well-aware of many church programs in the country, and had great skills in organization, cognition, and dexterity, she soon became involved in many other aspects of organbuilding. Her value to the shop, and to Charlie, was evident when the shop moved in 1974 from its rather rustic building at the end of Maplewood Avenue to the newly constructed quarters in the industrial park on Kondelin Road. Barbara must not have been present for the actual pack-up and move, because

Charlie took the time to make a "map" of all the items in and on her large old rolltop desk in the office. He wanted her to feel at home in the new location, and to soften the impact of having to move from the homey atmosphere that she had created.

Barbara did a great deal of voicing work on new organs during her tenure and had a large influence on the way those organs sounded. She also did a lot of tuning work "on the road" and locally. Retired tonal director David Pike recalls being the key-holder on many such tuning outings at the beginning of his career.

About 1977 or 1978, Barbara took a whole year off from work at the shop to write her first book, *The Organ in New England*, but she was "recalled" in the fall of 1979 to help with the finishing of Opus 78 at House of Hope Presbyterian. Stephen Kowalyshyn remembers that the work in the final weeks before the dedication was done in round-the-clock shifts, he and Barbara doing the night shift.

The drawing of the cat was originally done by Barbara. Someone else added the voicing tools later. The original drawing was glued to the glass window in the door of the voicing room of the old shop and could not be removed without destroying it. Robert Cornell eventually copied the sketch in a painstaking and fastidious process.



According to Cornell, Charlie was always a bit concerned that Barbara would "become tired of building organs and go off to do something else." She did eventually retire from Fisk, which was a great loss to those who had worked alongside her for many years, but it turned out to be a huge gift to the world of the organ, its music, and musicians. She made an enormous contribution to that world as a writer, educator, organist, and scholar and has inspired many others to follow in her footsteps.

Faithfully submitted, with respect and admiration for her many accomplishments, on behalf of C.B. Fisk, Inc.

Carl Klein, DMA

Barbar (as I and others affectionately called her) was a dear friend and confidante, gentle, self-sufficient, friendly, and very supportive, and, although she was a relatively soft-spoken woman of diminutive stature, she was a giant! Hers was a life of love and service to people and to "the Art of the Organ." She was a child of the 1950s and '60s, when young people were encouraged to follow their dream and not to prioritize just making money.

Barbar did indeed "follow her dream," producing 13 books and monographs, 22 editions of organ music, articles, editions of choral music, record-jacket notes, encyclopedia entries, and program notes. She was a consultant, the founder of the Boston AGO library, and one of the founding members of the OHS, in addition to hands-on building and restoring of organs. With E. Power Biggs, she changed America's organ culture in the mid- and late 20th-century. It became a rich culture, emphasizing tracker-action organs and historic American organs and organ music, from which all of us have benefited and learned so much.

But even more than all of that, Barbar was a close, loving friend, an extraordinary counselor, and a positive encourager to so many, including myself. At her 90th-birthday celebration she admonished us all to take the time to "help and encourage others." Because of her, I, at first very unintentionally, became involved with publishing.

The 14th Dalai Lama said, "We are visitors on this planet. We are here for ninety or one hundred years at the very most. During that period, we must try to do something good, something useful with our lives. If you contribute to other people's happiness, you will find the true goal, the true meaning of life." Barbar did something good and useful with her life. She stood for something, made a positive difference, and contributed to other people's happiness. Barbar found the true meaning of life and shared it with all of us. It mattered that she lived. For all of this, Barbar will be remembered and greatly missed!

Wayne Leupold



Barbara at the Zacharias Hildebrandt organ (1723) in Störmthal, 1989



Barbara with Louise Mundinger, Peter Sykes, Robert Barney, and Fritz Noack

REMEMBERING BARBARA

In november 2023, as I was planning a trip to Maine for Thanksgiving to visit my recently relocated stepdaughter and her family, I had the idea that it would be good to tack on an extra day to visit Barbara, whom I hadn't seen in ages, in Newburyport. I also invited George Bozeman to drive down from New Hampshire to join us for lunch. This plan worked very well, and we had lobster rolls in Barbara's favorite restaurant overlooking the Merrimack River. During the two-hour lunch we discussed the most amazing details of American organs, their history, and their construction. I thought at the time that I should be recording this historic conversation between two of the most knowledgeable organ experts in the country, but unfortunately I didn't and now have only memories.

Other memories go way back. I first met Charlie Fisk in 1963 as he was crawling out of the organ chamber of the recently completed instrument at King's Chapel, when I was preparing for my first graduate recital for a master's degree at Boston University. I'm sure I met Barbara around that time, and we became friends. During the 1960s I would frequently take the train from Boston up to Rockport and stay with her. I distinctly remember that while I was floating off to dreamland on my roll-away bed, Barbara would be still talking from the other side of the room. I pretended to remember everything she had said the next morning.

Twenty years later, she had already moved to Newburyport. I had been married and had a son, and we also moved to Newburyport. Barbara's well-known generosity was evident on all fronts. I was invited to private dinners at her house with visiting Bach scholars such as Peter Williams and Christoph Wolff. She gave me a key to her church, First Religious Society, so I could just walk from my house to practice on a tracker instrument. Once I became aware of all the significant 19th-century organs in and around the city that Barbara had saved from oblivion, I decided to record all seven of them. She was instrumental in helping get some grants, making contacts with the churches, and writing the program notes. She also let me go through her files for music that she had not yet published that was suitable to the organs. With Bill Van Pelt as recording engineer, we completed the recording of "Yankee: Come Home!" in the fall of 1989. It never would have happened without Barbara!

Other memories are too numerous to recount in detail. We commuted together to Boston University once a week, where she worked in the Boston AGO Library and I taught organ. I learned so much on those trips! We organized and presented workshops on service playing and choral conducting for the locals. Many were volunteers and needed help

and encouragement. Her yearly presentation of a carol service at Chrismastide gathered all the local church choirs into one great chorus of close to 100 singers. Out of love for her friends, colleagues, the Newburyport community, and the organ world, Barbara gave everything she had. And we loved her for it.

Marian Metson

It was my pleasure to know Barbara from the time I arrived in the Boston area in 1975. Because she was everywhere—OHS, Boston Organ Club, AGO, Methuen Memorial Music Hall, Boston AGO Organ Library, C.B. Fisk, and the Boston organ scene—I would not be able to pinpoint where I met her, although I quickly became aware of her diverse accomplishments and the respect shown her by colleagues.

As I became acquainted with the music of New England composers, not covered in university organ departments at that time, she was a resource on registrations for these works and always generous with her help. Soon I was performing from her published editions, making regular use of the four volumes of *A Century of American Organ Music, 1776–1876* and *The Victorian Organ Album*. Clarence Eddy and George E. Whiting were now two of my new musical friends. I knew that she was an organbuilder/restorer, and I became acquainted with her as an author through her huge tome, *The Organ in New England*. Scholarship and wisdom flowed in a readable style in this publication and nine other books. She was also an organist and a devoted church musician.

She became a legend in her own time, and was always down-to-earth, supportive, and caring. Her contributions to the organ world are extraordinary. It was a privilege and a joy to call Barbara a friend.

Rosalind Mohnsen

THANK YOU, BARBARA!

It was May 1968, and I was enjoying a year off from my California teaching and church-music positions. I had just spent four months abroad, had landed in New York, visited friends in Pennsylvania, bought a used car, and headed to New England. My objective now was to investigate historic American organs.

Three years before, I had spent several months making a comparative study of historic European organs. Halfway through this project it occurred to me that I really ought to be studying the history of organs in my own country. It was this realization that sent me scurrying to Massachusetts in 1968 to see what I could find there. Was this a topic of genuine musical importance, or was it just a hobby for people who like to collect old things?

I knew that Barbara Owen had been one of the group that formed the Organ Historical Society, so I telephoned her to ask if she could show me some historic organs in or near Boston. Although she didn't know me, she seemed happy to oblige, and we spent a delightful Sunday afternoon touring Boston organs. By the end of the day she said, "You had better stay all night—we have lots to talk about." Of course, I did. This was my introduction to New England hospitality, and to the advisability of taking your toothbrush with you when you go calling there.

By the time I left her home, Barbara had made arrangements for me to visit Ed Boadway and Alan Laufman, both of whom were actively engaged in collecting information about historic American organs and organbuilders. They supplied me with back issues of *The Tracker* and Boadway's publication *The Boston Organ Club Newsletter.* They also made a list of organs for me to investigate on my way back to California. That list kept me entertained from South Carolina to San Francisco. The information I collected on that 1968 trip kept me busy for the next seven years. The friendships I made in New England influenced the rest of my life.

In 1968, when I first met Barbara, she was about 35 years old, and I was 43. We remained good friends through the years, corresponding frequently, seeing each other at AGO and OHS conventions, and occasionally meeting by chance in the music section of a library or on purpose at the Oaxaca, Mexico, organ festival. What a wonderful friend! What a fine scholar!

Thank you, Barbara.

Orpha Ochse

I first met Barbar circa 1962 in New Haven, where she still resided with her family. I had just completed my Yale master's degree in organ a year earlier and was holding down a "big" $2,000/yr church job, with three or four choirs, in Meriden, Conn., and teaching piano to about three dozen students, from ages 4 to 74, at the Neighborhood Music School near Wooster Square.

Barbara lived nearby and knew the organs in that part of the city. She was two years older than I was. She showed me around, and we became lifelong friends.

A few years later, in the Boston area, we again crossed paths in the Boston AGO. She worked at Fisk. Pigeon Cove, Rockport, is the place that I associated with her at that time. I

believe she must have commuted from there to the Fisk shop (Andover at the time).

Her friendship was natural. She really was as unassuming as anyone could be. She offered her wise opinions easily and with no fanfare. Barbar knew everyone and enjoyed her many friends. Her first book, *The Organ in New England*, has been a valuable source for me. I made certain that Susan Park, of Historic Boston, had a copy on her shelf. I am still impressed with the breadth of some of Barbar's topics, such as Brahms, Baroque registration, and many others. We spent many moments attending concerts and recitals together.

Before she started *Pioneers in American Organ Music, 1860–1920*, Barbara said, "I think I have one more book in me," and indeed she did, although she continued to write articles. The Boston AGO honored her at the book's publication in 2021. Her direct and seemingly simplistic comment, "History is about stories," was both clear and profound.

Lois Regestein

Barbara owen, Alan Laufman, Ed Boadway, and I met in a favored Cambridge, Mass., watering hole on April 28, 1978, before attending Jean Langlais' recital at Saint Paul Parish Church on Harvard Square. I remained quiet as the three discussed their latest observations. Boadway could not abide statements of conjecture without bona fide proof, whereas Barbara used clues to state a definite conclusion. As the conversation gained the heat of diverging stances, Alan broke the tension with a very loud "Oh! Poor piggy!" stunning the entire restaurant. Alan used that trick frequently, sometimes substituting "kitty" for "piggy."

These three friends largely controlled the flow of American organ history, certainly in New England and more broadly in the United States. All contributed to Orpha Ochse's seminal *The History of the Organ in the United States*, of 1975, acknowledged on page xv.

Barbara's manuscript for her famed *The Organ in New England* was influenced by the meetings of these friends, as she acknowledged on page xix of the book, published in 1979. Although a few of the facts published therein have since yielded to Boadway's demand for certainty, that book, and Orpha's, remain pillars of American organ history and always will.

In 1978, when we met in Cambridge, the OHS was 22 years old. I had joined in 1975, when the OHS had fewer than 700 members in its 19th year. Nobody told me that the OHS mounted conventions where lots of old organs were visited and heard, nor had an issue of *The Tracker* arrived, so I missed the bicentennial convention of 1976 in eastern Pennsylvania. I learned from Barbara, Ed, and Alan, as well as from James R. McFarland, organbuilder of Millersville, Pennsylvania, that upheavals of factionalism within OHS had distracted communications. An eastern Pennsylvania contingent and a Midwestern contingent centered in Ohio fought for control with the New England contingent. An issue of the day led the serving OHS Archivist to threaten immolation of the Archives unless certain conditions were met. Thus challenged, the New Englanders (with Pennsylvania sympathizers) sent a sheriff to seize the Archives, then consisting of a few boxes of books and papers. Thus saved, the Archives moved to a metal cabinet at Ohio Wesleyan University, where Homer Blanchard, an OHS Founder, took charge as the OHS Archivist.

More than 350 OHS members attended the 1976 convention, the largest in its history for many years thereafter, signaling growth and maturation. A splendid convention of 1977 followed in Detroit, my first.

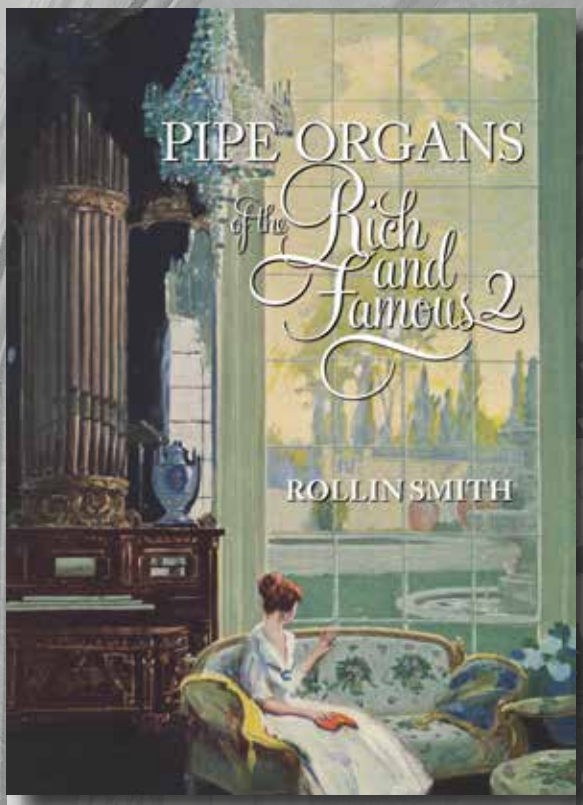
Barbara founded within the OHS what became the Organ Clearing House. In the first issue of *The Tracker*, October 1956, Barbara wrote as the second reason to consider organizing an Organ Historical Society, "To see if a central file could be kept of information concerning old organs which are to be sold or scrapped, in order to prevent these examples of early American organbuilding from being lost or destroyed." She followed up, relocating several organs, but eventually relinquished the effort to Alan Laufman. Subsequently, Alan separated the Organ Clearing House from the OHS, running it as a business with genial ties to the OHS and its members.

Barbara's creation of the OHS gave many of us our life's work: advocating for old organs, relocating them, restoring them, researching them, publishing about them, and administering the OHS as a center of these activities; for me, five years as a hyperactive volunteer, followed by 23 years as executive director (1982–2005), followed by active membership for as many years as I may exist.

William T. Van Pelt



Barbara and friends at First Religious Society, Newburyport, for her 90th-birthday celebration January 21, 2023.



PIPE ORGANS OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS 2

by ROLLIN SMITH



Since the first volume of *Pipe Organs of the Rich and Famous* appeared in 2014, the question has been asked many times: "When will there be a volume two?" It is now in publication and focuses on organs played and owned by famous people, many perhaps not so rich, but most are more famous than the subjects discussed in the first volume. In Volume Two, we explore organs associated with prominent Americans: the Fords, James Deering, the Ringling Brothers, Thomas Edison, and Joseph Pulitzer; humanitarians Albert Schweitzer and Martin Luther King; organ virtuosos: Daquin, Bruckner, E. Power Biggs, and Virgil Fox; famous preachers Henry Ward Beecher, Mary Baker Eddy, and Aimee Semple McPherson; great composers: Beethoven, Wagner, Verdi, Reger, Messiaen, and Elgar; and the trinity of French organ composers: Guilmant, Widor, and Vierne.

This volume is profusely illustrated with many previously unseen photographs, organ stoplists, and biographies of any number of people not usually associated with the King of Instruments.

We hope to have included something for everyone's interest and taste, but especially we hope to have shown the organ in all its facets, both sacred and secular, serious and entertaining, and the myriad way it enters our lives and continues to give inspiration as well as pleasure to so many millions of people.

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Lacunae in Organ History

JAMES L. WALLMANN

More books have been written about the organ than any other musical instrument. From Arnolt Schlick's *Spiegel der Orgelmacher und Organisten* in 1511 to the present day, the bibliography of books on the history and construction of the organ is vast. Even so, there are gaps in what has been written and published about organ history. The purpose of this essay is to delineate some of these lacunae and suggest where further research could improve our understanding of the history of organs and organbuilding.[1]

Most of the lacunae highlighted here will require significant research; we are talking about theses, dissertations, and works requiring years of study, not undergraduate research papers. The topics identified are undoubtedly colored by my personal research interests, and others may highlight different subjects for attention.

NATIONAL AND PERIOD HISTORIES

Few countries have adequate national histories of the organ. Organ researchers seem far more inclined to devote their energies to a particular region, organbuilder, or period than to tackle a survey covering an entire country from the first organs to the 21st century. One country with an outstanding history is England: *The History of the English Organ* by Stephen Bicknell (1996) is a wonderful book, and one wishes that all countries had comparable works. Three other countries come close, however. *Norsk orgelkultur* by Stein Johannes Kolnes (1987) is a nice survey of organs in Norway. Orpha Ochse's *The History of the Organ in the United States* (1975) is excellent, but is now 50 years old, and the subject should be revisited and updated. *Einführung in die schweizerische Orgelbaukunst* by Willy Hardmeyer (1947, plus later editions), while not a detailed history, offers a fine review of Swiss organbuilding. Despite excellent regional histories published in France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, there are no national histories to speak of for these countries. This is not to discount the excellent work done on published organ inventories in France (sometimes, but not always, appearing with a series title "Inventaire national des orgues"), Belgium, and, in particular, the Netherlands (*Het historische orgel in Nederland,* 15 vols. [1997–2010]), but inventories are snapshots in which the present state is described, not historical studies. Furthermore, the future of organ inventories is probably in online databases, not published monographs.[2] In addition to books on the more prominent organ areas in Europe, our understanding of organ history would be increased if we had works in English on, for example, organs in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, and other lesser-known regions.

Nicholas Thistlethwaite's *The Making of the Victorian Organ* (1990) is a splendid survey of a period, but it is limited to a single country—England. Similar histories of 19th-century organbuilding in France and Germany would be of great benefit. An international review of Romantic organbuilding treating the English, French, and German schools with developments in other countries would be a challenge to write, but it needs to be done. I would love to see a book-length treatise on the organ in the 20th century covering all countries.[3] The postwar *Orgelbewegung* or organ reform instrument had its heyday from the 1950s to the 1980s and merits careful study, even if the current attitude is more inclined to revoice and rebuild rather than preserve.

BIOGRAPHIES OF ORGANBUILDERS

There is more than one way to write a good biography of an organbuilder. The historian can offer brief remarks on the builder and then survey his instruments, write a narrative account of the organbuilder's life, or present enough technical information that it would almost be possible to re-create an

1. Writings on organ music, organ performance, and organists deserve a similar review but remain outside the scope of this contribution.

2. For example, 18th-century organs in Sweden are inventoried by the Göteborg International Organ Academy Association at https://www.organacademy.org/swedish-18th-century-organs.

3. My essay in *Twentieth-century Organ Music*, ed. Christopher S. Anderson (2012), is just 33 pages long and is only a very brief introduction to the subject.

instrument in that builder's style based on the written word.[4] Of the greatest organbuilders, Gottfried Silbermann has received the best coverage by organ historians, albeit almost exclusively in German. *Arp Schnitger and His Work* by Cor H. Edskes and Harald Vogel (2016) is good as far as it goes—and in English—but more needs to be done about the North German master and his instruments.[5] The great 19th-century organbuilders are Aristide Cavaillé-Coll, Eberhard Friedrich Walcker, and Henry Willis, but none has been surveyed in a worthy monograph covering life, works, and influence.[6] "Ironically, it is the lesser-known national builders who have received the best scholarly treatment."[7]

IMPORTANT ORGANS

Only a fraction of the important organs of the world have received appropriate scholarly treatment, including an account of how the organ came to be, who built it, how the instrument is used, and, for historic organs, the place of the instrument in history and the changes the organ has experienced over time. Of course, such a monograph will fully describe the instrument, ideally with photographs, illustrations, and pipe measurements. Titles in the monographic series "Nederlandse orgelmonografieën" and "Tiroler Orgelschatz" are generally good examples of what I have in mind.

In addition to histories of significant organs, historians of the organ and organbuilders need more books containing detailed technical descriptions of important instruments. There are numerous books about historic organs with pipe measurements, but I am thinking about complete descriptions of organs with illustrations and measurements of all parts, such as *Die Stellwagen-Orgel in Sankt Marien zu Stralsund: Eine Bestandsaufnahme, Chronik und Dokumentation* (2006), the four volumes of the GOArt organ documentation reports (2000–2007), or the Harley Monographs prepared by the English organbuilder Goetze & Gwynn (1990–2018).[8] In particular, the great historic organs of Europe restored with public funds have already been fully documented, and this technical information should be made available to all.

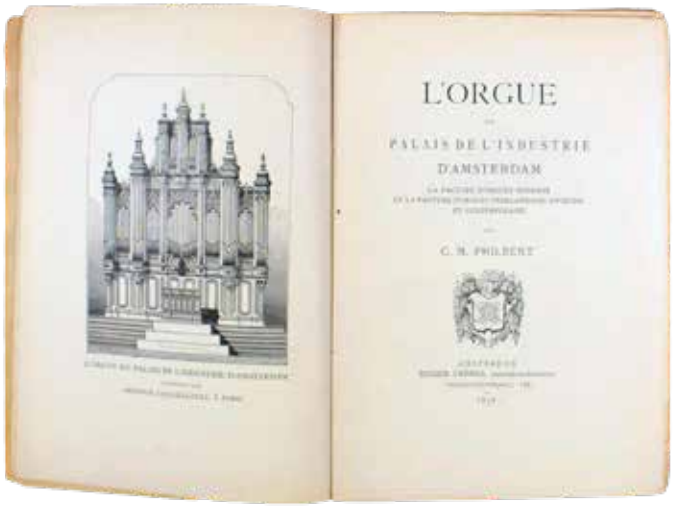
4. As an example of the first, see Frank-Harald Gress, *Die Orgeln Gottfried Silbermanns* (2000/3rd ed. 2007); of the second, Dorothy J. Holden, *The Life and Work of Ernest M. Skinner* (1985/2nd ed. 1987); of the third, Teus den Toom, *De Orgelmakers Witte* (1997).

5. Work in progress by Tim Knigge using the archives of Cor and Bernhardt Edskes aims to describe how Schnitger built his organs.

6. *Organ-building in Georgian and Victorian England* (2020) by Nicholas Thistlethwaite is a superb account of Gray & Davison, but that firm, while significant in English organ history, is no Willis.

7. James L. Wallmann, "Foreword," in Stephen L. Pinel, *The Work-List of Henry Erben* (2021), p. xvi and references at footnote 3. My contribution to the Erben book will necessarily color the reader's evaluation of my suggestion that Erben should join Cavaillé-Coll, Walcker, and Willis as one of the great 19th-century organbuilders. For the record, I find Pinel's magnum opus to be a "worthy monograph" of a great organbuilder.

8. The Harley Monographs are available online at https://www.goetzegwynn.co.uk/reports/.



HISTORIOGRAPHY

The history and transmission of books on the organ is an interesting but barely explored subject.[9] Researchers commonly use WorldCat, KVK (Karlsruher virtueller Katalog), or *Écrits imprimés concernant la musique*, ed. François Lesure (Répertoire international des sources musicales, B/VI), to locate early treatises on the organ, but these sources are not always complete.[10] A comprehensive survey of these early works would be a great benefit to students of the organ. Knowing how many exemplars of a particular title survived and where these books are found establishes useful data points in evaluating the influence and distribution of historic treatises.

The historian of science Owen Gingerich wrote a fascinating book, *The Book Nobody Read: Chasing the Revolutions*

9. A few references: Ernst Flade, "Handschriften und Drucke zweier Jahrtausende zum Thema der Orgel. Gedanken zur musikwissenschaftlichen Erfassung des Orgelschrifttums aller Länder," *Deutsche Musikkultur* 6 (1941–42): 174–78; Frederick Frank Jackisch, *Organ Building in Germany during the Baroque Era According to the Treatises Dating from Praetorius'* Syntagma musicum *(1619) to Adlung's* Musica mechanica organoedi *(1768)* (1966); Robert L. Tusler, "Toward a Comprehensive History of the organ," *The Organ* 52, no. 205 (1972): 20–27; Ulrich Martini, *Die Orgeldispositionssammlungen bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (1975); Maarten Albert Vente, "The Sources for the History of the Organ," in James Boeringer, *Organa Britannica* (1983), 1:9–14; Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, "Orgel und Ideologie–Orgelschrifttum des Barock," in *Orgel und Ideologie* (1984), pp. 13–27; Vincent J. Panetta, Jr., "Praetorius, Compenius, and Werckmeister: A Tale of Two Treatises," in *Church, Stage, and Studio,* ed. Paul Walker (1990), pp. 67–85; James L. Wallmann, "Books on Organbuilding before 1875: An Essay on Their Historiography and a Bibliography," *The American Organist* 24, no. 9 (September 1990): 56–69; Eva and Marco Brandazza, "Cataloghi organari fino alla seconda metà del XIX secolo: Un breve, incompleto sguardo sulla situazione europea," *Arte organaria italiana* 8 (2016): 303–12; and James L. Wallmann, "A Checklist of Books on the Organ, 1511–1875," *The Organ Yearbook* 45 (2016): 57–59.

10. For example, *Écrits imprimés concernant la musique* is often cited to show how many exemplars of a particular title exist. This reference book records two exemplars of Andreas Werckmeister's original edition of his *Orgel-Probe* (1681), one in Leipzig and the other in The Hague, but there are also exemplars in Görlitz (Oberlausitzische Bibliothek der Wissenschaften, shelf mark A VIII 8o 27,9) and Gotha (Forschungsbibliothek Gotha der Universität Erfurt, shelf mark Mus 8o 00127/03 (02)). Use *Écrits imprimés concernant la musique* as a guide, not as a definitive reference work.



84 DISPOSITIEN DER KERK-ORGELEN

Z W O L.

Het Orgel in de MICHAELIS-KERK, met vier Hand-Clavieren en een Vry-Pedaal, heeft 63 stemmen en 80 Regisers.

Groot Manuaal		Onder Manuaal		Rugpositief	
Præstant	16 v.	Præstant	8 v.	Præstant	8 v.
Octaav	8-	Gedact	8-	Fluitdoux	8-
Rhoerfluit	8-	Octaav	4-	Octaav	4-
Octaav	4-	Hol[illegible]	4-	Fluit	4-
Speelfluit	4-	Sup. Octaav	2-	Woudfluit	2-
Principaal	2-	Woodfluit	2-	Octaav	2-
Nazat	3-	Quint	3-	Scherp	3-
Ruyschpyp	2	Sifloet	1	Cimbel	1
Mixtuur	4-	Scherp 4 voet		Fagot	16 v.
Cimbel	3			Hautbois	8-
Trompet	16 v.	Violadig.	8 v.		
Trompet	8-	Trompet	4-		
Voxhumana	8-				

Borstwerk		Pedaal		Stomme Regist.
Præstant	4 v.	Præstant	16 v.	5 Affluitingen
Fluitfleyt	8-	Subbas	16-	1 Copp. van 't Rugp. en bov. M.
Rhoerfluit	4-	[illegible]		1 Copp. van 't boven en ond. M.
Præstant	2-	Octaav	8-	1 Copp. van't boven en borstw.
Fluchfluit	2-	Octaav	4-	1 Copp. van't boven en ond. M.
Gemshoorn	2-	Ruyschpyp	2	2 Tremulanten
Speelfluit	3-	[illegible]		1 Calcanten-klok
Quint	1-	[illegible]		1 Hoofd-Vent, tot het gehele w.
Sexquialtra	2	[illegible]	16-	1 Ventiel
Mixtuur	4-	Trompet	8-	1 Sleutel tot de Voxhumana
Dulciaan	8-	Trompet	4-	1 ditto tot de Coppelingen
Krombhoorn	8-	Cornet	2-	1 ditto tot de Affluitingen.

Dit

The stoplist of the Schnitger organ in Zwolle was annotated by a previous owner of this exemplar of Joachim Hess, Dispositien der merkwaardigste kerk-orgelen *(1774). A survey of all such annotations in other books on the organ would be welcome. Courtesy Organ Historical Society Library and Archives.*

of Nicolaus Copernicus (2004), in which he describes his quest to examine every extant exemplar of the first (1543) and second (1566) editions of the astronomer's *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* and the marginalia they contained. In books on the organ, marginal notes can expand on the text or correct, annotate, or supplement printed stoplists. Four books come immediately to mind that would benefit from a wide-ranging search for marginalia: Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum*, part 2, *De organographia* (1618/1619); all editions of Andreas Werckmeister's *Orgel-Probe* (1681, 1698, 1716, 1754, [1755] [Dutch translation], 1783); François Bedos de Celles, *L'Art du facteur d'orgues* (1766–78); and Jakob Adlung, *Musica mechanica organoedi* (1768). For centuries, organists have loved to collect organ stoplists. A similar review could be done of some of these printed collections of stoplists, such as Friedrich Erhardt Niedt, *Musicalischer Handleitung*, part 2, ed. Johann Mattheson (1721); Johann Hermann Biermann, *Organographia Hildesiensis specialis* (1738); *Sammlung einiger Nachrichten von berühmten Orgel-Wercken in Teutschland* (1757); Joachim Hess, *Dispositien der merkwaardigste kerk-orgelen* (1774); and Nicolaas Arnoldi Knock, *Dispositien der merkwaardigste kerk-orgelen, welken in de provincie Friesland, Groningen en elders aangetroffen worden* (1788). A review of annotations in books on the organ would help to show how much (if at all) organists and organbuilders read these treatises, applied what they learned, and studied the stoplists.[11]

TRANSLATIONS OF BOOKS ON THE ORGAN

Although the serious historian of the organ will read French and German, if not also Dutch, Italian, Latin, and Spanish, the reason to have English translations of historic works is to make them available to a wide variety of organists, students, and researchers. A handful of treatises on the organ published before 1800 have already been translated into English: Arnolt Schlick, *Spiegel der Orgelmacher und Organisten*, trans. Elizabeth Berry Barber (1511/1980);[12] Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum II: De organographia* (parts III to V), trans. Quentin Faulkner (1619/2014); Andreas Werckmeister, *Erweiterte und verbesserte Orgel-Probe*, trans. Gerhard Krapf (1698/1976); Christian Ludwig Boxberg, *Ausführliche Beschreibung der grossen neuen Orgel in der Kirchen zu St. Petri und Pauli allhie zu Görlitz*, trans. Mary Murrell Faulkner (1704/2009); Andreas Werckmeister, *Organum Gruningense redivivum*, trans. Marcos Fernando Krieger (1705/2009); François Bedos de Celles, *L'Art du facteur d'orgues*, trans. Charles Ferguson (1766–78/1977); Jakob Adlung, *Musica mechanica organoedi*, trans. Quentin Faulkner (1768/2011); *Procès-verbal de la vérification de l'orgue de l'église de Narbonne*, trans. Kurt Lueders as "Troubles autour de l'orgue de Narbonne" in *ISO Yearbook* 1993, pp. 84–113 (1771/1993); and Abraham Abrahamsson Hülphers, *Historisk afhandling om musik och instrumenter*, trans. James Wiley Harker (1773/1992).

Among the books deserving a translation to English are these dozen titles:

- Costanzo Antegnati, *L'arte organica* (1608). An early and significant treatise by the Italian organbuilder. German and French translations have already appeared.[13]
- Johann Caspar Trost, Jun., *Ausführliche Beschreibung deß neuen Orgelwercks auf der Augustus-Burg zu Weissenfels* (1677). Description of the remarkable instrument at Weissenfels known to J.S. Bach, with important information on temperament.

11. Naturally, many organists and organbuilders have read books on the organ without making any notes in the printed text. For these readers, the researcher must study what the organist wrote, or the instruments made by the organbuilder, to find influence from the printed word.

12. Current scholarship puts the place of printing of the original edition in Speyer, not in Mainz as stated on the title page of the reprint and translation. The title was volume 63 in the monographic series Bibliotheca organologica, not volume 113 as incorrectly printed in the 1980 edition.

13. German translation by Paul Smets in editions appearing in 1938 and 1958; French translation by Charles Walter Lindow in editions appearing in 1975, 1998, and 1999. Antegnati's instructions on registration have appeared in English (see Fenner Douglass, *The Language of the Classical French Organ* [1969], pp. 152–58), but a complete translation is needed.

- Gerhardus Havingha, *Oorspronk en voortgang der orgelen, met de voortreffelykheit van Alkmaars groote orgel* (1727). A defense of the organ in Alkmaar rebuilt by Frans Caspar Schnitger along North German lines against criticism from the traditional Holland school.
- Philipp Wilhelm Stärck, *Organi Wrizensis viadrini veteris destructi, et novi in templo majori exstructi, descriptio. Das ist: Beschreibung der alten abgerissenen, und in der grossen Kirchen zu Writzen an der Oder neu-erbauten Orgel* ([1729]). Description of the organ by Joachim Wagner in Wriezen.
- Christophe Moucherel, *Mémoire instructif pour faire les devis, desseins, plans, marchez & reception des orgues* (1734). The earliest book in French on organbuilding.
- [Johann Gottfried Donati], *Einige Discurse zweyer Orgel-Freunde* ([1742]). Written by the organist Donati (from the family of organbuilders) in the form of a dialog between student and master about the Gottfried Silbermann organ in Greiz.
- Georg Andreas Sorge, *Der in der Rechen- und Meßkunst wohlerfahrne Orgelbaumeister* ([1773]). A treatise on organbuilding, with attention to the use of mathematics.
- Johann Samuel Halle, *Die Kunst des Orgelbaues, theoretisch und praktisch beschrieben* (1779). Description of organbuilding, influenced by Dom Bedos.
- Giuseppe Serassi, *Sugli organi: Lettere* (1816).[14] Erudite essays on the organ by the famous Italian organbuilder.
- D[avid] H[ermann] Engel, *Beitrag zur Geschichte des Orgelbauwesens: Eine Denkschrift zur Einweihung der durch Herrn Friedrich Ladegast erbauten großen Dom-Orgel zu Merseburg nebst Disposition derselben* (1855). A review of organbuilding, with attention to developments in Germany illustrated by the important Ladegast organ in Merseburg.
- Charles-Marie Philbert, *L'Orgue du Palais de l'Industrie d'Amsterdam: La Facture d'orgues moderne et la facture d'orgues néerlandaise ancienne et contemporaine* (1876). A description of the Cavaillé-Coll organ in the Paleis voor Volksvlijt, Amsterdam, now in the Philharmonie, Haarlem, and a general discussion of organbuilding.
- Theoretical works of Aristide Cavaillé-Coll (1859–1895). A German translation has already appeared.[15]

The list could easily be expanded.

BOOKS ON ORGANBUILDING

A final category of lacunae comprises books on organbuilding. We need a history of organbuilding written by an organbuilder in the same way the great harpsichord builder Frank Hubbard wrote *Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making* (1965). It would be a monumental undertaking to cover all periods and schools of organbuilding, but it ought to be done, perhaps by a consortium of organbuilders. Just as François Bedos de Celles in late 18th-century France, Jan van Heurn in the early 19th-century southern Netherlands, or perhaps even George Ashdown Audsley in early 20th-century America (*The Art of Organ-Building*)[16] summarized the craft of their day, books describing traditional organbuilding—mechanical key- and stop-action instruments—and non-mechanical organbuilding in the 21st century would be most welcome. These books would not necessarily have to be written by an organbuilder; a well-informed organist or researcher may have sufficient technical knowledge to describe current practice. Much ink has been spilled over historical temperaments on organs and other keyboard instruments, but these writings have generally focused on theoretical matters. Understanding how these historical temperaments were applied in practice is a more challenging subject and deserves additional scholarly attention.[17]

CONCLUSION

The organ has the largest bibliography of any musical instrument, but there is plenty of opportunity to expand what has already been written. I look forward to reading what scholars of the king of instruments can produce.

James L. Wallmann is an independent historian of the organ. He has degrees in music and law from Brigham Young University and Georgetown University, respectively. Since 1984, he has reviewed over 650 books for The American Organist. *In addition to that publication, Mr. Wallmann has also written for* The Tracker, The Organ Yearbook, *and* Het Orgel, *as well as contributing a chapter to* Twentieth-Century Organ Music *(2012) and entries for* The Organ: An Encyclopedia *(2006). He has twice presented papers at symposia of the Orgelpark in Amsterdam and recently lectured before the American Institute of Organbuilders. His particular areas of interest are the history of books on the organ, organs and organbuilders in the Netherlands, the life and instruments of Gottfried Silbermann, and the organ in the 20th century.*

14. The reprint edition edited by Giosuè Berbenni appears in two versions: one with Berbenni's introduction in Italian (2013), and the other with the introduction translated into English (2014). However, the main text in both publications is a facsimile reprint of the original edition in Italian.

15. *Sämtliche theoretische Arbeiten*, trans. Christoph Glatter-Götz (1982).

16. The devastating critique of Edward W. Flint is on point: "It is because Audsley's information is second-hand and insufficiently grounded in the actual experience of organ-building that his place in the organ world is that, not of an authority, but of a dilettante." Edward W. Flint, "The Works of George Ashdown Audsley," *The Rotunda* 5, no. 2 (March–April 1934): 36; rpt. *Art of the Organ* 2, no. 2 (June 1972): 31.

17. I thank Hans Fidom for highlighting this lacuna of temperament.



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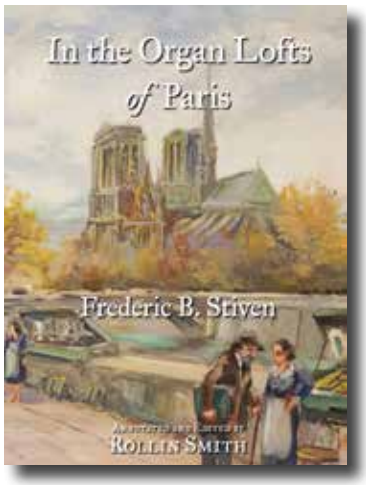

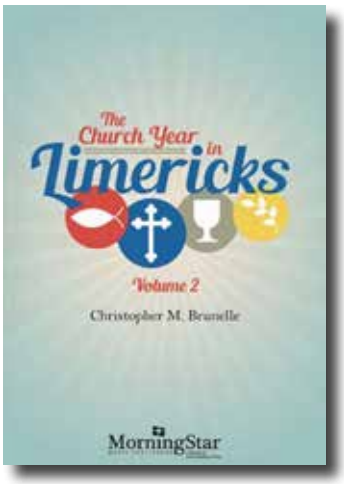







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Charles B. Fisk
and His Work with the Atomic Bomb

MARGARET-MARY SAUPPÉ AND CHARLES MCMILLAN

Charles Brenton Fisk (1925–1983), before he became a well-known and respected American builder of tracker organs, was drafted into the U.S. military as a fresh high school graduate and found himself in Los Alamos, New Mexico, working as an electronics technician on the detonator of *Fat Man*, the implosion-type plutonium bomb dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. Fisk said of his work in 1979: "The work of the group in the Bomb Physics division was of greatest importance because the whole question of yield depended on our work. As a matter of fact I understand that it is the only part of the original work that is still classified."[1] This article publishes for the first time now-unclassified documents associated with Fisk's work at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL).

Fisk's path to Los Alamos began when his uncle Joyce Stearns, director of the University of Chicago Metallurgical Lab, hired Charles as "Lab Helper" to help keep his nephew from the draft. There, he interpreted schematic diagrams, soldered materials, and constructed electrical circuits for experimental audio frequency equipment.[2] Only four months later, he was drafted and spent one year in the Army Air Corps as a Link Trainer Mechanic.[3]

From July 1944 to September 1945, Fisk was relocated to the secret military base in Los Alamos, New Mexico, working as part of the Special Engineer Detachment (SED) in the Bomb Physics Division as an electronics technician for the Manhattan Project. He helped build pin diagnostics for the Trinity device, the design that was used for *Fat Man*. As a technician huddling in a desert bunker watching his work being blown to pieces time after time in test detonations, Fisk would not fully understand what he had been building until news of Nagasaki reached him by newspaper.[4]



Charles Fisk's war ID card PHOTO COURTESY OF *C.B. Fisk, Inc.*

After the war, Fisk completed a B.S. in physics from Harvard University, followed by a year at Brookhaven National Laboratory studying cosmic rays. When he left for a PhD in physics at Stanford University in 1950, he transferred into a master's degree in music for one semester before apprenticing himself to organbuilder John Swinford of San Francisco, CA.[5] He had always felt a calling to music over physics despite fam-

1. Mark Daryl Coffey, "Charles Fisk: Organ Builder," Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1984, 8413856), 3.

2. "Charles B. Fisk," Atomic Heritage Foundation, Nuclear Museum.org, accessed April 9, 2024, https://ahf.nuclearmuseum.org/ahf/profile/charles-b-fisk/.

3. Coffey, "Charles Fisk," 3. A Link Trainer was a flight simulator for training pilots, developed by the son of an organbuilder who used his knowledge of pumps, valves, and bellows to build a convincing simulation of flight and instrument accuracy.

4. Laura Sewell Matter, "Hell and Reason," *The Georgia Review* (Spring 2017), https://thegeorgiareview.com/posts/hell-and-reason/.

5. "Charles B. Fisk," Atomic Heritage Foundation, https://ahf.nuclearmuseum.org/ahf/profile/charles-b-fisk/.



Fisk's war portrait PHOTO COURTESY OF *C.B. Fisk, Inc.*

ily pressure, and organbuilding gave him a way to combine his love of tinkering with his love of music.[6]

Although the basics of Fisk's job at Los Alamos are known, many details about his tasks have remained hidden among documents in the archives of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. What follows is an interview with Charles McMillan, pipe organ enthusiast and tenth director of LANL, serving from 2011 to 2017. With help from the LANL archivists and historians, Dr. McMillan has been able to release some of the documents related to Fisk's time at the lab and share interesting details on Fisk's role in the development of the bomb.

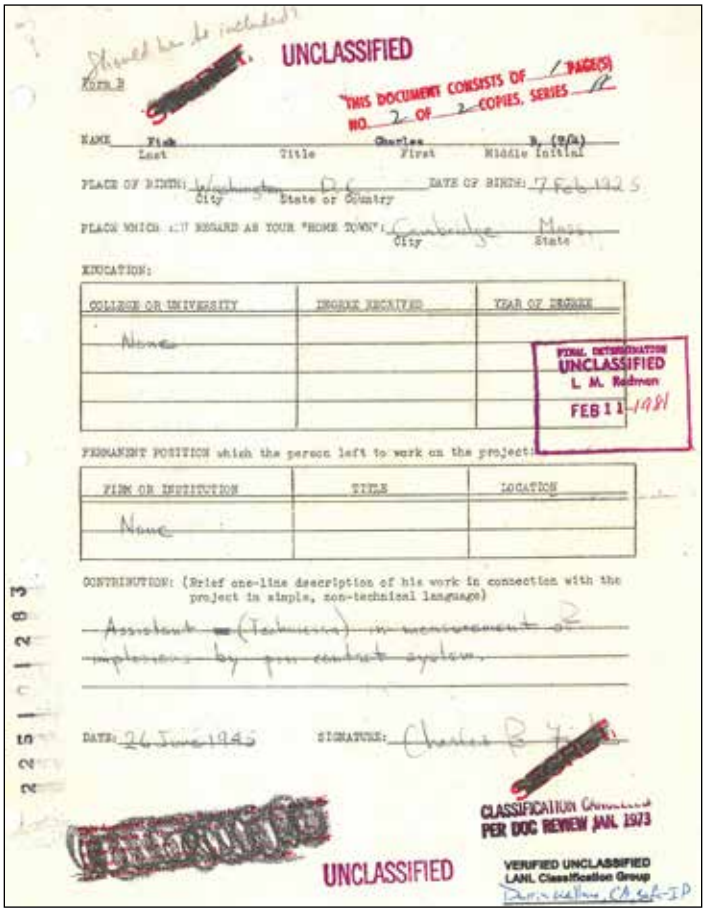
Thank you for your willingness to talk about what you have found. How did you first hear about C.B. Fisk working at LANL, and what made you want to look into Fisk's work here?

When my in-laws passed away in 2018, my wife, who was the executor of their estate, assigned me the task of disposing of a 1929 Möller organ that was stored in the basement of their home. I began searching for someone experienced in the organ business to assist with the removal, and through a series of indirect connections, I contacted Richard Nickerson, an organ technician based in Malden, Mass. He helped me dispose of the organ's pipes and remove the electropneumatic action from the console, facilitating its transport to Los Alamos, where I planned to install MIDI manuals and a new pedalboard in order to create a home organ using Hauptwerk.

During this process, Richard mentioned a rumor within the organ community that Charlie Fisk had worked on the Manhattan Project. Motivated by his inquiry, I reached out to Alan Carr, the LANL historian, and asked him to verify Charles Fisk's involvement. He replied with a questionnaire that confirmed Fisk's participation. Armed with this information, I was able to affirm to Richard that Charlie Fisk indeed worked on the Manhattan Project, providing him with concrete evidence.

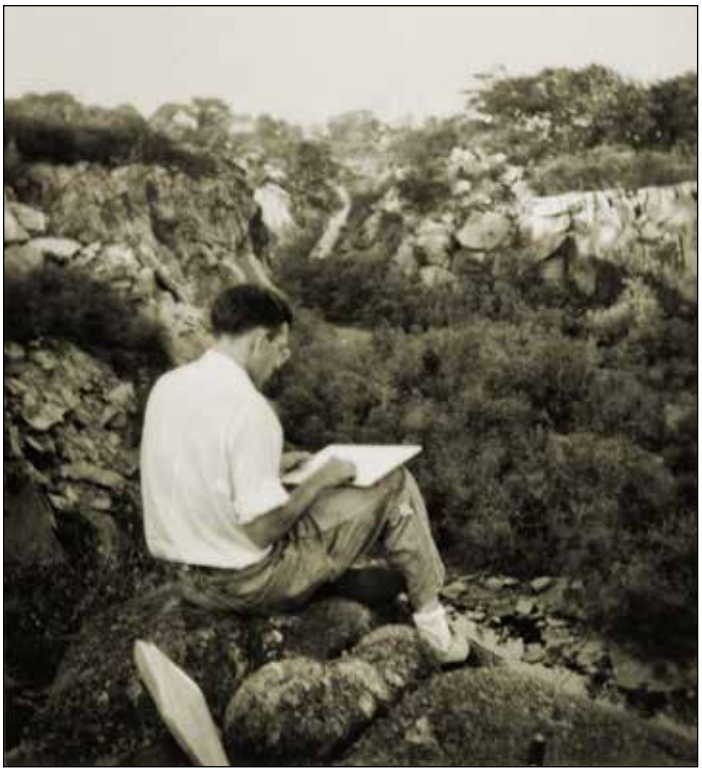
What was Fisk working on at the lab?

Fisk was a member of the Special Engineer Detachment (SED), a group of enlisted servicemen who participated in the Manhattan Project. He served as an electrical technician. Our search through the Lab archives yielded few direct references to him; however, we know that he worked under Darol Froman, a prominent physicist on the project. Froman was one of the lab's leaders and later served as the deputy director of the



Entrance questionnaire "Form B" for Charles Fisk
PHOTO COURTESY OF *Los Alamos National Laboratory*

6. Laura Sewell Matter, in conversation with the author, May 2024.



Fisk sketching in New Mexico PHOTO COURTESY OF *C.B. Fisk*

lab from 1951 to 1962. Given Froman's notable role, it is easier to trace his activities during the Manhattan Project and infer the projects Fisk may have been involved with.

So we can use Froman's work to trace what Fisk was doing also.

That's right.

That gives us a little more information, since we know that Froman oversaw the electronics group called the G-4 Electric Method Group in G (Gadget) Division.[7] This group notably developed the implosion bomb, confirming that Fisk worked on *Fat Man*.

My own digging also revealed that Fisk not only worked under Froman, but that he was friends enough with his supervisor to have picnics with Froman and his family on the weekends.[8] Charlie's uncle, Joyce Stearns, was an old friend with Froman as well. My question for you would be: What is the relationship between the Metallurgical Lab and LANL? As in, how did Fisk find himself moving from Chicago to Los Alamos?

The Chicago laboratory was a significant component of the Manhattan Project, a vast initiative that operated multiple sites across the United States. Named after its initial headquarters in Manhattan, the project was formally recognized as the Manhattan Engineering District. Among its key locations were Los Alamos, serving as the principal design laboratory; Oak Ridge, dedicated to the separation of uranium; Hanford, responsible for plutonium production; and Chicago, where Enrico Fermi successfully operated the first working nuclear reactor.

SED assignments across these diverse sites were strategically managed based on specific project needs. As you mentioned, Joyce Stearns exerted his influence to ensure that his nephew was stationed in Chicago, thereby sparing him from military service in Europe during the war.

Well, and Fisk was able to contribute very well as a tech.

Yes. During the 1940s and '50s, it was common for individuals to assemble electronic kits, particularly when a high-end audio system was financially out of reach. Many would construct amplifiers and similar devices. It appears that he was likely among those who engaged in such DIY electronic projects.

Can you explain the documents that you found?

We found a security-like questionnaire from when Fisk came to Los Alamos. That shows that he was an electronics technician helping to build parts for doing pin experiments—important diagnostics that were used in preparation for the Trinity experiment.

The questionnaire lists Fisk as being a SED with the rank "T/4," the technical equivalent to a sergeant. This gave him status, despite lacking a college degree at the time. Can you talk a little bit more about his work?

When the laboratory realized that the gun-type assembly—similar to the one used in the *Little Boy* bomb—would not be effective with plutonium, J. Robert Oppenheimer initiated a comprehensive reorganization to facilitate the development of an implosion weapon. Unlike the gun-type mechanism, where components simply come together, the implosion design required a spherical assembly that would be compressed by high explosives. This represented a significantly more complex physical system, necessitating advanced diagnostics to ensure proper assembly.

One such diagnostic technique developed was the "pin shot." This method involved setting up a series of pins, each positioned with a small foil separated from a wire by a short distance. These were connected to an oscilloscope via a volt-

7. "Darol Froman," Atomic Heritage Foundation, Nuclear Museum.org, accessed April 9, 2024, https://ahf.nuclearmuseum.org/ahf/profile/darol-froman/; Robert S. Norris, "An American Scientist, the Soviets and the H-Bomb," *Huffington Post* (January 30, 2009), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/an-american-scientist-the_b_154307.

8. Matter, "Hell and Reason," https://thegeorgiareview.com/posts/hell-and-reason/.



Fisk working on an engine in an auto shop PHOTO COURTESY OF *C.B. Fisk*

age source. When the moving surface struck a pin, it would force the foil into contact with the wire, creating a spike on the oscilloscope. The oscilloscopes would display these spikes across their screens, allowing scientists to visually track the arrival time and hence the position of the assembly as it impacted each pin.

This innovative diagnostic tool proved crucial for the Trinity test preparations and remained a valuable diagnostic method for decades thereafter.

Right, because you used the same diagnostic during your early-career experimental work at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California.

Yes.

Amazing. Do you think he really had no idea that those detonators were being used for a bomb, or do you think he knew he was working on a weapon and simply did not know the magnitude?

It is difficult to know. Information within the project was highly compartmentalized. While scientists often had broad insights into the project's scope, technicians operated on a strict "need-to-know" basis. It is very likely that he remained unaware of the project's full implications until the Trinity test[9] was conducted, and he almost certainly did not comprehend the full magnitude of the weapon being developed.

It sounds like Fisk was just working on one component of one component, specifically the pins for the bomb's diagnostics. Can you give me a sense of scale of the pins, and what would have gone into making the pins?

Today, some types of pins measure a couple of millimeters in diameter, while others are as fine as thin wires. You can liken their size to that of the smallest pipes in a flue rank.

Good analogy. I can see how easily he could have transferred his skills from this job into the fine handiwork of organbuilding.

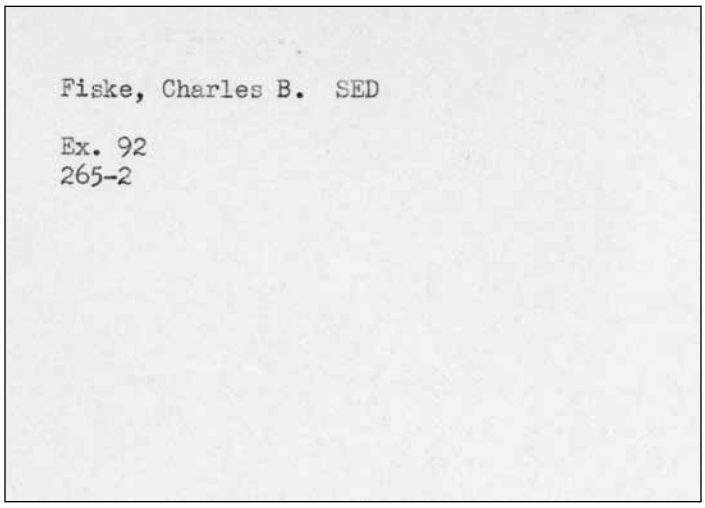
Constructing a pin array involves meticulous, precise work. It remains unclear whether he was responsible for making the pin arrays, for creating the circuits that recorded the signals, or both. Nonetheless, the historical records clearly indicate that these types of diagnostics played a crucial role in understanding the implosion system that was ultimately implemented in the Trinity test and later used over Nagasaki.

The other document with some history is something you label a "McKibben card." Can you tell me about Fisk's McKibben card?

Yes, I sent you a copy of the instructions that were distributed to individuals heading to Los Alamos. However, they did not directly arrive at Los Alamos; instead, they went to 109 East Palace in Santa Fe. The lab maintained secrecy about its exact location. While residents of Santa Fe suspected activities on the hill, they were unaware of the specifics.

Dorothy McKibben managed the office at 109 East Palace. She not only welcomed new arrivals and directed them to their next destination but also served as a social nexus for the laboratory community. Social events, including weddings, were often hosted at her facility in Santa Fe. Photographs from parties at Oppenheimer's house include Dorothy. She

9. The U.S. Army's first test detonation of a nuclear weapon in July 1945, conducted 210 miles south of Los Alamos. Fisk was on his family farm at the time of the test, mowing grass and listening to records.

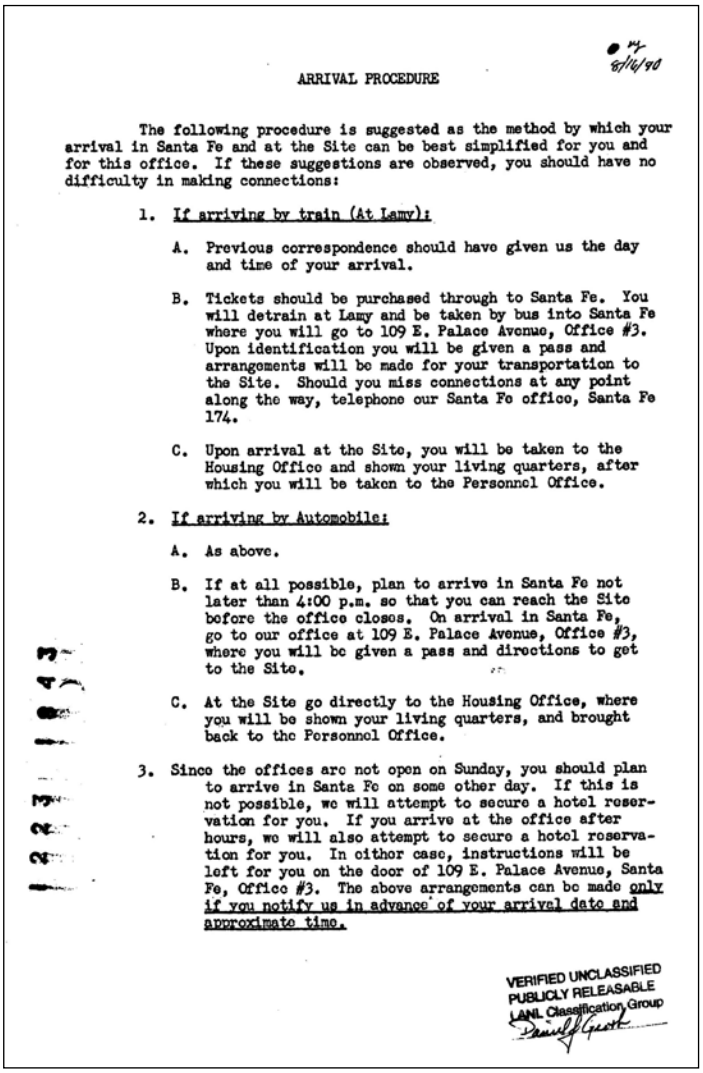


Fiske, Charles B. SED

Ex. 92
265-2

Fisk's McKibben card

PHOTO COURTESY OF *Los Alamos National Laboratory*



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   A. Previous correspondence should have given us the day and time of your arrival.

   B. Tickets should be purchased through to Santa Fe. You will detrain at Lamy and be taken by bus into Santa Fe where you will go to 109 E. Palace Avenue, Office #3. Upon identification you will be given a pass and arrangements will be made for your transportation to the Site. Should you miss connections at any point along the way, telephone our Santa Fe office, Santa Fe 174.

   C. Upon arrival at the Site, you will be taken to the Housing Office and shown your living quarters, after which you will be taken to the Personnel Office.

2. If arriving by Automobile:

   A. As above.

   B. If at all possible, plan to arrive in Santa Fe not later than 4:00 p.m. so that you can reach the Site before the office closes. On arrival in Santa Fe, go to our office at 109 E. Palace Avenue, Office #3, where you will be given a pass and directions to get to the Site.

   C. At the Site go directly to the Housing Office, where you will be shown your living quarters, and brought back to the Personnel Office.

3. Since the offices are not open on Sunday, you should plan to arrive in Santa Fe on some other day. If this is not possible, we will attempt to secure a hotel reservation for you. If you arrive at the office after hours, we will also attempt to secure a hotel reservation for you. In either case, instructions will be left for you on the door of 109 E. Palace Avenue, Santa Fe, Office #3. The above arrangements can be made only if you notify us in advance of your arrival date and approximate time.

VERIFIED UNCLASSIFIED
PUBLICLY RELEASABLE
LANL Classification Group

Arrival Procedure for new hires at Los Alamos National Laboratory

PHOTO COURTESY OF *Los Alamos National Laboratory*

greeted everyone who visited the lab, and for each, she created identification cards, now known as "McKibben cards."

The instructions I sent you are very likely the same instructions Dorothy McKibben would have sent to Fisk when he arrived.

That is a very fun tidbit. On the card it says Fisk was an "e." "Charles Fisk(e), SED." We know what the initials SED mean. But on the McKibben Card, there is also an "Ex. 92" and a "265-2."

Ex. 92 was his phone number and 265-2 was the building and room number he worked in.

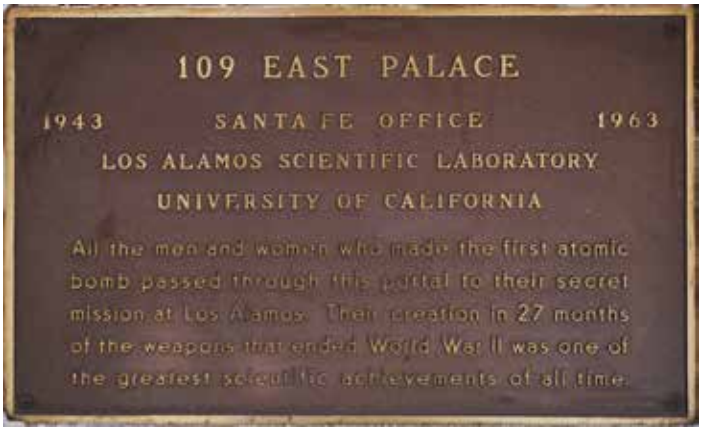
That makes sense. What other details about Fisk's time at Los Alamos would you like to add?

Val Fitch, who later won a Nobel Prize in Physics, was listed just below Fisk in the laboratory phone book. Both Fitch and Fisk were part of Froman's group and appear to have collaborated closely. Surrounded by such distinguished colleagues, it is likely that these interactions inspired Fisk to pursue further studies in physics at Harvard after the war and then to start work on a PhD at Stanford.

And yet he dropped his degree to study organbuilding! I imagine if Fisk continued with his PhD in physics, he could have become a notable physicist. Luckily for us, his life and interests took a different path.

I suspect Charlie Fisk was the kind of person who would have succeeded in anything he put his mind to.

Thank you again for sitting down with me and talking a little bit about Charles Fisk and his work at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The story of Fisk working on the Manhattan Project has circulated around the organ community as a bit of a legend, so having



Historical marker for 109 East Palace in Santa Fe

PHOTO BY *Marco Carag on Flickr, available through Creative Commons License "Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0." https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/.*

concrete evidence from someone who knows is good confirmation to have. It is also particularly relevant now that the blockbuster movie about Oppenheimer has won some major awards, and Los Alamos is becoming more of a tourist destination. It is fun for us organists to know that we have a direct connection to this part of world history.

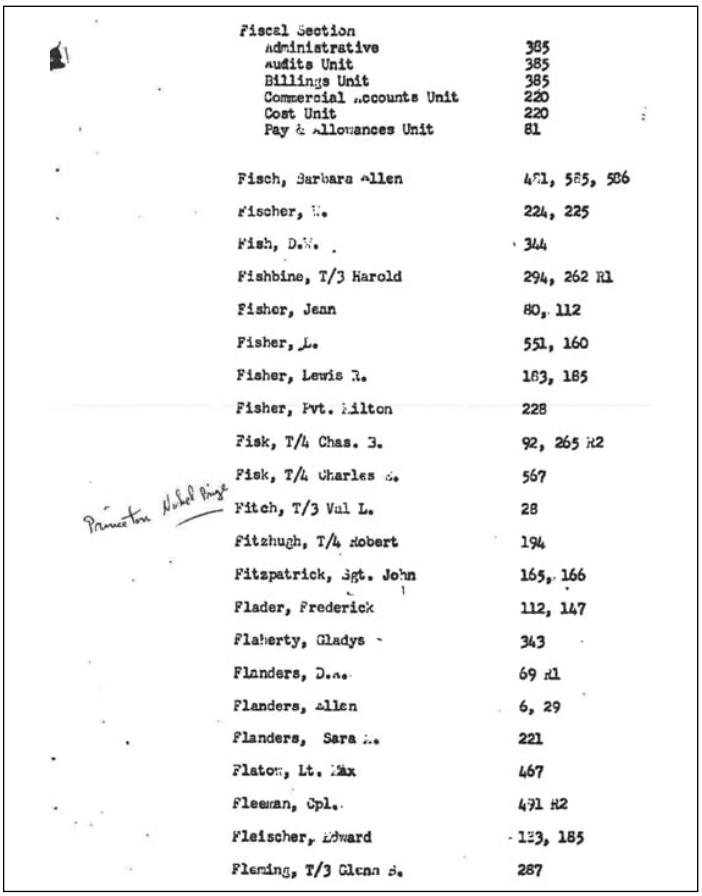
Thank you, Margaret. As a physicist and someone who enjoys organs, I too have enjoyed exploring the connections between these disparate worlds.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Margaret-Mary Sauppé earned her master's and doctoral degrees in organ performance and literature from the Eastman School of Music. She now resides with her husband and two children in Los Alamos, New Mexico. For further inquiries, please visit margaretmarysauppe.com.

Charles McMillan was a physicist and served as the tenth director of Los Alamos National Laboratory. He was also an amateur musician. As a recorder player, he performed Baroque chamber music locally and enjoyed experimenting with the organ. He lived in Los Alamos, New Mexico. As a recorder player, he performed Baroque chamber music locally and enjoyed experimenting with the organ.

Sadly, Dr. McMillan was killed in a traffic collision on September 6, 2024. This article is now published in honor of his enthusiasm for discovering more about both music and science.



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Princeton Nobel Prize

Original laboratory phone book showing Fisk's information
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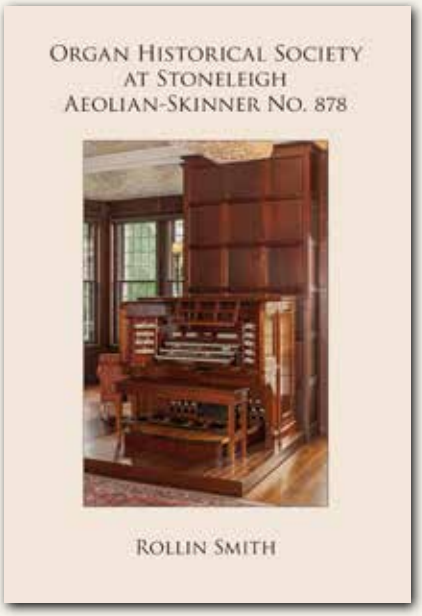

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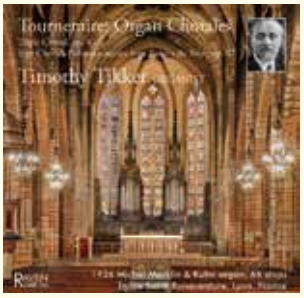

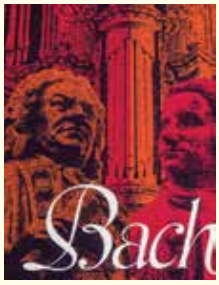

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MADER FUND RESEARCH GRANTS

The Ruth and Clarence Mader Memorial Scholarship Fund is pleased to invite proposals for its 2025 Research Grant Competition. Recent recipients of Mader Fund research grants include Emma Whitten, Damin Spritzer, Anne Laver, Stephanie Barth, Russell Weismann, and Steven Young.

Proposals are welcome on all topics related to organs, organists, and organ repertoire. Individual grants of up to $1,250 will be awarded. Preference will be given to research that will lead to the publication of articles or books, although research projects involving the creation of recordings, digital resources, or other methods of knowledge dissemination will also be considered.

The deadline to submit applications for this round of grants is April 30, 2025. For more information, application details, and a complete list of past recipients, please visit maderscholarshipfund.org/grants.

FAMED FRENCH ORGAN IS DESTROYED BY ARSON

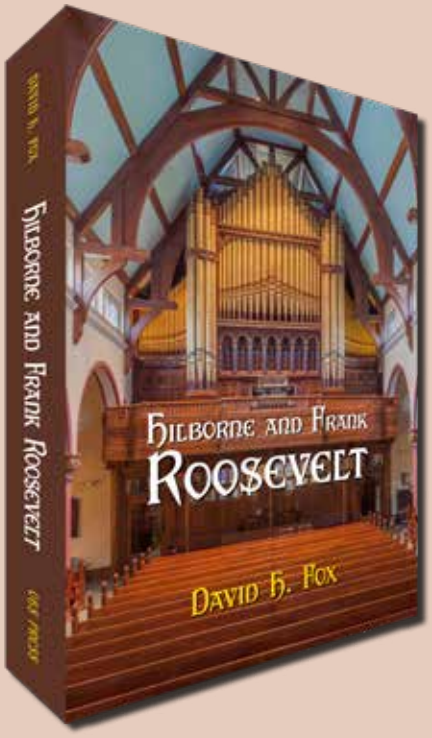
The 1861 Merklin organ at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Saint-Omer, northern France, was completely destroyed in a fire on Monday morning, September 2, 2024. Believed to be the work of arsonists, the fire broke out at 4:30 A.M. on Monday, and the bell tower collapsed very quickly. One suspect has been detained.

NORMAN LEBRECHT
September 4, 2024









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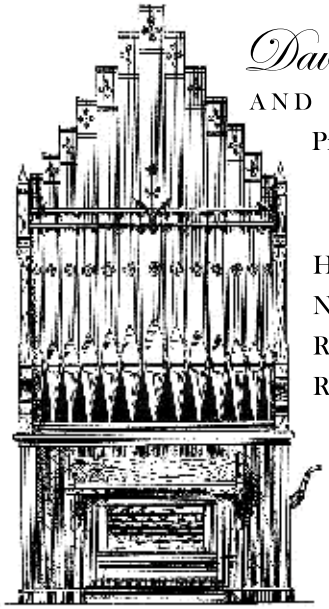

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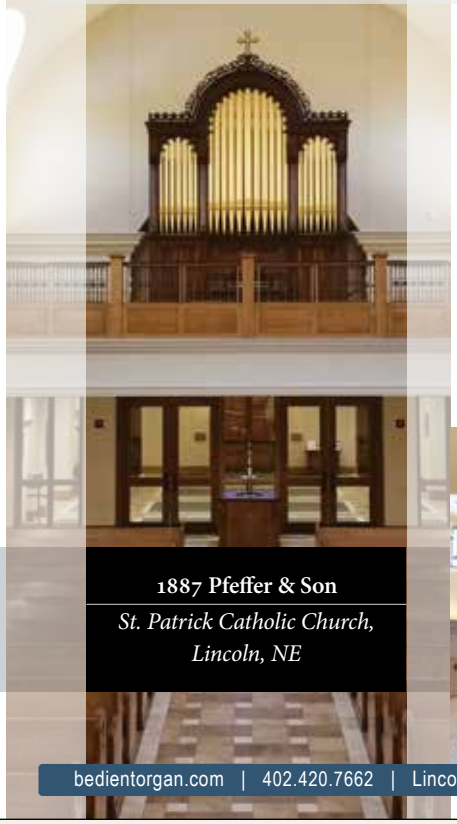

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Obituary



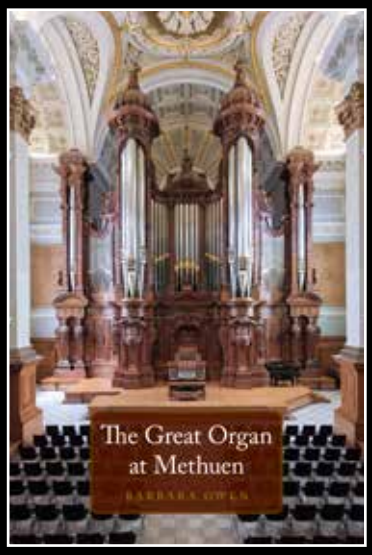
BARBARA J. OWEN passed away peacefully on the evening of October 14, 2024, at Masconomet Healthcare in Topsfield, Mass., after a brief period of declining health. She was 91.

Born in Utica, N.Y., on January 25, 1933, she earned a bachelor of music degree from Westminster Choir College and a master of music degree in musicology from Boston University in 1962. The next year she began a 40-year tenure as director of music at the First Religious Society of Newburyport. Mass. In addition, she was a voicer for C.B. Fisk, Inc. from 1961 to 1979.

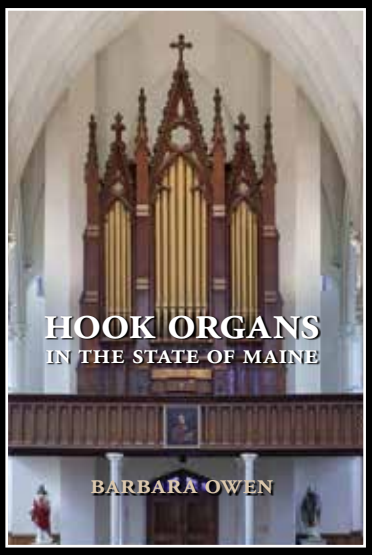
Barbara Owen was one of several American organ enthusiasts who founded the Organ Historical Society in 1956, became the founding president, and served in several capacities. She was honored with the OHS Distinguished Service Award in 1988, and was designated an Honorary Member in 1998 in recognition of her contributions both to the society and to scholarship. The American Musical Instrument Society honored her with its prestigious Curt Sachs Award in 1994. She served the American Guild of Organists as regional councilor and chapter dean and was a trustee of the Methuen Memorial Music Hall. She was the founder and curator of the Organ Library of the Boston Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, located at Boston University.

Few have served and influenced a profession in as many aspects as Barbara Owen. Throughout seven decades she was an organbuilder, organ restorer, researcher, author, advocate, consultant, musician, music editor, lecturer, hymn writer, and librarian. In addition to a constant flow of articles in scholarly journals, her books included *The Organ in New England, E. Power Biggs: Concert Organist, The Mormon Tabernacle Organ: An American Classic, The Registration of Baroque Organ Music, The Organ Music of Johannes Brahms, The Great Organ at Methuen,* and *Pioneers in American Organ Music 1860–1920: The New England Classicists*.

BOOKS BY BARBARA OWEN ARE AVAILABLE IN THE OHS CATALOG







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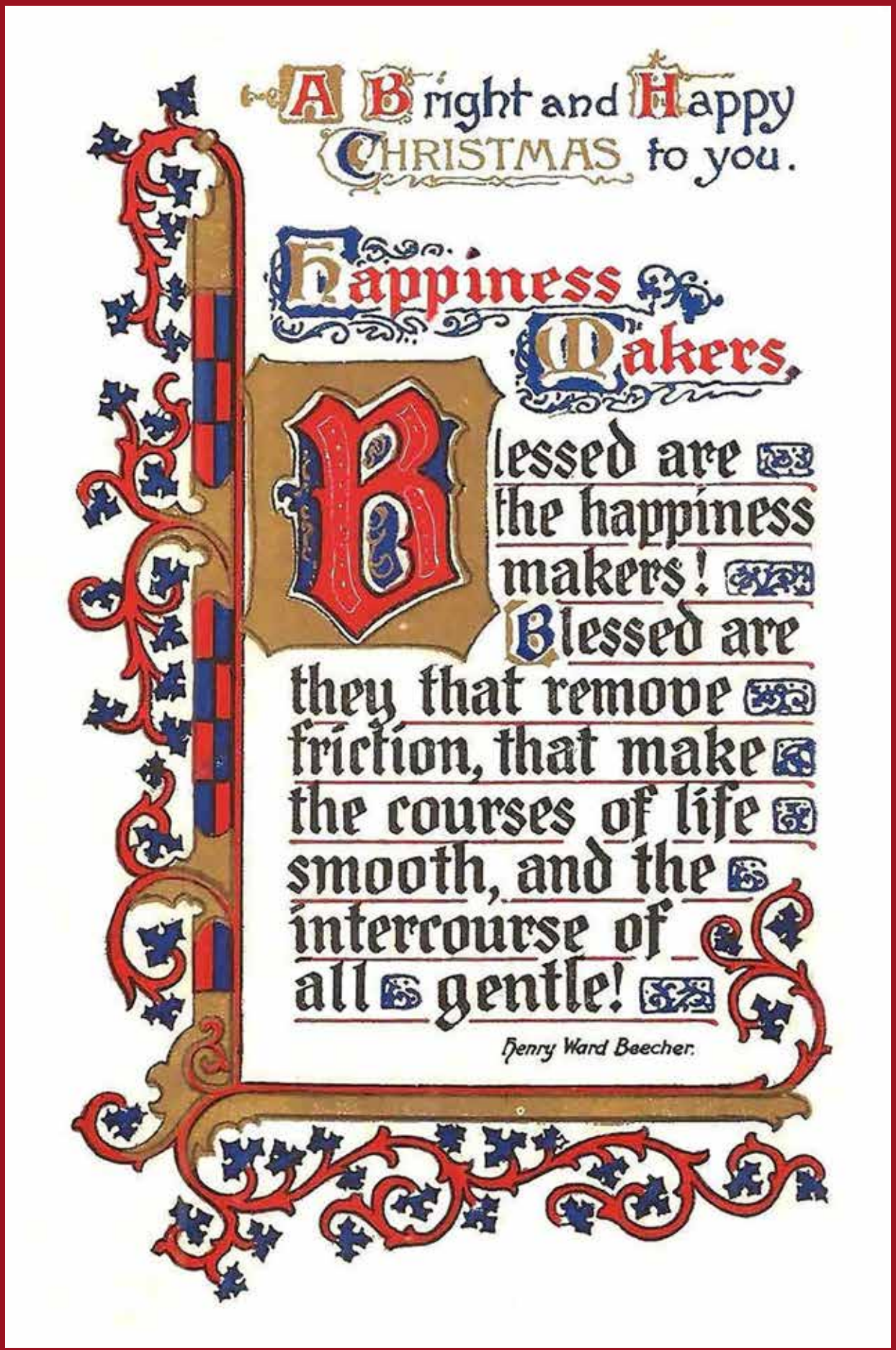
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