

# HILBUS CHAPTER

*THE ORGAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.*

*Where the Tracker Action Is!*

WWW.HILBUS.ORG

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## Organ Crawl - South Central Pennsylvania - Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2005

10 AM Mercersburg, Academy Chapel, 300 E. Seminary St. , Mercersburg,  
PA 17236. 1920s Skinner with some alterations.

**Directions:**

- A) From D.C. I - 270 North to I - 70 West at Frederick, or from Baltimore I - 70 west to:
- B) I - 81 North at Hagerstown to:
- C) Travel to I - 81 North through MD into PA. Approximately 5 miles into PA to:
- D) Exit 5, Route 16 west / Greencastle to:
- E) Travel through Greencastle and on, approximately 10 miles towards Mercersburg, PA. Outskirts to:
- F) Mercersburg Academy - right turn:
- G) Chapel is large stone building with prominent steeple.

11:30 AM Lunch at a Mercersburg restaurant - details forthcoming.

1 - 2:30 PM Wilson College - Thomson Hall, Chambersburg, PA.

Philadelphia Road/ Route 11. 1930s Whitelegg Moeller .

- A) Depart Rt. 16 East from Mercersburg, approx. 10 mi. to:
- B) I - 81 North to:
- C) Exit 14 - Rt. 316 Wayne Ave.
- D) Follow Rt. 316/Wayne Ave. west to
- E) Rt. 11 North
- F) Follow Rt. 11 North in right lane for approx. 2 mi. to:
- G) Wilson College - marked by stone pillars.
- H) Follow signs to Thomson Hall where chapel and organ are located.

3:15 PM United Methodist Church of Rouzerville, Waynesboro, PA. (11977 Old Route 16, Waynesboro, PA). Lancaster - Marshall organ, tracker action from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- A) Depart Rt. 11 south/west, following Rt. 11 on several turns to:
- B) Right onto Rt. 316 / South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, becomes Wayne Ave. Stay on Rt. 316 with some turns to:
- C) I - 81 south to:
- D) Route 16, Exit 5 - East towards Waynesboro, go approx. 10 mi. through town of Waynesboro to:
- E) Right onto Old PA 16 to:
- F) 11977 Old Rt. 16 - United Methodist Church of Rouzerville.

HILBUS CHAPTER CRAWL – SEPTEMBER 24  
WASHINGTON, D.C., NW  
A report by Peter Crisafulli

With a hint of autumn in the air, several members of the Hilbus Chapter set out to explore two exceptional instruments in the NW area of Washington, DC.

Our first visit was St. Paul's Church, Rock Creek Parish. Superlatives are in order to describe the building, the acoustics, and the organ. Our host was Graham Elliott, Director of Music at St. Paul's, who gave us a wonderful introduction to the history of the parish, its buildings, and the story of how the beautiful new Dobson organ came to be. Graham also had worthwhile words of wisdom about organ building and left us with much common-sense wisdom to contemplate, especially for anyone fortunate enough to be involved in planning a new organ project.

This smallish gem of an instrument is huge from a musical standpoint. Graham's demonstration consisted of a brilliant improvisation that began *pianissimo* and gradually built up to full organ, complete with toccata-like figurations, and then back down to a whisper. It was a seamless progression – no one thing stood out. Even mixtures and reeds elegantly entered the build-up. And yet, the individual stops are filled with character and color. For anyone who has not yet seen and heard this marvel – you owe it to yourself to do so at the first possible opportunity. Also, St. Paul's has just released a new CD featuring its professional choir and the Dobson organ in works of Elgar.

John Panning, Tonal Director for Dobson, has written a comprehensive analysis of the tonal design of this organ. It is well worth reading and can be accessed by going to [www.dobsonorgan.com](http://www.dobsonorgan.com) and clicking on Instruments – Past Projects – The District of Columbia – Washington, D.C.

GREAT		SWELL		PEDAL	
8'	Open Diapason	8'	Geigen Principal	16'	Bourdon
8'	Hohlfute	8'	Liebllich Gedeckt	8'	Open Diapason
4'	Octave	8'	Salicional	8'	Bass Flute (ext.)
4'	Harmonic Flute	8'	Voix Celeste	4'	Octave (ext.)
2 2/3'	Twelfth	4'	Gemshorn	16'	Trombone
2'	Fifteenth	2'	Flageolet	8'	Trumpet (ext.)
1 3/5'	Seventeenth	2'	Mixture III		
1 1/3'	Mixture IV	16'	Bassoon		
		8'	Trumpet		
		8'	Oboe		

Couplers: SG, GP, SP. Tremulant (general).

Mechanical key action, electric stop and combination action.

Following St. Paul's, we visited St. Martin of Tours RC, home of M. P. Moller's Opus 6809 of 1939 – the Whitelegg era. A choir rehearsal in the organ loft was concluding as we arrived, and it was evident that choir members were thrilled that we had come to visit, as they are justifiably proud of this instrument.

Everything appeared to be in original condition and in working order except for the Vox Humana which was not playable. Two stops originally planned for have never been installed. The console is a three-manual stop-key in "theatre organ" style. Of note are the unusual Choir to Swell couplers at 16, 8 & 4.

The tonal compartments are divided on either side of the gallery, the enclosed Choir division and unenclosed Pedal Violone/Octave unit being placed to the right of the console, and the unenclosed Great to the left. The enclosed Swell is deeply recessed in a chamber behind the Great. Both sides are fronted by matching dummy pipe facades.

The sound of this instrument is characterized by rich, clear Diapasons, a restrained brilliance in the chorus, pretty flutes, a Gemshorn "with attitude," a nice bright Trumpet and piquant Oboe, and a juicy Clarinet that I would have loved to take home.

GREAT		SWELL		CHOIR	
8'	Diapason	8'	Diapason	8'	Viola
8'	Clarabella	8'	Rohrgedeckt	8'	Melodia
8'	Gemshorn	8'	Gamba	8'	Dulciana
4'	Octave	8'	Voix Celeste	4'	Rohrflute
II-III	Mixture	4'	Rohrflute (ext. 8' Rohrged.)	8'	Clarinet
	(2 2/3' + 2';	2'	Flautino		Tremolo
	@ mid. C + 4')	III-IV	Mixture (prepared for)		Swell/Choir 8'
	Tremolo	8'	Trumpet		
	Swell/Great 8'	8'	Oboe		
	Choir/Great 8'	8'	Vox Humana		
			Tremolo		
			Swell 16', 4'		
			Choir/Swell 16', 8', 4'		

- PEDAL
- 16' Violone (low end open wood, upper pipes metal)
  - 16' Bourdon (ext. Swell Rohrged.)
  - 10 2/3' Quint (from Bourdon & Rohrged.)
  - 8' Octave (ext. Viol.)
  - 8' Flute (Great Clara.)
  - 8' Gedeckt (Swell)
  - 8' Dulciana (Choir)
  - 16' Trombone (prepared for)
    - Great/Pedal 8'
    - Swell/Pedal 8'
    - Choir/Pedal 8'

Lunch followed at the Colonel Brooks Tavern – a great way to end a great crawl. We thank our President, Carolyn Booth, for making arrangements for this crawl.

### From the Treasurer...

Please send your annual dues of \$14 to Barb Birkner, 6606 Farmer Drive, Fort Washington, MD 20744. Make checks payable to "OHS - Hilbus Chapter"

At the August meeting our members voted to purchase a half page advertisement in the AGO 2005-2006 Directory for \$100.00. Look for the add.

How embarrassing... I may have lost a dues check... I always deposit checks within a few days of receiving. If your check has not been cashed in a normal period of time, please give me a call. Sorry. 301-449-4399.

### OHS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History Project

Please contribute photos, clippings, anecdotes to: Allison Alcorn-Oppedahl ([aoppedahl@tiu.edu](mailto:aoppedahl@tiu.edu)) Trinity College, 2065 Half Day Rd., Deerfield, IL 60015 This address is also an add in the recent Tracker and the latest OHS Convention booklet.

#### Cleveland Fisher

An old-time OHS member, Cleveland was one of a kind. He was a tall, lanky guy with sparse red hair and a "rug" hairpiece (think Ichabod Crane), and his sense of humor was legendary, both at OHS conventions and in his everyday organ maintenance practice. He left us all too soon, succumbing to stomach cancer, I believe in 1977. What follows are some memories of him.

1. In a Boston convention, he marched into a church waving the Confederate flag and declared a start of the "southern" convention.
2. In the 1970 Canton, NY, convention, he was to play a small rural organ. He had gone there ahead of time to check on things and found one small, silent pipe. He looked at it and found it was stopped up by a fat spider. So he wrapped the culprit in a hanky and at the concert formally presented it to the OHS archivist as a historic artifact.
3. I think it was at that same convention that his encore consisted of nothing but sitting at the organ bench, looking at some printed music, counting measures, periodically pulling stop knobs, but no playing. At the end, he got up and held up the published music copy which was called "Resting" and was dedicated to tired organists everywhere.
4. He was called to a small church when the organist complained that the organ needed tuning. He played the organ and found it in good tune, so he asked the organist to come and play. She commenced to pull out the stop knobs at different lengths and thus, by restricting the air to some ranks, varying the pitch, so some ranks were out of tune. The

organist explained that she had previously played a Hammond electronic organ where the stops were selected by varying the length of the "drawbars".

5. Another rural organist's complaint about an organ's tuning was resolved when Cleve found hymnals stuffed in the mouths of the large wooden façade pipes.
6. Another organist was asked why she had covered the pedals with a rug. She explained there was a draft coming from the floor "grating" (pedal keys).
7. Another time he claims he found a glass eye staring at him from underneath the pedal keys.
8. And then he or someone else reported working on a rural tracker organ on the first floor in the hot summer. The windows and doors and the organ side panels were all open. Outside a dog was chasing a cat who ducked into the church and they both ran through the organ breaking the pedal trackers.

This was compiled by Carolyn Fix who recalled fondly these episodes. If anyone has clippings, photos, other anecdotes - please send them to OHS Anniversary Project.

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Two DC tracker organs are available from David Storey ([dms1518@aol.com](mailto:dms1518@aol.com)) in Baltimore

- 1.) For sale: 1970 Holtkamp II - 25, detached console, electric stop action, in Hand Chapel of the former Mount Vernon College.
- 2.) Free to a non profit organization: 1872 William Johnson II-15 stops (58/30). Needs complete restoration.

Two of our members (Rachaelen Lien and Marigim Theone) live in New Orleans. We hope and pray they are OK.

First Congregational United Church of Christ at corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and G Streets, N.W. present the original 1925 silent film "The Phantom of the Opera" with live organ accompaniment by Paul Fleckenstein on their 41-rank Casavant pipe organ, Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30PM for a family pot luck and the film beginning at 7:30 PM . It is free and open to the public. Use the metro. It is near Metro Center and Gallery Place stations.



St. Paul's Episcopal, Rock Creek Sept., 2005

The Church exterior. Photo: P. Birkner



The Dobson organ, St. Paul's Episcopal, Rock Creek. Organ is located behind the altar Sept. '05 Photo: P. Birckner



Dobson organ key desk; St. Paul's Episcopal



M.P. Moller organ at St. Martin of Tours RC Church

Sept., '05 Photo P. Birckner