

Hilbus Chapter

The Organ Historical Society, Inc.

Where the Tracker Action Is!

www.hilbus.org



Volume 37

Number 5

January 2008

Whole No. 337

Saturday, January 26, 2008

A Day in Georgetown and Bethesda

9:30 AM

Georgetown Baptist Church

3101 N Street NW, Washington, DC

Roosevelt Organ, 1883, I Manual, 6 stops

On the occasion of this visit we will deliver and present the 2005 OHS Historic Citation for the Roosevelt organ originally built for the Chapel of the Holy Cross, Episcopal lately St. Thomas Parish, Dupont Circle.

Directions:

The Church is located just north of M Street in Georgetown. Parking is on the street and difficult to find so allow time or carpool.

11:00 AM

Episcopal Church of the Redeemer

6201 Dunrobbin Place, Bethesda, MD 20816

DiGennaro-Hart Organ 2007 - 2 Manuals 28 Ranks

This is a fine new pipe organ built by Hilbus member Michael Hart's firm.

[crawl information continued next page]

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Articles and news may be submitted to the Editor electronically: music.director@gracealex.org

Dues due in October: \$14, mailed to Secretary-Treasurer (Checks payable to Hilbus Chapter, OHS)

Directions:

From Georgetown Baptist: Proceed South on any numbered street to M Street, turn right.

Go West on M Street continuing on Canal Road which becomes the Clara Barton Parkway. Exit for MacArthur Blvd/Glen Echo. Turn left on MacArthur, passing Glen Echo Park on your left and the intersection with Goldsboro Road. The church is on your right as you pass the shopping center. Parking on street.

Alternatively you may reach the Church via M Street and MacArthur or Reservoir Road and MacArthur if you know these routes.

From Beltway - East (inbound) on Clara Barton Parkway to MacArthur Blvd. exit. (Here you will make a U-turn and then exit right. Left on MacArthur to the church.)

From River Road or Massachusetts Avenue extended: South on Goldsboro Road to MacArthur. Right on MacArthur. Dunrobbin Place is just past the shopping center on your right.

12:00 NOON

Lunch at the Irish Inn at Glen Echo

6119 Tulane Avenue (at MacArthur Blvd), Glen Echo, Maryland 20812

Directions from Redeemer:

Turn left (east) on MacArthur Blvd to the Inn or walk.

1:30 PM

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church

5450 Massachusetts Ave., Bethesda, MD 20816

Wicks Organ, 2 Manuals - about 15 ranks

This is an interesting and quite successful Wicks Organ from the early 1980's.

The organ is encased in the rear gallery.

Directions from the restaurant:

Exit restaurant, turn left and then right on Goldsboro Rd to Massachusetts Ave.

Right on Massachusetts to Fort Sumner Drive. Right on Ft. Sumner and first left into Church parking lot.



November 17th, 2007 Crawl

Reviewed by Tom Parker, Organist, St. Dominic's Church

The idea for this day's crawl began when I was asked to play a wedding at St. Aloysius. As a lifelong resident of the DC Metro area, I had driven past the Jesuit church on North Capitol Street many times. It looks like a big brick barn. When I arrived to check out the organ in preparation for the wedding, I was amazed to enter a dazzling interior in Italian Renaissance style dominated by an altarpiece by Constantino Brumidi, of U. S. Capitol fame. When I climbed the 47 steps to the upper of two galleries to play the organ, I was disappointed to find a rather ordinary instrument with the reeds out of tune. However, the spectacular appearance of the room and the

flawless acoustics stayed in my mind. To learn that this edifice was built by a working class parish in 1859 was mind boggling.

On the other side of the Mall from St. Aloysius, in 1852, the Dominican fathers founded their Washington parish at 6th and E Streets, SW. St. Dominic's, however, was not completed until after the Civil War, in 1875. It was another working class parish, mainly Irish, and associated with the waterfront and its activities. Like St. Al's, it is a spacious building with excellent acoustics, Gothic in style, but without sound-scrambling features like domes or transepts. While contemporary Catholics seem to throw up the cheapest building possible, carpet it, and furnish it with padded pews, a grand piano, and a seldom-used electronic organ, one can only wonder at the dedication and



St. Dominic's

faith of the 19th century Catholics. Unfortunately, these magnificent buildings serve few parishioners these days, but with the revitalization of downtown, perhaps someday they will be filled again. What wonderful music will then fill these houses of worship!

The 1887 organ at St. Dominic's, built by the Roosevelt Organ Works in 1887, is one of the few surviving works by this firm, founded by Hilborne Roosevelt, first cousin of President Theodore Roosevelt. Hilborne had passed away by 1887 and the firm was headed by his brother Frank. Although the action of the St. Dominic organ has been modified and is now direct electric, the tonal design has never been altered, so we are able to hear what was one of the most innovative and distinguished specifications of the time. Some of the features of the instrument:

- A solid pedal department with huge open and stopped wood basses and a full length Trombone standing next to the rear wall of the church;
- A very large scale 8' Diapason that fills the church with an ocean of sound;
- A complete chorus of ten flute stops at 8, 4 and 2 foot pitch;
- An ensemble-type specification where a large number of manual 8 foot stops (17) ranging in volume from a *pppp Dolce* to the *ff* Great Diapason furnish an almost limitless palette of tone colors for the accompaniment of voices and instruments
- Because of the way the Great stops are scaled, adding the super octave coupler or playing the right hand in octaves higher up the keyboard adds a whole new level of pealing sound.

Here is the specification:

[review continued next page]

The Gallery Organ at St. Dominic's Church, Washington, DC

Built by The Roosevelt Organ Works, NYC, 1887, Opus 290

GREAT

16' Double Open Diapason *full length; metal; façade*
8' Open Diapason
8' Doppelflöte *wood; stopped; double mouths*
8' Viola di Gamba
8' Gemshorn
4' Octave *in choir enclosure*
4' Flute Harmonique *in choir enclosure*
2 2/3' Twelfth *in choir enclosure*
2' Super Octave *in choir enclosure*
V Mixture* *in choir enclosure*
IV Quint Mixture* (without Tierce) *in choir enclosure*
8' Trumpet *in choir enclosure*

Note: Roosevelt's Mixture has a tierce in it.
When the organ was rebuilt, the tierce was separated out
so the player could draw the mixture with or without it –
thus the two versions of the same mixture.*

CHOIR

8' Geigen Diapason
8' Concert Flute *harmonic, wood*
8' Quintadena *stopped, wood*
8' Dolce
4' Fugara
4' Flute D'Amour *wood*
2' Harmonic Piccolo *metal*
8' Clarinet *bell-shaped resonators*

SWELL

16' Bourdon *in swell enclosure, independent of pedal*
8' Open Diapason
8' Stopped Diapason
8' Spitz Flute
8' Salicional
8' Voix Celestes (TC) *added in 1990's rebuild*
4' Octave
4' Hohlflöte *wood*
2' Flageolet *metal*
III-V Cornet *upper register has 8' and 4'*
8' Cornopean (*Trompette*)
8' Oboe

*Note: A rumor has been around that
the swell reeds are by Cavallé-Coll.
This does not seem to be true.*

PEDAL

16' Open Diapason *wood*
16' Subbass *wood; stopped*
10 2/3' Quint
8' Violoncello *metal*
8' Octave (*a unit rank; added by Daffer*)
4' Octave (*a unit rank; added by Daffer*)
16' Trombone *full length; metal*



St. Dominic's console

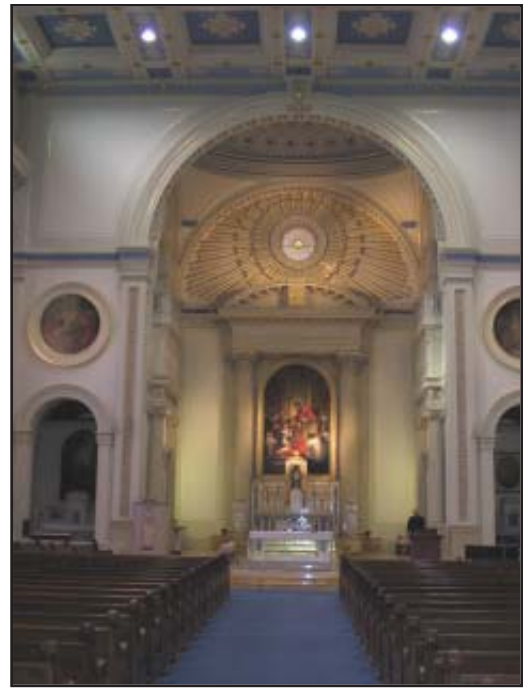
When the organ was installed, the pipe enclosures were arranged vertically and the facade pipes were stenciled and gilded. This type of organ was listed in Roosevelt's literature as a "Model 55". The original action was probably part tracker and part Roosevelt's patented pneumatic with ventill chests. Unfortunately, the installation blocked the stained glass rose window, so in the 1920's the organ was rearranged by Lewis & Hitchcock with the two wooden enclosures side by side. Some non-speaking facade pipes were added and the exposed pipes were painted silver. Gradually the organ deteriorated until a contract was given to R. A. Daffer for renovations in 1989. The renovation was finished in the early 90's. The action was converted to direct electric.

Our next stop was St. Aloysius, where we were met by Robert Murray, the artist who oversaw the renovation of the church. Mr. Murray gave us a brief history of the building and an explanation of the prominent design

[review continued next page]

features, including the altarpiece of St. Aloysius receiving communion from St. Charles Borromeo, donated by Brumidi. Mr. Murray continued to answer questions while the more eager organists began the long climb to the organ.

The church is a straightforward rectangle in shape with an 80' ceiling. The organ is ideally situated in the rear gallery near the ceiling and projects flawlessly into the nave. The case is from the Simmons and Wilcox organ of c. 1860. Of course, the reaction of the OHS members present was dominated by regret for the removal of the original organ in the 1950's, which was still hand-pumped! Supposedly the excuse given for junking the historic instrument, which was reputed to be magnificent, was that some of the keys were drooping.



St. Aloysius



St. Aloysius
photo courtesy Parl Birckner

However, the 1952 Kilgen is at least satisfactory. The Jesuits at St. Aloysius mainly use the church as the auditorium for Gonzaga High School, while the parishioners assemble at a Gospel Mass in the lower church, so it is not intended as a concert instrument. It has a fine principal chorus, a lovely Great Open Flute, 50's style thin strings, a pretty Oboe, and a bright Trumpet. It could certainly use repairs and tuning, but it deserves to be used someday to accompany a performance by choir and orchestra in the ample loft, or perhaps a Latin

Mass with chant propers and a renaissance ordinary. Compare the usefulness of this 18 rank organ with a neo-baroque organ with 25 ranks, 11 of them mixtures! Here is the specification:

St. Aloysius Gonzaga Catholic Church, Washington, DC

Kilgen Organ, Opus 7495 (1952)

GREAT

8' Diapason *61 pipes*
 8' Hohlflute *61 pipes*
 8' Dulciana *61 pipes*
 4' Principal *61 pipes*
 2 2/3' Twelfth *61 pipes*
 2' Fifteenth *61 pipes*
 Chimes *21 tubes*

SWELL

8' Geigen Diapason *61 pipes*
 8' Rohrfloete *61 pipes*
 8' Viole d'Gamba *61 pipes*
 8' Viole Celeste TC *49 pipes*
 4' Flute Harmonic *61 pipes*
 2 2/3' III Plein Jeu *183 pipes*
 8' Trompette *61 pipes*
 8' Oboe *61 pipes*

PEDAL

16' Major Bass (stopped) *32 pipes*
 16' Bourdon *32 pipes*
 16' Rohr Bourdon (Swell) *12 pipes*
 8' Bass Flute (from 16') *12 pipes*
 8' Rohrfloete (Swell)
 4' Blockfloete (from 16') *12 pipes*
 16' Trombone (Swell Trompette) *12 pipes*
 8' Trumpet (Swell)

[review continued next page]

We left St. Aloysius to head for Barracks Row on 8th St. SE for lunch, allowing time for members to get lost, regroup, have lunch and get caught up on gossip.

Our final stop was at one of Washington’s most historic churches, Christ Church (Washington Parish), founded in 1794, the church of John Philip Sousa and of Congressional Cemetery. Jacob Hilbus used to tune an earlier organ in this building. The current instrument, the fourth pipe organ, is a 1901 Hook & Hastings, originally installed in St. Cyprian’s Catholic Church and moved here in the 70’s. I used to practice on this organ when I was a student at CU in the 70’s, and learned Franck’s *E Major Chorale* on its 2 tracker manuals.



Christ Church (Washington Parish)

The organ has been considerably modified over the years, and those present would have liked to see it restored to its original state. At present it’s not pretty – of course, someone just couldn’t resist removing the stenciling on the façade pipes, leaving the outlines visible, and the most recently added stops apparently have never worked properly. Originally intended for a gallery, the case sits rather awkwardly on the nave floor. However, the H&H foundations are still crisp and clear as a bell and fill the modest church beautifully. Any congregation should jump at the opportunity to rescue an old pipe organ like this! Here is the specification (it should be pretty obvious which are the altered ranks):

GREAT	SWELL	PEDAL
Diapason 8'	Stopped Diapason 8'	Bourdon 16'
Doppleflote 8'	Viola Celeste II	(other pedal upperwork not functioning)
Octave 4'	Geigen Octave 4'	
Fifteenth 2'	Flute Harmonic 4'	
Scharff III	Principal 2'	
Sesquialter II	Zymbelquint II	
	Oboe (Cornoepan) 8'	



Christ Church keydesk

Thanks to Carl Schwartz for information about the St. Aloysius organ, Dan Meyer for information about the Christ Church organ, JC Cantrell of St. Dominic’s for meeting us at that church, Fr. Thomas Clifford and Robert Murray of St. Aloysius for welcoming us there, and Richard Thibadeaux of Christ Church for showing us the Hook & Hastings.





bass pipes on top of St. Dominic's case



St. Dominic's façade pipes (with a hand to show scale)

News of Note

An organ recital will be held on Sunday, February 10, 2008, at Friendship United Methodist Church, 22 West Friendship Road, Friendship, Maryland, beginning at 4:00 p.m. The performance will be given by Hilbus Chapter member Charles R. ("Chuck") Nye, a resident of Chesapeake Beach, Maryland. The featured instrument is the Oberlinger Orgelbau pipe organ built in Windesheim, Germany and installed at Friendship U.M. Church in November/December 2006. Mr. Nye is currently the organist for the First Lutheran Church's Classic Grace service in Sunderland, Maryland. Nye also serves as organist for Concordia Lutheran Church in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. His recital program will be entertaining with a colorful mixture of hymns, snazzy theater and pop songs, romance/love themes, and even a patriotic selection. There will be a reception at the Church after the concert. The concert will be free, but donations will be accepted.

Driving directions are: Maryland Rt. 4 to MD Rt. 258; MD Rt. 258 to MD Rt 2. Right onto MD Rt. 2 to a traffic circle. Continue counterclockwise around the traffic circle, and right off of the circle onto West Friendship Road. Friendship Church is on the immediate left. There is additional parking across the street. For more information call the church at 410-257-7133 or Bob Hobbs at 301-855-5269.



Submitting material to the newsletter

Please note the deadline for each newsletter; this allows time for the production and mailing of each edition in a timely fashion. Electronic submission is always best, preferably in a Microsoft *Word* document. Organ specifications should be single spaced, not formatted into columns. Photos should be in JPEG or TIFF format.

Have you paid your dues? The deadline was October!

\$14 (Checks payable to Hilbus Chapter, OHS) mailed to:
SECRETARY-TREASURER Barbara Birckner
6606 Farmer Drive
Fort Washington, MD 20744

2011 Convention Update

The committee planning the 2011 OHS National Convention in the Washington, DC area met in early January. The tentative dates (subject to approval from the national office) will be June 27 through July 1, 2011; this will hopefully allow those who might like to stay in the area for the July 4th celebrations added incentive. Bus companies, caterers, and hotel options were discussed, as was the best way to utilize the four full days of the convention. Tentative contact has been made with the Smithsonian about the possibility of seeing instruments in the collection of the institution, and early news is that instruments are to be moved to a different facility next year making their access much more likely.

Site visits to various hotels will begin this spring, as well as visits to all potential churches and organs.



Dates to remember:

January Crawl - Saturday, January 26th

February Crawl - Saturday, February 26rd

Deadline for February Newsletter:

Thursday, February 7th