

Hilbus Chapter

The Organ Historical Society, Inc.

Where the Tracker Action Is!

www.hilbus.org



Volume 46

Number 3

September 2015

Whole Number 414

A TRIP DOWN FRANCONIA ROAD

Prepared by Gerald Piercey

Saturday, September 26, 2015

10:00 a.m.

All Saints Sharon Chapel

3421 Franconia Road

Alexandria, Virginia 22310

Patrick J. Summers, Music Director

Meredith Meersman, POC

1891 Hook and Hastings Organ, Opus 1502 (Rebuilt in 1993 Dan Meyers)

Two manuals, three divisions, 16 ranks

mechanical key and stop action

DIRECTIONS: All Saints - Sharon Chapel building is located on the eastern stretch Franconia Road (Route 644), where Franconia Road goes downhill toward the intersection with Telegraph Road (Route 611). The church is about 1/3 mile west of the intersection of Franconia and Telegraph. All Saints - Sharon Chapel is about three miles southwest of Old Town, Alexandria and about 10 miles south-southwest of Washington, D.C. The driveway is on the southern side of Franconia Road.

CHAIRMAN: Glen Frank, 4715 31st Street South, #B2, Arlington, VA 22206

(571) 488-3060

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Gerald Piercey, 4008 Decatur Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895

(301) 933-1503

SECRETARY-TREASURER: Carolyn Lamb Booth, 9200 LaBelle Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20879

(301) 869-6271

EDITOR: Kevin M. Clemens, 711 Court Square Way, Edgewood, MD 21040

(410) 679-2271

EDITOR-ADVISOR: Carolyn Fix, 166 Battle Street, SW, Vienna, VA 22180

(703) 281-5046

Articles and news may be submitted to the Editor electronically: kevinclemens@mac.com

Dues are due in October. \$14.00 mailed to Secretary-Treasurer. (Checks payable to: HILBUS CHAPTER, OHS)

11:30 a.m.

Ted's Lone Star Steakhouse
3141 Duke Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Directions: (Six minutes - 2.5 miles) Head east on Franconia Road toward Governors Pond Circle. Use the two left lanes to turn left on VA-611 N/Telegraph Road. Merge onto Duke Street. Destination will be on the right.

1:00 p.m.

Bush Hill Presbyterian Church
4916 Franconia Road
Alexandria, Virginia 22310

Richard Mumford, Music Director and Organist

1995 Orgues Létourneau Ltée, Opus 44
Two manuals. three divisions, 23 ranks
Slider Chests, Electric Key action, and Electric Stop Action

DIRECTIONS: (Eight Minutes - 3.8 miles) Head east on Duke Street approximately one half mile. Use the right lane to take the Telegraph Road ramp to I-95. Merge onto VA-611 S/Telegraph Road. Turn right onto Franconia Road. In approximate two miles destination will be on the right.

CONCERTS AND RECITALS

September 18 - **Randall Sheets, organist**, National City Christian Church, Washington, D.C. **12:15 p.m.**

September 25 - **Joanne Peterson, organist**, National City Christian Church, Washington, D.C. **12:15 p.m.**

September 25 - **Bradley Hunter Welch, organist**, US Naval Academy Chapel, Annapolis, Maryland, **7:30 p.m.**
Tickets \$20.00

September 29 - **Christopher Houlihan, organist**, Mount St. Mary's Seminary (Immaculate Conception Chapel) Emmitsburg, Maryland, **7:00 p.m.**

October 4 - **Stephen Hamilton, organist**, First Unitarian Church, Wilmington, Delaware, **4:00 p.m.**

October 9 - **Scott Montgomery, organist**, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Chestertown, Maryland, **7:30 p.m.**
Tickets \$20.00

October 14 - **William Neil, organist with brass and timpani**, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. **8:00 p.m.** A ticketed event.

August Crawl Review

By Carl Schwartz

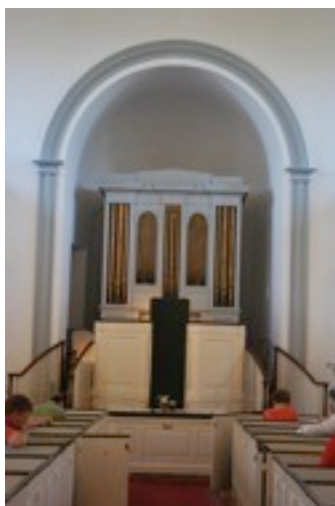
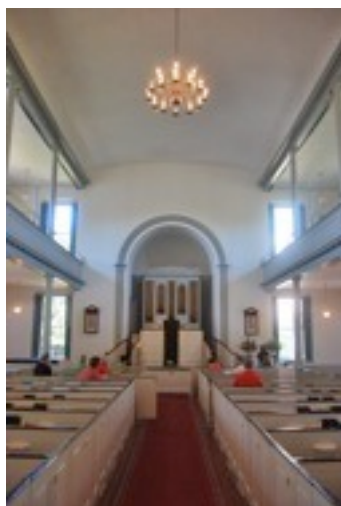
Members assembled on a lovely summer day in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia for the monthly crawl arranged by Glen Frank.

Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 South Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia, 22314

In 1772, the Society of Presbyterians in Alexandria formed a congregation and constructed a meeting house in 1775 that is the basis of the present structure. In 1817 the congregation adopted the name First Presbyterian Church. In that year Jacob Hilbus installed an organ: the first organ to have been put in use by a Presbyterian congregation in the United States. Hilbus had lived in the same block as the church at an earlier time and built at least two organs for Alexandria churches, then a part of the District of Columbia. Research by Michael Friesen of the OHS indicates that this instrument, like the one built for Christ Episcopal Church and now in the Smithsonian collection was built in partnership with Robert Howison. The Presbyterian church burned in 1835 and was subsequently reconstructed reaching its present form by about 1849 when a new Erben Organ was purchased and installed behind the pulpit. In the early 1870s Hall and Labagh of New York added a 20 note Subbass stop and a pedal clavier.

First Presbyterian Church closed in 1899 and the building passed to the ownership of Second Presbyterian Church. It was renamed the Old Meeting House and used occasionally. In 1928 the organ was moved to the gallery of the building: possibly by Lewis and Hitchcock. In 1949 the The Old Presbyterian Meeting House congregation was established and the church has flourished with the revival of Old Town Alexandria. The Erben organ received an electric blower and it appears the Lewis and Hitchcock went over the organ and carried out deferred maintenance at that time. In 1957 L&H installed a one manual 4 stop Erben Organ (1851) in the forward area of the gallery near the front of the church. This organ was subsequently moved to the Flounder House behind the church (the former manse) and then owned by chapter member Ben Faidley of McLean. It has recently been restored and placed in a Fredricksburg, Virginia church by James Baird. In 1963 the Newcomer Organ Company carried out restorative work to the 1849 Erben. In 1965 the Reuter Organ Company installed their Opus 1500 on either side of the Erben instrument. In 1997 Lively-Fulcher installed a new mechanical action organ in the gallery and the Erben was placed back in its original location behind the pulpit and gone over mechanically. The pedal stop installed in the 1870s was removed returning the organ to its original state. At some point in the history of the instrument an original hitch down Swell pedal was replaced by a balanced swell pedal. Those that wish to reference a more detailed history will find this in The Organ Historical Society, Atlas 2011.

The organ is in very good condition. The action is precise and quick and a pleasure to play. The tone is pleasing and musical in a timeless way. What a delight!



Henry Erben (1849)

New York, New York

(stop label engravings from 1963 renovation)

All stops enclosed in Swell except Diapason Bass

Compass : CC-g3 Wind pressure: 3_ Pitch : A435 Temperament: Equal

[8] Open Diapason	44 pipes TC, common metal,
[8] Diapason Bass	12 pipes CC-BB, unenclosed, some in façade
[8] Stopped Diapason	44 pipes from c0, stopped wood and metal Chimney flutes
[8] Stopped Diapason Bass	12 pipes CC-BB, stopped wood
[4] Principal	56 pipes, common metal,
[4] Flute	44 pipes TC, metal Chimney Flutes
[8] Dulciana	44 pipes TC, common metal,
[2] Piccolo	56 pipes, common metal,
[8] Trumpet	39 pipes from TF, 7 open metal flues c#3 to top new shallots and tongues by M. P. Moller, Inc. (1963)

The horizontal swell shades were originally controlled by a hitch-down lever left of center that was later replaced with a balanced swell pedal.

Open metal flue pipes were provided with tuning slides 1963.

Pedal stop, Bourdon 16, 20 notes (Hall and Labagh, c. 1870) and clavier removed 1997

Sources: The Atlas 2011, Organ Historical Society, p. 78ff, article by Carl Schwartz, also Jacob Hilbus, The First Washington Organbuilder by Michael Friesen, p. 32ff



The present gallery organ of the Meeting House was built in 1997 by Lively-Fulcher Organbuilders. Installed behind a handsome case that compliments and enriches the architecture of the room. It is controlled by a mechanical key action and electric stop action.

Sam Baker demonstrated the organ splendidly. The builders have balanced the sound as it is heard down on the main floor of the church. In this they have dealt effectively with the challenging acoustical environment. The instrument is versatile and colorful with a wide dynamic range. The tonal resources adapt to a wide range of organ music. The writer can attest to its versatility in choral accompaniment and service playing.

LIVELY-FULCHER ORGANBUILDERS

Washington, D. C., 1997

61/32 compass

GREAT

16	Bourdon	49 wood/plain metal (1-12 Subbass)
8	Open Diapason	tin and spotted metal
8	Stopt Diapason	wood/plain metal
8	Harmonic Flute	plain metal
4	Principal	spotted metal
4	Open Flute	plain metal
2 2/3	Twelfth	spotted metal
2	Fifteenth	spotted metal
2 2/3	Cornet III	183 pipes, plain metal
1 1/3	Furniture IV	244 pipes, spotted metal
8	Trumpet	spotted metal
8	Swell to Great	
	Tremulant	



SWELL

8	Diapason	spotted metal
8	Chimney Flute	wood/plain metal
8	Salicional	spotted metal
8	Voix Celeste	spotted metal
4	Principal	spotted metal
4	Tapered Flute	plain metal
2	Flageolet	plain metal
2 2/3	Sesquialtera II	spotted metal
1 1/3	Larigot	spotted metal
1	Mixture III	183 pipes spotted metal
16	Bassoon	spotted metal bells
8	Hautboy	spotted metal bells



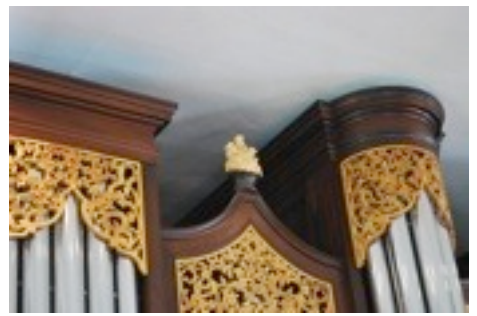
PEDAL

32	Contra Bourdon	32 generators
16	Open Diapason	wood
16	Subbass	wood
8	Principal	tin and spotted metal
8	Bass Flute	12 pipes, extension Subbass 16, wood
4	Fifteenth	12 pipes extension Principal 8, spotted metal
16	Trombone	zinc and spotted metal
8	Trumpet	12 pipes extension Trombone 16, spotted metal
8	Great to Pedal	
8	Swell to Pedal	

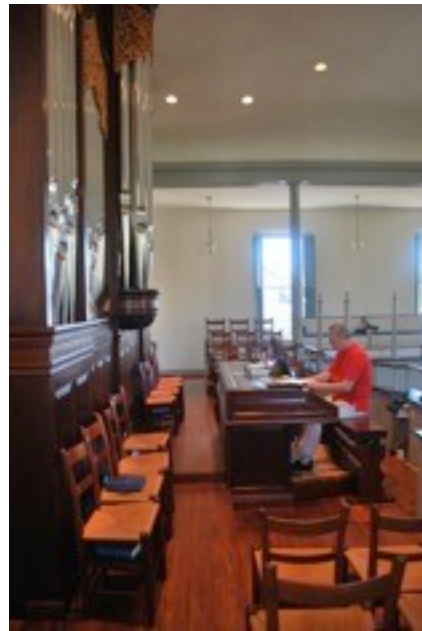
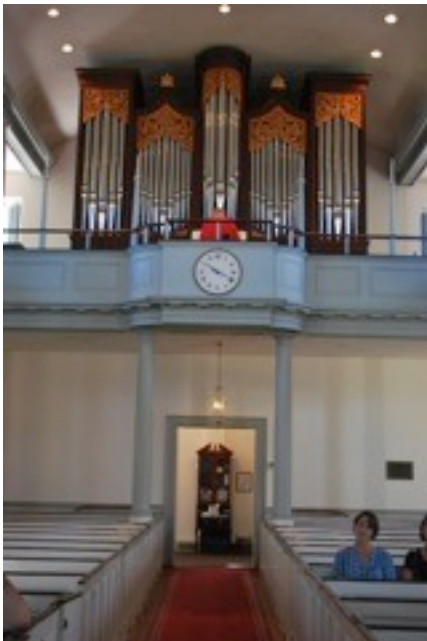
Mechanical key action

Electric stop action with eight memory levels

Detached Console



Following lunch at Chadwick's near the waterfront we strolled through Old Town to our next destination



St. Paul's Episcopal Church was founded in 1809 and was located on South Fairfax Street. The present church on South Pitt was designed in the Gothic style in 1817 by Benjamin Latrobe and dedicated in 1818. Reportedly it is based on a Gothic plan submitted for the Catholic Cathedral in Baltimore. There a classical design by Latrobe, the Father of American Architecture, was selected by Bishop Carroll. Early organs include a Pomplitz organ 1869 of 2 manuals and Pedal. In that year nearby Grace Episcopal Church acquired a Pomplitz organ now located at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Washington, DC that may give us a window into the the tone of St. Paul's organ. When the chancel at St. Paul's was extended in 1906 the Pomplitz organ was replaced by Austin Organ Company's Opus 151 (1905) with 2 manuals and 12 ranks. This was located in the present chapel space visible to the right of the chancel.

As to the matter of pre-Civil War organs at St. Paul's Church there can only be speculation at this time though at least one is reported. The architect Benjamin Latrobe, a relative of Moravian Church composer Christian Latrobe, was an organist and composer who served as organist for St. John's Episcopal Church, Lafayette Square, Washington, DC for a brief time. He was also the architect for that historic building. If Hilbus built organs for these two churches then his output was considerably more than is documented at present. It's clear that Hilbus was well known and well regarded in the music life of the early District of Columbia but the scope of his work is yet to be fully understood. Further research into period publications, now possible in electronic format, may reveal new information.

Sources:

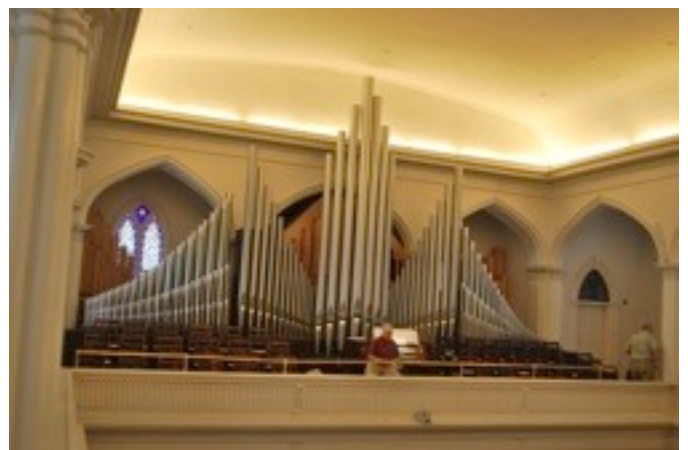
Documented Work List of Pomplitz and Rodewald (1853-62), August Pomplitz (1862-74) and the Pomplitz Church Organ Co. (1874-86), Baltimore: Michael Friesen (private copy)

Early Organs and Organbuilders in Washington and Vicinity:

Michael D. Friesen, Organ Historical Society, Organ Atlas 2011, Washington, D.C.

A short history of August Pomplitz and the Pomplitz Church Organ Company: Steve Bartley, Where The Tracker Action Is! - The Hilbus Chapter OHS Newsletter, Volume 45, No. 1, September 2014, Whole No. 404

In 1968 St. Paul's church made some modifications to the plan of the chancel, the Austin organ was removed and the present Casavant Frères Organ was installed in three arched bays of the rear gallery with large pedal pipes forming a screen in front of the Swell division. This organ was designed by Lawrence Phelps of the Casavant firm. The organ is of straight design and all divisions have complete Principal choruses.



Casavant Frères, No. 2792, 1968 & 2014

Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada

Compass 56/32

Electro-pneumatic action

Great

Quintaten 16

Prinzipal 8

Bordun 8

Gemshorn 8

Octav 4

Rohrflöte 4

Octave 2

Blockflöte 2

Sesquialtera II 2 2/3

Mixture IV 1 1/3

Trompete 8

Swell to Great

Swell

Salizional 8

Schwebung T.C. 8

Gedackt 8

Principal 4

Waldflöte 4

Octave 2

Quinteflöte 1 1/3

Scharff IV 2/3

Dulzian 16

Oboe 8

Tremolo

Pedal

Untersatz 32 (digital)

Prinzipal 16

Subbass 16

Octave 8

Gedackt 8

Choralbass 4

Rohrpfeife 4

Nachthorn 2

Mixture III 2

Posaune 16 1/2 length

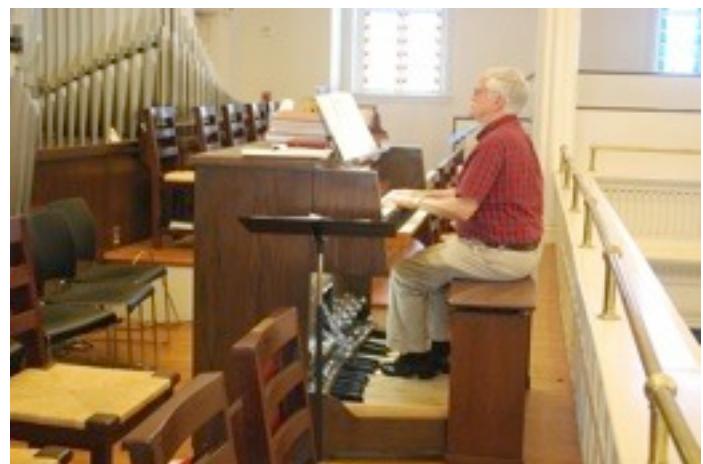
Trompete 8

Schalmei 4

Great to Pedal

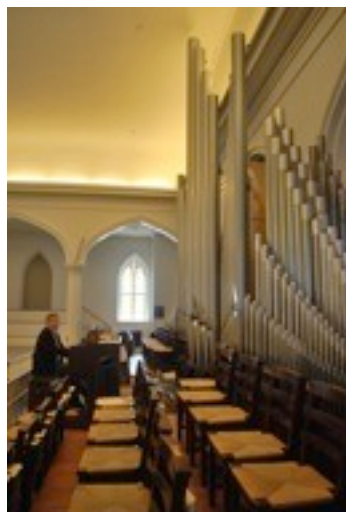
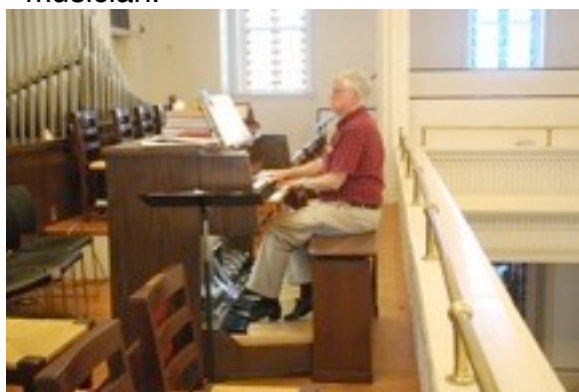
Swell to Pedal

Peterson combination action, 32 levels



Grant Hellmers, Organist-Choirmaster of St. Paul's Church played for us beautifully and spoke eloquently about the principles and aspirations of the Orgelbewegung movement that inspired this instrument. Many have known this organ for years and generally, though not universally, it has been considered too loud and harsh for the space, which like the Old Presbyterian Meeting House and nearby Christ Episcopal Church, does not have a helpful acoustic. That impression will vary with the listener's position in the room of course but the sounds of the organ "hit hard" in most locations.

In 2014 the original builder, Casavant, and David M. Storey, Inc. skillfully renovated the organ mechanically, repaired many pipes, especially the reed voices, and modified several of the reed stops. Casavant tonally refinished the organ for more focused and agreeable pipe speech. While the organ is still quite bold, the results reflect what musical gains can be made in existing instruments placed in the hands of skilled voicers and finishers. This also rendered the organ more amenable to a wide range of organ literature. The improved pipe speech makes for a good tactile experience for the musician much like that attributed to a good tracker action. Such an outspoken organ demands taste and restraint from the performer but has much to offer the listener in the hands of a sensitive musician.



**HILBUS CHAPTER RENEWAL FORM
2016**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone(s): _____

Email Address: _____

**CONTRIBUTION TO E. POWER BIGGS FELLOWSHIP
2016**

Honoring an notable advocate for examining and understanding the pipe organ, the E. Power Biggs Fellows will attend the OHS 61st Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 26 - July 1, 2016. Hear and experience a wide variety of pipe organs in the company of organ builders, professional musicians and enthusiasts. The Fellowship includes a two-year membership in the OHS and covers these convention costs: Travel, Hotel, Meals and Registration.

Hilbus Chapter Dues: \$14.00

Contribution to E. Power Biggs Fellowship: _____

TOTAL: _____

Write check payable to: Hilbus Chapter, OHS

Mail to: Carolyn Booth, 9200 LaBelle Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20879