

# Hilbus Chapter

The Organ Historical Society, Inc.

*Where the Tracker Action Is!*

www.hilbus.org



Volume 52 Number 5

June 2022

Whole, Number 460

*published monthly except for July and December*

## **HILBUS CHAPTER CRAWL & ANNUAL MEETING**

**Saturday, June 18, 2022**

**10 a.m. - 11:15 a.m**

**Montgomery United Methodist Church  
28328 Kemptown Road, Damascus Md 20872  
M. P. Möller organ, Opus 11833 (1991) 13 Ranks**

From I-270 exit on Ridge Road (MD 27 North) towards Damascus -  
Follow Ridge Rd to MD-80 W 18 min (9.8 mi) Turn left onto MD-80 W to the Church 2 min (0.5 mi)

From I-70 Exit on MD 27 South towards Damascus.  
Go 3.9 miles and turn right on MD 80, 1/2 mile to the church on right

**12:00 Noon**

**Annual Meeting & Picnic Lunch**

**Becker Family Residence  
4920 Griffith Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20882  
Lewis & Hitchcock, Inc. Op. 251 (1977), II-3**

Left on MD-80 E to MD-27 S/Ridge Rd 2 min (0.5 mi) -Continue straight onto MD-27 S/Ridge Rd 2 min (1.3 mi) - Turn left onto Woodfield Rd 2 min (0.9 mi) -Follow Damascus Rd to Griffith Rd 11 min (7.4 mi) Turn right onto Griffith Road to 4920.

### **Picnic Details**

**Please bring a side dish, including salads and desserts.  
Our hosts are providing hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks**

<b>Chairman:</b> Peter Crisafulli, 37 Big Acre Square, Gaithersburg, MD 20878	(301) 977-2370
<b>Vice-Chairman:</b> Charles English, 2910 Moores Road, Baldwin, MD 21013	(410) 557-7990
<b>Secretary-Treasurer:</b> Carolyn Lamb Booth, 9200 LaBelle Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20879	(301) 869-6271
<b>Editor:</b> Carl Schwartz, 12802 Ruxton Road, Silver Spring, MD	(301)-221-4815

*Articles and news may be submitted to the Editor electronically: [ruxtoncar@icloud.com](mailto:ruxtoncar@icloud.com)*

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AT ANNUAL MEETING**

The nominees for office are:

Charles English - Chair  
Carolyn Booth - Secretary-Treasurer

### **DUES RENEWAL**

**It is time to renew your chapter membership by paying Annual Dues.** Send a check for \$14 to our treasurer Carolyn Booth, 9200 LaBelle Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20879. Include any address changes or other changes to contact information. Please consider a donation of \$10.00 or more towards the Biggs Fellows program run by the Organ Historical Society.. The Convention which will be in Columbus, Ohio. It begins Sunday evening, July 31st and goes through Thursday August 4th. There are two days preceding the convention called *Prelude 1* on Saturday July 30th and *Prelude 2* on Sunday July 31st. There is an additional day called *Postlude* on Friday August 5th. Monies from dues have been used to support the OHS documentary on the restoration of the Hilbus organ; the OHS Kaleidoscope of Colors project last summer; and to support one of the Biggs Fellows attendance at the 2022 convention, in memory of John Becker.

### **Additional Directions to the Becker Residence**

If you are coming direct from the north via I-70 you might take MD 97 south to MD 650. Turn right until you reach Griffith Road, then turn left.

From the Beltway via Georgia Ave (MD 97) north to Olney, turn left on Route 108, go through Laytonsville (north) and turn right on Griffith Road just past town.

From I-270 there are several routes to Laytonsville:

1. Exit on MD 27 - Father Hurley Blvd to Brink Road. Right on Brink Road to Laytonsville. left (north ) on 108 to Griffith Road. Turn right.
2. Exit on MD 124 North. Follow this to Brink Road, turn right and as above.
3. Exit on Shady Grove Road, at the intersections with MD 115 continue straight on Airpark Rd. Continue to MD 124 north. Turn right. Follow this to Brink Road then as above.

**Better, use your GPS!**

## MAY CRAWL REVIEW

Charles English

*supplemented by the editor with additional details taken from  
The Work List of Henry Erben - Stephen L. Pinel (OHS)*

An early start to the hot, steamy mid-Atlantic weather did not deter Hilbus Chapter members from enjoying three historic churches and organs located in the King George, Caroline, and Westmoreland Counties of Virginia. This area has been termed the “Cradle of America” and the “Birthplace of Presidents.” With the exception of electricity and air conditioning, these well maintained architectural gems in exceptional settings appear today as they did in the mid-1800’s. Thanks to Jimmy Baird and David Dutton for setting this crawl up to these historic treasures. Many thanks to Richard Strattan for demonstrating the three organs.



Our first church visited was St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Oak Grove, home to a lovely one manual, 5 rank, 1853 Henry Erben tracker organ. This was the fourth church for this parish constructed circa 1848-1849; the first two being washed away during floods and the third falling into disrepair. The parish dates back to 1653 having been founded by Archibald Campbell, Thomas Lee, Thomas Marshall, Andrew Munroe, and John Washington, forebears and teachers of those who established this nation. The church was occupied by Union troops during the civil war and several autographs of the soldiers

have been preserved on a wall.



The organ was built by Henry Erben in his Baltimore factory in 1853 and installed in the new gallery in 1854 by Jezebell Homer, a local cabinetmaker of English descent. It was equipped with an electric blower in 1934 and relocated to the back of the nave at that time. Lawrence Walker, trained in England and a local Casavant representative restored the organ in 1979 and about 100 pipes were replaced in that work. According to the research in *The Henry Erben Worklist (Pinel)*, this likely included most of the pipes of the 2' rank and possibly those of the 4' Flute. Pipes were trimmed and tuning slides installed. The action was modified with aluminum trackers and Heuss nuts for regulation. There is some evidence of voicing alteration at the time reported. This style of organ likely had a silk center screen with decoration that was replaced at some time in the history of the organ. Some details of the case may also have been altered.

The organ is in good condition. The keys are narrower and shallower in depth than modern keys and retain their original ivories. The three right-jamb stops were spring loaded and in order to keep any one

of them drawn, the notch on the underside of the shank must be made to catch into the jamb. The FOOT LEVER farthest left released those unison stops that were drawn. The other FOOT LEVER, left of center, was the hold-down swell shade pedal. The organ was well suited to accompanying a choir and congregation, with a sound that was pure and not overpowering. All remarked that the ranks blended together making for a truly enjoyable sound that carried throughout the church. The church is to be credited for maintaining the organ through the years. This organ was truly a pleasure to play. Many thanks to Brent Jones who hosted our visit and to the Very Rev. Rodney E. Gordon, M. Div., rector of the church. More information on the history of the church and organ can be found at the following link: <http://www.stpetersoakgrove.org/default.asp>



Manual CC-f3, 54 notes

Left Jamb

Stop'd Diapason Treble (wood-tF)

Stop'd Diapason Bass (17 pipes, wood)

Open Diapason (metal-tF)

Right Jamb

Flute (tF)

Fifteenth

Principal

Our second visit was to Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Port Conway. The parish was established in 1713 with the present country Gothic Revival structure with Italianate tower being built in 1859.



The organ was built by Henry Erben in 1860 (work list) and it came to the church by boat from Baltimore. Written inside and outside the wind chest is a history of the organ from its construction and maintenance from 1860 to 2005. The facade pipes are decorative and constructed of wood. The organ was meticulously restored by S. L. Huntington & Co. of Stonington, Connecticut in 2005. Scot provided a new blower. The feeder bellows which had been removed were restored. Pipes were repaired. The Dulciana had been cut down to make a 2' rank at some point. Scot reconstructed and lengthened these pipes, restoring the original sound.

At first hearing the organ was quite similar to the one previously heard at St. Peter's Church, Oak Grove, but slightly more mellow. Opening the swell added much more "sparkle" to the tone. Although having only 4 ranks, the organ had a wide range of tone and loudness. As with the organ at St. Peter's Church, Oak Grove, the Emmanuel Episcopal organ was exceptionally well voiced with the



pipes blending well together. The organ could be equally heard throughout the church. Those who played the organ stated it had a very nice key touch and found it a pleasure to play and hear. Thanks to our host, John Meyers and the Rev. Richard E. Fichter, Jr., Rector. Information on the church and organ can be found at the following link: <http://hwbkgva.org/emmanuel>

Manual CC-g 56 notes

Left Jamb

Open Diapason

St.<sup>d</sup> Diap.<sup>n</sup> Treble

Diapason Bass.

Right Jamb

Principal

Dulciana



*Photo: Scot Huntington*

The group split between Horne's Restaurant and Randolph's Seafood for lunch and reassembled at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Port Royal. The parish was founded in 1677. Situated on the Rappahannock River, the church was built in 1835 and is a mixture of Gothic and Greek revival. The organ was constructed and installed by George Stevens, Cambridge, Massachusetts, circa 1848. However, it is postulated the organ was originally built and installed in St. George's Episcopal Church in Fredericksburg in the 1830 to 1840 period and then moved to St. Peter's. However, that has never been proven. This is believed to be the only surviving Stevens organ in Virginia.



This organ was quite unlike the two previous Erben organs. It was much brighter and louder, equated by those present to have a German sound or a sound similar to that of Moller organs. It was explained that the organ was removed for safety and rebuilding after the 2011 earthquake that damaged the church. During the rebuild the sound of the organ was changed from the original “silvery” sound to that of a more modern voicing. It was stated the wind pressure was increased, stop knobs replaced with those with modern style lettering and pitch designation, and the cone tuning used by Stevens changed to the use of sliding collars. Unlike the two previous Erben organs, the Stevens organ is a rare "G" compass organ, both in the 59 note manual and 13 note pedal board. The original hand pumped bellows mechanism was present. The facade pipes were decorative and constructed of wood. The case was made of pine in a Gothic style. The earthquake in 2011 resulted in repairs that lowered the ceiling with the exception of that directly above the organ. The console was equipped with sliding doors and finished with rosewood around the keyboard. A manual-to-pedal coupler was present as there were no unique pedal stops existing. Two combination pedals were present on the left side of the console which moved the Diapason stop-knobs. A pedal on the right side of the console operated the swell shades in front of all the pipes.

The stops played alone were very pleasant to hear. When combined they filled the church with a full sound. The Hautboy stop was quite prominent and bright. The additional ranks do provide a greater range of tone color versus the two previous Erben organs. Overall, the organ works very well for accompanying a choir/congregation and for solo organ pieces.

The organ was found to be in excellent condition. Like the first Erben visited, the key depth was shallow. The pedals took some getting used to due to their narrowness and location, something to be expected of an organ from 1848. Thanks to our host for the crawl, the Reverend Catherine D. Hicks, Rector.

All three churches visited expressed the difficulty in finding organists.

More information on the church and organ can be found at the following link: <https://www.churchsp.org/>  
and at <https://www.churchsp.org/organ-maintenance-and-history/>

Compass GG-g 59 notes

Left Jamb

Manual to Ped

Hautboy 8

Flute 4

Fifteenth 2

Twelfth 2 2/3

Right Jamb

Open Diapason 8

Dulciana 8

Principal 4

Stopped Diapason 8

Sub Bass 16 Pedal 13 notes

