

The Jardine Organ

The organ was built by George Jardine & Son in 1869 in New York for the Congregational Church, South Britain, Connecticut and served the church for 95 years. In 1964, the Organ Clearing House arranged the gift of the instrument to the Thomas More School in Harrisville, New Hampshire for use in its chapel.

The organ was altered in 1964 when the original Dulciana 8' was converted to a 2' stop. It was modified further in 1968 when the original fretwork and a flat of gilded dummy pipes (somewhat battered) were replaced with a removable screen containing grill cloth. At that time, the pedalboard and its coupler action were removed. These items were stored pending restoration but were discarded by an over-zealous school custodian!

When the Thomas More School closed in 1971, the organ was purchased by Alan Laufman, Director of the Organ Clearing House and former Dean of the school. Dudley Terrill, of Concord, New Hampshire modified the manual chest to accommodate two prepared stops (a 4' Flute and a two rank mixture). He also cut and stopped the original 8' Melodia, creating an 8' Gedeckt, retaining the inverted lip of the Melodia. In addition, he replaced the 2' stop with a different one, of a principal nature.

Over the next few years, Mr Laufman rented the organ to a number of churches including:

- St John's Episcopal, Pleasantville, NY
- The Congregational Church, Hopkinton, NH
- South Congregational Church, Concord, NH
- St. David's Episcopal, Shelton, WA
- St. Augustine's-in-the-Woods Episcopal, Freeland, WA

In 1982, Mr Laufman negotiated the sale of the organ to the York Hospital for their chapel. It was moved from Seattle, WA to the Marietta, PA shop of Raymond Brunner and Alan Heller who had won the contract to rebuild the instrument. Funding was provided by Gail K. Cunningham in memory of her husband, Chester E. Cunningham and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James S. Keefer. The organ stayed there until the hospital renovated and downsized the chapel. At that time, Dave Jeffries from York Hospital contacted Judith Wallace, then President of The Brethren Home Community, to see if they would be willing to accept the organ. Mr. Jeffries expressed that he did not feel the donors wishes would be honored by keeping the organ at the hospital since it would not be used on any kind of regular basis. She agreed to accept the organ and so it was completely dismantled, packaged and moved to the Cross Keys Village where it was reassembled and placed in the old Meeting House, now the studio and other office areas on the second floor of this building. Later it was again dismantled and moved to the Nicarry Meeting House in 1999 where it is now located. In 2003, Shirley Sprunger King instituted an annual concert series which continues today.

The Builder

George Jardine (1800-1882), a native of Dartford, England, was apprenticed to and worked with two English organ building firms. In 1863 he came to America with his wife and five children. His first organs were built in a loft over the family's living quarters at Broadway and Grand Street in NYC. Seven years later, Jardine owned a large factory and had become a major organ builder.

Among churches having Jardine organs of note were New York's St. George's Episcopal Church, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church (where Lowell Mason was the Music Director), St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Church of the Redeemer in Augusta, GA.

In 1871, Jardine retired and left the business to his sons, Edward and Joseph. In March of 1900, the firm of Jardine and Son closed its doors after producing about 1300 church organs and a significant number of chapel and residence organs during their 35 years in existence.

The Restoration

In 1982, Brunner & Heller (now Brunner & Assoc.) restored the manual key action, built a new 25 note straight pedalboard to Jardine specifications, repaired and releathered the wind system and manual chest, repaired existing pipework and restored the black walnut case using old photographs and historical references.

Current specifications are available at:

<https://pipeorgandatabase.org/OrganDetails.php?OrganID=61397>.



Historical information from the Dedicatory Program, September 25, 1983, York Hospital. Author(s) unknown.
Thanks to Raymond Brunner.