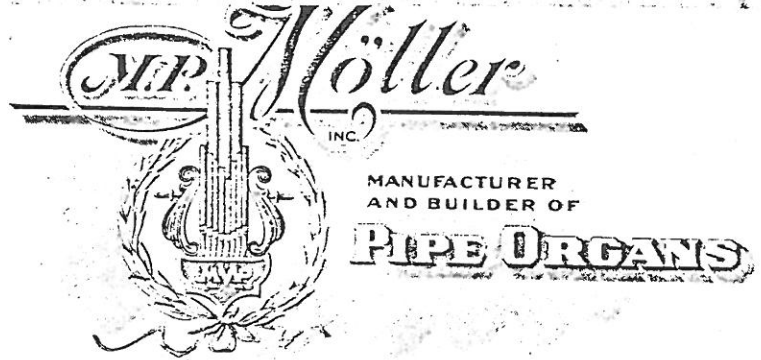


ESTABLISHED 1880.



Hagerstown, Maryland, U.S.A.
Nov. 20, 1923.

Summer, 1943..

.....

In re Pipe Organ in Curtiss Church....

This organ came to the College from the Pawtucket, R.I. Free Baptist Church of which my college friend, Rev. C.C. Mitchell, was then pastor. The organ had been passed on to that church from a Baptist church in Providence, and was one of the many organs of the kind in use. The wooden pipes, so beautiful in tones, indicate fact.

It was rebuilt in the church, as shown by this letter in
..... 1928....

Mr. J. C. Newcomer
Harpers Ferry, W. Va.

Dear Sir:

We have your letter of the 18th. If you are all ready the electric blower could almost be set up in one day, and it would take a day for our men to get there and back, so my suggestion would be if you decide to go ahead, to have him come over and spend the day. If you can have your wind conductor ready and electrician convenient I believe the regulation all could be done within that time.

Yours very truly,

M. P. MÖLLER.

Ed. C. Shulenburg
P.S. It happened that one Sunday I spoke for my friend and college mate, Rev. C.C. Mitchell, and conversation turned upon his prospect of securing a Carnegie Organ for his church. I asked him what was to become of the old organ then in place. He said it had not been disposed of, but would be. I immediately importuned him to see whether it might not come to Storer. And he, with the help of interested Rhode Island Free Baptists, enabled Storer to obtain the organ. It has been a source of great satisfaction to us through the years.

H.T. McD.

July 26, 1944.

of the pulpit supporting fine groundglass lights" were given to the church by J. W. McKinney who made them in the college industrial building.⁴²

In 1908, an organ was given to Storer College. The executive committee voted to place it in the Curtis Freewill Baptist Church if the college and the church executed a written contract "allowing the church to use the organ for Sabbath and other religious services and the College to have the right to use the church for organ practice for instruction of students and for organ recitals." Furthermore, should either party wish to terminate the agreement, the college reserved the right to remove the organ.⁴³ For over two years, however, the pipe organ stood "unbuilt" in the church because there were no funds for its rebuilding. Nor could the college find anyone capable of doing the work. Finally, work commenced in the Spring of 1911, and the following year, college president Henry McDonald commented how music at the college church had improved life at the school.⁴⁴ As the college catalog for 1914-15 indicates the organ came from "Rhode Island friends," it likely is the same organ McDonald later recalled came to Harpers Ferry from the Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Free Baptist Church.⁴⁵

According to McDonald, the arrangement executed in the 1890s between the Curtis Freewill Baptist Church, Storer College, and the General Conference of Free Baptists, whereby the college deeded the property to the church and the General Conference treasurer became trustee for most of the funds donated for the church building, left the college with "no hold upon or

⁴²Storer Record, March 1907, p. 2, col. 3, Park Reel 122, Flash 1.

⁴³Trustees Minute Book 1898-1913, p. 186, Park Reel 130.

⁴⁴Storer Record, May 1911, p. 3, col. 2, Park Reel 122, Flash 4; May 1912, p. 1, col. 2, Park Reel 122, Flash 5.

⁴⁵Catalogue of Storer College 1914-15, p. 22, Park Reel 128, Flash "Storer College Bulletins"; Henry T. McDonald, Notes on Organ in Curtis Freewill Baptist Church, 26 July 1944, Storer College Binder General Correspondence.

Didn't find this minute book on this reel.

Didn't find this binder - Yes, found it.

Lawless-Johnson Organ Company

120 Bester Street #102
Hagerstown MD 21740
301-791-9026
FAX 301-733-4306

TO: BRUCE J. NOBLE JR

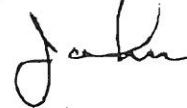
FAX: 304-535-6244
FROM: JOHN J JOHNSON

BRUCE: HERE IS A LITTLE BIO INFO ON GEORGE STEVENS.
MICHAEL IS 100% SURE HE IS THE BUILDER OF YOUR INSTRUMENT.
I AM 95% SURE. I WOULD LIKE TO FIND A WRITTEN VERIFICATION SOMEWHERE.
HOPE YOU ENJOY. OUR PROPOSAL WILL BE IN THE MAIL TODAY

Mayor Stevens

George Stevens was born in Norway, Maine, on 22 April 1803.
As a young man he moved to East Cambridge, Massachusetts, and

P.S. - THANKS FOR
THE INFO!



at first worked as a carpenter.⁸ In 1820 William Goodrich opened an organ shop at Fifth Street in East Cambridge and shortly afterwards Stevens went to work for Goodrich. After Goodrich's death in 1833,⁹ George Stevens and William Gayetty, another Goodrich employee, formed a partnership to continue the business.¹⁰ Stevens & Gayetty operated until Gayetty's untimely death in 1839, after which Stevens continued alone.¹¹ George Stevens' younger brother, William Stevens (1808-1896), also a former Goodrich employee, worked for his brother until 1852. According to one source, he was a partner with his brother in Stevens & Gayetty.¹² After leaving his brother's business, William Stevens went into business on his own account and formed a partnership with Horatio Davis and James Jewett.

According to the 1850 Census, George Stevens owned real estate to the value of \$5000. His wife Martha was thirty-three years old and had been born in Massachusetts. At this time there were three children, Martha A. (age seven), Fanny E. (age four), and George F. (age three). There was also an Irish servant named Caroline Higgins.¹³ There is additional information about Stevens in the 1850 Census. At this time the business had an invested capital of \$10,000 plus \$8,000 in materials. Twelve male employees produced \$18,000 worth of organs a year.¹⁴ By 1880, however, the business seems to have contracted considerably. The 1880 Census return shows that the firm had an invested capital of \$2,000 and a further \$1,000 on hand in materials. Four male employees were producing only \$3000 worth of organs a year. Furthermore, the enumerator noted that Stevens' organ building plant was idle six months each year.¹⁵ Probably in part this was the result of Stevens' heavy involvement in other activities besides organbuilding. Under these circumstances it would have made sense for Stevens to do his chest making and other organ construction work during the winter months when humidity was very low, leaving him free to do his installation work in the pleasant working conditions of the spring.

18.

Besides his organbuilding activities, George Stevens was prominent in the civic affairs of Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was elected an alderman of the city in 1848, 1849, 1850 and 1855, and was mayor in 1851 and 1852. Stevens was an incorporator of the East Cambridge Savings Bank and was its President for the last thirty years of his life. Active in masonic affairs, George Stevens was a member of the Norfolk Union Lodge, F & A. M., Randolph, Massachusetts, from 1825 until his death. Unusually for the period, however, Stevens does not seem to have belonged to any church.¹⁶ Stevens retired from organbuilding in 1892 and two of his employees, employees, George A. Butler and James L. Gilbert, then took over the firm and ran it as Gilbert & Butler until 1902.¹⁷ As councillor, mayor, and banker, in addition to organbuilder, George Stevens must have been a very busy man. One piece of evidence, indeed, suggests that George A. Butler was doing much of Stevens' organ work as early as 1852. An inscription inside the 1852 three-manual Stevens organ at Edwards Church U. C. C. Saxonville, Massachusetts, reads: "George A. Butler, of George Stevens, builder of this organ. Organ No. 50."¹⁸ When the firm of Gilbert & Butler closed in 1902, George Butler went to

work for Ernest M. Skinner.

In his later years George Stevens suffered greatly from rheumatoid arthritis. During the last ten years of his life he was only able to walk using crutches. Stevens died at his home, 69 Thorndike Street, East Cambridge, early in the morning of Wednesday, 15 August 1894. His widow, two sons and a daughter survived him.¹⁹ The officiant at the funeral, held in Stevens' house on 17 August, was the Rev. W. H. Johnson, of the Austin Street Unitarian Church in East Cambridge. A quartet provided music at the ceremony.²⁰

During his sixty-year career as an independent organbuilder, George Stevens built more than eight hundred organs,²¹ many of which were small instruments of conservative design. This factor may have contributed to the financial success of his organbuilding operations.

From THE TRACKER
Journal of the Organ Historical Society
Vol 37, #4, 1993