

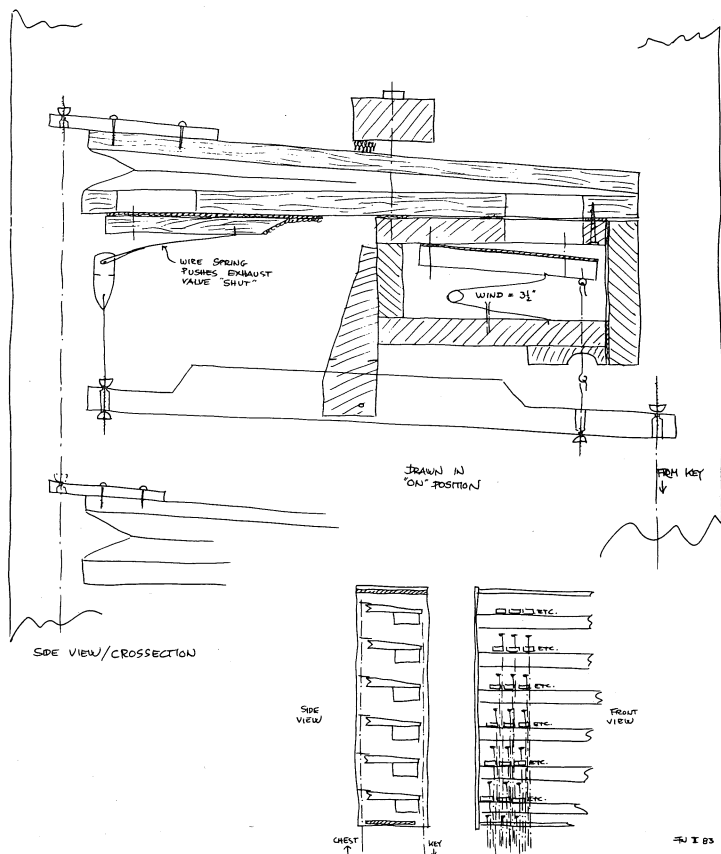


The attractive four manual keydesk, built by the Noack Organ Company, is a reproduction based on a few, rare, extant Hook consoles built during the period surrounding the introduction of this organ. The engraved disks above the top (Solo) manual indicate the function of the combination pedals.

The stop knobs are arranged in horizontal rows on vertical jambs. **Left jamb:** Row 1, Solo; Rows 2 to 4, Swell; Rows 5 to 7, Couplers. **Right jamb:** Rows 1 to 3, Great; Rows 4 and 5, Choir; Rows 6 and 7, Pedale.

The illustration at right shows the location of the four manual divisions of the E. & G.G. Hook organ in Mechanics Hall. A detailed illustration of the pneumatic lever system, located behind the keydesk and below the Great windchest, is shown below.

These drawings were supplied by Fritz Noack whose firm completed the restoration of the organ in 1982.



Mechanics Hall □ Worcester, MA

E. & G.G. Hook □ Boston □ 1864

Restored
Noack □ 1982

64 Ranks □ 3504 Pipes

GREAT

- 16' Open Diapason
- 8' Open Diapason
- 8' Viola Da Gamba
- 8' Stopped Diapason
- 8' Clarabella
- 4' Principal
- 4' Flute Harmonique
- 2-2/3' Twelfth
- 2' Fifteenth
- III Mixture
- V Mixture
- 16' Trumpet
- 8' Trumpet
- 4' Clarion

SWELL

- 16' Bourdon
- 8' Open Diapason
- 8' Stopped Diapason
- 8' Viol d'Amour
- 4' Principal
- 4' Flute Octaviane
- 4' Violin
- 2-2/3' Twelfth
- 2' Fifteenth
- V Mixture
- 16' Trumpet
- 8' Cornopean
- 8' Oboe
- 4' Clarion
- 8' Vox Humana

CHOIR

- 16' Aeolina & Bourdon
- 8' Open Diapason
- 8' Melodia
- 8' Dulciana
- 8' Keraulophon
- 4' Flauto Traverso
- 4' Violin
- 2' Picolo
- III Mixture
- 8' Clarinet

SOLO

- 8' Philomela
- 8' Salicional
- 4' Hohl Pfeife
- 2' Picolo
- 8' Tuba
- 8' Corno Inglese

PEDALE

- 16' Open Diapason
- 16' Violone
- 16' Bourdon
- 10-2/3' Quinte
- 8' Violoncello
- 8' Flute
- 16' Posaune



The drawknobs and engraved ivory faces for the reproduced keydesk of the E. & G. G. Hook organ were executed by Brunner & Heller of Marietta, Pennsylvania. They are faithful copies of such controls as were provided on other Hook organs of the period when the Mechanics Hall organ was built. The silverplated nameplate was also engraved by Brunner & Heller, and is a replica of those of the organs' builder. The fine detail of the engraving is shown in the photo on the preceding page (13).

The Mechanics Hall organ was rededicated on September 25 and 26, 1982 in a series of concerts presented by Worcester musicians and musical organizations. Featured organists at the events were Brenda Fraser, LeRoy Hanson, Stephen Long, Donna Merrill, Ronald Stafford and Barclay Wood.

The photographs which accompany this article were supplied by William T. Van Pelt, Executive Director of the Organ Historical Society.

money and to lobby for the restoration of the Hook organ. Murray, when asked by the AGO chapter to perform a concert in Worcester, offered to do a fundraising concert, with proceeds to benefit the organ restoration project. When asked about the Worcester Organ, Murray stated, "[This organ is] incredibly rare . . . a large size, four-manual American concert hall organ. It is the only four-manual organ extant from the period. It is a fine instrument."

On December 21, 1974, the Worcester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists sent a letter to the Worcester County Mechanics Association, expressing their desire to work with the Mechanics Association to see the organ restored. A joint AGO-WCMA meeting was held on January 20, 1975 to consider the possibilities of such a venture. Thomas Murray was also at the meeting to address the group about the value and importance of the organ.

The joint meeting convinced the group of the importance of doing some work on the organ, and an organ committee was formed. At the beginning, the major issue facing the organ committee was whether or not they should aim toward restoring the instrument to its original condition (a very expensive proposition) or if they should be satisfied with just making the instrument play. Barbara Owen was invited to address the committee. She convinced the group that they should aim for complete restoration and consider the plan to make it play as a fall-back. (Ms. Owen has said, with respect to the subsequently successful restoration, "It is a very important restoration. It is the only nineteenth century concert hall organ in this country that has been completely restored.")

The organ restoration committee proceeded to solicit the opinions of organ builders. Six reputable companies were invited to inspect the organ and report to the committee their recommendations for its restoration and/or repair along with an estimate for the work. Of the companies contacted, all except one made presentations to the committee. The company that declined to submit a presentation cited that their many previous obligations precluded their ability to bid on the Hook organ project. They did feel it to be a significant restoration project, however, and offered their services in an advisory capacity.

In April, 1977, the committee chose the Noack Organ Company to restore the instrument.

A member of the organ restoration committee suggested that, since the committee had not asked the competing companies to bid on the basis of the same specifications, each builder was talking about doing something different to the organ. He further suggested that the services of Mr. Fisk be utilized to draw up uniform specifications for the complete restoration project, and that each organ builder be asked to re-submit a bid on the basis of the new specs. The committee adopted these suggestions.

The C.B. Fisk specification was quite detailed, and included an element intended to "catch" restorers who might not completely understand the mechanism of this type of instrument. In one section Mr. Fisk asked the bidders to make an estimate for "a new stop action in Hook's style, including composition pedals and register crescendo." In fact, Hook organs of this period had no register crescendo.

After travelling to factories and to see representative restorations, the committee prepared a comparison chart to be able to compare the work estimates with the Fisk specifications. Although several proposals were considered to be excellent, the Noack Organ Company was again chosen to do the restoration work.

The Noack proposal included ample evidence of a good deal of preliminary research. In response to Mr. Fisk's "trap," Fritz Noack wrote, "(P.S. We appreciate the little practical joke about the register crescendo. We all know that this organ did not even have one in 1900!)" The total estimated cost for the project was \$185,000.

The work that was begun in April 1977 continued with more research. The Noack firm explored the private

archival collections of Thomas Murray and Barbara Owen; solicited advice from the LaHaize Brothers of Roxbury, descendants of Hook employees who currently care for many Hook organs; gained access to research some *in situ* extant Hook organs in Boston, Roxbury, Woburn, Chicago, Buffalo and others; purchased an unrestored 1865 Hook organ from the Charles Street AME Church (Boston) to use as a model and as a source for parts; visited the Worcester Historical Society archives and the American Antiquarian Society archives to obtain relevant photographs, newspaper articles, etc.; and explored the files and resources of the Worcester County Mechanics Association.

Some Details of the Restoration

After an inspection at Mechanics Hall, all of the approximately 3,500 pipes were taken to the Noack shop in Georgetown to be cleaned and the pipes were re-tuned to the modern concert pitch of a=440 Hz. The missing pipes were either made new following the models of the existing pipes, or replaced with pipes taken from the unrestored 1865 Hook organ purchased by Fritz Noack for the Worcester Organ restoration. Fortunately, the original sound of

the organ was fairly easy to reconstruct. The changes that had been made in the pipework, particularly in 1926 by George Reed, were crude and obvious.

The original windchests were restored in Mechanics Hall. The methods and materials used for the restoration work were essentially the same as those used by the Hooks. Fritz Noack wrote to Dr. Roger Rowell, a wood chemist (at the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Products Laboratory) and organ restorer, to ask for advice about materials and methods used to repair the windchests. He wrote:

"... The chests of this organ are in pretty good condition except in the few spots where a leaking roof allowed water to enter the chests. Obviously, all cracks now existing have to be repaired. I propose glue injection, clamping, nailing next to the cracks . . . Some sealing process should be employed to reduce moisture exchange while also filling hairline cracks. Any of the processes using water-based liquids . . . seems wrong, as it will cause a lot of needless swelling in the process. Lacquer or epoxy not only means a severe health/safety problem, but also introduces an historically foreign material. My present plan is to pour all channels out with shellac."

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