

Greetings

Much of the information here was painstakingly gathered by Dan Walter, fellow High Str. UMC member, and it can be found in the 2016 Church History Book. I'm deeply indebted to Mr. Walter for this information.

The first High Str. Methodist Church was built in 1851 but only had a reed organ; it was renovated in 1868 and again in 1881, when the first pipe organ was added.

The 1881 organ was built and installed by **A. B. Felgemaker Co.** [opus unknown] for \$1950. The church discarded the pump organ around then, though it is unknown whether it (or the new Felgemaker) caused organist Lowrey Jackson to be fired for "unsatisfactory" performance. Apparently he was playing a "maladjusted" organ at the church...possibly foreshadowing later issues.

By 1883, Springfield was slowly becoming electrified, and the church was as well. I don't know if the Felgemaker organ was outfitted with an electric blower at this time, though.

The church was completely rebuilt in 1904, and the Felgemaker organ was reinstalled in the back of the new sanctuary's chancel, with the pipes visible. By 1936, a report of the church's condition described the pipe organ as "worn out", and by summer 1941 it was in "bad shape" (more like serious disrepair...at times, it didn't work at all). Eventually, the need to replace the organ led to the idea of renovating the chancel area for a "modern" pipe organ (implying the Felgemaker was mechanical action, maybe not even fitted with electric blower?).

I know of few photographs showing the Felgemaker in the chancel/sanctuary (1941), prior to renovation. The console isn't visible, but I would guess it looked like the other tracker consoles Felgemaker used. It appears choir pews were located in the chancel next to the organ console as well, as they were after the renovation.

As with other Felgemakers, the pipes were directly visible to the congregation (see next page).



Sanctuary and Chancel (large alcove) in 1941, prior to renovation – note the Felgemaker organ against the wall and what appear to be choir pews with a small center aisle

The church entered a contract with **Schantz Organ Co.** to install a "three-manual electric organ complete with 1524 pipes...from 16-ft to 3/8-in" (still used today!) plus a set of chimes, though "a few pipes from the original organ were incorporated into the new one" ...this time at a cost of \$10000.

I don't know exactly how many pipes were reused, but the great majority of the new organ was Schantz-made, and church history states "Miss Eleanor Stimmel then had the organ equipped with a harp attachment in memory of her sister Mrs. Cary R. Merriman, at cost of about \$1200".

The new setup placed the pipes in chambers on either side of the chancel alcove, with choir pews facing the center aisle and the electric console on the right side, near the back corner (see next page).



Sanctuary and Chancel after 1942 remodel – the Schantz organ console is on the right side near the corner, with the pipe chambers behind the screens on either side of the chancel alcove

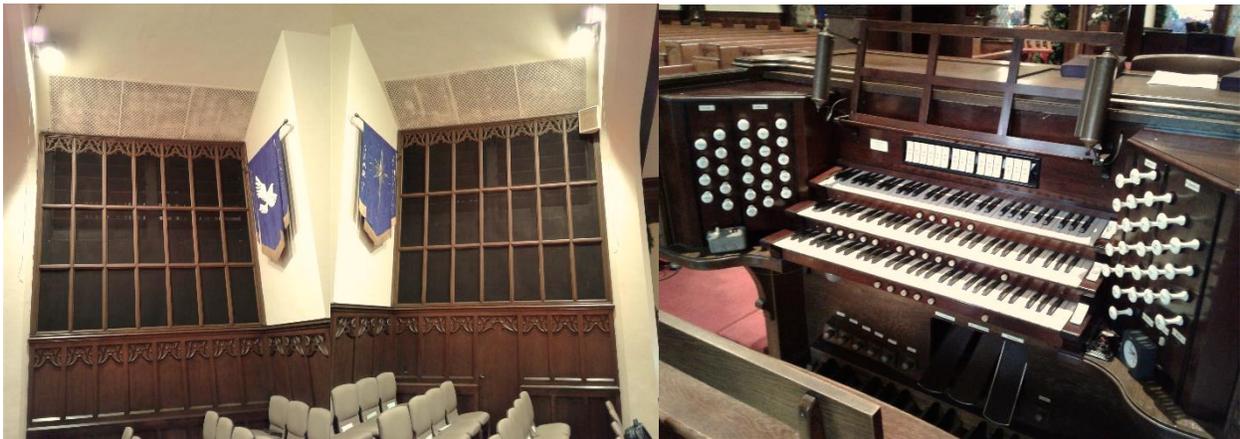
Apparently the harp/“vibraharp” attachment malfunctioned during church service several years ago [early 2000s?], going off on its own and making a tearing, ratcheting sound. Schantz was called back to repair it, and it was either disconnected or removed entirely; this could explain the Schantz records omitting it.

In 2011, Peebles-Herzog Co. of Columbus (the company in charge of maintaining the organ) fully inspected the organ; they found it was up for a number of general repairs (including cipher problems, electronics maintenance, re-leathering pneumatics). Apparently someone considered converting the organ to all-electronic, but this never happened - former organist Phyllis K. Wagoner donated \$25000 to the church, and the intent was it be used for the organ's upkeep. In 2013, the pipe organ was "preserved and rehabilitated to its full glory", and the console was moved forward along with the chancel renovation.

The 1942 Schantz organ is still in top order and used weekly to this day.



Sanctuary and Chancel, 2016 – the Schantz console is now next to the lectern (podium on the right in this image)



Left to Right, Top to Bottom: left & right pipe chambers in chancel alcove, console, electrical switch, nameplate, some pipes

In 1985, the Parlor (now Commons) was renovated (one of several times) along with the balcony around it. Richard and Phyllis Wagoner donated a Hammond B3 organ to be placed there; it and its Leslie speaker remained until the most recent renovation in 2013.

As more information comes my way, I will continue to revise this document.

Cheers

J. A. Hefner