

Survey of the 1799/1864 John & Andrew / George Krauss organ in The Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Bally, PA

Survey completed by Phil Cooper in June, 1998.

I. Historical Background

The organ in the Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Bally, PA was originally built in 1799 by the brothers John and Andrew Krauss. At that time, they had David Tannenberg, Jr. working for them¹. It is not known how much information he passed on to the Krauss brothers from his father in Lititz but the case of the 1799 portion of the organ bears a strong resemblance to the typical 5-sectional cases built by the elder Tannenberg. Also, the Krauss brothers apparently obtained a copy of the Sorge treatise that the elder Tannenberg had obtained from Germany in 1765².

Originally, the organ had a single manual with 9 stops³. Whether it had a pedal board or any independent pedal ranks is not known but there is no evidence in the current organ that it had one.

The church building in which the organ was originally placed was considerably smaller than the current church. It is not known where in the church the organ was placed but the squat design of the case with the center tower not much higher than the 2 side towers strongly suggests that the organ was placed in a gallery where height was a severe restriction.

In 1864, the organ was considerably enlarged by the son of Andrew, George Krauss. George had taken over the organ building business from Andrew in the 1840's (John had left the organ building business for farming in 1812)⁴. George moved the organ to the considerably enlarged church placing it in its present location on a second gallery at the west end. His enlargements included adding a second manual of 4 ranks and a pedal organ with two independent 16' stops. In addition, he also considerably increased the depth of the case to accommodate these additions. George's work on the Bally organ closely resembles the organ he built for Huff's Union Church in 1852.

At a later date, George's son Edwin Krauss again rebuilt the organ⁵. He apparently replaced some of the 1799 ranks as part of his work. He also rebuilt the key desk area building a projecting console with terraced stop jams⁶.

In 1905, the organ was rebuilt by Barrington & Oakey. It is not certain what the scope of their work was but by the time Hartman-Beaty first saw the organ in the early 1960's, many of the 1799 pipes had already been replaced⁷.

II. Survey of the Pipe Work

The stop list immediately prior to the 1962 work by Hartman-Beaty was as follows⁸:

| <u>Great</u> (C-f ³ , 54 notes): | <u>Swell</u> (C-f ³ , 54 notes): | <u>Pedal</u> (C-f, 18 notes): |
|---|---|-------------------------------|
| Open Diapason 8' | Open Diapason 8' | Double Open Dia. 16' |
| Stopped Diapason 8' | Stopped Diapason 8' | Bourdon 16' |
| Gamba 8' | Dulciana 8' | Flute Bass 8' |
| Claribel 8' | Principal 4' | Great to Pedal |
| Dulciana 8' | | |
| Principal 4' | | |
| Flute 4' | | |
| Twelfth 3' | | |
| Fifteenth 2' | | |

Presently, there are 4 original ranks in the organ. They are:

- 1) The 4' Flute on the Great. Possibly these date from 1799.
- 2) The 8' Gedackt on the 2nd manual – most likely George Krauss.
- 3) The Octav 2' on the 2nd manual (missing the lowest octave). Possibly the original 2' from 1799.
- 4) The large 16' Subbass added by George Krauss.

In addition, there are several wood basses that are obviously Krauss pipes since they all have the distinctive Krauss stoppers. These are:

- 1) The lowest 15 pipes of a stopped bass – possibly to the original Gedackt.
- 2) The lowest 17 pipes of a stopped bass – possibly to the Viola da Gamba.
- 3) The lowest 12 pipes of a stopped bass – possibly for the Principal 8'.

In all there are 212 pipes in the present organ that are either from the original 1799 organ or from George Krauss' rebuilt in 1864.

The present condition of the organ is very poor with much of the 1962 work deteriorating the most. The tuning is very bad and the whole organ leaks wind very badly. It is in a desperate need of an historical restoration to bring it back to its full potential.

Notes:

1 – William Armstrong, *Organs for America: The Life and Work of David Tannenberg* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967)

2 - This copy of the Sorge treatise is with the Krauss papers at the Schwenkfelder Library in Pensburg, PA.

3 – The original chest from 1799 currently has 9 old toe boards.

4 – Raymond J. Brunner, *That Ingenious Business: Pennsylvania-German Organ Builders* (Pennsylvania German Society; V. 24, 1990).

5 – Brunner, *That Ingenious Business*

6 – Information from a conversation with David Beaty.

7 – *ibid*

8 – Stop list provided by David Beaty.