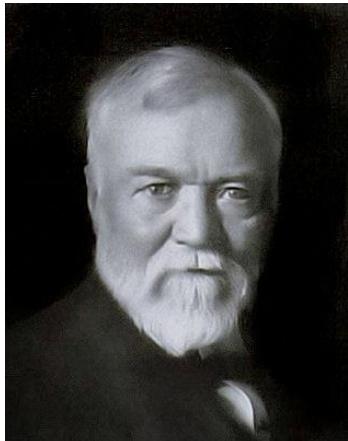


## Andrew Carnegie Organs in Union County, Pennsylvania

by Matthew C. Wagner



Among the many philanthropic activities of Andrew Carnegie, the great U.S. Steel magnate, was his financial support for pipe organs in churches, schools and municipal concert halls. Not as well-known as his other philanthropies, it was an important endeavor for Carnegie who was a lover of organ music.

Soon after marrying, Carnegie purchased a Gothic mansion in Scotland called "Skibo". The home already had a pipe organ. Mrs. Carnegie hired an organist to come into the mansion and play every morning as the Carnegies rose and attended breakfast. When construction of Carnegie's new mansion at East 91st Street and Fifth Avenue in New York City was completed in 1902, it

contained a large 3-manual pipe organ built by the Aeolian Organ Company. The custom of morning organ music was maintained there when the Carnegies were in residence.

It may surprise people today to learn that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, organ music outside the realm of the church was very popular. Organs were being built in municipal auditoriums, concert halls and theaters throughout the country. The organs at the Atlantic City Convention Hall and Radio City Music Hall are two famous examples. John Wanamaker even installed pipe organs in his Philadelphia and New York stores. Touring virtuoso organists such as Louis Vierne and Charles Courboin from France and Englishman Edwin Lamare toured the world playing organ masterworks and popular music of the day. They would compare to contemporary pop music stars in popularity. 10,000 fans attended a 1917 recital in San Francisco; 30,000 at a St. Paul, Minnesota concert and 20,000 at a concert in Cleveland.<sup>1</sup>

It became the fad for wealthy businessmen and industrialists to install pipe organs in their mansions. Organ historian, Rollin Smith wrote that owning an organ "was not only a symbol of those who had arrived socially, but was considered the ultimate appointment of the luxurious home."<sup>2</sup> Other wealthy businessmen and industrialists who had pipe organs in their homes include John D. Rockefeller, George Eastman, Henry Clay Frick, Charles Schwab, and William K. Vanderbilt.<sup>3</sup> Craig Whitney (2003, p.33) quotes a 1911 *New York Times* article stating that "there were 200 to 300 great homes with pipe organs in the metropolitan New York region".<sup>4</sup> Broadway musical buffs may recall the pipe organ scene in millionaire Daddy Warbuck's mansion in the 1982 film version of "Annie" which bolsters the image of the well-appointed millionaire's home. Scenes of Warbuck's mansion including the organ were filmed at the former home of onetime Woolworth Company President, Hubert T. Parson in Monmouth, NJ.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2008/09/booming-beaming-waves-of-noise/>

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Rollin. Pipe Organs of the Rich and Famous. Organ Historical Society, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Whitney, Craig R. All the Stops. Public Affairs, New York, 2003. p. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Hinds, Michael deCourcy. *New York Times*. June 25, 1981. <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/06/25/garden/a-mansion-for-daddy-warbucks.html?mcubz=0>

While Carnegie donated toward organs for municipal concert halls, most of his grants went to churches. Initially, churches made requests to Carnegie himself. Later, so many requests were coming in that, in 1911, Carnegie created the Carnegie Corporation of New York which managed the organ grants as well as Carnegie's other numerous philanthropies.<sup>6</sup> One of the stipulations of the grants was that he would provide half the cost of the organ. The church was responsible for raising the money for the remaining half. It was his way of encouraging parishioners to do the work of stewardship in their churches.

The statistics demonstrate the enormity of this philanthropy. Over 7,000 organs throughout the U.S. and the world benefitted from Carnegie's financial support. Grants for 4092 organs in the United States totaled \$3,604,718.75. Pennsylvania received more grants than any other state – 1351. 124 grants were awarded to churches in Canada. Grants were also distributed for organs in the following countries worldwide: England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Africa, Australia, British Guiana, British West Indies, Gibraltar, India, New Zealand.<sup>7</sup>

A report into the effectiveness of his organ bequests concluded three things:

1. Churches are contributing instrumentalities in the social and cultural advancement of a community – the aggregate of communities make the Nation.
2. The efficiency of the services of a church is augmented by the use of a pipe organ, hence, through the church, the organ indirectly contributes to the social and cultural advancement of the community, and
3. Directly, the organ when used in recitals and by students of music, renders an important cultural service.<sup>8</sup>

### Carnegie Organs in Union County

Union County citizens may not be aware that there were four churches in Union County that received funds from Carnegie to support the installation of pipe organs. Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lewisburg and three churches in Mifflinburg: St. John's United Church of Christ (Reformed), First Evangelical Lutheran Church, and Mifflinburg Methodist Church (formerly Wesley)

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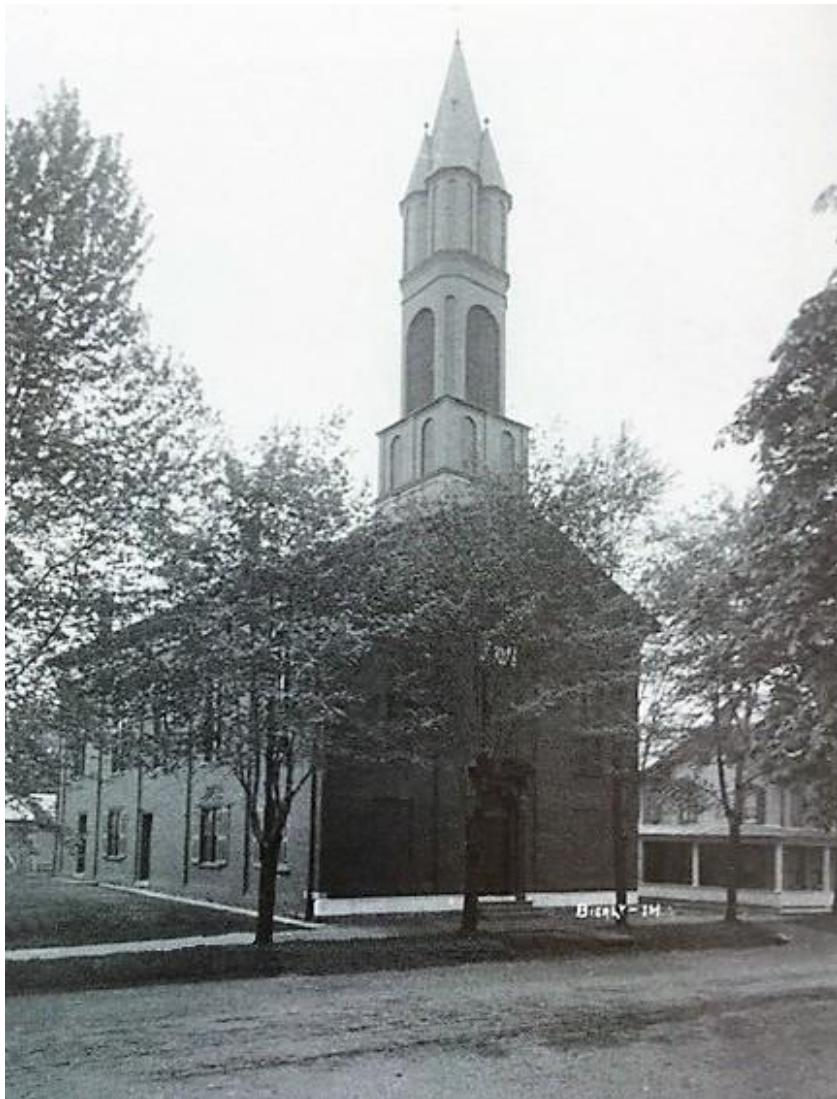
<sup>6</sup> <https://velvethummingbee.wordpress.com/tag/carnegie-organ/>

<sup>7</sup> The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. [A Manual of the Public Benefactions of Andrew Carnegie](#). Washington, D.C. 1919. pp. 310-321.

<sup>8</sup> <https://velvethummingbee.wordpress.com/tag/carnegie-organ/>

**Saint John's United Church of Christ  
417 Market Street, Mifflinburg**

Saint John's United Church of Christ (Reformed) installed a new pipe organ in 1903 to replace an older one from 1867.<sup>9</sup> The organ was built by the Estey Organ Company of Brattleboro, Vermont and funded by Carnegie.<sup>10</sup> The 1903 organ was renovated in the 1940' or 1950's by the Robert Minium Organ Company of Mifflinburg. A new organ which includes some pipework from the 1903 organ was completed in 2015 by Peter Gerger of the Jacob Gerger and Sons of Croydon, PA.<sup>11</sup>



**St. John's United Church of Christ (Reformed) – 1914**  
(UCHS JD)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.organforum.com/forums/showthread.php?29525-Andrew-Carnegie>

<sup>10</sup> Snyder, Mifflinburg: A Bicentennial History; pages 17ff, photo of Enoch Miller, p. 146.

<sup>11</sup> Sylvester, Joe. 113-Year-Old Pipe Organ Playing In Tune. *The Daily Item*, June 12, 2016.



**Saint John's United Church of Christ, Mifflinburg  
Pipe Organ and Chancel in 1957 prior to renovations of 1960**

*(Photo courtesy of Saint John's United Church of Christ)*



**New Organ incorporating restored façade pipes from the 1903 Estey organ**

*(Photo courtesy of the author)*

**First Evangelical Lutheran Church  
404 Market Street, Mifflinburg**

The first pipe organ for the new Lutheran church building, dedicated in 1900, was Moeller Opus 1254 built by the M.P. Moeller Organ Company of Hagerstown, Maryland. It was installed in 1911 at a cost of \$2,500 with half the cost provided by Carnegie.<sup>12</sup> That instrument was located in a two-story, arched recess on the right side of the chancel.

A new pipe organ, Opus 5973, was installed by the Moeller Company during extensive remodeling of the chancel area of the church in 1950.<sup>13</sup> The pipes for this instrument are located in chambers, high on the left and right sides of the central apse. Olive Hoover, organist from 1919 to 1948, told this author that some of the pipework from the 1911 instrument was incorporated into the 1950 instrument. In 2014, this organ was replaced with a Walker electronic digital instrument. The pipes, however, remain intact and unused in the organ chambers.



**First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 404 Market Street – circa 1910**  
*(Postcard photo courtesy of the author)*

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.savetheorgan.org/kbase/opus\\_lists/moller\\_opus.pdf](http://www.savetheorgan.org/kbase/opus_lists/moller_opus.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



**Interior of First Evangelical Lutheran Church, circa 1917**

(Photo courtesy of the author)

**New Organ Installed**

*Special to The Telegraph*

Mifflinburg, Pa., Sept. 16.—A new pipe organ has been installed in the Mifflinburg Lutheran Church. The builder is M. P. Moller, of Hagerstown, Md. Thursday night the inaugural recital was given by Professor Frederick Maxson, of Philadelphia, assisted by Mrs. Harriette Sowers Kleckner Mrs. Oliver K. Pellman, Miss Carrie E. Mench and Miss Sara S. Klose, of Mifflinburg.

The program was superior to anything ever presented in Mifflinburg.

Article regarding 1911 inaugural recital for Lutheran Church pipe organ<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Harrisburg Telegraph, Harrisburg, PA. Sept. 16, 1911, p. 4.

**Mifflinburg United Methodist Church**  
**279 Market Street, Mifflinburg**

Plans for acquiring a pipe organ for the Methodist Church were begun in 1906 during the pastorate of Rev. C.W. Karns. The organ of 24 registers, Opus 781, was built by the M.P. Moeller Organ Company of Hagerstown, Maryland and installed in 1907.<sup>15</sup>



**Mifflinburg Methodist Church**  
*(Postcard photo courtesy of the author)*

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.savetheorgan.org/kbase/opus\\_lists/moller\\_opus.pdf](http://www.savetheorgan.org/kbase/opus_lists/moller_opus.pdf)



### **Methodist Church, Mifflinburg**

*(Photo courtesy of the author)*

Andrew Carnegie provided \$1,000 toward the instrument. The congregation raised an additional \$1,500 to \$1,800 toward the cost.<sup>16</sup> A dedication was held on Sunday, December 8, 1907. The following is a quote from the *Christian Advocate*:

Sunday, December 8, Pastor J.A. Mattern's people celebrated the installation of a new pipe organ in (the) Mifflinburg Church. They paid \$2,500, built a recess for the instrument, costing \$350, and put in electric light. Pastor G.M. Glenn, of Chambersburg, came to preach and secure \$310; asked for \$400, received \$425.<sup>17</sup>

Chimes were added to the organ in 1924. Mrs. Alice M. Schoch provided the money for the chimes as a gift in memory of her brother, Rev. Abraham H. Mensch. Rev. Mensch was a son of the church who entered the ministry in 1868, the year the Central Pennsylvania Conference was organized.

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<sup>16</sup> History of Wesley Methodist Church. 1963.

<sup>17</sup> Buckley, James M., Editor. *The Christian Advocate*, Jan. 2, 1908. New York, NY. Vol. 83, No. 1, p. 32.

In 1948, during the pastorate of Rev. David M. Kerr, the organ was enlarged, and a new console was built by the Canarsus Company at a cost of \$3,500.<sup>18</sup> A special service of dedication was held Sunday, March 21, 1948, with a guest organist, W.W. Adams, Jr. of Westminster Choir College. Special music was also provided by the church organist, George B. Klingman, and the church choir. At this time the organ console was dedicated in memory of Janet S. Mench who faithful served as organist and choir director from 1910 to 1945.

This instrument retains its original pipework along with the additions of 1948, and the case is virtually unchanged. But for the 1948 alterations, this instrument is probably one of the few Carnegie organs in Central Pennsylvania close to its original state.

**Christ's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> & St. Louis Streets, Lewisburg**

Around 1802, the Lutherans in Lewisburg worshiped in a log schoolhouse on the site of the present Parsonage near the corner of St. Louis and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. Later, they joined with the Reformed congregation to form a Union Church and, together, they replaced the log school with a brick building that functioned as school and church. In 1853, the union was dissolved and a new church, known as "The Brick Church" was erected by the Lutherans in 1853. In 1885, the congregation purchased a pipe organ built by the A. B. Felgemaker Organ Company of Erie, Pennsylvania.



**1902 "Brown Stone Church" with Courthouse in the background**

*(Photo courtesy of Christ's Evangelical Lutheran Church)*

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<sup>18</sup> Mifflinburg Telegraph, November 19, 195\_\_\_. p. \_\_\_. <https://www.fold3.com/image/39589520>

Construction on the present edifice, referred to as "The Brown Stone Church", was begun in September 1901 and the dedication took place on September 7, 1902. The decision was made to dismantle and rebuild the 1885 Felgemaker organ in the new church. Documents in the church's archives indicate that the organ's stoplist was unchanged. The old organ was rebuilt inside a new case constructed by the Felgemaker company. The case featured a rank of exposed metal speaking pipes that were decorated in French Gold Bronze and stood on a chest with an oak paneled front. The journal, *The Luther League Review* (1902) stated that the church was to receive grant of \$1,500 from Andrew Carnegie toward the cost of the organ. Since it was customary for the organ grants to be for half the cost of the organ, one could assume that the total cost of the rebuilt instrument with new case was \$3,000.

A 1917 project included additional stops, expanded pipework, a Harp Celeste and chimes installed by the Felgemaker Company. The project also included replacement of the tracker action with the new technology of electric pneumatic action. An Echo division was added to the organ in 1941 as well as a new 3-manual console from the Moller Organ Company of Hagerstown, Maryland. Subsequent projects in 1963 and 1970-71 included renovations, repairs and additions to the organ. By 1983, the organ began to show signs of deterioration and by 1988, portions of the instrument were unplayable.

The much-altered Felgemaker organ was replaced in 1993 with a new instrument manufactured by the Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Connecticut. The Austin organ contains 38 new ranks and three ranks of pipes from the previous organ.



**Interior of 1902 church showing original pipe façade of the Felgemaker Organ**

(Photo courtesy of Christ's Evangelical Lutheran Church)

## Other Carnegie Organs in Central Pennsylvania

There are other churches in nearby counties that benefited from Carnegie's generosity. The list of those churches and the dates of organ installation follow.

1. First Lutheran Church (Sharon), Selinsgrove – 1905 – Funded by Carnegie; dedicated on November 5, 1905.<sup>19</sup>
2. First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Watsontown – 1904 – Renovated in 1995 by the Parsons Organ Builders.<sup>20</sup>
3. Trinity Methodist Church, Danville – 1914 - \$2,500 with half paid by Carnegie.<sup>21</sup>
4. Saint Andrew Evangelical Lutheran Church, Muncy – 1914 - \$2,400 with \$875 paid by Carnegie.<sup>22</sup>
5. Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church, Mount Carmel – date unknown.<sup>23</sup>
6. Saint Paul's Lutheran Church, Gordan – 1904 - \$1,200 with \$600 paid by Carnegie.<sup>24</sup>
7. Saint John's German Lutheran Church, Millville – circa 1905 – Total cost \$1,500.<sup>25</sup>
8. Pine Street Methodist Church, Williamsport – circa 1910 – Total just over \$1,000.<sup>26</sup>
9. Messiah Lutheran Church, Mifflintown – 1904 - \$2,275 with \$1000 paid by Carnegie.<sup>27</sup>
10. Saint Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Millersburg – circa 1906 - \$2,000 with half paid by Carnegie.<sup>28</sup>

### **Special Thank You to:**

Charlotte Winter – Christ's Lutheran Church, Lewisburg

Linda Baum – St. John's United Church of Christ, Mifflinburg

Mary Williard – Mifflinburg Methodist Church

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<sup>19</sup> Schnure, William Marion. Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania Chronology, Vol. II, 1851-1920. Selinsgrove, 1929. p. 93.

<sup>20</sup> [www.dailyitem.com/news/church-invites-community-for-anniversary-celebration/article\\_72ebf190-27ec-11e6-bac7-f31f37183772.html](http://www.dailyitem.com/news/church-invites-community-for-anniversary-celebration/article_72ebf190-27ec-11e6-bac7-f31f37183772.html)

<sup>21</sup>The Danville Morning News. Danville, PA Sat., December 12, 1931 – p. 6.  
[www.newspapers.com/image/89186295/#](http://www.newspapers.com/image/89186295/#)

<sup>22</sup> [www.standrewlutheranmuncy.org/our-history/](http://www.standrewlutheranmuncy.org/our-history/)

<sup>23</sup> [www.visitcentralpa.org/data/uploads/contentblock/mountcarmelWT.pdf](http://www.visitcentralpa.org/data/uploads/contentblock/mountcarmelWT.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book. 1951. p. 10.

<sup>25</sup> Meader, John R. Collier's Self-Indexing Annual 1905. P.F. Collier & Son, New York, 1905. p.297.

<sup>26</sup> Williamsport Sun-Gazzette - January 24, 1910 <https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/40986375/>

<sup>27</sup> Valentine, Rev. M.H. Lutheran Observer. Lancaster, PA. September 30, 1904. p. 18. e

<sup>28</sup> [www.stpaulsmillersburg.com/HistoryPart1.htm](http://www.stpaulsmillersburg.com/HistoryPart1.htm)