



The church, with the van ready for loading.



Dick Beaver watches Linda Murphy and Laurel Haggart disassemble a pipe rack.



Marshall Willett (left) and Ron Downer remove screws from a swell shutter frame.

# Raid!

by Elmer Fubb

Photos: Bruce Haggart, Stu Green

*We don't often read an account of what might be described as an "organknapping." Actually it was completely legal; southern Californians Lee and Laurel Haggart of Granada Hills bought what at first appeared to be a 2/5 Smith organ from a northern California church. They were a little concerned about the reaction of Bay Area denizens to losing a pipe organ. But we must add a word of caution regarding this account of this event. The writer has been known to — well, exaggerate. While the main stream of the story is factual, Mr. Fubb's efforts to revive the Civil War remain his own syndrome. To be safe, skip the text and follow the photos.*

"A guy can tell who his friends are when it comes to moving his organ," stated veteran organ builder Lee Haggart, with a sly smile.

That's how I got roped into getting up at 3:00 A.M. and travelling from Los Angeles to Oakland, California one summer night. Like an idiot, I volunteered before I learned the organ to be moved was 400 miles from home.

So at 3:15 A.M. I found myself being propelled northward in Dick Schroder's car. Dick is the owner of a Morton of undetermined size which he keeps well hidden in his hillside home in Encino. Along the way we stopped to pick up other sleepy-eyed night crawlers until the heap was loaded. There were mumbled greetings and soon the drone of gentle snores blended with the hum of the motor. Onward into the night!

I was rudely awakened by a loud yell, "All out for refreshments, et cetera!"

"Where's the head?" said Marshall Willitt. Marshall owns a 7-rank Robert Morton which he sent north to the State of Washington so it wouldn't bother him.

"Where's the bar?" queried Stu

Green probably surveying the lone lunch room only to find something missing.

I took this in before opening my sleepy eyes and when I did it was broad daylight. "The bar — at 7:00 A.M.?" I mused. We were at one of the few "pit stops" on the almost curveless strip of pavement between LA and the Bay Area, Route 5, which runs mostly across desert flatland. This oasis would be our last stop before Oakland. After Stu finished chomping the garlic sandwich he'd fished out of his barracks bag we climbed back into the car and proceeded north — with the windows open. Route 5 is a concrete ribbon stretching across desolate moonscapes. The most exciting sight along the route is a giant corral loaded with bellowing cattle, as far as the eye can see. It was several miles later that the barnyard aroma let up.

"We're gonna get clobbered by them Frisco organ nuts" said someone in the car.

We arrived in Oakland after more siestas, around 9:00 A.M., and started looking for the church from which the organ was to be extricated. We didn't have an address but Dick Schroder had been there before and thought he had a good idea of its whereabouts.

"I remember the tall tower with JESUS SAVES in vertical letters," recalled Dick. A half hour of criss-crossing streets in the general area failed to show any signs of church or tower.

"Elmer, ask that guy on the corner where it is?" suggested Danny Murphy. Danny is the Haggart's son-in-law, an organ fan by induction.

"Hey mister, where's the 'Jesus Saves' church?," I hollered.

The man pointed across the street. There it was. We pulled across the street and there on the church steps was a man wearing a hard hat. Inscribed across the front of the hard hat





The single chamber is behind and above the altar (note work lights). The console is in a recessed pit at left, front, before the altar.



Laurel Haggart, 'I think we need a truck!'

Preparing to lift the console out of its enclosure.



was "Jesus Saves." This had to be the place, but we approached with some caution.

"Now we're in for it," groaned Stu.

"I'm Mr. Sparks and churches are my hobby," said the hard-hatted one cheerfully.

Yes, there was an organ moving in progress. "They've been working all night" said Mr. Sparks. He seemed friendly.

The hard hat was a suggestion that there might be resistance to the organ move. After all, we were, in effect, raiders. Our mission was to shanghai an organ from northern to southern California. Our shock troops were two gals whose mission was to clear the way for us men. It was clearly a victory for "wimmin's lib." We approached a closed door at the top of a dark stairway and one of us knocked.

Silence.

Again, the knock.

From inside, a female voice — "password!"

"Ugga ugga boo ugga boo boo ugga!"

The door flew open and we new arrivals noted that Laurel Haggart, son Bruce and daughter Linda had been working all night and were a bit weary from wrapping and packing pipes.

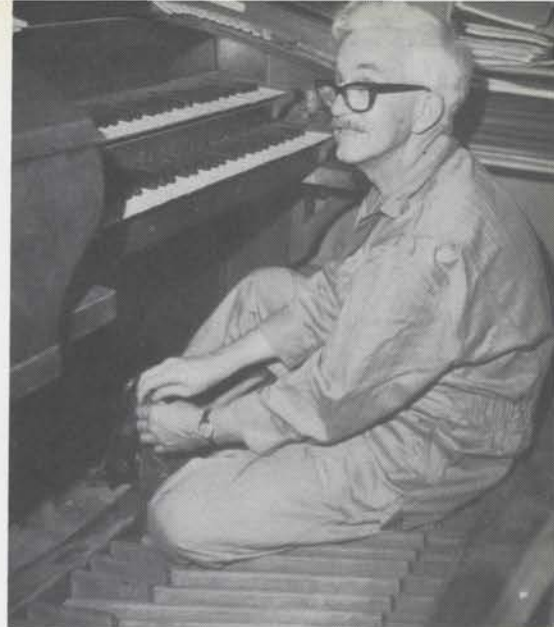
"You gals look a little Haggart," said Marshall, in a weak attempt at humor.

Ignoring this, Laurel introduced Ron Downer, Bay Area enthusiast and organ owner. Ron had come to assure the organ's new owners that there would be no local hard feelings over the loss of the 5-ranker. And to show his good intent he had brought along some long coffin-like pipe packing cases. With no signs of hostilities in the offing, Stu dropped his brass nuckles into his barracks bag, alongside his WWII army helmet. No one had taken him seriously.

We were happy to learn that the gals, assisted by another Haggart friend, Dick Beaver (who had flown from LA to Oakland to help), had already removed and packed all the pipes. There were still the swell shutters to dismount and a huge chest, with regulators and a trem beneath it.

About the time the chest was up for transport, who should arrive but the guy who might have been the 4-star general of the resisting forces — Tiny James.

"No hard feelings about our losing this one. Frankly, it's a dog," said



A wistful look from Dick Schroder when he realizes he must cut the console cable. Note paucity of stopkeys on the console.



The console, which witnessed so many processions down the church center aisle, makes the trip in reverse on the way out.

The switch stack joins organ parts ready for loading in the church yard.







The blower, on a dolly, is edged down a stairway.



The blower crew puts on the brakes as the heavily-loaded dolly reaches the curb.

Up the ramp, into the van.



Tiny. Laurel glared at him but was glad the organ wouldn't be missed.

Tiny laughed, "I didn't mean that, just wanted to get your reaction. I never heard this organ. No one has for ten years. It's been silent that long."

I noted a two manual Conn on the altar, the obvious replacement.

The instrument was supposed to be a late Smith, built by Hope-Jones' associate Fred Smith who worked out of Oakland during the '30s. But later investigation indicated that the only genuine Smith parts were the console relays and switch stack. Therefore, it's doubtful that Fred Smith assembled or installed it.

As Tiny left, Linda beamed, "Gee, he's kinda famous. Did a hitch as prez of ATOS. Heard he plays, too." Back to the organ.

The swell shutters are genuine "gee dad" Wurlitzer, the type used on a style 185. The chimes are early style "M" North Tonawanda. The huge chest proved to be a Roosevelt, vintage circa 1900 and well-built. The switch stacks were also Wurlitzer. Pipe work is similarly varied.

The Open Diapason is Morton. The String, a Gamba, is Roosevelt. There are two unmarked open Flutes, one a Celeste, one Harmonic, and the Vox Humana is actually a small scale Vox Mystica from a Fotoplayer built in nearby Berkeley. It is set up as a church organ, with fewer and lighter voices on the upper manual (Swell) and the Open Diapason on the lower Great. There is unification in the Harmonic Flute, but most other stops appear only at 8' and some at 4'. There are two synthetics, an "Oboe" and a "Clarinet." The only pedal 16' is the Bourdon. With so little unification the stopkeys occupy only about one third of the horseshoe stoprail.

"What a mish-mash," I mumbled, half aloud.

"But it's going into the home of a guy who knows how to transform a mish-mash into a silk purse," said a voice behind me, literally booting me out of my reverie.

Slowly I turned, and my heart did a flip-flop; it was none other than Dewey Cagle, who would have had the rank of no less than Field Marshall, had the Northerners decided in favor of combat.

"I'll bet this instrument goes into the Haggart home as a fully loaded theatre organ," declared Dewey to the assembled throng. They had all ceased



Next is the oversize 4-rank chest.



Too large for the side door, the chest takes the same route as the console, up the center aisle and out the front door.

With Linda holding the coiled cable, the chest is moved into the van.







Unloading in Granada Hills. Lee Haggart (left) watches the blower emerge.



Bruce Haggart (center) and Dick Beaver wheel the blower into Lee's carport — which is already full of organ parts.

The Roosevelt chest is dollied toward the Haggart driveway.



work to size up Dewey because he's kinda famous in both the pipe and plug-in fields, having been a co-founder of the Pacific Council for Organ Clubs and a wheel in ATOS affairs since the year one.

Dewey Cagle didn't fathom how right he was. Little did he know that at that very moment, back in Granada Hills, Lee Haggart was standing on his front curbstone with a newly reconditioned Morton unification relay, ready to clap it onto the incoming instrument — even before it had been fully disassembled 400 miles up the Pacific coast. And he had dusted off that Morton set of Tibias which had been neatly stacked beneath his bed for no one knows how many years.

"Aren't any of you northerners sore because we're latching onto this mess of pipes?" asked Bruce Haggart.

"Nope," answered Dewey. "I've known about this odd assortment of parts for years. Besides, there are more pipe organs for sale in the Bay Area than there are buyers. So load her up and haul her away."

At that point we all glowered at Stu, who had predicted a pitched battle.

"Did you bring your brass knuckles, Stu?" asked Dewey, turning to leave. Stu grunted and pointed to his old army bag. "Where's the bar?" he muttered dully.

"Load her up?" screeched Laurel. "Load her on what? We need a truck!"

So we drew straws and Dan Murphy lost. He departed in search of "drive it yourself" transportation. Danny returned in a few minutes with a huge wheezing bucket of bolts leased from the Rentabucket Hauling Co. and Emergency Hospital. The neatly stacked organ parts were soon swallowed up by the van. Meanwhile, Stu Green had disappeared with Dewey Cagle. Dewey brought him back hours later, after Danny and wife Linda had taken off with the truck for the southward journey. The crew poured Stu into the Schroder auto. They expected to pass the truck pronto but they couldn't know Danny had disconnected the speed limiter and the Rentabucket was barreling southward at a goodly rate of speed. We never overtook them until we passed the pit stop; nearly 300 miles to the south Dan and Linda had stopped for a snack.

Next day most of the crew reassembled to unload the truck at the Haggart home and pipe shop.

Lee, who after an encounter with ticker trouble, could only stand by, waving a confederate flag and cheering the parts haulers from the sidelines.

"A guy sure knows who his friends are when it comes to organ moving" reprised Lee. "See, you didn't need the brass knuckles after all, Stu."

"Oh, but I did" said the owl-faced one, coming slightly alive. "I had to hock them in Oakland to buy Dewey a drink of Burpsi-Booma."

More on the Haggart project as it develops. □



Lee Haggart (left) points out to a willing but clumsy helper that a pipe's lip shouldn't be used as a handle.

Laurel gets the feel of the console, now placed where it will operate in the Haggart home.

