

The Jackling Residence Organ . . .

A Hi-Fi of the 20's

by James D. Crank

The span of years between 1900 and approximately 1935 produced a fascinating variation to the art of organ building, the American residence organ.

These instruments were the musical adornments of the homes of the wealthy and provided reproductions of orchestral music with amazing fidelity, truly the ultimate Hi Fi of the 1920's.

Most of the major builders of the period produced residence organs; but the great leader in the field was the Aeolian Company. The factory shipping list in the author's possession numbers 1789 organs installed in the United States, England, France and Cuba.

The Aeolian Company's greatest asset was a vast library of rolls featuring the leading organists of the period. People like Charles Courboin, Clarence Eddy, Marcel Dupré, Lynnwood Farnum, Alfred Hollins, Alexander McCurdy, Jr. and Leopold Stokowski to name but a few who recorded for the Aeolian Organ. Chief recordist seems to be Archer Gibson, private organist to Charles Schwab and John D. Rockefeller. His recordings comprise about half of the Duo-Art library.

These reproducing pipe organs ranged from small five or six rank instruments to vast giants of eighty ranks and over, and some of the really large organs boasted 32' stops and grand pianos among their resources.

One of the very last of these Aeolian residence organs was installed in January 1931 in the country estate of Daniel C. Jackling. It was a modest two-manual fourteen rank organ with the usual harp and chimes.

Daniel Jackling was one of the biggest powers in the copper industry and began as a hard rock miner and geologist at Cripple Creek, Colorado. His development, along with Spencer Penrose, of a really practical method of milling low grade copper ore brought him vast wealth. Among his properties during his long and colorful career was the Utah Copper Company,

two private railroad cars, a 268 foot steam yacht and the four hundred acre country estate on the San Francisco Peninsula.

One interesting residence occupied by Mr. Jackling was his San Francisco apartment from 1927 to 1937. It is now called the "Top of the Mark." This ten bedroom eyre boasted rare tapestries and paintings and what is regarded as the greatest mining library in the West. This personal retreat was so large that one awed beholder remarked that a full cavalry charge would be a minor inconvenience.

During the 1930's Jackling's niece was studying organ with the celebrated Pietro Yon. During the course of study it was decided to enlarge the organ at the country estate to its present 56

ranks. The George Kilgen Company of St. Louis was contracted to provide the additional pipework, chests etc., and a new four manual console. The organ was designed by Pietro Yon and it is understood that he personally supervised its regulation. The additions were completed in late 1938.

The organ is installed in the game room, the Great on the left and the Swell on the right. Two new chambers were added to the north wall to house the Choir and Echo divisions.

Wind is supplied by two Spencer Orgoblos, the original blower being duplicated.

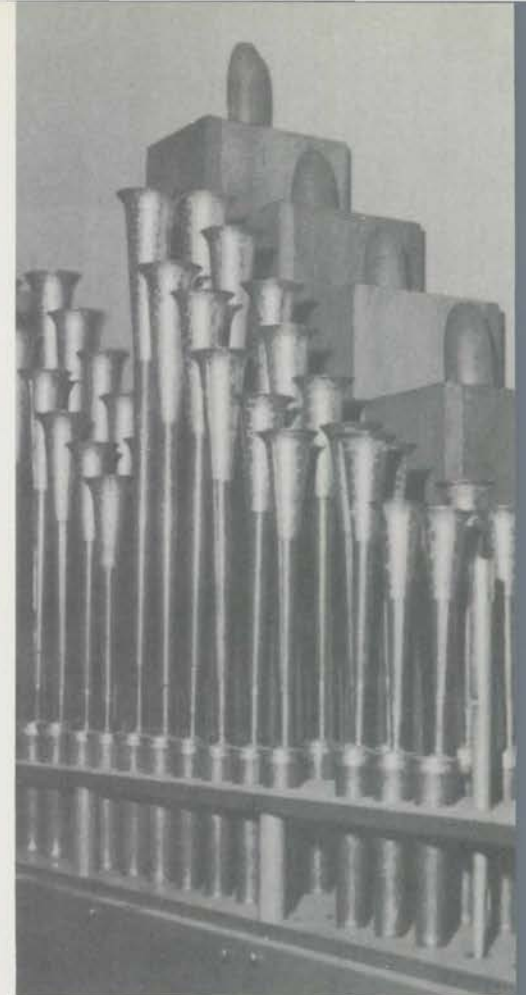
The basement blower room is adjoining a relay room that contains the remote key action, the Aeolian and Kilgen player stop actions.

The Kilgen console, supplied when organ was enlarged in 1938.



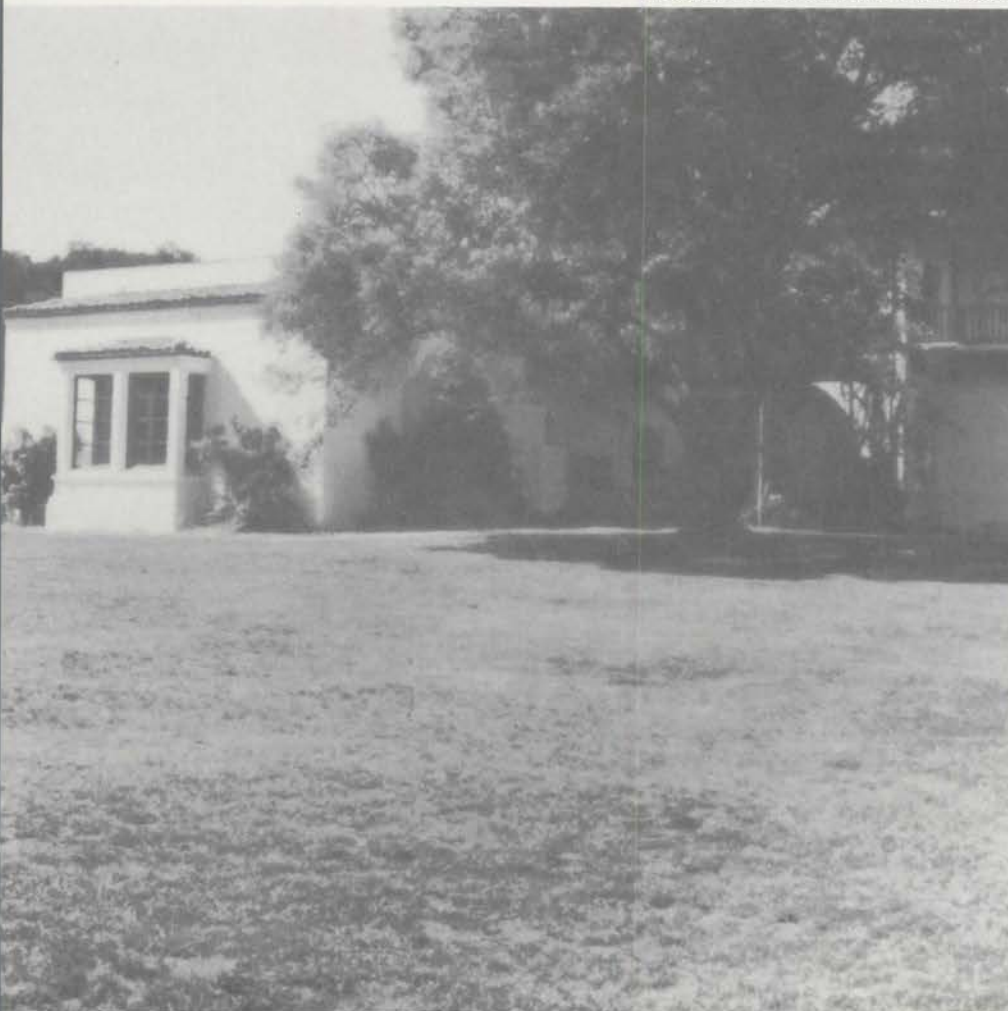


The game room Great chamber is on left, Swell chamber is on right. The room has a one and a half second reverb.



Top end of the Post Horn.

The game room, at the rear of the house.



The Great chamber also houses a Deagan "Super Sostenuto" Vibra Harp in addition to the pipework. The great bulk of the Great organ is the original Aeolian which was retained in the rebuilding.

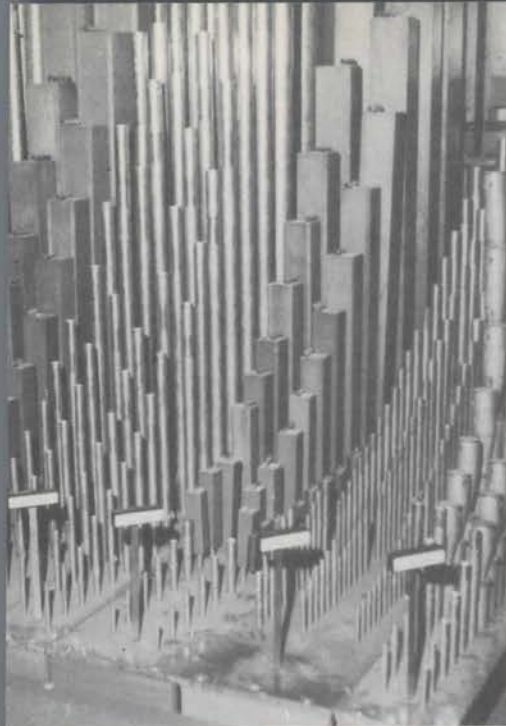
The Swell contains the original Aeolian Swell organ in addition to many added Kilgen ranks. One interesting stop is an 8' Post Horn.

The Choir and the Echo are the major Kilgen additions. The original Aeolian Harp was relocated in the Echo.

The organ is a straight instrument with only one unit rank, a Flute in the Swell. There are numerous pedal extensions.

One of the most amusing aspects of the organ is the little name tags that were placed next to each rank in the instrument. Jackling frequently took guests through the chambers and probably needed help to identify what was what.

The author has been greatly helped in the restoration of this organ by Cliff Lasher, Jon Johnson and Ken Eaton of the Avenue Photoplay Society staff. Tom Hazleton has provided tremen-

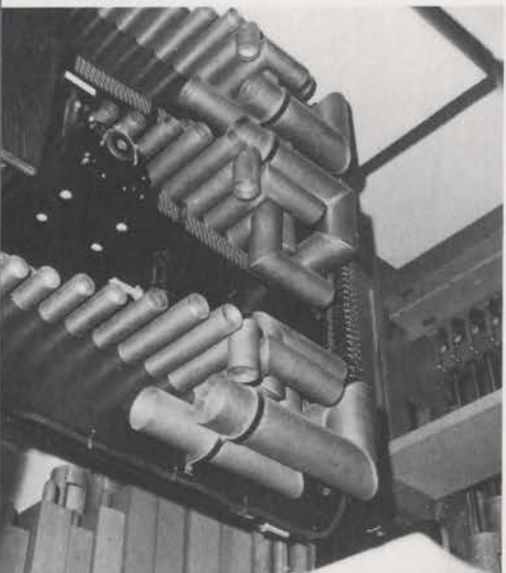


Echo chamber. Name tags clearly identify each rank.



Automatic player actions for both Kilgen and Duo-Art player rolls.

A view of the unusual Deagan "Super Sostenuto" Vibra-Harp, located in Great chamber.



dous help in this project.

The estate is now owned by a prominent Peninsula industrialist who has restored the property to its original condition. The mansion and the organ suffered under several owners who were not able to maintain them. It has been very satisfying to see the estate fall into ownership of a family who appreciates it.

This interesting instrument will probably be on the agenda for the 1975 San Francisco ATOS convention. □

Closing Chord

Vic Hammett was very special. No one who came in contact with him is likely to forget his forceful conversational prowess or his sharp wit. Victor Hammett was born in Windsor Berks, England, 57 years ago. Early musical education included some terms at Eton College Choir School "until my voice changed." He first played theatre organ at 15 at the



VIC HAMMETT (shown here at the Harvey Heck Wurlitzer). (Stufoto)

Palace Cinema, Slough. At 19 he joined first the Gaumont British theatre circuit then the Shipman and King circuit "doing the rounds" with brief engagements at many theatres, which was then the practice in Britain. Then Vic organized *The Wonder Five*, an accordion band, and played vaudeville houses. His first BBC radiocast was from the Regal Cinema in Edmonton. Thereafter he was heard via radio playing theatre organs all over the United Kingdom.

His assignment at the Regal was indicative of both Vic's musical acumen and his adaptability. He was hired to follow the volatile Sidney Torch, the man who had practically invented organ jazz in Britain. Torch had succeeded in approximating the voices and rhythmic patterns of the "swing bands" on the organ, not to mention his expertise in the New Orleans and Chicago jazz styles. Sidney Torch was the toast of Britain in the '30s, and a very hard man to follow. To Vic Hammett fell that task. When he realized that audiences still expected to hear the frenetic Torch jazz at the Regal, he played such a close approximation that his future was assured. But Hammett rarely stressed his skills as a copyist. He had his own style as heard on his recordings. He also became known as a dance band pianist, orchestral arranger and conductor.

Fate hit Vic Hammett a low blow in 1939 when, during a tour of the continent with a travelling show, World War II broke out. The Germans arrested the entire British troupe and interned them until advancing allied armies liberated them in 1945. Vic never talked much about those lost years but it required many months of recuperation before he regained his normal weight.

In recent years Vic Hammett was one of Britain's most active organists, at home and abroad. His frequent tours took him to New Zealand, Australia, Hongkong, Tokyo, San Francisco (Avenue theatre), Los Angeles (Wiltern theatre) and Chicago (the NAMM trade show). He was very active on the organ scene in Britain, with frequent concerts played on the instruments maintained by England's organ clubs, among them the 3/10 Wurlitzer in Buckingham Town Hall. He made many recordings, some released in the USA on the Concert and Doric labels. One recording made in