

ford, and in July 1943 a local columnist said "... she amazes and intrigues you with her pyrotechnics on that organ."

As she refined her style and technique on Hammond, she returned to New York to play the St. Regis Hotel in 1947, and held a highly successful and rewarding job at the Shelbourne Hotel on the boardwalk in Atlantic City during the seasons of 1946 and 1948. In February of 1949 she became ill, and in November moved West for her health.

Her first stop was Tucson, where she played the Westerner Hotel and the NCO Club at a local Air Force Base. Then on to an eight-month engagement at the Fez Club in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she was the "band" for dancing. While in Albuquerque she met Bill Brown (now a resident of Phoenix and owner of a 4/28 Wurlitzer at the Organ Stop Pizza and a 5/21 Wurlitzer in his home) who remains an ardent fan of Betty's.

As she explored the West she played an engagement at Valle's in San Diego, then tried Los Angeles and Santa Barbara.

But when she sauntered into an ATOS meeting at the Phoenix Paramount (Meisel & Sullivan - 3/13 Wurlitzer) in 1966 she was immediately encouraged to try her hand at the pipes. Through the local Phoenix group she acquired Dan Barton's address and began a correspondence which continued until his recent death. Never willing to retire, she has a Hammond in her home, keeps up with new plug-in organs, and plays a variety of jobs. She has played Bill Brown's home organ and proven she is still a "veritable streak at the keys."

"I guess a rolling stone keeps rolling." □

Editors note to the Fats Waller fans: Although we mentioned in the last issue that we would print the Waller Discography (as issued in England) in this issue, we were unable to do so. However, we do still plan on printing it in a future issue.

Now, if our Fats Waller fans make an issue of our neglect in printing the discography in this issue, because we had promised in the last issue to run it in this issue, then we will consider it a hot issue and run it in the next issue instead of just waiting for some future issue.

If you can only find it . . .

History Is Recorded Somewhere

by Harvey Whitney

Tom and Louella Sanders, Sierra Chapter ATOS members in Oroville read Carroll Harris' story on the Golden Bear Playhouse in THEATRE ORGAN (page 11 December 1974) and noted history was lacking on the 2/7 Wurlitzer prior to 1968. Well, bless my tambourine if Louella didn't have the fill-in for this period.

Let's start way back in the twenties in Fresno. Lorin and the writer constituted the Whitney gang and down the street were the Critchfields - Howard, Irene, Walt, Jim, Cal, Josina and Ruth - a bit outnumbered as I recall. Only one thing I remember - we were all fascinated by the pipe organ in the Civic Auditorium at Fresno and Van Ness.

It's all becoming clear now. That's why Lorin took lessons on a local 2/6 Morton and later became the owner of a 4/34 Morton. And me, I really pulled wishbones until I had a 2/6 Morton at home with my own staff organist, Virginia, to play the old tunes of the twenties. Then there was Cal Critchfield who grew up still thinking about the Fresno pipe organ. After schooling, and marrying a sweet girl named Jane, he moved to Richmond where he and his brother Jim (Louella's father) built their real estate and insurance emporium. Jane liked pipe organs too and by the end of the thirties, she was looking for a pipe organ challenge. That challenge was to be met right in Cal and Jane's church.

The year was 1941 - when you couldn't buy a straight organ. St. Lukes United Methodist Church at 32nd and Barrett, Richmond, purchased a Wurlitzer (Opus 939) as an interim step from the Leandro Theatre. With the help of Bob Kates a teenager, (now of Swain and Kates, San Francisco) the organ was soon ready for sacred music. At this time the Wurlitzer lost its toy counter in exchange for chimes. Jane Critchfield (Louella Sanders' aunt) became organist and continued until late 1974, 33 years. She and Cal now live in Sonora.

When Larry Weid bought the Wurlitzer theatre organ in 1968, it signalled the start of a new organ fund for St. Lukes. A plug-in provided by Jim was used from then on (probably helped raise money for pipes). Six years later the new pipe organ was ready.

On January 19, 1975, Jane Critchfield was called back to play the inaugural concert on the German built 15 rank custom baroque organ. During the ceremony, the minister remarked he had read of the Golden Bear Playhouse and the fine home for the old organ (and he might have added: "If you get tired of baroque and you long for those Tibias, you might remember every September is Fair time and a short trip to Sacramento will bring back some nostalgia.")

It's that nostalgia that keeps ATOS growing and growing. But now I have to think of getting ready for April 20 to continue the saga of Opus 939. See you then - Jane Critchfield too, I hope.

Harvey Whitney is in charge of the George A. Seaver Memorial Organ installation, hence the reference to having to get ready for April 20. On that Sunday, Sierra Chapter will dedicate their club organ to the memory of their first vice chairman, whose fondest dream was for the club to have its own instrument.

Clyde Derby, Emil Martin (Sacramento organists) and W. "Tiny" James of Oakland will play the concert. These artists played the concert which marked Mr. Seaver's passing some three years ago. George had requested no funeral, no formal memorial services, but it would be fine with him if his friends wanted to gather around a theatre pipe organ and play his type of music. This they did on the former Seattle, Washington, Music Hall, 4/16 Robert Morton in the Sheraton Inn. The place was packed with George's many friends. James Hodges was the master of ceremonies and will repeat the function April 20. □