



The entire plant of the Marr & Colton Co. Building at left was the original structure, built by interests in Warsaw, N.Y. Structure in center housed office and accounting department on first floor, drafting and console engraving department on second floor. Building at right housed lumber inventory. When latter two structures were built, the cable department was moved to the first building, as heating in winter was better there for women employees. Tracks in front ran to the nearby Warsaw Elevator Co. which made lifts for the organs. A Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh Railway spur to the Organ Co. ran alongside plant in rear.

David J. Marr and the Marr & Colton Co.

by Loyd E. Klos

For some time, the writer has been engaged in collecting data for a history of the Marr & Colton Organ Company to be published in THEATRE ORGAN. This effort has been greatly augmented by the gracious co-operation of Mrs. David Marr and her daughter, Mrs. Kay Marr Reichert, who made available much of the memorabilia, and also the excellent pictures which have been used to illustrate this feature story.

This will be a combined history-biography, since the development of the Marr & Colton Company so closely paralleled the work of its founder, David Jackson Marr. As one will readily learn, Mr. Marr WAS the Marr & Colton Company.

Mr. Marr was born in London, England, on July 7, 1882, the son of David and Christine White Marr. At an early age, David had manifested a great interest in things mechanical such as locomotives and steamships, a love which was to carry through his life. In those days, it was mandatory for most young boys to learn a trade, so he became an apprentice in an organ-building firm in Edinburgh, Scotland, and for seven years, learned every phase of pipe organ construction, from consoles to pipes, from keyboards to regulators. The firm which served as his "college" later became the Ingram Organ Co., and one of the employees was an eccentric genius by the name of Robert Hope-Jones, the eventual "Father of the Theatre Organ."

In 1904, David Marr embarked for the United States, where his first employment was with the Skinner Organ Company in Boston. Here he did every type of job called for in a big organ plant. He

was learning the trade through on-the-job experience. His employers valued his work highly, for Mr. Marr was an earnest, intense young man who never did anything slipshod. He was a worrier when a problem took long in solving, but he always stuck to it until he was rewarded with the solution.

Hope-Jones had arrived in the United States earlier, and after a circuitous route via Hartford, Connecticut, and Bloomfield, New Jersey, began work for the Skinner Company.

In 1906, Mr. Marr returned to England to marry Nancy Hyde. They were married on June 30, 1906, and within two months the newlyweds arrived in the United States. Behind every successful man is a sympathetic, understanding, and loving woman, and this became true more and more for the Marrs in the years ahead. They located in Boston, and David resumed employment with the Skinner Company.

In 1907, Hope-Jones, determined to establish his own factory, left Skinner with about 15 men and located in Elmira, N.Y. The Hope-Jones Electric Organ Company was organized through local capital, and a prominent directorate included the famous writer, Mark Twain; Charles Langdon, Twain's brother-in-law; "Diamond Jim" Brady; J. Sloan Fassett; Theodore Vail; John Stanchfield, and E.E. Loomis. The factory was in rented quarters on 700 Madison Ave. in Elmira, with executive offices in New York City, one of the factors which helped lead to the demise of the company later.

Remembering the young man who was such a meticulous and dependable work-



David Marr, founder of the Marr & Colton Co. With seven years' apprenticeship behind him, he could solve any mechanical problem peculiar to a pipe organ. Marr was a man of tremendous concentration, and meticulous devotion to his work.

er, with a thorough knowledge of his trade, Hope-Jones wrote to Marr, asking that he join his firm in Elmira. This Marr did, and it was while working in the factory that he became acquainted with a young chap who often frequented the place to stand by Mr. Marr's work bench. His name — John J. Colton. John eventually studied the art of tuning and voicing, and in the process, David Marr



The other half of the Marr & Colton duo. This picture of John J. Colton was taken about 1926. "Jack" Colton served as tuner and voicer for the company.

developed a strong bond of friendship with him.

Eventually, Mr. Marr was sent to the West Coast to oversee the installation of Hope-Jones instruments there. While there, the company was sold to WurliTzer at North Tonawanda, N.Y., and the Marrs returned east to locate in that town. John Colton had also gone to Tonawanda. For 2½ years, Mr. Marr worked for WurliTzer, ultimately becoming factory superintendent. Then, the next chapter of this history began to unfold - the founding of the Marr & Colton Organ Company.

Through these years, Marr's status as an organ builder and repairman had been on the ascendancy, and this became known to various business interests in Warsaw, N.Y. These included the Whitney Brothers and Bert Gage, who were promoting Warsaw and its ideal location for new industries. Approaching David Marr, they outlined a plan by which he could establish his own factory in Warsaw. Through their capital, a factory would be built, the money to be amortized over a period of time.

The plan sounded good to the young man - a chance of running his own firm, good financial backing, and attractive surroundings in a nice little town. He agreed to the proposition. Until his new one-story plant could be built, Mr. Marr began business in an old garage. The new factory opened in 1915, and in deference to his affection for the young fellow who hung around his work bench in the old days, the company was named "The Marr & Colton Organ Company." John Colton was with the new company from the beginning, but contrary to popular notion, did not invest any money in the new organization.

The plant was situated at the foot of Industrial Street on a spur of the Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad, making shipments of raw materials to, and organs from the building simple. The first theatre organ produced by the infant concern was for the Oatka Theatre in Warsaw.

At the height of its operation in the 1920's, the company had about 375 on its payroll. Mrs. Marr's memory, which seems longer than an ostrich's neck, provides the names of some of the key personnel and their work which contributed to the success of the company. John J. Colton, voicer and tuner, had attended Elmira Academy for awhile, but became interested in organ-building in that city, and learned some of the facets of the trade. Harold Hollinshead worked his way up to become Factory Superintendent. Angelo Marong became Marr's right-hand man, and eventually supervised the installation of organs all over the country. "Andy's" assistants were Herb Schneider and Joseph Novarro. George Osborn was draftsman. John Hirst shaped the metal pipes, while Lute Benham built the wooden ones. Chest maker was Ira Davis. Three brothers, John, Ralph, and Lawrence Atkins, built the consoles. A general workman helping in all phases of the work was Arthur Green, who came from England. Frank Heffer was factory organist. Kay Marr, for a time, served as her father's secretary.

The custom was to build the entire organ, then erect it in a room in the factory and thoroughly test it. Quite often, when Mr. Marr was present, he would tune it himself. If there were problems involved, these would have to be solved before shipment. The story goes that when the problem would be particularly knotty, and the personnel not getting anywhere, Marr would be called. All he had to do was to walk into the erecting room, and the problem would be solved in a hurry, so thoroughly did he understand his profession. When giving the organs the final test, Marr would play "Just a Cottage Small By a Waterfall," or the "Waltz of the Flowers". Then the organ would be taken down and packed for shipment. Even the console was dismantled instead of being shipped in one unit.

Quite frequently, Mr. Marr, accompanied by his wife and perhaps one or two

of his daughters, would attend the opening of a new theatre in which one of his instruments was installed. Occasionally, he would do the final tuning into the early hours of the morning, with Mrs. Marr holding the keys.

In November 1927 when the company's largest organ, a 5-manual 24 ranker, was dedicated in the Rochester Theatre, Mr. and Mrs. Marr were on hand for the elaborate festivities. The theatre management held a big pre-dedication banquet at the nearby Seneca Hotel. While squeezing lemon onto his plate of fish, Mr. Marr was so engrossed in conversation with the dinner guest next to him that he failed to notice sprays of lemon aimed at his poor spouse until someone called his attention to it.

While nostalgically recalling these events for the writer, Mrs. Marr mentioned that she misses "those wonderful theatre parties with the excitement and atmosphere of opening night." She attended many of these affairs all over the country.

In the days when radio was in its infancy, and television unheard of, the company used trade magazines, and distributed its own circulars to advertise its organs. One of these circulars, made available to the writer, described a novel method of locally advertising an installation in the Capitol Theatre in Reading, Pa. While the organ was being installed, the 3-manual console was placed on the stage behind the curtain. During every performance, the curtains were drawn back, the console bathed in the spotlight, with two signs proclaiming to the patrons that "Another Marr & Colton Organ is now being installed."

In church installations, Marr would frequently arouse janitors in mid-week to start up the furnace so tuning could be done in proper room temperatures. Then, during Sunday services, he would sit in a rear pew, listening critically to the organ's tone.

As did all organ companies, Marr & Colton engaged several professional organists to open new organs for them. These included the master showman, C Sharp Minor, who opened the Rochester organ, among others; Guy Fraser Harrison, now conductor of the Oklahoma City Symphony; Tom Greirson; Wilson Ross;

* Please turn page

THEATRE ORGAN REVIEW

brings you illustrated features on famous organs and organists, news items, record reviews, and reports of meetings enjoyed by theatre organ enthusiasts in Great Britain.

Published quarterly in London
by The Theatre Organ Club
(President: Robinson Cleaver)

Annual Subscription \$1, Post Free

Subscription Agent for U.S.A.

R. GROVE

2210 INDIANA AVENUE

CONNERSVILLE, INDIANA

Overseas Distribution from:

121 CLYFFORD ROAD, RUISLIP GARDENS, MIDDLESEX

Reginald Webb; and Herbert Henderson, a teacher of organists including Radio City Music Hall's Jack Ward.

The lumber used in the organs was shipped to Warsaw, stored in one of the factory buildings, and paid for as it was used. Stop keys were bought from the Durst firm in Erie, Pa. Some pipe work was purchased from Gottfried, also of Erie. Lifts for the consoles were made by the Warsaw Elevator Company which was handily located a short distance from the organ factory.

Marr & Colton had three branch offices. In New York City was the General Sales Office. Once it was at 505 Fifth Avenue, later at 1560 Broadway. The Midwest office was in Detroit, and the Western Office was at 6372 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, California. About four men were assigned to each office, handling sales and service.

Kay Marr Reichert, in addition to her secretary's duties, had to make sure that the company's cars were always in tip-top condition and available to travel at a moment's notice. When they needed repairs, it was her task to see that they were taken to the garage. The plant had a Cadillac to accommodate VIP's who visited Warsaw for consultations, and a Buick for Mr. Marr's use. During its life, the company had three Cadillacs and nine Buicks.

As the company progressed, various innovations in organ construction were developed, but none was of greater importance to Marr & Colton than the Symphonic Registrator. The demand for theatre organists in the Twenties was so great that it was impossible, in most cases, for the organist to give the necessary time to the study of emotional tone colors called for on the screen. Foreseeing the need for instantaneous and proper blending of tone colors, the company highly advertised this feature.

On organs equipped with the Symphonic Registrator was a row of stop tabs across the front board of the console. Each tab had a spot of color as an aid to the organist - black, blue, gray, green, orange, pink, red, violet, and yellow. The tabs were further inscribed as to emotion or situation - practically any mood called for on the motion picture screen. One instrument's Symphonic Registrator contained the following tabs:

1. Love, Mother
2. Love, Romantic
3. Love, Passion
4. Lullaby
5. Quietude
6. Jealousy (green spot)
7. Hatred
8. Anger
9. Excitement
10. Agitation
11. Suspense (blue spot)
12. Garden
13. Water
14. Rural
15. Children
16. Happiness
17. Festival
18. Fox Trot (1)
19. Fox Trot (2)
20. Waltz (1)
21. Waltz (2)
22. March
23. Mysterious (gray spot)
24. Gruesome (black spot)
25. Neutral (1)
26. Neutral (2)

* Please turn to next page

MARR & COLTON INSTALLATIONS

Compiled by

Lloyd E. Klos

Following is a partial listing of original Marr & Colton installations. It is presented in the hope that ATOE members can add to it from time to time. A complete list was never compiled by the company.

City or Town	Location	Organ Size	Organists; Other Remarks
Allentown, Pa.	19th St. Th.		
Allentown, Pa.	Orpheum Th.		
Ashland, W. Va.	Palace Th.		
Astoria, Ore.	Viking Th.	3M	
Bethesda, Md.	Hiser Th.	2M 5R	
Bismarck, N. Dak.	Bismarck Th.	2M 5R	
Buffalo, N.Y.	Broadway Th.		
Buffalo, N.Y.	Commodore Th.	2M 7R	
Buffalo, N.Y.	Genesee Th.		
Buffalo, N.Y.	Roosevelt Th.	4M 18R	Tim Crawford, Sylv. Stambaugh, org.
Conneaut, Ohio	La Grande Th.		
Dearborn, Mich.	Calvin Th.	2M 5R	
Detroit, Mich.	Dexter Th.	2M 5R	
Detroit, Mich.	Lasky Th.	3M 9R	
Detroit, Mich.	Oriole Th.	3M 17R	
Detroit, Mich.	Radio Sta. WJR		Reginald Webb, organist
East Rochester, N.Y.	Rialto Th.		
Easton, Pa.	State Th.		
Easton, Pa.	Opera House		
Elmira, N.Y.	Keeny's Th.	3M 20R	Sylvester Stambaugh, organist
Fargo, N. Dak.	Fargo State Th.	2M 6R	Hildegard Usselman, organist
Harrisburg, Pa.	State Th.		
Harrisburg, Pa.	Victoria Th.		
Hartford, Conn.	Colonial Th.	2M 5R	
Hazleton, Pa.	Feeley Th.	3M 11R	
Hollywood, Cal.	Warner's Th.	4M 28R	
Indianapolis, Ind.	Fountain Sq Th.	3M 9R	
Ithaca, N.Y.	Crescent Th.		
Jamestown, N.Y.	Palace Th.	3M	
Lancaster, N.Y.	New Albert Th.		
Lebanon, Pa.	Academy Th.	2M 10R	
Le Roy, N.Y.	Le Roy Th.	2M	
Mc Cook, Neb.	Fox Th.	2M	
Minneapolis, Minn.	Chateau Th.		
New Orleans, La.	Saenger Th.	4M	
New York, N.Y.	Times Th.		
Niagara Falls, N.Y.	Cataract Th.	2M	Olive Sutherland, organist
Niagara Falls, N.Y.	New Lumberg Th.		
Niagara Falls, N.Y.	Strand Th.	3M	Ernie Whistler, F. Paul Knarr, org.
Norfolk, Va.	Gramby Th.		
Norfolk, Va.	Wells Th.		
Oneonta, N.Y.	Palace	2M	
Palmyra, N.Y.	Strand Th.	2M	
Philadelphia, Pa.	Rivoli Th.		
Pittsfield, Mass.	Capitol Th.	3M	
Reading, Pa.	Capitol Th.	3M 12R	
Renovo, Pa.	Rialto Th.	3M 9R	
Richmond, Pa.	Lyric Th.		
Richmond, Pa.	Strand Th.		
Rochester, N.Y.	East. Sch of Mus.		Practice organ #1
Rochester, N.Y.	East. Sch of Mus.		Practice organ #2
Rochester, N.Y.	Riviera Th.	3M	Edward C. May, organist
Rochester, N.Y.	Rochester Th.	5M 24R	C Sharpe Minor, Earl Tobias, J Gordon Baldwin, organists
Rochester, N.Y.	Strand Th.	3M 15R	Tom Grierson, Harry Sullivan, org.
Springfield, Ohio	Alhambra Th.		
Stockton, Cal.	Rialto Th.		
Syracuse, N.Y.	Avon Th.	3M 9R	W Stu Green, organist
Syracuse, N.Y.	Civic Th.	2M 10R	W Stu Green, organist
Syracuse, N.Y.	Empire Th.	3M 10R	W Stu Green, organist
Syracuse, N.Y.	Regent Th.	3M 13R	W Stu Green, organist
Syracuse, N.Y.	Rivoli Th.	2M	
Toledo, Ohio	Rivoli Th.	4M 20R	
Utica, N.Y.	Olympic Th.	2M	Earl Pudney, organist
Utica, N.Y.	Uptown Th.	3M	George Davis, organist
Warsaw, N.Y.	Oatka Th.		First to be built by Marr & Colton
Wayland, N.Y.	Legion Th.	2M	
Wheeling, W. Va.	Capitol Th.	4M 17R	

27. Neutral (3)
28. Night
29. Fire (red spot)
30. Storm
31. Chase
32. Chinese
33. Oriental
34. Spanish
35. Funeral
36. Sorrow
37. Pathetic
38. Cathedral
39. Full Organ

From the above list, one can see that "Every Tone Element - Every Shading - Every Emotion to fit the sentiment portrayed in a Motion Picture, instantly" was at the finger tips of a competent organist, as described in a folder published by the company to advertise its unique product.

Mr. Marr was of average build, puffed a pipe, and owned two violins. When not on the road, he puttered in the garden or sat in front of the fireplace, reading. And how he loved that fireplace! Although he could build a complete organ, he was not an organist per se. "But David always promised himself an organ for the house," Mrs. Marr relates. "He had a spot picked out in the living room, opposite the fireplace, where he wanted to install the console of a two-manual organ. Several times he had such an organ built at the plant, and then someone would come along and buy it."

From time to time, Marr was asked to write articles for publication in trade papers or magazines. A piece he wrote for MOTION PICTURE NEWS appeared on August 27, 1921, and is worth including with this feature because, though it was not a promotion for his product, it represented his professional advice on theatre organ installation. It was entitled "Pipe Organs, a Necessary Adjunct to Motion Pictures:"

"People go to a moving picture theatre primarily, of course, to see an attractive picture.

"But a motion picture theatre may offer excellent pictures week after week, and yet, through lack of a Certain Something in the atmosphere of the house, may fall far short of playing to capacity audiences. Every alert house manager has studied the psychology of a moving picture audience as it sits, watching the unfolding of a story on the screen.

"You, of course, have noticed how for a time, there seems to be a little undercurrent of unrest throughout the house. Neighbors talk to one another in undertones - or not in undertones; irrepresible small boys make comments concerning the action in the pictures; little children ask questions in high treble voices.

"Then, soothing, resonant, and restful come the first clear notes of the music - and in a flash, the whole spirit of the audience is changed. They relax and give closer attention to the picture, and an atmosphere of friendliness and comfort pervades the theatre.

"Time was when the manager of a motion picture house who felt that he required music to bring the utmost returns from this theatre, found himself in somewhat of a quandary. If he hired an orchestra as expensive as his ambition desired, this rather considerable expense would cut deeply into his profits; with only a piano, it was doubtful whether the instrumental music alone would draw and hold the extra percentage of patrons



The Warsaw Elevator Co., which made the lifts for Marr & Colton organs.



The newest section of the Marr & Colton organ factory in Warsaw, N.Y. The office was located on the ground floor to right of entrance. To the left was the accounting department. Above the office was the drafting department, and above the accounting department was where the fancy engraving was applied to Marr & Colton consoles.

whom he sought.

"Now, however, all that is changed, for in the modern pipe organ, one secures an instrument which furnishes music of such splendid quality and volume as to charm the most critical audience, organ music which forms a perfect accompaniment to every picture - be it a simple comedy or a complicated emotional drama. Nor is a large investment required, either is first cost for the upkeep. These instruments are built in various sizes at reasonable prices, and if desired, terms can be arranged which extend payments. Some of these organs are no more difficult to play than a piano, and any musician will get really wonderful effects out of these instruments.

"Here are five reasons why you should have an organ in your theatre:

"First, There is but one instrument which alone will give you thorough satisfaction, and that instrument is an organ. The pipe organ is conceded by all musicians to be the "King of Musical Instruments."

"Second, Even if you use an orchestra, there are times when the organ is indispensable.

"Third, Patrons of the better class of motion picture theatres have reached the point where they expect organ music to be at least part of the regular program.

"Fourth, The organ is being used today in many theatres, not only alone, but also in conjunction with the orchestra. Organ music alone is soothing and restful.

"Fifth, In the smaller theatre and neighborhood houses, the pipe organ is fast displacing all other forms of music. The installation of an organ in these theatres provides an added attraction that is sure to increase their patronage.

"The pipe organ has passed through an evolution during the last ten years. In the large organs, the electro-pneumatic action has superseded both the tracker and pneumatic action. There is no question but that the electro-pneumatic action will soon surpass all other forms of action in the small as well as the large organ. It is well for the would-be purchaser to familiarize himself with the different types of organs and make his choice carefully. The cost of upkeep is an item of importance. It is well to select an instrument of such careful design and

* Please turn page

workmanship that there is small chance of any of its parts getting out of order or adjustment.

"Of course, the prime requisite in any musical instrument is its tone, and while many organs sound all right when first hearing them, they prove to be a great disappointment after months of service. Be sure when buying an organ that you select one with a tone of which you will never tire. While a great many stops are desirable, it is much better to have an instrument with a fewer number of stops of refined tone than one whose many stops are harsh and rough in tonal quality.

"It is always well to have a new theatre planned from the start with organ chambers appropriately placed. Installing the organ in an organ chamber, places it in a better position for the distribution of tone, and also leaves the orchestra pit clear for musicians whenever required. If your architect is not familiar with organ construction, it is well to have him obtain the necessary information from an organ builder. If you are installing an organ in a theatre already constructed, have it placed in a chamber if possible. We always recommend this to our customers, and make a careful study of their conditions.

"One mistake many theatre owners make is to install a large and costly instrument and then expect to employ an ordinary musician to play it. It is much better to buy a small organ, and place it in the hands of a good player than to buy a large and costly instrument, and put it in the hands of an ordinary musician. There are also many cases where small theatres have been provided with too large an organ. One would not think of using a brass band in a small parlor or reception room. A large and loud organ is as much out of place in the small theatre."

The company flourished so well in the Twenties, producing what its slogan proudly heralded "America's Finest Organ", that new additions were made to the plant. In 1926, two 2-story structures were built, connected to the original one-story building. The oldest edifice was then used for cable assembly, as heating in the cold Warsaw winters was good, and thereby more comfortable for the women employees engaged in this work. This period of the company's history coincided with the Golden Age of the Movie Palace, when the lush houses were being built. Few of them did not have a theatre organ — it was the status symbol of the time.

As far as can be determined, the Marr & Colton Company built between 500 and 600 organs for theatres, churches, auditoria, radio stations, and homes. Not one instrument was sold outside continental United States. Paper work connected with export licenses and tariffs was so extensive that this dissuaded Mr. Marr from selling in Canada or abroad. It is regrettable that there is not an available listing of Marr & Colton installations. However, through extensive research, the writer has compiled a small listing which accompanies this article. It is hoped that this will act as a spur to other enthusiasts to add to it, in the hope that a complete list some day will be possible.

When Al Jolson uttered the first words on the screen to herald the beginning of the talkies, the theatre organ's days as a regular feature in the show palaces were numbered. This situation drastically reflected itself in the decrease in sales for the Marr & Colton Company. The depression of the early 1930's was also a factor

which hastened the end. In 1932, John Colton left the firm to join the Kilgen Company in St. Louis as a salesman. He died not long after on one of his trips to the east. Of interest is that John Colton's second cousin, Mrs. Joseph O'Neil of Elmira, is organist at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, thereby keeping a branch of the Colton name connected with a pipe organ.

Operations ceased at the Warsaw plant in the fall of 1932. Mr. Marr set up a shop at home. Working in the cellar and in the garage, he did organ repair work. He also traveled about, buying old organs, converting and re-selling them. He serviced organs in churches and homes. Not a man to retire, as this was in the good old days when retirement philosophy had not reached the stage as it is now, David Marr believed in wearing out, not rusting out.

Mr. Marr's health began to fail in 1949. Working to the end, he died on December 20, 1951. His wife, four daughters, four sisters and five grandchildren survived him. A member of Trinity Episcopal Church in Warsaw, and a member of North Tonawanda Masonic Lodge, he was laid to rest in Warsaw Cemetery.

The plant where the famous-name organs were built has had one tenant since the organ builders left—a button machine manufacturer. While visiting Warsaw to gather information for this article, the writer stopped at the site of the factory. It stands idle, with ivy growing up the broken steps of the entrance, and covering the walls and windows. Some of the windows were broken by vandals, the handle on the front door was hanging by one bolt, but one could see that the plant was well-built and sturdy and could still be used for manufacturing purposes or as a warehouse. The wooden floors are in excellent condition, and the sprinkler system intact.

Mrs. Marr still lives with her cat, Puffy, in the same house which was home for 43 years. On the living-room walls are pictures of half a dozen organ consoles built by the company. Over the fireplace is a copy of a painting which hangs in the Rochester Theatre, once home of the largest Marr & Colton organ. It was a thrill for the writer to visit Mrs. Marr at home and to talk of the old days. Occasionally, this kindly lady receives an inquiry in the mail, asking for spare parts which some organ buff might need for a restoration project. She regretfully must answer that no more are available, since 30 years have passed since the plant's closing.

Most of the original installations of Marr & Colton organs have either been scrapped or relocated. Brought to mind are two of the best instruments which the company produced, and which can be heard in perfect playing condition today. One is at ATOE member Bill Blunk's Viking Roller Rink in Astoria, Oregon. Wanting a larger organ to replace the original 3M Marr & Colton in the building, Blunk acquired the ex-Rochester Theatre 5/24 organ. It has been played by noted artists such as Don Baker during the past year for Puget Sound ATOE Chapter meetings.

Another Marr & Colton, still used for two between-show interludes on Sundays, is in the Roosevelt Theatre in Buffalo, N.Y. On the same order as the Rochester instrument, it also was installed in 1927. Meticulously restored, and expertly maintained by ATOE member Harry Radloff, this 4/18 instrument is a monument to the

glory of the Marr & Colton Company. When being restored, Mrs. Marr was most generous in giving magnets and spare parts to Mr. Radloff, and the project could not have been realized without this assistance. Installed in the heart of "Wurlitzer country", this organ was equal to the best which the Marr & Colton Company ever built. Its tibiae are the most beautiful heard anywhere, its strings are at their shimmering best, the reeds are very strident, and the vox real sassy. The organ truly exemplifies the company's claim of "Beauty of Tone, Matched by Excellence of Construction." The organ indeed fills the theatre — a perfect installation, as all ATOE members in this area will attest. (See Winter Issue 1961-62 THEATRE ORGAN.)

And so we come to the end of this history of the Marr & Colton Organ Company, and the man who made it possible, David J. Marr. The story is typical of many — a man from overseas who came to these shores, rich in talent and ideas, and who, after a time, established a business, thereby realizing the American Dream. Theatre organ enthusiasts everywhere should hold the name of David Jackson Marr in reverence, as his contributions to the cinema organ field were noteworthy. When great names in the theatre organ industry are mentioned, his name should be included with the other greats — Hope-Jones, Wurlitzer, Kimball, Barton — and very close to the top of this distinguished list.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gentlemen:

Quite by accident, I learned of your association - much to my delight!

I happen to be a member of the Quiet Birdmen, a social club of airplane pilots; lo and behold, last meeting a brother member, knowing I was an organist, told me about ATOE and naturally I asked questions - he forthwith forwarded me a '62-'63 winter copy of THEATRE ORGAN, which brought nostalgia to the surface with almost a twinge of sorrow over the ignominious death of the "mighty ones" of the '20's!

Seeing those pictures, specs and reading the stories sure took me back 40 years, when I was around greater Chicago; and I note in the Chicago Federation paper, the deaths of many whom I knew in those days - how time flies!

I wonder if you would accept me as a member as being one of those that "rode the clouds" with those gorgeously expressive instruments; as a theatre organist I joined Local 10 in 1919, so you can assume I've been thru the mill.

By the way, can you tell me IF the Harry Zimmerman of the movie colony as orchestra leader, is the Harry Zimmerman, organist, of Chicago in the early '20's?

Enclosed is check for five bucks - please start the THEATRE ORGAN with the spring issue.

J. Gibbs Spring
Albuquerque, New Mexico

theatre organ