

Communication with several organ experts found most concurring this was a German-made organ and many considered it to be possibly made by Frati. The jury is still out and we may never know the exact company of origin.

One additional point, however, that points to the Frati Company being responsible for the construction of this organ—many Frati hand organs were fitted with a tremolo mechanism, a feature not found on most other hand organs.

### Conclusion

We may never know the exact origin of this 25-key deKleist barrel organ. The deKleist catalog and Graham Lloyd's monograph point to it being produced in North Tonawanda. Similarities to German organs and in particular, the Frati company, tend to lean towards manufacture in Germany. It does represent, however, an interesting piece of early American promotion of organs for the amusement and entertainment industry. Some experts I contacted believe that deKleist never made any of his instruments but based on research for my book, *The American Carousel Organ*, I would heartily disagree with that notion.

If Eugene deKleist did not produce this organ in North Tonawanda but rather, marketed it as one of his own, he was not the last organ distributor to do this. This practice was followed extensively during the early years of Wurlitzer's domination of the market—a time when the Wurlitzer Company bought organs (that were manufactured by deKleist) and sold them as their own. There is some speculation as well as to whether the Niagara

Manufacturing Company made any organs or resold those of the North Tonawanda Manufacturing Instrument Company.

Never-the-less, this was an exciting and fresh organ to find—one that was very pristine in nature and from an early American organ company.

I wish to thank Fred Dahlinger who gave me ideas for the research of this organ. I also wish to thank Bill Edgerton, Björn Isebaert, Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, Andrew Pilmer, Tim Trager and Hans van Oost for their input into the research for this article.

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Ron Bopp is Editor of the *Carousel Organ*. He has enjoyed all aspects of outdoor organs, both small and large since his first band organ, acquired in 1978.

### In memoriam . . . Dave Miner

*Although not a COAA member Dave Miner provided quality mechanical instruments for many of our members. I owned a Miner Tangley Calliope and the quality was exceptional as were my dealings with Dave. Dave was 47 and passed away on September 13, 2007. Excerpts from an obituary by Louis Rugani follow . . . Ed.*

“Mr. David R. Miner was president and founder of Miner Manufacturing at 2208 220th Street in Donnellson, Iowa, with 24 years of service. Among his many works was the restoration of five historic PCC streetcars for the City of Kenosha, Wisconsin in 2000. He also manufactured Tangley Calliophone calliopes used on carousels and riverboats, plus self-playing accordions and other vintage musical instruments, vintage railcars, popcorn wagons and trucks and band organs at his facility.

Dave Miner built two special air calliopes for the road show of “Showboat” which were

quiet enough to mimic the sound of a steam calliope inside the confines of a theatre. They operated on 1/4 pound of air supplied by a tiny blower while emitting prop “steam,” which was powder admitted into the blower unit for the calliope. These instruments simulated a larger calliope in that the whistles were mounted on a small air chamber painted black and rounded on the sides to resemble an actual steel-pipe manifold used by traditional steam calliopes.

In 1989 he founded and began building the replica 1930s village of Minerville and the adjoining Fort Madison, Farmington and Western Railroad country branch-line used for excursions and laid on an abandoned right-of-way of the Chicago Burlington & Quincy Railroad. It all opened in 1994 and at their height they attracted 7,000 visitors a year to a remote rural road east of Donnellson.

Dave was also a member of the Southeast Iowa Antique Car Club, where he served a term as vice president, and he enjoyed playing in the

city band.

Survivors include his wife; two daughters, Emily and Sara Miner, both of Donnellson; one son, Nathan Miner of Donnellson; and one sister, Deb Miner of Minneapolis, Minn. He was preceded in death by his parents.”

