

Reading, PA, Berks History Center

Berks History Center, 940, Centre Avenue, 19601 Reading, PA, United States of America



Builder	J. J. Dieffenbach
Year	ca. 1800
Period/Style	Romantic
Stops	6
Keyboards	1
Keyaction	tracker/mechanical

Description

The organ housed at the Historical Society of Berks County in Reading, Pennsylvania, crafted around 1800 by John Dieffenbach, offers a glimpse into early American organ building. The organ has been carefully documented with inscriptions and updates that indicate modifications and restorations over its two centuries of existence. The manual has 49 notes with various stops including an 8' Grob Gadackt with walnut pipes, a 4' Principal with some pipes borrowed from a 4' Klein Gadackt, a unique 4' Qund:Dehn with metal-capped pipes, and other wood and metal stops. Notably, the 4' Principal was installed in 1879 by Thomas Dieffenbach, replacing an original Mixture stop, hinting at changes in musical tastes or performance requirements over time.

The organ's authenticity is corroborated by signatures and dates found within the organ's structure, including one from John Jacob Dieffenbach dated 1803, and a piece of newspaper from 1799 used in the organ's construction, suggesting a meticulous documentation practice by its builders. This historical artifact not only represents the craftsmanship of the Dieffenbach family but also encapsulates the evolution of organ music and technology in early America. Its preservation allows current and future generations to appreciate and study the intersection of music, craftsmanship, and history.

Stoplist/Disposition

Manual

Grob Gedackt 8'

Principal 4'

Qund:Dehn 4'

Klein Gadackt 4'

Salicet 4'

Octav 2'

Additional:

Sources

<https://beta.pipeorgandatabase.org/instruments/514>