

**THE DIEFFENBACH  
ORGAN BUILDERS**

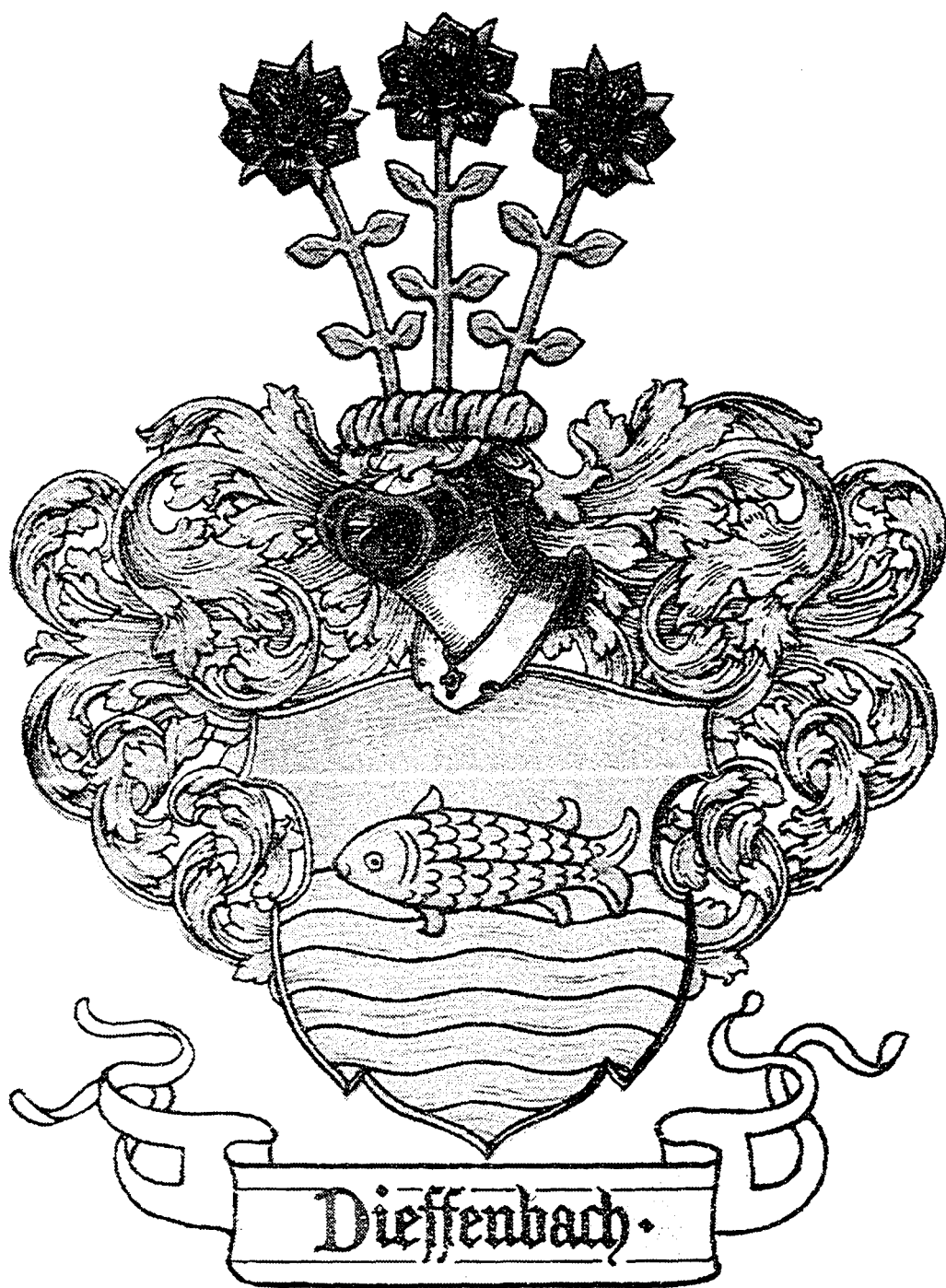
**WRITTEN C. 1959**

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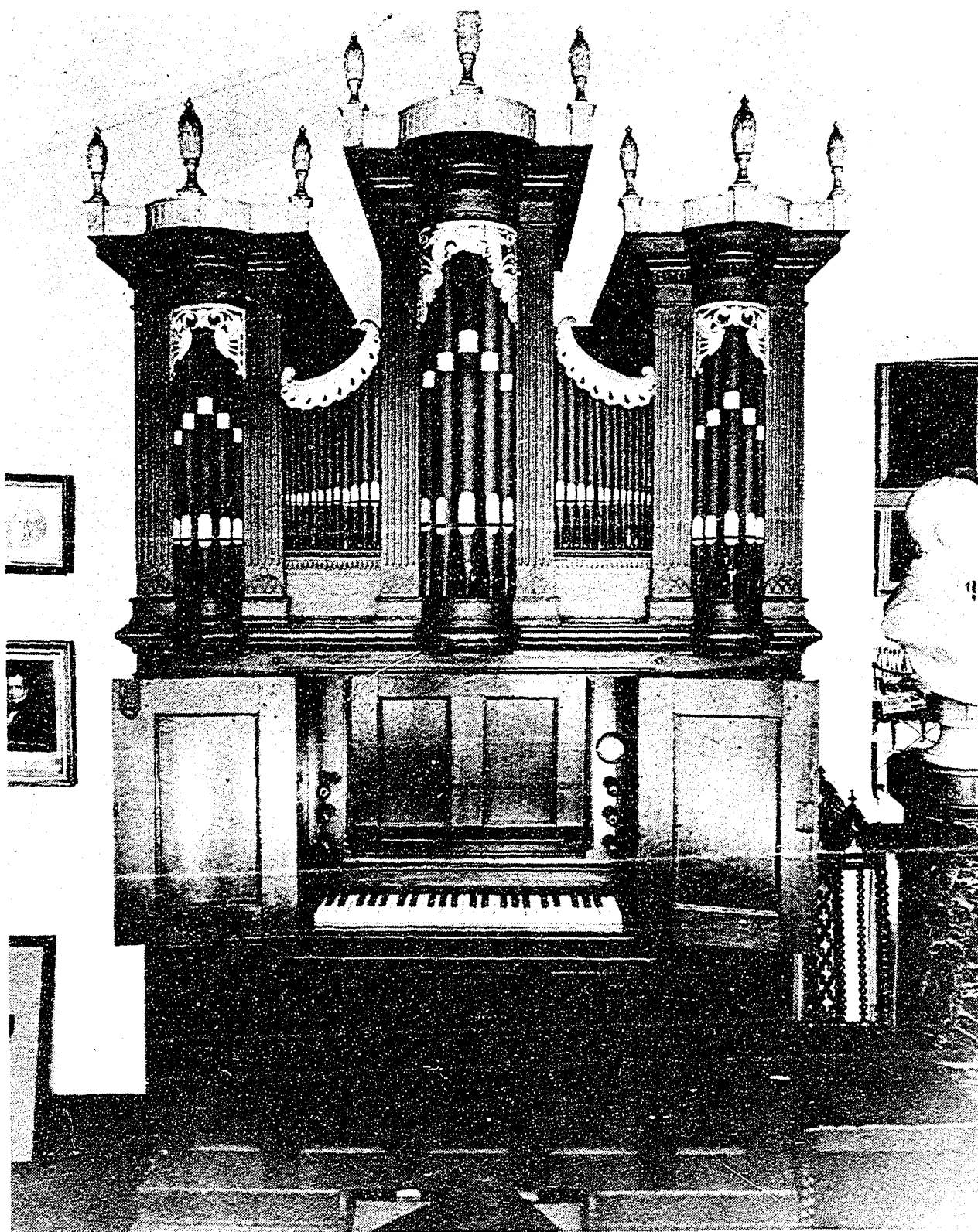
**Victor C. Dieffenbach**

*Printed 1967*









**DIEFFENBACH PIPE ORGAN**  
**Built by Johan Jacob Dieffenbach, 1776 – 1778.**



## THE DIEFFENBACH ORGAN BUILDERS.

In the year 1709 thousands of Germans left their homes in the lower valley of the Rhine river and traveled up that river to Holland and took ship across the channel to England, whence they hoped to be transported to the British Colonies in America. British officials had lists of these persons and their occupations prepared at the time of their arrival, these lists still survive in the Public Record Office in London. In the 4th list enumerating those who arrived at St. Catharines near the tower of London on June 11, 1709 appears the following, concerning our pioneer Dieffenbach ancestor: Konrad Dieffenbach, cooper, aged 50, Reformed religion - his wife Maria Barbara and three daughters aged 11, 4 and 1, his mother Anna Dieffenbach aged 74.

Strange as it may seem, on this selfsame day there arrived at the same place another ancestor, viz Jakob Koebel, father of Maria Sybilla wife of Johann Adam Dieffenbach. Several thousand of these distressed Germans were eventually sent to the Colony of New York in a project to obtain tar and pitch from the pine forests there. These two commodities were badly needed by the British Navy. Again were these two men brought together for Koebel being a miller by trade was a vital member of the community and Konrad being a cooper, made the barrels needed to ship grain, flour, tar, etc. etc..

Religious persecution was reputedly one reason for these families leaving their homeland, and the war then was partly a religious struggle so the Colony of N. Y. required Catholics to give up their religion and become Protestants or return to their homeland. More than 3000 refused to recant and were transported back to Germany. But Jakob Koebel remained, although he was not indifferent to religion as was later indicated in his will.

The failure of the tar making project and the rapacity of the agent in charge caused many of the German families of both East and West camp to look for new homes else-

where, and they looked to the previously promised Indian lands at Schoharie. In the fall of 1712 the list-masters came to interview Ca ree ah dum kah, chief of the Schoharie Indians as to the lands on which to settle their families. Some of the Palatines did not arrive till 1713, after their leading man, Weiser, Windecker, Gerlach, Fox, Schmidt, Kniskern and Koebel had made arrangement for them to settle. Later a Westinghouse had his factory on Cobleskill creek. Despite great obstacles and adversity, the settlers at Schoharie prospered, thus inciting the greed of the ruling class. Once utterly disillusioned by their treatment in N. Y. a number of families banded together and resolved to undertake a hazardous migration to more inviting lands in Pennsylvania. Once more Fate played its part and brought the Dieffenbach and Koebels together in this new venture.

In the spring of 1723 thirty-three families under the conduct of Indian guides ascended the Schoharie valley over an old Indian trail to Summit Lake and down the Charlotte creek below its junction with the Susquehanna River above the present city of Oneonta. Here they constructed rafts from the big trees, on these rafts and their Canoes they loaded their household effects, women and children floated down the Susquehanna to the mouth of the Swatara which they ascended. There, in what is now Berks Co. they found permanent homes at last.

The Dieffenbachs located on the Tulpehocken Creek, their farm practically surrounding Trinity Tulpehocken Reformed Church on the Berks-Lebanon County line. The Koebels settled farther east, on a branch of the Tulp. north of Conrad Weiser Park (could be the old mill at north east of Womelsdorf.) Johann Konrad Dieffenbach was born in Germany C. 1659. He was a son of Michael Dieffenbach and wife Anna her maiden name we do not know, nor the town from whence they came. Since only three daughters are mentioned, therefore Johann Adam must have been born in N. Y. settlement, and was undoubtedly only a stripling when the pioneers came to Pa.. Since J.A.D. was a miller by trade and was the son-in-law of Jakob Koebel it stands



to reason that he may have been apprenticed to Koebel to learn the trade, fell in love with the daughter and thus married into the family whose life and adventures parallell his own. At any rate, on 13 Aug. 1734 at the age of 23, Maria Sybilla Koebel was united in marriage with Johann Adam Dieffenbach by the Rev. Casper Stover (Luth.) To them were born seven children, one of these was Johann Jacob D.

The outbreak of the French and Indian war brought terror and horror to the settlement on the Tulpehocken. By the middle of Nov. 1755 most of these settlers had fled to the protection of the various forts with wives, children and livestock and all they possessed. J. A. D. served in some sort of local militia and the records show that Capt. Adam D. was in charge of a company of men at Fort Henry, north of Bethel. Johan Peter a son of J.A.D. and Sybilla Koebel D. was born 15 Jul 1755 died 23 Feb 1838, 82 years 7 mo. 8 da. Text Psalm 90 - 10. His wife Anna Catharine Lewegud was born 23 Feb 1758 died 18 Nov 1824 66 yr 8 mo 21 da. Text 2 Epistle Paul-Timothy 1:78. The Lewegud (Livingood) family was later cruelly massacred by the Indians. The mill which J.A.D. diligently and successfully operated for many years has in recent years been torn down and the stone used to build an enormous memorial to Caspar Wistar, who had later acquired the Dieffenbach farm and homestead through entanglements between the Penns and Wistars father. Rev. Backenstose, present pastor of Tulpehocken Church once tried to tell me that the Dieffenbach never actually owned the farm, the mill, nor the ground which he donated for the erection of the church. In the Dept. of Interior at Harrisburg it showed the Dieffenbach's settled 1723 and the Wistar receiving their papers 1734. So much for the "Squatters rights" which Rev. Backenstose tried to tell me was all the D's ever had.

Nevertheless be that as it may - J.A.D. prospered. Johann Jacob D. married Sabina Schmeltzer. She was born 1746 and died 1824. When J.J.D. started housekeeping on a large farm 1½ miles west of Millersburg, (now Bethel Pa.) he was engaged in making plows, harrows, carts and

wagons but all the time he had an idea he wanted to make or build an organ for his own use. When his father told him there was an imported organ in Philadelphia, he made the trip on foot to see this instrument.

The original Dieffenbach pipe organ contains around 300 pipes of metal and wood. The case is entirely made by hand as well as the intricate carving and the construction and the fitting of the pipes. The writer has in his possession a wooden mortising gauge used by J.J.D. bearing the name CHRISTIAN on the face of the block and the date 1741 on the side both deeply pressed into the wood. Also the tinkers staff such as was used to shape the Zinc pipes previous to soldering them. Whether the staff was used by my ancestors I do not know, but the gauge and the tradition of its use has been handed down from father to son.

## THE DIEFFENBACH ORGAN - BUILDERS

The clackin' of the ox-yoke stopped as the heavily laden Conestoga came to a halt in the farmyard of John Jacob (der Hann Yakob) Dieffenbach, about one mile west of Millersburg (now called Bethel) in Bethel Twp. Berks Co. (then Lanc. Co.) almost two hundred years ago. The teamster, or driver of this ponderous vehicle or freighter as they were often called, proceeded to unload, from under a heterogeneous pile of sugar, salt, coal, etc. etc. He dug out a long thin and flat crate it contained sheets of zinc, which J.J.D. had previously purchased in Philadelphia, and had ordered it to be delivered by the freighter.

About 1774 Johan Adam from the Tulpehocken settlement had visited his son J.J. and told him that he had heard reports of a pipe organ in a church in Phila. the organ had been imported.

There was at that time no organ in the entire settlement, log buildings had been erected for holding religious services. The early pioneers were a pious folk. But when they sang the hymns of their forefathers they missed the music of the organ. Singing without instrumental accom-

paniment was similar to mortar minus hair - it didn't hang together. J.J.D. began to ponder over this shortcoming. He was a very good mechanic - a painstaking craftsman, turning out in his shop anything from a grain cradle, a harrow for the farmer to till his acre or a coffin to bury him once his toil was over.

If only he could see this organ in Philly: He was sure he could make one; but how? He had never seen a pipe-organ; and, dear readers don't forget that at that distant day there were no photographs to be had; at most some crude sketches. Day after day did J.J.D. resolve this in his busy head. It became an obsession, working, waking or resting he could not get rid of the idea that he wanted to make an organ.

So one day J.J.D. told his family: I am going to Philly to see that organ; and when I come back I am going to build one myself! So said, so done. One morning he filled his pockets with fried sausage, dried beef, bread wrapped in muslin - eatables that would keep for several days, his stout oaken cane, and set out for the city of Brotherly love. Arriving at his destination the church having the organ, the sexton showed him the organ. J. J. D. now took from an inner pocket a small notebook, a footrule and pencil. He measured the height of the organ and put it down in his book, so many feet so many inches from front to back, so many doors, pipes etc. etc., all this he had down in black and white in his little notebook. The caretaker questioned him as to where he lived, how he came, what was his occupation? After telling the man he was a farmer and had walked. The caretaker then asked the young rustic. "Why do you measure the organ all over?" "I'm going to build one when I get home!" Well the caretaker said - "I have some errands that need my attention - you just go ahead with your measuring. I'll be back later." (He well knew that the dumb farmer would not take the organ on his back and run off with it.) Then he went to several members of church Council and told them, "there's a lunatic in the church" and told what J.J.D. had told him. The Council rushed to the church, questioned this uncouth farmer in cowhide boots

and barn - fall trousers; they soon found out that he was far from a lunatic. Arriving home J.J.D. proceeded to make the case of the organ out of previously cut and well dried native black walnut lumber. He made the plans or working drawings from his notes and built a case approximately two thirds the size of the organ he had measured in Phila. Once the shell was finished, he started on the pipes, some of these were of wood and square in shape; these he easily made. Soldering the Zinc pipes, there J.J.D. was up against it - he couldn't solder - he didn't know how. Discouraged he stored the entire project in the loft of the pigsty - a log building with a forebay like a barn. My great grandfather showed me the place when I was a lad of ten and told me that under the roof the organ had lain for a year. Along came a tramp - a German "rumlayfer" or traveling journeyman. He stayed there as long as it took to solder the pipes. J.J.D. then constructed a niche in the wall of his dwelling, also lifted the ceiling to set up the organ in his house and play it.

Later it was sold to Eplers Church Bern Twp. where it was in continuous service till 1877, one hundred years after it had been built. The congregation had then increased to such proportions that a larger building was needed. Consequently a larger organ. Thomas D. Gr. Gr. son of J.J.D. was now the organ builder, in Bethel on the N. W. corner of the intersection of Main St. and old Rt. 22.

Thomas built a new organ for Eplers church and took the old J.J.D. organ as partial payment. After the death of Thomas, his son John Adam (Punch) secured the organ, repaired it, and presented it to the Berks Co. Hist. Soc. Museum where it can be seen. It is still in playing condition. Other Dieffenbach organs can be found throughout Berks and Lebanon Counties. Among these are Salem Church Bethel, Zion Luth. Church. Mt. Zion installed in 1854 and used 85 years, sold in 1937. St. Paul's Union Church, Hamlin Lebanon County bought 1850, used till 1935. In Vol XI, No. 1 Oct. 1945 issue Hist. Review G. W. Clemmens states "David (Pit) D. of Frystown told him in 1940 that he thought an earlier organ had been built by

his father for this church.”

Now to correct and clarify the record I will say that Pitt's name was Peter (Not David) and his father was David the wheel wright and coach maker, at the Black Bear Inn, about one mile west of Frystown. Peter was the blacksmith, his brother Tom the painter and their Dad had never built an organ in his lifetime. This David was a son of David (der Dawfit) who lived on the Jonestown road one one mile east of Frystown at present owned by Allen Klahr. David of the Black Bear Inn was a brother to my grandfather, he was a tall man with a great bushy beard. He was the Gr. Gr. father of Mrs. Fred Christian of Shillington, Pa.

Johann Conrath Dieffenbach bom in Germany C. 1659, married Maria Barbara (last name unknown) comming to America the family consisted of wife, threedaughters and his mother aged 74. They settled in New York and later came to Penna. Johann Adam probably bom C 1712 Schoharie, N. Y. died 1777. On 13 Aug. 1734 married Maria Sybilla Koebel who died in 1807. Johann Jacob Dieffenbach bom Jul. 8, 1744 died Jul. 30, 1803 aged 59 yr 23 da. Christian son of J.J.D. bom Sep. 4 1769 died Feb 9, 1829, aged 59 yr 5 mo 5 da. David, son of Chr. bom Mar. 3, 1798, died Dec. 11 1872, aged 74 yr 9 mo 8 da. Thomas, son of David bom Jan. 22 1821, died Feb 18 1900, aged 79 yr 24 da.

The writer was well acquainted with Thomas and wife “Polly” almost as well as with his own parents. Going to Bethel Grammer School, now the bar-room of the Union Firehall, I would ride Nell, a big longlegged old gray mare to old Toms place, put Nell in the stable, go to school and if the weather did not look too promising, I'd stay overnight. Old Tom had whiskers. If he was working in the shop I'd be right with him. If he'd run a splinter in his hand or perchance hit his thumb with the hammer, he'd cuss in Pa. Dutch till you could smell the brimstone. But in ordinary conversation he was never profane nor would be tolerate a dirty story. Polly, his wife was one of the Loshes (Loose) from Myerstown. She was a short, dumpy little woman. One

day going down the steep hill between Mt. Aetna and Frystown the front wheel of the pheaton came off the spindle. Polly fell out and rolled into the gutter. Scared as she was, she sputtered "Och Ich glawb ich gay runner!" (I think I'll get off) and old Tom chuckled "Ich denk fer - sei du bisht hunna" (I'll be D--- but you are down.)

John Adam (Punch) was so styled from conducting the Punch and Judy show he was the buyer for the firm; he was younger and could find his way around towns better than Dad, also had a better knowledge of the English. He would go to Phila. or N.Y. City and buy hardware for the shop. Viz. handless, nameplates, etc.. On such a trip he saw a new fangled contraption, a talking machine, bought the metal parts and made one in his father's shop. I'm not sure, but think it was called a "Megaphone" or something similar, it had rubber tubes hanging down. He'd wind it like a clock and you would hold the tubes, one to each ear, much like a Doctors stethoscope and you could hear it play. One Sun. P.M., Dad and I went to visit his uncle Tom; they had company - some of Polly's relations. Punch had just returned from a trip to N. Y. City so he said he was going to play a new record for us. He started it up; we could hear old Tom talking to himself in his workshop but the voice we heard was coming off the new record. Tom said "now I must make the coffin for old Mummy Lanz 5'8" long, we could hear him pull the board from where it lay between the joists on strings nailed crossways. We heard him drop it on the trussels. We heard him draw the pencil square and each cut of the saw as he cut it in length. He had made a coffin of Poplar wood and covered it with cloth. Soon we could hear him nailing it together and then Outch D--r! Then we heard the crash of the hammer as he threw it through the shop. Sly punch had made the record secretly in the shop and it was not from N.Y. City.



**THOMAS DIEFFENBACH**

Thomas Dieffenbach born 22 Jan 1821, died in Millersburg in his eightieth year, married Maria (Polly) Loose of Myerstown, Pa. Thomas Dieffenbach, the last of a family of four generations of organ builders, was the son of David and Margaret (Schmidt) Dieffenbach. He was born on a farm about 1½ miles west of Bethel then Millersburg. His father was a wheelwright and cabinet maker in connection with organ building, and there in a log-cabin shop, still standing, young Thomas learned his trade. In fact, there wasn't much to learn, since all the members of this family of craftsmen that I have met do not learn a trade - they just take the tools and do the job. When he started on his own hook in Bethel, we do not know.

My Gr. father, Elias, built log-house and shop adjoining and both are in excellent preservation. It is situated on the n.w. corner of Main Street and old Rt. 22. Twas a far cry from the old and primitive shop of Johann Jacob D. to the more modern shop of Thomas D.. Tom was but a cabinet maker and of course, the village undertaker.

Well do I remember when he would have a finished pipe organ in the display room (an extra building,) sandwiched in between the dwelling-house and the shop proper. It had an extra high ceiling, for some of those instruments were 14 feet tall. At the same time he had a second organ ready for assembly, and a third well on the way of construction. Making the case or shell as it is sometimes called was child's play compared to the forming of all the pipes, be they wood or metal. A tiny splinter or an air leak in the soldering may put the whole assembly out of tune. Worst of all Tom could never play any of the instruments he built. So, when it was fully assembled, his son John Adam (Punch) would then tune it; although he was almost blind, he had the finest ear to hear "sour notes" as he called them. When Tom would hit some quirk that he could not solve on the spot, he would start to whistle through his teeth, not out loud, but he would tramp all over the little village to release surplus energy. While on such a spree of whistling he would be oblivious to his surroundings, he might pass a neighbor or friend without recognizing them and he couldn't for the life of him tell you whether he had been whistling Yankee Doodle or Now Thank we all our God. The crux of the matter was the off-beat in the music. When we stop to consider the fact that he was the fourth generation of organ builders, each learning from his predecessor and the first one just spending a few days scrutinizing the work of some foreign mechanic, it is a wonder that the organ ever played. To watch him at work, sawing, planning, gluing, fitting or polishing some tiny intricate part - all done by hand - and often at night and by lamp-light - yes many an hour the writer was watching him in his little shop. He never aspired to public office save for



a few terms as deacon and elder in the church.

Once the original Dieffenbach organ came into his possession (as noted elsewhere in this article) he used it as a sample when some congregation needed or wanted an organ. Many of the organs Thos. D. built are still in use today.

In 1872 he built a very fine organ for Salem's Church in Bethel. While originally installed in the balcony or gallery of the Church (where it actually belongs) for perfection in resonance, it was later torn down and reassembled on the main floor of the auditorium in 1930. This instrument, typical of the master craftsmen, is 4 ft high 5 ft deep and 9 ft wide; four octaves constitute the keyboard, it has pedal controls, viz. It is a wind instrument, the air pressure is made by a big bellows operated by a boy. Once on a sultry July forenoon, when the congregation stood to sing the Doxology in German, with old Levi Donkel a sturdy farmer with a long red beard and handlebar mustache was pounding the keys and singing to beat the band - it was then that "Cally" Spangler was watching out through the window, seeing the folks going to the big Schleiffshtay Loch Picinic - he neglected to pump and the bellows ran out of air, but not old Levi, unknowing of the coming disaster, he plunged down on the keys and hollered "sohn" - but the organ failed to respond - his stentorian shout rammed the notes down the throats of the stupified congregation and they were mute. Casting a murderous look at the negligent boy the latter resumed his job in a hurry and nearly all of us came in at the end of the benediction. But what tickled me most was that as we went down the stairs old Levi said to Cally "Du grickscht nix fer heidt". As much as I remember Levi the organist got a dollar for every time he played the organ and the boy working the bellows got a quarter.

Today, due to the influence of the un-intelligentsia, the beautiful grain of the walnut wood of this organ is smeared up with white paint to correspond to the color of the plastering. Very harmonious to the uncultured minds. Thomas D. was actually and actively engaged in his life-

long occupation until almost up to the time of his death which occurred in the year 1900 in his 80th year. Thomas D. shop was never modernized, as much as I recollect he he never had a power tool except a ratchet screwdriver and a breast-drill all of the dozens of mortises and tenons were made by hand up to the hair and they just HAD to fit. Thos. D. was a mild-spoken never profane man, and would not tolerate a dirty story; but let something go wrong in the shop - a split board, a crack in a turning on the lathe or a splinter under a nail and you could really hear the good old Penna. Dutch cusswords flying. That is the time that he'd start to whistle through his teeth - a seemingly mild and harmless critter and within a white hot fire.

In the winter of 1894-95 I attended the Bethel Grammar School. I had to hike two miles, morning and night; so, when the weather did not look very promising in the morning, I'd slap the saddle on old Nell (a big rawboned, long-legged old grey mare) put a peck of oats and a few ears of corn in a bag and tie it to the back of the saddle and start for old Tom's place. I'd put the mare in the stable and feed her at noon. If the weather didn't look any better by the time school left out, he'd tell me: "I think you'd better stay here overnight. Polly won't mind having you - she gets lonely for company and I can find something for old Nell." So I'd be there for several nights in a row, once in a while, and that is how I got to know the old craftsman. Making a coffin, he would first of all get his little old notebook that he had been using for years; in it he had the measurements of the deceased. Was he thin, long and narrow, it so would be recorded; was the man or woman short and stout, a much wider casket was needed. Then he'd do a little "figgerin" as he called it and then he'd get the boards from a roofed shed in the rear of the shop. Here were piles of walnut and poplar wood, all set up in stacks with strips of lath laid crosswise between the boards for air circulation to aid in drying the lumber. Once the board was on the sawhorse he'd measure, square it, then cut it off by hand; his saws were always sharp and had very fine teeth so as to make a smooth cut; then plane them down by hand till they were

smooth and finish with a cabinet scraper and then sanded down by hand.

Since there was no method of refrigeration those days and embalming was still unknown, the only recourse was the ice-box, a cumbersome wooden case, lined with zinc, in this the corpse was placed and ice broken into fist sized pieces was placed around it; a drain at one end let the ice drip into a bucket underneath.

So, in the very hot summertime, a funeral might be held on the fourth day after death. But many were held a full week after the demise of the person, and some of them are not nice to write about.

On one such occasion old Tom, to save time and facilitate conditions in general, decided to make a cloth covered coffin. This was primarily a rough wooden box of poplar, very light and easy to cut. Although meticulously constructed in every detail, the boards were raw uplaned, as they came from the mill. Once the outside shell was put together, then the entire case was covered with nice gray cloth: This was tacked along the upperedge, then glued and smoothed over the sides and tucked underneath; the inside was nicely embellished with satin and ruffles and you could not detect a splinter of the rough box underneath. I do not know what one had to pay for such a casket. I do know that when my brother died in 1895 my father got a fine solid walnut casket for \$20.00 and traded in a pile of walnut boards as payment. We took the boards to the planing mill at Myerstown and old Tom was very pleased when he saw the nicely smoothed surface; it saved him a lot of elbow grease.

Thomas D. had three sons, John Adam, Henry who for a number of years had a separate shop of his own at his residence in Millersburg and although engaged in the furniture business and cabinet making, he continued to help his father in the undertaking business for a number of years. A third son, George, was a carpenter and lived in Reading up to the time of his death.

Henry D. was married to Amanda Reed and had a son Harry, a daughter Maggie, who married Wm. Gearhardt and

lived in Lebanon Pa. Harry was employed by Isaac Wolf, clothier in Lebanon until the death of Mr. Wolf when J. S. Bashore a longtime employee took over the business and Harry worked for him until retirement. When in a talkative mood, Thos. could relate some wonderful and amusing anecdotes that had occurred during his long term as undertaker. Oft times I've been asked in a somewhat subdued, but still not quite fully disguised manner as to their aversion to anything in the P.D. dialect? Just what the name implies - he takes 'em under - he undertakes to do it and does it.

Names as to an individual's occupation vary in given localities. I have heard them called: "der doata mann" der leicht a mann - der leicht en nahm - der doata fersorriger - der leichta fersorriger. Once I was asked (being an apiarist or bee keeper) why an undertaker could not handle bees or operate with them successfully. The only answer to this is that if he was an old timer, and not very sanitary, he might bring an ood to the hive on his hands and clothes that the bees would not tolerate; otherwise you had better ask the bees - for honeybugs are a very supercilious critter.

Long before the advent of book-matches, when the ladies wore feather boas and bustles, when the shoestrings were all round like a rope - way back to the oldest recorded deeds of the clan, you will find clockmakers among the D. every inhabitant of the village, plus the surrounding countryside for miles around would bring their ailing timepieces for treatment. If he had time and felt in the mood he'd fix them, otherwise he would bring them to my grandfather to fix. I helped my grandfather make molds in wet sand and cast new wheels of brass, then he would put the cogs with file and hacksaw and the confounded things would run like new. He'd work for hours at a time, three to four days and when Thos. would ask what he owed him he'd say \$2.75 or three dollars or something like that. I would get a little paper bag of gum-drops, or maybe a hoarhound sticks plus a handful of peanuts and gr. father would say: "Siss ken gelt gemocht, ower's muss epper es do" (made no money on this, but someone has to do it.) I remember the big

grandfather clocks that Dad would take apart and scrape the old varnish and grease off, down to the raw wood with a steel cabinet scraper then sand it smooth; then he would stain the cherry wood with red sandal wood cut up in alcohol. Around the top arch of the door he would put the owners name, address and date in old English script with yellow paint mixed so it would not dry hard and then cover it with gold leaf; later the surplus was brushed off with a camel-hair brush. That part or chore I was allowed to do, the rest of the work no one was allowed to touch, as he was too finicky and exact to tolerate any help. He also repaired the dials; in designing the scenes and flowers etc. On these dials I was eventually allowed to help or to give suggestions, once he perceived my artistic talent. Dad painted signs by the dozen and made road-markers by the mile. One day I went in from the field for a drink and then watched Dad working on a big sign that had to be finished that week, the time I arrived on the scene he was mixing a little batch of nice pink paint on his palette (a big pane of glass). On the sign he had been painting a robin-egg blue shade to some dark brown letters and had run out of paint. I could not imagine where the pink paint would be used, and so I asked him. "Well, I guess you can see where the paint got all, and now I'll use this to finish." Yes but this is pink and that is blue. He insisted the two colors were alike. "Guess I know what I'm doing - I was mixing paint before you arrived!" So, all I could do was go over in the house and get the women folk to come over. There for the first time Dad and we found out he was color blind; all the rest of the colors he could see but pink and robin-egg blue looked alike to him. He was so frustrated he almost cried. I grabbed the brush and finished the job while he went out and put up the team. Dad could draw, flourish and fracture. You'd think you could hear the birds singing the way he'd put them on paper. At night he'd sit by the fire and carve butter moulds out of wood and give them to a friend for a gift. He carved the name of every farmer for miles around so they could print their names on their grain bags, or make cookie cutters or fill in the names in some-

body's old Family Bible.

## FINIS

Whenever I read a good book, a good magazine or any exciting article. I want to know who is the writer of it. So, to set your mind at rest I'll tell you. While still very young and helpless, I was born on a hilltop farmstead in Bethel Twp Berks Co. Pa., the third child and youngest son of Jacob and Caroline Thompson Dieffenbach, on Oct. 26 1882. I can still hear my mother telling of how the Thompsons were English speaking people, although she always used the Pa. Ger. dialect. Up to a few years ago I used to say I was 100% Pa. Ger. Then I found in Mont. Hist. Berks Co. that Nick Thompson, my ancestral Grandfathers step-brother was born in Ireland. So I am quite sure that regardless of where my Grandfather Emanuel Elijah Thompson was born, he surly was neither a Frenchman or Chinese. Therefor I now say that I am 60% P.D. 10% Eng. 20% Ger. 40% Irish and the rest you may call as you see fit.

Since both my Dad and Uncle John had been engaged in the coachmaking and wheelwright business for years prior to the advent of the factory buggy when they went out of business being unable to compete with mass production. But there were always odd repair and paint jobs to be done - barrels needed hoops or staves - a saw to file - an axe to grind etc. etc. etc.. Gr. Dad would be making the doors, saches and shutters for a home. In such an establishment is where the writer grew up.

On my 5th birthday G. Dad gave me a pocket knife (en Barlow Messer) it was razor sharp and he told me that if I cut nothing but wood it would stay that way. And if you only shave off one shaving at a time and the plug doesn't go into the hole you can still take off another one. He was very exact in his work.

Several years ago, at the request of Dr. A. Shoemaker, Editor of Penna. Folklife I wrote an article on primitive and modern comcribs. I explained in detail how the slats on the side of the crib were beveled on the top and bottom to keep the water from seeping into the crib. Some fool changed the word bevel into level, undoubtedly not having seen or heard of a bevel he thought it meant level; but how would such a person build a comcrib or an organ?

VICTOR C. DIEFFENBACH

