

AN OLD ORGAN

by Amelia V. Christeson
Submitted by Cyndi Wray

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A Cottage organ bearing the inscription "J Estey and Co., Cottage Organ, Brattleboro, Vt.," was the wedding gift of Clemens Juergens to his bride in 1838, in Pittsburgh, PA. They were among a group of "Pennsylvania Dutch" who banded together to seek homes in the valley of the Mississippi early in that year. They made the 1,000 mile journey by ox team and on the eve of Easter reached the east bank of the Mississippi River, where they camped for a day of rest. On Easter morning the organ was lifted to the ground and the folk held an Easter service in the new world.

The Juergens ferried the river and journeyed on to Maries County and built a log house. The Indians, attracted by the magic of the organ often gathered outside the cabin when it was being played and usually brought a deer or turkey as a gift and would listen with folded arms to the music and silently steal away. In 1884 the organ was again used as a gift to the youngest of their 12 children when she married G.O. Crismon. The organ remained in the Crismon home for 56 years, and at

the death of Mrs. Crismon, in 1940, at Dixon, Mo., it came into the possession of her daughter, Mrs. E.A. Christeson, who had it shipped by express to her home in Los Animas, Colorado.

In its century the organ has traveled two-thirds of the distance across the continent and has provided strains of wedding marches and funeral services for two large pioneer families, well known in this section of Missouri. It is still in working order, and its tones are soft and sweet. A penned inscription on the inside of the keyboard reads: "Cleaned by O.E. Bailey, 1867". The above is gleaned from an article in Caper's Weekly of April 20, 1946.

Note: Clemens Juergens, born in 1809, and Pauline Menzell, born in 1818 in Menzel, Germany, married in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, April 22, 1838 came to Missouri in 1838, near Brinktown. Unia A. Juergens and Gilbert Oliver Crismon married at Brinktown, Missouri on October 14, 1884.



Unia Juergens Crismon painting at 16 (1879).
Photo submitted by Cyndi Wray.



Jesse Creech working lines (telegraph) Hancock to Dixon 1909. Photo submitted by Cyndi Wray.

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