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John Huber's Pianos in Context

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SOME TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO in Northampton, Pennsylvania, John Huber built pianos. Little else is known about him; several adults named John Huber lived in the vicinity of present-day Allentown at the same time, and which was the piano maker remains uncertain.¹ One possibility is the son of Michael and Anna Huber, born 11 July 1768 and christened 12 August at the Dryland Reformed Church in Hecktown, near Northampton, on the road between Bethlehem and Nazareth.² Perhaps he was the John Huber who grew up to marry Catherine Moser; their son, also named John Huber, was born 8 June 1791 and christened

1. The 1790 federal census of Pennsylvania counted fifteen heads of families named John Huber: ten in Lancaster County, three in Berks County, and two in Bucks County. The 1800 census enumerated ten John Hubers: three in Lancaster County, two in Somerset County, and one each in Bucks, Dauphin, Franklin, Northampton (Macungie Township), and York counties. (According to Harry M. Hoover, *The Huber-Hoover Family History* [Lancaster, PA: Mennonite Publishing Co., 1928], the Lancaster County Hubers were mostly Mennonites, who did employ musical instruments outside church.) Some of these men may have been immigrants; among those who disembarked in Philadelphia after 1760 were John George Huber, arrived 13 January 1767, and John Jacob Huber, arrived 5 October 1767, according to passenger manifests in William H. Egle, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2d ser., vol. 17 (Harrisburg: E. K. Meyers, 1890). According to the register of St. Paul's Lutheran and Reformed Congregations, Upper Saucon Township, Jacob and Elizabeth Catharina Huber had a son, Johann Heinrich, born 1 March 1762, and another son named Johann Jacob, born 3 November 1766. Records of Old Zionsville Reformed Church, Upper Milford Township, list the birth of a John Jacob on 14 August 1768 to Henry Huber and his wife. For more about John Hubers in Northampton, Lancaster, and Berks counties, see Charles R. Roberts, et al., *History of Lehigh County, Pennsylvania*, vol. 2 (Allentown, PA: Lehigh Valley Publishing Company, 1914), 590–92; John T. Humphrey, *Pennsylvania Births, Northampton County 1733–1800* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1991); and by the same author, *Pennsylvania Births, Lehigh County 1734–1800* (Washington, DC: Humphrey Publications, 1992). The borough of Northampton was incorporated in 1811; today's Northampton is a suburb of Allentown.

2. Donald F. Johnson, historian of Dryland United Church of Christ, kindly verified these dates in records of the formerly Lutheran congregation. Secondary sources give John's birth year as 1769. Michael Huber's family, which included six children christened at Dryland, regularly received Communion there until 1782. Walter Edward Mann, in "Piano Making in Philadelphia before 1825" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1977), 135–37, proposed as the piano builder a Moravian John Huber (1765–22 September 1798). Because this son of Peter Huber died in Lititz, Mann's identification may be untenable; see note 15, below. Possibly more than one John Huber built pianos.

at the Dryland Church on 18 September. Or the piano builder might have been the John Huber who married Maria Elizabeth Koehler on 17 March 1793 in nearby Schoenersville, Hanover Township.³ Easton's *American Eagle* for 12 January 1805 announced the death in Harrisburg of Mary Huber, age twenty-eight, wife of John Huber, formerly of Northampton County; maybe Mary was the same person as Maria Koehler. The *Easton Centinel* for 12 December 1828 listed the death in Shamokin Township, Northumberland County, of Margaret, consort of John Huber, formerly of Northampton County; this John Huber was probably not Mary's widower because John and Margaret, née Stotemeyer, had a daughter the same year Mary died.

Another John Huber, probably Michael's brother, who sponsored his namesake's christening, is apparently the John Huber "on the Dry Land" (an area near Hecktown known for its low water table); from 1783 to 1794 he was named in Bethlehem general store ledgers and journals preserved in the Moravian Archives at Bethlehem. This man, also called Johannes and Hannes in the earlier ledger entries, sometimes consolidated his accounts with Michael's; purchases made "per his daughter" as early as 1788 distinguish him from Michael's son. Along with staple supplies, pine boards, and New Testaments, the elder John and Michael and a third Huber relative named Henry occasionally purchased tools, but this information does not disclose their occupations.

A bond of administration for the estate of one John Huber, late of Millerstown, Macungie Township (near Emmaus), dated 18 April 1829, and subsequent accountings do not link the deceased with a musical trade.⁴ Also known as Johannes, he was no doubt the John Huber located by census takers in Macungie Township in 1800. He died 11 April 1829, predeceased by his wife, Anna Regina née Jarrett, and survived by a son, John Jacob; his birthplace is unknown, but his tombstone in the Old Zionsville Reformed Church cemetery gives his year of birth as 1763. Like the estate papers, his death notice in Allentown's *Unabhaenger Republikaner* for 23 April mentions no occupation. But whoever the Northampton piano builder was, like many rural artisans, he probably

3. Listed in the computerized *International Genealogical Index* maintained by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

4. Register of Wills, Lehigh County Courthouse, Allentown, file no. 896. I am grateful to Carol M. Herrity of the Lehigh County Historical Society for copies of the relevant documents. Lehigh County was separated from Northampton County in 1812.

started making instruments only as a sideline, and this together with changes of domicile might explain the sparse documentation of his career.⁵

Two square pianos, one in the collection of the Wachovia Historical Society at Old Salem, Inc., a restored Moravian village in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, the other at the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society, Easton, Pennsylvania, exemplify Huber's work.⁶ A third piano, owned by William Emerson Creider in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and inscribed *John Huber/Musical-Instrument-Maker/Harrisburg*, may be by the same maker. Pictured in the *Tulsa Daily World* on 12 August 1934, Creider's piano descended in the family of its original owner, James Finney, and is accompanied by a manuscript compilation of keyboard music begun in 1779, with contributions by five generations of women named Sarah Elizabeth. Family lore reports that this piano was built by an immigrant in March 1767; the year is surely mistaken, as the FF-f³ English action with overhead dampers and the crossbanded case indicate a date nearer 1800 (perhaps the 1767 date recalls a previous instrument for which the manuscript was begun).⁷

A Harrisburg provenance points to the husband of Mary Huber, who is mentioned above. John Huber, "Musical Instrument Maker," advertised "Piano fortes, Spinnetts, Harpsichords, &c." in the *Oracle of Dauphin & Harrisburg Advertiser* of 8 January 1808. In the same Harrisburg newspaper on 5 August 1809, he sought "A journeyman cabinet maker capable of executing the outside work of Pianos, &c." Michael Huver [*sic*], who advertised in the same paper on 4 July 1807 for "An Apprentice to the Cabinet and Carpenter business," may have been the relative mentioned above.

5. Some secondary sources mention an organ builder named John Huber, active in New York City about 1821–23 and in Philadelphia about 1831–37. But his name also appears as Hubie and Hubic, and no relationship to the piano builder is evident. See David H. Fox, *A Guide to North American Organ Builders* (Richmond, VA: Organ Historical Society, 1991).

6. I am grateful to Paula Locklair, director and curator of the Department of Collections, Old Salem, Inc., and to Janet E. Nugent, formerly executive director of the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society, for facilitating this study. John Watson described the Old Salem piano in "Claviers for Salem," *Moravian Music Journal* 31, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 1, 9.

7. Paula Locklair located Creider's piano, which was earlier called to my attention by John Watson just as this article went to press, and Donald L. Thompson generously examined it for me with the cooperation of Elsie Creider. I am grateful to John J. Snyder, Jr., for the following references to Huber in Harrisburg.

Assuming that the same John Huber built all three pianos, one sees that his work aroused more than parochial interest. For an Anglophone customer, James Finney, he produced what looks like a typical Anglo-American piano; for German-speaking clients he made Germanic types. In thus adapting his output to different milieus, Huber followed a practice common among enterprising Pennsylvania German builders, such as his contemporary, Charles Albrecht, and his predecessor, Johann Gottlob Clemm.⁸

According to its accession records, the Easton piano early in the nineteenth century belonged to David Wagener II, who purchased it from Jacob Opp, probably its original owner. Opp, a German-born Lutheran, kept a profitable inn—at least from 1776—at what is now 11 North Fourth Street in Easton. His several daughters provided reason enough to buy a piano. Daughter Eve married David Wagener's brother Daniel, and Wagener descendants retained the piano until Elizabeth Draney gave it and a framed tablet recording its history to the Northampton Historical and Genealogical Society about 1921 (the tablet could not be found for this study). Jacob Opp's death at age sixty-five on 16 April 1805, reported in the *American Eagle* for 20 April, establishes a terminus ad quem for this piano's construction, but evidence presented below puts its manufacture at least ten years earlier.⁹

The Old Salem piano's more informative history sheds light on the nature and dissemination of Moravian musical culture in America. A bill of sale preserved with this piano reads as follows:

Mr. Christ[ia]n R. Heckewelder D[e]btor.
To John Huber

8. For Clemm and Albrecht, see Laurence Libin, *American Musical Instruments in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: W. W. Norton and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), 157–58, 163–64, and by the same author, "New Facts and Speculations on John Clemm," *Tracker* 31, no. 2 (1987), 19–23.

9. The 1790 census records two householders named Jacob Upp [*sic*] in Easton; one of them had an account with the Bethlehem general store in 1792. A Jacob Opp, "American," returned to Philadelphia from Amsterdam on 17 September 1793; maybe he was the Jacob Ob [*sic*] who came to Philadelphia from Amsterdam on 17 October 1786. See Ralph Beaver Strassburger and William John Hinke, eds., *Pennsylvania German Pioneers* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1966), 2: 17, 60). For more on the innkeeper, see Floyd S. Bixler, *The History with Reminiscences of the Early Taverns and Inns of Easton* (Easton, PA: Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society, 1931), 23–27, and A. D. Chidsey, Jr., *A Frontier Village: Pre-Revolutionary Easton* (Easton, PA: Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society, 1940), 236–37.

Mr. Christ. A. Heckwelder Dr
 To John Huber
 To making a Forte Piano of
 Wild Cherry Wood — } £ 25. —
 Sundry Wire Strings — 16. —
 freight & to Philadelphia — 10. —
 Base from Mr. Huber gratis —————
 £ 26. 6. —
 Rec[ive]d the Contints John Huber

FIGURE 1. Bill and receipt for Gottlieb Schober's piano. Photo by Stewart Polens; courtesy Old Salem Restoration, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

To making a Forte Piano of Wild Cherry Wood	£25. —
Sundry Wire Strings	—16.—
freight & [etc.] to Philadelphia	—10.—
Base from Mr. Huber gratis	—————
	£26. 6.—

Rec[ive]d the Contints [sic] John Huber

Only the last line seems to be in Huber's hand (fig. 1).

A letter in German script accompanies this bill and dates the transaction; Anne Hodgson's translation for Old Salem, Inc., is published here for the first time, slightly amended and with kind permission:

Bethlehem the 16th April 1796.

Dear Brother Schober,

On the 9th of this month I received the balance, £3.19.6, from Br. Heckwelder, which was what was left after paying Mr. John Huber for your

instrument and covering all expenses to Philadelphia, totalling 90 dollars; and so, to clear the skies over this matter, I am including the account of the transaction between me and you; just as Br. Heckewelder was going to complete his bill this week. Regarding the instrument itself I want to mention that it had arrived at Philadelphia before the 9th, and it was very good that it was not—due to the initial delay—ready and sent off as early as March. For the excessively heavy N.W. thunderstorm raged terribly and caused many ships to go down. Now that everything has gone so well, I sincerely hope that the Clavier may arrive safely in Petersburg by May 1st. It has been tuned almost an octave too low, so that the strings will not be taut. A Forte piano cannot well be tuned higher than one-half tone *lower* than chamber pitch, just 1/2 tone lower than a violin is ordinarily tuned. I want to suggest to you that you place the Clavier or Forte piano in a cool, dry, and airy place for a while [*marginal note*: making sure that neither sun nor the heat of a stove reaches it]—for example, by an *inside wall* and never near a damp outside wall—until you tune it, so that it may dry out. You will then have an easier time tuning it, and you will also serve the instrument better. Sending heartfelt greetings to you and your dear family, I remain

your loving Br.
Johann Friedrich Peter.

[in English, same page]	Bethl[ehe]m April 16th 1796.	
Gottlieb Shober to John Frederik Peter De[bit]	£. S.D.	
1795		
Oct. 14th To 17 Quires Music &c	1. 7.6.	
as per Acc[oun]t		
1796		
Febr. 13. " 27 d[jitt]o do &c as per do	2.13.6.	
Apr. 9. " Balance	1. 7.10 $\frac{1}{2}$	
	£3.10.10 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Contra	Cr[edit]	
1796		
Jan[uar]y 5.	By Assigation to Boller & Jordan d. d. 22 Nov. 1795	£1.11. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Apr. 9.	By cash rec[eive]d of C. R. Heckewelder	3.19. 6
		5.10.10 $\frac{1}{2}$]
<hr/>		
1796 Apr. 16th By Balance Pens Curry		
[Pennsylvania currency]	£ 1. 7.10 $\frac{1}{2}$	

Beth[ehe]m April 9th 1796

Received of Mr. Christian Renatus Heckewelder, Merchant of Em[m]aus Three Pounds Nineteen Shillings & Six Pence Lawfull Money of Pen[n]-sylvania, in Order of Mr. Gottlieb Schober, Postmaster at Salem in North-Carolina, being the Balance in full on Account between both here mentioned Parties

£3.19.6

I say rec[eive]d by me
John frederik Peter

[in German, verso]

P.S.

According to the bill I owe you £ 1.7.10 $\frac{1}{2}$, with which I shall be happy to serve you NB *according to your instructions*; I should suggest Just's and Giordani's 4-hand sonatas, which are excellent and very popular in the boarding schools. Regarding the song service [*Singstunde*] I should like to remind you that they have begun singing German songs by Uz, Klopstock, Koepke, etc., with gusto, and that English songs, which cater to *lower* tastes and are less respectable, have become less esteemed. I must confess an error: I neglected to make note of which pieces, particularly vocal pieces, I procured for you. The great amount of business I have to take care of demands that I ask you to indicate the ones that I have sent and send me a list at your convenience, so that I will not send you a second copy of those pieces you already have. Farewell

Evidently Gottlieb Schober obtained his piano through the agency of the merchant Christian Renatus Heckewelder, with Johann Friedrich Peter, Salem's former music director, acting as intermediary. These three Moravians knew one another through a network of relationships in which music figured importantly.¹⁰ Peter, a prolific composer, worked in Salem from 1780 until 1790, when he went to Maryland, thence to New Jersey, and in 1793 to Bethlehem, where he served as church bookkeeper and diarist, among other activities. His successor in Salem, Johann Reuz, an alcoholic, stopped teaching music in 1795, whereupon Schober, already an experienced teacher, took over many of Reuz's

10. On Schober, see Jerry L. Surratt, *Gottlieb Schober of Salem* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983); Surratt, however, errs in stating that Heckewelder made Schober's piano (p. 87). Further documentation of Schober's musical activity is cited in Jeannine Ann Cansler, "An Annotated Listing of Organists Flourishing in Five American Cities between 1700 and 1850" (D.M.A. diss., University of Oregon, 1984), 117–18. On Peter, see C. David Crews, *Johann Friedrich Peter and His Times* (Winston-Salem: Moravian Music Foundation, 1990), and Cansler, "An Annotated Listing," 100–1. For Heckewelder's life, see Joseph Mortimer Levering, *A History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 1741–1892: With Some Account of Its Founders and Their Early Activity in America* (Bethlehem, PA: Times Publishing Company, 1903); his relationship to the Heckewelder [*sic*; first name not given] cited as a North Carolina Moravian organist by Cansler, "An Annotated Listing", 60, is unknown.

tasks. According to the Minutes of Salem Boards (19 August 1795), “Br. Pfohl has spoken with Johann Reuz about giving lessons on the clavier, and says he cannot undertake it at present. Br. Schober shall be asked whether he will do it.”¹¹ Perhaps this request spurred Schober to order his piano, but the transaction was a private matter; his name first appears in official accounts of music purchases on 31 December 1796.¹² Schober, who in 1796 was not only the local postmaster but also a prospering attorney, master tinsmith, paper mill owner, land speculator, and father of five, in 1799 formally became Salem’s music director, an appointment perhaps delayed by his outspoken behavior. His son Nathanael, organist in Salem in 1803 and 1806, surely practiced on this piano.¹³

Before Heckewelder (brother of a famous missionary) took over the Moravian general store in Bethlehem in 1781, he had shared responsibility with Schober for teaching Salem’s boys. Like Schober, he had also worked for Salem’s leading merchant, Traugott Bagge, whose daughter and two sons took keyboard lessons from Peter. Heckewelder was transferred to Emmaus in 1794. After Peter left Salem in 1790, the community of some 250 persons “had to order music from Pennsylvania and depend on distant colleagues to choose work suitable to its needs—a time-consuming and uncertain process.”¹⁴ Schober had grown up in Bethlehem and visited his mother there in 1794 and 1795, when he could have met Huber; or, he might have left the choice of a builder to his “distant colleagues,” Peter and Heckewelder.

The enigmatic John Huber, although of German background (shown by his using the letter *H* for B-natural and *B* for B-flat to identify tuning pins in Opp’s and Schober’s pianos), was evidently not Moravian, and so far as billing was concerned, his customer was Heckewelder.¹⁵ The price

11. Adelaide Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1927–43), 6: 2541.

12. Frances Cumnock, ed., *Catalog of the Salem Congregation Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 18–19. Already in 1794 Schober had been involved with ordering from David Tannenberg an organ for Salem’s meeting hall (installed 1798).

13. Cumnock, *Catalog*, 19. Heckewelder regularly supplied musical merchandise for Salem; see the *Guide to the Manuscripts in the Archives of the Moravian Church in America: Southern Province* (Winston-Salem), no. 430, General Store records 1785–88, in which Heckewelder mentions items such as trombones ordered by Salem; thus, his involvement with Schober’s purchase was no isolated instance.

14. Cansler, “An Annotated Listing”, 118.

15. Although Moravian men often addressed one another as “Mister” in English-language correspondence (where Schober’s name was commonly spelled without the *c*,

of Schober's piano, £25, equivalent to about \$66.66 in Pennsylvania currency, was £5 more than John Krauss of Northampton County charged for one in 1797. Krauss's diary records:

July 28 I begun to make an Forte Piano for Mr Henry Gisenhiner

.....
 Oct. 7 I brought my Forte Piano to Mr. Henry Geisenheiner—rec'd mony
 from him [£]10 the $\frac{1}{2}$ part of it¹⁶

Perhaps Geisenheiner's piano, like Opp's, had a short range and lacked dampers, which were an expensive option but necessary for playing any but the simplest music.

The cost of these provincial pianos approximated prices charged by John Broadwood & Son, London's leading manufacturer at that time; Broadwood's least expensive square cost twenty guineas, one with an inlaid case, twenty-five guineas.¹⁷ Prices could go much higher: A "Forte piano," perhaps a grand, ordered on 30 September 1795 by the Nazareth general store from the Philadelphia firm of Trute and Wiedberg cost £41

another small point of acculturation), when writing in German they reserved the term "Brother" for one another. Even Schober was no longer called Brother after he became a Lutheran pastor and was considered to have left the Moravian fold. Thus the reference to "Mr. Huber" in a letter written in German from one Moravian to another clearly indicates that Huber was an outsider.

16. Krauss's diary, preserved in the Schwenkfelder Library at Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, is extracted in Raymond J. Brunner, *That Ingenious Business: Pennsylvania German Organ Builders*, Publications of The Pennsylvania German Society, no. 24 (Birdsboro: Pennsylvania German Society, 1990), 223–29. Piano making was an occasional sideline for Krauss and other Pennsylvania German organ builders, including Philip Bachman, Conrad Doll, Johannes Scheible, John Wind, and David Tannenber, who sold two pianos in Lititz for £22 6s. each; see William H. Armstrong, *Organs for America: The Life and Work of David Tannenber* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967), 133. Describing Bethlehem in a letter dated 9 August 1803, Eliza Southgate Bowne remarked that "there is scarcely a house in the place without a Piano-forte; the Post Master [Francis Christian Kampmann] has an elegant grand Piano. . . . We went thro' all the different schoolrooms . . . and in every room was a Piano." (*A Girl's Life Eighty Years Ago*; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887, 173–74). The previous postmaster, coincidentally named George Huber, owned an "organ piano forte" appraised in his 1813 probate inventory at fifty dollars, the same as his horse, these being the two most valuable items listed among goods totalling \$309.70; Charles LeCount kindly provided a transcript of the inventory.

17. David Wainwright, *Broadwood By Appointment: A History* (London: Quiller Press, 1982), 77. Philadelphia's furniture prices commonly matched London's; see *The Cabinet-Makers' Philadelphia and London Book of Prices* (Philadelphia: Snowden and McCorkle, 1796), iii. The average daily wage of a Philadelphia journeyman cabinetmaker was 7s. 6d., or about one dollar, according to *The Journeymen Cabinet and Chair-Makers' Philadelphia Book of Prices* (2d ed., 1795).

5s. The same store later ordered, presumably from Germany, a *clavecin royal* for £40.¹⁸ By any standard these were expensive, high-status instruments whose purchase reflected the piano's central role in Moravian life.

Prized pianos might even appreciate in value. At the 1818 auction of property from the estate of Salem's doctor Samuel Benjamin Vierling, his piano fetched more than three times the price of his second most valuable property, a female slave.¹⁹ Schober's future son-in-law Peter Wolle, who tuned pianos in Salem, noted in his diary on 3 January 1818, "[Dr. Vierling's] piano was sold to Chpt. [sic] Reich for 180 dollars, more than it had cost when it was new."²⁰ Like Vierling's piano, Schober's was supposedly "the most valuable article in the sale of household goods after [his] death."²¹ Its purchaser is unknown, but eventually it passed into the hands of the prominent Moravian textile manufacturers Francis and Henry Fries; the bottom of the case is inscribed *F & H Fries/Raleigh/1882 NC*.

Peter's advice to Schober about caring for his piano recalls similar instructions in Daniel Gottlob Türk's popular *Klavierschule, oder Anweisung zum Klavierspielen* (Leipzig and Halle, 1789; condensed version, 1792), which appears several times in the Nazareth store accounts. Peter's letter also hints at the piano's didactic function and discloses its eclectic repertoire.²² Just such music makes up a contemporary manu-

18. See the Nazareth general store account book, 1795–1806, Library of Old Salem, Inc., 10, where the notation "110 doll[ars]" equates to the £41 5s. debit. The *clavecin royal* appears on p. 82. The *clavecin royal* was a tonally versatile piano invented in 1774 by Johann Gottlob Wagner of Dresden; see Donald H. Boalch, *Makers of the Harpsichord and Clavichord 1440–1840*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 187.

19. Gottlieb Schober, Papers, Stokes County Estate Records 1753–1941, C.R.090.508.94, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh. Vierling may have been related to the Lutheran composer and organist Johann Gottfried Vierling (1750–1813).

20. Peter Wolle, Diary, trans. Peter S. and Irene P. Seadle, Library of Old Salem, Inc., 323.

21. Surratt, *Gottlieb Schober*, 87. However, the account of that sale on 1–3 November 1838 (North Carolina State Archives) lists as the last item, "Piano & other articles" at \$32.64 $\frac{1}{2}$, so the cost of the piano alone is unknown. A broadside announcing the sale and dated 20 September 1838 advertises Schober's "Forte Piano" in the largest type.

22. One of the oldest pianos in America, preserved by the Moravian Historical Society in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, also had pedagogic uses; see Laurence Libin, "Nazareth Piano May Be Among America's First," *Moravian Music Journal* 33, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 1–6. Johann August Just (ca. 1750–91) composed much pedagogic music that was published in the Netherlands and preserved in manuscript copies at Moravian archives in Winston-Salem and Bethlehem. While living in London, the popular opera composer Tommaso Giordani (ca. 1733–1806) wrote many teaching pieces, including two sets of keyboard duets. Once-prominent composers such as Johann Abraham Peter Schulz set poems by

script collection at the Moravian Music Foundation archives in Winston-Salem (call number SMB79), comprising *Trois sonates a Quatre mains Pour le Clavecin ou Piano Forte Composés Par T. Giordani Oeuvre IX* (ca. 1780), *Six Divertissements Pour le Clavecin ou Piano-Forte à Quatre mains Dediés A Monsieur Arnoldi Knock Amateur de Musique a Leuwarden par Son tres humble Serviteur J. A. Just . . . Oeuvre XII* (1781), a nondescript *ouverture* by Martini (Johann Paul Aegidius Martini, an opera composer in Paris) arranged for piano solo, and German and English-language songs: *Musik: Ein Lied von Herder in Musik gesetzt von Wenk* (August Heinrich Wenck, a glass harmonica virtuoso who also built pianos), “The Dying Christian to his Soul, a Celebrated Ode by Mr. Pope” (anonymous vocal duet), and a love song, “The Shepherd” by Henri Capron (French-American, active in Philadelphia and New York). All the piano parts fit the sixty-one-note compass of Schober’s piano, but most of this music could not be played effectively on Opp’s fifty-four-note, damperless instrument.

Schober’s piano arrived with slack strings and was to be kept tuned low probably to minimize strain on the case and preserve the strings, which broke so often that arrival of a piano with strings intact was noteworthy. Upon receiving a piano shipped like Schober’s through Petersburg, Peter Wolle wrote in his diary, “To be sure, it needs to be tuned very thoroughly, but none of the strings was broken” (2 August 1815). And again, “In the evening the long desired pianoforte for the unmarried Sisters arrived . . . It was in very good condition; not a single string was broken and it was still quite well tuned” (3 January 1816). Huber sensibly included extra strings, which might not have been readily available in Salem.²³

Johann Peter Uz (1720–96) and Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1724–1803); for example, Schulz’s folk-like songs on texts by Uz adjoin Just’s opus 12 duets in a keyboard collection once owned by the Bethlehem musician Marcus Fetter. (Schulz’s accompaniments might be effective on a damperless piano.) The poet Koeppke eludes identification.

23. The Nazareth store account book gives prices of 7s. 6d. for two dozen spinet wires (31 December 1795) and six pence for one roll of spinet wire (31 December 1796); this shop also retailed music wire by the ounce. The Bethlehem store inventory taken in February 1796 lists large quantities of music wire, including some of silver, and eleven and one-half dozen rolls of brass in several gauges (p. 51). The 1798 inventory (p. 50) lists fifteen dozen rolls of brass clavichord wire in at least eight gauges (indicated in the German system, OO-O-1 . . . 6), four dozen rolls of steel in several gauges, and a half-pound of silver wire valued at 17s. 6d. per pound. Mention of silver wire is no anomaly; the Nazareth store account (p. 48) lists “Ein Instrument zum Saiten ueberspinnen nebst Silberdraht.”

In accompaniment, the pitch level Peter recommended would have eased singing high notes but would have been untenable with woodwinds not designed for such low pitch. In keyboard solos and duets and for practicing, the pitch would not have mattered much. Naturally, pianos served not only for entertainment but equally as instructional tools, since music lessons for boys and girls formed a vital part of Moravian and much other German-American education. A student or teacher pencilled pitch letters on the natural keys of Opp's piano; these markings are legible now only on the several highest and lowest ivories (one letter appears on an old replacement ivory). Huber himself lettered all the C, E, and G keys in ink near the hammers; on Schober's piano he lettered all the F keys near the ivories (an original ivory partly overlays one F). These letters, out of the player's sight, might have aided Huber in marking out his keyboards.

* * *

Schober's instrument retains the Federal-style "base," with four removable, square, tapered legs, that Huber provided without charge; only one of its brass bolt covers remains (figs. 2 and 3). Opp's piano stands on four moderately heavy, turned legs threaded into large corner blocks affixed under smaller blocks; the legs and larger blocks appear to have been added, perhaps as late as the 1830s (figs. 4 and 5). Thick, yellowed spirit varnish covering the legs and plain cherrywood case cannot be original. Schober's piano, also primarily of cherry, is lightly and neatly varnished.

Over its keyboard Schober's piano sports a sumptuous brass nameplate engraved *John Huber Fecit/Northampton*, the first line printed, the second in script (fig. 6). This convex elliptical plate, 22.7 cm wide, creates a striking appearance; although its shape is common for nameboard insignia of the period, these are usually smaller and painted.²⁴ On the wood behind the plate, in addition to holes for four screws that secure it, is a single smaller hole, perhaps a centering mark, but nothing suggests

24. Elegant nameboard inscriptions, unlike inconspicuous marks or labels in furniture, elevated builders' and owners' status. According to Brunner, *That Ingenious Business*, 158 and 178, the Lancaster portraitist Jacob Eichholz charged the organ builders Conrad Doll and John Wind fifteen shillings in 1809 and 1810 respectively for "painting a frontispiece," perhaps a piano nameboard; the term "frontispiece" also meant an entranceway to a building.

that the plate replaces an earlier label or inscription. The equally unconventional nameboard of Opp's piano has *John Huber Fecit* painted in black on a green-bordered white banner; this inscription is possibly by the same amateurish hand that engraved the brass plate (fig. 7). Huber furnished Finney's piano with a smaller elliptical nameplate (quoted on page 7) of white glass surrounded by a frame. This variety of insignia together with the absence of serial numbers on Opp's and Schober's pianos indicate that Huber built pianos to order, not in batches. In fact, his entire output might have comprised only a handful of "bespoken" instruments, all differing in accord with customers' needs and budgets and Huber's own whims.

Tabulated measurements of Opp's and Schober's pianos appear in tables 1 and 2 (pp. 31–33). The instruments share many likenesses. Case design and materials, style of joinery, bridge and hitchpin plank shapes, hardware types and placement, and many internal details including patterns of scored guidelines, handwriting of numbers and letters, mouse-hole shape, and extensive use of brass rods define Huber's workmanship. On the other hand, string scalings, keyboards, and actions reflect different approaches, and significant structural differences imply a learning process. Huber may have begun by copying features from imported and locally made pianos, such as an anonymous Pennsylvania German square in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (hereafter, MMA), and modified his designs as he gained experience.²⁵

Except on the back, the corner dovetails joining Schober's case are concealed. On Opp's piano, as on many Pennsylvania German chests, these dovetails are exposed, though at the corners flanking the keyboard they show only on the cheeks, not on the front. As in the MMA square, the top inner edges of Opp's piano are ogee-molded, whereas Schober's case edges are beaded and ebonized. Ebonized beading appears also on the edges of the base and on all four corners of the legs of Schober's piano, and ebonized molding outlines the bottom of its case. Tall bottom molding around the front and sides of Opp's case overhangs and conceals the upper corner blocks. Smaller molding overhangs the front and sides of Opp's plain, flat lid; the edges of Schober's thinner lid are simply rounded. In Opp's piano the nameboard top molding makes a right angle at the ends to intersect the molding of the keywell cheeks, but the

25. See Laurence Libin, "A Unique German-American Square Piano," *Early Keyboard Journal* 9 (1991): 7–20.



FIGURE 2. Gottlieb Schober's piano. Photo by Wes Stewart; courtesy Old Salem Restoration, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

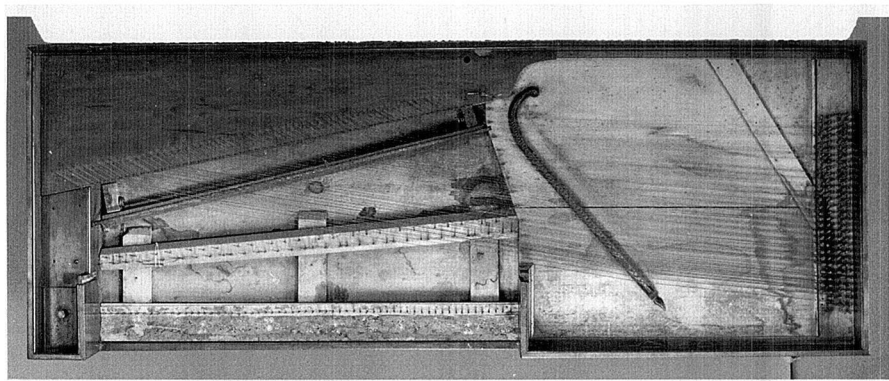


FIGURE 3. Gottlieb Schober's piano, plan view. Photo by Wes Stewart; courtesy Old Salem Restoration, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.



FIGURE 4. Jacob Opp's piano. Photo by Stewart Pollens.

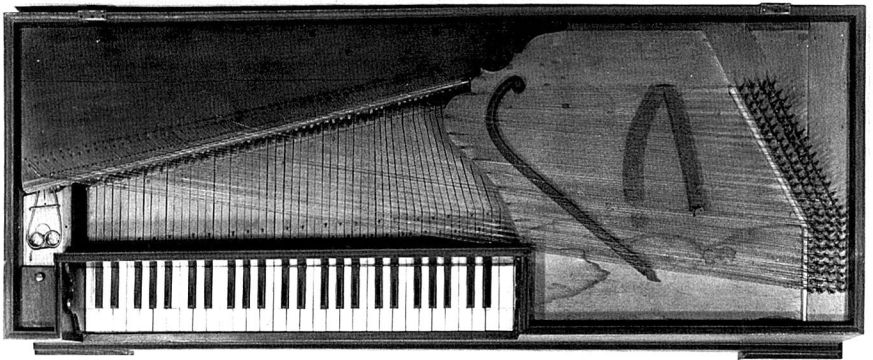


FIGURE 5. Jacob Opp's piano, plan view. Photo by Stewart Pollens.

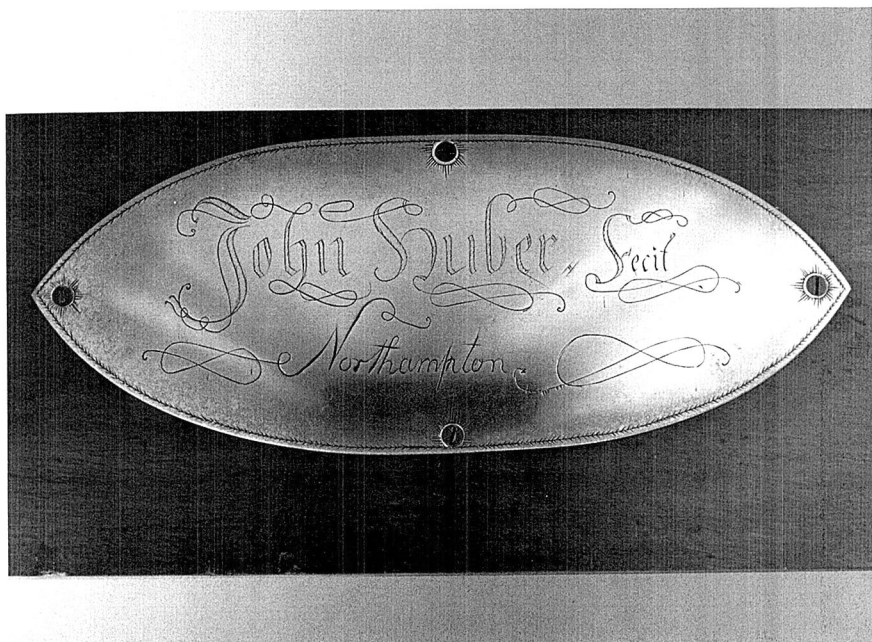


FIGURE 6. Gottlieb Schober's piano, nameboard detail. Photo by Wes Stewart; courtesy Old Salem Restoration, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

bead atop the inner edge of Schober's nameboard does not turn to meet the bead on the cheeks. Other decorative features described below reinforce an impression that Opp's piano looks old-fashioned compared to Schober's.

Schober's piano is also musically more advanced. It has a five-octave range, FF–f³; so although its octave span is narrower than Opp's, its case is larger, accommodating more and longer bass strings. All but its highest nine bichords have underdampers, tiny fabric pads glued to slender, elongated S-shaped basswood arms pivoted in cherrywood kapsels. Threaded holes for kapsel rods in the upper keys, except the highest, indicate provision of dampers for these notes as well. The damper arms rest on a horizontal iron rod formerly padded with red cloth. Vertical brass rods at both ends attach the iron rod to a movable board beneath the keys. A lever for the left knee pulls this board down to lower the

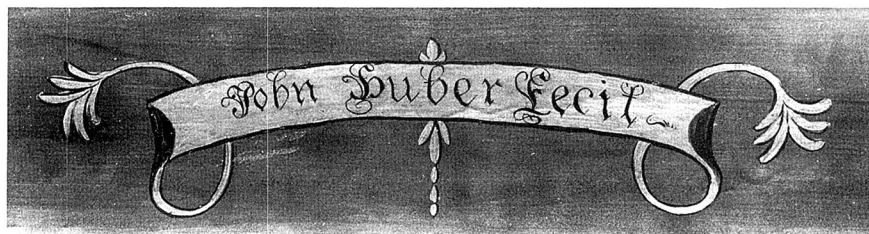


FIGURE 7. Jacob Opp's piano, nameboard detail. Photo by Stewart Pollens.

dampers from the strings; brass coil springs raise the board upon release of the lever.

A second (right) knee lever provided tonal contrast by lowering a cloth-fringed rail—often called a harp stop, or *Harfenzug*—onto the strings in front of the bridge. Three brass rods connect this curved rail to a hexagonal wood roller mounted diagonally in blocks screwed to the front and back walls. A second pair of blocks, one of them now missing, was perhaps erroneously installed too far from the bridge to accommodate this arrangement. A brass coil spring embedded in the hitchpin plank raised the rail upon release of its knee lever. Possibly this device is altered or incomplete; how its missing pulldown rod was connected is not evident. The knee levers, now lacking their end knobs, pivot in semicircular wood flanges under the case bottom.

Opp's piano has a conservative range, C–f³, but the shortness of its case is essentially a consequence of the bass string lengths; the MMA square, also of C–f³ range, has abnormally long bass strings and a longer case than even Schober's FF–f³ model. In Opp's piano, two knee levers (both now removed, though one semicircular flange remains) operated two thin sliding rails that are slotted over five threaded brass rods protruding from the front edge of the hitchpin plank. Thin, irregularly shaped brass nuts, two of which remain, loosely secure the rails. The right knee lever pulls down a vertical brass rod having an eye that retains a fragment of purplish silk string. This string, or a previous length of gut, passed leftward over a tiny wood pulley nailed to the edge of the hitchpin plank and drew the inner rail diagonally upward toward the right, so that cloth glued to its top edge pressed the strings—a lute stop, or *Lautenzug*. This rail rides above a narrow ledge cut from the front of the hitchpin plank.

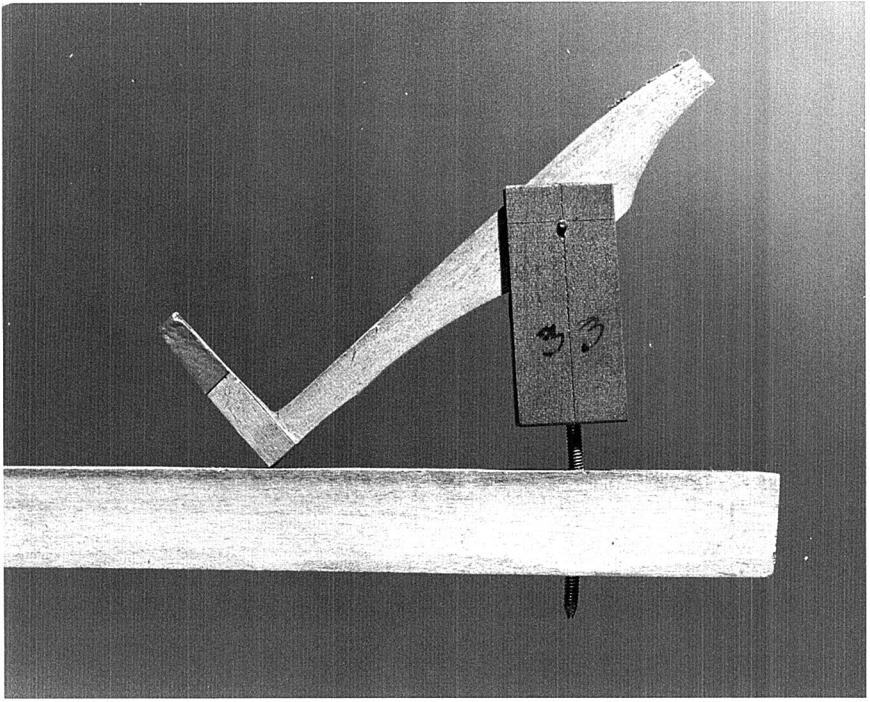


FIGURE 8. Gottlieb Schober's piano, action detail. Photo by Wes Stewart; courtesy Old Salem Restoration, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The outer rail, pulled horizontally leftward by a gut cord connected to the left knee lever, interposed pads between hammers and strings—a moderator stop, or *Pianozug*. On the front of this rail, fifty-four irregularly spaced vertical scores roughly coincide with striking points. Two springs coiled from a single length of brass rod return both rails to rest; the springs lie concealed in a recess beneath a cap screwed atop the left-side frame member, behind the tool compartment. The corresponding cap in Schober's piano simply covers the frame. Like many German squares, the MMA piano had one similarly placed stop, either a moderator or lute, operated by hand.

The typically Germanic hammer actions of Huber's pianos differ markedly, although both utilize cherrywood kapsels supported by threaded brass rods that pierce the key levers. Wire-head pins of tin-plated brass with clipped and bent points, centered on perpendicularly

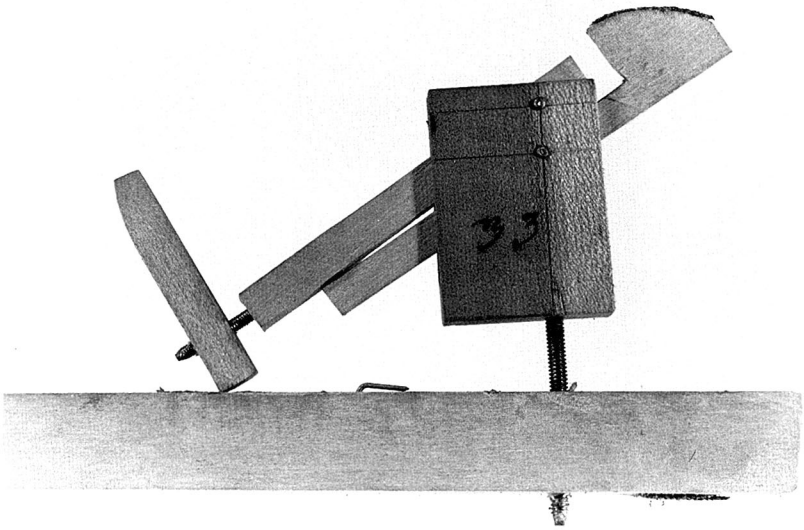


FIGURE 9. Jacob Opp's piano, action detail. Photo by Stewart Pollens.

crossed lines scored on the kapsels, pivot the basswood hammer shanks. These kapsels, pins, support rods, and score lines resemble those in the MMA piano, but deflection of wood fibers suggests that the latter's kapsels were scored by a left-handed person and Huber's by a right-handed one.

Schober's piano has a conventional *Prellmechanik* with a fixed rear overrail that limits rise of the key ends to less than fourteen millimeters (fig. 8). Lacking an overrail, Opp's keys are limited by their front rail to a terminal rise of less than eight millimeters. Perhaps to compensate for its relatively low rise, Opp's unusual action involves two levers pivoted one above the other in an enlarged kapsel (fig. 9). The rounded distal end of the lower lever bears directly against the bottom of the hitchpin plank as its opposite end thrusts the hammer shank upwards.²⁶ Huber's

26. An action operating on the same two-lever principle occurs in a Viennese square piano by J. C. Heyne, 1777, illustrated in Rosamond E. M. Harding, *The Piano-Forte: Its History Traced to the Great Exhibition of 1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933; New York: Da Capo Press, 1973; 2d rev. ed. 1978), 21, fig. 11.

Advertisement.

On the 1st and 2d days of
NOVEMBER NEXT,

being Thursday and Friday of the week---and continue on Saturday, if necessary---we shall expose to public sale, on the usual terms, at the house of the late *Gottlieb Shober*, dec'd, in Salem; a variety of

HOUSEHOLD & KITCHEN FURNITURE,

an excellent Two-Horse and a One-Horse

Carriage with Harness;

a Forte Piano;

A QUANTITY OF

Books, in the Book Store,

and some **PAPER**, by the ream;

Drugs & Patent Medicines,

and a quantity of **GOODS** of various descriptions, *with a variety of other articles too tedious to mention.*

Further conditions made known on the day of sale.

✎ In the mean time the **Book Store** will be continued open, and **Books** and other articles in the Store contained, will be offered at private sale, at reduced prices for cash.

Persons indebted to the

estate are requested to pay, as no indulgence will be given; and those who have claims against the estate are requested to present them within the time limited by law, otherwise the Act will be plead in bar of a recovery.

**EM'L SHOBER, }
JOHN C. BLUM, } *Ex'rs.***

Salem., Sept. 20, 1838.

FIGURE 10. Advertisement of sale of Gottlieb Schober's effects. Photo by Stewart Pollens; courtesy North Carolina State Archives.

purpose here might have been to maximize leverage while keeping the striking point close to the hitchpin plank to generate a bright tone, thus enhancing the effectiveness of the moderator. In both pianos the same hand numbered the kapsels in ink on the right side; Opp's kapsels bear incomplete numbering: 31–36, 38–41, 44–52. Blue wool fabric, now deteriorated, padded the action parts. In Opp's piano, slender, threaded brass rods attach the hammers adjustably to their shanks. The oblong, tapered hammers, with blunt, unpadded striking surfaces whittled to fit their respective bichords, come to rest on remnants of red wool fabric glued to the key levers; behind these pads, bent pins clasp other bits of red fabric. Schober's hammers, covered with a single layer of brown leather—perhaps not original—are slotted and glued onto their bass-wood shanks, as in the MMA square.

Huber corrected a mistake that occurred in assembling Opp's action. He originally aligned pilot holes for the kapsel rods along a diagonal score line that angled too far forward in the treble; the highest eighteen holes were already drilled when Huber discovered the error. He then cancelled the original line, plugged the holes, and drilled new holes along a second line that moved the kapsels closer to the hitchpin plank. Johann Zumppe made a similar error in one of his earliest pianos, dated 1766, now at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.²⁷

Both keyboards have ivory natural plates with heads scored by a pair of lines slightly separated from the scored joint with the tails. Opp's ivories are imperfectly scored and not of uniform width, the B heads tending to be wide, resulting in varying interval spans. Neighboring B and C heads differ in width by as much as two millimeters, while neighboring accidental blocks differ in width by as much as one and one-half millimeters at both top and base. These unrefined keys betray Huber's inexperience, which perhaps accounts for the note letters on the levers. In both keyboards, the accidental blocks (Schober's are stained dark, Opp's are solid ebony) taper sharply inwards toward the top and reduce slightly in height from front to back.

Opp's ivories end flush with flat, ebony fronts. Narrow, white leather strips added across the bottom of the key fronts cushion them against the front rail where earlier blue cloth padding has disintegrated. Schober's neater, more uniform keys have molded fronts in the British

27. Richard Maunder, "The Earliest English Square Piano?" *Galpin Society Journal* 42 (August 1989): 77–84.

fashion. Their ogee profile matches part of the soundboard and case bottom moldings, and these key fronts extend slightly below their levers. Red wool cloth that pads the front rail was later covered by a fine painted ribbon, possibly a Moravian product. The same hand that numbered the kapsels inked ordinal numbers (that is, figures followed by a period) on the key levers.

Both keyboards have brass balance and guide pins nailed into separate rails fixed to the case bottom. In Opp's keyboard, Huber simply cut slots into the fronts of all the levers for chromatically staggered guide pins. Initially he placed the pins for the accidentals too far forward, then he moved them back but too close to the back edge of the front rail, and finally he planted them between the previous two lines. In Schober's keyboard, he aligned all the guide pins in a single row along the slotted fronts of the accidentals and morticed the naturals at the corresponding place along their length. To allow adequate clearance, the key levers in both pianos narrow toward the bottom, thus giving a slightly trapezoidal cross section. Opp's balance-pin mortices lie on single transversely scribed guidelines; Schober's are placed on triple lines, with the first and middle lines bracketing the balance-pins when keys are at rest. Small wedges inserted next to some mortices in Opp's keys reduce the mortice width.

The bridge in Schober's piano is ebonized; Opp's is not. Both bridges are carved to curve in the treble but otherwise extend straight. At the treble ends both terminate in an incurved bulb that vaguely recalls a violin scroll; the bass ends extend in a low, flame-like form. Both bridges have wide bases and convex sides and are single-pinned with brass. Opp's bridge is pinned in a straight line (the lowest five pins are iron replacements) and secured by screws through cleats and a bar beneath the soundboard. Schober's bridge pins are staggered to reduce crowding in the treble and to equalize somewhat the string lengths in each bichord. Both bridges are quite short, foreshortening the bass; otherwise the scalings have nothing in common, but string lengths in Schober's piano nearly coincide at notes C, g, and g² with those in an anonymous, probably Pennsylvania-made upright piano at Whitefield House, Nazareth (see table 2). The afterlengths, muted with red (possibly tin-dyed) wool listing in Opp's piano, cross a padded rail in front of the wrestplank before coiling around roughly forged, unpierced tuning pins.

In Opp's piano the angled wrestplank isolates a triangle of soundboard at the right rear corner. The wrestplank vertex, which falls at the

nineteenth pair of tuning pins, seems to correspond to a change from brass to steel strings. Schober's soundboard, of Atlantic white cedar, is similarly transected. But the tuning pins do not follow the angle; they continue in two double files straight along the right side of the case. On both wrestplanks the same hand inked pitch letters alongside the tuning pins. Two bass tuning pins in Schober's piano were moved from their original locations.

Opp's wide-grained pine soundboard overhangs the topmost keys and rests on a hollow shelf that curves outward from the bellyrail as in the MMA piano. The left edge of the soundboard is screwed down along a score line. Schober's thicker, narrower-grain soundboard ends flush with the bellyrail, to which it is likewise screwed along a score line. In both pianos molding covers the intersection of soundboard and case walls, and an oblong mousehole with rounded ends and edges pierces the bellyrail. Oddly, probes through the mousehole and through a crack all along the soundboard in Schober's piano revealed no soundboard ribs; direct visual inspection was impossible. Opp's soundboard has a single shallow rib approximately parallel to the bridge between it and the wrestplank.

Both instruments are entirely double-strung with old, maybe partly original wire. In Opp's piano the lowest sixteen bichords are now of brass; notes 17 and 18 have one brass and one steel string, while the rest are steel. Six open-wound brass strings survive. Five of them are wound with silver-plated copper; but the lowest, much thicker than the others and wound in the opposite direction, was broken and knotted near its tuning pin, as were two plain brass strings. In Schober's piano the lowest eighteen bichords are now of open-wound brass, the next eight of plain brass, the rest steel. The change from brass or mixed to steel bichords seems to have occurred about f \sharp -g in both pianos.

Both hitchpin planks terminate in a neatly cut bracket shape that overlaps the soundboard, which must have been installed earlier with the bridge already attached. These terminations share the same form but Schober's is shorter; they correspond to designs in certain German pianos, such as one by Melchior Quante (Münster, ca. 1805) in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and a similar but more elaborate shape occurs in the MMA piano's hitchpin plank. Also as in the MMA piano, Huber's nut pins and hitch pins are aligned along intersecting score lines and driven directly into the plank, with no separate, raised nut. In Opp's piano Huber stepped down the front edge of the hitchpin plank to give

clearance beneath the vibrating strings and some distance, increasing toward the bass, between these pins and the inner stop rail. The lowest fifteen pairs of nut pins and twenty-five pairs of hitch pins in Opp's piano are thicker than the rest, a subtlety Huber could have learned by observation, instruction, or experience.

Strangely, both pianos have more bridge, nut, and hitch pins (but not tuning pins) than strings. Schober's bridge and hitchpin plank bear pins for sixty-two rather than sixty-one bichords. Careful uniform scoring of the plank indicates that the disposition is original, but damper and hammer placement suggests the lowest pairs of pins are extraneous. Opp's piano has fifty-five instead of fifty-four pairs of pins plus one single pin on the bridge; the topmost pairs and extra bridge pin lack strings (two other pairs of misplaced nut and hitch pins were relocated and their original holes plugged). These disparities demonstrate—as does the initial misplacement of Opp's kapsels—that Huber did not prepare comprehensive plans or templates but worked out details as he went along. Possibly he miscounted when subdividing the rulers from which he presumably marked off the bridge pins and unwittingly transferred the errors from bridge to hitchpin plank. If this is so, both Opp's and Schober's pianos might be the first or only examples of their respective models, because the rulers could have been corrected easily once these errors had been noticed.

The recurring mistake implies that Huber, a careful woodworker, lacked experience with claviers. In any event he most likely drove in all the pins before installing the actions, because, if actual striking points had determined pin alignment, extra pins could not have crept in accidentally. Why did he not remove these pins and plug their holes after stringing? One can only surmise that he was no perfectionist. Johann Zumpe's 1766 piano at Emmanuel College, mentioned above, likewise has too many pins, but that discrepancy occurred due to Zumpe's decision to omit G \sharp at a late stage of construction—showing, incidentally, that he, perhaps like Huber, cut the keys apart and assembled the action after installing and pinning the hitchpin plank and bridge.

Doubtless inspired by a German or British prototype he had seen, Huber glued a tall, narrow ornamental bracket to the cheek at either end of Opp's keyboard and thereby filled a gap next to the highest and lowest keys.²⁸ On both pianos, an undivided lid flap extends the whole

28. A square piano by Saxon-born Ferdinand Weber (Dublin 1772) and owned by Murtoogh D. Guinness, New York, likewise has narrow keyboard end brackets, as does the

width of the case and hinges back to reveal a music rest inside. The fallboards, which when raised form a back to the music rest, both have a brass knob and an escutcheon plate for an inset lock at the right end; the bolt enters a mortise in the adjoining cheek. Schober's lid is notched for a prop stick; the main lid hinges, probably replacements, have the number 1818 or 1848 (probably the manufacturer's catalogue number) cast in one leaf. Opp's lid is also notched for a stick, as is the cap behind the compartment lid. Groups of three small pegs arranged in a triangle reinforce mortise and tenon joints that secure wide side rails to both lids' central panels.

Thanks to solid joinery and low string tension, both pianos remain structurally intact and only slightly twisted. Their well-aged wood shows little shrinkage. Numerous pegs reinforce critical joints. The pine bottoms (thicker on Schober's piano to resist greater stress?), pegged to main frame elements, are surrounded by the case walls. In contrast, the walls of the MMA piano sit atop a thinner and structurally less important bottom, which is not pegged into the frame and has become detached. This distinction and major differences in case proportions, scaling, and keyboard design demonstrate that Huber did not copy the MMA builder's work, though similarities noted above suggest he might have been familiar with it.

* * *

Huber might also have seen a small (136.1 x 50.9 x 17.6 cm), anonymous square piano donated to the Bethlehem Moravian Archives in 1956 by children of Abram P. Steckel. This ruinously restored but perhaps locally made piano has a C-f³ range, a simple damperless *Prellmechanik* with overrail, wooden kapsels on threaded rods, unpadded hammers except in the extreme bass, lute and moderator rails operated by knee levers, and guidepin slots cut in from the fronts of the keys. All these features are observable in one or the other of Huber's pianos. However, its style differs substantially from Huber's. Although its mahogany case with inlaid striping and integral stand looks fancier, the surviving original parts indicate that its maker was not a superior craftsman. Indeed, he might just as well have learned from Huber's work as vice versa.

square piano in Thaddäus Helbling's portrait (ca. 1776) of Carl Graf Firmian (Salzburg, Mozart's Geburtshaus). The latter piano is illustrated in Walter Haacke, *Am Klavier* (Königstein in Taunus: Karl Robert Langewiesche, 1968), 50.

Specific sources for Huber's designs might never emerge. His instruments belong to no coherent "school" except in the most general sense. He seems to have learned piano making more or less on his own, at least not through extended apprenticeship. His woodworking ability, tool kit, and good selection of materials—at least by local standards—evince a joiner's or cabinetmaker's occupation, though no furniture by him is known.

Unlike Huber's relatively populous locale (Northampton County held about 24,000 persons in 1790), Schober's rural community did not support a commercial piano builder even part-time.²⁹ In 1812, a prospective builder still had to seek instruction elsewhere. The Salem Board Minutes reported that "Br. William Holland asks permission to go to Pennsylvania and in a seaport or somewhere else to learn to make musical instruments, especially pianofortes. We will not hinder him, but suggest that he go first to our congregations, and if he cannot get the desired instruction there he can go for a time to a city. . . ." ³⁰ Huber, on the other hand, would not have had to travel far to observe piano construction, which thrived in Philadelphia and the surrounding region after the Revolution, thanks to increasing affluence and cultural aspiration. Huber's career might have paved the way for that of J. C. Till, a Moravian organist and woodworker (born near Bethlehem in 1762 and trained in music by J. F. Peter's older brother Simon), whose son learned piano making in Philadelphia early in the nineteenth century and returned to Bethlehem to pursue this occupation with his father.³¹

29. David Tannenbergh, Jr., a clavier maker like his father, went to Wachovia in 1781 but moved to Philadelphia the following year; see Armstrong, *Organs for America*, 39. Joseph Ferdinand Bulitschek, an assistant of the elder Tannenbergh, had moved to Wachovia in 1771 and built two small organs there. But he is not known to have made pianos and left the Moravians in 1792; see Brunner, *That Ingenious Business*, 105–6. Concerning Salem's craftsmen, see Paula Welshimer Locklair, "The Moravian Craftsman in Eighteenth-Century North Carolina," in *The Craftsman in Early America*, ed. Ian M. G. Quimby, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co. for the Winterthur Museum, 1984), 273–98. Concerning instrument makers, see Donald M. McCorkle, "Moravian Music in Salem: A German-American Heritage" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1958).

30. Salem Board Minutes, 26 February 1812, in Fries, *Records*, 7: 3174.

31. Till's autobiography is transcribed in Alice May Caldwell, "Music of the Moravian 'Liturgische Gesänge' (1791–1823): From Oral to Written Tradition" (Ph.D. diss. New York University, 1987), 641–57; about piano making, see p. 656. I am grateful to Paul Larson for this reference. Till crossed paths with Peter and Heckewelder in Bethlehem and encountered Heckewelder again when both lived in Hope, New Jersey, about 1800. As a keyboard player and woodworker, Till may have been acquainted with Huber. Till's son moved to Easton to teach music in 1834.

It is worth reiterating that Opp and Schober were wealthy men by community standards. That they acquired pianos by Huber rather than another builder implies respect for the quality of his work. His instruments, while modest compared to those of Charles Albrecht, let alone John Broadwood, were not inferior to many produced in provincial Germany by the generation of craftsmen who emerged after the Seven Years' War.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

* * *

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TABLE I
Approximate Dimensions in Centimeters

	Opp	Schober
Case side to side	145.4	160.5
front to back	55.9	58.9
height without lid	19.8	21.5
(Opp: plus 2.8 molding overhang; molding height 5.2)		
front length right of keyboard	57.2	66.2
left of keyboard	10.2	11.2
side thickness	1.52-.57	1.46-.56
Lid thickness	1.72-.80	1.5
Bottom thickness	2.9	3.3
Three-octave span	49.8-50.2	48.3
Natural length to nameboard	11.4	11.8-.9
Natural head length	4.0	4.0
Accidental length along bottom	7.3	7.8
Soundboard thickness at left edge	.36-.40	.58
Hitchpin plank thickness	1.3	1.9

TABLE 2
Approximate String Lengths in Centimeters

	Opp	Schober	MMA	Nazareth	Finney
		[115.7 between unused pins]			
FF		113.7			132.7
FF \sharp		111.6			129.7
GG		109.4			127.0
GG \sharp		107.5			124.6
AA		105.4			122.3
AA \sharp		103.5			119.4
BB		101.3			117.0
C	104.1	99.5	149.4	99.4	114.5
C \sharp	101.6	97.6	146.3	98.4	112.0
D	99.4	95.6	143.7	97.3	109.5
D \sharp	97.2	93.7	140.8	95.9	106.8
E	95.0	91.7	137.4	94.3	104.2
F	92.7	89.7	134.1	93.2	102.1
F \sharp	90.2	87.9	130.6	91.6	99.7
G	88.9	86.0	126.6	90.0	97.4
G \sharp	85.7	84.0	122.0	88.6	95.1
A	83.3	82.2	115.8	86.8	92.5
A \sharp	81.0	80.3	108.2	84.8	90.0
B	79.9	78.3	100.8	83.0	87.5
c	76.4	76.3	94.5	80.7	85.1
c \sharp	74.2	74.3	87.8	78.5	82.6
d	72.0	72.4	82.8	76.2	80.2
d \sharp	69.7	70.4	78.6	73.8	77.7
e	67.4	68.6	74.7	71.1	75.2
f	65.1	66.6	71.7	68.4	72.5
f \sharp	63.0	64.7	68.9	65.6	70.0
g	60.8	62.7	66.4	62.9	67.6
g \sharp	58.5	60.8	63.9	60.3	65.3
a	56.2	58.9	61.6	57.8	62.8
a \sharp	54.0	56.9	59.3	55.5	60.4
b	51.7	55.1	56.9	53.1	58.1
c ¹	49.5	53.2	54.7	51.0	55.7
c \sharp ¹	47.2	51.3	52.3	48.8	53.3
d ¹	45.0	49.3	50.3	46.6	50.9
d \sharp ¹	43.1	47.4	48.5	44.6	48.7
e ¹	41.0	45.5	46.6	42.8	46.5
f ¹	38.9	43.6	44.8	40.8	44.5
f \sharp ¹	37.0	41.6	43.2	39.4	42.5
g ¹	35.0	39.8	41.5	37.4	40.6
g \sharp ¹	33.2	37.8	39.9	35.8	38.7

TABLE 2 (continued)

	Opp	Schober	MMA	Nazareth	Finney
a ¹	31.5	35.9	38.3	34.0	37.0
a ^{#1}	29.7	34.1	36.7	32.3	35.5
b ¹	28.0	32.3	35.2	30.8	33.7
c ²	26.4	30.3	33.7	29.1	32.2
c ^{#2}	24.9	28.8	32.2	27.7	30.9
d ²	23.3	27.5	30.9	26.4	29.4
d ^{#2}	22.2	26.1	29.4	25.0	28.0
e ²	21.2	24.8	28.2	23.8	26.5
f ²	20.2	23.5	26.9	22.6	25.1
f ^{#2}	19.3	22.0	25.6	21.5	23.7
g ²	18.3	20.6	24.3	20.6	22.4
g ^{#2}	17.5	19.4	23.1	19.5	21.0
a ²	16.4	18.1	22.1	18.5	19.9
a ^{#2}	15.6	16.8	21.0	17.6	18.6
b ²	14.7	15.6	19.9	16.8	17.4
c ³	13.9	14.3	18.9	16.0	16.3
c ^{#3}	13.0	13.2	18.0		15.2
d ³	12.2	12.0	16.9		14.1
d ^{#3}	11.5	10.8	16.0		13.0
e ³	10.7	9.7	15.0		12.0
f ³	9.9	8.7	14.1		10.9

[9.2 between unused pins]

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