



Name of Property: Davis-Ferris Organ
City, State: Village of Round Lake, New York
Period of Significance: 1846-1898
NHL Criteria: 1 and 4
NHL Themes: II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements
 3. religious institutions
 4. recreational activities
III. Expressing Cultural Values
 2. visual and performing arts
 5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design
 6. popular and traditional culture
Previous Recognition: 2012 Historic American Engineering Record, HAER #NY-543-A
1975 National Register of Historic Places (Village of Round Lake Historic District)
National Historic Context: XII. Business
 B. Manufacturing Organizations
 3. Machinery and Instruments
XXII. Music
 I. Instruments (Use and Development)
 J. Forums (Halls and Auditoriums)



NHL Significance:

- The Davis-Ferris Organ, built for a New York City Episcopal church in 1846-1847, is an example of the technical and mechanical achievements and innovative uses of materials in the thriving pre-Civil War American organ-building industry.
- Forty years later, changing trends in theology, technology, American culture, and ecclesiastic music led to the sale of the organ to the Round Lake Camp Meeting Association in Upstate New York. There it accompanied the popular Methodist summer gatherings and eventually anchored a transition to a Chautauqua-style institution of culture, education, and enlightenment. This organ is a record of American music-making that bridges sacred and secular genres.
- Other organs of this size and type from this era have been lost, altered, or “improved” beyond recognition. The Davis-Ferris Organ is not only uniquely representative of the technology of its creation; the organ demonstrates the development of American religious, popular, and musical cultures as it provides a direct aural link to those attending a church service in 1847 New York City, or a raucous Methodist camp meeting in the 1880s, or those seeking education and enlightenment at the turn of the twentieth century.

Integrity:

- The Davis-Ferris Organ is essentially intact in terms of materials and design from the time of its construction in 1846-1847. However, it also exhibits a number of minor but important historic alterations undertaken to update it as changes occurred in church music in the 1860s and 1870s. It also had minor alterations to the rear portion of the case when the organ was retrofitted into the Round Lake Auditorium upon its relocation in 1888. All of these changes occurred during the period of significance.
- Because major restoration of the Davis-Ferris Organ has never been undertaken, and

maintenance, tuning, and repairs were only as needed and as funds allowed, it retains over 90 percent of its original pipes and its original faux-grained and gilded finish.

Owner of Property: Village of Round Lake

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre.

Origins of Nomination: After the Davis-Ferris Organ was documented by the NPS Historic American Engineering Record in 2012, the Village of Round Lake approached the NHL Program to determine whether the organ was eligible for potential designation as an NHL. After receiving guidance from the program on how best to document the national significance of the organ, the Village hired a consultant to write the nomination.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Designation of the Davis-Ferris Organ will bring public attention to an area of United States history that has not been adequately recognized in the National Historic Landmarks Program. Designation will inform the public about religious musical styles in the early nineteenth century and how changes in that genre are exemplified in church organs.
- Designation will recognize a nearly intact example of the art and science of American organ building in the early years of the industry.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None is known

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Dr. Carson moved, Dr. Allan seconded; 1 nay; 9 yeas.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 10/24/16):

The Honorable Dixie Lee Sacks, Mayor, Village of Round Lake, New York

Laurence Libin, FRSA, Emeritus Curator of Musical Instruments, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York

Mike Russo, Director, U.S. Corporate Government Relations, Regulatory Affairs & Strategic Initiatives, Global Foundries

Samantha Bosshart, Executive Director, Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation, Saratoga Springs, New York

Todd Diacon, PhD, Senior Vice President and Provost, Kent State University, Ohio

Jerry M. Lewis, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, Kent State University, Ohio

Stephen H. Paschen, Associate Professor Emeritus, Archivist (retired), Kent State University, Ohio

William I. Ryan Sr., Village Historian, Village of Round Lake, New York

The Honorable Carrie Woerner, Member, New York State Assembly, 113th District, Saratoga and Washington Counties, New York

Advisory Board Recommendation: