

Hunt, Vincent Perry

Remember when

Monday, Oct. 24, 1994

Victorian gentleman was known as 'the Professor'

Old habits die hard.

So when V.P. (Vincent) Hunt met a woman on the street, be it January or July, he always removed his hat before speaking to her.

Hunt was the musical director for Albert College and the organist/choir director at Bridge Street United (Methodist) Church for many years. He was also appointed music director of city schools.

According to the book, *Bridging the Years, A History of Bridge Street United/Methodist Church, Belleville, 1815-1990*, written by Rev. J. William Lamb, Hunt came to the city in 1899 to assume those positions and became a fixture on the local music scene. The short, classically trained gentleman with a moustache, came to be called simply "the professor."

The affinity Hunt showed towards the Methodist Church came naturally. He was born in Whitby to a Methodist minister and his wife.

He had studied organ in Toronto and played at several

churches there. He was also an original member of the Royal Conservatory of Music, which opened in 1887, and became one of its first teachers.

After his training in Toronto, Hunt studied in Leipzig, Germany, at the world-famous Conservatory of Music (founded by Felix Mendelssohn) under the tutelage of Carl Reineke.

In 1907, the organist passed the required examinations and became an Associate of the American Guild of Organists, allowing him to place the letters AAGO after his name.

The following year the professor moved west and between 1908 and 1916 taught at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. During these years he was also the organist for McDougall Church.

Perhaps he missed Belleville, because Hunt returned to the city in 1916 or 1917 and resumed his duties at Bridge Street Methodist Church and Albert College.

During the successive years, this master of the big pipes be-

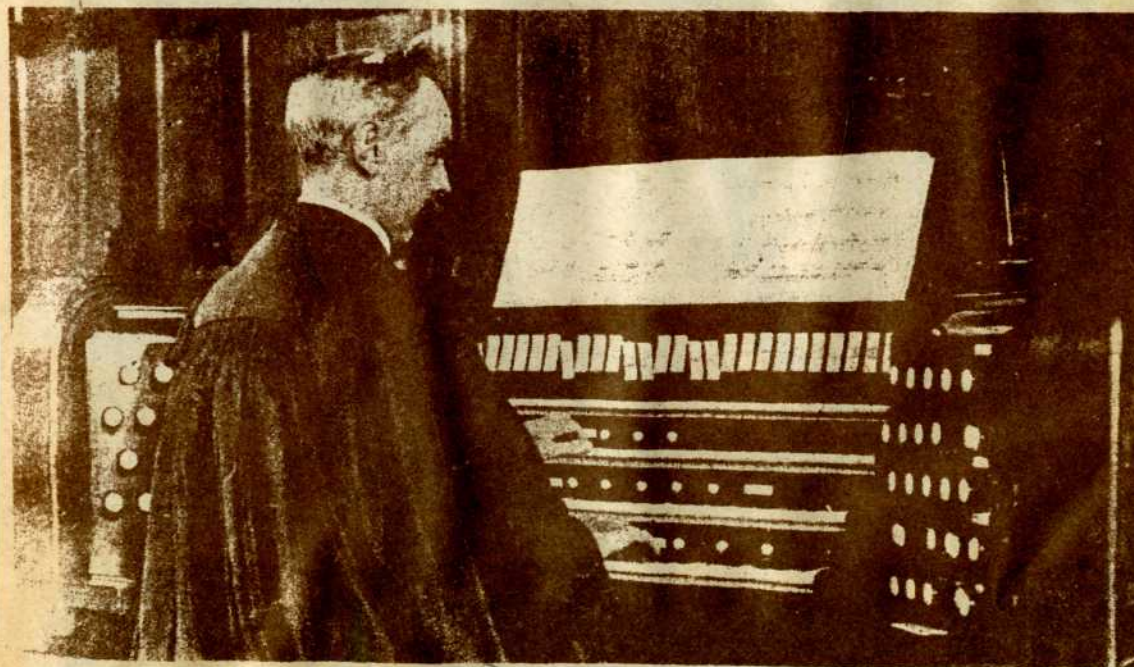
came director of the Belleville Philharmonic Society for local schools and produced oratorios of Handel's, Haydn's and Mendelssohn's, as well as shorter works and cantatas.

In 1908, Belleville was visited by Sir Frederick Bridge, organist of Westminster Abbey, for a music festival. Hunt must have returned to the city for the event because he organized and trained a large chorus for the occasion, receiving strong words of praise from Bridge.

Prior to that, in 1900, Hunt brought the South African Boy Choir to the church. He also brought many other nationally and internationally known organists, soloists and choral groups to Belleville.

In 1937, "the professor" retired from the job as organist and Alec Gordon took over from him.

For the last three years of his life, Hunt lived with family in Pittsburgh and Toronto. He died Oct. 4, 1952, in Toronto, in his 94th year.



Vincent Perry Hunt working his magic at the organ.

Intell.
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