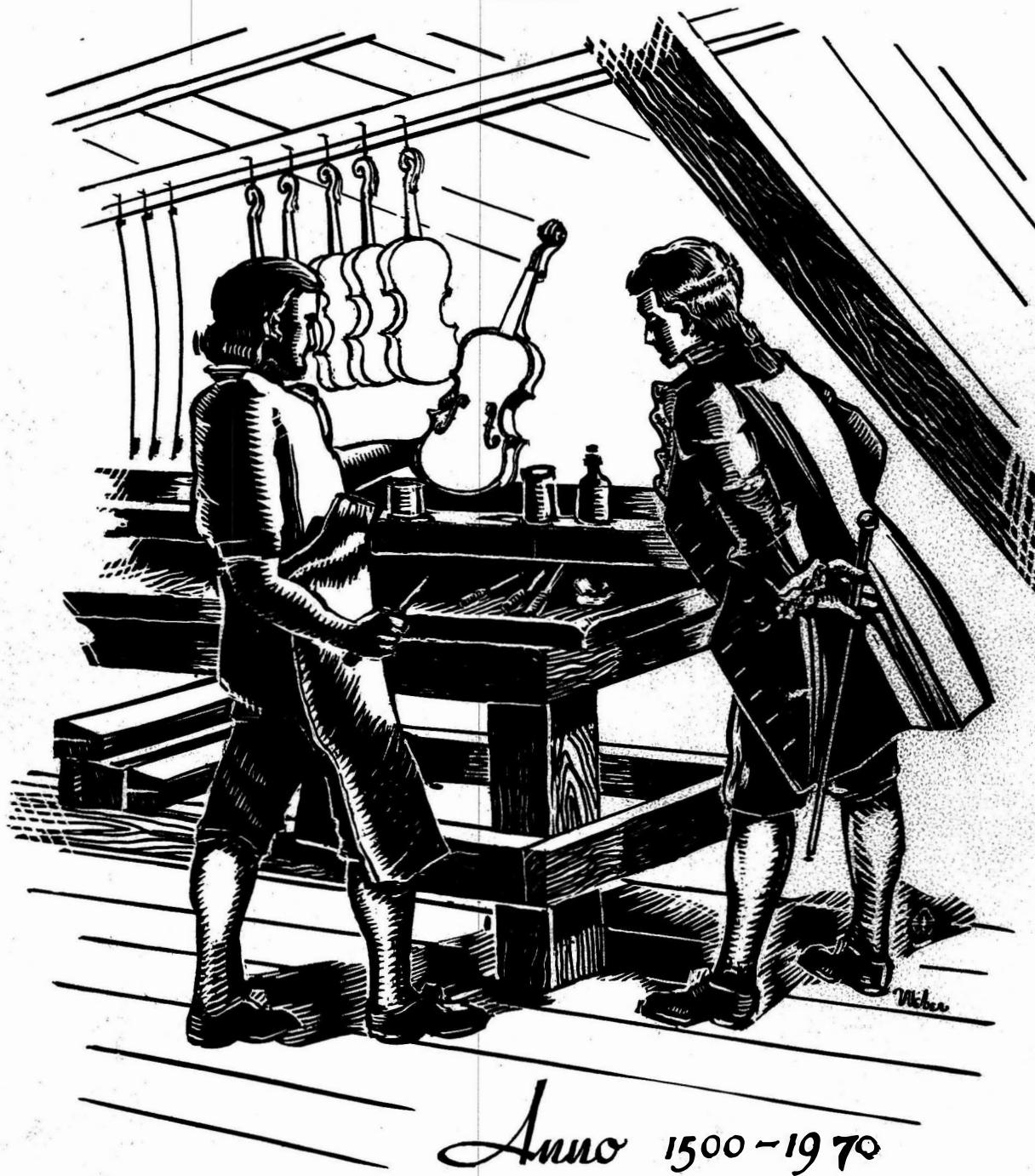


INTERNATIONAL

VIOLIN & GUITAR MAKERS JOURNAL

BOB WALLACE MEMORIAL ISSUE

JANUARY



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Issued as an Educational Feature to encourage and develop the art of violin & guitar making.

International Violin & Guitar Makers Association



IN MEMORIAM

It is with immense regret that we report the death of Bob Wallace who has been the motivating power behind the Violin and Guitar Makers Association of Arizona. Bob passed away at 7:15 A.M. December 29, 1969 at Miami, Arizona. He was born in Texas September 11, 1904. He is survived by his wife Kate, two daughters; Barbara Smith of Mesa, Arizona, and Linda of Miami, Arizona, one son Robert W. of Hong Kong, two sisters and six grandchildren. Bob moved from Texas to Gilbert, Arizona in 1930 and to Miami, Arizona in 1960. Bob Wallace will be missed by violin and guitar makers throughout the world for he had many friends in foreign places. He will be remembered for his kindly help to the amateurmaker as well as for his wise counsel to the professional. His great pride in a well made instrument, whether his or someone elses, was characteristic of his devotion to the art. I'm sure we all will remember Bob Wallace for his genuine generosity and kindly guidance. His effort was untiring.

January 8, 1970

Dear Bill,

It was with deep sorrow that we learned of the death of Bob Wallace. Bob has made a large mark in the field of violin making but he has made even a larger mark, in our estimation, through forming this organization and keeping it together through these many years. By this effort he has brought many violin makers together who would never have known each other or been able to compare notes. The Competition has enabled both amateur and professional to help each other which in turn has helped the entire field of violin-making.

Bob and Kate have devoted so much of their time and done so much for the organization and we feel we have done little or nothing for them. Wouldn't it be nice if the Association would start a Memorial Fund for Bob? We could all send you the money prior to the 10th of March and then you could write one check to be given to Kate. We would suggest an amount of about \$5.00 or whatever each member feels he could spare.

The members w know how Bob and Kate have opened their hearts and their homes to us. Let us see if we in turn can reciprocate in just a small way to their generosity. Sometimes we have no method of expressing our appreciation other than a monetary gift.

Best regards,

Edward C. Campbell
The Chimneys Violin Shop
R. D. 1
Boiling Springs, Penn. 17007

Dear Ed,

Sam Waddle and I have elected you as a committee of one to head up the "Bob Wallace Memorial Fund." So everybody send your contributions to Ed at the Chimneys Violin Shop. He will accumulate funds until April 10th, 1970, and then send a single check to Kate to do with as she sees fit.

Your friend,

Bill Reid

So far we have \$20 in the fund

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* * * * *

Our new History Editor is CLINTON E. GROSZ. Clinton is a native of Louisville and has been teaching strings for only two years but at the same time is a music education senior at "Garden Court" and has an intense interest in the history of strings. He has at his disposal four libraries where he can find the answers (we hope) to your historical questions and verify dates and places for you upon request. His first article in two parts concerning Nicolas L'vot should be of interest to all of us.

* * * * *

Starting in the February issue we will have with us as Guitar editor, TOM LEE, the president of the Louisville Classic Guitar Society. He is a student at the University of Louisville and is a maker/player himself. We know you will enjoy his articles and welcome his help in making our Journal the best.

* * * * *

FOREWARD

Fred Craig

Last night as I was laying awake in my sleep I kept losing count of the sheep because of looking back on 1969 and trying to look ahead at 1970. You know they say hind sight is better than foresight. I guess that is supposed to mean that we can see our mistakes better after we have made them. I suspect that the reason for that may be that if we could look ahead and see them we wouldn't make them! But mistakes and all, I think 1969 was a real good year for fiddle makers and conventions and expect 1970 to be even better.

never comes and yesterday is gone for ever. For the NOW part of it we can all get in and help Bill Reid with the Journal by contributing articles and questions. He has to have it if he is going to print it. We need more questioners and we are all beginners, because no one knows it all about making violins. After ten violins he may feel that he knows all about it but after fifty he will start to realize that he really knows but very little. That is good because then he will start learning.

Some people seem to think that progress in violin making reached its' peak with Stradivari, but that ain't necessarily so. Progress does not stop; it may spin its wheels for a while, but with our modern research in the field of acoustics, wave lengths and the like, plus easy access to the finest materials and greatly improved strings there is no reason to not advance. Things are moving forward in other fields.

Just think of it; mans' first flight took place only sixty six years ago and now we have twice landed men on the moon and brought them back again. Of course such things have a price. After the last splashdown I came down with a bad case of Kronkitus, due to over exposure, but even so I must have missed some of it. I saw the three astronauts dis stowaway, Roger. I heard times but never got a glimpse of him. Lucky he didn't try to make them land in Cuba.

In looking back I think that our 1969 convention and contest was the best one ever, all due to the tireless efforts of Bob and Kate Wallace. (And don't forget Linda; she helps too).

I notice Woodcocks' art in the J my face when he would whip out that tape measure of his. He thought he saw a look of horror but I was merely intrigued. Some one had told me he takes that ruler to bed with him to see how long he slept! But I have now learned my lesson and can see where he is wise to carry the tape measure. Last week I traded for a fiddle without measuring it and I find I have to use a shoe horn to get in a case! That don't happen to Woody.

Maby it is a cross between a violin and a viola. I guess that is OK. Burbank crossed an apricot with a peach and got a peachcot and Brigham Young crossed the plains with a hand cart and got a lake! (Even if it did turn out to be salty).

Some of our progress irks me a little though. We and they will no longer let us graze our cow in the park.

No one, so far, has came up with an explaination of why a mouse will gnaw out an FF hole to get into a fiddle and then refuse to use it to come out; out through the other hole. An answer to that would be about as big a boon as the mini skirt, and as revealing.

I repaired a violin yesterday that some character had made and if he had been trying his best he couldn't have assembled more mistakes. One of the easiest to avoid was the way he lined up his peg holes. They should be so that each string will clear the peg that is underneath it but with his the D string rode on the E peg and the A rode on the D peg. So easy to do it right and avoid all that future trouble when trying to tune the fiddle.

I have a fellow here making his first violin in my shop, with me looking over his shoulder. He is so fascinated by it and is doing so well at it that I predict we will hear more about him. His name is John Perfect and his work looks like he was trying to live up to his name. I'll try to get him on the mailing list for the Journal. Maybe we can get him to write some articles or at least ask questions. If he would write and ask some of the questions he is asking me he would probably get better answers.

Now let's look forward to better violins and an even greater convention in 1970. No telling what research will turn up. Just see what it has done already. I used to say "I've never seen a purple cow---" and now thanks to T.V. I have seen one!

A violin is like a smile; It speaks in any language.

Now I have tell you. Here lately I was all shook up because Hattie wanted to get rid of me. She wanted to trade me in on an adding machine; said she wanted something she could count on.

Naturally I started being real nice to her and I put wall to wall carpet in the bathroom. She liked that so well that I went ahead and ran a strip of it clear up to the house!

Now let's have a vote of confidence for Bill Reid and wish him well with the Journal and then prove our sincerity by sending in articles and otherwise helping him in any way we can. It is OUR association and Journal and its' success depends on all of us.

* * * * *

WE NEED MORE ARTICLES SO THAT THE JOURNAL CAN GROW. THESE WILL BE MORE HELPFUL IF THEY ADD TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF VIOLIN AND GUITAR MAKING.

HOW ABOUT SOME PICTURES TOO!

OBSERVATIONS

In this age of synthetics, plastics, and mass production, the skilled craftsman is becoming scarcer and scarcer. Each passing year registers a thinning of their ranks. The reasons for this unfortunate condition are several. For one thing, the demand for fine instruments simply cannot be met, thereby forcing the acceptance of something inferior or none at all. Then there are many more prospective buyers whose desire is limited by their available funds. Last year at the Sotheby Galleries in England there were several old masters at auction that commanded unheardof prices, even for current inflationary conditions.

There are still a considerable number of artisans producing instruments with great beauty and tonal excellence, but there are too few apprentices coming along. It may be that the young man of today has no desire to spend the necessary time to acquire some of the skill of his patron, and at the necessarily low wage. Or it may be that many of the recognized masters have their own individual methods, processes, and materials that they decline to share with their peers, who in turn, have the same situation.

Violin making has always been a closely guarded operation, with many priceless formulas and skills dying with their possessors. It is regrettable that so little information is shared, as often a craftsman, thru trial and effort, only develops a formula to his satisfaction in his declining years, when possibly even a hint, received in his youth, could have hastened the result by decades.

It is my opinion that if all violin secrets were in the public domain, there would still be as great a variation as now in fine instruments. After all, Antonio Stradivari himself could produce only one Alard.

Robert T. Vail

In the Coming Months:

February - WHO'S WHERE ISSUE

The fly-leaf included will be a map of the United States showing membership distribution by state. A separate listing will show membership outside North America.

March - MEMBERSHIP DRIVE ISSUE

* *

Subscription rates for the VIOLIN AND GUITAR MAKERS JOURNAL will be \$4.00 per year, \$15.00 for five years, and \$100.00 for life -- all subscriptions outside continental North America are \$1.00 extra per year, including those for life. Life subscribers will receive a certificate suitable for framing and a 10% discount on advertising as well as a 10% discount on our publications. Life membership dues can be paid in two installments not more than 90 days apart. But "life" advantages do not start until paid in full.

* * *

So much for subscriptions! Now let's talk about advertising. The new rates are \$60.00 per page for 12 issues. Two pages of advertising is \$108.00. The closing date for copy is the 10th of the month preceding the month of issue.

* * * *

A Texan was visiting a friend from Vermont. The Vermont man, a farmer, pointed out his land to the Texan. "My property goes from here to that pond over there, up to that hilltop, across to that tree, and back here again," he said with great esteem. The Texan replied, "That's a fairly nice farm. But at my ranch I start out at daybreak and drive like crazy until noon. Then I stop for 20 minutes for a quick sandwich. Then I drive until dusk again and barely reach the end of my ranch."

The Vermont man replied, "You know, I had a car like that once too, but I sold it."

VARNISH, VARNISHING AND BRUSH CLEANING

I have provided several of our members the following information on varnishing through individual correspondence. Some have told me that they have found it, or parts of it, helpful to them. The information I have given is the result of my own experience. I don't profess to be an expert - I'm not far enough from home. Maybe some other members can find some help in it.

Varnishing

A. TYPE OF BRUSHES:

1. A 3/4" Grumbacher No. 4116 artist brush (for violin)
2. A 1/2" Grumbacher No. 4116 artist brush (for scroll)

These brushes are comparatively costly and also very durable if treated as a good brush should be. They are of soft texture with enough body to move the varnish without making you feel that you have a limp piece of cloth on the end of a stick handle. With the following "no effort" cleaning procedure (paragraph G), my brushes are like new after many varnish jobs over a period of about two years.

B. VARNISH:

The only varnish fit to be put on a violin, in my opinion, is an oil varnish that can be brushed without pulling (to insure even distribution) and will level out and leave no brush marks. The varnishes that I have found to more nearly meet these requirements are Bill Fulton's and Vitali's. (There may be others). Both meet these requirements. I have used others of various brands, both home made and commercial with greater difficulty and poorer results. Both keep very well with no signs of jelling within a reasonable time. As far as I know, the Fulton varnish doesn't jell at all. If you are convinced that this is a matter of opinion, just remember that it is my opinion at this time and subject to change. It may be necessary to thin the varnish before the bottle is empty if varnish jobs are few. For Vitali varnish, Harry Wakes thinning formula of a couple of conventions ago is very good. That was 1 part boiled linseed oil to 4 or 5 parts of gum turpentine. Mr. Fulton recommends any one of Rosemary Oil, Pine Oil, or slightly oxidized turpentine. In any event the varnish must be kept at the correct consistency if a good job is to be done and a blotched appearance avoided.

C. PREPARATION OF SURFACE:

1. The violin in the white after thorough sanding and cleaning should be dampened with a wet sponge or cloth, dried and sanded with very fine sandpaper, repeating this procedure 6 to 8 times to lay the grain.
2. If filler or sizing is to be used, apply it in sufficient coats to suit the porosity of the wood and to allow for sanding to a smooth surface. Do not apply against the end grain in the arching.
3. A damp sponge or chamois, not too wet, makes a good wiper after sanding between coats to remove dust and lint.
4. Have at hand a 4" piece of 3/8" dowelling tapered at one end to fit the end pin hole and to support the violin while varnishing. Cover the untapered end with a rubber tip.

5. If peg holes have been finally reamed it is well to plug them to prevent varnish from entering them. Leave the outside of the peg box flue i.e. no outside protrusion of the plugs. Pilot holes need not be plugged since the varnish will be reamed away in the final fitting of the pegs.
6. Have the violin at room temperature and work in a strong light.

D. PREPARATION OF THE VARNISH:

1. Have the varnish at about 75 degrees F.
2. Filter only enough varnish for the job at hand through one or two thicknesses of coffee filter paper into a "shot" glass - also at about 75 degrees F. to prevent chilling the varnish.
3. Insure that the varnish is at a proper consistency for application. This is important. It should not be too thick or too thin. Avoid old varnish that has thickened too much or has started to jell. Once jelling has started, varnish cannot be satisfactorily or economically reclaimed by addition of turps or linseed oil. Always use new varnish or at least varnish that is in good condition.

E. APPLICATION OF VARNISH:

1. Dip only the tips of the bristles into the varnish, about $1/16$ " to $1/8$ ".
2. Brush on with the tips of the bristles, inclining the brush handle in the direction of travel. Feather the brush strokes. When the job is finished only about $1/2$ of the bristles should be wet - i.e. the lower one half.
3. Start varnishing with the ribs, working around the violin body from the neck to the neck again.
4. On either plate start at the upper right of the upper bout and work across to the left of the upper bout and down to the center bout. Varnish may be applied crosswise initially and then brushed out vertically to insure good distribution. I recommend final brushing in both up and down directions, still using only the tips of the brush. Then start at the right of the center bout and work to the left as above. On the top plate it is advisable to use considerable care and a fairly dry brush around the "F" holes to prevent accumulation of varnish at the edges of the holes and resultant sags. Next start at the right of the lower bout and similarly work to the left. Be sure that no excess varnish collects at the saddle.
5. Brushing both ways in smoothing out the cross laid varnish is of much help in avoiding overlap variations of color. The varn right as mentioned above and the brush tips used with a feathered stroke. When starting to use color, do so over 2 or 3 coats, i.e. gradually.
6. Varnish as rapidly as you can and still avoid sloppiness and the application of too much varnish. Work with a small amount of varnish in the brush and never brush over varnish that has started to set.
7. Don't attempt to lay fresh varnish over varnish that has set. It is better to leave a rough place and to sand it out in the between coat sanding. Place the violin in the drying cabinet immediately after varnishing. This avoids to a large extent the accumulation of dust and flying insects. A drying cabinet in which to place the freshly varnished violin is well worth the effort. If equipped with "black light" it is many times more valuable because one can varnish in any weather. I try to keep the temperature below 100 degrees and the humidity above 30 percent.

8. Some like to rub the varnish off the edges with the finger or a turpentine cloth to prevent a heavy accumulation at the edges. This should be done upon finishing the varnishing of a plate.

F. GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. Do not apply too many coats of varnish - maybe 2 coats of clear or amber, 4 to 6 coats of color and 2 coats of clear for polishing. When using Fulton's varnish, I have dispensed with the final clear coats and polished the last color coats with good results. Maybe the same treatment could be made of other color varnish, I haven't tried this.
2. Sand all coats but the first, second and last with wet-dry sandpaper of 440 or higher grade and water. Sand lightly and enough to roughen the surface to insure good adhesion of the next coat. Do not sand into the wood. This sanding removes dust specks and other surface imperfections.
3. The final coat should be thoroughly rubbed with "FFF" grade pumice powder with either olive or light mineral oil. Then polish the surface with rottenstone and oil. Since both commercial grade powdered pumice or rottenstone may not be 100% uniform, it is recommended that about a teaspoonful be placed in a clean porous cloth and tied to form a ball. Use only that which comes through when the ball is struck against the surface of the violin. After thoroughly cleanin the final surface, polish with a good non-oily furniture or violin polish.
4. The finally polished surface may be further enhanced by buffing with a lambs wool polishing head in the drill press. Use 800 to 900 RPM and don't hold in one spot or too heavily. Keep the violin moving.

G. CLEANING THE BRUSHES:

1. Accessories:
 - a. Lacquer thinner. (I like Regal brand by Fuller).
 - b. Liquid brush cleaner. (I like Regal brand by Fuller).
 - c. Two small glass jars (about 2" dia. x 3-4" tall - large Gerber).
2. Procedure:
 - a. Fill each jar about half full: one with thinner and one with cleaner.
 - b. Drill each brush handle transversely about $2\frac{1}{2}$ " above the tips of the bristles so a piece of wire about 4" long may be passed through for suspending the brush in the jar.
 - c. Immediately after placing the freshly varnished violin in the drying cabinet, squeeze out the excess varnish from the brush into a paper towel.
 - d. Squish the brush around in the lacquer thinner for 15 to 20 seconds.
 - e. Squeeze out the excess lacquer thinner in a paper towel.
 - f. Squish the brush around in the brush cleaner jar and suspend in the cleaner by inserting the wire through the brush handle and laying the wire across the top of the jar. Be sure that the bristles do not touch the bottom of the jar and that they are covered with cleaner. Leave for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour or more.
 - g. Wash out the brush with laundry soap (Fels Naptha) and warm water.
 - h. Squeeze out the excess water in a towel, form the bristles and leave to dry in a dust free location.
 - i. Don't use your violin brush for any other purpose.

Sam Waddle
1446 E. 1st Place
Mesa, Arizona 85203

"Fellow Members" - From Page 27 of the October 1967 Journal

I have decided to write you a little story and it's not going to be just another fairy tale.

I think most of you will agree that we have all been receiving a mighty fine Violin makers Journal, but I don't believe that many of you realize just how much that Journal has depended on the efforts of your Editor, Bob Wallace, and his hard-working wife, Kate. It is nearly six years since I first came to Arizona and in all that time, every single monthly issue of the Journal has been published and sent out to you members. On only one occasion, when Bob and Kate and Linda spent Christmas in Florida visiting their son and daughter there, the Journal was rather late in being sent out. Once or twice, due to uncontrollable conditions, the Journal has been smaller than usual. The Journal of course has to depend on you members to keep it supplied with material for publication, and when that material has been slow arriving, the procedure has been for Bob to sit down and write about eighty letters to members, soliciting articles for publication.

As you probably all know Bob spent about six weeks in hospital during this past summer. He got home from the hospital on July 20th, just at the time when the August Journal was being sent out to you. I want you all to realize that Kate put out this Journal, full size and promptly on time, even tho she was spending half her time on the road driving between Miami, and the railroad hospital in Tucson which is about one hundred and fifteen miles away. When Bob got home, he was still not well enough to return to work. He found there was very little material on hand for publication in the next Journal, so he wrote about eighty letters asking for articles. As a result, enough material came in to produce an especially fine September issue of the Journal. But it seems we have a short memory. By the time that September issue was in the mail, there wasn't much left for the October Journal. Maby Bob should have written another eighty letters, but he just didn't feel like it, and so now, on September 9th, only two weeks before the October issue is due to be sent out and there is only enough material on hand for half'a Journal. Kate has scraped the bottom of the barrel and all she got was a lot of slivers under her finger nails.

From now on if you members want a good Journal, it's going to be up to you to keep writing without having to be prodded by individual letters from the Editor. Instead, you are just going to get a half sized Journal and may make you sit up and take notice. I have been just as negligent as the rest of you, but since I am closer to the center of operation I can more fully realize just what the situation is, so I am getting busy and writing a little bit to help out, but I am busy right now patching up a lot of instruments for the Miami School. I presume you are all just as busy as I am, but it is still going to be necessary for each of you to do your share without being prodded by individual letters. Just remember that he doesn't even get paid one thin dime for writing those letters, and out of his own pocket he pays for the midnight oil he burns while writing them.

Harold Briggs

FIDDLING THRU THE AGES

NICOLAS LUPOT PART I

Let's talk about Nicolas Lupot (1758-1824), son of the Duke of Wurttemberg's violin-maker. It is strange that the "Stradivari" of the French violin-makers was of German birth, but that is how it was. At the age of ten he went with his father to Orleans, France, as an apprentice. In 1794 he went to Paris, where he worked under the celebrated maker

It is interesting to note that Pique had been buying for 30 francs each the violins that ole Nicholas made back in Orleans. Rumor has it that he bought them unvarnished, varnished them with his own varnish, and labelled them with his own name. It is doubtful that Lupot gained much in Pique's shop. All was not lost, however, for Nicolas started his own business four years later. Immediately his great talent was recognized. He was now 40 years old, and his fame spread all over France. Nicolas had one great aim in life---to be a second Stradivarius. He worked with such diligence and enthusiasm to produce something akin to his ideal that he soon was able that suffered but little on comparison to the first-rate Italians.

While in Paris, Nicolas stacked up a bunch of awards, titles, and honors to pass the time away. He was appointed instrument-maker to the Paris Conservatory, where it was his duty to make instruments that were to be awarded to the winners of the yearly gold medals at the Conservatory. His instruments at this time are some of his finest efforts, due to the importance of the events.

In 1806 Lupot moved his workshop to the Lane of the Cross of the Small Champions (Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs). It was here that he produced his famous copies of Italian instruments. He did not attempt to be original, but worked until he could produce exact imitations of the great Stradivari violins. A few copies of Guarneri and Amati are known, but he was most successful with the Stradivari pattern. In 1815 Nicolas was appointed violin-maker to the King, who requested him to make an orchestra of stringed instruments for the Royal Chapel. Each instrument was to be ornamented. He ambitiously undertook this project in 1820, completing 14 violins, 4 violas, 6 cellos, and 4 double basses, but his death in 1824 prevented him from entirely finishing.

For 26 years Nicolas had worked in Paris, gaining the reputation he now has. His quality of workmanship influenced his contemporaries and French makers to come. Several of his pupils, Charles François Gand, Nicolas Gand, Guillaume Gand, Sébastien Bernardel, and Pierre Sylestre, became violin-makers of note.

The world has honored Lupot in many ways. His violins are recognized as the greatest of all the French and some of the best in the world, rivaling even the greatest of the Italian makers. Lupot's fame is known the world over. In Mirecourt there is even a street named after him. Nicolas accomplished his life-long goal, and those violinists who are fortunate enough to own one of these much-sought-after Lupot violins are the beneficiaries of the excellent qualities that only this great man, Nicolas Lupot, was able to put in a fiddle.

TEN YEARS AGO IN THE JOURNAL - January, 1960.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Wallace:

Very many thanks for the back numbers you sent me, I have had a look through these, and there are some interesting theories in some of them.

One aspect of the Late Justin Gilberts method of plate saturation was for principally raising the tone pitch of the plate, I made several violins on his method long before the book was published, I do not believe that Stradivarius adopted this method however, by heating up the table to get most of the moisture out, had a tendency to shrink the width of the plate also there is a great danger of the center joint becoming unglued, your correspondent who quotes Mr. Gilbert should not forget, that putting on foundation was only for the light weight violin i.e. a body weight of about $9\frac{1}{2}$ ozs, he also said it was unsuitable for heavy wooded fiddles, however there is some ground for believing the old Italian Masters did use something in the nature of a filler. If one can find this substance it would be a great help in getting the real Cremona result, I have tried all manner of ingredients for this. If one works to Stradivarius thickness, this will not be enough. This has been proved time and time again, we have quite as good material as he had and also workmen of a very high order who can work pretty exact in making a violin, but what do we have, a very nice looking wooden box with strings on. Raw wood will not do alone, neither does the top coat varnish matter two hoots whether it be spirit or oil, but of course the oil varnish wears better and looks much better in Patina, you sees it pays the people who are dealing in fine \$6000 violins to preach the varnish theory, they are on pretty safe ground when they say it is the varnish that makes the tone, and the secret has been lost. They know no chemists alive can analyze the varnish today, as it is no longer in the same state chemically as when applied, after two hundred years of oxidation, and of course, the modern maker is fighting prejudice from the beginning, there is no doubt the fact that when Strad made his fiddles they were in great demand in his lifetime, and one did not have to wait two hundred years for them to mature, likewise today there is some tendency to avoid using American woods in Europe, why I do not know, this is a lot of bunk, good wood grows all over the world, incidently the pine you sent me in my opinion is as good as anything Stradivarius ever had, we at least know the source of its growth, which is more than can be said of some European variety, I have made some good violins with Sitka pine bellies also Pacific Coast Silver Spruce, it is only with great experience that the maker can determine what wood quantities to use and how to distribute them, Stradivarius got hold of some good pine and no doubt from long experience knew what was wanted as to thickness etc. Everyone knows these old instruments have had to be re-barred and re-necked to suit modern requirements, I don't suppose old Strad ever heard his fiddles played as we hear them today, as in those days they seldom if ever went beyond the third position anyway. I have handled quite a few master instruments and the majority of these have all been touched-up as varnish had deteriorated somewhat, if you saw the Famouse Le Messie Strad now in the Ashmolium Museum in Oxford, you would say it had on it cheap French varnish, in my opinion it was never made by Stradivarius but by Vuiluame, best wishes for your association, (you can use the other letter I sent you in whatever way you wish also this one, once more thanks again.)

Yours faithfully,

H. W. Ratcliffe

December 31, 1969

Dear Friends:

Today, I received some very shocking news of the death of Bob Wallace, from Mr. Bill Reid. First of all I would like to extend my personal sympathy and condolences to Kate. We are all going to miss him very much.

I was also informed at this time, that Mr. Reid and associates are taking over that task of keeping the Journal in existence, which I think is very commendable. I am sure that Kate appreciates this. I believe that this was started before Bob passed away, so, I am very sure that he was happy about whom he left the task to. I think more than ever this association will be brought together.

To some of us I am sure that this is the Grand Finale, to our yearly labors in the making and loving of stringed instruments. I personally have had probably as much or more fortune out of this convention and contest than anyone else that I have certainly taken more out of it than I have put into it. Everyone that I have met there has went out of their way to be extra friendly and it is very much appreciated, too. Bob and Kate were very nice to me and for the 3 short years that I have known them, I don't think there was one time that I felt that they were more friendly and cordial to one person more than another. I know it when you are in a position that they were in. Bob wrote me a personal letter right after the last contest and asked if I would write an article on, "Why I thought I had won the past 3 years in a row on the Violin." He also asked if I would write as what my technique in shading and antiquing of my Violins. I am in the process of doing this right now. I only wish that Bob Wallace was still with us to see if it is what he wanted to know. I plan on taking much more interest in the Association in the years to come.

I hope that all of the members of this great organization will try to do the same. I know this was the hope of Bob and is still the wish of Kate.

Respectfully yours,

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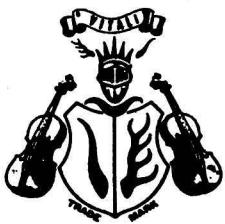
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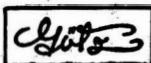
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