

Carl W. F. Jansen

Early America's Premiere Harp Guitarist

Gregg Miner



Introduction

I'll go out on a limb here and guess that few have ever heard of Mr. Jansen, one of our most important American harp guitarists. He has indeed snuck under the radar, including my own (and I leave few harp guitar stones unturned, as you know!). I've been meaning to do more research on him for almost two decades now, if only to give him a simple blurb in my [Encyclopedia of Harp Guitar Players of the Past](#). The poor guy has never even had *that*.

A recent flurry of events transpired to make this finally happen. First, my esteemed colleague Robert Coldwell sent me a few tidbits on Jansen, including some rare artifacts from Jansen's descendants. Robert runs the awe-inspiring [Digital Guitar Archive](#); his main interest in Jansen was the huge music manuscript library Jansen collected in his lifetime. Robert would eventually put me in contact with Mindy Debes, who is Carl Jansen's great-great-granddaughter and the genealogist in the family.

All this was on the backburner until Robert casually mentioned that "Brian Torosian wrote about Jansen in his dissertation..." What? *Our* Brian Torosian? (Brian officially became part of the "harp guitar" and Harp Guitar Gathering community when we featured him as [our special "Historical Music" guest in 2010](#).)

Brian specializes in the music of J. K. Mertz on the 10-string (harp) guitar and naturally, that was the topic of his PhD thesis, or more specifically, "Mertz in America: The Music of J. K. Mertz in Early Twentieth-Century America." How I never heard about this from Brian himself beggars the imagination, as this is a topic I have been suggesting to many over the years as something ripe for Harpguitar.net and historians everywhere. Well, he kind of did it!

America's early guitar period is a minefield of woefully under-researched misinformation and assumptions, virtually a "Lost World" of guitar music and players. Jeffrey Noonan wrote a decent book on the subject, *The Guitar in America*, but it is just the tip of an iceberg. How many today idolize "America's Greatest Guitarist" William Foden, or Vahdah Olcott-Bickford (whom I once did a [short blog about](#))...once two of the most famous names in the guitar world? Hundreds of other names now forgotten form a fascinatingly cryptic, overlooked part of this country's crucial birthing of an instrument (many, actually) and musical styles and social constructs that include them. As readers have seen, I touch on this period in just about every other historical harp guitar article I write.

What Dr. Torosian did is, rather than write about Mertz from a European perspective, he looked at the American "pre-classical guitar" scene's discovery and performances of Mertz' music. (If you're curious about Mertz in Europe, start with "The Memoirs of Makaroff." You can find it all on Coldwell's web site.) Again, this was a weird era...there *was* no "classical guitar," as this – the late 1800s and early 1900s – was pre-Llobet/Segovia. These Americans were serious artists typically playing early Martin and similar guitars with gut strings, while sharing their efforts and

trading correspondence and rare music manuscripts with similar guitar friends in America and across the Atlantic...

...nearly all of which played the common six-string guitar.

As Mertz himself played an instrument with four floating bass strings and Carl Jansen preferred a harp guitar with five sub-basses, Brian naturally gets into that “elephant in the room” topic – i.e.: *serious musicians playing harp guitars*. What a treat! Remember that 99% of American harp guitars were sold to amateurs (wealthy or not) and used predominately for accompaniment. So Brian’s thesis is partly a rare look at the topic I remain so curious about, which I’ll call The Serious American Harp Guitarist. (By the way, as we speak, my U.K. friend Matt Redman is working on his own PhD which will take a look at this world from additional angles.) I said “partly” about Brian’s work, as it concentrates predominately on Mertz alone. Brian – for my dollar – never stops to dig into the crux and conundrums of some of his own discoveries regarding extended-range guitars (which I will below). But he *did* give Jansen his own entire chapter!

And so – after another of my long-winded introductions – back to Professor Jansen. Thanks entirely to Robert Coldwell, I was thus armed with Torosian’s detailed and fully sourced thesis (which Robert is now in the process of digitally re-publishing), Jansen’s letters from the International Guitar Research Archives, and a small collection of unpublished Jansen family photographs from Mindy Debes, including the discovery of a second harp guitar! Let’s see what we can learn.

Carl W. F. Jansen, Harp-Guitarist

Much of the basic biographical material in Torosian’s dissertation and Debes’ ancestry site came from profiles in the *Cadenza* and *Crescendo*, the two main “BMG” periodicals for that world. (i.e.: dedicated aficionados of the Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar. And yes, guitar was most often third in importance.)

So, rather than me paraphrasing all this yet again, I’ll include these key sources for you to read directly, beginning with Jansen’s first artist profile published in *Cadenza*’s May 1909 issue. The provided photograph of the handsome man with the serious mustache might have been from an earlier timeframe; at this time Jansen would have been forty years old (his birth date in 1868 was November 17th) and been playing the guitar around twenty-two years by that point. His Swedish ancestry and home in Chicago will become worth remembering a bit later in our story. Also note the mention of his rare guitar music library and his repertoire. Though he is playing at least the Mertz Hungarian Fantasie on his harp guitar, no mention is made of his instrument.



C. W. F. JANSEN

THOUGH America is more closely identified with the banjo than any other of the string instruments, yet some of the finest mandolinists and guitarists of modern times have been proud to claim the United States as their home. One of the most notable guitarists now before the public is the subject of our sketch, Mr. C. W. F. Jansen, of Chicago. Mr. Jansen is of Swedish extraction, though born in Norway in 1868. His interest in the guitar was first inspired by hearing a wealthy nobleman play some of the compositions by Zani de Ferranti. This incident happened when Mr. Jansen was in his eighteenth year. His immigration to this country also occurred about this time, but the memory of the nobleman's playing had made so lasting an impression upon young Jansen's mind that he resolved to make a serious study of the instrument. He never devoted less than four hours a day to practice, and the possibilities of the guitar began to appeal to him more and more. By diligent and persistent effort he has attained his present eminent place in the ranks of America's foremost guitar soloists. For several years Mr. Jansen has interested himself in the study of what is known as chamber music for the strings, and has made himself acquainted with the works by the great masters. His musical library of guitar music is rare. Nearly everything written by Paganini for guitar can be found in this collection. Though Mr. Jansen has a large class of pupils he still reserves certain hours

for individual practice. The following are some of the compositions and arrangements included in his present repertoire.

Fantasie Honyroise, Op. 65, J. K. Mertz.

Overture Semiramide, M. Guiliani.

Fete Villagroise, Rondo Caprice, Op. 20.

Pot Pourri, Op. 53, J. H. Hammel.

Var. Russian Airs, Pettofetti.

Rondo des Fees Capricieto, Zani de Ferranti.

Opus 103, String Quartet for Terz Guitar, M. Guiliani.

Six Sonatas for violin and guitar, N. Paganini.

Quite a number of original compositions and etudes for the guitar by Mr. Jansen have been published and are universally popular with teachers and students. In his library of guitar music may be found a number of unpublished original manuscripts by such master composers as J. K. Mertz and Ferranti. As a performer on the guitar, the latter is considered by Mr. Jansen as the "greatest of all great guitarists."

Mr. Jansen is a member of the National Qualified Teacher's League of Music, whose headquarters are in Cleveland, Ohio.

In the March 1912 Cadenza three years later, Jansen and his string quartet were featured as part of the upcoming Guild Convention in Chicago. As that year's convention was taking place in Jansen's home city, he had been invited to be part of the concert program.



The text gives the same information taken from Jansen's previous profile, while naming the group members. Two issues later, the program for their slot at the April 23rd convention is listed as:

Guitar Solos – Carl W. F. Jansen

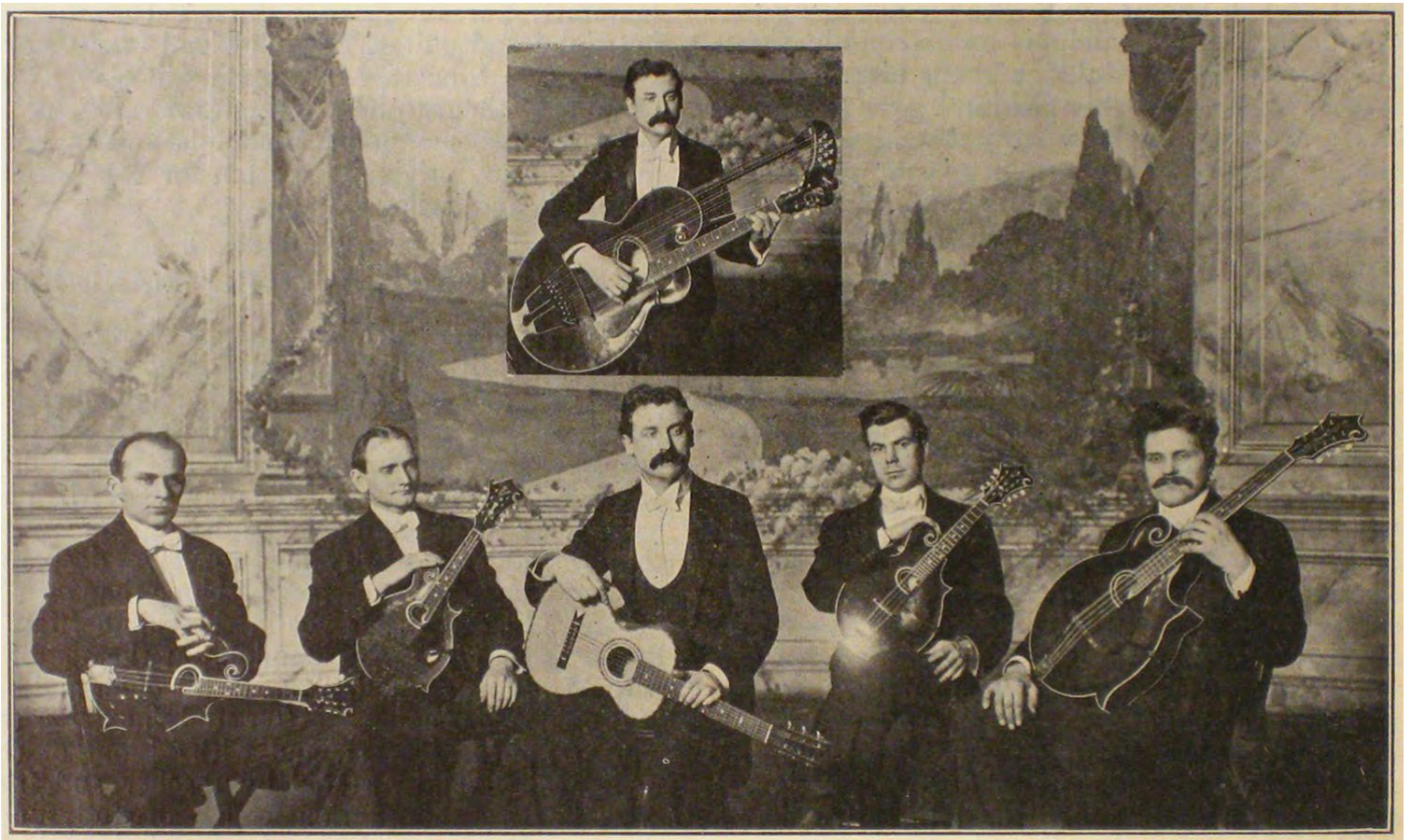
(a) Harp-Guitar, Fantasie Hongroise, Op. 65.....Mertz

(b) Terz-Guitar and String Quartet, Intro, Theme, and
Five Variations, Op.103.....Giuliani

His eventual Cadenza review must not have thrilled Jansen, saying, “The next number called out Mr. Carl. W. F. Jansen, the terz guitarist, and his string quartet. This number was a disappointment, although not through any fault of the players, but from the uninteresting character of the selection presented. It was a “Theme and Five Variations” by Giuliani, and a number much better suited to studio practice than concert performance, at least for a miscellaneous audience. In the guitar solo and encore that followed, Mr. Jansen appeared in better advantage and disclosed himself the musician.”

He clearly played the Mertz piece on a harp guitar – something Cadenza members considered distinct from guitar – yet again, the writer (likely Literary Editor Myron V. Freese) failed to mention it.

But which harp guitar?



In the image with string quartet (“plucked” string quartet, of course), Jansen is seen with his terz guitar (maker unknown; this instrument is tuned a third higher than standard and its smaller size is readily apparent). In his inset photo, taken in front of the same background during the same session, he poses with the common and popular Gibson harp guitar, something I don’t believe he ever owned or played (we’ll see his original harp guitar shortly). I doubt that Jansen would have

been amenable to the Gibson tone (which was meant for a very different musical purpose), and it's doubtful that he could have afforded such an instrument. Note that his colleagues were clearly all "Gibsonites" that relished the look, feel and sound of a cohesive Gibson ensemble. My suspicion is that one of these more affluent gentlemen owned the harp guitar and convinced Jansen of the more prestigious photo opportunity. The accompanying text describes each quartet member as a master of their instrument, so these are not Jansen's students (nor did he teach anything but guitar as far as I know); likely they were all skilled Chicago amateurs, Jansen being "only" another highly skilled amateur himself. Indeed, his income from guitar students probably never made ends meet. In 1914, he is listed in the Chicago Directory as a "painter" (his wife, a stenographer).

BMG triple-threat – he played and taught all three instruments – Claud Rowden of Chicago was the Guild's president at this time, and naturally featured one of his many ensembles at the convention. Rowden was a major proponent of the harp guitar and played a Gibson himself. His Chicago Plectra Orchestra below (from the April 1912 Cadenza) includes *six* Gibson harp guitars!



THE CHICAGO PLECTRA ORCHESTRA
MR. CLAUD C. ROWDEN, CONDUCTOR

In June of 1913, the year after the Guild's convention in Chicago, Jansen performed with his daughter Elsie, where they "rendered most effectively a duet for terz and harp-guitar the 'Serenade and Romance' by Diabelli." Performing at this same concert were Myron A. Bickford and Miss Ethel Lucretia Olcott, already famous to *Cadenza & Crescendo* readers, and soon – after their discovery of astrology – to be more famously known as Zarh Myron Bickford and Vahdah Olcott-Bickford. While this is the only record of Carl Jansen and Vahdah Olcott-Bickford meeting in person, they would soon begin a correspondence, as both were Mertz devotees and wholly dedicated to "playing the guitar properly."

Thus, Olcott-Bickford witnessed Jansen performing on his harp guitar, and surely must have imagined how he would play Mertz and other expanded range repertoire on this instrument. Interestingly, however, the topic never once came up in their letters. Undoubtedly, they each knew the others' stance and chose to remain civil about it...to each other. In print, however, it was a different matter. Olcott-Bickford made it clear in her *Crescendo* column and performances that she considered the harp guitar completely unnecessary.

Jansen persevered, and wrote an article on the benefits of *his* harp guitar in the *Crescendo's* March 1918 issue:

His instrument having just five sub-basses, he tried to make a case for his easier instrument (the "twelve extra basses" harp guitar was the Gibson, and by this time had just ten basses, not twelve – which Walter Boehm and others occasionally wrote about). Jansen's tuning echoed the harp guitars of Chris Knutsen and the first Dyers, which were advertised as "being able to play in any key" – as Jansen hints at here. He mentions Mertz's and others' use of floating basses. (Note that he repeats the Sor error that many still make even today.

THE HARP-GUITAR

By Carl Jansen

So many articles have been written about the guitar with the twelve extra basses, that I thought I would submit a few lines concerning my experience on the harp-guitar with only five extra strings. I consider this instrument most practical of all, being of the ordinary concert size; might also state that I have played it for the past twenty years.

These five extra basses, namely, *D*, *C*, *B*, *A* and *G*, are often used as octaves, giving a rich, full tone. This instrument is a trifle harder for the right hand, but a great deal easier for the left. If one is playing in flats, all that is necessary is to tune the *D* to *E* flat, *B* to *B* flat, and so on. In Germany and Austria, they have put four and five extra strings on a small guitar, known as the Terz guitar. It is easy to perform on such a small instrument and the additional basses bring out brilliant volume of tone.

I use my harp-guitar continually for solo work. There is no strain on the right hand, as the body of the instrument is similar to the ordinary six-stringed one, being well proportioned.

Old masters like Mertz, Legnani, Edw. Bayer-Gardana, used and wrote for guitar with extra basses as can be proved in their best solo pieces, and F. Sor had one extra bass on his guitar.

Several guitarists have attempted playing Op. 65 by Mertz on the ordinary guitar, but the effect was lost as the extra contra-basses written, were not to be had on the instrument. In Legnani's arrangement of Overture to "William Tell," so well as "Souvenir De Emi" by Edw. Bayer, the music is written for the extra basses. Now, what kind of solo work can we do without the harp-guitar?

(Sor never played a 7-string; the assumption stems from Coste's own Sor method where he rearranged some of Sor's piece for his heptacorde.) In this fairly innocuous and accurate piece, Jansen thus manages to not-so-subtly belittle all the 6-string guitarists (from Foden to Olcott-Bickford) who had long rebuffed the harp guitar.

Now we're going to jump forward to 1931 for a minute, as that's when the BMG community *finally* got a look at Jansen's original harp guitar.

This March 1931 *Crescendo* profile includes a provided photograph that dates from much earlier, and Jansen's harp guitar is earlier yet. It is likely his original (and for three decades, *only*) harp guitar, a 6-string converted a bit before 1900. (I would be glad if someone could identify the original 6-string model.) In his 1918 Harp Guitar article, he mentions playing a 5-bass instrument for "the past twenty years" (so, c.1898). In the February 1931 *Crescendo* "Recitals" section the editor states specifically that "Mr. Jansen plays a guitar with five sub-bass strings, which he has used for the past thirty-six years with great success." This would indicate the likelihood that there was only the one instrument, and the date of its first use was c.1895.

So, it seems that Jansen created his own harp guitar, rather than acquiring something already built. Remember that Knutsen and Dyer instruments were several years away, so a harp guitar with just five sub-basses was not common – twelve and sometimes six being more the norm. It's also clear that Jansen was specifically interested in the music – and presumably, imagined sound – of the early/mid 1800s European guitarists. So, modifying a readily available gut-strung 6-string was likely preferable to obtaining one of the larger-bodied harp guitars strung in heavy silk & steel strings.



CARL W. F. JANSEN

Carl W. F. Jansen

Mr. Jansen was born in Norway in 1868, but at the age of nine years his parents removed to Sweden, where Mr. Jansen remained until he was seventeen. During his childhood, he was profoundly interested in music, but it was not until he reached the age of eighteen, that he procured a guitar.

Mr. Jansen arrived in America at the age of eighteen, after working his passage as a seaman, and immediately began to search for music and books to follow up his ambition to become a proficient guitarist, using several that were written by teachers who were not fundamentally guitarists and afterwards changing to the more scholarly works of Mertz, Giuliani and other classic guitar writers and virtuosi.

In spite of the discouragement on all sides, Mr. Jansen kept right on practicing, and soon realized his ambition, for to-day he is regarded as one of our few great American guitarists, and has a remarkable repertoire of classic and standard music for his chosen instrument. As a composer, he is well known and enjoys the distinction of having his works published

both in America and in Europe.

In 1903, Mr. Jansen was the soloist at the American Guild convention at Philadelphia, and also in 1912 at the Chicago convention, where he also played the *terz* guitar accompanied by a string quartet.

A kindly gentleman and a thorough musician is Mr. Jansen, and we are glad to have the opportunity of presenting his likeness in this issue.

Jansen would eventually come to own an instrument perhaps better suited to his yearnings, if only a 6-string. In the early 1900s his friend, pioneer guitar and mandolin historian Philip J. Bone gifted him an early 1800s unlabeled guitar supposedly formerly owned by Matteo Carcassi. It was described in the July 1907 Cadenza by Jansen's friend A. H. Newcomb – a fascinating letter that must be taken with a huge grain of salt:

Guitar Formerly in the Possession of Matteo Carcassi.

Editor THE CADENZA:

The following is a description of Matteo Carcassi's guitar, now in the hands of my friend and teacher, Mr. C. W. F. Jansen of Chicago. This guitar was purchased from the private secretary and confidential friend of the late Squire Benthall, of Silsoe, Bedfordshire, England. This gentleman was a pupil of Carcassi and purchased the guitar from him in 1849.

Description: Length from tip of head to end of body, 36 inches; greatest width across table, 11½ inches; diameter of sound hole, 3¾ inches; greatest depth of ribs, 4 inches; length of neck (fingerboard side) from nut to body, 11¾ inches.

The guitar is made of satinwood, of a golden-yellow varnish, after the style of a violin back, and is in good condition. It has had a modern machine head put on in place of the original pegs, and this machine head bears a French mark at the top of the brass plates, Lon & Fils. The sides of the ribs and the back are decorated, and the edges of the instrument have fancy inlayings which on the table are continued on the fingerboard and finished there.

The bridge appears not to be the original, as the sound-board bears marks of a bridge with scroll or fretwork at each end. The present bridge is of ebony, inlaid with pearl. The only flaw on the instrument is a slight crack on the right-hand rib; this is about three inches long but has been well repaired.

The table is unvarnished and of fine, regular grain, and shows deep finger and thumb indentations from the right hand of its player till they are nearly worn through the table under the strings, which shows the instrument has had considerable playing from a powerful player. These worn indentations are, of course, between the sound hole and bridge. A peculiar feature of this guitar, which explains the wear of right hand to be in one position, is that there is hardly any perceptible difference in its tone, whether picked by the right hand between the bridge and sound hole or nearer the twelfth fret.

The guitar is evidently of Italian make, if not a Stradivarius, for its frets from the twelfth fret are inserted in the sound-board. Its outlines compare with the best cuts and descriptions of Stradivarius' models; it shows signs of having at different times two labels which have been detached. The instrument contains its regular round and powerful tone. The case is the original one for the guitar, and was the usual style in Europe eighty or one hundred years ago.

This guitar was recently presented to Mr. Jansen by his esteemed friend, Mr. Philip J. Bone, of Luton, England.

Very truly, A. H. NEWCOMB.

Early guitar expert Erik Hofmann and I both believe this surviving 6-string in the family (below) *may* be the very instrument in question, though it is not at all what was described by Jansen's friend in the Cadenza article below.



Whether or not it came from Carcassi or his student, it had certainly been extensively modified. Erik says:

"It's an odd one altogether: the bridge doesn't match the body, and the body doesn't match the head. The bridge seems to have the same inlay that some guitars by Coffe have, but the body is about twenty years older than that kind of bridge.

"The instrument described in the article, despite the author claiming that it is "evidently of Italian make," would be a typical French guitar. Satinwood was only used in French guitar-making (assuming that the author is at least right about this being satinwood) and the "Lon & Fils" machines are in fact "Eon & fils," one of the Mirecourt-based makers of tuning machines. It is interesting that he speaks of "marks of a bridge with scroll," because this brings the extant guitar back in the game.

"So here's my (non-definitive) conclusion: the guitar described by the author is indeed the surviving instrument, which is in fact a guitar made in Mirecourt circa.1810, fitted with a new Coffe-style bridge, two additional frets on the soundboard and a new Panormo-style head with French machines. As for the satinwood, I very much doubt it is that, because it was mostly used a little bit later, and much more in Paris than in Mirecourt. It's more likely to be plain maple or lime, which the author mistook for satinwood because of the color of the varnish."

Jansen may have played his newly-acquired antique instrument in concert, and thankfully appears to have resisted adding a bass neck to it. Indeed, it seems he would spend his entire guitar playing career without anything close to a true Scherzer-style harp guitar. Such instruments were extremely rare in America, if not unknown.



At left, in the February 1902 *Cadenza*, transplanted German guitarist "Mr. J. G. Schroeder, harp-guitarist and soloist" uses a Viennese 3-bass instrument. Interestingly, Schroeder was also described as "the well-known guitar manufacturer of New York City" and a former student of Luigi Mozzani (prior to Mozzani's own efforts with floating basses).

As a *Cadenza* reader, Jansen must have felt pangs of jealousy at the East Coast competitor who had the luxury to travel to and from Vienna and Berlin searching for antique musical instruments. Schroeder even described having attempted to visit Mertz' widow in 1903, sadly learning of her own recent death.

The Jansen Family

Carl W. F. Jansen's wife was Patronelle "Nellie" Pierson (at right, with Carl in the 1930s), born in Sweden on November 29, 1869 and died in 1964. They had six children: Harry, Elsie, Walter, Ruth, Garnet and Gladys.



Left: The first four children, c.1904.



According to Elsie's granddaughter Mindy Debes, "Elsie and her siblings Harry, Walter and Ruth had a fond regard for each other. In the 1930s they lived in different cities, but when they were together, they had a great time. There was a lot of laughing, singing, joke telling and impersonations when they were together. They would do impressions of old Swedes that they

knew – making up funny names that sounded Swedish – Tuquart Bottleson and Tinkon Tinkonson. They would recite an old Scandinavian poem: ‘Ten thousand Swedes went thru the weeds, pursued by one Norwegian...’ They also played the guitar, mandolin and banjo. When they got together, they didn’t need anyone else. They were the performers and the audience.”

Of the musical children, only Elsie seems to have fully dedicated herself to the guitar, performing often in public with her famous father beginning when she was a teenager.

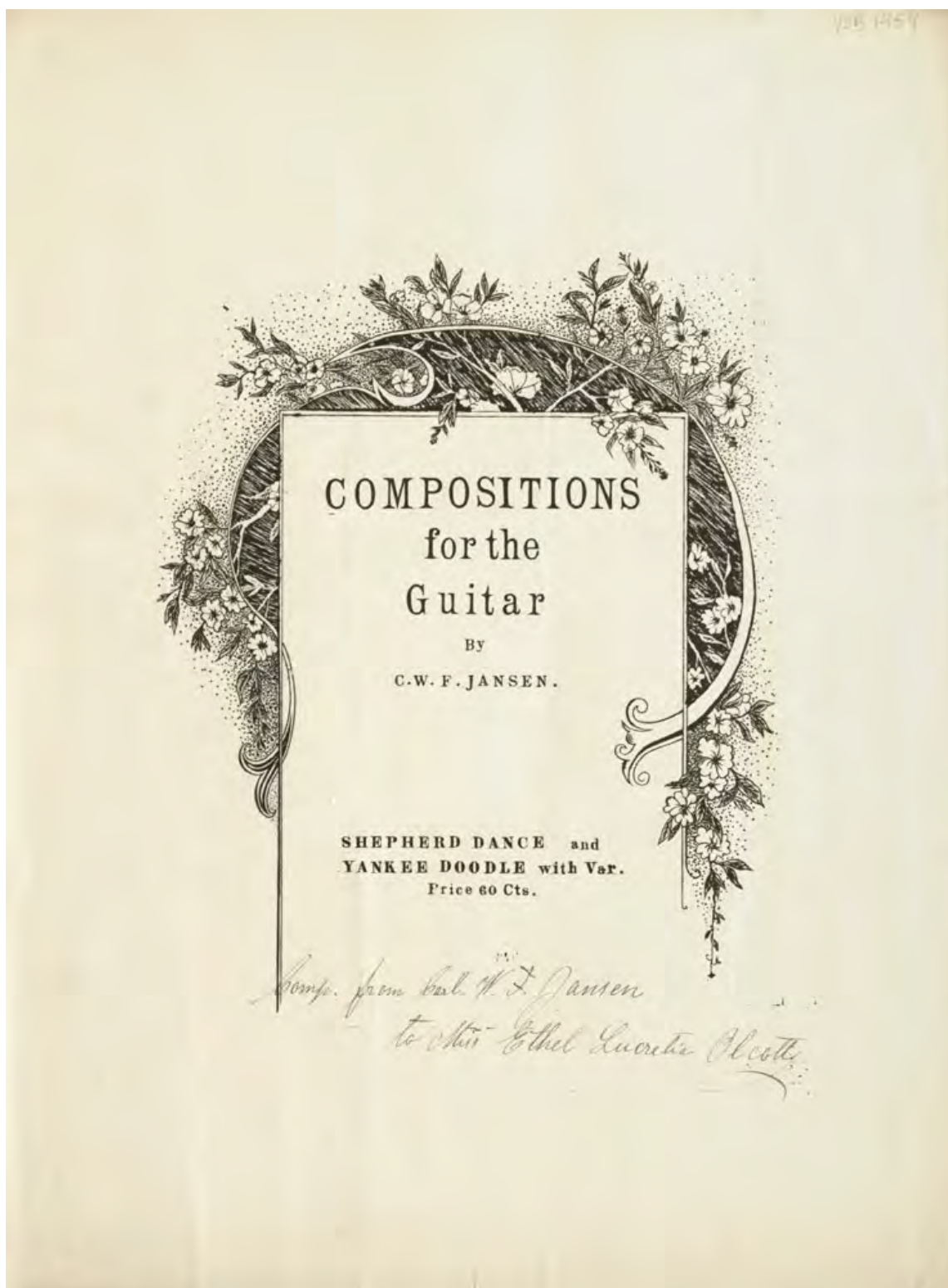


Elsie Henrietta Jansen/Larrison/Cotton (1896-1973), with her guitar late in life.

Carl W. F. Jansen’s Legacy

There are no known recordings of Jansen, and his images here seem to be all that survive. His many recital listings in *Cadenza* and *Crescendo* and his three featured profiles prove that he was a well-regarded amateur and – to those paying attention – one of the very few serious practitioners of the “classical” harp guitar.

He was also a composer, whose pieces can be located today for those willing to look. His first published piece was “Beyond Good By” (sic) in 1900.



He self-published his next two pieces in this 1905 folio. Five years later, Cadenza published his "Norwegian Air" in 1910.

GUITAR or
HARP GUITAR SOLO

To my Daughter Elsa

AT DUSK

A Study

.30

CARL W. F. JANSEN

Andante sostenuto

Moderato

Play notes or chords marked x with thumb

Copyright 1913 by H.F. Odell & Co.

His 1913 study, dedicated to Elsie, was his only piece specified "Guitar or Harp Guitar solo." As with all American harp guitar notation of the time, the optional sub-basses to be played are marked underneath with an "8" (denoting "an octave below") – in this case, just C and D.

In 1920, his Prelude in E Major was included in an Italian guitar composition folio published in Milan. Other non-dated remnants of his original sheet music remaining with the family include "Summer Breezes; Mazurka," "Moonlight," and (curiously, another Milan publication) "Elsie: Preludio per Chitarra."

In Robert Coldwell's mind, Jansen's lasting legacy is his remarkable and valuable collection of original guitar music...if only he can find it!

After Carl Jansen's death in 1936, his widow Nellie wrote Vahdah Olcott Bickford to offer her any and all of her husband's extensive and rare collection of guitar music. Despite her request for the return of the typed list, Bickford kept it – and lucky for us, as it was thus preserved when she donated her collection to the IGRA in Northridge, CA.

CWJ. VOB. JUL. 05. 1937

CARL JANSEN
SAWYER, MICHIGAN

(14)

July 5-1937

My dear Mrs. Bickford:

I want to thank you for your lovely letter and could not answer sooner, but have had a gentleman from Chicago sort out the music. Am enclosing a list of the most important music I have. If you are interested in buying any of it, please give me your offer.

I also would appreciate if you could return the list to me.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Carl Jansen

When Robert first saw the list, he was amazed by the volume and rarity of Jansen's personal library, including several unpublished, handwritten manuscripts by Mertz and others. Like I, his second thought was *why would Bickford not buy the collection?!*

Players of this style and era are likely salivating at this list, which incidentally includes works by most of those guitarists

*All my best
my own value*

VICTOR MAGNIEN
Op. 5 Duo Concertant for Guitar and Violin.
6 Duo Concertant for Guitar and Violin.

GOTTFRIED WEBER
Op. 2 Variations for Guitar and Violoncello or Flute.

ALEX STIEVENARD.
Op. 48 "Ah Vous dirai-je Maman etc." Varie pour Guitarre avec Accompagnement de 2 violons et Violoncelle.

CHARLES BLUM.
Op. 64 #1. Le Bouquet. Trois Nocturnes pour Flute Violon et Guitarre.

FRANZ GR. SEEGER.
Op. 14 Bravour Sonate for Piano and Guitar.

JGN. PLEYEL.
Six Sonatines.

J. N. DE BOBRIWICZ.
Op. 6. Four Mazurkas of Chopin, arranged for guitar solo.
Introduction and Variations on the Polish air Ja ciebie niezapomne

FELIX HORETZKY.
Brilliant Variations from the Ballet Nina. (for one or two guitars)

N. PAVLISTCHEFF .
Op. 41. Nocturne for Basse-Guitar.

S. MOLITOR
Funeral March,
DUNST. ETIENNE
Opus 5. Caprice, dedicated to Legnani.

W. MATIEGA. Grand Sonata. (Copied in Pen and ink; Very legible)

FRANCOIS PFEIFER.
Op. 18 Second Grande Polonaise.

Auswahl de Beliebtesten Tange Also marked Souvenir a St. Petersburg.
by JOS. LABITZKY.

HENRY KOLHLER.
Op. 89 Sonate Facile. for Guitar and Piano.

C. C. BUTTINGER.
Sonate de. Hern von Seidl

who used floating basses – Pavlistchev, Molitor, Regondi, Mertz, Legnani and Giuliani (note the “Nocturne for Basse-Guitar” by N. Pavlistcheff).

ANTON DIABELLI--X

Op. 63 Serenate for two guitars.
Sach Deutsche for Flute or Violin & Guitar.

GIULIO REGONDI.

Op. 22. 2nd Air Varie.
23 Introduction & Caprice
20 Fete Villageoise
Nocturne (First Page practically all missing)

FERDINANDO CARULLI

Piccola Fuga (Duet)
Op 155 Andante varie et Rondeau. aus de Sonate in As dur Op 26 von Beethoven
107 Solo Varie. (for two guitars)

MATEO CARCASSI

Op. 35 Fantasia La Fiancee.

J. K. MERTZ.

Opera Revue 22 Nabucodnosor (Verdi)
Opus 65 Fantasia Hongroise
Fantasia Originale
Le Gondolier.

Grand Fantasia Original (in handwriting of Miss Josephine Mertz)
Opera Revue 15 Die Zigeunerin (Belfe) (Two copies)
16 La Favorita (Donizetti) (Mertz)
L'Elisir d'Amour, for Piano and Guitar by J. K. and Josephine
Fantasia
"Gruss an Wien" (Greetings to Vienna. Dur for Guitar and Piano
by J. K. Mertz and Josephine Mertz.

PL. J. BLOUVIER.

Overture dell Italiana in Algeri, (Rosini) for Guitar, Flute,
Violin and Violincello.
Duo Simphonique for two guitars.

RIGOT X

Introduction et Theme Varie.
Dieuxieme Fantasia
Polonaise de Societe precedee d'une Introduction.

J. N. HUMMEL. X

Pot Pouri for Piano and Guitar (Op. 55)
Op. 53 Concert for Guitar and Piano. (Guitar Part only)

CARKI NARUA DE WEBER, Divertimento facile for Guitar and Piano. Op. 38

LUIGI LEGNANI---

Op. 202 Andante and Allegro from William Tell.
--3 Gran Ricreario o Studio (Solo)
224 Due Divertimenti (Solos)
204 Rondoletto (Blueprint)

NICOLO PAGANINI

Op. 2 Six Sonatas for Violin and Guitar. (Oeuv 2)
3 Three Quartets for Violin, Alto, Guitar and Violincello. (Complete)
4 Three Quartets for Violin, Alto, Guitar and Violincello. (First
Quartet only.

MAURO GIULIANI X

Op. 70 Third Concert- (Parts for Clarinette, 1st & 2nd Oboe, 1st & 2nd
Tromba, 1st and 2nd Fagotto, Timpani 1st & 2nd
Corno, Flute, 1st & 2nd Violin, Basso and Violin-
cello, 1st Viola)

70 Third Concert Terz Guitar Part

70 Third Concert Piano Accompaniment. (Two copies)

19 Serenade for Guitar, Violin & Violincello
31 Third Potpourri
28 Second Potpourri
36 Grand Concert for Guitar with accompaniment of two Violins,
Alto and Violincello

38 Six Variations sur L'air - Schiefert und a Reindl.

65 Grand Quintetto for Guitar and Piano.

67 Grand Potpourri for two Guitars.

82 Grand Serenade for Flute or Violin & Guitar

84 Variations for Flute or Violin with Guitar or Piano accompani-
ment. (No piano part)

130 Concert Variations for two Guitars.

150 Gran Sonata Eroica

-- Grand Concert Duo for Piano and Guitar M. Giuliani and J. Moschelles

Sonata (Possibly Opus 15)

Overture from the Opera La Clemenza di Tito of Mozart.

Second Polonoise of M. Mayseder, arranged for Violin or Flute &
Guitar

103 Introduction & Variations on a favorite Waltz, with accompaniment
for two violins, Alto and Violincello.

EMILIA GIULIANI

Belliniana ossia Vari Pezzi tratti dalle opere di Bellini.

MAURO GIULIANI- Opus 30.-- Premier Grand Concerto, with parts for 1st & 2nd
Violins, Viola, Violincello and Guitar Solo.

Robert came up empty at IGRA, though he found a couple of other manuscripts that Jansen had loaned to Bickford, similarly never having been returned. The mystery deepened when he and I simultaneously received from the Jansen family a letter from Carl's daughter Elsie written to a niece in 1967...asking for help in getting rid of the same list of music!

A. L. WEISS

Variations on a favorite Theme

F. BATISTINI. Potpourri for two guitars. Op. 9.

LEONARD SCHULZ.X

Fantasia on the waltz Gabriellen of Strauss. Copied in pen and Ink
and marked unpublished.

Piece de Societe and Serenade in E. Major tuning. Pen and ink copy
marked unpublished.

Fantasia on a Walts by Strauss Reichstadt.

HEAVY PASTEBOARD COVER, containing copies of various pieces, in pen and ink.
by Zani de Ferranti, J. K. and Josephine Mertz,, many of which
are marked unpublished.

The Mandolin & Guitar by Philip L. Bone.

April 8 1967

My dear Dot

I just was forever, getting a copy of this music listed. Needed typing paper and also carbon, but would forget it each time I was at the store.

Your grandmother Nellie, did sell one of the selections listed, which I don't know. At the time she sold it, Larry was in hi-school and studying Spanish, and he translated the letter, as he could read it. She sold that score for \$125.00, for which she purchased a head-stone for grand-dad's (My father)- grave, on which she had the inscription "FOREVER WITH THE LORD." In all those years- I never got around to asking her which should be crossed off the list. I could go thru the music some fine day, and see that all is intact etc.

I have no idea what to do with all of it- as some surely would be quite valuable. On one is a date- 4-23-59. And that is not 1959, but 1859.

Years back, dad did correspond with a woman guitar teacher who now lives in Los Angeles. She and dad wrote back and forth a lot- and I don't know if you ought to call on her sometime, when you have the time to spare. Her name is Vahdah Bickford. If you do call on her, she will remember very definitely Carl W F Jansen, and introduce yourself- his grand-daughter. This is only date I am giving you- in case you care to get involved in this music. She might be able to give you information etc. And most likely, will be amazed to learn of the above.

I won't make any more comment, until you let me know, if you have the time, to check up on this project.

Had a letter from Laura- I think she is quite miserable with arthritis - but the sunny climate in California and also in Florida are recommended for that ailment. Just can't give in to it- and exercise as much as possible, is best. George Larrison just wouldn't move more than he had too- and took so much medicine. He was Hank's brother.

Had a four day visit over in Cocoa, and came home very sad and tired and weary. Circumstances are in a sad state over there, and I'm praying for help from on HIGH to get their lives straightened out. A church-going family is wonderful with children in Sunday School, etc. A child misses much in life, without this contact.

Going to ring off for today. Trust you don't think me too persistent- but I really have to do something about this music, if only a collector's item.

Thanks for always being so sweet to write and write. I sure

*american guitar
to write
asked Bob Bickford
Holly Hill
Hollywood, Cal.
taped to
back of letter
all the be
cemetary??
den she
uried a*

*mentions
be. 2031
Holly Hill
Hollywood, Cal.*

*envelope she wrote
"Bickford 467-2031"
probably her phone #!!*

love you, loads of love Aunt Elsie

Comparing the lists, Robert noticed only the Bone book and Bobrowicz's op. 20 score missing. However, he is certain that the Bobrowicz was *not* the score that Nellie sold for \$125 (sometime prior to her death in 1962). Nor does it sound like Elsie had gone through the collection for what actually remained (indeed, she may have just copied from another original duplicate list). Note how she wrote Bickford's old phone number just in case she might have changed her mind! (Bickford lived until 1980.) Alas, the family does not know what became of the collection and Robert continues his hunt.

Jansen's Harp Guitars

At right is the custom harp guitar we saw above which was made from an unidentified American 6-string guitar in the latter 1890s. The image below in the family includes the “Carcassi guitar” and what is *possibly* the original harp guitar.



The perspective makes it rather difficult to tell, but if the bass tailpiece was removed (leaving no marks), we could be looking at the same instrument, with its significantly slanted bridge and severe “pinky wear” (Jansen insisted on keeping it on the soundboard).

By early 1931, Carl Jansen had moved to Michigan, settling on a farm in Bridgman. He still continued to perform, with solo appearances listed into 1931. He also had a brand new harp guitar!



Jansen late in life with his final harp guitar.

The remarkable instrument remains fairly intact today, in the possession of a descendant. But who built it?

It is once again clearly a modified six-string guitar, and this time we can identify it: a Larson brothers!

As Jansen was a guitar-loving Swede living in Chicago, it is perhaps unsurprising that he would cross paths with Chicago's highly regarded luthiers, the Swedish Larson brothers, Carl and August.



The body of Jansen's harp guitar sure looked like one of their then-standard new 6-strings, and Larson descendent and expert Bob Hartman agreed. Blowing up the first photo from the family, we saw the hollow tube and thin tension adjusting rod that formed the basis of their 1930 patent.

When I asked for additional photos, owner Karl's mother Cindy Larrison sent this:



It was exactly as we thought: a Larson brothers "Prairie State" brand guitar, listing their 1904 patent No. 765,019 (laminated braces and neck strip) and No. 1,768,261, which covered the internal metal support tube and tension-adjusting rod. Though they had filed the latter on Feb 25, 1927, the stamp signifies now having been granted. Thus, this guitar was built sometime after June 24th, 1930. Ms. Larrison was also able to make out the faint serial number – "642" – which according to Bob Hartman's records would put this in 1931. Based on its appointments and provided measurements of 15" wide body, Bob could also identify this as a Style 425 Auditorium model.

As Jansen would move to Michigan by February of that year, I'd like to think that he ordered this instrument while still in Chicago and came back to pick it up later, Bridgman being just 90 miles around the tip of lake Michigan.

The next question is, who added the sub-bass string neck and new bridge? Though Bob Hartman thinks it was someone else's work (especially the bridge), I still believe it might have been the Larson brothers, doing a completely custom job at Jansen's request. Notably, he once again chose to start with a nice American 6-string guitar body (and the Prairie State was a nice as they come), then add a narrow support neck for his preferred five basses.

Below are additional photos from the Larrisons that illustrate the following:

The bridge is a simplified version of one that the Larsons had been installing on their hollow arm Dyer harp guitars in the previous decades, while the metal connecting bracket between the two headstocks another Dyer feature. Rather than five-in-a-row bass tuners, here, the headstock was made shorter by moving two tuners to the opposite side.

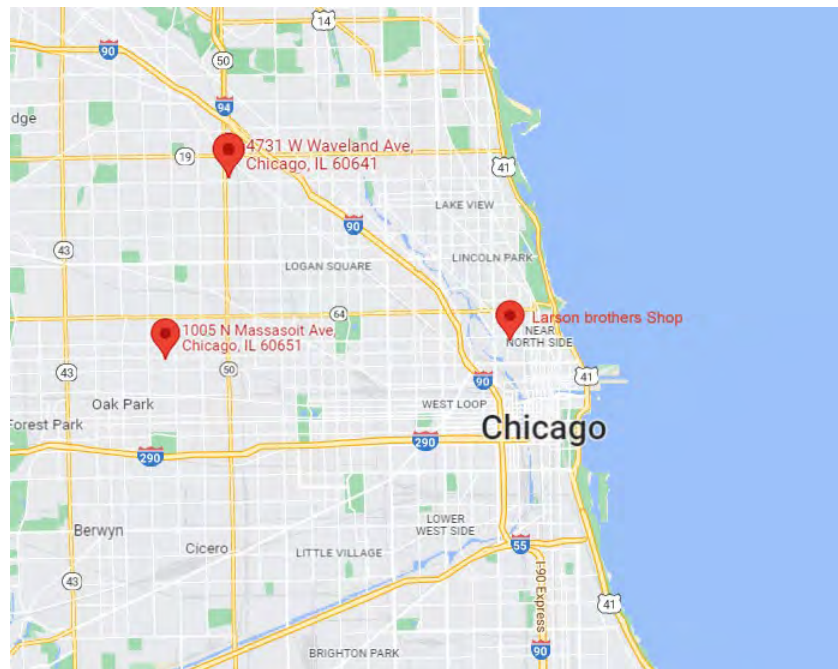
Though any number of Chicago guitar builders could have made the addition, it seems equally likely that Jansen requested the Larsons do the customization – and probably immediately on a then brand-new Prairie State.



Curious as to Jansen's proximity to the Larson's shop I looked up the addresses. In the 1910 & 1920 Chicago censuses, Jansen is at 4731 Waveland Ave. In the 1930 census (and at least by 1927, per his Bickford correspondence) he was at 1005 N. Massasoit Ave. Each residence is around six miles from Larson's shop at 536 W. Elm St. Of course, there was also the connection in their ancestry, and the men may have met at church or other neighborhood activities. Though Jansen likely found work as a house painter for most of his life, it's encouraging that in 1920 his census entry gives "Musician, Theatre" and even in 1930 he is a "Musician, Music industry" (in 1920 he was listed again as "Painter, House").



1005 N. Massasoit Ave, Chicago, today



Interestingly, Jansen acquired a second, smaller custom terz 6-string at the same time which appears to be another Prairie State, this time with a stained maple body and a much shorter scale than their smallest standard size (about 23-7/16 by my photo calculations).



At some point while they were still in excellent condition, his two instruments were photographed in front of Carl Jansen's bust by the family.

Again I find myself wondering at Jansen's instrument choice. While fantastic American guitars, these were intended for silk & steel strings (or even full steel strings by some players). Yet, the

small 6-string appears to have a thick nylon G string (third from the treble side; this would have been gut in Carl's time). Jansen was still performing the music of his beloved old pre-classical masters, so that makes sense. He was also at that time fully aware of Segovia, though consistently critical of his tone (his many letters to Ms. Bickford complained that Segovia did not rest his little finger on the top, which he considered absolutely essential for good tone). Fully enmeshed in all the pros and cons in the burgeoning modern classical guitar world, it makes no sense to me that Jansen never explored obtaining a guitar and harp guitar more suitable for that music, whether Spanish, Viennese or German. Surely, his contacts overseas could have found him something – and the Larsons could've easily added a bass neck to anything he brought them.

To me, this just helps illustrate the “American aesthetic” in turn-of-the-last-century guitars and harp guitars. Even with thousands of musical immigrants and given every opportunity, American players and builders simply refused to be influenced by earlier European tradition! (This surprising and almost unbelievable conclusion is what formed the topic of my book/catalog *Floating Strings: The Remarkable Story of the Harp Guitar in America*.)

Bethany Beach

Carl W. F. Jansen performed publicly until early 1931 and remained in Crescendo's Teachers Directory until October 1933. He died of coronary thrombosis on April 27th, 1937 in Bethany Beach (Sawyer), Michigan. Curious about Bethany Beach, I found these interesting stories about the extended Jansen family – among a section of Chicago's Swedish community – creating their own private resort community in Michigan. They provide an interesting picture of early America in the Chicago area and of course the guitarist in his private life. On their private genealogy site, Mindy Debes writes:

“In 1910, the Jansens would take the train (the Pere Marquette Railroad) from Chicago to Sawyer, Michigan. They would then hire a horse and buggy for the last mile and a half. Family members that worked during the week would travel Friday night and would return on a Sunday evening train. When busses came into use in the 1920s, one would take the South Shore electric train from downtown Chicago to Michigan City, Indiana, then change to a bus, which would let them off at a highway corner near Bethany. Lucky families (mothers and children) would spend all summer at Bethany, and the fathers would work in Chicago all week and go to Bethany for the weekend.

“As cars became more dependable, people would drive, going south out of Chicago, through Calumet City, Whiting, Indiana Harbor, Gary, and Michigan City, and when they got to New Buffalo, they knew they were almost there. The trip would take four to five hours. Going home on Sunday evenings was hazardous. Car lights were dim and brakes were poor. Street lights weren't bright and highway signs couldn't always be seen in the dark.

Traffic might be heavy and tempers short. The traffic from Bethany on Sunday evenings was small, but the traffic down the highway going to Chicago could get very heavy as each beach community added to the group. Towns like Saugatuck, Grand Haven, Benton Harbor, St. Joe and dozens of others added their cars throughout the 1920s and 30s. Accidents were common. Auto safety glass was still years away and people would be terribly cut by flying glass. Tires were not as sturdy as today, and punctures and blow outs were to be expected. Two or three spare tires were carried at the rear, along with side mounts and tires carried on the front fender wells.

“Sometime during this period the Jansen’s had a Haynes open touring car, a big, powerful car capable of carrying most of the family and their goods and supplies tied to the running boards. The car had an air compressor powered by the car engine to pump up the tires when needed. Extra oil was carried, and the oil was changed every 500 miles.

“There were two properties in Michigan, which were the summer homes of the Jansen and Larrison families (Carl Jansen’s daughter Elsie married Henry Axel Larrison sometime before 1921). In Michigan, about six miles north of the Indiana state line, there was a private community of cottages nestled in tall woods and separated from Lake Michigan by 100 foot sand dunes. The town was called Bethany Beach. It had no mayor or commissioner, but was an association owned and operated by its inhabitants. It was formed by members of a Chicago church, probably the Swedish Baptist. Around 1910 some of the church members arranged to buy 25 acres of forested land from a Michigan farmer. They drew up an association agreement, and the basic requirement was membership in the church. A member of the association could purchase a share for \$100 and would be entitled to select a lot and construct a dwelling. The initial intent of most of the shareholders was staying there on summer weekends and summer vacations. The town was about three blocks square. The streets were sand, unpaved into the late 1970s.

“Eventually there were around sixty cottages and a general store with a gas pump, where residents picked up their mail and bought groceries. There was a wooden hotel for visiting association members without dwellings and their church guests. There was a wooden church for the community gatherings and church services. A loud dinner bell which could be heard throughout the community was rung for meals at the hotel and all church services.

“The streets were numbered, but the cottages were not. They were named by their owners. Some were named after towns in Sweden. Some were whimsical. The Jansen’s named their dwelling Castlewood. It had several tall tulip poplar trees in the backyard. It started as a simple weekend cabin, a 20 x 20 wooden structure with a sloped roof painted green on the outside to blend in with the forest. Instead of windows, shutters were hinged along the top edge of the wall so they could be swung out for ventilation. Window screening was fastened across the opening to keep out insects. Seven foot partition walls were put up inside to form four small rooms, stopping just short of the ceiling to help with air circulation. This would serve the family of six. Tents could be pitched for the boys, and the girls could have some privacy in the small rooms. Over the next twenty-five years, rooms would be enlarged, windows installed, a front porch added and closed in, and a 12’ x 12’ basement dug for a furnace, which made it inhabitable as a winter residence.

“When Bethany Beach was first settled, there was no electricity. Kerosene lamps provided illumination in the tents, cottages and cabins. Under the canopy of trees at night, there was no light, only your feeble flashlight to navigate the sandy streets. If you passed a dwelling lit inside by a kerosene lamp, that helped you find your way home. All of the water came from a hand operated pump outside of the cabin back door, carried into the kitchen in a pail. Water was heated on the same kerosene stove that cooked the meals, made the coffee and baked the bread. The men and children had a wonderful time in the little bit of heaven, but the mothers and grandmothers had to do all of their regular work and housekeeping without the appliances they had at home in Chicago.”

One of Mindy’s ancestors also reminisced:

“When I was a kid, I thought there was no better place to live than Michigan. At Bethany Beach, the woodsy village even smelled good. Stepping into the forest at the end of the Jansen’s property was a world of fallen trees with animals living in them, ravines, flowing water from springs clear and cold, and even old Indian trails. Who could deny it? A kid could wander for forever in those woods. Follow the creek to the barrier sand dune and climb over it to the lake, stretching the whole horizon. Carl Jansen’s 12-foot wooden rowboat was high up on the beach, waiting for him. Further along was the second creek that came from the woods. Here the dunes were over 150 feet high. One is called Pike’s Peak. It would take 15 to 20 minutes to climb and 20 seconds to descend. From the top you could see the big ships on the lake.”

Postscript

Carl W. F. Jansen is gone, as is his original customized harp guitar, and quite likely his rowboat, along with nearly – but not quite – all memory of him. Thanks to family members and dedicated researchers, his legacy remains – if one knows where to look. His unique Larson harp guitar survives as do his letters to Vahdah Olcott-Bickford...and somewhere out there, a pretty substantial and valuable collection of guitar manuscripts!

Oh, and he finally has his spot in the [Historical Harp Guitar Players Encyclopedia!](#)

Thanks to Robert Coldwell, Brian Torosian, Mindy Debes, Karl & Cindy Larrison, Robert C. Hartman, Randy Klimpert, and Erik Hofmann

About The Author: Creator and Editor of Harpguitars.net Gregg Miner has been fascinated by harp guitars since the early 1970s. He purchased his first instrument (a 1916 red sunburst Gibson) in 1983, then fell in love with the harp guitars of Chris Knutsen when he found his first one in 1988. He collects harp guitars, researches harp guitars, writes about harp guitars, plays harp guitars, produces harp guitar CDs, buys and sells harp guitars, and runs Harpguitars.net, Harp Guitar Music and the Harp Guitar Foundation. You would think that by now he would be sick of harp guitars, but he is not.

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