

Arp Schnitger was one of the most celebrated organ builders of his time. His production was excellent and copious: he built, restored, or enlarged about 170 instruments. He exported instruments to many European countries, among them Holland, England, Spain, Portugal, and Russia. Of these organs, about thirty still exist, either whole or in parts, and the one in Mariana is the only instrument outside Europe.

### **Arp Schnitger Chronology**

- Born into a family of woodworkers from Golzwarden, Oldenburg. First family records appear in 1600. The name probably comes from his craft: carver, "Schnitzer," "Schnitker," "Schnitger."
- Son of Master Arp Schnitger and Katharine Schnitger. The father, a master woodworker, worked at least in the building of some organ cases (records from 1650).
- In 1662, when he was 14 years old, he began to learn his father's trade. He attended school; for he knew some Latin (a book in Latin was found in his library).
- In 1666, he moved to Glückstadt, Holstein (then belonging to Denmark) as an apprentice to his cousin Berendt Huss, an organ builder. Glückstadt was a large cultural center comparable to Hamburg at the time. Schnitger spent five years as an apprentice and then ran the workshop until Huss's death in 1676.
- As an apprentice to Huss, he helped to build the organs of St. Cosmae and St. Wilhaldi in Stade and finished the instrument in St. Wilhaldi after his master's death, on request of his widow. Lightning destroyed the St. Wilhaldi organ in 1727.
- At age 29, he opened a workshop in Stade as an independent master.
- In 1665, he married Gertrud Otte and bought a house in Neuenfelde, near Hamburg.
- He found much work around Stade. Following the tradition, whenever an organ was built, the whole workshop moved to the place, because the organ was practically built inside the church, from the box to the stops to the pipes.
- In 1682, he moved to Hamburg, where, after paying a fee, he made a pledge and became a citizen. Probably the building of the St. Nikolai organ motivated this relocation.
- Of the five children of his first marriage (three men and two women), three became organ builders. Two of them settled in Zwolle in 1720 and built many instruments in Holland, among them the St. Laurenskerk organ in Alkmaar.
- In 24 or 25 July 1719, Arp Schnitger died in Neuenfelde.
- In 1729, Franz Caspar Schnitger died, and in 1734, Hans Jürgen Schnitger.
- Albert Hinsch in Holland, who married Franz Caspar's widow and kept the workshop running, carried on the Schnitger tradition.
- In 1796, Franz Caspar the Young (Arp's grandson) made a society with Freytag, an organ builder, and their company lasted until 1860.