

The following pages are reprinted from Peter Sykes concert program of March 14th, 2004, following the restoration of PUUC's E. & G. G. Hook Tracker Organ

Purchase of the Organ

While taking pride in accomplishing this important restoration, it seems appropriate to think of the meetings and discussions, many no doubt controversial, leading to the purchase of the organ in 1867.

The anticipated cost for the organ was considerable because of the member's determination to buy a quality instrument from the Hook company in Boston (then considered the country's leading organ builder). From letters in the files of the Peterborough Historical Society, it appears that Messrs. T. D. Albert Smith, Timothy K. Ames and Albert S. Scott led the effort, sending letters far and wide to former members of the Unitarian Association who had left the region. Here in Peterborough, they arranged for a Great Party. Contemporary accounts that appeared in the Peterborough Transcript, December 8, 1866, advertised an "Organ Festival and Levee to which the public was respectfully invited, beginning at 5:00 o'clock at the Town Hall, Wednesday Eve, December 12, 1866, proceeds to be applied to the purchase of an organ for the Unitarian Church." The program offered:

Old Folks Concert, Juvenile Singing, Music by the Peterborough Cornet Band, Farmer's Kitchen, Tableau Vivantes, Grab Bag, Gypsy's Tent, Shooting Gallery, &C! Refreshments consisting of Oysters, Pies, Cakes, Tea, Coffee, Ice Cream, Fruits and Confectionery & C. furnished at all hours at reasonable prices. Tickets 25 cents, children under 12 years of age, 15 cents.

The Transcript reviewed the event, commenting especially on "the Old Singers, aged from 50 to 80 who sang old *fage* tunes, popular in their day. The audience generally agreed that there was more heart music in them than in modern tunes where the music is refined away."

The levee raised \$455 and the balance needed came from subscriptions by church members and others in town favorable to the enterprise. The cost of the Hook organ was \$2,600 plus \$321 for "fixtures," a considerable sum for the times. (The total cost of the original brick church building when built in 1825-26 was \$6,141, according to the Morison History of Peterborough).

Times and the value of money both change. The contract price of the present organ restoration was \$166,500, which was raised entirely from members and friends of the church. Funding began early after the organ's troubles became a concern. Arlene Dart, then church organist, was inspired to make a generous gift, establishing a trust fund in 1996, to which members and friends made additions for several years before the organized campaign began in November, 2000. Some \$50,000 had accumulated in the fund by the time the contract for restoration was signed. The balance needed to complete the payments came from a highly successful pledge campaign.

The Reverend Sarah Clark, minister of the church, conducted a service of rededication of the organ on November 2nd 2003, leading to this final act of celebration.

The Restoration of a Musical Treasure

The E. & G. G. Hook Pipe Organ, Op. 419

Peterborough Unitarian Church

Luis Molina, Co-Chair, Historic Organ Restoration Committee

On the Fourth of July, 1867, the people of Peterborough were invited by the members of the Unitarian Society to a "Great Party and Recital" played on a new pipe organ just installed in the handsome brick 1825 church on Main Street.

On March 14, 2004, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the community was invited to attend another recital on this historic musical instrument, celebrating completion of its restoration after nearly 137 years of service.

Built in 1867 by the pre-eminent Boston firm of E. & G. G. Hook, this organ, like so many other fine 19th century instruments, was altered in 1933, to reflect contemporary taste for a big, symphonic sound. Many pipes were altered, others added, and the console and mechanical connections to the pipes removed and replaced by an electro-pneumatic action. All of these changes produced a quite different quality of sound to that of the original Hook instrument. With the passage of time many of these components deteriorated, greatly increasing the cost of maintenance and threatening collapse of the whole system.

Faced with the possibility of losing the use of the organ, in 1997, the church appointed a study group to research the problem and recommend action. The committee began its work by hiring an internationally known expert on historic organs, Barbara Owen of Newburyport, MA. She reported that much of the original Hook organ was still viable - including the handsome American walnut casework, most of the 1867 pipes and the decorative front flats of pipes with their original stenciling. She concluded that, if rebuilt properly, the instrument's special tonal quality could be restored at half the cost of a new instrument of comparable size.

The task force spent two years visiting other churches and organ builders, finally recommending restoration. The church contracted with the highly regarded Andover Organ Company of Methuen, MA, to proceed with the restoration, and in July 2002, skilled artisans of this firm completely dismantled pipes, casing and console, transporting them to their shop in Lawrence, MA. Over the course of a year, they designed and built an entirely new tracker mechanical action and console, and repaired and adjusted pipes and air systems to approximate as closely as possible the authentic Hook character. The restored instrument was returned to its proper place in the balcony of the sanctuary during the summer of 2003, where it resumed its status as a priceless asset to the entire Peterborough Community.

Notes from the Andover Organ Company

In 1867, E. & G. G. Hook installed Opus 419, a two-manual, 12-stop organ in the balcony of the PUUC. This instrument was electrified in 1933 by George W. Reed & Son, with several electric unit chests installed to enlarge the instrument.

Andover retrackerized the organ's key action and installed a new attached console in the Hook style. Four stops were added in the Hook style to the original windchests to make the organ more versatile. The stop action remains electric with new solenoid motors installed and a solid-state combination action by Solid State Organ Systems. The Pedal remains electric on new windchests. The new attached console was built by David Zarges. Ben Mague was in charge of the mechanical portions and Robert Newton was in charge of the tonal aspects.

The organ was dedicated on Sunday, November 2nd during the regular morning service.

STOP LIST

Great

16' Bourdon	Hook	46 Pipes	SW
8' Open Diapason	Hook	58 Pipes	OM, Low 17 in case
8' Melodia	Hook	58 Pipes	OW, Low 17 SW
8' Dulciana	Hook	46 Pipes	OM, Bass 12 fr. Melodia
4' Octave	Hook	58 Pipes	OM
2' Fifteenth	Hook	58 Pipes	OM
II-III Mixture	AOC, New	157 Pipes	OM
8' Trumpet	AOC, New	58 Pipes	Reed, 7 OM Trebles

Swell: 58 notes, CC-a3, expressive

8' Keraulophon	Hook	58 Pipes	OM
8' Stopped Diapason	Hook	58 Pipes	SW, 9 OM Trebles
4' Flute Harmonique	Hook	58 Pipes	OM, Middle C-b2 Harmonic
4' Violina	Hook	58 Pipes	OM
2 2/3' Nazard	Unknown	58 Pipes	M Chimney Flute Low 11 SW, Top 20 OM
2' Flautino	AOC, Old	58 Pipes	OM

Swell: 58 notes, CC-a3, expressive

1 3/5' Tierce	AOC, Old	58 Pipes	OM
8' Oboe	Hook	58 Pipes	Reed, 9 OM Trebles

16' Bourdon Sub Bass	Hook	30 Pipes	SW
8' Violoncello	C& W	30 Pipes	OM
8' Flute	Unknown	12 Pipes	Ext. Sub Bass
4' Principal	AOC	12 Pipes	Ext. Violincello

Couplers

Swell to Great - Great to Pedale - Swell to Pedale

Tremulant (on Swell), Balanced Swell Pedal, Push button combination action by solid state organ systems

Twenty speaking stops, twenty ranks, 1087 pipes.

Abbreviations: S = Stopped, O = Open, C&W = Cole & Woodberry, W = Wood, M = Metal

AOC = Andover Organ Company.