



Notable Vermont Organs



1894 George S. Hutchings Pipe Organ - Opus 344 **Bethany Church U.C.C., Randolph, Vermont**

The organ in Bethany Congregational Church, Randolph, Vermont, was built in 1894 by George S. Hutchings of Boston, Mass., for the Christian Church, West Randolph. It was moved in 1906 from the Christian Church, which stood on the site of the Chandler Music Hall. Bethany Church, a frame building in the "classic" style, was erected in the 1860's and has an exceptionally handsome tower with a bell and a hand-wound Howard clock. In 1891, the interior was considerably altered. The sloping sanctuary floor and semi-circular oak pews were installed to face the organ chamber on what was originally the right side of the room. While regrettable, the alterations were carefully and even tastefully done. No records of early organs have been found. A 2-9 J.W. Steere & Son organ, Opus 318, 1891, was installed, and when the Congregational and Christian churches merged in 1905, the smaller Steers instrument was moved to the Methodist Episcopal Church, which was until 1992 the Masonic Temple. The Steere organ was moved to the Roman Catholic Church in Woodstock, Vt., in 1984, where it exists today. The Hutchings organ is mentioned in the **Herald & News**, a local weekly:

September 28, 1893:

The new pipe organ for the Christian Church is being built by the well known firm of Johnson & Son of Westfield, Mass. and will be put in place as soon as the repairs upon the church which are progressing rapidly, have been completed. Six artists including Mr. Harry Cochrane and one of whom is a lady are from Monmouth, Maine, are this week frescoing the interior and no pains are being spared ...

October 26, 1893:

The Christian Ch. Society has decided not to buy a pipe organ of the Westfield, Mass. firm but will purchase an organ costing \$2800 of George S. Hutchings, an organ dealer in Boston who was here Tuesday to confer with the committee having this matter in charge. The new organ will be 18 ft. high, 11 ft. wide and 8 ft. deep. It will consist of a great organ of 6 stops and 366 pipes, a swell organ of 6 stops and 354 pipes and a pedal organ of 2 stops and 54 pipes. Three couplers, with 4 pedal movements- making a total of 21 stops and 774 pipes. With such an instrument the Christian Ch. choir ought to be able to "make a joyful noise before the Lord."

January 18, 1894:

The elegant new organ for the Christian Church has arrived from the Hutchings Manufactory, Boston, and is being set up by Mr. H. P. Seaver of Springfield, Mass.

January 25, 1894:

The work of setting up and tuning the new pipe organ for the Christian Church is completed, and the instrument now stands ready, under skillfull [sic] fingers, "to raise a mortal to the skies or draw an angel down." The case is of highly finished oak, corresponding with the woodwork of the church, and as the circle is prominent in all

directions of the audience room, the builder, Mr. Geo. S. Hutchings of Boston, has adopted the idea in designing the case, in the front of which is a large semi-circular opening filled with thirteen pipes, tastefully painted in colors ... On either side of this opening are nine pipes, similarly ornamented, and making thirty-one in view, all of which [sic] belong to the open diapason, the loudest and strongest set in the organ. Across these groups of pipes, and near the top, is an oaken bar pierced with circular openings, and the keyboards, two in number, are of the modern style, setting out from the organ, and consequently, more accessible to the organist. That great improvement on the boy-power for pumping, the Ross Motor, made in Troy, has been put in by L.R. Stanley of Boston, and this contrivance, which will always be on hand when wanted, is warranted not to let the wind out of the bellows with a dismal squeak in the middle of a particularly fine voluntary.

February 8, 1894:

An organ recital will be given at the Christian Church next Tuesday night at 8 o'clock. George S. Hutchings, who built the new organ, will send a fine musician to show up the organ and give people a rare treat in music. Added to this will be a program consisting of chorus, quartet, duet, solo and saxophone music and readings. Only 400 people can be seated ...

The article closes with a list of the organ selections to be played at the concert, for which 25 cents admission was charged: Communion in E minor - Batiste; Cantilene Pastorale and Elevation in A Flat - Guilman; Largo - Handel; Allegretto - Tours; Andante - Lefébure-Wély; Gavotte - Thomas; Traumerei and Romance - Schumann; Intermezzo - Mascagni; Pilgrim's Chorus - Wagner; and Triumphal March - Costa. On February 15, 1894, the **Herald & News** reviewed the event:

The organ recital given by F. V. Clarke of Boston with the magnificent new organ ... was thoroughly enjoyed by one of the largest audiences of the season, between four and five hundred tickets being taken. The program was the same as given in the last issue of the Herald with the addition of one or two organ selections in response to encores. The organ recital was interspersed with a duet, "Moonlight on the Rhine," by Mr. and Mrs. Hayes; song, "An Old Garden," by Mrs. C. H. Tewksbury; reading by Galen Fish, "A Boy's Composition on Noses," and "A Hindu's Dream," in response to an encore; "Tell Her I Love Her So," by Mrs. Hayes; song, "One Sweetly Solemn Thought," by Mrs. J. B. Adams; duet, "The Curfew Bell," by Mrs. Tewksbury and Mrs. Ford. Both songs and recitations were very pleasing, the song by Mrs. Adams being especially applauded. ...

On February 22, 1894, the **Herald and News** published an EXTRA describing the renovated and enlarged Christian Church in much detail and included pastor Rev. George W. Morrow's sermon. The rededicatory services were held on Wednesday afternoon, February 22, 1894 beginning at 2 o'clock with an organ voluntary by Miss Abbie Clarke.

A 1914 "rebuild" by C. H. Belknap probably included the alteration of the 4' Violina to 8' pitch, and the gold-leafing of the case pipes. The installation of the present chandeliers and the arched openings for the organ and side areas were part of major alterations to the building. The electric blower installed in 1920 by the Estey Organ Company cost \$287.00, but the hand-pumping mechanism is still intact. A 1948 redecoration of the auditorium included changing the platform area, the repositioning of the choir, and the installation of an altar with a reredos. The

finish on the oak was removed and wiped with light blue paint and the case pipes were painted a light blue with gold mouths. In 1992, what could have been a disastrous fire was discovered in time. However, the auditorium and organ pipes received extensive smoke damage. The room was redecorated. Because the centennial anniversary of the organ was near at hand, a committee was formed to have restorative work done to the organ during the time that the pipework was being cleaned. The firm of Watersmith of Enfield, N.H., was engaged for the work. The organ was pitched to A-440, slide tuners were installed, and the wind returned to 3" pressure, thus restoring the original brighter-sounding voicing. The casework was again stripped and restored to the former golden oak color, and an oil finish applied. The case pipes were stripped and repainted a medium grey with gold mouths and stenciled bands near the tops, producing a very handsome appearance. A set of Deagan chimes added in 1961 has a small keyboard below the Great manual.

Organists during the past one hundred years have been:

Miss Abbie Clarke	1894
Bessie Woodward Phillips	
Edgar T. Salisbury	
Miss Edith Marcott	1906-1943
Beatrice Perkins	1943-1956
Jean Brigham Montgomery	1956-1960, 1985-1987
Helen Moore	1960-1976
Debra Earle	1976
Verna Mackenzie	1976-1985
Margaret Moore	1987-1988
Marilyn Polson	1989-

STOPLIST

<u>GREAT</u>			<u>SWELL</u>		
Open Diapason	8 ft.	61 pipes	Bourdon (TC)	16 ft.	49 pipes
Dolcissimo	8 ft.	61 pipes	Salicional	8 ft.	61 pipes
Melodia	8 ft.	61 pipes	Stopped Diapason	8 ft.	61 pipes
Octave	4 ft.	61 pipes	Flute Harmonique	4 ft.	61 pipes
Octave Quint	2 2/3 ft.	61 pipes	Violina	4 ft.	61 pipes
Super Octave	2 ft.	61 pipes	Oboe (TC)	8 ft.	49 pipes
			Bassoon	8 ft.	12 pipes
			Tremolo (by hitch-down pedal)		
<u>PEDAL</u>			<u>Combination Pedals</u>		
Bourdon	16 ft.	27 pipes	Forte Great		
Flote	8 ft.	27 pipes	Piano Great		
			Reversible Gt. to Ped.		

Couplers

Swell to Great
Great to Pedal
Swell to Pedal

Blowers Signal

The organ has tracker-action; the keydesk is attached; the Swell division is above the Great and the tops of the outer set of shutters are visible; the Pedal stops are on two chests, the Bourdon being on the left side; the bellows handle is inside the organ chamber; the longest pipes of the Open Diapason and Dolcissimo are in the case with a few "dummies." The Pedal stops are of wood, as are the pipes of the Melodia, Swell Bourdon, and Stopped Diapason. The names of several Hutchings pipe makers and voicers are inscribed on the metal pipes: Putnam Clark, Nicolas Chatelain (trained by Cavaillé-Coll of Paris), F. C. Küpfer, F. W. Pollard, J. Fuchs, and N. S. Taylor. The Dolcissimo pipes bear Hutchings' opus number for his huge organ in St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, New York City. The pipes either never reached New York or were rejected. Bethany's organ cost \$200 per stop and has a replacement value of more than \$185,000! (1994 figure - ed.).

George S. Hutchings

George Sherburne Hutchings was born in Salem, Mass., on December 9, 1835, and died in Cambridge, Mass., on June 1, 1913. During his 77 years, he became one of the foremost organbuilders in American history, designing and building hundreds of large and important instruments for churches and universities throughout the United States, and earning in 1903 an honorary M.A. degree from Yale University. He trained with the famous Boston organbuilders E. & G. G. Hook, and opened his own firm in Boston in 1869, with J. H. Willcox and others, under Dr. Willcox's name. In 1872, the firm name became Hutchings, Plaisted & Co., and after 1884, it continued under the name of Geo. S. Hutchings. In 1901, the firm merged with the Votey Organ Co. of Detroit (formerly Farrand & Votey, which had in 1893 absorbed the Roosevelt Organ Works of New York City) and operated until 1908 as the Hutchings-Votey Organ Co. A disastrous fire in 1904 occasioned a move from Boston to Cambridge, Massachusetts; in 1908, the company moved again to Waltham, now in its turn absorbing the organbuilding establishment of E. W. Lane, and doing business as the Hutchings Organ Company. After George S. Hutchings died, the firm continued for about four years before going out of business.

Notes by E. A. Boadway and L. W. Leonard, 1994

Many thanks to Marilyn Polson, Organist, Bethany Church U.C.C., Randolph, Vermont for making the original brochure available and granting permission to post it online.