

The Church and Society Win the Auction

Anne Krantz, Historian

As the town prepared to auction off the meetinghouse, owners of the pews were required to either remove them or sell them, but not for less than \$100.00. On Saturday, April 14, 1832, the town auctioned the meetinghouse. The Congregational Church and Society won the auction with a bid of \$100.

Nearly four years passed before the meetinghouse history was continued in *Secomb's*. At a church meeting on Jan. 4, 1836 "a committee was chosen to ascertain the probable cost of altering and repairing the meetinghouse." [Secomb's pg. 245] A month later the committee presented their plans for the alteration of the house with estimate of expenses. Many more committees and meetings followed, including several with the pew holders. After buying the meeting-house, some proposed to build a new building! They visited the new 'house' in Milford and it was estimated that a similar one in Amherst would cost about \$5,000. After hearing the reports the Society voted to repair the one they now owned.

They then voted to remove the house from the common to a piece of land across Church Street, owned by Jonathan Bennett, "provided a sum of money could be raised by subscription sufficient to purchase the land and pay the expense of moving and underpinning the house."

The selectmen called a town meeting on May 21, 1836 and gave the society permission to remove the building and gave the title the town had in the land where the string of horse sheds stood that were owned and used by church members. This strip of land was combined with the Bennett lot for the placement of meeting-house, provided the shed owners gave consent. The church was required to remove the sheds at no expense to the town or owner.

"The town also consented that the society should make such alterations in the house, and about the west porch, bell deck, and steeple, as they wished, provided the house was left as convenient for town purposes as it then was." [Pg. 247]

The society sold unneeded parts of the meetinghouse including the east porch. The accounting document pictured left lists the building materials and parts that were sold including timbers, planks and the log for Madam Means to make a trough. They sold the East Porch to Hugh Moore for \$15.00. It would not be needed after the move because the building was to be pivoted 90 degrees to orient it so the west gable end with the tower and steeple would face Church Street looking south. The new floor plan placed the pulpit at the north gable end, with the new pew benches arranged in rows in an 'auditorium' layout. The porch contained the stairs to the former balcony that would no longer along this north wall. See photo of the Freemont meetinghouse built in 1800 with a porch at one gable end. Also note the many windows at that gable end that were removed and sold in the Amherst meetinghouse after the 1836 renovation & modernization. The new flat front built across the front of the tower now had our three doors.

Also, documented in the receipt were three pieces of stove pipe for \$2.38. Nine people bought windows ranging from .75 to \$15.00. One can conclude that the members of the church were not only meticulous bookkeepers but resourceful recyclers. After buying the meetinghouse for \$100 they collected \$158.12 for the sale of unneeded materials!

Memorandum of Articles Sold by the Church and Society	
Jonathan Bennett 100 ft Plank	3.50
James C. Williams 100 ft Plank	6.50
Hugh Moore 50 ft Plank	1.50
Madam Means for Log to make Trough	15.00
Wilford Committee 100 ft Plank	3.00
" " 100 ft Plank	5.64
" " Lot of Planking	10.00
Henry Anthony 100 ft Plank	11.00
" " 100 ft Plank	.38
Ray Smith 100 ft Plank	1.50
David M. Moore 100 ft Plank	1.50
John G. Moore 100 ft Plank	19.50
Henry Jackson for Windows	1.75
Andrew Wallum " "	.57
Edwin Howard " "	1.75
H. B. Davis " "	2.50
E. Parker " "	15.00
G. Richardson " "	3.00
Southwell " "	2.50
D. Russell " "	.75
A. Lawrence " "	2.00
	\$158.12

put in Receipt

Memorandum of articles sold.



Freemont NH Meetinghouse - photo by Paul Wainwright



The Meetinghouse at Freemont -- 1800