

# Meetinghouse Moving Week, August 1836

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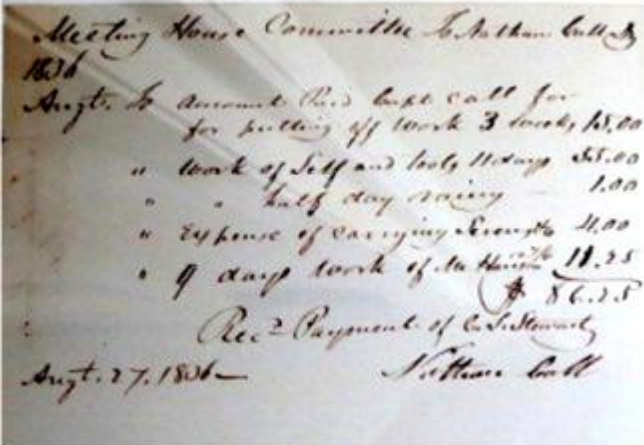
By August 1836 all was ready to move the meetinghouse across Church Street to its new foundation on the lot the church and society now owned. The building was empty and stripped of unnecessary exterior parts. It had a wood shake roof rather than today's slate roof, which would have made it a bit lighter to drag across the street. Secomb explains this remarkable event in his *History of Amherst*, pg. 247-248:

*The meeting-house was removed from the spot "on the training-field" where the fathers placed it sixty-five years before, to the place it now occupies. Prior to its removal, the porch at the east end was taken off, after which the house was moved to the place prepared for its reception. The work of the removal was under the direction of Capt. Nathan Call, of Concord, and was accomplished with apparent ease.*

Thanks to the brilliance of the national database, *America's Historical Newspapers*, available online through our library website, all issues of the *Farmers' Cabinet*, beginning in 1808, are digitized and can be word searched. A few seconds search of 'Nathan Call, summer 1836', located the article that described the move in the issue of 8/26/1836, pg. 3:

*The old Congregational meeting-house in this town was moved in the last week from its former site to another, some rods distant, and turned round so as to face one end southerly to the common. The work, when commenced, was thought by some to be nearly impossible to be effected with safety to the building - but has been accomplished by Capt. Nathan Call, of Concord, with screws and tackle, with apparent ease and entire safety, so much so as that the high towering steeple, which has so long pointed us upward as the way to heaven, has not deviated in its line of altitude - and the clock has not ceased its monitions that time is hastening on and should by constantly improved. Capt. Call is renowned for his removals.....Our old meeting house had stood in all weather, wet and dry, hot and cold, six and sixty years, and its massy timbers are as firm and fresh to appearance as if put up but the last year. The old and once 'beautiful house' where our fathers worshiped, is now desolate - but will soon be rebuilt and modernized; it is to have a basement story, for a town hall and vestry, with a room above as the sanctuary of the Lord, where the people will assemble for his worship. ....May the glory of the latter house be greater than that of the former, and the peace of the Lord remain in it.*

The same framed document hanging across from our church office, that shows the receipt for the sale of the building parts, also shows the receipt for Nathan Call's work directing the move.



The total of \$86.25 paid to him begins with the fee for:

putting off work 3 weeks,	15.00
Work of self and tools 11 days	55.00
" half day rainy	1.00
Expense of carrying ???	4.00
4 days work of Mr. Harrison....	<u>11.25</u>
	\$86.25

Rec. Payment of C...Stewart  
Augt. 27, 1836 - Nathan Call

This is only one of many bills paid to the team workers who helped Mr. Call complete this moving miracle. He was paid \$5.00 a day while his helper was paid about \$3.00 a day. J C Patterson was paid for "1 day of set of 2 yolk of Oxen - \$ 2.50." He supplied the set of oxen for 2 1/2 days. The average worker was paid \$1.00 a day. Copies that I had made of the many receipts relating to the move, (originals are at the NH Historic Society) include this one:

John Secomb was paid:

For 4 Days work assisting about moving shed Meeting house etc.-	\$4.00
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Josiah Russell was one of the higher paid 'contractors' who did the

"Excavating & building wall under The Meeting House	\$70.00
396 ft. underpinning @ 21	83.16
Lathing and Plastering said House as per contract	250.00
134 yar of Plastering Extra @22	29.48
206 1/3 Door steps Hammered @ 38	78.41
One day work mending plastering	<u>1.75</u>
	512.80

The newspaper account above that describes the building: "is now desolate," is an indication of the overwhelming amount of work to finish the building for it to become a church. This work continued through the summer of 1837.