

# The Final Accounting of Moving the Meetinghouse: \$7,593.94

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As explained in the *Spire* history article of May, *Raising and Rebuilding the Moved Meetinghouse*, the meetinghouse was on its new foundation across from the common by mid-August 1836. The rebuilding continued through the fall and the newly refurbished building was ready to be used in January 1837 when "it was again occupied by the society for Sunday services. The exercises on this occasion, under the direction of the pastor, Rev. Silas Aiken, were appropriate and of a very interesting character." [Secomb's, pg. 248] Coincidentally, Rev. Aiken only preached a few weeks in the new church because he accepted a call to become the minister of Park Street Church in Boston. His contract was dissolved on February 28, 1837, just as the final finishing tasks were being completed. Surely his strong leadership played a major role in the successful completion of this historic project. While minister, (March 1829 to February 28, 1837) membership soared. During his seven-year ministry he admitted 209 new members; 79 joined in 1835 after a "revival."

The *Farmer's Cabinet* article on August 26, 1836 that describes the expert work of Nathan Call of Concord, who moved the building for \$86.25, also explained that it was to be "modernized." "It is to have a basement story for a town hall and a vestry, with a room above as a sanctuary of the Lord, where the people will assemble for his worship." Modernization in 1836 also meant that it would have a stove(s), as recorded in various receipts: stove 12.00 - Aaron Lawrence.

The Meeting House Committee to D Hartshorn included:

- for 374 lbs Ru? In Pipe at 18 cents per pound – 67.32
- for eighty two lb Sheet of iron – 11.42
- for fixing stoves etc. 1.50
- for two ash pans- 2.00

Expenses for the clock:

- for transporting the clock face from Milford to Amherst and work on clock face – 2.00
- for making numbers and painting them on – 1.00

All the expenses and payments were compiled in the final report of "Your Committee Appointed to Superintend the Moving and Repairing of the Meeting House make the following Report of the Receipts and expenditures" (see photo right)

This remarkable ledger document of 8 pages, 4 sheets of ledger paper sewn together with thread, is a meticulous accounting of every financial receipt and expenditure for the moving and rebuilding of the meetinghouse in 1836-37:

"By cash received as follows"—listing of 151 payments plus 32.59 collected in interest.

"Expenditures"—listing of 141 payments including four for pews in old House.

What is unclear is how it was determined how much each was to pay, and who paid. Because the expenses were for both the church portion of the house and the town owned parts like the clock, and the basement town meeting room, it appears that all town residents were invited to contribute or assessed a tax. Some names on the cash received list do not appear on our list of church members in the 250th manual of the church. And the name Charles Atherton, who left the church in 1824 to form a new church society (Unitarian) does NOT appear at all.

Two members of the committee, Jonathan Knight and Charles L. Stewart are not in our list of church members. Remember that Knight was the major contractor for the rebuilding at 2,300.

Here is the final tally (*second photo right*), the last page of ledger with final total and names of the committee members



Whole amount of Expend-  
itures brought forward -----7593.94  
Whole amount of Receipts ----- 7140.94  
453.00

Leaving a balance due to the  
Committee to enable them to  
Discharge all their obligations  
Without costs to themselves  
Of four Hundred fifty three  
Dollars ----  
Amherst July 10, 1837

