

First Organ

First Parish of Norwell most likely acquired its first pipe organ when the 5th and present meetinghouse was erected in 1830. The Ebenezer Goodrich organ is first mentioned in 1831. At the Annual meeting of March 21, 1831, Samuel Northeg was chosen sexton, his compensation to be \$27 provided he “is faithful in discharging his duties, which are the same as formerly, with the additional duty of blowing the bellows of the organ and cleaning the brasses of the meeting house.” The organ was a gift of Thomas Otis, Esq. and at that same meeting the Clerk, Ebenezer T. Fogg, made a motion to thank him. “It was then voted, that the thanks of this Society be presented to Thomas Otis, Esq. and the Hon. Cushing Otis for their handsome and valuable donations. To Thomas Otis, Esq., for the organ; and to the Hon. Cushing Otis for the Clock. That the members of this Society shall ever feel bound to cherish sentiments of gratitude toward these gentlemen who by these acts of munificence combining usefulness with ornaments have liberally contributed so much to promote the interior beauty and neatness of their Church.” Goodrich was noted for his small chamber organs and beautiful cases. The organ probably had 5 or 6 stops and no pedal division. When the organ was disassembled in 2008, it was determined that the front façade pipes were originally speaking pipes.

Second Organ

In 1864 the Parish Clerk entered the following in the record: voted: “To add the Parish Committee to the Committee on Singing and that they take into consideration the matter of a new organ for the church.” They later voted in 1865, “To have new works put in the old organ case and Sylvanus Clapp, E.T. Fogg, E.T. Vinal, David Torrey,

Jr., and Israel Nash were chosen a committee to carry the same into effect.” The Parish voted to “place at the disposal of the committee a sum not exceeding One thousand dollars including all that may be subscribed outside the Parish.” Israel Nash bought a single manual E. & G. G. Hook organ in 1865, Opus #365, for which the Parish was billed \$950 as reported by the treasurer in 1866. The Great/Swell wind chest had 8 stops with 56 notes. A small one octave pedal board was interlocked with the lower octave of the manual to play 12 large wooden pipes located across the back of the case. In 1942 a Spencer Orgoblo electric blower was installed relieving the sexton and others the chore of hand blowing the bellows.

Third Organ

During much of the twentieth century the church had a paid quartet. In the late 1950’s the quartet was replaced by a choir. The music program flourished with the hiring of good music directors. But at times it was difficult to hire a director due to the serious limitations of the organ. One director even refused to play it and instead borrowed an electronic organ. In the early 1960’s the limitations of the organ prompted a move to expand it. The first priority was to have a full pedal division. Lewis Pierce, chair of the Music Committee, began a process to solicit bids and plans to expand the instrument. Andover Organ Co. was chosen for the work which consisted of adding a 5 stop pedal division, replacing the Melodia stop with a new Spitzflute stop, revoicing (actually making louder) the Great chorus stops (8’, 4’, 2’, and 2 2/3’), and the installation of a balanced swell pedal. Twelve pipes were added to the manual 8’ Principal for the bottom octave. Andover developed a three phase plan to expand the organ. The

completed first phase added a pedal division. The other phases would add a second manual and Ruckpostiv division overhanging the balcony. Phases 2&3 were never pursued as a completely different view and understanding evolved relative to New England tracker organs. The work for the first phase was completed in December, 1965 and expanded the instrument to 13 stops. The new 32 note pedal chest supported a 16’ Subbase, 8’ Principal, 8’ Gedeckt, 4’ Choral Bass, and a Mixture IV. The instrument had a total of 680 pipes under 3” of wind pressure. Paul Anderson, former music director, performed the dedicatory concert.

Fourth Organ – Wissinger Organs

Wissinger Organs, Opus No. 27, is a recreation of a 19th century organ using the existing Goodrich case and nearly all the pipes from the previous organ. Work on the new organ began in May, 2008 with disassembly of the existing organ. Only the case remained. Several discoveries were made. The Hook name and address was found written on the inside of the case. It was common practice to reverse the wood panels of a case and to use it as a shipping crate for sending the organ to the shop of the builder. In this case it didn’t have far to go as Elias and George Hook had their shop in Boston. The Hook voicer left his signature on one of the pipes. Names of others who had done repair work were also found. The design of the new organ called for replacing the Andover Organ pedal chest located behind the main case with new Swell and Pedal chests. Through highly efficient use of space and computer assisted design the footprint of the new organ would be the same as the previous organ. Designing this organ turned out to be a formidable task given the constraints of working with the existing organ

case, a relatively low ceiling for an organ, and limited space behind the main case. During the remainder of 2008, a new blower and box were installed in the organ loft, pedalboard and adjustable bench built. During 2009 the Goodrich case was refinished, façade pipes painted, and new keyboards made. In early December, Parish members assisted in moving the completed Great chest to the organ loft. A few weeks later and just in time for use at Christmas Eve services, the Great division was tuned and voiced. The original Hook oboe pipes were sent off site to be restored. During 2010 the swell and pedal chests were installed and console completed. Early in the year, the Parish voted to purchase all additional “prepared for” stops. These included a Seventeenth and Clarinet stops on the Great, and a 4' Principal and 2 2/3' Sesquialtera II on the Swell. By the end of the summer the Swell division pipes were installed and voiced. The organ was completed in December, 2010. On April 30, 2011, a dedicatory concert was performed by James Russell Brown, former music director. In December, 2013, an 8 bell Cymbelstern was installed. This final stop of the organ was made possible by a generous donation from John Marsh, husband of long time choir member, Carol Marsh.

Organ Specifications, Opus No. 27

Great

1)	Open Diapason	8'	56 pipes
2)	Spire Flute	8'	56 pipes
3)	Dulciana	8'	44 pipes
4)	Octave	4'	56 pipes
5)	Flute a Chiminee	4'	56 pipes
6)	Twelfth	2 2/3'	56 pipes
7)	Fifteenth	2'	56 pipes
8)	Seventeenth	1 3/5'	56 pipes
9)	Mixture	II-III	156 pipes

10) Clarinet 8' 56 pipes

Swell (Enclosed)

11)	Stopped Diapason	8'	56 pipes
12)	Gamba	8'	50 pipes
13)	Viol Celeste	8'	44 pipes
14)	Principal	4'	56 pipes
15)	Harmonic Flute	4'	56 pipes
16)	Piccolo	2'	56 pipes
17)	Oboe	8'	56 pipes
18)	Sesquialtera II	2 2/3'	112 pipes

Pedal

19)	Bourdon	16'	30 pipes
20)	Principal	8'	30 pipes
21)	Bourdon	8'	30 pipes
22)	Choralbass	4'	30 pipes

Couplers: Great/Pedal, Swell/Pedal, Swell/Great. Tremulant for the Swell Division. Cymbelstern

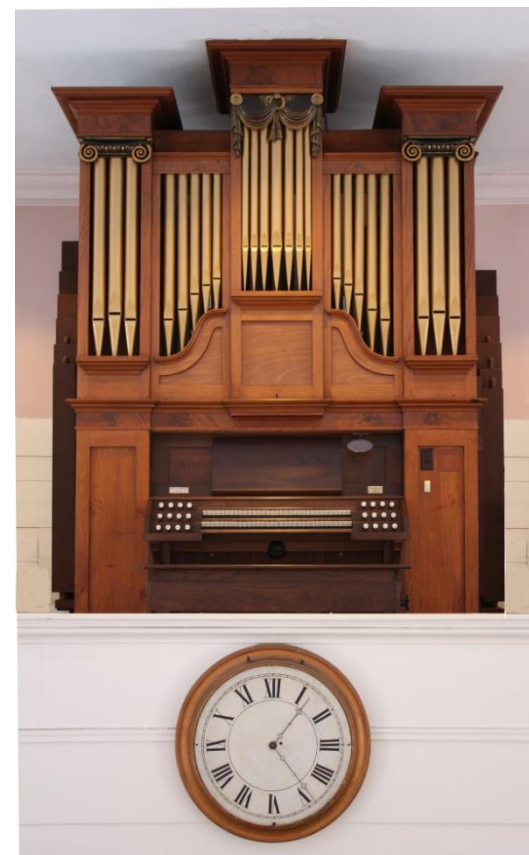
22 stops, 1254 pipes, 2 3/4" wind pressure

Mechanical key action with two new 56 note keyboards and a new 30 note straight/flat pedalboard. Drawknob style mechanical stop action. New draw knobs match the original Hook draw knobs. Swell box with mechanically operated Swell shutters enclose pipes of the Swell division. Existing Great and Pedal pipework re-conditioned and restored as needed. New Great, Swell, and Pedal windchests. New mechanically adjustable bench. New silent blower located in the organ loft. Existing 1831 Goodrich organ case refinished. New rear Swell/Pedal case complements the original case.

Organ Builder: Darron Wissinger, Wissinger Organs, Rockland Maine

Organ Voicer: Halbert Gober, organ builder and curator of organs at Oberlin Conservatory

History of the Meetinghouse Organ



**First Parish of Norwell
Unitarian Universalist**
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