

THE WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN



October 1983

Vol. XX, No. 1



HOOK-
Hastings Co.,

Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis.

ESTABLISHED 1827.
Main Office & Works at Hastings, Mass.

CHURCH ORGANS.

Kendal Green, Mass.

Visible in the upper left corner are three cottages which Frank Hastings built in 1893 to house some of his factory employees — 225-231 North Avenue. To the right of the homes is the Northeast District School #4 at 221 North Avenue — later removed — in which Frank Hastings received his entire formal education. "Hastings Station" is visible in the left foreground.

WESTON'S HOOK-HASTINGS ORGAN FACTORY

In 1827, George Greenleaf Hook (1807-1880) of Salem constructed a chamber pipe organ in the room at the rear of his father's house. This first Hook organ is now on display in the Essex Institute of Salem and is still in use. George soon was joined by his brother, Elias Hook (1805-1881) to form the organ building firm of "E. and G. G. Hook". [Elias and George were the sons of William and Abigail Greenleaf Hook. William Hook (1777-1867) was an exceptionally talented cabinetmaker whose work may be found in the Essex Institute and in the Museum of Fine Arts. The two young Hook boys sang in the choir of the South Church, suggesting an early interest in music. At the age of 16 or 17 Elias was apprenticed to William Goodrich, Boston's leading organ builder. Elias returned to Salem after a year but later returned to Goodrich — probably with his brother, George Hook. George's first organ — the 1827 instrument referred to above — was delivered to the Essex Institute and set up there in 1933 by Edward A. Lahaise of the Hook and Hastings Company of Weston. But that is a different story. Curiously the records of the firm assign "Opus 1" to an organ built two years later in 1829 for the Unitarian Church in Danvers. The brothers may have agreed to count only those organs built after their partnership was formed. Nineteen early Hook organs lack opus numbers! In 1827, the year during which George experimented by building his first organ, Elias opened a music store in Salem. Elias' advertisement in the May 9, 1827 issue of the *Essex Register* of Salem appears on page six of the *Bulletin*. Elias' store must not have met with success because the two Hook brothers soon had launched their partnership as organ builders. In later years the firm advertised "1827" as the date of its establishment. Ed.] In 1832 the Hook's business was moved to Friend Street in the North End of Boston and the firm was then known as E. and G. G. Hook. In 1853 the prosperous brothers — now at the head of their profession — moved

to 1131 Tremont Street in Roxbury, at that time the largest organ factory in the country. "From this extensive and modern factory came organs destined for every part of the country, including some of the century's greatest and most influential church and concert hall organs" wrote a recent historian of the Hook brothers. The Baptist and Unitarian churches of Jamaica Plain both retain three-manual Hook organs of the 1850's. A two-manual organ of 1859 still serves the Congregational Church of Hinsdale, New Hampshire. The organ in the Community Church of Dublin, New Hampshire was the 153rd organ, made in 1853.

Francis Henry Hastings was born in Weston July 13, 1836 at what is now 199 North Avenue, the son of Francis Hastings and his wife, Mary W. Cooley. His father was a farmer and cordwainer (bootmaker). Mr. Hastings as a boy worked on the farm, but the work was so distasteful to him that when fourteen years old, and not well, he rebelled, declaring he would study and work as a farmer no longer. He left the District School when he was fourteen years old, thus ending his formal education. Apparently, Francis Hastings moved to Boston. Five years later, on May 1, 1855 a Benjamin Dutton of Boston, for whom Hastings worked — as an apprentice making tools in a machine shop — gave him a recommendation, stating that "He has been in my employ for the last year and one half and for honesty, integrity, and industrious habits and good moral principles I would cheerfully recommend him to anyone who may be in want of his services." Thus, Hastings was nineteen years old when he went to work for E. and G. G. Hook in Roxbury on August 13, 1855. He continued business in the same place for thirty-four years, until the factory was moved to Kendal Green. [Francis Hastings was successful in his endeavors. He married, and in July, 1862 a son, Francis Warren Hastings, was born. In June, 1865 Francis Henry Hastings became a Master Mason in Washington Lodge in Roxbury, and in May, 1866 the Hook brothers took him into the firm as a co-partner. Ed.] In the articles of co-partnership it was stated that "Mr. Hastings had long been in the employment of the factory and acquired a skill in the business, fitting himself to take an interest in the products and profits thereof and is desirous of assuming the responsibilities and duties of a partner in the business." In order to become a partner he gave the Hook brothers a note for \$6,666 payable to them \$1,000 or more yearly with semi-annual interest until the whole amount of the note was paid. The amount of the rent which should be paid to the owners — Elias Hook and George G. Hook — after the admission of Francis Hastings into the co-partnership was calculated as follows:

Value of the Buildings	\$12,000
Value of the Land	18,000
	\$30,000
Interest @ 6%	1,800
Insurance	400
Rent per Year	\$ 2,200

On January 2, 1871 a second article of co-partnership was drawn up as agreed in the original co-partnership which was to last for five years under the name of E. and G. G. Hook and at an annual rental of \$2,200. This 1871 agreement changed the name to "E. and G. G. Hook and Hastings" with a rental of \$3,000 per year.

Some of the organs which were built in Roxbury at this time were: in 1872 the organ for the Immaculate Conception Church of Boston; in 1875 the organ for the Boston Cathedral which was the largest and best organ at that time; in 1876 (Opus 828) the organ for the centennial celebration in Philadelphia; in 1878 the organ for the Cincinnati Music Hall which was then the largest in the country. This organ had one thousand more pipes than the large organ which they had built for the Cathedral.

In 1880 Elias Hook — the brother who had guided the business affairs — died and in 1881 G. G. Hook — the musical artist and head-voicer of all Hook organs — also passed away leaving his widow Adeline L. Hook as the administratrix of his estate. Between December 6, 1880 and September 17, 1881 Hastings paid Mrs. Hook her

share of the earnings amounting to \$20,000. On the 15th of October, 1881 Francis Hastings bought Mrs. Hook's interest and share in the business for \$33,723.42 and at the same time gave her his note for \$8,006.46 with interest at 6% payable semi-annually. [Francis Hastings — and his son Warren — moved from their home in Boston at 76 Dudley Street to 93 Warren Street in 1884 for reasons which are not known. Ed.]

Mr. Hastings moved into his new home, 190 North Avenue in Kendal Green, in 1885 at the age of 49. [The stable which he built across the street in 1885 — at what is now 191 North Avenue — was designed to house fire equipment which he purchased. Frank Hastings' contribution to the development of Weston's fire department is a story yet to be written. Ed.] In 1889 the main part of the new factory in Kendal Green was completed and the factory moved from Tremont Street, Boston on May 1, 1889. [Although Frank Hastings moved to Weston in 1885, the factory in Boston is listed by the Boston City Directory as continuing to manufacture organs through 1888 — while the new factory was being built in Weston. The directory for 1889 lists only an office in Boston — at 10 Tremont Street. We can only speculate why Hastings chose to move the factory to Weston at this particular time. Labor troubles throughout the nation may have been one reason — see article in the January *Bulletin*. As his parents approached old age, the family's farm lands became available for other uses. Hastings' mother died in 1888 and his father in 1889. Ed.] In 1889 the storehouse in the rear of the factory, and Hastings Hall across Viles Street were built. In 1891 a wing was added to the factory and the gardener's cottage (189 North Avenue) across the street from his home was built, as well as a reservoir in the woods on the West side of Cat Rock Hill to supply water to the three cottages on North Avenue and those on Viles Street as well as Hastings Hall. Later, in 1914, water was supplied to the District #4 school on North Avenue.

Three cottages on North Avenue for factory employees were built in 1893 (now #225, 227, 231 North Avenue) and another, No. 6 on White Lane, now Brook Road. Mr. Hastings' house at 190 North Avenue was enlarged in 1891 by adding a west wing where Mr. Hastings had his office overlooking the factory. The office furniture consisted of a roll-top desk, a safe and a stand-up drawing board where he drew many of the sketches for proposed organs. There was also a fireplace and a slant-top desk and a reclining sofa.

In 1894 two cottages on White Lane were completed, and in 1895 the Andrews' house on White Lane and the Gowell house on North Avenue were purchased. Thus, by 1895 seven houses on White Lane housed factory employees (now #75-87 Brook Road). In 1897 three two-family cottages were built on Lexington Street, now #17-29. This property had been part of the Warren farm, a portion of which had been sold to George H. Ellis who operated a printing firm in Boston which, among other things, printed the Town Reports of Weston. In that same year the two Warner cottages were built on Viles Street (#126-134).

On October 7, 1893 the first meeting of the subscribers was held to vote on an article of agreement for the foundation of a Corporation to be known as the "Hook & Hastings Co." Francis Henry Hastings was elected Treasurer and his son, Francis Warren Hastings, was elected President. [The elder Hastings was known to family, friends, and the Boston City Directory as "Frank." His son was known as "Warren." Ed.] Francis Warren Hastings was born at Roxbury July 10, 1862 and entered Harvard College in July, 1881, having graduated from Roxbury Latin School. He spent three years at Harvard. His failing health caused him to leave college early in 1884, but he always retained a lively interest in the class and in his friends whom he left behind. He retired to Weston, the family home. There he purchased, in 1885, both the old Hastings homestead — now 199 North Avenue — always dear to him, and the old Warren homestead and farm on Lexington Street which had been in one branch of the family since 1639. Francis Warren Hastings hoped, in an out-of-door life, to regain health. He resolutely took a hand in the family business, but his health became steadily worse. The hard winters of New England were too vigorous and he spent them in the softer climate of Bermuda. [In 1893 Warren Hastings sold the Warren house to George H. Ellis, resigned from the Board of Health, and ceased to be a year-around resident in Weston.

Ed.] From 1895 he had to make Bermuda his permanent home and there he died of consumption on May 11, 1903.

Upon the death of Francis Warren Hastings, Mr. Arthur L. Coburn, who had been Secretary of the Corporation and Superintendent of the Factory was elected President, Mr. F. H. Hastings, Treasurer, and Mr. Alfred R. Pratt, Secretary, of Hook & Hastings Co.

Some of the more interesting organs built by Hook and Hastings have been recorded in the various trade magazines. For example, an article in the May 1892 issue of *Organ* relates: "In 1756 an organ was built by Adrian Smith of London for Kings' Chapel of Boston. It is said to have been played upon and approved by Handel and cost £500. It continued in use in the church until 1860, 140 years, when it was reconstructed and enlarged. In 1884 Hook & Hastings of Boston, in building a new organ for Kings' Chapel, retained some of the old stops and pipes, the new organ being built within the old oaken case, which with the gilded crown and mitre, presents to the eye the same appearance as when originally put in the church. Additions and improvements are now being made in the organ by Mr. Hastings, which are to be completed for use when service is resumed in the fall."

Other famous organs were installed in:

1862 - The Immaculate Conception Church in Boston, four manuals, 80 registers (ranks)

1875 - Boston Cathedral, which at the time was the largest and one of the best organs made, three manuals, 83 registers

1876 - The large organ (Opus 828) four manuals, 59 registers, displayed at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia was recommended by the United States Centennial Commission for an award. [This organ, special in its day, apparently is the only large organ from the 1876 Centennial to survive through the 1976 Bicentennial! It was moved from Philadelphia to Buffalo, and has remained in use for 107 years in Old St. Joseph's Cathedral. The stairway for viewers and glass windows for peering inside the organ remain as originally constructed. In 1876 the judges wrote, "We can recall no organ of equal size and power that could be played with so much ease and satisfaction to the organist, or so much gratification to the listener." Ed.]

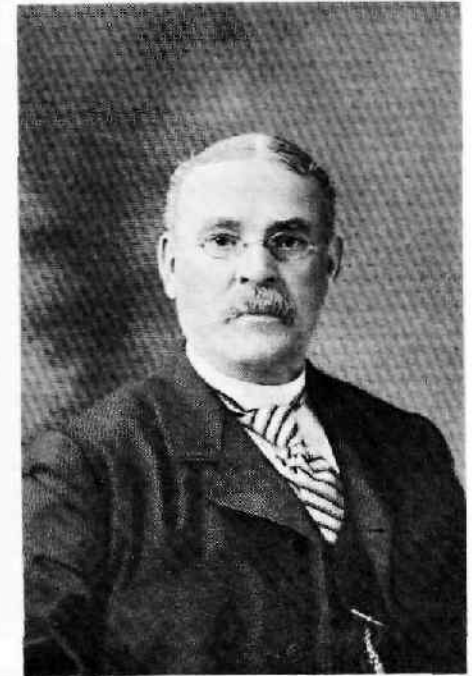
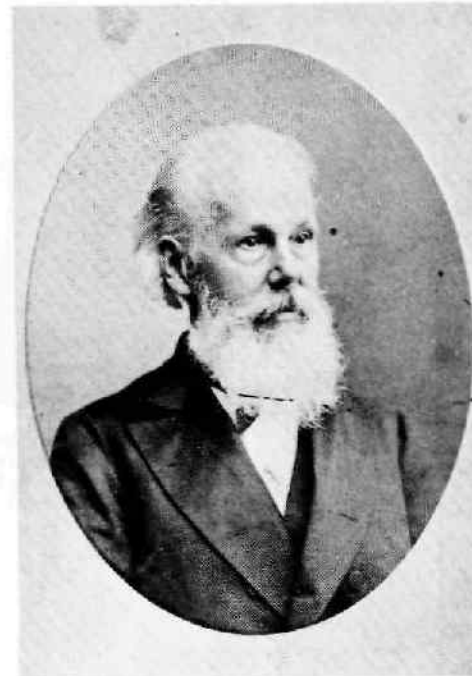
1878 - Cincinnati Music Hall which was the largest in the country at the time, four manuals, 96 registers. It had 1,000 more pipes than the great organ in the Boston Cathedral.

An article in the *Cincinnati Courier*, April 1892, cited a list of 100 "Monster Organs" published by the Rev. George P. Mains D.D., Pastor of the New York Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church. These were considered as thoroughly representative by the builders themselves. The Hastings organs were: 80 stops, Music Hall, Cincinnati; 70 stops, Cathedral Roman Catholic Church, Boston; 66 stops, St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic, New York; 54 stops, Shawmut Congregational, Boston; 52 stops, Plymouth Church, Brooklyn; and 51 stops, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic, Hartford.

The *Organ* of May 1892 announced a series of recitals in the Central Baptist Church in Providence, Rhode Island on a three-manual Hook & Hastings organ and a series of recitals on the large three-manual Hook & Hastings organ in the Beneficent Congregational Church also in Providence. [Over the years the firm trained some of its own competitors! Emory W. Lane organized the "Waltham Church Organ Factory" after two years as a Hook and Hastings employee. George S. Hutchings of Salem worked for the Hooks from 1857 to 1869, then with Lane and Fred J. Flaherty — another Hook and Hastings employee — built the "Hutchings Organ Co." factory in Waltham in 1911. Ed.]

On March 3, 1904 there was a banquet and organ recital at "Hastings Hall" on Viles Street, opposite the factory, celebrating the completion of the 2,000th organ built by Hook & Hastings Co. The employees and their families, numbering about 150, were present by invitation of the company. The 2,000th organ comprising all the modern features was built for the Foundry Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.

In 1905 Mr. Hastings drew the plans for an organ which he installed in the music room at the north end of his house. There were twelve stops which were operated



Elias Hook (1805-81) who, with his brother, George Greenleaf Hook (1807-80), founded the firm which Francis Henry Hastings moved to Weston in 1889. From 1855 onward, Frank Hastings spent many hours with Elias Hook in the design department of the factory. George G. Hook, a fine organist, played for many years at Tremont Temple in Boston.

Francis Henry Hastings (1836-1916) had such a dislike for farming that he left school — and Weston — in 1850. He joined the Hook Brothers in 1855, became a partner in 1866, and moved the organ-building firm to Weston in 1889.

manually. There was a pianola player which could be attached to the organ and was operated by two foot treadles. The air for the organ was furnished by a water pump in the cellar which could be turned on and off by means of a metal control knob. Each roll for the pianola player was kept neatly in a cardboard box and properly labeled. There were many rolls, some of which were: Polonaise Militaire, Poet and Peasant, Largo, Cavaleria Rusticana, Strauss (Blue Danube), Strauss (Rosen auf dem Suden), Pomp and Circumstance, Lohengrin March, Intermezzo, Tales from the Vienna Woods, Tales of Hoffman, William Tell Overture, and March and Chorus from "Tannhauser." The tempo was governed by a lever operated with the left hand. It controlled a needle or pointer following a line printed on the player roll paper. The loudness was governed by a similar lever operated with the right hand and by following the instructions printed on the roll and could be varied from "pianissimo" to "forte fortissimo." Sketches of the house organ, dated in January 1905, were done by Mr. Hastings, showing swell folds which were like louvres and were opened and closed by operating the foot pedals. The finished organ was installed in July, 1905. The organ was removed after Mr. Hastings' death.

Francis Henry Hastings was a typical New Englander with strong puritanical ideas of the right. He was a student of nature, fond of good books — especially books of history, art, and science — and had strong inventive tendencies. He enjoyed horseback riding and driving. In 1872 Mr. Hastings was granted a patent for improvement in swells for pipe organs, and in 1897 a patent for electro-pneumatic organ action in which he had a half interest.

Hastings was a Republican and a staunch, loyal Unitarian, supporting the First Parish in Weston and the parent organization, the American Unitarian Association. He

NEW STORE.

ELIAS HOOK,

HAVING taken the Store No. 13, Old Paved Street, opposite Barton's Hotel, intends keeping a general assortment of *Music, Stationary and Fancy Goods*, among which may be found

A selection of superior tuned Piano Fortes

Patent and common German Flutes
Third, seventh, and octavo do. Clarionetts and Hautboys; Keyed and plain Trumpets; Do. do. Bugles; French and Post Horns

Double and Single Flageolets; Fies, Drums and Tamborines

Guitars, Violins and Violoncellos
Best English and Roman Viol Strings; Guitar do.; Tuning Forks and Hammers

Bows, Bridges, Pegs, Clarified Rosin, Bow Hair, &c.

Bassoon and Clarionett Reeds
Do. Mouth Pieces

A general assortment of Piano Forte Music—and will be constantly receiving all New Publications

Instruction Books for all kinds of Instruments
Blank Music Paper; Drawing, Writing and Rice do.

Gilt and Plain Letter do.; Ink and Ink Powder; Indelible Ink; Quills, Sealing Wax and Wafers

Boxes of Paint; Loose Cakes do.; Paint Saucers, for Velvet and Flower Painting
Pallets, Velvet Scrubs, Camel's Hair, and Lead Pencils

Tortoise Shell, and Morocco Reticules;—
Thread and Needle Books

Pocket and Memorandum do.; Card Cases, Wallets, &c.

Ladies' Work Boxes, and Fancy Cushions
Emery's Wafers and Eyelet Needles
Fine Steel Scissors and Pen Knives
Visiting and Playing Cards; Card Racks
Candle Ornaments; Chess Men; Checker Boards and Whist Counters

Clothes, Head, and Tooth Brushes; Comb and Nail do.

Ivory and Horn Dressing Combs; Pocket do.
Razors, Strops, Leather Boxes and Brushes
Old Windsor, Naples, and Rose Shaving Soap; French Fancy do.; Atkiston's Ambrosial Soap

Bear's Grease and Curling Fluid
Rowland's Kalydor; Macassar Oil; Essence of Tyre, and Aisana Extract

Gowland's Lotion; Milk of Roses; Lavender and Cologne Water; Otto of Rose; Rose and Antique Oil; English, French, and American Pomatum

A variety of English and German Toys
Piano Fortes to let. April 19.



The parents of Francis Henry Hastings, Mary Cooley Hastings (1817-88) and Francis Hastings (1809-89), celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on June 20, 1883. Francis Hastings, a bootmaker and farmer, lived all of his life at 199 North Avenue.



The Hastings homestead at 199 North Avenue. Francis Henry Hastings was born here in 1836. His father, Francis, made boots in the rear shed and farmed the land across the street. Francis died in 1889. In 1914, Francis Henry Hastings sold the homestead to one of his organ factory employees, Norman Jacobsen.



Francis Henry Hastings built "Seven Gables" at 190 North Ave. in 1885. His bride, Anna Coburn Hastings and her sister, Edith Coburn, moved in in 1899. After Hastings' death in 1916, Mrs. Hastings' niece, Anna Hall, lived here with Mrs. Hastings.



The view from Frank Hastings' home at 190 North Avenue, looking westward toward the organ factory. The two houses on White Lane, built for factory employees in 1894, remain in use as #75-77 Brook Road.

The May 9, 1827 *Essex Register* of Salem advertised Elias Hook's entry into the music business.

took an active part in town affairs, contributing both his time and financial help where he felt it was needed. [Francis Hastings loved Weston. In 1894 he compiled for the Friendly Society a history of the old houses of the Town; arranged for about twenty of the houses to be photographed — many of these photos later were published as illustrations in D. S. Lamson's history of Weston; and was the moving spirit behind a reunion at the "Old North Schoolhouse." In 1894, Mr. Hastings gave the Town Hall a bust of Alonzo S. Fiske — Weston's long-time legislator — who had died a year earlier. Mr. Hastings provided guided tours of historic Boston for seniors at Weston High School. In addition, those Town Reports listing "Donations to the Schools" abound with examples of Francis Hastings' philanthropy — and his passion for History. Some examples are: picture "General Grant" (1899); picture "The Aurora" (1901); "reproductions of famous objects of art" and "A View of Washington's Home (1902); picture "Mother and Child" and "Chillon Castle" (1905); pictures "A Group of Cherubs" and "The Stuart Prince" (1906); picture "Spirit of '76" and "Bugler" (1908); picture "Surrender of Cornwallis" (1909); "talk on Lincoln by a person who had known him" (1912). Unlike Arthur L. Coburn, Frank Hastings held but two elective offices: Hastings served as a Trustee of Burial Grounds in 1896-98 and as a Field Driver in 1899. In 1906 he and Coburn served on the five-member committee to study the need for a new school building. Mr. Hastings also cooperated with the schools by using the organ factory whistle to signal "no school" — two single blasts at 7:30 a.m. The fire alarm whistle in the center of town was not added until 1922. Ed.]

On April 27, 1899 Hastings married Anna Cutter Coburn, daughter of Isaac and Julia Ann Cutter Coburn, granddaughter of Jones and Susannah Viles Coburn and of Charles and Anna Smith Cutter and a descendant from Edward Coburn who came from England to Ipswich, Massachusetts on the ship "Defence" in September or October, 1635. [Miss Coburn — who had grown up, and taught school in Weston for twenty-six years — was the sister of Arthur L. Coburn, an officer of the firm. At the time of their marriage, Frank Hastings was 62, and "Miss Annie", 46. Ed.] Hastings' one child, Francis Warren Hastings, was by a former marriage.

When Mr. Hastings was seventy years old, in 1906, he was given a birthday party by his employees. About 300 people gathered at his residence to extend congratulations and present him with an engraved testimonial signed by seventy-one of his employees as a token of their loyalty. [This party is described in the January, 1982 *Bulletin*, Ed.]

In 1914, Frank Hastings sold the family homestead at 199 North Avenue to an employee, Norman Jacobsen. Mr. Hastings died on February 23, 1916 after a short illness at his home "Seven Gables", 190 North Avenue, Weston. In 1917 Mrs. Hastings gave a new organ (Opus 2399) to the First Parish in Weston in memory of her husband. The organ was placed in the transept given by Horace S. Sears — her classmate in the Weston High School Class of 1871 — in memory of one of her brothers, William H. Coburn. [Will Coburn was the author's father. The First Parish in Wayland also had an organ from the firm, Opus 402 by E. and G. G. Hook, installed in 1866. A future researcher might trace details of the firm's rate of production. In the initial two decades of their partnership, the Hook Brothers averaged first 4, then 16, new organs each year. From the time Francis Hastings joined the company in 1855 through 1917, the firm averaged 30 to 45 organs per year — whether in Roxbury or, after 1889, in Weston. Understandably, World War I slowed production. Average output from 1917 to 1920 dropped to 15 new organs per year. The firm's production records subsequent to 1920 have not been located. Eventually production slowed to a trickle in the Great Depression. Natalie Coburn recalls Anna Coburn Hastings saying, "The company motto was 'Quality first - and always.' My husband always quoted quality. He never quoted price. Today organ makers are quoting price and I decided it was time to tear it down!" While the firm was productive, railroad traffic to Hastings Depot was significant. Those employees who lived in Boston or Waltham commuted daily by rail. Materials — including parts imported from England or Zimmerman reeds from Paris — were shipped in and completed organs shipped out. Ed.]

Probably the most famous Hook and Hastings organ is the "Rockefeller Organ" which was installed in the Riverside Church in January, 1931. The church's organist

wrote a letter dated January 13, 1931 to the Hook & Hastings Co. which reads in part:

"It has been four years now since we began to plan for the organs in the Riverside Church and now that the instruments are in active use, it is a pleasure to look back over the delightful association. In this age of mass production and a constantly increasing mechanization of life, it is encouraging to find at least one group of highly skilled artisans such as your company has, who put into their work the best that is in them, and who obviously regard the construction of an organ as a work of art and not merely a commercial 'job.' Every one of the multitude of mechanical details has been attended to with the utmost care so that the instrument responds instantly and perfectly to every musical requirement. The voicing of every individual register has been accomplished with rare delicacy, but perhaps the greatest achievement of all is to be found in the perfect blending of the whole ensemble. It is absolutely impossible to find an unpleasant combination of stops. Reeds, strings, flutes and diapasons blend in a harmonious full. Every time I play it I say to myself, 'Thank God I can be a musical artist and not a mechanician.' I hope that the Hook & Hastings Co. will remain true to the artistic ideals which made the name famous in years past. With every good wish for your continued progress and prosperity."

The introduction of talking movies had made obsolete the organs which played for the silent pictures. The big movie theatres such as Balaban & Katz in Chicago disposed of their Wurlitzer organs to prospective churches. The depression also hurt the organ business. In January, 1931 Arthur L. Coburn, who had been the President and operating head of the factory for thirty-eight years, died. Alfred L. Pratt continued the firm for a short time, but it was the opinion of the trustees of Mr. Hastings' estate that the plant and some of the real estate should be liquidated. Therefore, in June, 1936, a contract was signed with the Mystic Building Wrecking Co., Inc. of Chelsea, Mass. to demolish the factory building and lumber shed, two hose houses and two hydrants, four tenement blocks on Viles Street and the railroad track within the yard which extended across Viles Street, up to the switch belonging to the Boston & Maine Railroad. The work which began on July 1, 1936 was completed in forty-five days.

The Buttrick House at 253 North Avenue was razed in 1942 and Hastings Hall, which was across Viles Street from the factory was razed in 1944, and the West Storehouse in 1947.

PART II: FACTORIES AND ORGANS

The factory at 1131 Tremont Street was two hundred feet long, and contained two finishing halls as well as large work rooms, fitted with all available machinery and every convenience for manufacturing and testing instruments of the largest size. In addition there were large storehouses in which lumber, obtained from all parts of the continent, was dried and stored.

It was printed in the 1883 King's Handbook of Boston that "their large business enables them to systematize their work under the direction of various experts, each proficient in his own department, thus securing the most perfect result and the greatest economy. Possessing and applying all important improvements, their relations with eminent European buildings, the ingenuity and skill of our American workmen, combined with their constant endeavor to advance the standard of their work, have enabled these builders to attain the highest position in their art."

The factory in Kendal Green was composed of two wings — each one hundred feet long, three stories and a basement, with a center section eighty feet long, forty feet wide and forty feet high, extending through all four stories. This tall center section was called the "finishing" or "erecting" room where each organ was assembled, tested and played — then knocked down and crated for shipment to its destination.

The factory extended along the tracks of the Fitchburg Division of Boston and Maine Railroad across from Hastings Station. There was a Mill Room which contained lathes, band and circular saws, planers, sanders and other woodworking

machinery. This was located in the basement or lower floor of the Viles Street wing.

The Wood Pipe Room is where the wood pipes were manufactured and assembled. In the construction of the wood pipes only the finest selected and most thoroughly seasoned wood was used. The wood was specially treated so that when finally built into organ pipes, they would successfully withstand atmospheric and climatic extremes.

The Metal Pipe Room was on the top floor of the Viles Street wing. There the metal in every pipe was compounded to a special formula. In the graduation of the pipes a system of scales and gauges was used embodying the cumulative knowledge and experience of a century spent in this work. Each order number was recorded. In addition to the size, the rise and dip, there were thirteen other tests recorded for each organ.

There were several Action Rooms where materials were carefully subjected to severe tests. The factory was a pioneer in this country in successfully applying electric action to pipe organs. The first organ in which such action was installed was built in 1895 and is doing excellent service today. The main contacts of the key and coupler were built of platinum.

In the Voicing Room the voicers preserved the distinctive characteristics of each individual stop and devoted attention to proper blending and to coordination of the finished whole. By the use of pipes of large scale and special methods of voicing, grandeur and solidarity were given to the tone. The French Horn and Patented Flute were features of Hook-Hastings organs.

The Console Room was where the consoles were assembled. There were two different styles, one with knobs on the resters and the other vertical jambs set at an oblique angle.

Although much of the Hook Company's fame derived from its large instruments, the firm was not insensitive to the market for small organs. An advertising brochure from about 1876 describes little organs, called the "Choral" organs, ranging in price from \$500 to \$1,200. The smallest consisted of a single fifty-eight pipe, Open Diapason. The brochure noted that this organ was "far superior to any reed organ in every respect, especially in dignity and pervading characteristics of tone, and in durability." Another pamphlet, from the early 1880's shows that the Hooks then had six models of small organs that were ready-made, while larger models were built to order. Standard specifications and prices were given, but variation from the suggested specifications was possible in the custom-built organs.

The Hooks sometimes won a contract by "donating" a part of the contracted amount to the church. In letters between the company and the First Congregational Church, North Brookfield, Massachusetts, we read that on June 6, 1874 the Hooks stated a price of \$3,200 for an organ. By June 11 they had reconsidered, and the price was lowered to \$3,100. On June 18 their letter to a representative of the church contained the paragraph:

"We would here allude to our reduction of fifty dollars from our price making it actually \$3,050, which should be known only to ourselves. We have in the contract specified it in full — \$3,100 — upon payment of which we agree to refund \$50."

According to the log of new and rebuilt organs, there were 2,445 recorded up to 1920 when the practice of recording was discontinued. Assuming an average of thirteen organs per year from 1920 to 1927, the last year before work was commenced on the organ for the Riverside Church in New York, there were approximately 2,536 organs built.

The most notable organs built by the firm in Boston, as recorded in the *History of the Organ in the United States* or by the firm's own evaluation, were as follows: 1863, Church of the Immaculate Conception in Boston; 1864, Mechanics Hall in Worcester; 1865, Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn, New York; 1866, Shawmut Congregational Church in Boston; 1870, First Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh; 1871, Union Park Congregational Church in Chicago; 1873, Church of the Holy Communion in Philadelphia; 1875, Holy Cross Cathedral in Cincinnati; 1881, Industrial Exposition in Milwaukee; 1881, St. John's Cathedral in Denver; 1883, Central Congregational Church in Philadelphia; and 1886, Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York. Important organs made after the factory was

moved to Kendal Green: 1889, St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco; 1890, St. Joseph's Cathedral in Hartford; 1893, St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church in Philadelphia; 1895, Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church in Norfolk, Virginia; 1896, Trinity P. E. Church in Buffalo; 1896, Trinity Episcopal Church in San Francisco; 1898, St. Patrick's Cathedral in Baltimore; 1898, Temple Emanuel in San Francisco; 1899, St. Patrick's in Elizabethport, New Jersey; 1899, St. Agnes Church in New York; 1899, New York University Chapel in New York; 1899, Music Hall in St. Louis; 1899, St. Lawrence Church in Cincinnati; 1900, Second Presbyterian Church in St. Louis; 1900, Theological Seminary in Chicago; 1900, Third Church of Christ, Scientist in Chicago; 1901, Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville; 1902, St. John's M. E. Church in St. Louis; 1902, Lake Avenue Baptist Church in Rochester; Immaculate Conception (reconstruction) in Boston; and, skipping to later organs, 1916, Central Congregational Church in Fall River; 1917, Presbyterian Church in Kingston, Pennsylvania; 1917, Presbyterian Church in Englewood, New Jersey; 1917, Fourth Church of Christ, Scientist in New York; 1919, First Baptist Church in Flint, Michigan; 1919, First Church of Christ, Scientist in St. Paul, Minnesota; 1919, First Baptist Church in Troy, New York; 1920, Congregational Church in Gloversville, New York; 1920, St. Paul's Cathedral in Boston; 1920, Masonic Temple in Lake Charles, Louisiana; and 1920, Sacred Heart Church in Wichita Falls, Texas.

On the occasion of the completion of the 2,000th organ, a banquet was given in Hastings Hall on March 3, 1904. The organ was built for the Foundry Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. An organ recital was given in the organ factory Finishing Room where the organ was set up ready for shipping. After the banquet, Mr. Hastings spoke in part:

"I am pleased to greet you on behalf of the Corporation and on behalf of my young associates . . . I greet you on my own behalf. It has been my good fortune to long have the valued aid of many very capable experts, men who have grown up with me and the business, who have felt the fascination of our art, who have identified themselves with its interests and to whom I am glad to here express my indebtedness and gratitude . . . I am able to say now as I said to a reporter who came out here fourteen years ago — 'We have never had any labor troubles here.' When this was told by the reporter on his return to Boston, he was sent back to learn all about us, and the *Boston Herald of Sunday*, July 13, 1890 published unsolicited, a four-column article with illustrations describing what it termed a 'community of labor,' an 'object lesson — a neighborhood like a family.' All this can be repeated and emphasized by the further experience of fourteen years and this I owe largely to you. It may be well here to glance back and briefly review some features of our past. Its very beginning was in 1827 — a memorial of which is the little imitation organ, rescued from the rubbish of our old factory and now placed in our finishing hall. Many have wondered when and where it was made, and for what purpose — it was used for a sign over the door of the first factory nearly eighty years ago . . . From 1865 the business increased rapidly and by 1880 we had produced 1,000 organs — and fulfilling my promise — on the completion of organ #1,000 for a church in Washington, D.C., we celebrated the occasion of the completion of organ #2,000. It happens that this, too, is for Washington for the new large church for what is there known as the Foundry Methodist Church, attended by President Grant and other noted men. I can make but brief illusion to the years 1880-1881, and the deaths in those years of my old partners and my succession to the entire business — to the years 1886-87 when the business was moved from Boston and re-established here by me — to the formation of a corporation in 1893, with my son as its President, who continued as such ten years until his recent death. The vacancy has just been filled, as you know, by the election of Mr. Arthur L. Coburn. I think you will join with me in wishing our new President success and pleasure, and in giving him our hearty cooperation."

Philip F. Coburn

FROM THE EDITOR

In 1980 Harold "Red" Travis encouraged Phil Coburn to research the history of the Hook-Hastings organ factory, Weston's largest employer from 1889 to 1936. Phil was a likely person to write the story because his Uncle Arthur had been president of the firm, his Aunt Anna had been married to the owner, Frank Hastings, and Phil could remember making many excursions through the factory — taking tin pans to be mended and selling magazines and newspapers to the workmen. Further, Phil and his wife Natalie lived for a short time at 227 North Avenue — one of the homes built by Frank Hastings for his employees. This Bulletin and the next present Phil's findings — and added companion material not available at the time of Phil's death last spring. The October 1980 and January 1982 issues of the Bulletin contain pictures and additional information on the organ factory.

The impact of the factory as an employer cannot be overestimated. Weston's population was about 1,700 when the factory — an employer of over seventy persons — came to town. Adjusted to our current population, a business would need upwards of 475 workers to have a comparable effect in numbers upon Weston's economy — a number greater than all positions in all businesses currently in Weston with the exception of the office building at the Turnpike entrance. This conservative estimate of the organ factory's impact omits the employment created by the construction of buildings described in Phil Coburn's article.

The organ factory is only the most conspicuous example of Weston's industrial past, a story yet to be written. North Avenue had a ropewalk and a shoe factory-tannery. In 1891 there burned at the corner of South Avenue and Pine Street a "wooden knitting factory" — whatever that was! South Avenue also had a sawmill. Crescent Street had a sawmill and gristmill which later made textile machinery, clocks, butter and cheese drills, window screens, and school furniture. The Boston Post Road has had a pottery and a sawmill-gristmill which later made textile machinery for both the North and the South, hardware and tools, then pencil sharpeners.



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(Currently the age span of our life members is from 5 to "over 80!")

Contributions and Bequests to the Endowment and Memorial Fund are welcomed.

All checks should be mailed to: Weston Historical Society, Inc., Box 343, Weston, MA 02193
Additional copies of THE BULLETIN may be obtained by phoning Mrs. Raymond Paynter, Jr., 899-3533, or Donald G. Kennedy, Editor, 893-1319; also by calling at the Josiah Smith Tavern any Wednesday afternoon during "Open House". If you have a spare copy of BULLETINS, vintage 1963-70, our Curator, Mrs. J. E. Fraser, 894-2872 would be glad to have them.