

**REPORT ON THE CONNECTION AT  
VARIOUS TIMES EXISTING BETWEEN  
THE FIRST PARISH IN CAMBRIDGE  
AND HARVARD COLLEGE,  
ACCEPTED MAY 20, 1850**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649322633

Report on the Connection at Various Times Existing Between the First Parish in Cambridge and Harvard College, Accepted May 20, 1850 by Various

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Cover @ 2017

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Printed for the Use of the First Parish.

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CAMBRIDGE:  
METCALF AND COMPANY,  
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY.  
1851.

MS 13207.24.19

122 June 26, 1850  
Copy of Morrill Map of Cambridge  
of Cambridge

At a meeting of the members of the First Parish in Cambridge, held at their Vestry, April 29, 1850, it was

"Voted, That a Committee be appointed to consider the rights and privileges of Harvard College to the use of the meeting-house, and Morrill Wyman, Daniel Austin, B. W. Whitney, William G. Stearns, and Oliver Hastings, were chosen."

At the adjournment of the above meeting, May 20, 1850,—

"The Committee appointed to make inquiries as to the rights of Harvard College to the meeting-house, presented their Report, which was accepted and referred to the Committee who presented it, with directions to print for the use of the society such abstracts and portions of it as they think advisable.

"Voted, That the same Committee cause a survey of the Parish land to be made, if they think advisable.

"Voted, That the same Committee be requested to make application to Harvard College for further aid towards defraying the annual expenses of the Parish."

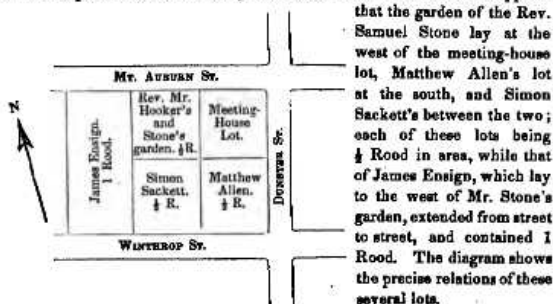
## R E P O R T .

Your Committee in the following Report have endeavored to give copies of the papers which have a bearing upon the history of the connection at various times existing between Harvard College and the First Parish. This they do because they believe that these papers, which have been obtained from the College, Parish, and Town Records with some trouble, should be preserved for future reference, when, as copies, they will have a value which no mere analysis of them could possess.

The First Parish in Cambridge has at successive periods been the proprietor of five meeting-houses.

The first was built in 1632, and had a bell upon it. It stood near the southwest corner of Mount Auburn and Dunster Streets, probably a little south of Mount Auburn Street.\*

\* Dr. T. W. Harris, who has investigated many questions relating to the early history of Cambridge with great care, states that the meeting-house lot was at the place mentioned above, and that from the Town Records it appears



The following vote refers to the repairs of this house.

"At a general meeting of the inhabitants of the Town 18.12.49 [Feb. 18, 1649,] voted and agreed by a general consent that the meeting-house shall be repaired with a 4-square rooffe and covered with shingle, and the charges thereof levied upon the Inhabitants of the towne by equale rate. Also Edw: Goffe, Tho: Morrett, Jno. Stedman, Robt. Holmes, and Tho: Danforth, are chosed by the towne to oversee and carry on this worke, to agree with workmen, and to levie the charge of their ingagements for the worke upon the inhabitants of the Towne."\*

"11(1)16½; [March 11, 1649, Old Style]. At a general meeting of the whole town it was then voted and agreed that the five men chosen by the town to repair the meeting-house shall desist from the same and agree with workmen for building of a new House about 40 foot square and covered as was formerly agreed for the other; and levy the charge of their ingagements upon the inhabitants of the Towne."

"It was also there voted and generally agreed that the new meeting-house shall stand on the Watch-House hill."—*Regestere Booke*, p. 108.

Watch-house Hill was the name given to the slight eminence upon which the two succeeding meeting-houses were built. This eminence was then undoubtedly much more distinct than now, since it is well known that a pond existed nearly south, at the corner of Dunster and Main Streets, into which it is probable the tide occasionally flowed.

According to Dr Abiel Holmes's History of Cambridge, the Town voted, in February, 1652, "That the Towns men [selectmen] shall make sale of the land whereon the old meeting-house stood."

"10th 9th month 1650. The Inhabitants did consent that

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\* Two Discourses delivered before the First Parish in Cambridge; one upon leaving the Old Meeting-house, and the other at the Dedication of the New. By William Newell, Pastor of the First Church in Cambridge. 1834. The original vote is recorded in *The Regestere Booke of the Lands and Houses in the New-towne*, 1635, p. 108; in the City Clerk's office.



the five men that were deputed by the Towne to make the agreement with the carpenters for building the meeting house should consider of their complaints and allow them what they may judge equal, not exceeding forty pounds." — *Regestere Booke*, p. 120.

From this vote we should infer that the second meeting-house was finished before the winter of 1650. Presidents Chauncy and Oakes both officiated as clergymen in this house while connected with Harvard College, the latter till his death in 1681; but the first pecuniary assistance from the College is recorded as follows: —

"Boston, Decemb<sup>r</sup> 24, 1691. At a corporation meeting of Harvard College. It is ordered, 1. That £5 be allowed towards y<sup>e</sup> repairing of y<sup>e</sup> meeting house in Cambr. Provided y<sup>t</sup> this present allowance shall not be drawn into a precedent for y<sup>e</sup> future and y<sup>t</sup> the selectmen shall renounce all expectation of such a thing for y<sup>e</sup> future." — *Corporation Records*, B. 4, p. 2.

"At a meeting of the Corporation at Cambridge, Sept. 28, 1703, Voted, that the sum of sixty pounds be allowed out of the College Treasury, towards the building a new meeting house in Cambridge." — *Corporation Records*, B. 4, p. 23.

This vote has reference to the third meeting-house, which was built upon Watch-house Hill, fronting to the south, with its rear line two and a half or three feet south of, and parallel to, the front line of the fourth house.

"6 Aug. 1706. Voted that Mr. Leverett with the Treasurer take care for the building of a pew for the President's family, in the meeting house now a building, and about the students' seats in said meeting house, the charge of the Pew to be defrayed out of the College Treasury." — *Corporation Records*, B. 4, p. 26.

"Sept. 6, 1717. In answer to the motion of Mr. Andrew Bordman and Zach<sup>r</sup> Hicks in the name and on the behalf of the town of Cambridge, Voted, That the College will be ready to allow out of the Treasury one seventh part of the charge of raising the meeting house and erecting an upper tier of galler-

ies ; Provided, That the frontier gallery that now is, with the two wings, shall, as of right it ought to be, and as their necessity calls for it, be surrendered to the use of the scholars, and so much room in the side gallery, contiguous to the front gallery aforesaid, as shall be equal to a seventh part of the new gallery which shall be erected be declared and entered in the Town book of records as the right and apportionable part of the meeting house belonging to the College, and delivered to the use of the said College as there shall be occasion therefor. The said part of the said side gallery to be taken and set off square from front to rear." — Corporation Records, B. 4, p. 60.

"April 23, 1746. At a meeting of the Pres<sup>ts</sup> and Fellows of Harvard College in Cambridge, the Corporation being this day informed from the Parish by their committee for the repairs of the meeting house — That they [the Parish] are about to repair said meeting house in the following manner, viz. To make sash lights of glass of 8 and 10 inches, to clapboard the house so far as there shall be need of it, and shingle the whole roof, and give the proper repairs of the steeple besides raising the floor to its state and setting the pews in good order. The request of the said committee to the corporation is that they would by them inform the Parish what they are willing to do with respect to the said repairs. Therefore the corporation on mature consideration of said affair come into the following vote.

"That if the Parish shall actually make the repairs above mentioned, This corporation will consent to pay for the windows in their gallery, and clapboard the upper part of the front of the meeting house from the girt to the plate, and also pay for the window in the President's pew, and clapboard behind said pew on the backside of the meeting house (if said part of the meeting house be new clapboarded) from the sill to the girt. Or if the Parish shall rather choose instead of our making the repairs of the above mentioned Parts, That we would give some certain Proportion of the said Repairs of the said house, we consent that we will ensure the seventh part of the whole repairs of the house, only requiring, That the Parish do inform the Corporation before they enter upon the repairs of said house which

of these proposals they choose to take up with."—Corporation Records, Book 4, p. 268.

No vote has been found on the records of the College, or those of the Parish, showing which of these proposals was acceded to, although a committee was appointed to make the election, as appears from the last-named records. It is probable, as the repairs were not so extensive as first proposed, that the College answered to the seventh part of the charge.

"At a meeting of the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the first precinct in Cambridge y<sup>e</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> of April 1746 by an adjournment from the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 1745-6, voted that William Brattle Ed<sup>m</sup> Throwbridge And<sup>w</sup> Boardman Esqirs Dea<sup>m</sup> Sam<sup>l</sup> Sparhawke & M<sup>r</sup> Noah Sparhawke be a committe to treat with y<sup>e</sup> corporation and y<sup>e</sup> parsons that own the pews in the meeting house in said precinct as to y<sup>e</sup> repairs of said house: viz. as to making windows and clabording to y<sup>e</sup> top of said windows and make report to y<sup>e</sup> committee or clerk of said precinct that a precinct meeting may be called as sone as posable."

"At a meeting of the Freeholders and Inhabitants of y<sup>e</sup> First precinct in Cambridge legally assembled on y<sup>e</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> of Sep<sup>r</sup> 1746. 1. Voted that eight pews be made out of the four hind seats on y<sup>e</sup> floor and that they be disposed off to such persons and for such sums as the committee hereafter named shall judge Proper. So as thereby to raise four hundred pounds old Tenour which sum the said Committee is to apply towards repairing y<sup>e</sup> meeting house in y<sup>e</sup> manner following; viz. new shingling y<sup>e</sup> roof, new clabording y<sup>e</sup> East End, south side and west end as far as y<sup>e</sup> north corner of y<sup>e</sup> Belfrey, making new fore-doors, new glaise y<sup>e</sup> house with sash glass eight & ten inches, amend and secure the floor, erect y<sup>e</sup> vane, and do such other things as shall be found needful thoroughly to repair y<sup>e</sup> said house. 2. That if y<sup>e</sup> said sum with what y<sup>e</sup> College, y<sup>e</sup> owners of y<sup>e</sup> pews and others shall do be not sufficient for that purpose, then to make so many more pews out of y<sup>e</sup> next seats and dispose of y<sup>m</sup> in manner and at rate aforesaid as will raise a sum sufficient for that purpose. 3. Voted that Francies Foxcroft, Edmund Trowbridge, Sam<sup>l</sup> Whit-