



James Cole & the Organ @ FUMC

From Jim Bennett, FUMC Historian:

James Cole built the organ on the third floor of 223 Tremont Street, just a couple blocks from our church. Known as the Waverley Building, it is an iconic historic structure in Melrose and is located just across from the Cedar Park commuter rail stop. I have attached the Melrose Historical Commission's inventory form on it.

Cole, a native of Manchester, England, who immigrated to this country as a child with his parents, was living in Melrose at the time, at 60 Upham Street, a walk of five minutes or less from the church. Andrew, you asked if he ever played our organ in a public capacity. I haven't found any documents that prove that he did, but he lived so close to our church that he could have heard the organ from his house on a Sunday morning, which suggests to me that he did.

As the attached notice from the Melrose Free Press details, on September 3rd, 1915 he married Florence Martin in the home of her mother in Medford. The presiding minister was Dr. F. K. Stratton. Stratton was a Methodist Episcopal minister with a long association with our church. At one point he was an associate pastor, although I don't know what his status was in 1915. Neither Cole nor his wife were members of the church, so if I had to propose a theory, it would be that the couple wanted a private ceremony when they married, and they turned to a clergyman whom they liked and trusted to do the honors, a Methodist pastor who lived in their neighborhood. Cole might have first met him when he was installing the organ in our church.

Cole died in 1934. Disappointingly, there was no obituary. He was buried at Forest Hills Cemetery in Boston.

Now, as for the organ, the evidence presents a dilemma. I have spent some more time in our archive, and I have also combed through every issue of the Melrose Free Press from 1915, As there is no mention anywhere of an organ being installed in 1915, I have come to question the idea that such an installation took place, partly because of the lack of evidence from 1915, and partly because of the overwhelming evidence that there was an impressive organ installed when the church first opened in 1904.

In the safe there is handwritten note which says that the estimated cost to be paid in 1904 to the architect of the new church, J. William Beal, for an organ was \$3500. This was a large sum for an impressive instrument; an inflation calculator would give it a value of about \$100000 today. Moreover, the attached scanned images of the organ recital concert that marked the opening of the new church building clearly demonstrate that the organ was an important attraction in the new facility.

In summary, we know that an expensive new organ was a built-in part of the church constructed in 1904. If that organ had been damaged in such a catastrophic way that it warranted a complete replacement in 1915, it would have turned up in church records and the public press in 1915. I therefore conclude, barring conclusive evidence to the contrary, that the organ was constructed in 1904 (with some replacements made in 1915, perhaps), at a cost of \$3500.

Linked photograph of the Waverly Building from the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System.

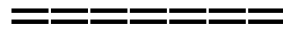


This Apartment building was erected after a disastrous fire which destroyed the previous Waverley Block on January 11, 1866. Up until the time it was converted to an apartment house in 1928 this building was used entirely for commercial purposes. For many years the James Cole & Company, a pipe organ manufacturer, occupied the third story. William A. Jeffs Co. occupied various areas for storage and display. J. A. Holbrook carried on a plumbing business here, and A. Brewer ran a furniture repair business in a small area. Various commercial enterprises occupied other areas.

MARRIAGES.



Cole === Martin.



At Medford Hillside at the residence of the bride's mother, Mrs. C. H. Hall, on Friday afternoon, September 3d, Mr. James Cole and Mrs. Florence Martin were joined in marriage by Rev. Dr. F. K. Stratton, of Melrose.

A happy company of relatives and friends of the bride and bridegroom with the aid of the mother and sister of the bide, rendered the occasion very bright and cheerful.

With repeated expressions of best wishes of the company the wedded couple departed on their honeymoon trip to Maine.

At home after Sept. 20th, at 60 Upham street, Melrose, Mass.

**First
Methodist Episcopal Church
Melrose, Massachusetts**

REV. CHARLES HENRY STACKPOLE
PASTOR

REV. JOEL MARVIN LEONARD, D.D.
PRESIDING ELDER

Dedication Exercises

JUNE 12-19
1904

Organ Recital

Program.



PARKER

Concerto No. 2, Opus 28

BACH Arranged by Mr. Douglas

a Aria from Suite in D

b Minuetto from Violin Sonata

DUBOIS

"March of the Magi"

STEWART—"The Nativity"

"Once in Royal David's City"

HANDEL—"Israel in Egypt" Arranged by Best

"But the Waters Overwhelmed their Enemies"

HANDEL

Arranged by Mr. Douglas

a Largo

b Gigue

TOURS

Fantasia in C major

GOUNOD

"O Divine Redeemer"

GUILMANT

a Elevation in A flat

b Grand Chorus in D

BARNBY

Aria from "Rebekah"

ROSSINI

Overture to "William Tell"

At the conclusion of the Recital the entire Church edifice will be open
for inspection.