



The Howard Co. Clock,
identical image shown
above, has been serving the
town of Walpole faithfully
since 1881

Excerpts from the Mann Scrapbook
courtesy of the Walpole Historical Society
regarding the Old Town Hall
Walpole, Massachusetts

1881

WALPOLE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

1861-1865



2011-2015

CIVIL WAR
SESQUICENTENNIAL

WALPOLE TOWN HALL.
1880 — 1881.

Building Committee.

GEORGE E. CRAIG.

JAMES G. SCOTT.

WARREN BOYDEN.

NAAMAN B. WILMARTH.

CHARLES D. HARTSHORN.

GEORGE P. MOWRY.

Architect,

J. WILLIAMS BEAL.

DEDICATORY SERVICE.

SEPTEMBER 28, 1881.

MUSIC.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE DAY, - GEORGE E. CRAIG, OF WALPOLE.

PRAYER, - - - - - BY REV. C. G. HILL.

ADDRESS OF THE ARCHITECT, - - - J. WILLIAMS BEAL, OF BOSTON.

ADDRESS OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BUILDING COMMITTEE, - GEO. E. CRAIG.

ADDRESS OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SELECTMEN, - - JAMES G. SCOTT.

MUSIC.

DEDICATORY PRAYER, - - - - - REV. F. P. HAMBLETT.

DEDICATORY ADDRESS, - - -	HENRY E. FALES, ESQ., OF BOSTON.
	MUSIC.
ADDRESS, - - -	HON. F. W. BIRD, OF WALPOLE.
	MUSIC.
ADDRESS, - - -	JAMES A. DUPEE, ESQ., OF BOSTON.
	MUSIC.
ADDRESS, - - -	GEORGE B. HYDE, ESQ., OF BOSTON.
	MUSIC.
ADDRESS, - - -	REV. FRANCIS GOUESSE, OF WALPOLE.
	MUSIC.
ADDRESS, - - -	REV. EDWIN P. THOMPSON, OF WALPOLE.
	MUSIC.
OLD HUNDRED, - - -	BY THE AUDIENCE.
BENEDICTION, - - -	REV. G. R. BENT, OF WALPOLE.

THE LEAGUE PENNANT.
The close of the last week but one of the league season finds the fight for the pennant practically narrowed down to two clubs—Boston and Providence. The former has an advantage over the latter in having won one more game, lost two less games and has one more to play than her

FRANK BIRD DEFEATED

In Town Meeting—Walpole Decides to Build a Town Hall.

The citizens of Walpole have been discussing the feasibility of constructing a town hall for the past two years, and three meetings upon that subject have been held since last February. A meeting was held yesterday afternoon, which was attended by over two-thirds of the legal voters. Nearly all of the manufacturing establishments were closed, teams were used to convey voters to and from the outskirts, proclamations by the contending factions had been made and circulated, and the public had been fully aroused so that when the meeting was called to order the building in which it was to be held was found to be inadequate, and an adjournment to the horse-sheds and grounds was made. Samuel Allen was chosen moderator. Hon. F. W. Bird led a conservative party, who favored the building of a hall of wood to cost \$15,000, from plans of Mr. Sillaway, or to postpone action at present. The opposing faction favored the Beal plan at a cost of \$20,000. As a hint of prospective pounding Mr. E. G. Piper presented the moderator with a ponderous gavel made from a large knot of a tree.

The votes were taken by check-list, and the town appropriated \$1800 to purchase 20,000 square feet of land on Main street, Centre, from E. D. Clapp. Then came the tug of war upon the cost of the building. Hon. F. W. Bird contrasted the valuation of this town with others in the county that are erecting halls, and he thought that was a fair criterion. He was willing to build a one-story structure, which would be ample. Mr. Stone, George Craig and others took an opposite view, and, during the discussion, many puns were interjected. The conservative party were defeated, it being voted to build a town-house by the plans of W. J. Beal, for \$20,000, and the treasurer was authorized to borrow that sum, with the advice and consent of the selectmen, payable in not more than ten years, the sum to be raised by taxation. The plans of the hall provide for a two-story brick building, Gothic style, the lower floor to be subdivided into selectmen's and other town officers' rooms, library room, small hall with stage appurtenances. A large hall, with galleries, will comprise the second story. George E. Craig, James G. Scott, N. B. Wilmarth, Warren Boyden, Charles D. Hartshorn and George P. Morey were chosen a building committee.

THE WENTAW BATTLE FLAG

Town Meeting at Walpole.

A special town meeting was held in Walpole yesterday afternoon, at which Samuel Allen was chosen moderator. The room in which the meeting was held being too small to accommodate the usual number of voters present, an adjournment was made to the open air, where, on each vote taken, the check list was used. After much discussion by Frank Bird, George E. Craig, James Hartshorn and others, it was voted to buy the Clapp lot of 20,000 square feet, on Main street, for a location for a town house, at a cost of \$1800; also to borrow \$20,000, for 10 years, to build a two-story brick structure for a hall and town offices.

Walpole's New Town House.

The citizens of the enterprising town of Walpole who, for many years past, have been agitating the subject of erecting a new town hall, have reason to feel proud of the handsome structure which today adorns the centre of their principal village, and which will this (Wednesday) afternoon be dedicated to all the uses which a progressive people desire a public hall for. Mr. Henry F. Fales of Milford delivering the dedicatory address. The building is of the Queen Anne style of architecture, and is, indeed, an imposing-looking structure. It is built of handsome red brick, and has brown freestone trimmings, with foundations of granite. It has a slated roof and two spires, one for the belfry and the other for the ventilator. On both the top and the edge of the roof are odd-looking terra cotta trimmings. A handsome weather vane adorns the entire structure, and from the foundations to the top of this vane the distance is 100 feet. The clock and bell, both of which are the gift of prominent citizens, cost some \$1000. Granite steps are located under the portico arch at the main entrance, and the double doors here, as well as all the other doors, swing outward. The first floor is devoted to an assembly hall, 43x32 feet in size; a public library room, 41x16 feet, and two additional rooms, some 16 feet square, which will be used by the selectmen and town clerk. The records of the town and other property of value will be deposited in a fireproof vault, located in one of these rooms. There are two stairways leading from the first floor to the main hall, which is located on the second floor. This hall will seat 500 people, being 43x76 feet in size. An elevated, semi-circular shaped stage or speaker's platform adorns one end of it, while at the opposite end is an elevated gallery, with good seating capacity. The stage is 42 feet long, with two wings, which are each 12 feet long. It is 15 feet deep in the centre. All of these rooms are finished in ash, have hard-pine floors, and are supplied with the most approved style of hall furniture. There are an abundance of ante-rooms, closets and other rooms connected with the main rooms. The height of the main hall is 28 feet 9 inches. Additional to the plain glass windows used in lighting the main hall there are 23 cathedral windows, with light green and yellow glass. The same style of windows are also adopted in other portions of the building. The main hall is very handsomely frescoed. The building is lighted by gas, heated by two hot-air furnaces located in the basement and ventilated in an improved manner. The principal means of egress from the farthest end of the hall, in case of an emergency, is afforded by a stairway which leads from the rear of the speaker's platform to the assembly hall below. This structure is a costly affair, and one of the finest town halls in the commonwealth.

WALPOLE.

The dedication ball at Walpole last evening was a decided success, there being about 150 couples present. The elaborate ornamentation of the hall rendered any floral display by the committee unnecessary. A promenade concert by Harts-horn's band was given for an hour, and at 9.30 o'clock dancing was begun, and, with the exception of an intermission for supper, was kept up until 4.30 this morning. The dresses of the ladies were elaborate and the committee of arrangements were indefatigable in their attention to the wants of all. John E. Mann was floor manager, aided by Messrs. A. M. Cram, W. I. Lewis, H. E. Craig, — Rooney and others. Supper was furnished by Tufts of Boston. It was conceded to be the largest social gathering held in town.

Wednesday Sept 28

1881-

Boston Herald

To the Voters and Tax-Payers of Walpole.

You are again called to a Town-Meeting to act upon a plan for a Town-House which you have twice rejected. You are asked not only to adopt this twice-rejected plan, but to commit the building recommended by that plan to the committee who reported it, who were ashamed to say they approved of it, and yet now have the impudence to ask the town to adopt a plan substantially the same. They have called this meeting in the busiest week of the year—a time when they know the farmers of the town will be in the midst of their haying, and when they hope that that large class of our tax-payers who reside mostly in the outskirts will be unwilling to leave their work. It is important that this vexed question be settled; and to this end it is essential that the next meeting should be a full one, and should make a decision by such a majority that there shall be no appeal.

The reckless course pursued by the leaders of what is called the Beale plan shows that they mean to “rule or ruin”—that they mean to force their plan upon the town, or to prevent the town’s adopting any. Believing as we do that a town-house can be built with all the conveniences desirable for town purposes, which shall be at the same time an elegant structure, an ornament to the centre of the town, and which will in the end cost at least from five to eight thousand dollars less than the “Beale” plan, we appeal to the voters and tax-payers of the town to attend town-meeting next Monday, to insist upon knowing all the facts in the case, and then render their verdict.

The issue before the town is simply this: 1st. Shall we build a town-house with ample and convenient accommodations for all *town purposes*, which, besides that, shall be a substantial and elegant structure which will be an ornament to the centre village: or, 2d, Shall we build, practically, two town-houses; one adapted to town-purposes; and the other, a smaller hall for concerts, caucusses, theatricals, etc., at an additional cost of at least five thousand dollars. Our people in the outskirts are willing, as I believe, to be taxed for a building of the class first above-named, without insisting upon any particular plan or material; but we ought not to be taxed for the extra cost of other rooms and superfluous ornamentation for the gratification of residents in the immediate vicinity. If the residents in the centre want to put this extra cost into a building for rooms, etc., let them put their hands in their pockets and pay for them, and I will join them, but I will not vote to tax the outskirts for the extravagant cost of a building which they will not enter more than three or four times in a year.

COME ONE, COME ALL! and, above all, **COME EARLY!**

F. W. BIRD.

EAST WALPOLE, June 22, 1880.

To whom it may concern. Residents of the town of Walpole.

In the transaction of business, public or private, an appeal to your passions is an insult to your intelligence. What more than this is the peculiar address just issued to you by that incarnation of the "Rule or Ruin" principle, the Honorable F. W. Bird. It is an open secret among the friends and advocates of this gentleman, that he and his assistants propose to hold this town by the throat while they administer the nauseating dose prepared by the reverend and able Dr. Silloway, and that in the event of the town's utter refusal to take the dose, why, they shall have no town-house.

As we have said, this document is peculiar in many respects; in the first place, it is assumed beyond a doubt to be an impertinence on the part of any free citizen of this town to move toward a mutual consultation in town meeting, without first having obtained the assent or permission of Hon. F. W. Bird and party; upon what ground this assumption is based, of course it is not our privilege to inquire.

The gentlemen with characteristic conscientiousness and care in the imputation of motives, accuses all who differ with him of being intentionally wicked in so far as the next town meeting is called at an accidentally busy season of the year. We wonder that he did not make us blameable for the exceptional heat of the season as it is really the cause which makes haying imperative now rather than two weeks hence as usual, and further he says, that they, his opponents hope that a large portion of the voters will be detained from the meeting while the fact is that we have openly and honorably made every effort to have all the voters present. Our one desire is that a full town meeting free from the trammels of chicanery and wire pulling, shall have the privilege of saying whether they will have a town house which they, rather than any one else, shall deem appropriate and acceptable; by their decision we are willing to abide.

But it is a matter of self respect to ourselves, as well as to all of the independent voters of the town, that we should be secured in our right to have a fair and deliberate expression of the opinion of the town, upon such questions as we may from time to time desire properly to put to it, without let or hindrance from any self appointed and impudently assumed authority.

This document further attempts to distort and misrepresent that gentlemanly delicacy with which the original committee abstained from officially recommending the plan of their own choice because of its unexpected cost, while they have personally endorsed it with an earnestness which is attested by their repeated and continuous efforts to get it fairly before the town.

Regardless of our various locations, we are all alike interested citizens of the whole town of Walpole, and we think that the number of persons who are illiberal and narrow enough to allow themselves to be governed by sectional considerations is exceedingly small.

We are told that the one question before the town is, whether we shall build a town house deemed satisfactory by Hon. F. W. Bird, at a cost of \$15,000, or whether we shall spend an additional \$5,000 in a way that *he* does not deem necessary, although the additional facilities to be secured by this additional investment would be a largely remunerative investment, and, in fact, the only part of the investment which by direct return would secure any income to the town.

The question, as it really affects us is, whether we shall for ten consecutive years, submit to additional tax of \$1.60 per thousand, and get a satisfactory and superior Town House, or whether we shall submit to a like additional tax of \$1.20 per thousand, thereby saving (40c.) forty cents per thousand, but at the same time getting a decidedly unsatisfactory and inferior building.

The remarkable fairness of this document is evidenced by the fact, that it was cautiously issued at the last possible moment, so that the citizens might be led to act under an impulse of passion, rather than, having a possible reply, be able to get at the merits of the case.

We are sincerely sorry to be obliged hastily to interfere with this eminently peculiar programme. It is with exceeding pleasure that we are able at least on one point to unite with the honorable writer in an earnest invitation to each and every voter in the town, "To come, and to come early"; but, in fairness we must add, that which he evidently did not care to emphasize, "that they should come prepared to act rationally and independently of any other influence whatever.

Yes 171 }
No 146 } 317 Votes
25 ahead

A NUMBER OF VOTERS.

June 28 1880

WALPOLE.

The Town Votes to Build a Town Hall.

The special town meeting held yesterday afternoon brought out a large number of voters, all sections of the town being well represented. Both the parties—those in favor of the wooden \$15,000 town house, and those in favor of the brick building—came fully organized and brought out their full strength. Consequently there was less argument and discussion than usual, and everything worked more smoothly than we have ever known it to work at town meetings. On account of the extreme heat the meeting was held out of doors and the excited crowd of voters formed a picturesque sight. Samuel Allen was chosen moderator.

Under article 2d of the warrant the town then voted to appropriate \$1800 to pay for the lot of land on Main street, containing 20,000 feet, now owned by E. Daggett Clapp. The town voted on this and the subsequent article by a check list, each person voting *visa voce*. Article 3d was then taken up and produced much discussion, but the result showed a vote of 171 in favor to 146 against building a Town House on the lot named in article second, according to plans presented by J. William Beal, architect, under article 4th. The town voted to authorize the committee appointed at the last March meeting to prepare plans and specifications for a Town House, and to act as a committee for building the same. This committee is composed of the following gentlemen: George E. Craig, James G. Scott, Norman B. Wilmarth, Warren Boyden, Charles D. Hartsorn, George P. Morey. Article 5th, To see if the town will authorize its treasurer, with the advice and under the direction of the selectmen, to borrow the sum of \$20,000, and to give the promissory note of said town therefor, payable in not more than ten years, in such amounts on such time and at such rates of interest as the selectmen may determine, was passed with hardly a dissenting voice. This action will give the town a handsome brick town house, with two halls, one with an excellent stage and well adapted to evening entertainments and large town gatherings. The other a smaller hall, suitable to smaller town and other assemblies. The building also includes a library, reading-room, selectmen's room, ante-rooms, etc.

The whole building is to be fitted up with every convenience, and is to be placed on the finest site to be found in the village. The estimates as presented by the committee have been very thorough and complete. While the hall will cost more than many of those who voted for it could have wished, its erection seemed the only safe and satisfactory move to make against the old-fogy element that was opposed to any town hall whatever. The plans for a wooden building were not satisfactory to most of the town's people, and rather than risk a delay that meant defeat, the vote was cast for the brick town house, which cannot fail to be a great ornament to the town.

Walpole.

TOWN MEETING. The war is at last ended, and the inhabitants of Walpole look forward to the speedy erection of the long-looked-for and much-talked-of Town House. At 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon the vestry of the Unitarian Church, used for town purposes, was packed with eager voters, and from the excited remarks it was impossible to tell which party had the largest number present. The "Bricks" and "Cord-wood," as the two parties have been called, were each anxious to have their pet scheme triumphant. Samuel Allen was chosen Moderator by ballot, receiving 139 votes. Before the contest opened, Mr. E. G. Piper presented the town with a handsome gavel and was awarded a vote of thanks by the meeting. Immediately afterward Dr. S. E. Stone moved that the meeting adjourn to the yard in the rear of the church, owing to the closeness of the atmosphere, and the motion was carried. After order was restored, Article 2, "To see if the town will appropriate \$1800, to pay for the lot of land on Main street, containing 20,000 feet, which the town has voted to buy of E. D. Chap," was read, and after some discussion it was voted to appropriate that amount of money. The check-list was used and 177 voted in the affirmative and 119 in the negative. Mr. M. B. Wilmarth then moved that Article 3, "To see if the town will vote to build a Town House on said lot in accordance with plans and specifications prepared by J. William Peal, architect, and will make appropriation therefor," be accepted and an appropriation of \$20,000 be made for that purpose. An opportunity for

discussion was now given and it was eagerly grasped by several individuals. Hon. F. W. Bird championed the cause of those who were in favor of erecting a wooden building, and he was answered by George E. Craig in behalf of the opposite party. One argument advanced in favor of the brick building was that it would be much more convenient to have the Public Library on the ground floor than on the second story, where it would necessarily be in the wooden building. A vote was finally reached with the check-list and the article was accepted by a vote of 171 to 146. The result was received with great enthusiasm, and immediately after the vote was declared there was a great scarcity of the supporters of the wooden building plan. Everybody was suddenly seized with the idea that the brick building was just what the town needed.

The important work of the meeting being disposed of, the rest of the business was hurried through with in the shortest time possible. Article 4, "To see if the town will authorize the committee, appointed at the last March meeting to prepare plans and specifications for a Town House, to act as a committee for building the same," was read, and the committee, George E. Craig, James G. Scott, M. B. Wilmarth, Warren Boyden, Charles D. Hartshorn and George P. Morey, were so authorized, and will at once organize and discharge their duty in the best possible manner. Article 5, "To see if the town will authorize its Treasurer, with the advice and under the direction of its Selectmen, to borrow the sum of \$20,000 and to give the promissory notes of said town therefor, payable in not more than ten years, in such amounts, on such time and at such rate of interest as the Selectmen may determine," was disposed of by authorizing the Treasurer to borrow the specified amount, and it was voted that the money for canceling the debt be raised by taxation. The meeting then dissolved.

During the past winter the Farmers' Club and other public assemblies often discussed the want of a town house. A committee of three were chosen by the Farmers' Club to visit different towns and examine recently erected town houses, and see if one could be found that would do to copy from and supply the wants of our people, not only in size and convenience, but also in expense. The town house lately completed by the citizens of Uxbridge, seemed to be the nearest towards supplying our wants. The whole expense of completion, ready for occupancy, of the building alone was thirteen thousand dollars. It was larger than we needed; had a cupola and spire, which cost five thousand dollars, an expensive driveway, that we could dispense with. In short, it was estimated that at least three to four thousand dollars less expense could be dispensed with—in size, driveway and cupola, which, in a great measure, would make up for the late rise in the materials for its construction. In view of these facts, a very large part of the people of the town expressed a desire that a town house should be built at an expense not to exceed the sum of fifteen or sixteen thousand dollars. A committee of six was appointed by the town to solicit plans, specifications and bids for such a house. On April 12th that committee reported a plan, with specifications and bids, that would cost the town twenty-five thousand dollars, and that five hundred dollars appropriated had been spent for them. That was not what the people called for. The committee was discharged, and another one of six was appointed, of which Hon. F. W. Bird was the chairman, and has been reported in your last issue. The parties who presented the plans and specifications which would cost twenty-five thousand dollars, April 12, and was desirous to pledge the town in that sum for its erection, came again with all force, June 7th, and in consideration of the great fall in the price of the materials for construction, etc., etc., strenuously, by a minority report, urged the adoption of the former plans and specifications, asking that the sum of twenty thousand dollars be appropriated for the same. Upon a division of the house, this party was seventy-six in number. They came thoroughly organized, and their report was made with ability; but their mouthpiece chosen to carry out their motion to adjourn in case they failed to carry their point exhibited a good deal more brass than brains. His manner and language would have done very good credit to a town meeting in Texas, where pistols and bowie knives are brought into requisition. His motion to adjourn, (which is always in order and not debatable,) not being instantly recognized, as he wished, stepped forward, and with clenched fist and uproarious language, brought that fist down upon the table in front of the moderator. An officer standing near told him he had no right to speak to the moderator in that manner. His reply to the officer was, "You are a G—d—d old fool." The penalty for swearing is clearly defined by the law. If there is no penalty for such language and manner to an officer, the reflection upon himself will probably injure him more than it will the officer. A town house will no doubt be built of brick and stone, and at a cost not exceeding fifteen or sixteen thousand dollars, at some future time, not very far distant, with a public library on the lower floor, and of convenient access.