



OUR SAVIOUR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

160 Hill Farm Road, Fairfield, CT oursaviours.net

A Brief History of Hutchings, Plaisted & Company, Organ Builders

George S. Hutchings (1835-1913) was born in Salem, Massachusetts, and learned the carpentry trade at an early age. In 1857 he entered the renowned Hook organ workshop in the capacity of case-maker, and by the time he struck out on his own in 1869 he had learned all aspects of organ building.



Between 1872-1884 Hutchings partnered with Mark Plaisted in the firm that rebuilt the small organ that will be installed at Our Saviour's. During this period Hutchings, Plaisted & Co. installed large organs in several churches that maintain distinguished music programs to the present day: in Boston, the Church of the Advent and Old South Church (Copley Square), and in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, the North Congregational Church.

Following Plaisted's departure for California in 1884, Hutchings continued to build under his own name, creating important instruments for churches throughout New England, in Brooklyn, New York City (including St. Bartholomew's, the Church of the Transfiguration, and Brick Presbyterian), and in Connecticut, at the South Congregational Church of New Britain. During this period the novice Ernest M. Skinner came to work in the Hutchings establishment. Skinner would later found his own company, which became the most prestigious organ-building firm of early 20th-century America.

Nearing retirement, Hutchings partnered once more with Edwin Votey. In 1902 the firm completed the Newberry Memorial Organ for Woolsey Hall at Yale University.

Hutchings died in 1913, and his firm went out of business in 1918. A testimonial to his work on the Yale organ describes him as a craftsman of unquestioned integrity. From his training in the Hook workshop, to his launching of the young Ernest M. Skinner, Hutchings' life and work covered an enormous span of history in American organ building.

Alice Caldwell, May 2014

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For more information, contact Will Thoretz at (203) 912-5192.

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