

CHAPTER XV.

A PEACEFUL DECADE.

1816—1825.

At the annual meeting in 1816, Keene cast 359 votes; Westmoreland, 372; Chesterfield, 380; Walpole, 393; indicating a remarkable parity in the number of inhabitants in those towns.

As early as 1771, a small church of Baptists had been established in the eastern part of Westmoreland, and that denomination had gradually spread into the western part of Keene. In 1816 a meetinghouse was built a few rods west of the stores at West Keene and a church of thirteen members gathered there under the ministry of Rev. Charles Cummings.¹ The same year the "old men's seats" in the Congregational meetinghouse were removed and twelve additional pews built in their places. In December previous the town "Voted not to suffer a stove put in the meeting-house provided it could be done without any expense to the town." The new pews sold for from \$60 to \$80 apiece, and the money was used for repairing and painting the edifice by a committee consisting of John Wood, Aaron Appleton and Isaac Parker. The same committee was directed to procure a new bell, provided they could do so by an exchange of the old one with the addition of any balance of funds that might be left in their hands from the sale of pews. The new bell was procured in 1819.

Mr. Thomas Hardy came to town this year, through the influence of Samuel Dinsmoor and others, and opened a private school in which he advertised to teach the branches usually taught in academies. He also taught an evening school. He remained two years and then took charge of the Chesterfield academy.

¹Samuel Dinsmoor (senior) afterwards governor, attended services there, "riding out from the village every Sunday morning on his beautiful white horse." The frame of the meetinghouse, many years afterwards, was taken down and rebuilt on the east side of the Ashuelot above the mills and converted into a steam sawmill.

The influence of the war still kept the military spirit active. The Keene Light Infantry retained its position as one of the finest companies in the state. Its late captain, Isaac Parker, had been promoted to brigade inspector with the rank of major; and in September of 1816 the company, under Capt. Smith, equipped for actual service, marched to Surry and encamped for several days, in imitation of real army life. While there the Ashuelot Cavalry, Capt. Justus Perry, marched to their camp and made them a friendly visit.

1816 was remembered long afterwards as "the cold year." It was remarkable as such throughout the United States and in Europe. In some sections it was cold and dry, in others cold and wet. In this vicinity for more than twelve weeks in the spring and summer no rain fell. Grass withered, corn and other crops could not mature, and there was much distress in consequence.

The annual town meeting of 1817 "Voted to adopt the act to regulate the proceedings for extinguishing fires," which required "fire wards" to be chosen by the town and gave them great power. Elijah Dunbar, William Lamson, James Wilson, Aaron Hall, Samuel Dinsmoor, Daniel Bradford, John Wood, Joab Pond, John Prentiss and Abijah Wilder were chosen; and about the same number was chosen each year for several years following.

The independence of thought on religious matters which resulted later in Unitarianism was beginning to develop. The services of Rev. Mr. Oliphant not being wholly satisfactory, the town took action looking to his dismissal and chose a committee to "wait on" him and request him to join in calling a council for that purpose. Mr. Oliphant declined to receive the committee or hold any communication with them except in writing. A controversy ensued in which the church sustained its pastor, and during which several long reports of contending committees were received and recorded in full. Finally, Mr. Oliphant acceded to the request of the town and on the 1st of December he was dismissed by a council called mutually for that purpose. The question of collecting the minister tax,¹ which

¹"Nathan Pond, tax collector, arrested Eli Blake, Isaac Wyman, Jr., and Samuel Towne, and locked them up in jail for refusing to pay their minister tax. After having the key turned on them they paid the tax and were set free."



ZEDEKIAH S. BARSTOW.

had become a serious one, also entered into that controversy, and in November the town "Voted not to direct the selectmen to assess the ministerial tax this year, 54 for, 98 against." On the 5th of October, 1817, the shock of an earthquake was felt here with remarkable distinctness. It occurred at 11:45, on Sunday morning, while the services in church were in progress. The edifice was shaken, the minister paused, the congregation sprang to their feet, and for a moment there was consternation and confusion. The same movement was felt throughout this part of the country and in Boston and New York.

John Lyscom, the first dentist of whom we have any record, took rooms this year at Sumner's inn, and was followed a few years later by George W. Partridge.

Capt. James Wells, the hatter, returned from the army and resumed business on the lower floor of the Kingsbury building, formerly the morocco dressing shop.

In 1816, Hon. Ithamar Chase had formed a copartnership with Ebenezer Brewer and Wm. M. Bond, Chase, Brewer & Bond, succeeding Phineas Fiske & Co. in the brick store, now the north end of City Hotel. Mr. Chase died in August of this year, and his son, Alexander Ralston Chase, took the business and continued it for a few years, when it was given up, and John P. Barber took the store for a stove and tin shop.

Among those who died in 1817 were Col. Timothy Ellis, aged ninety-one; Major Davis Howlett, seventy-nine; and Capt. John Draper.

At the annual meeting in 1818, the town appropriated \$1,000 for schools, a larger sum than had ever been raised before, and the same sum was continued for several years afterwards. Daniel Bradford, Elijah Parker and Samuel Dinsmoor were chosen "inspectors of schools."

The town was now without a minister, and several persons had officiated as candidates for the place. Among them was Mr. Zedekiah S. Barstow, a young man from Connecticut, who preached here first on the 1st day of March, 1818. He gave so much satisfaction that at a legal meeting on the 18th of May, the town voted to unite with the church in giving him a call to settle—about 150 voting

in favor and none against. It also voted him a settlement of \$600 and a salary of \$600 per annum—increased on the 13th of June to \$700—with a vacation of “three or four Sabbaths a year to visit his friends.” Mr. Barstow accepted and he was ordained on Wednesday, the 1st day of July, the churches of Acworth (Rev. Phineas Cooke), Charlestown, Walpole, Chesterfield and Marlboro in New Hampshire, and Lancaster and Hadley, Mass., assisting. The council was escorted to the meetinghouse by 400 to 500 members of the society, of both sexes, and the people who attended numbered nearly 2,000, hundreds of whom were unable to enter.

A freshet in March did immense damage on the Connecticut river and the smaller streams, carrying away bridges, dams and mills. The bridges at South Keene and below Judge Newcomb's were swept away.

Imprisonment for debt was still sanctioned by law, but the “jail-yard” for poor debtors sometimes included a considerable tract of territory, which was designated by the courts. This year, 1818, a petition was presented to the court, signed by many leading men of the town, representing that the jail-yard for poor debtors included only a few houses and asking that it be extended. The request was granted.

Hon. Salma Hale had been elected to congress in 1816, but this year he declined a reelection and returned to the position of clerk of the courts. Joseph Buffum, who had been postmaster in Keene since 1813, succeeded Mr. Hale in congress, and Thomas M. Edwards, then a young lawyer, was appointed postmaster, July 1, and had the office over the store of William Lamson, Jr., where the Bank block now stands. The entrance was from Roxbury street by stairs on the outside of the building.

Among the deaths in 1818 were those of Lockhart Willard, aged fifty-five; William Woods, eighty-four; Hon. Daniel Newcomb, seventy-two; Capt. John Houghton, seventy-two; Nathan Bixby, seventy-two; and Capt. David Willson, seventy.

The young minister, Rev. Z. S. Barstow, recently a tutor in the celebrated Hopkins school in New Haven, and

in Hamilton college, took great interest in the schools, and at the annual town meeting in 1819 he was chosen at the head of a board of five "visitors and inspectors of schools." The other members were Elijah Dunbar, John Prentiss, Salma Hale and Joel Parker.

To avoid the steep hills over which ran the great thoroughfare to the northwest, known from here to Bel lows Falls as the third New Hampshire turnpike, efforts were made to change its course by building a new road through the gap, where the railroad now runs. The project was opposed by the towns on the grounds that it would be very expensive to build and of but little benefit to the towns through which it passed, particularly in the cases of Surry and Westmoreland. It was to be wholly new in Surry, mostly so in Westmoreland, and over all the distance in Keene from the present stone house on the Blake farm to Surry line, and over most of that from the John Colony farmhouse to the Chesterfield road near Wheelock park. A petition for the road, with a long list of signatures, had been presented to the court in 1813 but the towns had secured continuances from term to term until 1816, when the court appointed a committee which laid out the road—estimating the expense at \$5,600 and the damages at \$3,450—and reported in 1817. The court accepted the report and ordered the road to be built within two years, and the appraised damages to be paid to the land owners. The annual town meeting in 1819 instructed the selectmen to consult with committees and agents of the other towns, to devise the best means of opposition, and to continue the fight against the road. Joel Parker, Esq., was reelected agent and counsel for the town to manage the suit. He was succeeded the next year by Foster Alexander, and he, for several years, by Thomas M. Edwards. After a long contest changes were made in the old highway from the Chesterfield road to the Colony farm, establishing the present line of road there; but the section from the Blake place to the summit was not built until 1833, when, after twenty years of opposition, the road was finally completed. It was known for many years as the "County road"—since the railroad was built, as the "Summit road."

The state militia at this time, 1819, was organized in three divisions of two brigades each, with general and staff officers to correspond—thirty-eight regiments of infantry, grenadiers, light infantry and riflemen, to which were attached thirty-three companies of cavalry, soon afterwards increased to forty-two, and thirty-two companies of artillery. The Keene Light Infantry was now commanded by Capt. Jesse Corbett. Capt. Justus Perry of the cavalry had been promoted to major, then to lieutenant colonel, and was now in command of the Twentieth regiment, with Thomas F. Ames, adjutant. The regiment mustered here on the 5th of October. The line was formed according to the tactics of those days, with two companies of cavalry on the right; next to them the Walpole artillery; then the two companies of light infantry, from Keene and Westmoreland; and on their left the nine companies of infantry, in the center of which was an artillery company of the lads of Keene, twelve to fifteen years of age, commanded by young William Dinsmoor. One of the infantry companies was from the west side of the river in Keene. The whole regiment was in uniform—those of the light infantry, cavalry and artillery were particularly fine—and was highly commended.

The national question of admitting the state of Missouri into the Union without prohibiting slavery agitated the public, and a call was issued by leading men for a convention of delegates from every town in the county to meet at the courthouse in Keene to discuss the question and give expression to public sentiment. The meeting, on the 21st of December, 1819, was fully attended by delegates and others. Judge Roger Vose of Walpole called the assembly to order, and Nahum Parker, Esq., of Fitzwilliam, was chosen president and Phineas Handerson of Chesterfield, secretary. An address taking strong ground against the extension of slavery, supported by Hon. James Wilson, Hon. Salma Hale and others, was sent out to the people.

In 1819, their clerk, Lockhart Willard, Esq., having died, the proprietors of Keene applied to Foster Alexander, a justice of the peace, to call a legal meeting of their body. Justice Alexander issued his warrant, and the meeting was

held on the 11th of January. Mr. John Wood was chosen clerk, and he held that position until he died, in 1856, and was the last clerk of the proprietors of Keene.

The supervising officers of the schools in 1820, chosen at the annual town meeting, were one "principal visitor," Rev. Z. S. Barstow, and six "visitors and inspectors of schools," one for every two districts—James Wilson (senior), Joel Parker, Nathaniel Sprague, Daniel Bradford, Thomas M. Edwards and Royal Blake.

The town had repeatedly refused to appropriate money for instruction in singing, though sometimes granting it. This year, 1820, it voted \$50 for such instruction "for both societies," Congregational and Baptist.

Notwithstanding the strong opposition to stoves in the meetinghouse a few years before, they had now been introduced (in the one belonging to the town), and the town "Voted that the sexton ring the Bell on Sunday and supply the wood for the stove in the meetinghouse and take care of it the ensuing year, and that the expense be defrayed by the persons who pay taxes to Mr. Barstow."¹ One article of the warrant was, "To adopt such measures as will prevent the increase of paupers, especially those who may become such by the intemperate use of ardent spirits." On that article, "In order to remove the principal cause of pauperism," the selectmen were instructed to enforce strictly the laws relating to licensed and unlicensed houses, and "to take such other measures for the suppression of intemperance as to them may seem advisable." In obedience to those instructions the selectmen posted the following:

"We hereby give notice that we shall proceed as the law of this state directs * * * * to post up a list of the names of those persons who are in the habit of drinking and tipping to excess."

(Signed)

"Foster Alexander,
Daniel Bradford,
Eliphalet Briggs, Jr., } Selectmen
of Keene."

The United States census for this year gave Keene a population of 1,895, a gain of 249 in ten years, notwithstanding the loss of seventy-five or more, set off to Roxbury ;

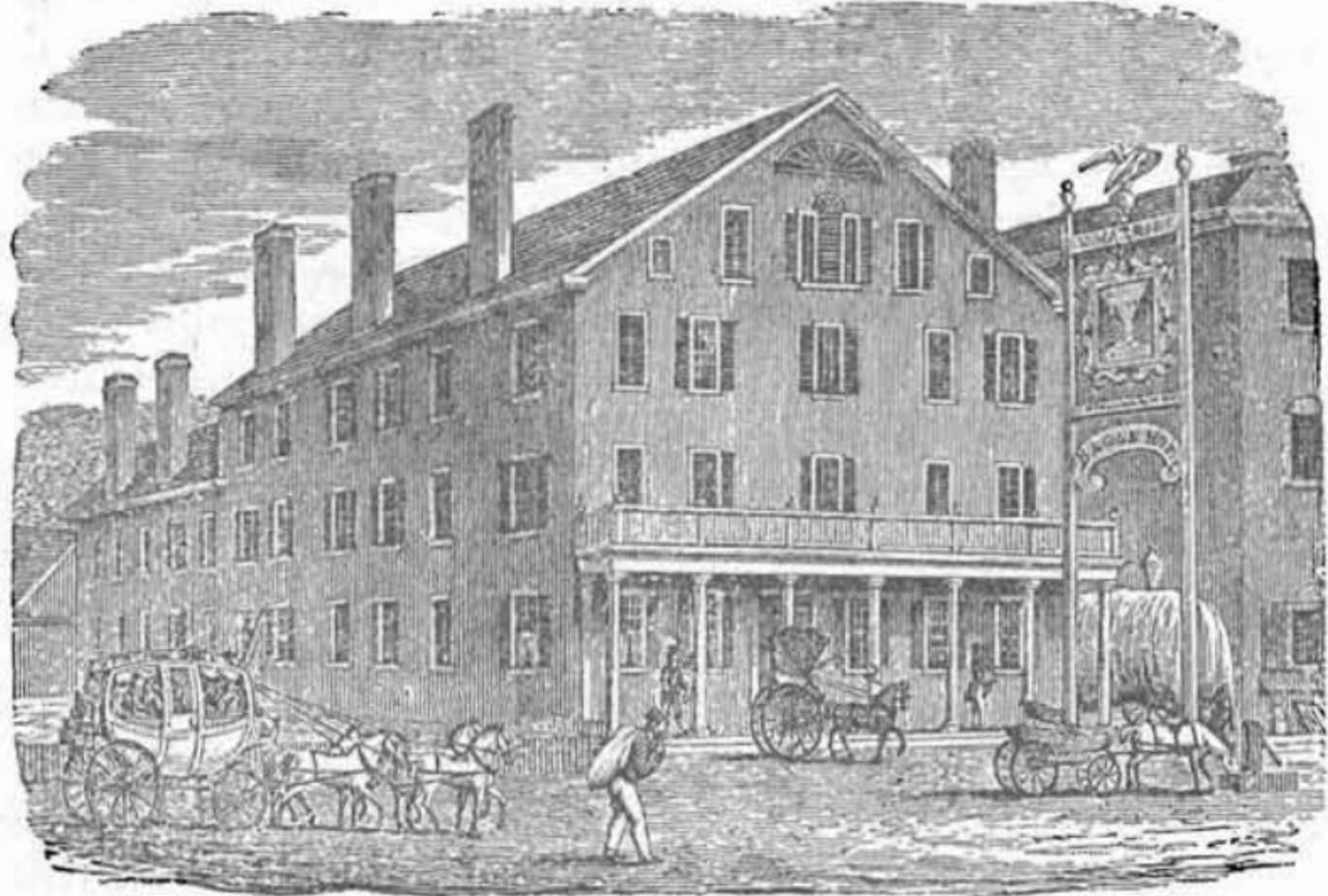
¹In 1822 there was an article in the warrant for the annual meeting: "To see if the town will vote to shorten the intermission between the forenoon and afternoon services on the Sabbath." It was dismissed.

Chesterfield, 2,103; Westmoreland, 2,029; Winchester, 1,849; Swanzey, 1,712. New Hampshire had 244,161; Boston, 43,275; New York, 123,706; Washington, 13,322.

The great bulk of the population throughout the country was engaged in agriculture, and during the period covered by this chapter there was a larger proportion of the land in this town and county under cultivation than ever before; and soon afterwards that proportion began to diminish. The soil was still rich and productive, the farms were well cultivated, large areas were covered with a heavy growth of timber which protected the fields from cold winds, agriculture was remunerative, and the farmers were generally "well to do."

In 1816, the Cheshire Agricultural Society, which included in its territorial limits the present county of Sullivan, was incorporated. Among the members from Keene were Noah Cooke, Samuel Dinsmoor, Elijah Dunbar, Daniel Bradford and John Prentiss. Its first "cattlè show" was held at Charlestown, in 1818; its third at Keene in 1820, on ground through which Emerald street now runs. The manufactures and fancy articles were displayed in the store which is now the north part of the City Hotel. The society formed a procession at Holland's tavern, formerly Sumner's, with a band of music, and marched to the grounds, where Rev. Mr. Barstow offered prayer, and Russell Jarvis, Esq., of Claremont, delivered an address. After viewing the exhibition the procession returned to the tavern, and 130 sat down to dinner. Gen. Samuel Dinsmoor was chosen president; Col. Thomas C. Drew, of Drewsville, vice president; Capt. Daniel Bradford, treasurer; Elijah Dunbar, secretary; and Thomas M. Edwards, librarian. For many years great interest was manifested, exhibitions were held in various towns in the county, and the leading men in the community gave the society their support and management. In 1819, \$356 were paid out in premiums. In 1822, Hon. Salma Hale delivered the address at Acworth; in 1824, Hon. Joel Parker that at Westmoreland.

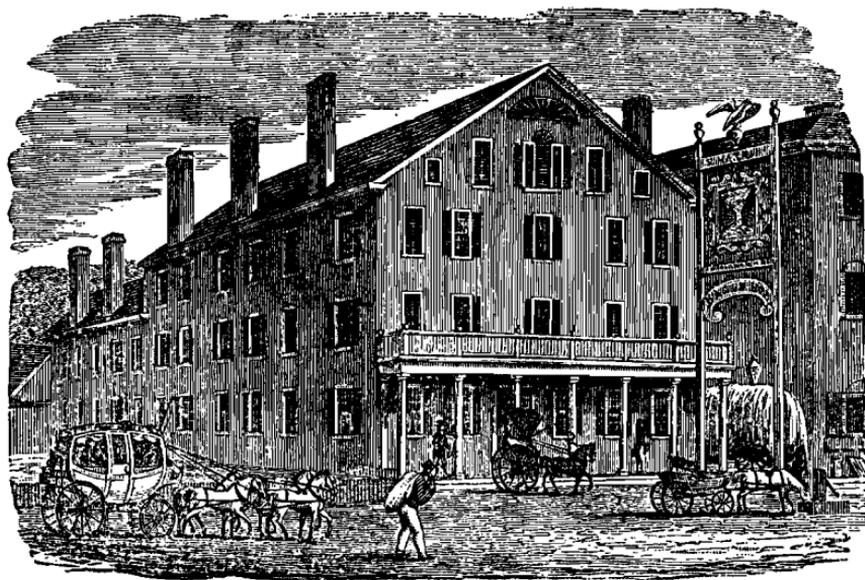
It was in 1816 also that the Cheshire County Bible Society was formed, afterwards merged in the state society.



EAGLE HOTEL.

The first meeting was held in the courthouse, Rev. Mr. Oliphant, chairman, and John Prentiss, secretary. Later, Rev. Z. S. Barstow was very active in the work of the society and served as secretary for many years, with Dan Hough, treasurer, and Rev. Seth Payson, Col. Joseph Frost, of Marlboro, Hon. Abel Parker, of Jaffrey, presidents at different times. Elijah Dunbar, Esq., Capt. Abel Blake, Dea. Abijah Wilder, Eliphalet Briggs, Azel Wilder, and other Keene men, served as directors.

There was a Young Mechanics' Association in Keene in 1816; the Female Charitable Society was in operation and met at the houses of members; and a Female Cent Society, a branch of the state society, met in the same way.



EAGLE HOTEL.

The public houses on the roads and turnpikes already mentioned were at the height of their prosperity. Salem Sumner was succeeded in 1820 by Ephraim Holland, and he, two years later, by George Sparhawk, in the one where the Cheshire House now stands. Benoni Shirtliff kept his tavern until 1823, when it was bought by Col. Stephen Harrington, who came from Nelson. He greatly improved it, gave it the name first of Harrington's Coffee House, afterwards that of Eagle Hotel, which it still retains; and

for more than fifty years the large and spirited figure of a gilded eagle, perched upon a wooden column, stood in front of the house as a sign. Upon the death of Ithamar Chase, in 1817, Jonathan E. Wadley succeeded him in the old Ralston tavern, and changed the name to the Keene Hotel.

On the 4th of July, 1820, 116 veteran soldiers of the Revolution residing in this county came together to comply with the law in relation to pensions.¹ They assembled at Wadley's Hotel, chose officers for the day, formed in procession and were escorted to the courthouse by the Keene Light Infantry.

The firm of Parker & Hough was dissolved in 1816, and Dan Hough continued the business for several years. Capt. Parker devoted himself to the manufacture of cotton and woolen machinery at Swanzey Factory, and a few years later went to Boston and established the commission business which was continued many years, under the noted firms of Isaac Parker & Co., Parker, Blanchard & Co., Parker, Wilder & Parker, etc. Phineas Fiske & Co. had removed from their store north of the Ralston tavern to the east side of the Square, next door south of Justus Perry, and had been succeeded there in 1816 by Lamson & Grout (Wm. Lamson, Jr., and Henry Grout). Royal Blake became partner with Lamson, in 1819, in place of Grout. George and Lynds Wheelock had a store on the east side of upper Main street next below the tavern, in 1816, and Lynds Wheelock continued in business there for several years. Collins H. Jaquith came to town in 1816, and carried on an extensive business in shoemaking. He was afterwards a prominent figure in town—well remembered by persons still living—and held important offices, among others the somewhat incongruous ones of deputy sheriff and deacon of the church.² Ridgway & Rockwood opened a store, in 1817, in the building which Noah Cooke had built in 1808, since known as the Nims building, where E. F. Lane's upper block now stands. They were

¹ They were required to make oath to the amount of property they owned, and if it exceeded \$200, no pension was granted. Besides the names given in the chapter on that war, applications for pensions were made by Jesse Watts, Frederick Locke, Niles Beckwith, Chas. Emerson, Elias Hall and James Potts of Keene.

² It used to be said of him that "he was a little too sharp for a deacon and a little too dull for a sheriff."

succeeded, in 1819, by Samuel A. Gerould, who came to Keene that year and began his long career in business. In 1816, A. & H. Walker had a bookstore and bindery in the basement of the building next south of A. & T. Hall, and started a circulating library. Both the business and the library were continued in 1820 by Henry Thayer, and by his widow, Pamela Thayer, in 1822, over Gerould's store on the east side.

Cooking stoves were first introduced here in 1817, and were on exhibition at A. & T. Hall's. In 1820, an improved pattern was for sale at the Keene bookstore. Later, Dan Hough took the agency, and after that they were for sale at the tinshop of John P. Barber and other stores.

In 1820, Nathaniel Sprague, son of Hon. Peleg Sprague, opened a private school in the brick schoolhouse on School street—then recently built—a little to the southwest of the present Tilden schoolhouse. The next year his sister Elizabeth, from Miss Fiske's school, assisted him. The building was then taken for the public school of that district, and Mr. Sprague removed his school to the hall over Dan Hough's store.

The Cheshire bank, the only one in the county, was doing a fair business, but found it necessary to open its doors but two hours in the forenoon and two in the afternoon each day and to designate one day in the week for discounts. Samuel Grout, of Walpole, was president, Aaron Appleton, John Wood, Salma Hale, Josiah Bellows, David Stone and Henry S. Newcomb were directors; and Nathaniel Dana had been chosen cashier in 1813, and held that position for more than twenty years.

Transportation by water had proved so superior to that by teams that that subject became almost a craze with the public. In 1816, the legislature of Massachusetts appointed Loammi Baldwin (who gave us the Baldwin apple) and Prof. Farrar, of Harvard college, a committee to explore and survey a route for a navigable canal from the Connecticut to the Merrimac rivers. The Ashuelot, Contocook and other rivers were examined, but the

scheme was found to be impracticable. The stores in Keene, however, were still selling tickets in the Union Canal Lottery, already mentioned.

The Ashuelot river "is a stream of much importance, and is made navigable for boats as far up as Keene, excepting a carrying place about the rapids at Winchester."¹ To appreciate the truth of the above statement at the time it was made we must remember that in the early days of this country there were no roads, no wheeled vehicles for carrying freight, and that every waterway that could be made available was used for transportation. Almost from the first settlement of Keene down to within the recollection of people still living, goods were bought in Hartford by the merchants in Keene and shipped by the Connecticut² and Ashuelot rivers. Mr. Wm. Lamson, the younger, was in trade here as late as 1841, and the fact of his shipping goods from New York and other southern cities by that route, in 1837-8, is well remembered.

The subject of clearing the Ashuelot and making it navigable for larger freight boats was agitated for many years, and finally culminated in 1819. Temporary locks were built around the falls in two places between Keene and Winchester. Lewis Page, who lived on the David Nims place on Prison street, obtained a grant from the legislature of the sole right to take tolls and navigate the Ashuelot from Faulkner & Colony's mills to the Connecticut river. With the aid of subscriptions he built a boat sixty feet long and of fifteen to twenty tons burden, named it the *Enterprise*, and floated it down to the head of the falls at Winchester. On Friday, the 19th of November, it made its first trip up the river, loaded with passengers. It arrived at Faulkner & Colony's mills with a display of banners and was welcomed by a crowd of people with cheers, the firing of cannon and the ringing of the town bell. A paragraph in the *Sentinel* giving an account of the event was headed with the cut of a full rigged ship and the announcement in large capitals:

"ASHUELOT RIVER NAVIGABLE!!"

¹New England Gazetteer, published in 1839.

²In 1837, the writer saw freight unloading from a sloop, at a wharf, in Brattleboro, Vt.



HOUSE OF ELIJAH PARKER.

House of Elijah Parker.

The agitation of the project for still further improving the river by canals and locks around the falls below Winchester continued, and five years later a correspondent of the *Sentinel* stated that a single boat running from Hartford brought 105 tons of freight in nine months to Winchester alone; and showed by figures and estimates that the business on the river would pay a fair return on an investment in the canal and other improvements. But the scheme was abandoned.

Upon opening up the navigation of the Connecticut river the Bellows Falls canal did a large business and the company published a tariff of tolls each year. It was usually seventy-five cents a ton for heavy goods for passing through the locks. The Middlesex canal was doing an extensive business, with warehouses for storing the goods, which were received and distributed by commission merchants; and transportation by heavy teams through this town was greatly increased.

At this period, 1820, the village of Keene was still little more than Main street. There was but one house on Roxbury street besides that of Dr. Edwards; Prison street was almost a barren waste; there were but three houses on the east side of the turnpike, north, and only those of Mr. John Prentiss, Dr. Joseph Wheeler (now the Tilden house), Elijah Parker (where Mrs. Joslin now lives), and the Sun tavern on the west side. All the rest north of the long row of horsesheds was open fields and pastures; and the same was true of those angular tracts between the five principal streets, now covered with streets and buildings. Although a few fine residences and other good buildings had been erected, as already mentioned, most of the structures in town, even those about the centre, were of wood, one story high, unpainted, and of very ordinary appearance. Appleton & Elliot's store on the corner was of brick, two stories high, but the tavern opposite, though of three stories, was a very ordinary looking wooden building; and the courthouse, also of wood, was unpainted. The old Ralston tavern was a low, wooden building, "painted a dirty yellow, with a red border around the bottom, standing with front steps reaching into

the street.”¹ Nearly all the stores and shops were “ten-footers”—what we should now call shanties.

The ten highest taxpayers in 1820 were James Wilson, Henry S. Newcomb, Stephen Chase, William Lamson, David Carpenter, Ephraim Wright, Samuel Dinsmoor, Abel Blake, A. & T. Hall and Abijah Foster.

Among those who died in 1820 were Major Josiah Richardson, who had lived here nearly fifty years, aged seventy-four; Mrs. Mary Dwinnell, aged ninety-two, widow of Jonathan Dwinnell, who left ten children living, all with families, the youngest having also ten children; Nehemiah Towns, a Revolutionary soldier, aged seventy-two; Mrs. Hannah Hall, widow of Rev. Aaron Hall, aged sixty-six, and Ephraim Wright, aged sixty-two.

Rev. Z. S. Barstow was chosen “principal visitor” of schools again in 1821, with James Wilson, Jr., Salma Hale, Nathaniel Sprague, John Wood, Thomas M. Edwards and Elijah Parker visitors and inspectors; and this method of managing the schools continued until 1824.

The first theatrical performance advertised and given in Keene was at the hall in Holland’s tavern, May 14, 1821. The play was Rev. Dr. Hawes’ tragedy, “Douglass,” followed by comic songs and a farce, “The Village Lawyer.” Admission, fifty cents; children, half price. There was a Keene Musical Society at that time, which gave Handel’s “Messiah,” at the meetinghouse in the afternoon of Feb. 21. Admission, twenty-five cents.

In September, 1821, a remarkably high wind, called in some places a tornado, in others a “tremendous hurricane,” passed along the Atlantic coast from the Carolinas to Maine. Buildings of all kinds were destroyed, trees uprooted, animals killed and many lives lost. The debris was carried in some instances twenty to thirty miles. In Keene it was a violent and destructive wind, but less so than in many other places.

Charles Rice, “an industrious and honest man,” died in October, at the age of ninety-four. He was one of the thirty patriots who marched from Keene at the Lexington alarm in 1775, and was wounded at the battle of Bunker

¹ Rev. Z. S. Barstow, when he came here in 1818.

Hill. He had also served his country through the whole of the French and Indian war, 1756-60. He had lived some years in Surry.

The third New Hampshire having been given up as a turnpike and the gates removed, the town voted to keep it in repair from the Marlboro to the Surry lines; and two years later laid out a town highway over the same route.

On Monday night, May 27, 1822, the large, three-story stage tavern on the site of the present Cheshire House, owned by Elijah Parker and Timothy Hall, and kept by George Sparhawk, was burned to the ground. The single engine of the town "and a small one from the glass factory," with the aid of citizens passing buckets of water, saved the stores of Lamson & Blake and Justus Perry on the north, only fifty feet away; and that of Lynds Wheelock on the south, only twenty feet away. The cistern of water on the common was soon exhausted, and then lines were formed to Beaver brook—one of men passing the full buckets and one of women and boys passing the empty ones. The roof of the meetinghouse took fire, but was extinguished by the engine. Fortunately there was very little wind, and the village was thus saved from a more serious conflagration.¹ The building was insured in the *Ætna* company for nearly its full value, and the sum was promptly paid. This fire roused the people to the importance of having a more efficient organization for extinguishing fires. A subscription was immediately started for the purchase of another engine; and the Keene Engine Co., John Elliot, clerk, called a meeting at Wadley's tavern, to choose officers, make by-laws and regulations, and to see if the company would purchase a new engine. The Keene Fire Society was also formed and continued for many years; and soon afterwards the Fire Fencibles were organized, with Samuel Dinsmoor, clerk.

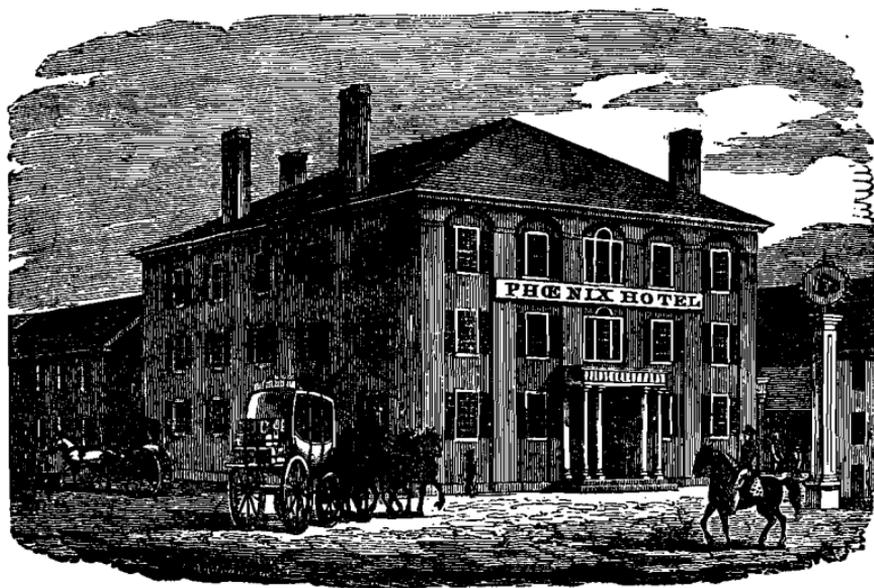
The foundations for a new and larger house, to be called the Phoenix Hotel, were soon laid, and in December the Sentinel announced that a "large, commodious and elegant" brick hotel had arisen since the fire in May—

¹It was provided by law that every village householder should keep a prescribed number of leathern fire-buckets on hand for use in case of fire. Some are still preserved as relics. They were made in this town by Daniel Watson.



PHOENIX HOTEL.

52x56 feet, three stories high, with a hall 52x23 feet and a large dining hall—"an ornament to our village." It was kept by Mr. Sparhawk until 1825.



PHOENIX HOTEL.

In September, 1822, the Twentieth regiment mustered here, closing with a sham fight. The Walpole artillery and the two light infantry companies from Keene and Westmoreland were highly praised. Young James Wilson, just from Middlebury college, now in his father's office, had taken command of the Keene Light Infantry and inspired it with new life and vigor. Their armory was at the north end of the village, in a field, where Armory street now runs.

Abijah Foster, one of the most successful men in town, died this year, aged fifty-nine; also, at the Island of St. Thomas, Lieut. Walter Newcomb, of the United States ship Spark, "late of the Columbus, seventy-four, son of the late Judge Newcomb of this town—an officer of promise and highly esteemed." (Sentinel.)

Hon. Samuel Dinsmoor had been nominated for governor in 1823 by the Democrats, and at the annual meeting the town, although strongly of the opposite party,

gave him 195 votes, to seventy-five for Levi Woodbury, the Federal candidate; but Mr. Woodbury was elected. Hon. Abel Parker, of Jaffrey, having served for more than twenty years as judge of probate for Cheshire county and reached the limit of age prescribed by law, retired from that position, and by the courtesy of Governor Woodbury, Mr. Dinsmoor was appointed in his place.

The 4th of July, 1823, was celebrated by a procession formed at the Phoenix Hotel and escorted by the Keene Light Infantry, Capt. Nathan Bassett, to the meeting-house, where Hon. Salma Hale read the Declaration of Independence, and Maj. Josiah Willard, Jr., delivered an oration. Returning to the hotel, a dinner with wine was served, toasts were drunk and speeches made.

The largest menagerie in the country containing Asiatic lions, tigers, buffaloes, elks, llamas, etc., exhibited in the rear of Wadley's tavern in 1822—the first in Keene—and again the next year at the same place.

In February, 1824, a destructive freshet, extending over all this section of country, carried away bridges, dams and mills. The bridges at South Keene, at Faulkner & Colony's mills and on the turnpike to Surry, were carried away or seriously injured.

At the annual town meeting in 1824 the price of labor on highways was fixed at six cents an hour for a man, or a pair of oxen, "boys and utensils in proportion;" and it remained the same until 1838, when it was raised to eight cents an hour for a man or a yoke of oxen.

The town had changed its by-laws in relation to schools, choosing a committee of five for the examination of teachers in addition to the seven visitors and inspectors. Rev. Z. S. Barstow, Joel Parker, Thomas M. Edwards, Samuel Dinsmoor and James Wilson, Jr., were that committee

\$3,355.17; Exeter, \$654.31; Concord, \$565.02; Keene, \$536.74; Dover, \$484.30; Walpole, \$276.52. The old high rates of postage still existed.

There was emulation among the independent military companies, and great efforts were made by them for improvement in drill and discipline. In September, 1824, the Keene Light Infantry, Capt. Nathan Bassett, and the light infantry companies of Westmoreland and Brattleboro, marched to Chesterfield and encamped, and were joined by the Chesterfield Light Infantry, Capt. Barton Skinner. James Wilson, Jr., then lieutenant colonel of the Twentieth regiment, took command and exercised them in battalion drill. Early in October the Twentieth regiment, Col. Justus Perry, mustered in Keene and was inspected by Major Joel Parker and reviewed by Gen. Samuel Griffin of Roxbury. The two companies of cavalry, the Walpole artillery, and the two companies of light infantry from Keene and Westmoreland were very highly commended.

The Cheshire Agricultural Society had its exhibition at Winchester this year. Joel Parker, Esq., delivered the oration, Col. Thomas C. Drew was president, Thomas M. Edwards, secretary, Daniel Bradford, treasurer, and Abijah Wilder, Jr., one of the executive committee.

A new brick courthouse was built in 1824, the north half of which is now the store of Bullard & Shedd. The committee to sell the old house¹ and build the new one were John Wood, Aaron Appleton, Abijah Wilder, Jr., Eliphalet Briggs, Jr., and Thomas M. Edwards. In the corner stone of the new building were deposited a glass bottle containing a copy of the Sentinel of that week, the

¹The old house was sold to Silas Angler and Eliphalet Briggs, and was hauled away to Prison street by James Keith with sixty yoke of oxen, and used for a boarding and tenement house. It was a long, narrow building, two stories high, afterwards bought by John H. Fuller, who divided it, moved one half to Railroad square and used it for a wool-house, and it is now the grain store of J. Cushing & Co., next to the Sentinel building. The other half Mr. Fuller used as a dwelling, on the site of the present residence of Mrs. D. M. Pollard, 256 Washington street, and when that brick house was built by Capt. H. T. H. Pierce, soon after the Civil war, the old wooden one was moved to the rear on Maple street, and is now the residence of Wm. L. Cheever, No. 26. The statement has been made that those two halves of a former building were parts of the old meetinghouse which was given to the county for a courthouse in 1788, but that is an error. That old meetinghouse, which stood, after its removal, on the northwest corner of the common, where Court street now comes in, was replaced by a new courthouse (the one above described), built on its site—largely by subscription—in 1796; and all trace of the old meetinghouse that fronted on "The Green" in Revolutionary days is lost, though it is believed that it was removed to the west side of Court street. (See account of fire on Court street in 1861).

New Hampshire Register for that year, and other documents. The main room, on the second floor, was ready for the use of the court at the October term. The town had appropriated \$500 towards the building, reserving rights for a town hall on the ground floor—two or three steps below the level of the ground—as it had in the old building; and in November “voted to raise \$150 to be appropriated towards finishing the Town Room in the New Court House.” That meeting was for the national election, James Wilson, Jr., moderator, and cast 144 votes for the electors who voted for John Quincy Adams for president, to one for those of the opposite party.

Capt. Thaddeus Metcalf had died in 1823, aged sixty-six, and among the deaths in 1824 were those of Joseph Sylvester, aged eighty; John Balch, sixty-six; Widow Anna Draper, ninety; Mrs. Hannah, wife of Adin Holbrook, sixty-six; James Philips, seventy-eight; and Mrs. Hannah Wheeler, widow of Abraham Wheeler, one of the first settlers, aged one hundred and three. Mrs. Wheeler was the mother of Col. Abraham Wheeler, who had died in 1814 at the age of seventy-one.

The controversy in the church which resulted in the secession of the Unitarians had been growing more and more sharp and bitter for several years and had now reached culmination. On the 18th of March, 1824, the seceders organized their society under the general laws of the state, taking the name of the Keene Congregational Society, and they held services during that summer. They had twelve members, seven male and five female. Those who had desired to withdraw had refused to pay the tax assessed for the support of Rev. Mr. Barstow, had filed the required certificates to that effect with the town clerk, and claimed their right to the use of the meetinghouse their proportion of Sundays. At the annual meeting in 1823 the town “Voted (on raising Mr. Barstow’s salary of \$700) that the selectmen be instructed to raise the sum which shall bear the same proportion to the sum of \$700 as the taxable property not signed off (by certificates) does to the whole taxable property of the parish;” and on the 3d of November of that year the town voted to

grant the use of the meetinghouse to the parties asking it five Sundays between that date and the first of May following, the selectmen to designate the Sundays. At the annual meeting in 1824, Mr. Barstow's salary was restored to \$700, although the Unitarians had withdrawn; and the vote passed in the negative on the article, "To see if the town will vote the use of the meetinghouse to those persons in town who do not contribute to the support of Rev. Mr. Barstow and who have supported preaching the present year in the month of February."

The town then "voted that the town property in the meetinghouse, consisting of the building, the Bell, and the land on which the building stands, be offered at public sale by the selectmen on the 30th day of March inst.,"—notice being given—and the selectmen were authorized to convey the same by deed. It was provided, however, that the sale should be made to an authorized agent of some religious society organized according to law and that the sum paid should be sufficient to cover the value of all the pews, to be appraised by disinterested parties from out of town. The property was not sold.

The annual meeting of 1825 again reduced the salary of Rev. Mr. Barstow to a certain proportion of what the town had agreed to pay him, as in 1823; and the year following the selectmen were instructed to make a similar assessment; and that was the last time (1826) the salary of the minister was raised by legal assessment. He was no longer the minister of the town, and his salary was ever afterwards raised by his own society. The controversy concerning the proportional use of the meetinghouse, and the agitation for the sale of it, continued, and at a legal meeting on the 30th of March, 1825, Joel Parker, moderator, the town voted that a committee of thirteen, six from each of the two societies, be appointed by the selectmen—the twelve to choose the chairman—to consider the question of disposing of the edifice and report at the next annual meeting.¹

¹The selectmen appointed from the First Congregational Society: Blijah Dunbar, Timothy Hall, Azel Wilder, Dea. Thomas Fisher, Ebenezer Clark, Abel Blake. Keene Congregational Society: Salma Hale, Daniel Bradford, John Wood, Aaron Appleton, James Wilson, Jr., Samuel Dinsmoor. The chairman's name does not appear on the records.

In June, 1825, Mr. Thomas R. Sullivan, a candidate for the ministry, preached for the Keene Congregational Society in the town hall for several Sundays, afterwards accepted a call, and was ordained on the 30th of December. Rev. George G. Ingersoll, of Burlington, Vt., Rev. Mr. Gannett, of Boston, and others from Massachusetts, assisted in the ceremony.

In 1825, the annual town meeting was held for the first time in the new town hall under the courthouse. The number of ratable polls in town exceeded 450, and two representatives to the legislature were chosen, Joel Parker and James Wilson, Jr.

The 4th of July was celebrated by a military parade and dinner "on the plain one mile south of the village."

The Twentieth regiment, Justus Perry, colonel, B. F. Adams, adjutant, mustered in Keene, and was inspected by Lt. Col. Joel Parker, and reviewed by Gov. Morrill, who gave it high commendation.

At a legal meeting in November, 1825, the town voted to adopt certain parts of "an act to establish a system of police in the town of Portsmouth;" and the selectmen appointed Capt. Joseph Dorr, Zebadiah Kise, Elijah Parker, Esq., John Hatch, Col. James Wilson and Oliver Heaton police officers, the first in town.

Among those who died that year were Mr. Lynds Wheelock, aged forty-one; Dea. Daniel Kingsbury, eighty-two; Capt. Cyrus Breed, forty; and Lieut. Henry S. Newcomb, at sea, son of the late Judge Newcomb. Lieutenant Newcomb had commanded Fort Covington at one time in the late war, and was an accomplished officer.

In 1825, the Phoenix Hotel passed into the hands of John Hatch, who had married the daughter of Dr. Thomas Edwards; and for many years Hatch's tavern had a high reputation, and was the principal stage house in town. At that time a watering trough stood in front of it, and there was still a passageway on the south side to the stable. Henry Coolidge succeeded Jonathan Wadley in the old Ralston tavern in 1823, kept an excellent house, and for a long term of years it went by the name of Coolidge's tavern. Col. Stephen Harrington also made the Eagle

Hotel a first-class hotel. The Sun tavern, on the turnpike, had been fitted up by Abijah Wilder, Jr., (doubtless his former cabinet shop) and was opened this year by Elias Mead, who kept choice liquors and made it an attractive inn. Daniel Day still kept his tavern on the Cheshire turnpike, east side of the river near the Surry line; Henry Goodnow on the third New Hampshire, near Walpole line; Stephen Chase continued at his place on the same "pike;" Josiah Sawyer on the Chesterfield and Thomas Gurler on the Westmoreland roads; Mrs. Susan Lanman at the foot of Marlboro street; William Lebourveau on Nine Lot Plain, opposite the present driving park—a part of the old house is still standing—and there were several others in different parts of the town. And the constant stream of travel through the town, particularly the freighting to and from the Middlesex canal and Boston, gave each and all of them a thriving business.

In 1823, Josiah Amidon opened the Grand Monadnock Hotel—"near the pinnacle of said Mountain;" and the following year John Fife "erects a building on the brook southeast of the pinnacle, Jaffrey side, and furnishes entertainment."

The first flour offered for sale at the stores in Keene was by A. & T. Hall in 1822. Previous to that time flour, meal and grain could be bought at the mills; and the farmers not only raised their own supply, but sold large quantities of grain. Justus Perry had taken John V. Wood as partner in 1822, and continued the business of the store and the manufacture of glass bottles, decanters, etc., on Marlboro street, under the firm name of Perry & Wood. Lamson & Blake dissolved in 1822, and Wm. Lamson, Jr., continued the business alone. The same year, Wm. Lamson, senior, took his son Charles as partner in the tannery; and the son continued a successful business there until he died, in 1876. In 1823, George Tilden and John Prentiss formed the firm of Geo. Tilden & Co. in the bookbinding business, in the basement of the building next south of A. & T. Hall—where the Walkers and Henry Thayer had formerly been—entrance on the north side. They also sold books and stationery, and the next year

opened a circulating library of 200 volumes. That partnership continued but a short time. In 1825, Mr. Prentiss built a brick block on the west side of the Square (now Whitcomb's) removed his printing establishment into its upper stories, withdrew from the firm of Geo. Tilden & Co., and opened the Keene Book Store on the ground floor of the north half. Tickets in various lottery schemes were sold in both book stores. The Sentinel printing office remained in those quarters for forty-six years. S. A. Gerould also built his brick store, next north of Mr. Prentiss's, the same year, took in his brother, and for some years the firm was S. A. & J. H. Gerould; later he took his son, Samuel A., Jr., as partner, and they remained in that store as long as they were in business.

Richard Montague, a very gentlemanly and obliging man, came here in 1822, opened a shop over A. & T. Hall, and for a long term of years held the lead in making fine, stylish garments for gentlemen. He also made ladies' pelisses and other outside garments. Sylvester Haskell bought out Dan Hough in 1824, and the next year removed to the south store in Prentiss's new block.

In 1822, Elijah and Joel Parker formed the law firm of E. & J. Parker and had their office over A. & T. Hall's store. Foster Alexander and Thomas M. Edwards were also lawyers in town; and Mr. Edwards was still postmaster. In 1825 he put up a small building east of Lamson's store, on Roxbury street, and had his office and the postoffice there. It was afterwards the law office of Wheeler & Faulkner.

The Medical Society of Cheshire County had been formed, with Dr. Amos Twitchell president and librarian, and held its annual meetings in Keene. The other members from Keene were Dr. Daniel Adams, Dr. Charles G. Adams and Dr. Joseph Wheeler.

Abijah Wilder, Jr., built his new shop where the "Museum" now stands, in 1823, and moved into it with his cabinet, chair and sleigh manufacturing. Eliphalet Briggs, Jr., and John W. Briggs were in the same business—"three doors north of the meetinghouse"—on the west side of Prison street.

The mills of Faulkner & Colony were destroyed by fire early in the year, but they immediately rebuilt, with brick, and in September advertised "that their new mills are so far completed that they are ready to receive Wool to Card and Cloth to Dress."

George Page and Alvan Holman were making pumps and manufacturing lumber "at Page's mill, two miles East of Keene street," on the Roxbury branch—the mills since known as the peg factory. The Ebenezer Robbins mill on White brook had passed into the hands of Joel Kingsbury. Aaron Davis was turning out "Warranted hoes at his Factory two miles from Keene street"—at South Keene—and Nathan Wood, a noted blacksmith, manufactured the best of ploughs.