

POLITICAL AND GOVERNMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

by Ruth Seaver Kirk

Keene was first settled under the authority of Massachusetts. At the time of its settlement the line between that colony and New Hampshire had not been surveyed. It was generally supposed that the valley of the Ashuelot would fall within the boundaries of the former.

1732—Gov. Belcher in his speech to the "Great and General Court" (legislature) of Massachusetts recommended that "care be taken to settle the ungranted land." In the House of Representatives it was thereupon voted "that there be seven towns opened, of the contents of six miles square;" two of which were to be on the Ashuelot River, above Northfield. Committees were appointed to admit settlers and lay out 63 house lots in each township: one for the first settled minister, one for the ministry, one for the school, and one for each of the 60 settlers. Each settler was to actually live on his land within three years after acquiring it, build a house at least 18' square and 7' stud, and fence in and till eight acres of land for a mowing. In the event that he failed in the whole or in part of the above conditions, his land would revert to the province.

1734—A Committee gave the General Court a plan of two townships on each side of the Ashuelot River. This was accepted. House lots were laid out and all persons desirous of taking these lots were notified to meet at Concord, Mass., on June 26. Then they were to choose a moderator and proprietors' clerk, agree upon methods and rules for the fulfillment of their respective grants, on making further decisions, on calling other meetings, and on attending to matters necessary for the speedy settlement of the townships.

No charter was ever granted to the proprietors by Massachusetts and their title to the lands rested wholly upon the votes of the General Court. On June 26, 60 individuals, having paid their five pounds to the committee, were admitted as proprietors, and drew lots for the land. The next day a full meeting of the proprietors was held and Samuel Sady was chosen moderator along with Samuel Heywood as proprietors' clerk. The meeting was then adjourned to meet at a later date in the new township. At this time Upper Ashuelot (Keene) was a frontier settlement in the middle of the wilderness. Its nearest neighbor was Northfield, 20 miles away.

1735—The town voted to lay out a road to the "Saw Mill Place" (on Beaver Brook) and to give 100 acres of land plus 25 pounds to any person or persons who would build a sawmill. John Corbet and Jesse Root agreed to build the mill by July 1, 1736.

1736—A vote was passed to widen the main street, which was originally four rods wide. It provided that if the proprietors of the house lots on the west side of the street would surrender four rods in depth on the end of their lots adjoining the street, they would have it made up in quantity in the rear. This proposition was acceded to, and to this vote Keene is indebted for its broad main street.

1737—A vote was passed to lay out 100 acres of upland to each house lot. The proprietors were to draw lots for choice, and the one who drew the right to choose first was to make his selection by a certain day. Those who drew successive numbers were to make their choices accordingly, thus "giving every man his day." Each lot was surveyed by a committee in such place and in such shape as the proprietor drawing it desired. Some of the plans

recorded in the proprietors' records show figures which Euclid never imagined and probably could not measure. Common (public open area) land was left in every part of the township, in pieces of all sizes and shapes. Thus great confusion in boundary lines was introduced, by which some owners of real estate are perplexed to this day.

1738—A committee was appointed to secure a town blacksmith, and anvil, bellows, vise, sledge-hammer and tongs were procured for his use. Although the colonists were at this time at peace with the Indians, it seemed prudent to finish the fort they had already begun, and it was voted that every one who worked on the fort would take his account to the surveyor of highways and be allowed accordingly on his highway tax. A boulder in front of The Keene Manor, 300 Main Street, marks the site of this fort. When finished, the fort was about 90' square. It was built of hewn logs, and there were two ovens and two wells in the enclosure. In the interior, next to the walls, were 20 barracks, each having one room. On the outside it was two stories high; in the inside, but one, the roof over the barracks sloping, inwards. In the space above the barracks were loopholes for musket firing. There were two watch-houses, one at the southeast corner, and one on the western side, each erected on four high posts set upright in the earth. And for greater safety the whole was surrounded by pickets.

1740—At a meeting of the proprietors it was voted to grant 10 acres of upland to each of the following: Jacob Bacon, Josiah Fisher, Joseph Fisher, Nathan Blake, William Smeed, Seth Heaton, Joseph Ellis, Ebenezer Nims, Joseph Guild, Joseph Richardson, Isaac Clark, Edward Dale, Jeremiah Hall, Ebenezer Force, Daniel Haws, Amos Foster, Ebenezer Day, Beriah Mac-caney, Jabez Hill, Obed Blake, Jeremiah Hall Jr., David Nims, Timothy Puffer, Ebenezer Daniels, Nathan Fairbanks, John Bullard, David Foster, Solomon Richardson, Abner Ellis, Benjamin Guild, Asa Richardson, Ebenezer Hill, Samuel Fisher, Ephraim Dorman, Timothy Sparhawk, Jonathan Underwood, John Andrews, Samuel Smith, and Samuel Daniels. Undoubtedly these are the names of nearly all the men residing in Keene at that time.

The long and spirited contest between the provinces of Massa-

chusetts and New Hampshire concerning their boundary lines had been carried before King George II, and in 1740 it was decided that Keene was within the boundaries of New Hampshire.

- 1744—In March war was declared by Great Britain against France and Spain, which was soon followed by a war between the English colonists and the French and Indians. Dread of savage incursions increased the labors and distresses of frontier settlement, and attention was diverted from the cultivation of land to the need for defense and protection. Colonists dared not work in the field or even leave the fort without carrying arms and being accompanied by a guard. All lived in apprehension of sudden attack.
- 1747—The settlers remained in the fort until March or April, when they released their minister from all obligations to them and resolved to abandon the settlement. After they had gone Indians burned all the buildings except the mill on Beaver Brook and the house in which the miller had resided. (Sources differ)
- 1750-52—After the treaty of peace many of the inhabitants who had been driven from their lands again occupied Upper Ashuelot (Keene) and eight or ten dwellings were erected by 1752.
- 1753—A charter was granted by Benning Wentworth, governor of New Hampshire, granting the proprietors the land embraced in the original limits of Upper Ashuelot, plus a small additional strip on the eastern side. A reservation was made of all white and other pine trees fit for masting the royal navy and of a rent of one ear of Indian corn annually until 1763, and afterwards of one shilling proclamation money for every 100 acres. Benjamin Bellows was authorized to call the first meeting of the proprietors and inhabitants which, under this charter, was held in Keene on the first Wednesday of May. Governor Wentworth had exercised his right to name the town and did so by calling it after his friend Sir Benjamin Keene. Thus Upper Ashuelot became Keene. A new meetinghouse was erected, and Rev. Carpenter was chosen minister.
- 1760—The warrants for town meetings at this period were headed "Province of New Hampshire" and issued "In his Majesty's Name." This form was used until 1771.

1761—The town voted to build a house for sick soldiers.

1762—Among the town officers chosen this year was a clerk of the market and a deer reif.

1768—Josiah Willard was chosen to represent the town in the General Assembly at Portsmouth. He was the first representative chosen.

1770—The town was now first divided into school districts, being four in number.

1771—Keene was made one of the shire towns for the county of Cheshire, and the Inferior Court held its first session here in October 1771 and the Superior Court in September 1772.

1774—Capt. Isaac Wyman and Lieutenant Timothy Ellis were chosen delegates to attend the County Congress at Walpole.

1775—At a town meeting Capt. Isaac Wyman was chosen to represent the town in the General Assembly at Portsmouth. In the warrant calling a town meeting one of the articles was: "to see if it be the mind of the town, that the names of those persons, who buy, sell, or make use of bohea tea, be advertised in the public prints." This article passed in the negative, but a committee was appointed to see that the resolutions of the Continental Congress were complied with. As a result of the disagreements between Great Britain and the colonies, conditions detrimental to society increased to such an extent that the people of Keene adopted resolutions against cursing and swearing, recommended that every person of able body should turn to some honest calling and not waste time wandering from place to place, and ordered a fine, to go for the use of the poor, on all convicted of such offenses, including those of drinking after 9 P.M., and threatening or destroying the person or property of another. It was further resolved that anyone who purchased or brought into town any tea whatsoever should hand it over to a committee for safe-keeping until Congress decided what to do about the question of the sale and use of tea in the colonies. The appointed officer had the authority to publish in the public *Gazette* the names of offenders found guilty of any of the above rules and regulations. The heads of families were directed to

take care that their children, servants, and all others in their household obey these statutes.

- 1776—The declaration of loyalty to the United Colonies, known as the "Association Test," was signed by all but 13 of the males over 21.
- 1777—The town voted to raise 16 pounds for ammunition. In May or June a Court, appointed by the Committee of Safety in the county, was held at Keene to try the principal Tories for their offenses or opinions. After two weeks of deliberation the Court decided that the Tories should be confined to their farms and give bonds for their good behavior.
- 1778—At a meeting in January the inhabitants voted that the Articles of Confederation of the Continental Congress be established in this state. On April 27 Jeremiah Stiles was chosen a delegate to meet in the convention at Concord which would establish a constitution and plan of government for the state.
- 1779—The town voted "that the selectmen be a committee to give the representative instructions to use his influence that the delegates from this State to the Continental Congress, lay claim to the New Hampshire Grants, so called, provided that Congress will not confirm the same into a new State."
- 1780—The town "voted on March 7 the sum of 5,000 pounds (\$16,666.66) for mending the roads." In December Timothy Ellis and Daniel Newcomb were chosen delegates to represent Keene in the convention at Charlestown in January regarding the jurisdiction of the New Hampshire Grants. The delegates were instructed to unite with the New Hampshire Grants only if the Grants were annexed to New Hampshire and not otherwise.
- 1781—At a meeting held March 26 the town voted not to unite with the New Hampshire Grants, 58 being against and 29 in favor of the union. The town stood almost alone in this vote, Hinsdale, Walpole, Surry, Gilsum, Alstead, Charlestown, Acworth, Lempster, Wendell, Claremont, Newport, Cornish, Croydon, Plainfield, Grantham, Marlow, Richmond, Chesterfield, and Westmoreland voting in favor of the union.

1782—The town voted a premium of 40 shillings to be paid to any inhabitant of the town for killing a grown wolf and 20 shillings for killing a wolf's whelp in this or any other nearby town. At a meeting on April 16 the town voted "to choose a committee to make an account of the service each man has done in the present war."

1783—At town meeting the citizens "voted unanimously that the representative be instructed to use his influence, that all who have absented themselves from any of the United States of America, and joined with, or put themselves under the protection of, the enemies of the United States, be utterly debarred from residing within this State." This vote was passed at the request of Daniel Kingsbury.

1784—The town voted to build a new meetinghouse (now the United Church of Christ) with a belfry and porch.

1786—At a meeting held January 12 a committee was chosen to take account of all services done by the town during the late war and to send the account to the Committee of Claims in the state.

1787—The town of Sullivan was incorporated, being formed from parts of the towns of Keene, Packersfield (now Nelson), Stoddard, and Gilsum. The territory taken from Keene consisted of 1,920 acres.

1788—Rev. Aaron Hall was chosen by the town as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention at Exeter. On February 8 the town "voted, that they will not, at present, show their minds whether they will accept or refuse the new Constitution." At a meeting held in March the town "voted the sum of two hundred pounds to pay for finishing the new Meeting-house, to be assessed immediately." At the same meeting it was "voted to accept the report of the committee on the claims of those that served in the late war." The old meetinghouse was moved.

1791—In this year the town chose Lockhart Willard, Eli Metcalf, and Luther Eames (Emes) "a committee to inspect the several milldams, and see that there are sluices in the same agreeably to a law of this State." At this time there was a statute in

force, passed in 1789, entitled "An Act for opening sluices in each dam across Ashuelot River, so that salmon and other fish may have free passage through the same from Connecticut River." In March, in accordance with an act of the legislature establishing post offices and post routes in New Hampshire, the president and council of the state appointed Major Josiah Richardson postmaster at Keene. The office was at his tavern on Pleasant Street (now West Street), the first regularly established post office in town. In August Daniel Newcomb was chosen a delegate to the Convention which met at Concord on September 7 to revise the state constitution. Of the 72 amendments proposed, all but 10 were approved by the town. The title of the executive was changed from president to governor.

1792—The town voted to raise 80 pounds to purchase a bell for the new meetinghouse.

1793—The state and county courts were held at this time in what was called "the old meeting-house." This building was situated a short distance west of the Meetinghouse, in the northwest corner of the Common, as it was then bounded (there was no road where Court Street is now). The center pews and seats in the old meetinghouse were removed and a bench and table (called a bar) were substituted for the use of the judges and lawyers.

1794—The town voted to raise the sum of 90 pounds to purchase a larger bell (to weigh 1,000 pounds) for the new meetinghouse. In February a subscription was started to purchase the first town clock, to be made by Luther Smith at his shop in Federal Row. In December appeared the warrant: "To see if the town will raise money for the purpose of raising and paying the soldiers." A vote was passed "that the soldiers raised in the town of Keene should have forty shillings (\$5.66) per month, including their established pay, while in actual service."

1795—Asa Bullard was appointed postmaster, the first in Keene under the United States Government. He had been an officer in the Revolutionary War and was styled "Capt. Bullard" when he first came to Keene; he afterwards rose to the rank of major in the militia. He kept a "Coffee House" on what is now the

south corner of Dunbar and Main Streets, in what was afterwards known as the "plastered house" (plastered on the outside) and had the office there. This house was later the residence of Elijah Dunbar, for whom the street was named. The mails now came direct from Boston once a week and went through to "Charleston, No. 4."

1796—A new court house replaced the old one (the former meeting-house) and was used as a town hall for many years. In November the town voted that when it was finished the Court House would become the sole property of the County of Cheshire. Keene had voted to donate the land, and prominent citizens had contributed generously toward its erection.

1797—Up to this time every property holder was compelled to pay taxes for the support of the town's established church. But the new state constitution provided that: "no person of any one particular denomination shall ever be compelled to pay towards the support of the teacher or teachers of another persuasion, sect or denomination." Controversy and litigation over payment of the minister tax at once sprang up from those who dissented, or pretended to dissent, from the doctrines taught in the established church. Dr. Ziba Hall, who claimed to be a Universalist, refused to be taxed for the support of the gospel. He sued the town to recover back taxes which had been paid under protest.

The denomination of money in use had now so far changed from the English to the Federal system that at the annual town meeting this year the sums raised were stated in dollars and cents instead of pounds, shillings, and pence.

1798—In August Peleg Sprague was elected to Congress to fill the vacancy from the resignation of Jeremiah Smith.

1804—At the annual meeting this year, the time for which had been changed by the legislature from the first to the second Tuesday in March, the town voted to raise the sum of \$50 to instruct persons to sing.

1808—The Jefferson Administration appointed Samuel Dinsmoor postmaster.

- 1809—The first meeting of the Keene Engine Company, called for organization by Daniel Newcomb, Elijah Dunbar, and Samuel Dinsmoor, was held at Pierce's tavern on February 6. This was the first successful movement for the introduction of a fire engine. Financial difficulties encountered by the Embargo Act exasperated many New Englanders, and the selectmen of Keene called a meeting of qualified voters "to take into consideration the present alarming situation of our country; to express our sentiments thereon and to adopt such measures for a redress of grievances as shall be thought expedient."
- 1810—Samuel Dinsmoor was elected to Congress.
- 1811—At the annual town meeting it was voted "that Thomas Thompson and Thomas Thompson Jr. with their farm lying in Swanzey may be annexed to this town."
- 1812—Roxbury was incorporated, taking from Keene 1,472 acres.
- 1816—A meetinghouse was built a few rods west of the stores at West Keene, and a church of 13 members gathered there.
- 1817—Samuel Dinsmoor was reelected to Congress.
- 1818—A petition was presented to the Court, signed by many leading citizens, stating that the jail yard for poor debtors included only a few houses and asking that it be extended. The request was granted.
- 1819—The national question of admitting 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 Court House in Keene to discuss the question and give expression to public sentiment.
- 1823—Samuel Dinsmoor was nominated for governor by the Democrats. At the annual meeting the town, although strongly of the opposite party, gave him 195 votes to 75 for Levi Woodbury, the Federal candidate. Woodbury was elected.
- 1824—At the annual town meeting 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.

1825—Keene 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 (Keyes), Elijah Parker, John Hatch, Col. James Wilson, and Oliver Heaton as police officers, the first in town.

1826—The 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence was celebrated with great éclat. By unanimous vote a new bell for the Meetin^ghouse had been procured, and at sunrise it was rung, accompanied by 24 discharges of cannon.

1827—An act was passed by the legislature creating the county of Sullivan and making Keene the sole shire town in Cheshire County.

1828—The town "Voted to grant and convey all the right, title and interest of the town of Keene in and unto the meeting House now standing on the common at the head of Main street, with the appurtenances, to the First Congregational Society in said town," reserving, however, to the town the right to use the house and the bell on public occasions. The town appropriated \$125 for the purchase of a cast steel bell for the West (Baptist) meetinghouse, to weigh not less than 600 pounds.

1831—General Samuel Dinsmoor Sr., Democrat, was elected governor. First Keene directory (in pamphlet form) was issued.

1832—The centennial anniversary of the birth of George Washington was celebrated in Keene with elaborate demonstrations.

1833—A new stone jail was built at the corner of Mechanic and Washington Streets.

1834—At the annual town meeting the selectmen were instructed to enforce the laws licensing houses selling intoxicating liquors.

1842—At the annual meeting upon the question of the erection of a

fireproof building by the county for keeping its records Keene voted unanimously in favor, and such a building was ordered by the county convention at the session of the legislature in June. It was built of granite on the site of the present Court House.

- 1844—At the town meeting it was reported that many trees were planted in the center of Keene. There was bitter opposition to this project of planting trees to "conceal the signs" of the traders or in any way obstructing the free use of that public common, the parade ground of the military, and the rendezvous and market place of the farmers and others with their teams. Threats were made that such trees would be quickly uprooted if planted. The planting was delayed and the controversy continued until 1851, when some active members of the Forest Tree Society ploughed up a circle about 50 feet in diameter in the center of the Square, planted a few trees, and enclosed the area with a fence.
- 1847—General James Wilson was elected to the 30th Congress. The Keene Fire Society turned over to the town all of its property, consisting of two fire engines, leathern hose, fire buckets, and an engine house, and the Keene Fire Society ceased to exist.
- 1848—A new town hall was built.
- 1849—On February 28 the new town hall (still used as City Hall in 1967) was dedicated with a Grand Citizens' Ball. Samuel Dinsmoor Jr. was chosen governor, and Gen. James Wilson was reelected to Congress.
- 1851—Land in Central Square was enclosed for a park, and trees were set out.
- 1852—In compliance with a vote of the town at the annual meeting, the selectmen procured a fireproof safe for keeping town records.
- 1853—The centennial anniversary of the organization of the town under the New Hampshire charter was celebrated on May 26, and by vote of the annual town meeting in March \$500 had been appropriated for that purpose.

- 1858—The present Court House was erected; its architect was G. J. F. Bryant of Boston.
- 1859—Thomas M. Edwards was elected to Congress.
The Keene Public Library was established under the General Laws of New Hampshire. Circulation of books began September 3.
- 1860—At the annual meeting it was voted to accept the bequest of \$1,000 made by Keene's David A. Simmons for the relief of the poor who were aged and infirm. The money was to be invested by the selectmen and the interest only to be used.
- 1861—By an act of the legislature Keene was authorized to establish a water works and make contracts with individuals and corporations for supplying water and establishing rents, charges, and tolls. The duties of the superintendent or water commissioner were to be defined by town vote. Thomas M. Edwards was reelected to Congress.
- 1862—At the annual meeting in March Keene appropriated \$3,000 for relief of the wives and children of its volunteers in the service of their country.
- 1863—At the annual town meeting it was voted to appropriate \$5,500 to aid the families of volunteers.
- 1865—At the annual meeting the town raised and appropriated \$10,000 towards paying town debts and interest. At its session in June the legislature passed "An Act to establish the City of Keene"—subject to the vote of the town. It was published in full in the local papers and thoroughly discussed. At a legal meeting on August 19 the town voted not to adopt the Act by a vote of 411 to 241.
- 1867—The demand for aqueduct water was imperative, and a special meeting to consider the question was held on October 5. A committee of seven was chosen to study the matter and on November 5 recommended that Goose Pond be purchased as the source of water supply. On December 18 the town voted to purchase said pond. A committee was appointed to employ engineers, make examinations and estimates, and after the

committee reported, the town voted (1868) 381 to 86 to construct the works. At the organization of the legislature in June 1867 General Simon G. Griffin of Keene was elected speaker of the House of Representatives and was reelected to that position in 1868.

1869—At the annual town meeting the city charter was again rejected by a vote of 784 to 177; and at the next meeting a still stronger majority was recorded against it.

1871—The Soldiers' Monument was erected. Designed by Martin Milmore of Boston, and cast by the Ames Mfg. Co. of Chicopee, Mass., the monument consists of a bronze figure of a soldier in the uniform and equipment of the Union Army. The figure stands on a pedestal of Roxbury granite cut by Charles S. Barnes from designs furnished by the committee.

1872—At the annual meeting the town authorized the Water Board to procure land for a reservoir on Beech Hill. On June 20 a meeting was held at Town Hall to consider a charter for a city. A committee was appointed to make a draft of a charter to be submitted to the legislature. The act passed at the next session, approved July 3, 1873.

1874—At the annual meeting on March 10 the town voted to adopt the city charter-783 to 589. The article to choose selectmen was passed over, the Board of 1873 holding over until the organization of the city government. Articles relating to highways, the public library, sewerage, and other matters were passed over or referred to the incoming city government. On April 14 city and ward officers were elected, the selectmen receiving, counting, and declaring the votes. On May 5 the officers then chosen organized as a city government. The chairman of the Board of Selectmen presented them with the original charter of the Town of Keene and surrendered the municipal affairs of the town into their hands. The oath of office was administered to Mayor-Elect Horatio Colony who then administered the oath of office to the Board of Aldermen and the Board of Common Council. Henry S. Martin was elected the first city clerk. The various departments which were in the former town government were carried over to the



Paying an election bet—November 14, 1872

city organization. Mrs. Lydia M. Handerson was appointed postmaster. (She died December 16, 1875.) Chapter XVII, Section I, of the General City Ordinances designated the Seal of the City of Keene: A circle one inch and five-eighths in diameter; around the border in capital letters the words "CITY OF KEENE" in the upper portion, and the words "NEW HAMPSHIRE" in the lower portion; on the disk a figure of Justice seated, with her right arm resting on a circular shield having represented upon it an arm in the act of striking with a hammer; on the right an inverted horn with coins issuing therefrom; on the left a toothed wheel and sheaves of wheat; a railroad train in the background; the figures 1874 underneath within the border.

1875—Horatio Colony, Mayor. The Keene Public Library was formally surrendered to the city on February 2 and the first books issued July 10.

1876—Edward Farrar, Mayor, was authorized to enter into a con-

tract with Edward Gustine for lighting the street lamps and keeping them in repair. Gustine was to furnish gas and light all the street lamps on such nights as the moon was not visible, from one hour after sunset until 10 P.M.

1877—Edward Farrar, Mayor. An ordinance providing for the appointment and duties of a city physician was passed, and Dr. J.Holmes Leach was chosen as the first city physician.

1878—Reuben Stewart, Mayor.

1879—Reuben Stewart, Mayor. General City Ordinances were revised in December. On March 4 women had the first opportunity to vote in school district affairs, and Mrs. Abby Bickford was elected a member of the Board of Education. Street letter boxes were erected.

1880—Horatio Kimball, Mayor. City Hall was remodeled, a stage and gallery added.

1881—Ira W. Russell, Mayor. On June 22 settees were placed in Central Park. An Ordinance relating to Cruelty to Animals. Section 1. If any person shall overdrive, overload, drive when overloaded, overwork, torture, torment, deprive of necessary sustenance, cruelly beat, mutilate, or cruelly kill, or cause or procure to be so overdriven, overloaded, driven when overloaded, overworked, tortured, tormented, deprived of necessary sustenance, cruelly beaten, mutilated or cruelly killed, any animal, and if any person having charge and custody of any animal, either as owner or otherwise, shall inflict unnecessary cruelty upon the same or fail to provide the same with proper food, drink, shelter or protection from the weather,— he shall for every such offense be punished by a fine not exceeding \$20, or by imprisonment not exceeding six months or by such fine and imprisonment. Section 7. Any and all fines imposed and collected by virtue of the provisions of this ordinance shall be paid to the treasurer of such incorporated and organized society to prevent cruelty to animals as shall have caused to be instituted the prosecution resulting in such fines, for the use of such society. Section 8. This ordinance shall take effect from and after its passage. Passed February 17, 1881.

- 1882**—Ira W. Russell, Mayor. Samuel W. Hale of Keene elected governor. On November 16 Chapter 6 of the General City Ordinances shall be amended to read: Section 17—The City Sewer shall be under the superintendent of Water Works and shall be called Keene Water Works and Sewer Department. Approved by Council.
- 1883—Horatio Kimball, Mayor. Waring Sewerage system was constructed at cost of \$82,000.
- 1884—Horatio Kimball, Mayor. Daniel H. Sawyer became first superintendent of Water Works and Sewers. On July 9 the "old town brook" was discontinued as a public sewer and 150 property owners were ordered to connect with the sewerage system.
- 1885**—Alfred T. Batchelder, Mayor. It was resolved by the City Councils that said Councils meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month at 7:30 P.M. for general business. In October the City Councils authorized the appointment of the first civil engineer. Charles H. Hersey was first elected city auditor. The new jail at what is now Fuller Park was completed.
- 1886**—Alfred T. Batchelder, Mayor. Woodward Pond (area 108 acres) was purchased for an additional water supply; an octagon reservoir on Beech Hill was constructed and more land was bought around Woodward Pond. On August 28 the first electric street light was installed on Roxbury Street. Miss Mary B. Dinsmoor purchased the belt of wood and timber land adjoining Maple Avenue to be preserved for the use of the public. On April 1 the City Councils accepted a tract of land known as the fair grounds, gift of George A. Wheelock, said property to be named Wheelock Park.
- 1887—Asa Smith, Mayor. Concrete sidewalks were adopted by the city, and a system of street numbering was initiated.
- 1888—Asa Smith, Mayor. On January 1 postal delivery was introduced with three postal carriers covering a distance of 25 miles per day each, having 2,700 names of persons receiving mail.



The "new" reservoir—constructed in 1886

On June 7 City Park was set aside for public use. George A. Wheelock was elected first park commissioner.

1889—Herbert B. Viall, Mayor. In April George A. Wheelock presented two tracts of land, one of 12 acres to be called the Children's Wood, adjoining City Park on Beech Hill, and one of 17 acres adjoining Wheelock Park, to the City of Keene to be forever kept as forest tracts and a part of said parks. Greenlawn Cemetery was conveyed to the city. The first granite pavement was laid on Roxbury Street. The South Keene Post Office was established.

1890—Herbert B. Viall, Mayor. Coolidge Park and fund were presented to the city by Henry O. Coolidge. The first water meters were installed.

1891—Horatio Kimball, Mayor. Ladies' Wildwood Park was accepted by the city. On June 13 the first macadam was laid (about 1,300 feet) on Court Street at an expense of \$4,236, or about \$1.10 per square foot.

1892—Frederic A. Faulkner, Mayor. Elliot manor house on Main Street was given to the city by John Henry Elliot for use as a hospital. A police signal light was installed at the lower side of Central Square to be operated from the central telephone station.

1893—Frederic A. Faulkner, Mayor. In June West Street was widened 15 inches on the north side from Central Square to Colorado Street.

1894—Frederic A. Faulkner, Mayor.

1895—George W. McDuffee, Mayor. On May 2 the city made a contract with General Simon Griffin for writing a history of Keene.

1896—George W. McDuffee, Mayor. The city accepted \$1,000 for the erection of the Allan Ingersoll Fountain in Central Square. This fund was left by the will of Caroline H. Ingersoll in memory of her brother. The fountain remained there for almost 18 years, when it was removed. The Elliot City Hospital was incorporated, and the city relinquished its interest to the new corporation.

1897—Francis A. Perry, Mayor. The city accepted 80 acres of land adjoining the Beech Hill reservoir and also accepted Woodland Cemetery for park purposes from George A. Wheelock, donor of Wheelock Park and Children's Wood.

1898—George H. Eames, Mayor. Edward Carrington Thayer presented to the city the Henry Colony house, on West Street, which he remodeled to make suitable for use as a public library. Frog Pond near the Symonds place on West Street was filled in and a drain constructed.

1899—George H. Eames, Mayor. The renovated Colony home was dedicated as a public library, and the trustees appointed Miss Myra F. Southworth librarian. The oil portrait of David Nims, the first town clerk, was turned over by the city to the trustees of the public library. This painting had been a gift from Mrs. Dauphin Nims in 1895.

1900—Austin A. Ellis, Mayor. The West Street bridge, built in 1837 by Aaron Wilson and Oren Dickinson, was dismantled for replacement by an iron structure.

1901—Francis A. Perry, Mayor. Opening of the 20th century was ob-

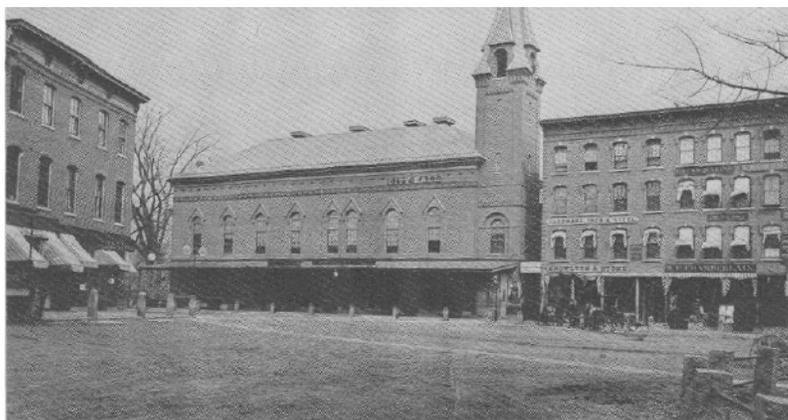


View from Beech Hill

served with appropriate exercises. At midnight a national salute was fired and services held in the several churches and in the Masonic Hall. Smallpox appeared in Keene, and rigid quarantine measures were enacted. Churches were closed and only allowed to open after the Board of Health deemed the situation under control. City Hall lot was enclosed by a fence to confirm title to the land. The city accepted a stone drinking fountain to be placed on Court Street. It was the gift of Mrs. Edward Carrington Thayer. On September 17 Mayor Perry requested the suspension of business and that services be held on Thursday, September 19, in memory of the late President William McKinley.

1902—Francis A. Perry, Mayor. The city authorized a masonry dam on the Munsell lot to contain 2,500,000 gallons of water. Free mail delivery service was established for South Keene and Swanzey Factory.

1903--James S. Taft, Mayor. A liquor license law was adopted in Keene by a plurality of 80 votes. Aldermen voted to widen and straighten lower Main Street. City Hall was repaired and a new stage, scenery, and electric lights added. On July 4 Independence Day and the 150th anniversary of Keene were celebrated together.



City Hall Block before the turn of the century

1904—James S. Taft, Mayor. The Australian ballot system was adopted for future municipal elections. The history of Keene was published. On October 15 rural free delivery was inaugurated by the post office. A new bandstand was built on the north end of Main Street on the site of the old one removed a few years before.

1905—James S. Taft, Mayor. Vital statistics of Keene were published.

1906—Martin V. B. Clark, Mayor. The West Keene sewer system was constructed.

1907—Martin V. B. Clark, Mayor. Keene united with Sullivan and Gilsum in the erection of a monument and on August 27 assisted in its dedication at the former northeast corner of Keene on the old Masonian Patent Line.

1908—Martin V. B. Clark, Mayor. City made improvements in its park lands on Beech Hill. The Board of Water Commissioners was abolished by the City Councils.

1909—Martin V. B. Clark, Mayor. On June 17 Keene voted to purchase the Samuel W. Hale property on Main Street, and the

Mayor was authorized to convey it to the state for a Normal School site.

- 1910**—John E. Benton, Mayor. Central Square was regraded and a new pavement of vitrified brick laid. The new Winchester Street steel bridge was opened on December 17 for public use. The oldest record books of Keene were returned to the office of the city clerk after having been restored and rebound.
- 1911—Charles Gale Shedd, Mayor. Valuation of the city was \$7,753,259. The new Federal Post Office was erected on West Street on the site of the former Lamson home. Sale of fireworks was prohibited, and the celebration of the 4th of July was to be under city supervision.
- 1912—Charles Gale Shedd, Mayor. The Board of Assessors was reduced from five to three members. The Kirk land (20 acres), the Cass quarry and lands in Roxbury, and land on Beech Hill near the reservoir were purchased to preserve the city's water supply. Edgewood was laid out. The second sane and safe 4th of July celebration was conducted by the municipal government. Ornamental lights were placed around the Common on Central Square.
- 1913—Charles Gale Shedd, Mayor. A city electrician was appointed. The bandstand and the Ingersoll Fountain were removed from the Common in Central Square. A temporary stand was placed in the Common. Buildings were erected on Elliot land in the rear of City Hall for use of the Water Works and Highway Departments.
- 1914—Herbert E. Fay, Mayor. On March 5 the city adopted the meter system for measuring water used by the inhabitants. On May 7 concrete bridges were ordered constructed over the canal at South Keene, over the Victoria Brook, and over the Beaver Brook on Main Street. Rules for driving and traffic regulations were adopted by the city. Citizens sent Christmas presents to Belgian children, and on Dec. 25 George M. Rossman provided the second municipal Christmas tree.
- 1915—Herbert E. Fay, Mayor. During July and August public play-

grounds were operated by a municipal committee by means of a city appropriation for the children.

1916—Orville E. Cain, Mayor. The Jarvis Engineering Co. installed a destructor furnace for the disposal of waste materials, an incinerating plant being erected at the city pasture. Free public band concerts were given on the Common, with dancing on the pavement in Central Square.

1917—George H. Eames Jr., Mayor.

1918—George H. Eames Jr., Mayor. On November 11 the signing of the Armistice was celebrated in Keene, and the next day Ex-Mayor Charles Shedd, recently returned from war work in France, addressed 1,200 people in City Hall.

1919—William H. Watson, Mayor. Spraying apparatus was purchased for the suppression of the elm tree beetle. On October 16 the tax collector was designated by the city to collect fees for permits for registration of automobiles, as required by the Session Laws of the state.

1920—William H. Watson, Mayor. On February 14 the Board of Health resigned. The John A. Drummer bequest of 135 acres of pasture and woodland was placed in care of the park commissioner, and the income was to be used to aid the aged. Laura E. Mason was elected by the City Councils as superintendent of cemeteries.

1921—Orville E. Cain, Mayor. Five of the 15 councilmen were women. The Board of Health appointed a health officer, who was to serve without pay. The Island Street steel bridge with an arched concrete floor was erected by the Groton Bridge Co.

1922—Orville E. Cain, Mayor. The city issued bonds for permanent highway improvements. Public garages were prohibited within 200 feet of a hospital, church, public or parochial school, or other state, city or public school or their grounds. Regulations were also enacted regarding the building of such garages in residential areas.



World War I Memorial—bronze eagle atop column was made around 1827 and used as a hotel sign for years

1923—Robert T. Kingsbury, Mayor. Miss Mary B. Dinsmoor gave the city 13 acres of woodland to be used as a forest reserve for public use. Faulkner & Colony Mfg. Co. donated for public use eight acres of forest adjacent to the Dinsmoor Woods. The Yale School of Forestry was granted permission to carry on its experimental forestry work there with the approval of the city's park commissioner.

- 1924—Robert T. Kingsbury, Mayor. The Memorial Flag Pole was erected at the north end of Main Street and dedicated by the City of Keene to her citizen soldiers of all wars.
- 1925—Robert T. Kingsbury, Mayor. With the purchase of the county property on Washington Street, Fuller Park, comprising 3.82 acres, was added to the city's park system. On October 14 the Zoning Committee, appointed by the city government, held its first meeting. Philip H. Faulkner was chairman. The city adopted an official flag on November 6. New and brilliant street lights were installed around Central Square and the adjacent parts of radiating streets and Keene's White Way was given a formal opening on Armistice Day.
- 1926—Arthur R. Jones, Mayor. The Keene Electric Railway deeded its Main Street bridge to the city. On Armistice Day a German war cannon was placed in Fuller Park. More cement concrete walks were built than in any previous year. Street railway rails were removed from Main Street to the Marlborough town line and from the West Street Ashuelot River bridge to the end of the line at Wheelock Park. The State of New Hampshire built an armory at Fuller Park. Permits were issued for 100 new houses. The new zoning ordinance was to take effect January 1, 1927.
- 1927—Arthur R. Jones, Mayor. The Board of Adjustment under the zoning ordinance was organized.
- 1928—Arthur R. Jones, Mayor. City Hall was remodeled. The former stores were converted into city offices and a comfort station was installed in the basement. The awning was removed and the exterior cleaned and refinished. On September 20 the airport was opened.
- 1929—Forrest L. Carey, Mayor. Traffic signal lights were established and first operated on December 12. The old reservoir on Beech Hill was turned over to the city to be used for a public swimming pool.
- 1930—Forrest L. Carey, Mayor. The city voted to construct a dam for a water reservoir in the Dakin meadow in Roxbury.

- 1931**—John J. Landers, Mayor. The city voted to construct Dakin Reservoir and Babbidge Dam. Paul F. Babbidge was superintendent of water works, sewers and drains for 50 years.
- 1932**—Nathan C. Sibley, Mayor.
- 1933**—Nathan C. Sibley, Mayor. On March 4 New England banks closed and one week later there was no cash for payrolls for the first time in the city's history. The city applied to the Federal Administration of Public Works for loans. A new bridge at South Keene was erected.
- 1934**—George F. T. Trask, Mayor. The city authorized the Park Development Project on November 4. The city accepted the Mary P. Lane Christmas Gift Fund, the income of which was to be distributed annually to old indigent ladies of Keene at Christmastime, \$10 each. The city accepted the Abbott A. Lane Playground Fund, the income to be expended under the direction of the mayor, to furnish equipment for games as played on Keene playgrounds. The city accepted the Abbott A. Lane Beautification Fund, the income to be expended by the park commissioner for beautifying the roadsides in Keene by planting ornamental bushes and flowers, and the care thereof.
- 1935—George F. T. Trask, Mayor. In July the city insured payrolls. Evan C. White was appointed by the Board of Health as the first full-time salaried health officer.
- 1936—George F. T. Trask, Mayor.
- 1937—George F. T. Trask, Mayor. The first municipal snowplowing took place in February.
- 1938**—William J. Callahan, Mayor. On July 27 Mayor Callahan died, and Richard L. Holbrook, by election as chairman of the Board of Aldermen, succeeded to all the powers and duties of mayor.
- 1939**—Richard L. Holbrook, Mayor.
- 1940**—Richard L. Holbrook, Mayor. On February 15 the fiscal year was changed to include December. In May an ordinance was

passed to license bicycles. In June it was decided that: All traffic in Central Square shall be in one direction continuing with Central Park on the left until a right hand turn can be made to the desired street or parking place.

1941—Richard L. Holbrook, Mayor.

1942—Richard L. Holbrook, Mayor. There shall be elected by the City Councils in joint convention and by joint ballot in the month of January every five years, a comptroller, who shall be an experienced accountant. In April the City Government adopted rules and regulations for, and conduct during, black-outs and air raids as necessary for the public safety of its citizens. After weeks of effort in purchasing land in North Swanzey, Keene's new municipal airport began to take form. It was formally voted that it should be called the Dillant-Hopkins Municipal Airport, in honor of Thomas David Dillant of Keene and Edwin Chester Hopkins of Swanzey, who gave their lives in the Second World War.

1943—Richard L. Holbrook, Mayor.

1944—Richard L. Holbrook, Mayor, advocated appropriating only the amounts necessary for the minimum essential operation of various city departments during this war year. The sum of \$1,750 was appropriated for an Honor Roll for men and women serving in the Armed Forces. This was the first biennial election in which a voter absent from the city on the day of election or by reason of physical disability could vote by an official state absentee ballot.

1945—Richard L. Holbrook, Mayor. Since 1887 the state laws required the printing in city reports of all vital statistics, but since that section of the law was repealed in 1941, Keene no longer prints them in detail.

1946—James C. Farmer, Mayor. Planting of 6,000 trees in city parks was started; also reforestation of the Dinsmoor Woods, Ladies Park, and Robin Hood Forest. The victory parade was held on July 4.



City Hall in the 1940's

- 1947**—James C. Farmer, Mayor. Two hundred-fifty parking meters were installed for a six months trial period. The city manager form of government, with Alderman Frederick D. Mitchell as mayor, was the choice of the city's registered voters. The vote on city management was 1,632 in favor, 1,460 opposed. Charles S. Farrar was hired as the first full-time recreation director. Frank Whitcomb, age 91, city clerk for 45 years, died.
- 1948**—Frederick D. Mitchell, Mayor. Henry F. Goodnow of Pontiac, Mich., was chosen as city manager.
- 1949**—Frederick D. Mitchell, Mayor. In September the voters turned out to a special referendum, and by a margin of 381 votes, rejected a proposed new council-manager charter known as House Bill 70. At the city election in November citizens voted to continue the council-manager form of government. On December 14 came the last regular meeting of the City Councils, a form of government which Keene had supported since 1874, when the town was chartered as a city. Keene's Public Works

Department became the first in New England to install radio equipment.

1950—Dr. Leroy S. Ford, Mayor. January 1 saw the beginning of a new government, a *city* manager with a one-council, unicameral, system to replace the Board of Aldermen and Common Council. New property valuations were made by the New England Survey Service, Inc.

1951—Dr. Leroy S. Ford, Mayor. The City Council backed the Connecticut River Valley Flood Control compact. It was decided to chlorinate city water. The city manager plan again became a major issue in an election campaign, and on election day 64% of the voters decided against the city manager form of government after a three-year trial.

1952—Laurence M. Pickett, Mayor. Property deeds were microfilmed.

1953—Laurence M. Pickett, Mayor. A week-long celebration of the city's 200th anniversary was held from June 28 to July 5, and the Keene Bicentennial March was composed by Karl Beedle. West Keene areas were rezoned. A mercury vapor street light system was installed.

1954—Laurence M. Pickett, Mayor. In April east-west air service was inaugurated in Keene.

1955—Laurence M. Pickett, Mayor. On August 18 the century-old tower on City Hall was torn down and the City Hall bell, made in Sheffield, England in 1866, was presented to the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, N. H. A building boom increased tax valuation. The Citizens for Council-Manager Government conducted a drive for a system of local government under which a city manager would work with a council-mayor setup. Keene operated under such a system from 1948 to 1951. This council-manager plan was voted back in November by 356 votes.

1956—J. Alfred Dennis, Mayor. On April 2 City Manager Donald E. Chick assumed office. Part of a Keene bypass route was officially approved in September. The Otter Brook section was ordered laid out, the \$3,500,000 Otter Brook flood control dam project

being the second of three proposed dams designed to eliminate major flooding in the Ashuelot River Valley. Flooding has plagued Keene since 1738, when high water was within a few feet of Main Street near the present site of Keene State College.

- 1957—J. Alfred Dennis, Mayor. It was decided to develop Wheelock Park as a recreation area. In May the City Council passed a resolution favoring a state park at the Otter Brook flood control dam. In August the city purchased property from the Boston & Maine Railroad, the first move toward setting up a parking lot at Railroad Square and St. James Street. The City Council voted to buy a disputed piece of property on Hastings Avenue for the construction of a state armory for the National Guard.
- 1958—Richard P. Gilbo, Mayor. Adoption of a surplus food program, urged by the Welfare Committee, was passed. A \$200,000 cross-town water main was completed.
- 1959—Richard P. Gilbo, Mayor. Maple Acres was rezoned from agricultural use to single family residence. Keene now had the highest per capita property taxes of all of New Hampshire's 13 cities.
- 1960—Richard P. Gilbo, Mayor. On May 19 Councilman William H. Shea (Ward 5) was elected temporary chairman of the City Council at a special meeting because of the death of Mayor Gilbo. On June 17 Charles A. Coolidge was elected mayor by the City Council.
- 1961—Charles A. Coolidge, Mayor. A chlorinator was installed by the Water Department. On July 21 ground-breaking ceremonies officially opened work on the Ash Swamp drainage project to reclaim 1,580 acres of flood plain. An immediate start on a parkway that eventually would run along both banks of the Ashuelot River from West Street to the Surry Dam was urged by the Ashuelot Parkway Study Committee.
- 1962—Robert L. Mallat Jr., Mayor. The City Council voted to buy land for a Steamtown Museum if the state wants it. On July 12 the first Steamtown type excursion train ride north from Keene to East Westmoreland was set for the following Thursday at

11 A.M. The city was to rent space in Railroad Square for a ticket booth. The Council authorized a contract with Camp, Dresser & McKee, Boston engineering consultants, to do the engineering work and to draw plans for developing an underground water source found near the north end of the MacKenzie Dairy property off upper Court Street. The contract called for construction of a gravel-packed well and installation of a pipeline to the city's distribution system, pumps, and other equipment.

1963—Robert L. Mallat Jr., Mayor. On February 16 a motion "that the State accept" and go ahead and build Steamtown, USA, was rejected by a 3-2 vote of the Governor's Council. Keene's ZIP code number was designated as 03431.

1964—Robert L. Mallat Jr., Mayor. The City Council passed a minimum housing code in January, giving appointed city officials the legal means to clear up bad housing conditions, and in a telegram to Mayor Robert L. Mallat Jr., read by the Mayor at the Task Force Poverty Benefit Concert, the President of the United States said: "I am delighted to learn that Keene has joined the War Against Poverty." Early in July came the opening day for the city's two Veterans' Memorial Swimming Pools. On October 3 a new ordinance was passed declaring: "That the entire areas of all city parks and city-owned recreational areas within the corporate limits of the City of Keene, be, and the same are, hereby designated as bird sanctuaries."

1965—Robert L. Mallat Jr., Mayor. In April Keene's first official act as a result of its designation as an "All-America City," the first to be so designated in the state, was the raising of an "All-America City" flag at ceremonies on Main Street, and on May 10 Richard S. Childs, chairman of the Executive Committee of the National Municipal League, presented the All-America City Award to Mayor Robert L. Mallat Jr., for the city. On July 16 the City Council voted for a Housing Authority. In October a special City Council Committee was appointed to consider the writing of a new Keene history. On December 1 Keene's new city manager, James C. Hobart, assumed his duties. Later in the month eight tons of food and clothing were sent from Keene to Mississippi, the result of a city-wide project under-

taken in memory of Jonathan M. Daniels, an Episcopal seminary student, and native of Keene, shot to death in Hayneville, Alabama, while on civil rights work.

1966—Richard E. Bean, Mayor. In April the location of the new Federal Post Office building was determined as the area bounded by Main, Water, and Willow Streets, and a portion of Marlboro Street. On May 10 printed copies of the 109-page Neighborhood Analysis, containing six maps of the city and showing pictures of deteriorating sections, were distributed to members of the Keene Planning Board and City Council. The report was compiled over the past two years by the James P. Purcell Associates of Newington, Conn. **In** June the Council approved an application for low-rent public housing and financial assistance and adopted a resolution authorizing the signing of a cooperative agreement.

1967—Richard E. Bean, Mayor. City tax rate announced at \$51.40 per \$1,000. Total city budget was \$2,378,923. At its annual town meeting Roxbury voted not to merge with Keene. In 1812 Keene lost 1,472 acres of land when Roxbury was incorporated; today Keene is that town's largest taxpayer, as a major portion of Keene's watershed is within Roxbury's boundaries. David H. Rogers, Keene's first resident planner, began work in June to gather data for the Planning Board and Keene's planning consultant, Hans Klunder. The problems of the downtown area, low-rent housing and housing for the elderly assumed high priority. The Common was renovated and major construction projects undertaken, including the widening of West Street. Keene citizens voted to change the date of the election of School Board members from the time of the annual school meeting to the same date as municipal elections.