

TIME MARCHES ON



THE HOUSE THAT WAS AT 51 WEST STREET

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On the north side of West street in Keene, N. H. is a brick house, numbered 51, which is one of the most thoroughly built houses in the state. On one of its timbers is cut with a scribe the date 1831, the year in which it was built.

It was built for the residence of John Vose Wood, whose name may be found in Keene's first directory, that of 1831, as living on Washington street when that work was printed.

John Vose Wood and Lucretia Perry, ~~daughter~~^{SISTER} of Justus Perry, were married in Keene April 17, 1822, by the Rev. Zedekiah S. Barstow.

September 12, 1822, Mr. Wood became a partner with his father-in-law, the firm name having been Perry & Wood. They carried on the manufacture of blacking, ink and other bottles and flasks at their factory on Marlboro Street, which are now collector's items.

The glassware was sold at their store on the east side of Central Square in connection with other goods usually carried by such establishments. The partnership was dissolved September 1, 1828.

When the West street house was built there stood on the site of the present Y. M. C. A. Building, a large wooden house, known as the Richardson tavern. It was built by Capt. Josiah Richardson about 1773.

Capt. Richardson died in 1820, and the tavern, with much land in the central part of town was inherited by Joseph and Rebecca (Richardson) Dorr.

October 28, 1830, the Dorrs deeded to John V. Wood, for the consideration of \$1,000, a piece of land on West street between the Richardson tavern and the land of Aaron Hall, now occupied by the Keene Public Library, the frontage on West-street having been twelve rods.

The deed also included a right of way for teams, etc., giving access to the land from the north side over land of the Dorrs, which was to be terminated on the laying out of a street on the north side. Winter street was laid out Nov. 12, 1832.

December 4, 1830, John V. Wood and his wife Lucretia, deeded to Samuel Wood, Jr. a brother of John V., a little over fifty-eight rods of land from the west side of the land purchased of the Dorrs, on which Samuel built the present building of the Aldrich-Huntley Company.

We have not learned the date when the Samuel Wood, Jr. house was built, but it was probably at nearly the same time as the house numbered 51 West street. On April 1, 1835, Samuel Wood, Jr. sold his house to Levi Chamberlain, and in the deed it is described as "the brick house which I lately occupied."

John V. Wood died October 31, 1834, aged 38 years, about three years after his house had been completed. The "Sentinel" of December 4, 1834, has the following advertisement.

"FOR SALE: The new and elegant brick house built by the late John V. Wood, situated within thirty rods of Central Square in the village of Keene.

"It is one of the most convenient and thoroughly built houses in the state, finished with two handsome fronts, a suit of drawing rooms, with a dining parlor, nursery, etc., and with extensive outbuildings.

"For further particulars inquire of Perry, Wheeler & Co. or Mrs. Wood, on the premises."

February 4, 1836, Lucretia P. Wood, widow of John V. Wood, sold to Sarah F. Wheelock, the widow of Lynds Wheelock, the property advertised, the consideration named in the deed having been \$5,000.

Lynds Wheelock had been a storekeeper on the east side of Main street, next below the former Phoenix hotel. One of the children of Lynds and Sarah was George A. Wheelock, who gave to the City of Keene many acres of park lands.

The Wheelock store was sold at auction in 1838 and was removed to Church street. It was again moved and remodeled in after years by the late James A. Toof, and is now owned by his widow, Mrs. Della Toof.

Sarah F. Wheelock died Oct. 12, 1839, aged 46 years. The property was sold by George A. Wheelock to his brother-in-law, John H. Elliot, March 21, 1859, for the consideration of \$5,000.

John V. Wood and his wife Lucretia had one child, Lucretia Jane, who was born June 10, 1824. She married, Dec. 19, 1850, Lucien Tilton, the ceremony being performed by the Rev. George G. Ingersoll.

Mr. Tilton was the chief engineer in charge of the construction of the Cheshire Railroad, and was the designer of the stone arch bridge at South Keene.

Lucretia Jane Wood, widow of John V. lived with the Tiltons in Keene, Charlestown, Springfield, Ill. and Chicago. They lost their house and many belongings in the great Chicago fire.

During the Civil War they lived in Abraham Lincoln's house in Springfield, where they did much for the soldiers and negroes who had fled to the north.

Lucretia Jane Wood, widow of John V. Wood, died in Chicago August 26, 1875, at the age of 78 years, and a notice of her death as a widely-known and greatly beloved lady was written for the "Sentinel" by the Rev. A. A. Livermore.

Her daughter, Mrs. Tilton, died in Chicago November 4, 1906, at the age of 82 years. She did much for the Invalids' Home in Keene and the Elliot hospital.

The house at 51 West Street was sold by John H. Elliot, June 1, 1864, to D. Henshaw Ward, in trust for Julia F. Ward, the consideration having been \$6,000.

Mr. Ward was a textile manufacturer at Ashuelot, N. H. He was a son of Andrew H. Ward, who died at Newtonville, Mass., Feb. 18, 1864, in his 80th year.

Andrew H. Ward was the compiler of the Ward Family Genealogy, which contains statistics of nine generations, 1,387 families and 6,171 descendants, and was published in 1858.

May 20, 1865, D. Henshaw Ward sold the West street house to William P. Wheeler in trust for Julia F. Ward, and on the same day, William P. Wheeler conveyed the property outright to Julia F. Ward.

February 11, 1867 the house was sold by Julia F. Ward for \$11,000 to Hafford B. Fuller, who had come to Keene from Boston in January, 1862, and bought the T. J. French store at No. 3 Town Hall, which he operated for something like six years.

Mr. Fuller sold the dry goods store July 1, 1868 to Patterson & Spaulding. On March 28, 1869, Mr. Fuller conveyed the West street house to John E. Colony, for the consideration of \$12,500.

John E. Colony died here Oct. 5, 1883. He had been a member of the Cheshire Mills Co. at Harrisville, where he had lived until he bought the place in Keene. It still remains as a part of his estate.

The present bell on the St. James Church was the gift of D. Henshaw Ward and his wife, Julia F. Ward. It arrived in Keene September 13, 1869, and was hung and rung for the first time October 15, 1869.

By the courtesy of John E. Hammond, then sexton of the church, and assisted by Clifford W. Farrar in handling the necessary ladder, we saw this bell for the first time early in 1945.

It is 40 inches high, and the diameter of its mouth is $54\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Its weight is 3,087 pounds, about double the weight of any other Keene bell. The bell is hung to swing north and south.

The inscription on its south side is "Presented to St. James Church by David Henshaw Ward--Julia Frances Ward--1869." On the north side, "Glory to God in the Highest."

Around the top, "Wm. Blake & Co. formerly H. N. Hooper & Co. Boston." The diameter of the wheel which actuates the bell is 96 inches. The key of the bell is D.

Julia Frances Noble, wife of D. Henshaw Ward, died at Oakland, California, Nov. 12, 1880. In 1882 her husband presented to the St. James church a memorial to his wife in the form of a stained glass window.

It was placed in the west side of the church in the latter part of December 1882. It represents the scene in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea after the Resurrection, where Mary Magdalene is kneeling at the feet of the risen Saviour, who says to her "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." The coloring is rich and the features very fine. The window was made by Max Mittermaier, of Brooklyn, N. Y.

The house at 51 West Street, after the death of John E. Colony, was occupied by his daughter, Julia H. Colony. She married, June 18, 1890, Hobart Ames, of North Easton, Massachusetts.

The property was afterward occupied for a number of years by Frank Salisbury, a member of the firm of Dunn & Salisbury, chair manufacturers, with a factory on Emerald street, now occupied by the Demeritt Fisher Co.

Upon Mr. Salisbury leaving the city, the house was taken by William S. Tuttle, sheriff of Cheshire county, and after his death, his daughter, Mary A. Tuttle, until recently, continued to occupy the house. The occupancy of the Tuttle, about thirty-four years, has been the longest in its history."

The John E. Colony Trust Estate conveyed to the present owners the House at 51 West Street May 18, 1949, for a consideration of \$35,000.00, where there is now being erected a modern Home Office Building at an estimated cost of \$850,000.00 for the Peerless Casualty Company, National Grange Mutual Liability Company and National Grange Fire Insurance Company, where as of this date (September 29, 1950) there is being held a Cornerstone Laying Ceremony.

NATIONAL GRANGE MUTUAL LIABILITY COMPANY

PEERLESS CASUALTY COMPANY

NATIONAL GRANGE FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY