

## CHAPTER XVI.

### TOWN AFFAIRS.

1826—1840.

The controversy between the Unitarians and the Orthodox Congregationalists in Keene entered into all the affairs of life to an extent that would seem incredible at the present day, and created much bitterness—in some cases even between those who had been the warmest friends.<sup>1</sup>

At the annual meeting in 1826, Hon. Salma Hale, from the committee appointed in 1825 to devise some satisfactory method of disposing of the meetinghouse, reported that several meetings of the committee had been held, but nothing had been accomplished. The town then voted to allow the Keene Congregational Society to use the edifice thirteen Sundays during the year ensuing, the particular Sundays to be designated by the selectmen; and that after that term, the selectmen then in office should fix the number of Sundays to be used by that society for four years following. In compliance with that vote the selectmen designated eighty-three Sundays in the four years beginning in June, 1827, on which the edifice might be used by that society.

During this year the first edition of the "Annals of the Town of Keene, from its first settlement in 1734 to the year 1790," by Hon. Salma Hale, was published by Moore, of Concord, N. H. They "were compiled at the request of the New Hampshire Historical Society," of which Mr. Hale was an active member, "and of several citizens of Keene."<sup>2</sup> At the annual meeting the town voted to instruct the selectmen to procure 400 copies of that work and distribute among the inhabitants, "provided that the expense does not exceed fifty dollars" (12½ cents a copy). About

<sup>1</sup>One of the wits of Keene said of the two societies that "one appeared to have religion without morals; the other, morals without religion."

<sup>2</sup>In 1851, a second edition, "with corrections, additions and a continuation to 1815" was published by J. W. Prentiss & Co. of Keene.

the same time appeared the "History of the United States" by the same author. In 1820, the American Academy of Languages and Belles Lettres had offered a premium of \$400 and a gold medal to the American citizen who should within two years produce the best written history of the United States. Four books were entered by different authors and the premium for the best history was awarded to Mr. Hale. It was published in New York by Harper & Brothers, in London, by T. Miller, and at the Sentinel office in Keene. A few copies of the London edition were sold here.

The rapid increase of the population and the immense productions of the country brought the subject of transportation more and more prominently before the public. That by water, with the steamboat, which was fast coming into use, was the cheapest and most rapid then known. Large canal systems were already in successful operation, others were projected in all parts of the country, wherever there was a possibility of a practicable route, and rivers, large and small, were utilized. The canal commissioners of Massachusetts in 1826 reported a feasible route for a canal from Boston through Groton, Leominster, Fitchburg, Winchendon and down Miller's river to the Connecticut; and it was confidently announced that there would be "a land carriage of only twenty miles from here to the capital of New England." (Sentinel.)

A company was formed to improve the navigation of the Connecticut river from Hartford, Ct., to Barnet, Vt., 219 miles, 202 of which would be in slack water caused by dams or natural levels, and seventeen by canals. The fall was 420 feet, to be overcome by forty-one locks, the whole cost estimated at \$1,500,000. The canal and locks at Bellows Falls cost \$107,313. Large meetings were held and the subject was ably discussed, notably at Charlestown, in August, 1826. The company had steam tow-boats built for hauling freight; and an elegant new steamer for both passengers and freight, seventy-five feet long, fourteen feet wide, drawing two feet of water and "carrying 30 tons burden including its machinery." It was called the Barnet, and began making its trips in the autumn

of 1826. Her first arrival at Brattleboro was "greeted with the roar of cannon and the ringing of the bell." The company had a public dinner at the Mansion House, followed by toasts and speeches. Another steamer called the *Enterprise*<sup>1</sup> was put on, followed in 1829 by the *Vermont*, which had "a handsome cabin on deck," and carried 150 passengers to Charlestown on its first trip. In 1830, congress was asked for an appropriation to improve the river. In 1831, the steamer *Hampden* was added. The boats, making alternate trips, advertised to leave Bel- lows Falls, Westminster and Walpole for Hartford every Monday; Putney, Chesterfield, Brattleboro, Vernon and Hinsdale every Tuesday; Northfield and Gill every Wednesday; the returning boat leaving Hartford every Monday; carrying both passengers and freight.

The fiftieth anniversary of American independence was celebrated in Keene with great eclat. By a unanimous vote of the town a new bell for the meetinghouse had been procured and at sunrise it was rung, accompanied by twenty-four discharges of cannon. Aaron Appleton was chairman of the committee of arrangements, and Hon. James Wilson (senior) was president of the day, with Samuel Grant of Walpole, Elisha Belding of Swanzey, S. Cobb of Westmoreland, Nahum Parker of Fitzwilliam and Hon. Salma Hale of Keene, vice presidents. Gen. Justus Perry was chief marshal, with Majors Oliver Heaton and B. F. Adams assistants. At 11 o'clock a procession of several hundred citizens of this and neighboring towns, escorted by the Keene Light Infantry, Capt. Geo. Brown, marched to the meetinghouse, where religious services were held, Rev. Mr. Dickinson, of Walpole, and Rev. Mr. Leonard, of Dublin, assisting the pastor. The house was filled to overflowing. An oration was delivered by Rev. T. R. Sullivan, and patriotic music was rendered by the Keene Musical Society under the direction of Eliphalet Briggs, Jr. At the close of those exercises, 150 persons sat down to "a very handsome entertainment under an artificial bower," where thirteen regular and sixteen voluntary toasts were drunk, and responses made by the talented

<sup>1</sup> Believed to have been the one from the Ashuelot river, with steam added.

gentlemen present. The day was very generally celebrated throughout the country. It was on that day that both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died.

The first appearance of a circus in this town was in July, 1826. It stopped at the Phoenix Hotel, and concluded its exhibition with a play, "The Hunted Tailor." "Admission 25 cents. Children half price."

At its muster this year the Twentieth regiment was commanded by Col. James Wilson, Jr., Col. Perry having been promoted to brigadier general. When the militia of the state was reviewed by Gov. John Taylor Gilman in 1797 or '98, the Twelfth regiment, composed of the towns of Marlboro, Packersfield, Dublin, Jaffrey, Rindge and Fitzwilliam, was pronounced the best in the state; and for a long term of years that superiority was maintained. The Twentieth had been its constant rival for the first position, and this year, under Col. Wilson's command, it was given a slight preference.

For many years afterwards, 1826 was known in this region as the "grasshopper year," from the destructive ravages of that insect. They destroyed gardens, stripped currant bushes and shrubs of their leaves and bark, and in many cases utterly ruined the grass, corn, rye, oats and other crops. They would destroy clothes if left within their reach, and even ruin the wooden handles of farming tools if left out over night. They literally covered the ground and "would rise up before the passer in countless millions, sometimes obscuring the sun like a cloud." "The weather was dry and potatoes and other crops came to a standstill." But rain fell, the grasshoppers died after a few weeks' existence, and crops took a fresh start. Lilacs, and potatoes planted in May, blossomed in September.

The Cheshire Agricultural Society exhibited at Keene this year, the leading men of the county taking an active part in its affairs. Hon. Joel Parker was chief marshal, assisted by Col. Thomas F. Ames and Major Oliver Heaton. Col. James Wilson delivered the address; Levi Chamberlain, then of Fitzwilliam, was chairman of the committee of awards; and among those who served on committees were James Wilson, senior, Elijah Dunbar, William Lamson,

Jr., Capt. Joseph Dorr and Aaron Appleton. Mrs. Thomas Edwards took a premium for the best carpet, and Samuel Wadsworth, of Roxbury, took one for the best product of potatoes, having raised 491 bushels on one acre of land.

The notable persons who died this year were David Nims (at his son's in Roxbury), one of the first persons born in Keene, aged eighty-four; Joshua Ellis, the Revolutionary soldier wounded at Bunker Hill, aged seventy-four; Ezra Wilder, aged eighty-five; Cornelius Sturtevant, an early settler, aged ninety-one; Mrs. Mary, widow of Major Davis Howlett, aged eighty-seven; Dr. Joseph Wheeler, aged forty-six; and Mrs. Mary H., wife of Gen. Justus Perry, aged twenty-one.

In January, 1827, there was a term of remarkably cold weather. For five successive mornings the mercury did not rise higher than 10° below zero, and on one morning it was 27° below. Lake Champlain was completely closed with ice, and Boston harbor was frozen over as far down as Nantasket Roads. Snow was four feet deep on a level—six feet on the Green Mountains.

At the annual meeting the town raised \$500 for fencing burying grounds. The firewards this year were Capt. Joseph Dorr, Timothy Hall, Abijah Wilder, Jr., John Hatch, Joel Parker and James Wilson, Jr. In November, in compliance with a law passed the year before, they posted printed rules and regulations in relation to fires; and gave notice that they would inspect the buildings in town, that the required ladders must be put up, and the leathern fire-buckets kept constantly on hand.

The question of dividing Cheshire county had been agitated for many years, and petitions for such an act had been presented to the legislature setting forth the need on account of "the great increase of population and of the business in the probate and judiciary courts and the registry of deeds." This year an act was passed creating the county of Sullivan and making Keene the sole shire town of Cheshire.

A committee consisting of Rev. Z. S. Barstow, Rev. T. R. Sullivan, Hon. Salma Hale, Samuel Dinsmoor, Jr., and James Wilson, Jr., was chosen "to take into consideration

the state of the common schools in the Town and devise such measures as may be practicable and expedient for their improvement." No report of that committee has been found, but the committee on examination of teachers that year, —Rev. T. R. Sullivan, Joel Parker, Thomas M. Edwards, Salma Hale and John Prentiss—prescribed the following textbooks to be used in the schools: "Lee's Spelling Book;" "Easy Lessons in Reading;" "History of the United States;" "English Reader;" the Scriptures; "Scientific Class Book;" Murray's and Putnam's grammars; Worcester's and Woodbridge's geographies; Adams' arithmetic, old and new, and Pike's arithmetic in full.

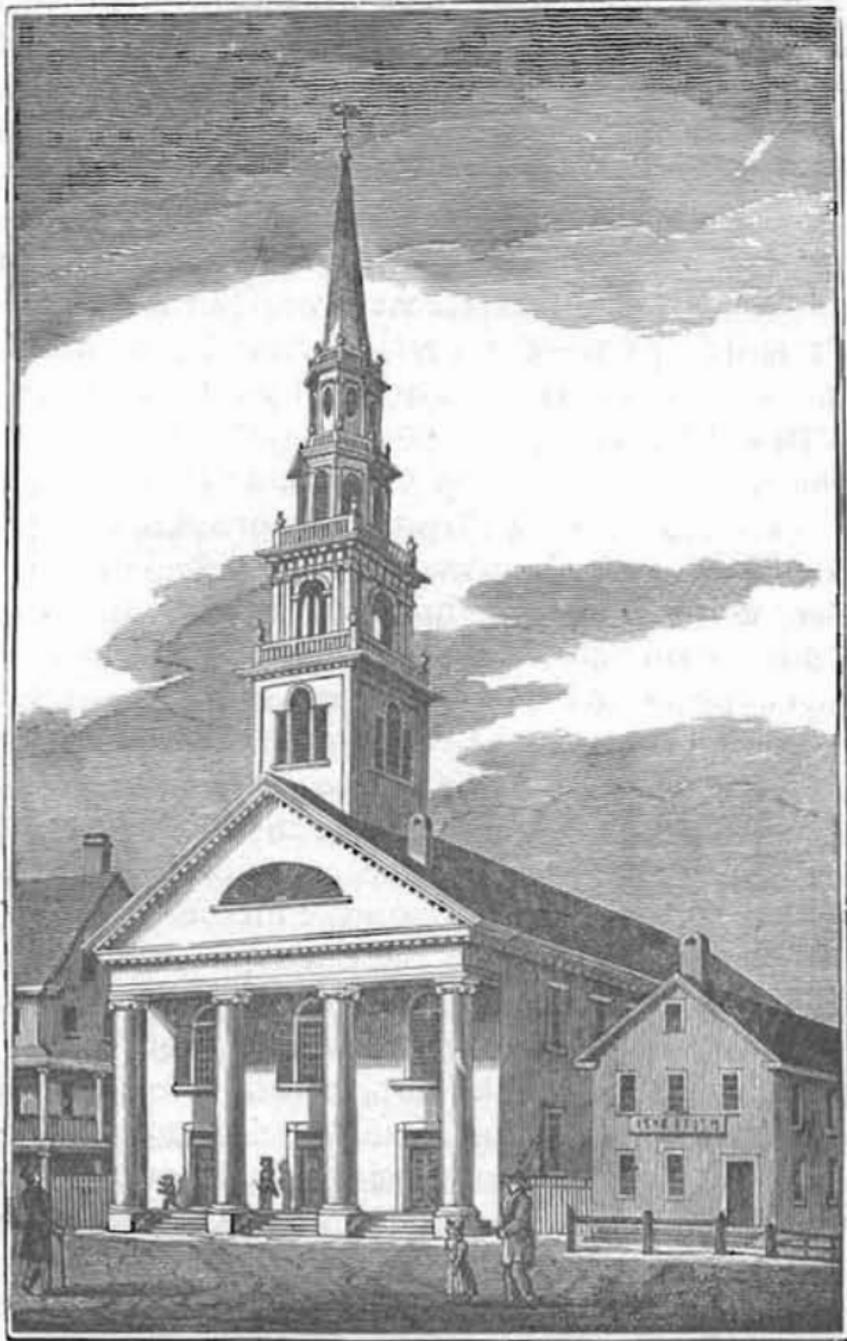
A mail had run between Keene and Worcester since about 1800. In 1826, a line of stages was put on via Templeton and Worcester to Norwich, Ct., to connect with steamers to New York, three times a week. For a year or two previous to this, the line had run in the same way to Providence, making a similar connection to New York. In 1827, a line of daily mail stages was established which ran from Boston through Keene to Middlebury, Burlington and Montreal, following the route of the third New Hampshire turnpike and connecting with other lines at all large towns. A competing line ran on the Cheshire turnpike and Branch Road Company's route through Rindge and Fitzwilliam, crossing the other line at Keene and going on through Surry, Drewsville and Charlestown to Woodstock and Montpelier, and also to Windsor and Hanover; thus giving Keene two daily lines to and from Boston. The companies often furnished six horses to the coach, and for many years staging was a lively and important business. It was not uncommon for sixty to one hundred passengers to arrive and depart in a day, and nearly all the coaches stopped for the night in Keene. Hatch's and Harrington's taverns were the stage-houses for the competing lines. Those lines bore various names at different times, as the "Old Mail;" the "Union;" the "Telegraph Despatch;" the "Citizens';" the "Boston, Fitchburg & Keene Mail Stage Co." etc. The quickest time recorded between Boston and Keene was made on the 27th of December, 1831, in nine hours and twenty-seven minutes,

from the toll-house in Cambridge to Harrington's tavern in Keene, stopping eight or nine times to shift mail and horses. The passage was made from Concord on runners. There was also at one time a line to Greenfield and Northampton, connecting at Hartford with steamboats to New York; and one running three times a week from Portsmouth and Exeter to Keene and thence through Brattleboro to Albany and the west.

In August, Aaron Davis's blacksmith shop and trip-hammer works at South Keene were burned; and Jehiel Wilson's pail factory—the first in New England to make pails by machinery—was damaged by the same fire. Both were immediately rebuilt.

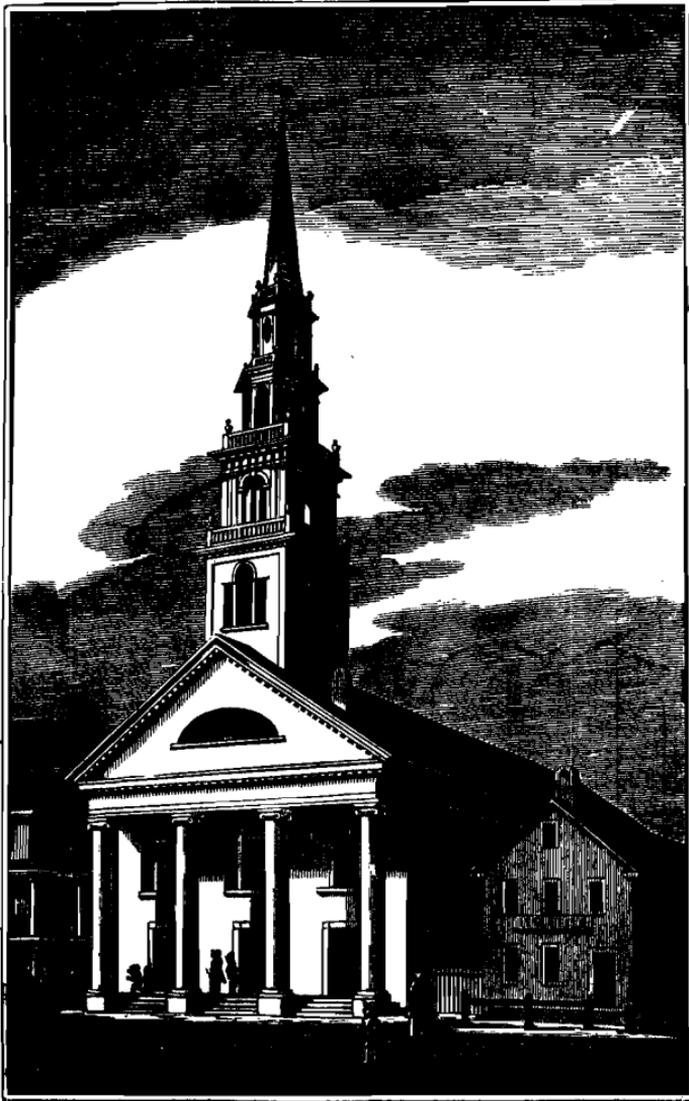
Eliphalet Briggs, third of that name in town, died this year, aged sixty-two; Ephraim Wilson, aged fifty-seven; and Royal Blake, aged seventy-two.

At the annual meeting in 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, and the right to hang a bell in the belfry and control and use it on such occasions; but on the Sabbath the society was to have full control. In case the town neglected for six months at any time to provide a bell its rights were to be forfeited. But the vote was not to take effect until bonds had been given to the town by said society for the removal of the house to its present position, without expense to the town, within eighteen months from the passing of the vote (a deed of the land for its future site having been given by Abijah and Azel Wilder); nor until said society had paid to the Keene Congregational Society the sum of \$750 and procured a release to the town from that society of its claims to the meetinghouse; and also a release from Joseph Dorr and his wife, Rebecca Richardson Dorr, of their rights and interests in the land on which the house then stood, and in the common—the limits of which were defined and were nearly the same as the present Square,



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH—1829.

which was "to be forever appropriated for a common and public highway." When all these conditions had been com-



FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH—1829.

plied with, the selectmen were to give a deed of the building to said First Congregational Society.<sup>1</sup> That society

<sup>1</sup>This was the final separation of the church from the town in Keene, except that the town retained control of the house and bell on public occasions until the annual meeting in 1840, when final action was taken on the 16th article of the warrant.—"To see if the town will relinquish all the right, title and interest in the old meeting-house except the use of the bell for town purposes, or raise money to repair the same"—by voting "that the town relinquish their claim."

accepted the proposition of the town, with all its provisions, and during that season and the one following the edifice was removed to its present position (by means of a windlass), turned one-quarter round,<sup>1</sup> remodelled and finished. The entrance was by broad stone steps on which stood four tall Corinthian pillars supporting the front of the steeple—a fine, graceful structure one hundred and thirty feet high, built by William Wilson of Keene, the organ maker. The work was done through different committees, consisting of Abijah Wilder, Jr., Azel Wilder, Abel Blake, Timothy Hall, William Lamson, Jr., S. A. Gerould, C. H. Jaquith, Enos Holbrook, Nathan Bassett, Eliphalet Briggs, Dea. Elijah Carter and Elijah Parker, the clerk of the society.

The question of enlarging and improving the common had been agitated for several years, particularly by A. & A. Wilder, who owned the land on the north side, gave that for the site of the meetinghouse and moved the edifice at their own expense. As early as 1820, meetings had been held by those interested, money subscribed, and action taken with a view to removing the meetinghouse, dispensing with the horsesheds and enlarging the Square. This year the change was made as related; A. & A. Wilder erected "Wilders' building" on the north; and William Lamson, Jr., had built his three-story brick block on the corner of Roxbury street, where the Bank block now stands, in 1827.

In compliance with a law passed in 1827, the selectmen this year appointed a superintending school committee, consisting of Rev. Z. S. Barstow, Rev. T. R. Sullivan, Joel Parker, Elijah Parker and Thomas M. Edwards; and each district chose a prudential committee.

In March, Mr. Beniah Cooke,<sup>2</sup> who had been "Preceptor of Fitchburg Academy" opened a school for instruction "in the several branches usually taught in our Academies" in a room over Sylvester Haskell's store, where the Sentinel building now stands, with the entrance on the

<sup>1</sup>"Old Capt. Samuel Bassett, the carpenter and Revolutionary soldier, sawed off the posts and men and boys pulled the steeple over with ropes." (W. S. Briggs and N. E. Starkey.)

<sup>2</sup>He married a daughter of Col. Stephen Harrington and was for many years editor and publisher of the Cheshire Republican and Farmers' Museum, the Silk Grower, and other publications.

north side. He afterwards called it the Keene Academic School, and continued it for several terms very successfully, having nearly 100 pupils.

But in December, 1828, the Keene High school was established by the citizens of the three central districts of the town, under certain restrictions and regulations. The candidates for admission were examined by a committee chosen for that purpose, the first being composed of Rev. T. R. Sullivan, Aaron Hall and Phineas Fiske. It was managed by a prudential committee consisting of Rev. Z. S. Barstow, Eliphalet Briggs and Abijah Wilder, Jr. It was taught in the east room of the Wilder building by Mr. Edward C. Ellis, a graduate of Middlebury college. He was succeeded the next year by Mr. A. H. Bennett, who was afterwards a lawyer at Winchester.

The town appropriated \$125 for the purchase of a cast steel bell<sup>1</sup> for the west (Baptist) meetinghouse, to weigh not less than 600 pounds.

At the meeting of the legislature, in June, Hon. Salma Hale presided as chairman when Col. James Wilson was elected speaker of the house.<sup>2</sup> Upon the introduction of a bill by Hon. Salma Hale, the First Congregational Society in Keene was incorporated.

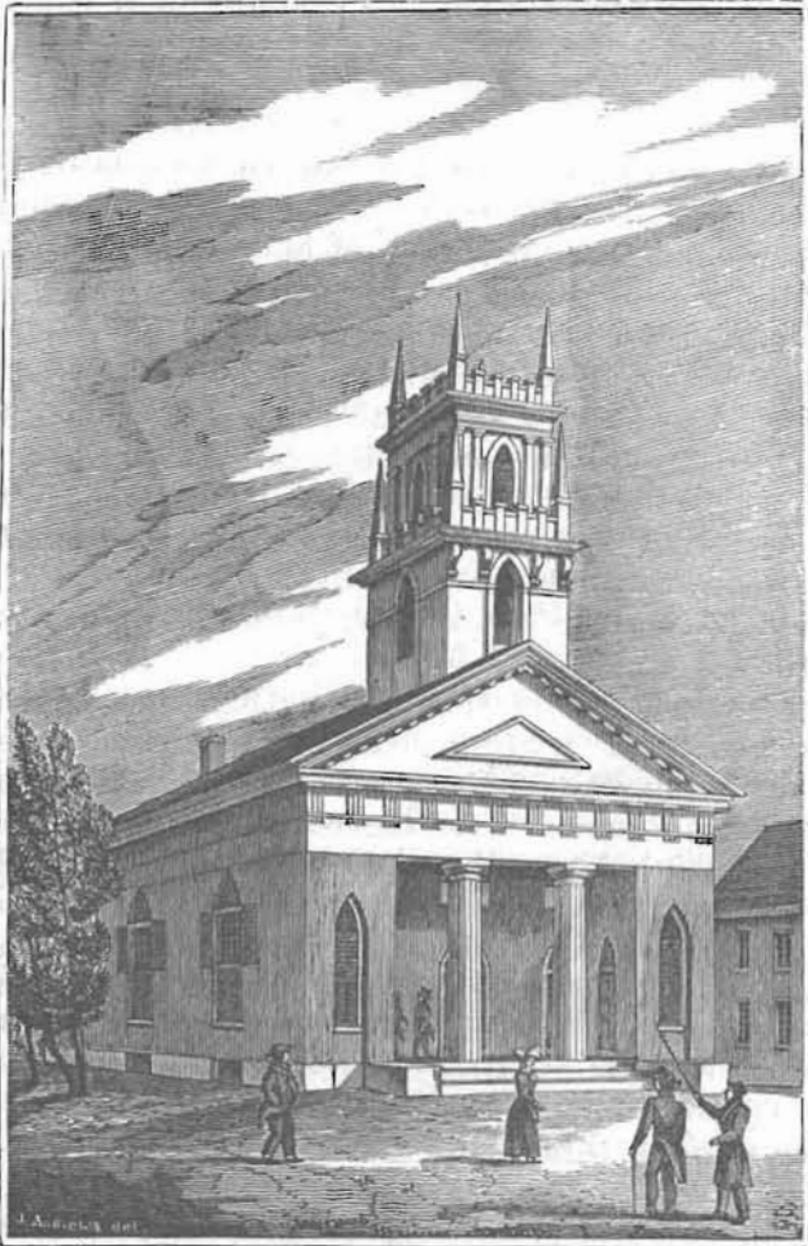
The 4th of July was celebrated in much the same way that it had been two years previous.

A large and enthusiastic convention of the Whigs of Cheshire county was held in Keene, on the 9th of October, in opposition to the movement in favor of Andrew Jackson for president. Hon. Joel Parker presided, Larkin G. Mead was secretary, and Col. James Wilson and Thomas M. Edwards were the principal speakers. At the national election in November, 1828, Keene cast 346 votes for the Adams' electors, to 107 for those of the Jackson party.

A remarkable rain-storm, lasting two days and extending over all New England, occurred in November. Mills, dams, bridges and fences were swept away and crops

<sup>1</sup> That bell is still in use in the tower of the Baptist church, on Court street.

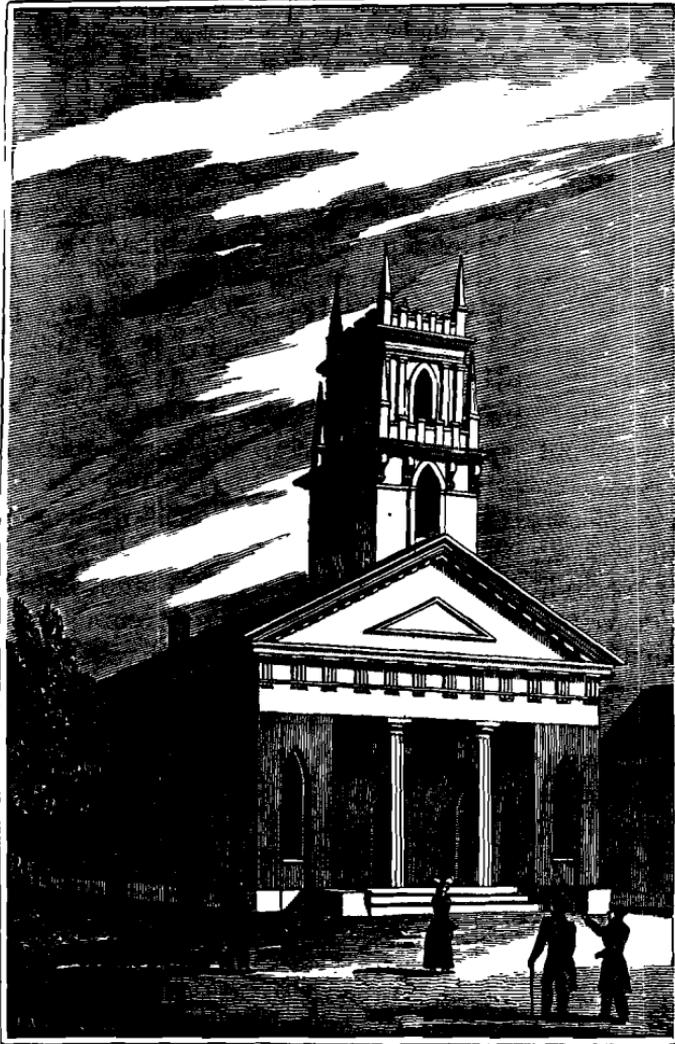
<sup>2</sup> His term as speaker continued but one year, the "Hurrah for Jackson" carrying the state Democratic in November. He built his large brick house the same year—now the residence of Mr. Isaac J. Dunn, 129 Main street, and soon afterwards built the present City Hotel, named at first the Workingmen's Hotel and kept by Edward Whitney. Two years later the name was changed to Emerald House. Still later the brick store north of it was joined to the hotel.



UNITARIAN CHURCH—1829.

destroyed. The Connecticut river rose more than twenty feet, and was higher than had been known for forty years.

Among those who died this year were William Lamson, senior, aged sixty-four, Samuel Osgood, seventy-one, and Zachariah Tufts, a Revolutionary pensioner who served with credit in Morgan's celebrated corps of riflemen.



UNITARIAN CHURCH—1829.

The first Unitarian meetinghouse was built in 1829, on the south corner of Main and Church streets. The building committee were John Wood, Justus Perry, John

Elliot, Francis Faulkner, and James Wilson, Jr. Placed beneath the corner stone was a copper plate bearing this inscription :

“On the Fourth Day of July,

A. D. 1829,

THE CORNER STONE

of this house

Erected by the Keene Congregational Society,

Aided by a donation from William Lamson,

And Dedicated to the worship of the Only True GOD,

In the name of JESUS CHRIST, whom he hath sent,

Was placed with religious ceremonies.

T. R. Sullivan, Pastor.”

It was dedicated in April following, Rev. Mr. Barrett, of Boston, Rev. Dr. Bancroft (father of the historian), of Worcester, and Rev. Mr. Abbott, of Peterboro, assisting. With Mr. Lamson's legacy of \$1,500.00, subscriptions, and the sale of pews, the society started not only free from debt, but with sufficient funds to purchase an organ—the first church organ in town—built by Pratt of Winchester and played by Miss Juliette Briggs. The bell, cast by Revere, weighed fifteen hundred pounds, and is still in use, in the tower of the new Unitarian meetinghouse. A few years later a town clock, made by Mr. Holbrook of East Medway, Mass., the gift of Mr. John Elliot, was placed upon the tower.

This period, culminating about 1825 and continuing for many years afterwards, was one of remarkable brilliancy in the society of Keene. The town was noted for its high social standard, for the refinement and culture of many of its inhabitants, and for its many accomplished and lovely women who gave tone to that society, among whom were the wife of Major Josiah Richardson and his daughter, Mrs. Joseph Dorr; Mrs. Daniel Newcomb and her sisters-in-law, Mrs. Daniel Adams and Mrs. George Ingersoll;<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Samuel Dinsmoor; Mrs. Aaron Hall; Mrs. James Wilson; Mrs. Elijah Dunbar and her sisters, Mrs. Ithamar Chase,<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Wm. M. Bond and Mrs. James H. Bradford; Mrs. Salma Hale; Mrs. Aaron Hall, Jr., and Mrs. Timothy Hall;<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Z. S. Barstow; Mrs. Aaron

<sup>1</sup>Of the Goldthwaite family of Boston.

<sup>2</sup>Daughter of Alexander Ralston and mother of Salmon P. Chase.

<sup>3</sup>One of the wits of Keene said of those ladies that “one was the immaculate Mrs. Hall, the other the aromatic Mrs. Hall,” from the profusion of flowers with which she adorned her home and provided for entertainments.

Appleton; Mrs. Azel Wilder; Mrs. Phineas Fiske; Mrs. Henry Dorr; Miss Catherine Fiske; and many others deserving of mention.

There was also a brilliant array of able men, as may be seen from the names already mentioned.

It was in 1829 that the Keene Debating Society, afterwards named the Keene Forensic Society and Lyceum, was formed; and it continued for many years with great success. The names of its members represent a tower of intellectual strength such as few country villages could present. Among them were those of Joel Parker, Salma Hale, James Wilson, Jr., Z. S. Barstow, T. R. Sullivan, A. A. Livermore, Samuel Dinsmoor, Jr., Elijah Parker, John Elliot, Justus Perry, Thomas M. Edwards, Aaron Hall, Charles G. Adams, John B. Dousman, John Prentiss, Phineas Fiske, Nathaniel Dana, Benj. F. Adams, Phineas Handerson, Levi Chamberlain, John H. Elliot, and Wm. P. Wheeler, whose name was the last signed to the constitution. Their constitution was headed with the preamble, "Whereas intellectual culture and a knowledge of science and the arts are important to the best interests of society, and indispensably requisite for the stability and prosperity of a free government," etc. Hon. Joel Parker was its first president, with Rev. Z. S. Barstow and Rev. T. R. Sullivan vice presidents. The meetings were held in the town hall, open to the public, and a lecture preceded the debate. One of the questions debated soon after the organization was, "Would it be advantageous to the public and to Keene to construct a railway from Boston through Keene to the Connecticut river?"

There was also a large number of men and women of refinement and literary taste and culture not mentioned in the above categories; and other societies for intellectual improvement were formed. The Keene Book Society had been organized in 1824 and its annual meetings were held in the town hall. Its membership in 1827 numbered 122 and its officers were the leading men of the town. Addresses were made each year, and the list of speakers contained the names of the most brilliant and learned men in the country. In 1831 this society was merged in the Keene

Circulating Library, which had been in existence many years, and the combined library numbered one thousand volumes. It was under the management of George Tilden and was open every day except Sunday. The Social Library of former days was still in existence, with Noah Cooke librarian, at the time of his death, in 1829. Some of its volumes are still in the Keene Public Library.

Then there was a Cheshire Athenæum, whose officers at this time were Joel Parker, president; James Wilson, Jr., vice president; Elijah Parker, treasurer and librarian; Timothy Hall, registrar; and Rev. Z. S. Barstow, Aaron Hall and George Tilden, trustees. It had six hundred volumes. There was also a Cheshire Theological Institute, a corporation in which many of Keene's prominent men held shares, designed<sup>1</sup> to furnish the clergymen of the county with literature that might aid them in their work. It had a library of about 700 volumes.

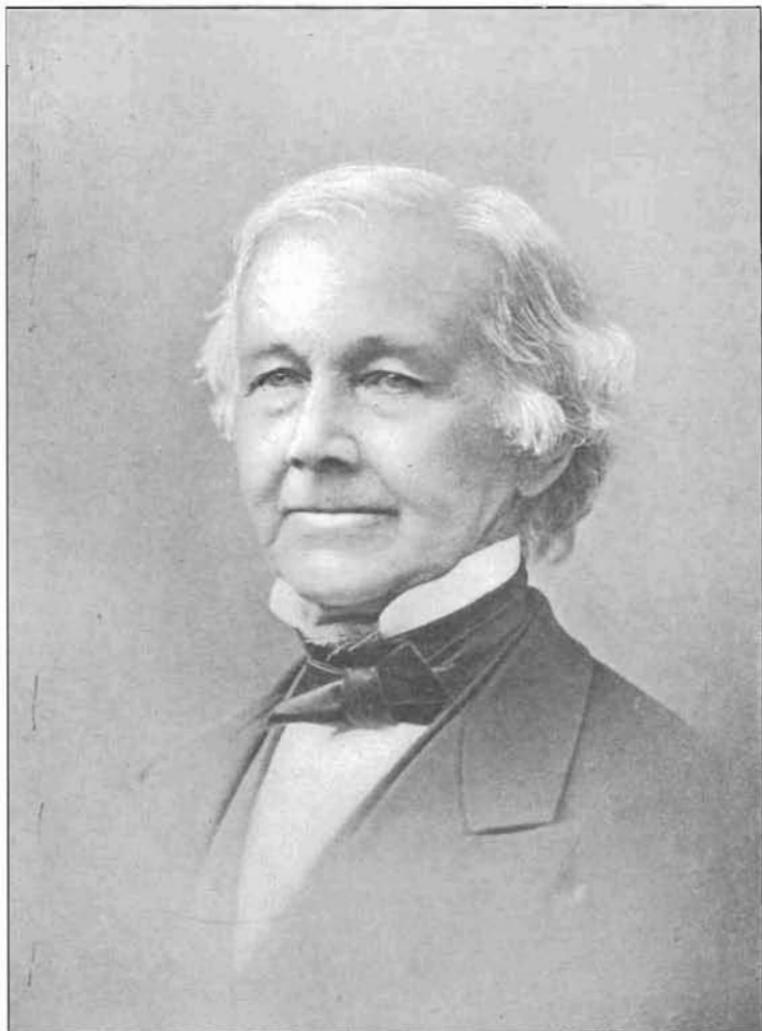
Besides these there was a Free Fellows' Society; an Auxiliary Education Society, Capt. Abel Blake, chairman; a Youth's Social Fraternity; a Juvenile Library, Rev. T. R. Sullivan, librarian; a Sabbath School library of the First Congregational church containing 550 volumes; and a Poker and Tongs Club.

The Masonic bodies were in a flourishing condition, and leading men of the town, including Col. James Wilson, John Prentiss and John Hatch, were active members.

There was the Keene Musical Society, already mentioned; the Keene Harmonic Society; and the Keene Musical Association—formed in 1831—all of which aspired to the rendering of classical music; and the Cheshire County Sacred Music Society, which held most of its sessions in Keene, was composed largely of Keene people. The Handel and Haydn Society's collection of church music had just then been published and gave new impetus to the cultivation of the art of singing.

There were two bookstores in town, kept by John Prentiss and George Tilden, and two weekly newspapers, besides a Unitarian monthly called the *Liberal Preacher*, begun in 1827, with Rev. T. R. Sullivan as editor. It was

<sup>1</sup> See sketch of Rev. Dr. Barstow.



GEORGE TILDEN.

published at the Sentinel office for several years and finally passed into the hands of George Tilden.

There were many other organizations for the promotion of temperance, charity and other good works—the Tract Society of Keene; the Ladies' Cent Society, of which Mrs. Barstow succeeded Mrs. Hall as president; the Heshbon Society, Miss Olive Prime, president, Miss Hannah Newcomb, secretary and treasurer, and Miss Lucretia Dawes and Miss Newcomb, prudential committee; and the Ladies' Charitable Society,<sup>1</sup> of which again Mrs. Barstow succeeded Mrs. Hall as president, and held the office for nearly half a century. The two latter societies are still in flourishing condition. There was an association of men and another of women in aid of foreign missions.

Much was done at this period for the cause of temperance. A large meeting for that purpose was held in Keene in October, 1829, at which Joel Parker, Gen. Wilson, Thomas M. Edwards and other prominent men made addresses. And such gatherings were frequent throughout the country. The Cheshire County Temperance Society was formed which survived for many years, usually holding its meetings at the town hall in Keene. Dr. Amos Twitchell was its first president, followed by Joel Parker and other men of influence. Previous to that the same class of men had organized the Association of Keene for Discountenancing the Use of Ardent Spirits, and much active work was done by that society, and many powerful appeals and addresses were made to the public. Another society was formed called the Keene Temperance Association, and a little later the Young People's Association for the Promotion of Temperance. Intoxicating liquors were sold at all public houses and most of the stores, by the glass and in larger quantities—either with license or without—and the use of them was so general and excessive as to become alarming; hence the vigorous action above indicated.

<sup>1</sup>The Ladies' Charitable Society was formed in 1815 as a reading society, meeting once a week and reading the Bible and other religious works, and the same year it opened a Sabbath school. The next year it established a charity school, and bought wool and had it carded and spun to be knit by the society—and cotton yarn to be woven—for the poor and destitute. In 1820, it made clothing and sent to the Indians, and in 1824, it appropriated twenty dollars to aid the Greeks in their struggle for independence. An extended historical report of the society, by Mrs. Catherine P. Dinsmoor, with the original preamble of its rules and regulations, was published in the Sentinel of Dec. 19, 1876.

John Hatch still kept the Phoenix Hotel; Col. Stephen Harrington the Eagle; Henry Coolidge the old Ralston; Daniel Day and Henry Goodnow theirs on the respective turnpikes; Joseph and Robert Shelly the one at the junction of those routes, formerly the Widow Leonard's; Josiah Sawyer was keeping his popular house in Ash Swamp; Abijah Metcalf the Sun tavern, also an excellent house; Samuel Streeter had one on the Westmoreland road; and a little later Asa Lincoln kept one on the Chesterfield road near the town line.

The attorneys in town were Samuel Dinsmoor, James Wilson, Elijah Dunbar, Joel Parker, Elijah Parker, Thomas M. Edwards, Samuel Dinsmoor, Jr., and James Wilson, Jr. The physicians were Daniel Adams (died in 1830), Amos Twitchell, Charles G. Adams and John B. Dousman. Dr. C. Stratton, the dentist, was making occasional visits to Keene and other towns, beginning in 1826.

Appleton & Elliot had continued in business at the corner store<sup>1</sup> and in the manufacture of glass until 1826, when that firm was dissolved, Mr. Appleton retired, John Elliot & Co.<sup>2</sup> took the glass business, and Adams & Holman<sup>3</sup> took the store the second time, the firm changing in 1828 to Adams, Holman & Wood, and in 1830, to Adams, Holman & Dutton (Ormond D.) which continued till 1835.

In the autumn of 1827, William Lamson occupied his new brick block, corner of Roxbury street. He had, as successive partners, John T. Hale, George Dutton and Franklin H. Cutting. The firm of Lamson, Cutting & Co. continued for many years. Sumner Wheeler succeeded Perry & Wheeler, continuing the manufacture of glass bottles with the business of the store. Capt. Jesse Corbett still carried on his watch repairing, jewelry and lottery ticket business, but was succeeded a few years later, as jeweler, by Norman Wilson, who remained for many years.

Richard Montague, the merchant tailor, had removed to a store on the west side of the Square, and in 1827, took William Dinsmoor as partner. The firm changed names several times, but Mr. Montague continued in business

<sup>1</sup> Adams & Holman took the store in the spring of 1821, but in the autumn of 1822 it passed back into the hands of Appleton & Elliot.

<sup>2</sup> John Elliot, Oliver Holman and Benj. F. Adams.

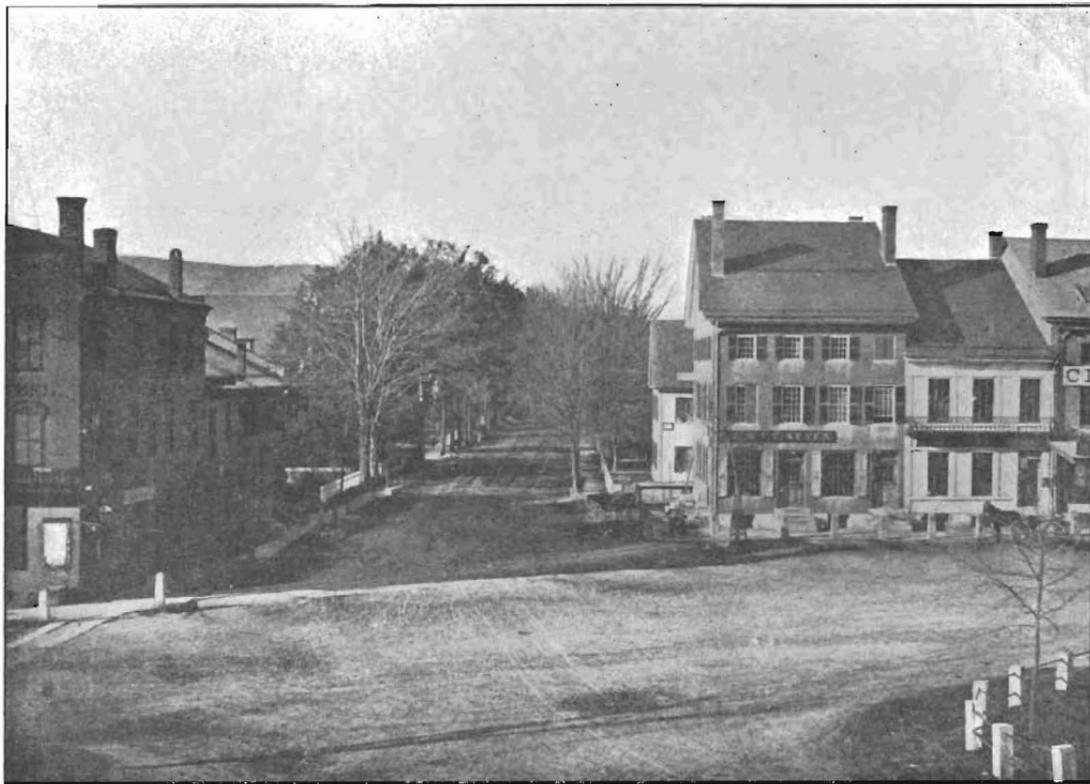
<sup>3</sup> Benj. F. Adams and Oliver Holman.

until 1835. In 1833, Mr. Dinsmoor formed a partnership with Selden F. White, at No. 2 Wilders' building. The firm soon became Dinsmoor, White & Lyon, and was the first in town to sell ready-made clothing. The change in the national administration brought about the removal of Thomas M. Edwards and the appointment of Mr. Dinsmoor as postmaster, and he removed the office to his store. In 1836, Selden F. White took the business of the store and carried it on for several years.

Upon the completion of Wilders' building in 1828, Keyes & Colony (Elbridge Keyes and Joshua D. Colony) took the west store and kept a general assortment of goods. Five years later they built and moved into their own three-story brick building, on the corner of West street, the site of the present postoffice building, and remained in business there for many years. There was a hall in the upper story of their building. They were succeeded in Wilders' by Jacob Haskell, with a silk and dry goods store. Sylvester Haskell had occupied a store on the west side of the Square, and in 1827, he removed "to the new brick store," where the Sentinel building now stands, and kept a general assortment of goods there for several years.

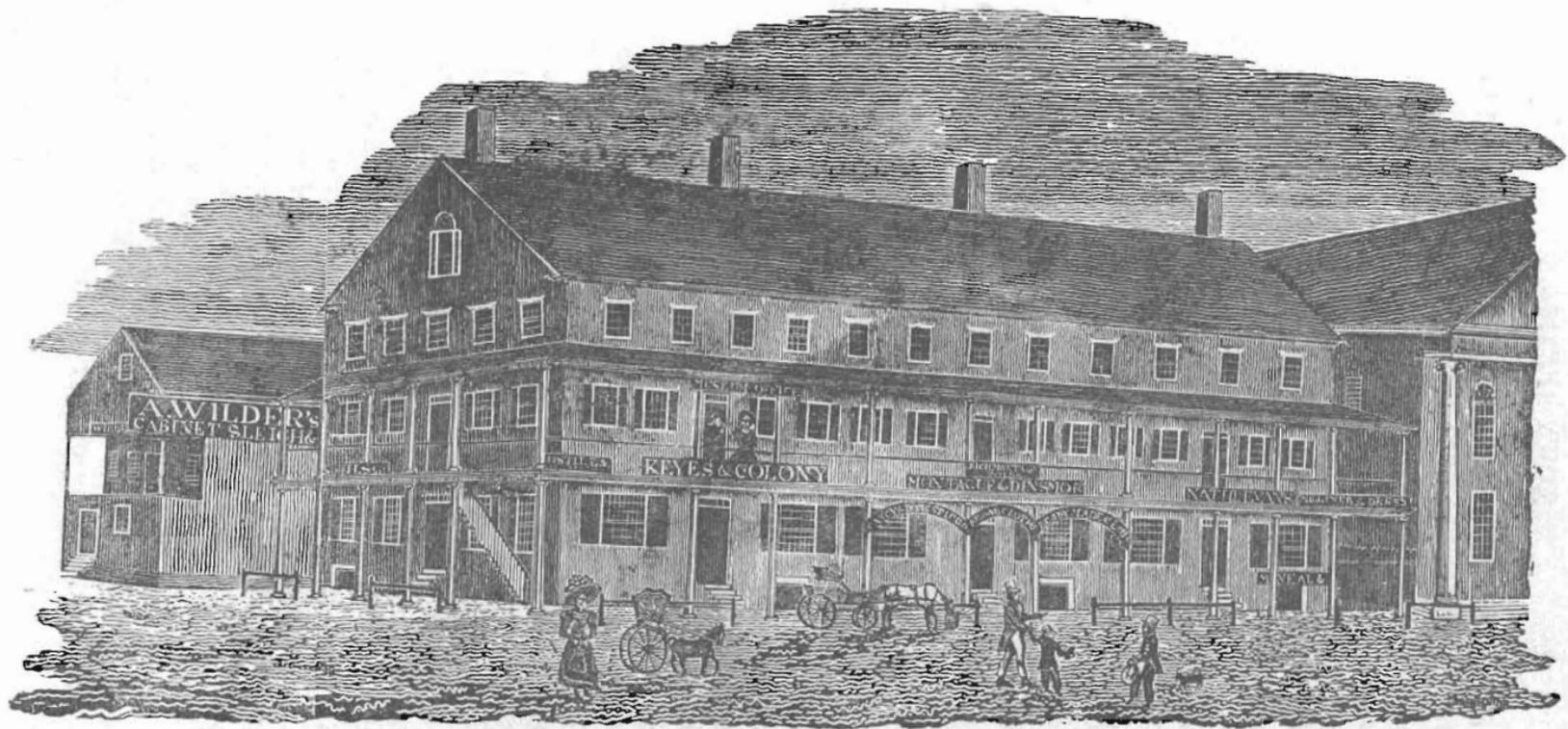
The cut of Wilders' building shown on the following page is from an original wood engraving made soon after the block was built. It is the property of Miss Frances M. Colony, 143 West street, through whose kindness it is now used.

Some matrimonial ventures came about in the course of trade in town. Miss Abigail Woods, daughter of Elijah Woods, kept a milliner's shop over S. A. Gerould's store, east side of Main street, afterwards over A. & T. Hall's. In 1827, she married J. Gilman Briggs, who was afterwards in business here with his brother, Eliphalet Briggs. The same year Miss Maria V. Wood, a milliner, sister of John V., married Dea. Asa Duren, the baker. A few years later, Miss Harriet Keyes, sister of Elbridge Keyes, who had a milliner's shop in Wilders' building, afterwards over Keyes & Colony's store, corner of West street, married Nathaniel Evans, a popular merchant who came from



KEYES & COLONY BLOCK, AND VIEW OUT WEST STREET.

Keyes & Colony Block, and view out West Street.



WILDERS' BUILDING IN ITS EARLY DAYS.

Wilders' Building in its early days.

Sullivan and was in business here many years. She bought the old Capt. Richardson tavern on West street and they made their home there, leaving it, at her death, to her sister (Susan), Mrs. Harvey A. Bill, who was the last to occupy it.

Dexter Anderson came in 1827 and was the fashionable hatter here for many years. He began business on the east side of Main street. Afterwards his shop was on the north side of the Square, east of the church, and is now the dwelling house of Dr. G. C. Hill on Winter street.

At this period, 1830, Faulkner & Colony were still dressing cloth and carding wool into rolls for families to spin and weave. Azel Wilder, near them, was making wheel-heads for hand spinning; Luther Smith, the brass founder, was still making the tall clocks, as in former years; the Briggses and Abijah Wilder, Jr., were manufacturing large quantities of cabinet-work, chairs, sleighs, etc.; Jennings & Perkins—afterwards Charles P. Perkins—had a carriage manufactory on Washington, north corner of Mechanic street; and Charles Ingalls, and Joseph Wheeler the portrait painter with him for a time, had a shop over them for sign and ornamental painting. Thomas F. Ames was making chaises, and he and the Watsons, father and son, were making saddles, harnesses, etc.; Col. Stephen Harrington and his son-in-law, William King, had a tannery and a curriers' shop in rear of Eagle Hotel, with a leather and shoe store on the street, and a morocco dressing establishment, in which they were succeeded by Josiah Burnap. Page & Holman still had turning works and made pumps on the North branch; Aaron and Oliver Wilson the same at their mills in Ash Swamp; and Jehiel Wilson made pails at South Keene. Dea. Samuel Wood, Jr., had succeeded his father as baker, removing from the Lamson building on the west side of Main street to the north corner of Main and Church streets, where a bakery was kept until 1900. He was succeeded by his brother, Amos Wood, and later by Dea. Asa Duren. Jeduthan Strickland had a distillery on the south side of the road just beyond Sawyer's tavern, at West Keene, but at this period he distilled only cider brandy.

The principal blacksmiths in 1830 were Aaron Davis, John Towns, Nathan Wood, Jabez Daniels, James Wilson, 2d, and Nathaniel Wilder; and they made axes, knives and other edge-tools by hand. The principal carpenters and builders were Nathan Bassett, Samuel Crossfield, Kendall Crossfield, John G. Thatcher and Everett Newcomb. The principal shoemakers were Abijah Kingsbury, Dea. C. H. Jaquith and Capt. George Brown, commander of the Keene Light Infantry. John C. Mason was the gunsmith, on Winter street; Whitcomb French had a livery stable, succeeding John Chase, the first in town, on the site of the present one on Washington street, and remained there for many years—an important institution of the town. He owned the house and lived where Mrs. J. G. Warren now does.

Alonzo Andrews<sup>1</sup> had a private school "over John Towns' blacksmith shop, one door north of the Bank," and Alphonso Wood had one in the Prentiss building, each for a few terms. Previous to that, Osgood Herrick taught a grammar school in Harrington's hall. Miss Fiske's school was called the Young Ladies' Seminary, and was exceedingly successful, numbering about one hundred pupils. She employed two assistants besides Miss Eliza P. Withington, who remained with her constantly. Reuel Blake taught writing and bookkeeping in chambers on the west side of the Square.

In November, 1829, John Towns' two-story brick blacksmith's shop, next north of the bank, was burned; but it was immediately rebuilt and reoccupied by Mr. Towns, the upper room being used by the Debating Club and for schools.

There were two fire companies and two engines in town, captains, John V. Wood and Jonas B. Davis, besides the Keene Fire Society, sixty-four members, S. Dinsmoor, president, succeeded about this time by John Wood, president, with T. M. Edwards, secretary, S. Dinsmoor, Jr., treasurer, and a board of trustees; and the Fire Fencibles, Joel Parker, captain, succeeded by Col. James Wilson, with Jesse Corbett, John Hatch and Wm. Dinsmoor, lieutenants,

<sup>1</sup>Two Fox boys came from Pitchburg, the father writing Mr. A. that he sent him "two young foxes to tame."

and S. Dinsmoor, Jr., treasurer. Gen. Justus Perry was promoted to major general commanding the Third division of the state militia, and he appointed Richard Montague and Sumner Wheeler aids, with the rank of major. Benjamin F. Adams was colonel of the Twentieth regiment, and William Dinsmoor captain of the Keene Light Infantry.

The Cheshire Agricultural Society exhibited in Keene on the 7th of October. Salma Hale was vice president; Thomas M. Edwards, chairman of committee of awards; John Elliot, Elijah Parker, Thomas F. Ames, James Wilson, Jr., and Abijah Wilder, Jr., committee of arrangements; and Col. B. F. Adams, chief marshal, assisted by Major Sumner Wheeler and Capt. William Dinsmoor. The society dined at Harrington's hotel.

Among the deaths this year were those of Noah Cooke, aged eighty; Daniel Ingersoll, aged seventy-nine; and Dr. Josiah Goodhue, father of Mrs. Levi Chamberlain, aged seventy-one.

At the annual meeting in 1830 the town voted to give Samuel Dinsmoor and others leave "to erect tombs in the village graveyard." The tombs were built in 1833.

A meeting in April chose Zebadiah Kise, John Elliot and Azel Wilder a committee to consider the question of a town-farm for the support of the poor. The committee reported in favor, and a farm three miles west of the village known as the "Dea. Kingsbury farm" was purchased. The same meeting instructed the selectmen to build and make alterations for the "Concord road"—leading from the Sullivan road at the James Wright farm down into the valley of the North branch and up to Roxbury line.<sup>1</sup>

The subject of a railroad from Boston to Brattleboro had been agitated for some time. Surveys were made and the whole cost was estimated at \$1,000,000. Large meetings favorable to the project were held in Boston and along the line. It was thought that a "branch might lead through Keene and Walpole," and it became the absorbing question of the time for the people of Keene and vicinity.

<sup>1</sup>The "Concord road," following the route described, from Keene through East Sullivan and Munsonville to South Stoddard and beyond, was another of those roads required by the public but opposed by the respective towns because they ran along their borders and would be of small advantage to the people of those towns. This road was petitioned for in 1820, but was fought so vigorously by the towns, including Keene, that it was not built until 1833.

The following is quoted from the Sentinel: "A pumpkin vine which grew in a garden in this village produced, this year, twenty-eight pumpkins, besides several small ones pulled off when green. The twenty-eight weighed five hundred and forty pounds."

According to the census of 1830, Keene had a population of 2,374<sup>1</sup>—1,239 in the village—whole increase in ten years, 477.

The notable deaths that year were: Capt. Stephen Chase, aged sixty-seven; Mr. Samuel Heaton, aged seventy; Dr. Daniel Adams, aged sixty-four; Mr. John Newcomb, formerly of Norton, Mass., aged eighty-two; Mrs. Elizabeth, wife of Hon. James Wilson, senior, aged forty-nine.

The ten highest taxpayers were James Wilson, Samuel Dinsmoor, Benj. F. Adams, Adams, Holman & Wood, Stephen Harrington, John Elliot, John Prentiss, Aaron Appleton, Azel Wilder and Perry & Wheeler. (Mrs. Sarah F. Wheelock paid one cent less than the latter firm.)

Gen. Samuel Dinsmoor, Democrat, was elected governor in 1831. On his return from Concord on the 4th of July, at the close of the session of the legislature, he was met at Marlboro by the Keene Light Infantry, Capt. James Wilson,<sup>2</sup> Jr.; the Ashuelot Cavalry, Capt. Chase; and a large cavalcade of citizens, all under Gen. Justus Perry as marshal, and escorted to Keene. The procession came in at the lower end of Main street, and as it passed Miss Fiske's school the governor was gracefully received by the teachers and young ladies paraded in two lines in front of the building. Arriving at his home<sup>3</sup> on Main street, by invitation of the governor, the escort partook of a collation. The tables had been prepared in his yard north of the house,<sup>4</sup> and toasts were drunk and speeches made.

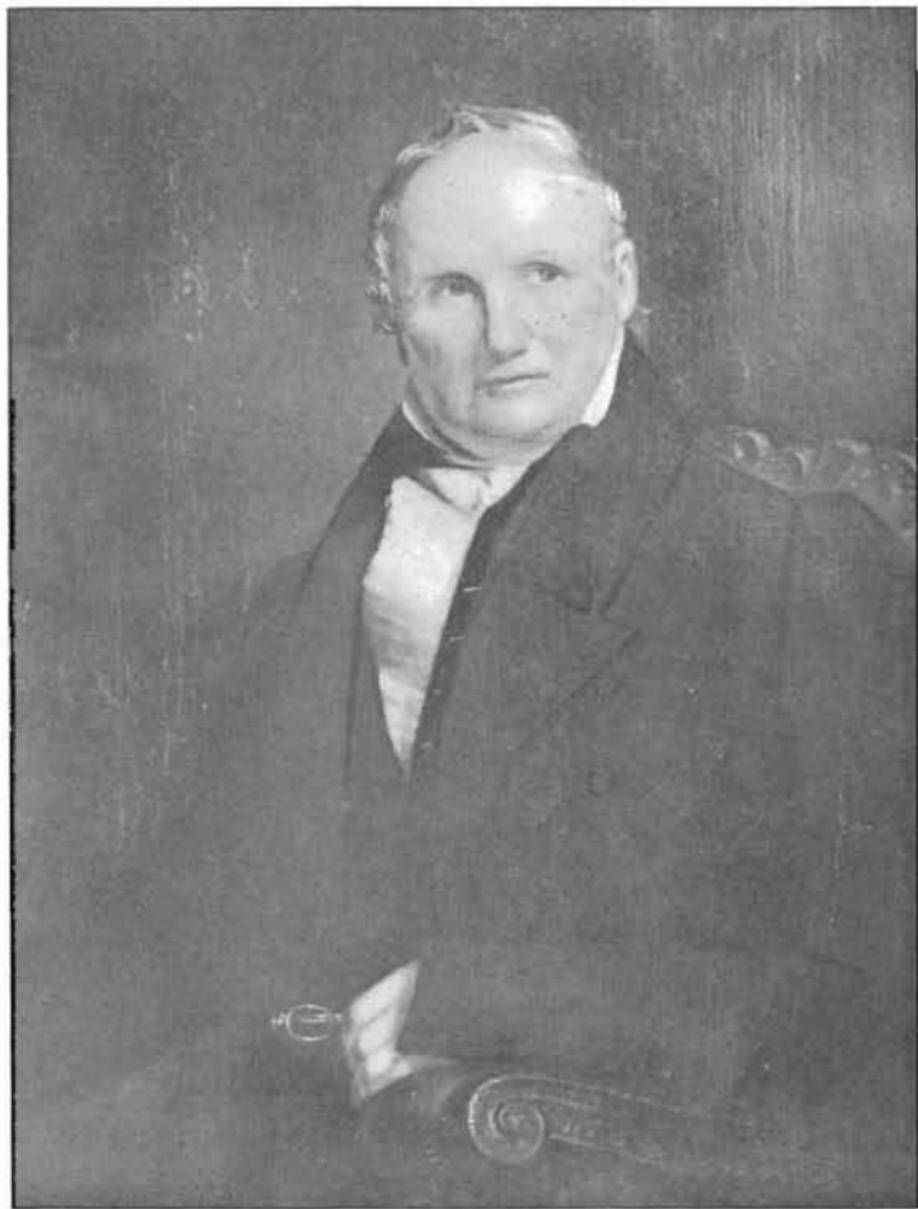
In October, 1831, there was a muster of the independent companies of the Sixth, Twelfth and Twentieth regiments on Nine Lot Plain, now the Keene driving park. There were two companies of cavalry, the Ashuelot Cavalry

<sup>1</sup> Westmoreland had 1,647; Swanzey, 1,816; Walpole, 1,979; Chesterfield, 2,046; Winchester, 2,052. Cheshire county had 27,016, gain, 173; New Hampshire, 269,533; gain, 25,372; the United States, 12,793,649, gain, 3,155,450.

<sup>2</sup> His second term as captain.

<sup>3</sup> Now known as the Laton Martin house, No. 95.

<sup>4</sup> Where the brick house now stands.



SAMUEL DINSMOOR, SR.

of Keene, and one from the Twelfth regiment; three of artillery; two of grenadiers; four of light infantry; and four of riflemen. The Keene Light Infantry was commanded by Capt. James Wilson, Jr. They were reviewed by Gov. Dinsmoor; and Col. Franklin Pierce, a member of his staff, afterwards president of the United States, delivered an address. The day was fine and the military display was exceedingly brilliant.

Among the deaths that year were those of Capt. Asa Ware, aged eighty; Oliver Whitcomb, aged eighty-two; and Abijah Houghton, a Revolutionary pensioner, aged eighty-four.

The centennial anniversary of the birth of Washington was celebrated in Keene with elaborate demonstrations in 1832. A meeting of the citizens at the town hall in January chose a general committee of two from each town in the county, among them Hon. Salma Hale and Henry Coolidge, of Keene, Larkin G. Méad, of Chesterfield, Levi Chamberlain, of Fitzwilliam, Gen. Samuel Griffin, of Roxbury, Henry Melville, of Nelson, and A. H. Bennett, of Winchester. Gen. Justus Perry, Zebadiah Kise, Timothy Hall, Josiah Colony, John Wood, James Wilson, Jr., John H. Fuller, Abijah Wilder, Jr., and Thomas Thompson were the local executive committee. The principal ceremonies were at the meetinghouse, where Hon. James Wilson, senior, presided, with Hon. Nahum Parker, of Fitzwilliam, Hon. Phineas Handerson, of Chesterfield, and Hon. John Wood, of Keene, vice presidents. Hon. Salma Hale delivered an oration, and Rev. Z. S. Barstow served as chaplain. The music rendered by the choir under Mr. Eliphalet Briggs was described as "truly excellent." About eighty gentlemen sat down to dinner at Hatch's tavern, at the close of which thirteen regular toasts were drunk, with eloquent speeches in response. His excellency, Gov. Dinsmoor, was an invited guest. In the evening a ball was given at Hatch's, and the village was illuminated.

Some of the parents complained that their children received too much religious instruction in the schools, some of it, as they alleged, of a sectarian character; that the teachers and others distributed religious tracts among the

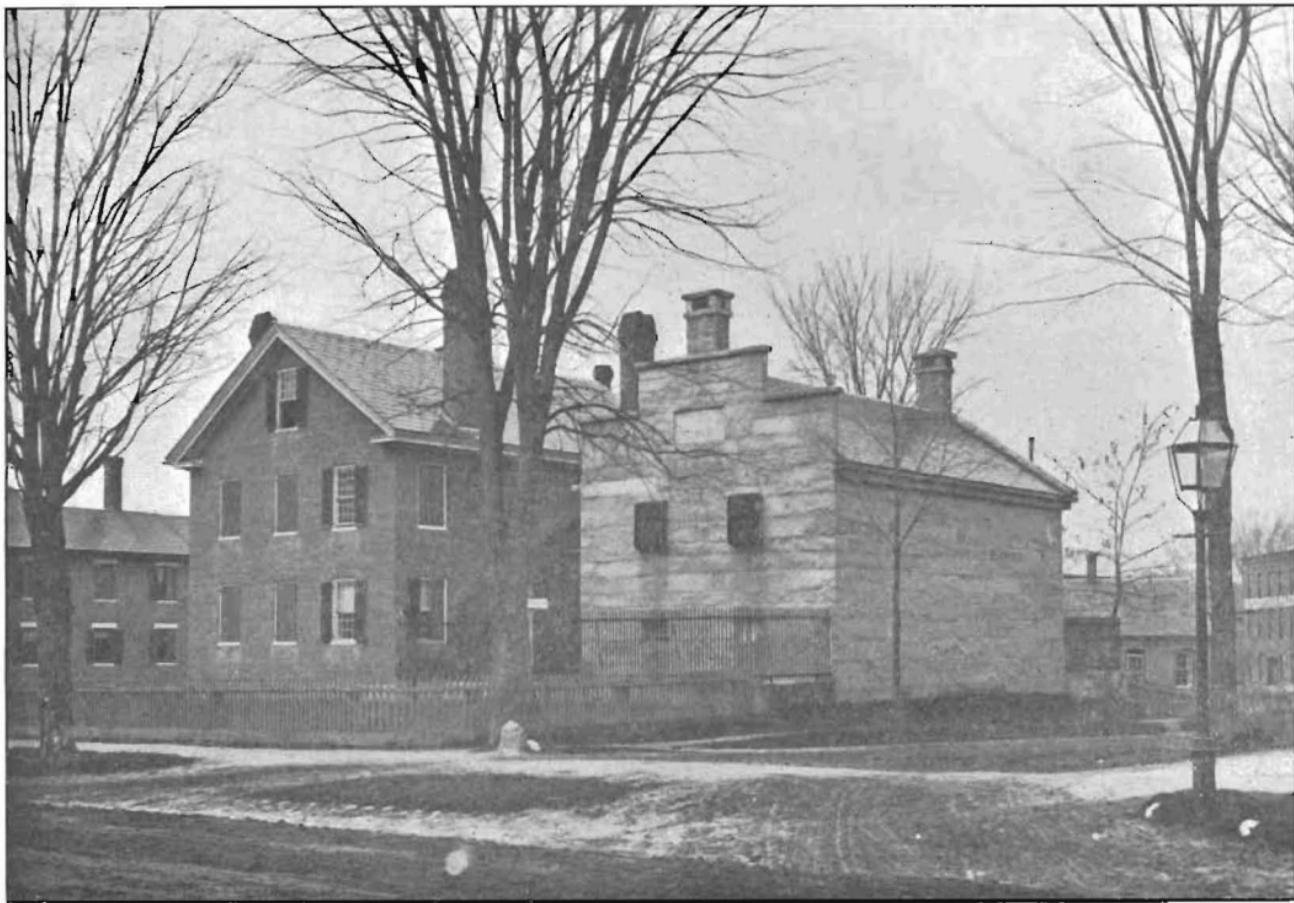
pupils and spent too much time in devotions and exhortations during school hours; and at the annual meeting this year the town voted its disapproval of those practices and directed that the teachers confine themselves to reading the Scriptures as prescribed by the committee, with one short prayer each day and instruction in those "moral virtues which are the ornaments of human society." The vote was recorded in full. The number of scholars in the public schools of Keene at this time was 768.

Gov. Dinsmoor was reëlected in 1832, receiving 138 votes in Keene, the total cast being 292; while at the national election in November following, 344 Whig votes were cast, to 131 Democratic. He was also reëlected the year following, without opposition.

In September the venerable Noah Webster, LL. D., spent a Sunday in Keene, and on Monday evening he gave an entertaining lecture at the town hall, telling his experience and giving an account of the opposition he encountered in his efforts to fix a uniform standard of pronunciation. The large octavo edition of his dictionary was then fast coming into use, and twelve million copies of his American Spelling Book had already been sold.

The Ashuelot bank was organized in 1833, with Samuel Dinsmoor, Phineas Handerson, John H. Fuller, Samuel Wood, Jr., Geo. S. Root, William Buffum, and Thomas M. Edwards, directors; Samuel Dinsmoor, president, and Samuel Dinsmoor, Jr., cashier. Its brick banking house was soon afterwards built on the west side of the Square, and there the bank still remains. Upon the death of his father, in 1835, S. Dinsmoor, Jr., was chosen president and Henry Seymour, from Brattleboro, cashier.

The Cheshire Provident Institution for Savings was also organized this year under an act of the legislature passed at the preceding session. The first meeting of the incorporators was held on the 13th of August, at the Phoenix Hotel. Dr. Amos Twitchell was chosen president, Gen. Justus Perry and Abijah Wilder, Jr., vice presidents, and George Tilden, secretary and treasurer. Deposits were received, beginning Sept. 10, "every Tuesday from 2 until 5 p. m." The incorporators were leading men of Keene



OLD JAIL—1833-1884.

Old Jail - 1833-1884.

and other towns in the county. The bank was in George Tilden's bookstore in the basement of the building south of A. & T. Hall's store, where the Cheshire bank now stands.

The old wooden jail, on the south corner of Mechanic and Washington streets had become unfit for use, three prisoners having escaped from it in 1830, and a new one was built in 1833, 24x36 feet, two stories high, all of Roxbury granite and iron except the rafters and planks for the slate roof—"one of the strongest and most thoroughly built prisons in the Union." "A handsome brick house" was built in connection with it for the use of the jailor, now the residence of Mr. Ferdinand Petts. The stone residence opposite, on the site of Oliver Heaton's blacksmith shop, was built the same year, of Marlboro granite, by Aaron Parker of Marlboro; and the brick house next south of it, by Abel Wilder.

The screw gimlet, which still stands at the head of all manufactures of the kind, had been invented just previous to this time by Gideon Newcomb of Roxbury, N. H., and had been made by him at his house, and by Everett Newcomb and George Page, at Page's mill, on the North branch in Keene. These gimlets were now manufactured by Everett Newcomb and Azel Wilder at the shop of the latter near Faulkner & Colony's mills. That firm made improvements on the first invention and also made bits and augers of the same kind. Later, the business went to Chesterfield and to other places, and large fortunes have been made in the manufacture and sale of those tools.

While the legislature was in session in June, President Jackson, accompanied by Vice President Van Buren and Secretaries Marcy, Woodbury and Cass,<sup>1</sup> visited the state. Eight companies of militia were ordered to Concord for escort duty, among them the Keene Light Infantry, Col. James Wilson, then its captain, commanding. The company left Keene Monday<sup>2</sup> morning, June 24, 1833, with full ranks—128 muskets, four officers and twelve musicians—

<sup>1</sup> Wm. L. Marcy was secretary of state, Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, secretary of the treasury, and Lewis Cass, a native of New Hampshire, secretary of war.

<sup>2</sup> As the time of the president's arrival was uncertain, it had been arranged that the members should be notified by the sound of their one piece of artillery. That was fired on Sunday evening.

all in full, new uniforms of blue, faced with red, with helmets and black plumes. The rear guard was composed of eight ex-captains averaging upwards of six feet in height. Teams were provided for all.<sup>1</sup> The route was through Dublin, Hancock, Hillsboro Bridge, Henniker and Hopkinton. Upon approaching a village the company would leave the carriages, form and march through, the teams bringing up the rear. They encamped the first night at Hancock. The next day it rained and they remained in camp. Wednesday evening they reached Concord and encamped in the fields west of the town, now covered with residences, near the site of the present insane asylum.

The president reached Concord on Friday, at 3 p. m. At the town line he was met by the committee of the legislature with the eight companies of militia—the Keene company,<sup>2</sup> by far the finest of all, on the right—a large cavalcade of citizens, and civic processions, and escorted to the Eagle Coffee House, where he was received by Gov. Dinsmoor, and the officers of the state and the members of the legislature were introduced. On Saturday the president reviewed the troops and spoke in the highest terms of their appearance, saying that the Keene Light Infantry was the finest and best disciplined company of soldiers that he had ever seen; and Secretary Cass was equally pronounced in his encomiums. The same afternoon the company started on its return, encamped that night at Henniker, reached its armory at sunset on Sunday, fired its evening gun and dispersed.

Among the notable deaths in 1833 were those of Thomas Wells, one of the early settlers, who aided Mr. Hale in his preparation of the *Annals of Keene*, aged eighty-seven; Aaron Davis, senior, a Revolutionary pensioner, aged seventy-seven; Isaac Billings, aged fifty-three; John Clark, aged fifty-five; and James, a young son of Capt. Nathan Bassett, drowned in the Ashuelot river.

In January, 1834, the Cheshire County Mutual Fire

<sup>1</sup>In most cases, six men in each, with a driver. A six-horse team carried the tents and camp equipage, including four barrels of liquor—one of each of four kinds. These particulars were furnished by Samuel P. Ellis, a member who was with the company on this expedition.

<sup>2</sup>\* \* \* "probably the best disciplined, most effective, largest and most attractive military company ever seen in New Hampshire." (McClintock's *History of New Hampshire*, page 565.)

Insurance Co. was organized, with Thomas Bellows, president, succeeded by Phineas Handerson, John H. Elliot, Silas Hardy and others at different times. It did a successful business for more than sixty years.

At the annual town meeting, the selectmen were instructed, acting in concert with the town agent, Thomas M. Edwards, and a committee of twenty chosen by the town, to enforce the laws in regard to licensed houses, several parties in town having been in the habit of selling intoxicating liquors without license.

In August, John Sears, a Keene boy who had been attracted to the business by the exhibition here in 1823, brought a fine menagerie to town and exhibited on the ground in rear of Mr. Lamson's store, on Roxbury street, which was then an open lot.

The first "Franklin fire-frames," invented by Benjamin Franklin, designed to bring the fire on the hearth further to the front and thus, with its own warmth, throw more of the heat into the room, were brought to town and sold by Adams & Holman.

Among those who died, 1834, were Abiathar Pond, aged eighty-nine; Jonathan Stearns, sixty-three; Mrs. Mary Boyd Reed, wife of Gov. Dinsmoor, sixty-four; Cornelius Howlett, seventy-two; John V. Wood, thirty-eight; Samuel Bassett, a Revolutionary pensioner, fifer of the company that marched from here April 21, 1775, aged eighty; Mrs. Miriam, widow of Charles Rice of the same company, aged ninety; Dea. Thomas Fisher, seventy-six; Mrs. Tamar, wife of Dea. Abijah Wilder, eighty-five; and Major John P. Blake, a Revolutionary pensioner, seventy-seven.

The 15th of January, 1835, was a remarkably cold day, the mercury here reaching thirty-four degrees below zero; at Dublin, twelve below. On the 16th it was nine degrees below here, while at Dublin it was twenty-three degrees above zero—showing the difference in temperature on the hills and in the valleys on still, cold mornings.

In January, Salma Hale and Elijah Parker formed a law partnership, Mr. Parker remaining in his office over A. & T. Hall, and Mr. Hale in his, over Lamson's store.

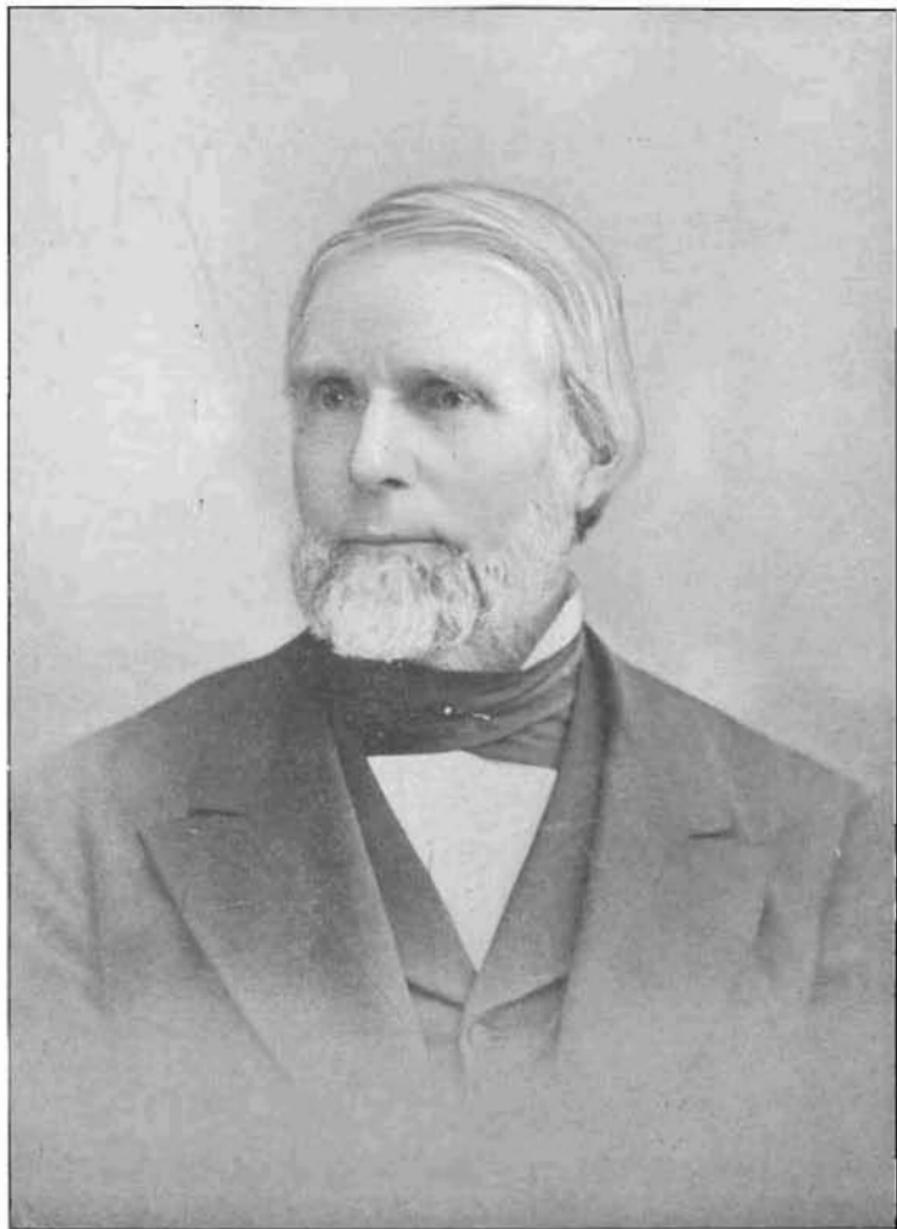
The Keene Railroad Co. was chartered in July, 1835,

and Aaron Appleton and Salma Hale were authorized to call the first meeting, at the Phoenix Hotel. The project was to run from Lowell and Nashua through Keene, Brattleboro and Bennington, to Troy, N. Y. A committee consisting of Salma Hale, Thomas M. Edwards and Justus Perry of Keene, and three from Brattleboro was appointed to push the enterprise. Col. Loammi Baldwin, engineer of the Middlesex canal, was appointed engineer, and various routes were examined, one through Marlboro, Dublin and Peterboro. Books were opened and more than a thousand shares were promptly taken. Salma Hale, Samuel Dinsmoor, Justus Perry, Phineas Handerson and John H. Fuller, were chosen commissioners of the road, and Justus Perry, Salma Hale, Thomas M. Edwards, John H. Fuller, John Elliot, Azel Wilder and Thomas Thompson, directors. But all the routes were found to be impracticable or too expensive, and the scheme was abandoned.

In July the canal, locks, water privilege and mills at Bellows Falls were purchased by a Boston company for manufacturing purposes—the navigation of the upper Connecticut having been abandoned.

This year, 1835, the Twentieth regiment mustered in Keene and was reviewed by Gen. James Wilson, who had been promoted to the command of the Fifth brigade. His brother Robert, who had succeeded to the command of the Keene Light Infantry, was appointed lieutenant colonel and inspector on his staff, and Capt. Sumner Carpenter commanded the Keene Light Infantry.

George Tilden had carried on his bookbinding business in the basement of the building south of A. & T. Hall until this year, when Samuel A. Gerould built in the space between his store and Mr. Prentiss' block, and Mr. Tilden took that store and the rooms over it—taking with him the Cheshire Provident Institution—and they are still occupied (1902) by his son, (Geo. H. Tilden & Co.) The same year the Wilders made an addition to their block, on the west—now occupied by the Citizens bank—and Edward Poole took it for his jewelry store. He was the first to advertise and sell "Loco Foco (friction) matches for families."



ABIEL A. LIVERMORE.

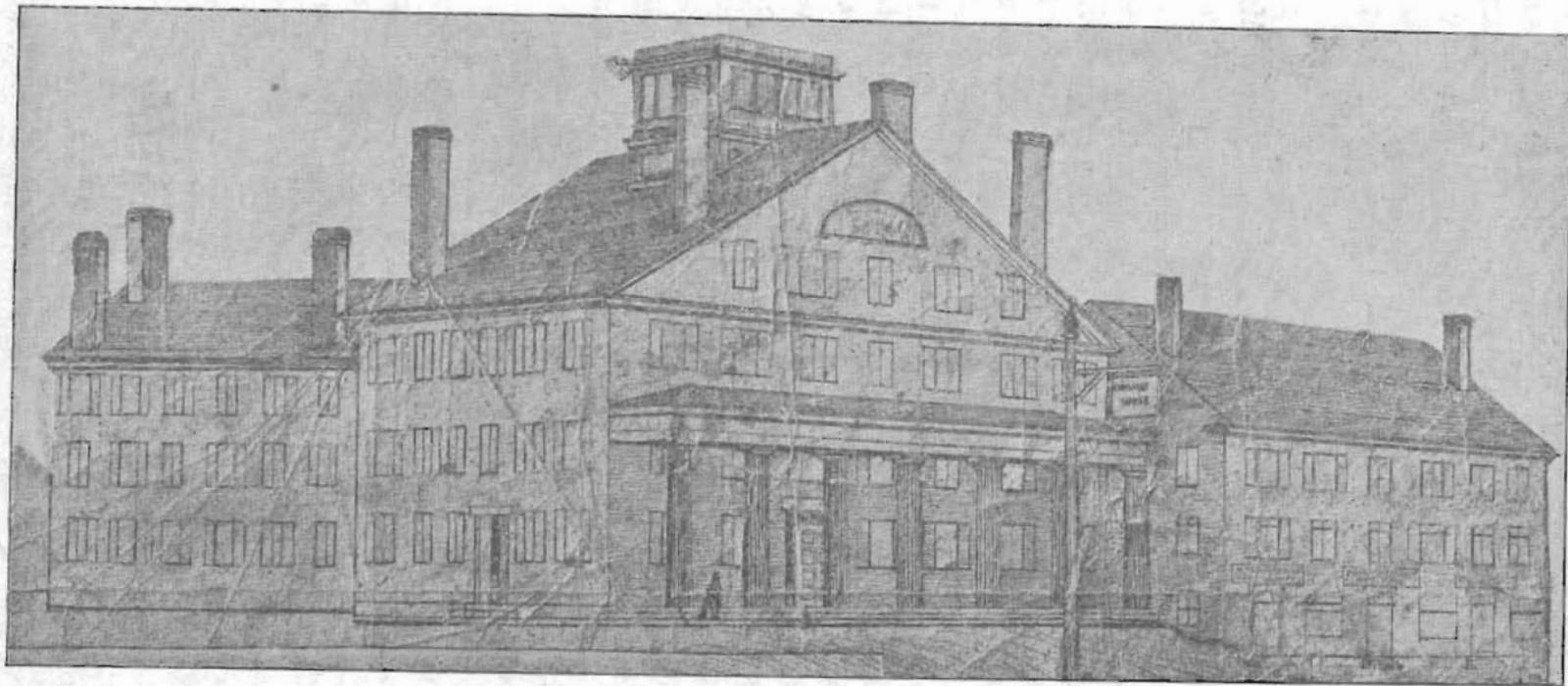
The notable deaths in 1835 were those of Dea. Abijah Wilder, a resident of Keene for about sixty-six years, aged eighty-three; Dea. Elijah Carter, aged sixty-eight; Hon. Samuel Dinsmoor, aged sixty-nine; Capt. Isaac Wyman, a Revolutionary soldier, son of Col. Isaac Wyman, aged seventy-nine; Eli Metcalf, aged eighty-five; and James Banks, aged eighty-three.

On the 6th of April, 1836, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon, a fire broke out in the attic of the Phoenix Hotel and that building was burned to the ground. Only the brick walls were left standing. It was kept by E. W. Boyden, who was well insured, and much of his furniture was saved. It was said at the time that the building was lost in consequence of the lack of a proper supply of hose by the town. All through the summer the blackened, unsightly ruins lay undisturbed, but about the 1st of September, John Wood and William Lamson called a meeting of those in favor of rebuilding, a fund was raised, a company organized, preparations made during the winter, and the present Cheshire House was built the following summer. It was afterwards extended twenty feet farther south, filling the space to the next building, and giving a front of seventy-five feet on Main street.

In August, the stables and outbuildings in rear of the Eagle Hotel, with those of Sumner Wheeler, next south of them, were all burned. The women aided as usual in forming lines for passing buckets, and the main buildings were saved.

In November, 1836, Rev. T. R. Sullivan having resigned, after a pastorate of nine years, Rev. Abiel A. Livermore was ordained over the Keene Congregational Society.

Among the deaths in 1836 were those of Joseph Brown, for a long term of years one of the most active business men in town, aged seventy-two, and on the same evening his wife Keziah (Day) aged seventy-two; Nathan Wheeler, who came from Troy, N. H., a Revolutionary pensioner, aged seventy-nine; Mrs. Eliza, widow of Noah Cooke, aged seventy-four; Timothy Colony, aged seventy-two; Everett Newcomb, aged fifty; Mrs. Elizabeth Page, aged ninety-two; and Mrs. Dorothy, widow of Thomas Wells, aged eighty-seven.



CHESHIRE HOUSE—FROM AN OLD PEN DRAWING.

Cheshire House - from an old pen drawing.

On the evening of the 25th of January, 1837, occurred one of the most marvelous displays of the aurora borealis ever recorded. Scarlet, crimson and all shades of color, in brilliant rays and fantastic shapes, constantly changing, spread over the whole heavens from Nova Scotia to Kentucky and from Montreal to the Bermudas. "The beauty and sublimity of the whole were beyond description."

In the spring of 1837, the "Academy in Keene" was opened to the public by a prudential committee of the First Congregational Society, consisting of Eliphalet Briggs, Wm. Lamson and S. A. Gerould, under the direction of Breed Batcheller,<sup>1</sup> a graduate of Dartmouth college, who had been successful as preceptor of an academy at Boscawen, N. H. A brick building of suitable size, two stories high, with a basement,<sup>2</sup> had been erected during the preceding summer on land of A. & A. Wilder<sup>3</sup>—110 square rods, which they gave for that purpose—with funds raised by subscription, chiefly through the efforts of Rev. Z. S. Barstow and Mr. William Lamson. It stood on the lot now occupied by the High School building, which was deeded to fifteen trustees—Joel Parker, Amos Twitchell, Z. S. Barstow, A. A. Livermore, James Wilson, Aaron Hall, Azel Wilder, William Lamson, Elijah Parker, and Eliphalet Briggs, all of Keene, and John Sabin, of Fitzwilliam, Elisha Rockwood, of Swanzey, Alanson Rawson, of Roxbury, Larkin Baker, of Westmoreland, and Pliny Jewell, of Winchester—five of them ministers<sup>4</sup>—the board to be self-perpetuating.

Mr. Batcheller was popular and successful, remained two years, had about 200 pupils, and employed Miss Sarah M. Leverett and Miss Mary M. Parker as assistants. The name was changed to "Keene Academy," and instruction

<sup>1</sup>Grandson of the noted loyalist of that name of Packersfield.

<sup>2</sup>The basement was used for a chapel by the First church, the attic for singing schools, and later for the Natural History Society's room.

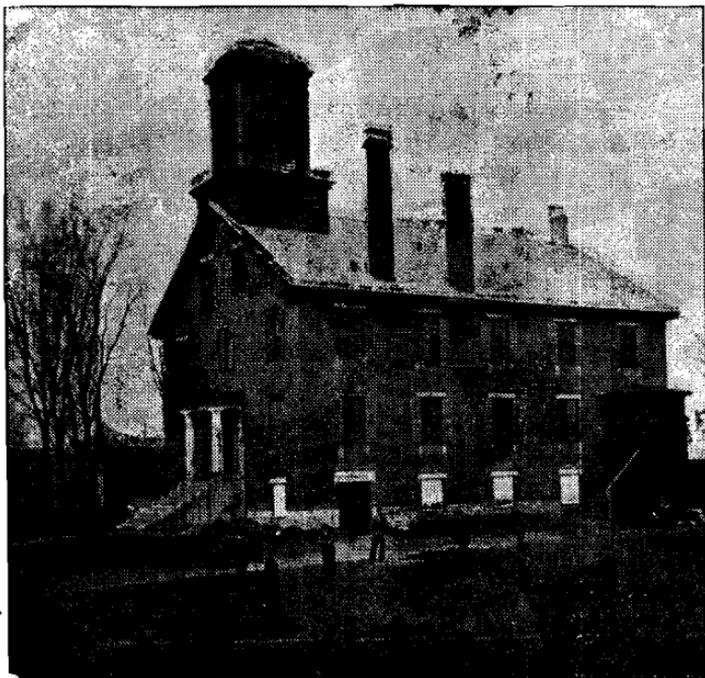
<sup>3</sup>The deed was made by Abijah Wilder, through an exchange of properties, but it was understood that both brothers were parties to the gift.

<sup>4</sup>It was essentially a Congregational institution. The deed of the land was given "in consideration of the promises and of the sum of one dollar," and one of the promises was that "the said trustees shall not elect or employ any person as Principal of said Academy who is not a professor of religion in an Orthodox Congregational or Presbyterian church, and who does not hold in substance the faith now held and maintained by the First Congregational Society in Keene." And the subscriptions came chiefly from members of the Congregational church.



KEENE ACADEMY.

was given in vocal music and on the piano and organ,<sup>1</sup> in addition to the branches usually taught in academies. In the spring of 1839, Mr. Batcheller married his assistant, Miss Leverett, and gave up his position. He was succeeded by Mr. Noah Bishop, and he by Abraham Jenkins; and from 1841 to 1844, Mr. A. E. P. Perkins was principal, succeeded by Mr. Seneca Cummings—all graduates of colleges. Mr. Cummings resigned in 1845 and was followed,



KEENE ACADEMY.

for one term, by his assistant, Miss L. K. Kimball, and afterwards by a Mr. Clark, for two years, and Blodgett and Woodworth, for one year each.

In 1850, Mr. William Torrance, of Enfield, Mass., a graduate of Amherst college, who had been an instructor at Ann Arbor, a man of lovely character and an excellent

<sup>1</sup>The apparatus was meagre, but was soon increased by subscriptions to the value of \$160. Abijah Wilder built the brick house, corner Court and Summer streets, for a boarding house for the academy. Mr. Timothy Hall gave a bell for the building which is still in use on the high school house, and Mr. Eliphalet Briggs gave a set of globes which cost \$100.

teacher became the principal. But the academy was not a success financially; it had no fund, and the trustees found difficulty in keeping it up to a proper standard.

In 1853, chiefly through the exertions of Mr. Torrance, the building was leased to the "Associated Districts"—composed of those covering the village—for the term of ten years, for a high school, of which Mr. Torrance became the first principal. The lease was afterwards renewed for a shorter term.<sup>1</sup>

Miss Catherine Fiske died in May, 1837, and the Young Ladies' Seminary was continued for several years by Miss E. P. Withington, with assistants.

The railroad from Boston to Lowell having been opened for traffic, stages ran from Keene to connect with the trains at Lowell, one line leaving the Emerald House Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 5 a. m., reaching Lowell, via Peterboro, at 3 p. m., and Boston by cars, at 4.30; another line leaving the same house on alternate days, at 8 a. m., reached Lowell at 6 p. m., and Boston the next morning, at 10.30. Returning, cars left Boston at 7 a. m. At Lowell a steamer took passengers to Nashua, where stages for Keene and beyond awaited them. But this arrangement lasted only a short time, as the railroad was completed to Nashua in September, 1838.

Two other lines still ran to Boston direct, and continued a year or two later; one from the Eagle Hotel, daily, except Sundays, through Troy, Fitzwilliam, Winchendon, Fitchburg, Lancaster and Waltham; the other from the new Cheshire House—through Fitzwilliam, Rindge, Ashby and Groton. Fare by each, \$2.50.

The first great financial crisis of the century came upon the country in 1837. The suspension of specie payments by the banks in the large cities created alarm throughout the country. A meeting of the citizens of Keene was held in the town hall, Gen. Justus Perry, chairman, to consider the situation, and to aid in restoring confidence. A committee consisting of Joel Parker, James Wilson, Jr., Levi Chamberlain, William S. Brooks, John Towns,

<sup>1</sup> From the rent, the sale of the apparatus to the high school, and other sources, the trustees had on deposit, Jan. 1, 1860, a fund of \$750, which, with the proceeds of the final sale of the property some years later, and interest, has increased to a large sum, now in the hands of fifteen trustees.

Samuel Wood, Jr., Abijah Wilder, Wm. Lamson and Caleb Carpenter presented resolutions which were adopted, stating that it was expedient for the two banks here to pursue the same course as the larger banks and suspend specie payments, and that "such a measure should in nowise impair the confidence which the community has heretofore placed in the management of the Banks in this town." The banks suspended, causing less financial disturbance than was anticipated. Merchants advertised that "New England Bank bills will be taken for goods, notes, or accounts if presented soon."

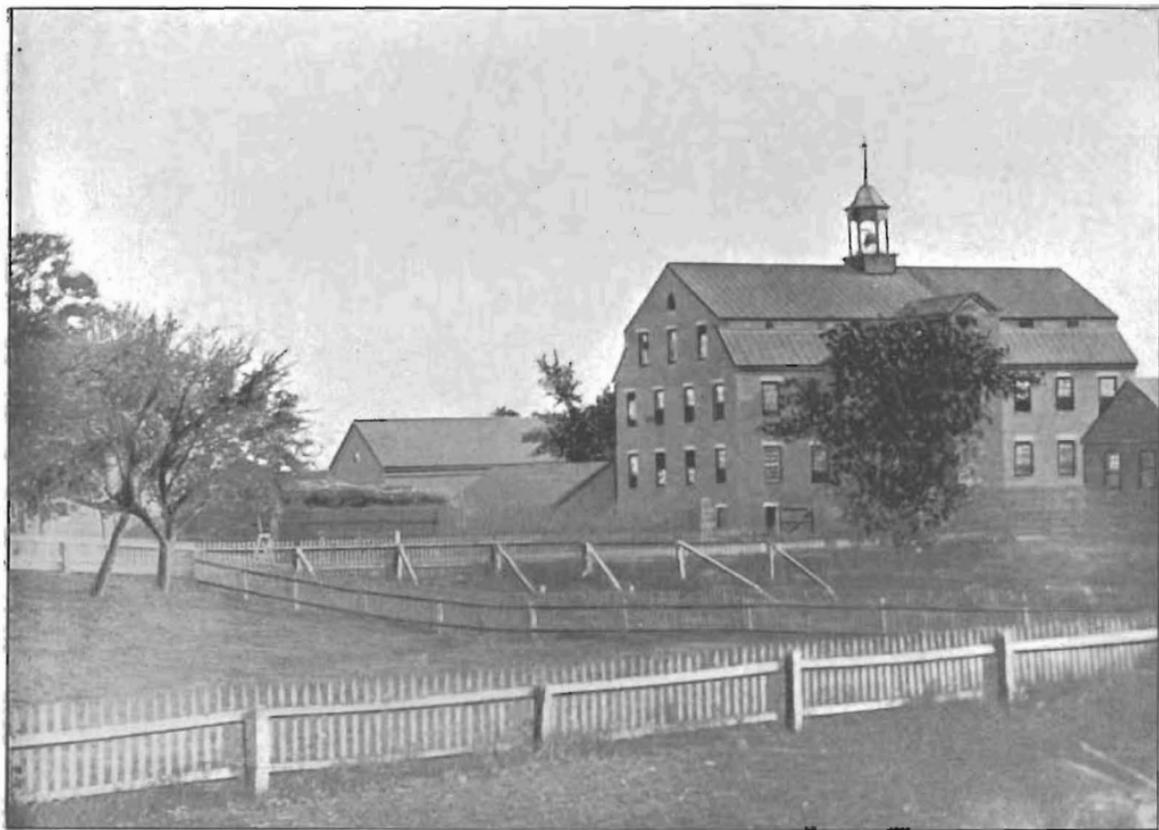
In the list of deaths in 1837 are found the names of Mrs. Artemisia, widow of Abijah Foster, aged seventy-one; Miss Hannah Lanman (sister of James Lanman), eighty; Dr. Thomas Edwards, eighty; John Hatch, formerly landlord of Phoenix Hotel, fifty-one; James Wilson, 2d, sixty-three; Miss Catherine Fiske, fifty-three, and Mrs. Azubah Morse, her mother, seventy-five; Phineas Pond, seventy; Daniel Watson, seventy-six; Eli Blake, sixty-nine; Rev. Silas Wilder, seventy-three; Solomon Woods, sixty-five.

Washington's birthday was celebrated in 1838, chiefly by the Whigs, with a view to carrying the state for their party and electing Gen. Wilson governor. A large convention was held in the meetinghouse, opened with prayer by Rev. Mr. Barstow, and presided over by Hon. Salma Hale, with several vice presidents, some from surrounding towns. Music was furnished by the choir, Hon. Phineas Handerson delivered an oration, and short speeches were made by others. At the annual meeting, the town cast 400 votes for Gen. Wilson for governor, to 152 for Isaac Hill. Hill was elected. The selectmen this year appointed Rev. Z. S. Barstow, Rev. A. A. Livermore and John Henry Elliot superintending school committee, and the same were continued the following year.

The wonderful Siamese twins visited Keene for one day, May 21, and exhibited at the Eagle Hotel.

A local census of Keene was taken in 1838 by Daniel Watson, who reported:

Males under 14.....	409
Males over 14.....	802



FAULKNER & COLONY WOOLEN MILLS. BUILT IN 1838-9.

Faulkner & Colony woolen mills. Built in 1838-9.

Females under 14.....	435
Females over 14.....	927
	<hr/>
Total.....	2,573
Total in 1830.....	2,374
	<hr/>
Increase in 8 years.....	199
Acres of wheat in cultivation.....	106
Acres of rye in cultivation.....	368
Acres of corn in cultivation.....	375
Acres of other grain in cultivation.....	427
Acres of root crops in cultivation.....	341
	<hr/>
Total (besides grass).....	1,617
Maple sugar made in 1838.....	19,550 lbs.

In August, 1838, Faulkner & Colony's brick factory, built in 1825, with dye-house and other buildings connected, was destroyed by fire. The main building was 73x36 feet, two stories high, and contained the gristmill, with three sets of stones, corn-cracker and smut-mill. The sawmill occupied the west end and the clothing works the east, with a low building running sixty to eighty feet to the south. "The valuable brick house on the east was saved." Loss \$12,500—insured for \$7,500. The firm immediately rebuilt on a larger scale—a brick mill for making flannels, heated by steam, and separately, to the west of it, their saw and grist mills. In 1859, the brick factory was enlarged, and again in 1900.

The Twentieth regiment, now commanded by Col. Robert Wilson, was inspected, in October, by Col. Edmund Burkè of Newport, brigade inspector. The Westmoreland Light Infantry, Capt. Levi Barker, 100 men, and the Keene Light Infantry, Capt. Walter Taylor, Jr., seventy-six men, both in attractive uniforms, completely equipped for service, were pronounced the finest companies in the brigade.

The Keene Thief Detecting Society, in its day an important institution, was organized in 1838. At its next annual meeting John H. Fuller was elected president; Geo. W. Sturtevant, secretary; Abel Blake, treasurer; Thomas M. Edwards, attorney; and Gen. Wilson, Josiah Colony, Oliver Wilson, Wm. Dinsmoor, Oliver Holman, Robert

Shelly, John B. Dousman and B. F. Adams standing committee; and the "pursuers" were the leading men in town.

The notable deaths in 1838 were those of Jonathan Rand, aged seventy-seven; Daniel Bradford, sixty-seven; Thomas Dwinnell, eighty-five; Dea. Henry Ellis, a Revolutionary soldier, ninety-two; Capt. Joshua Ellis, fifty-three; Solomon Woodward, seventy; and Mrs. Mary (Ralston), wife of Elijah Dunbar, seventy.

The subject of having a hospital for the insane in the state had been agitated for several years, and Governor Dinsmoor had been the first executive to recommend to the legislature its establishment as a state institution. A large meeting had been held in Keene in March, 1836, the call for which was signed by the leading men of the county, at which it was "Resolved that it is expedient and desirable to establish an Insane Hospital in this state." Similar meetings were held in Portsmouth and other large towns. The question was submitted to the people, and on the 7th of November of that year, the town, after an eloquent address by Gen. Wilson, voted unanimously in favor of state appropriations for that purpose.

One of the political questions of that time was that of the disposition to be made of the surplus revenue that had accumulated in the national treasury. It was finally divided among the states; but even then there were different opinions as to what the respective states could do with it, and for what purpose it could properly be used. In February, 1837, Keene had voted to accept its proportion of the \$892,115.17, which had been paid over to New Hampshire, amounting to \$2,607.20, and chose Phineas Handerson commissioner to receive the money and loan it out on good security in sums of \$100 to \$500—preferably to individuals in town. On the 30th of March, this year, the town "Voted to give the interest which may accrue from the Public money deposited with this town for the term of ten years to the New Hampshire Asylum for the Insane on condition said Asylum is Located in this town." The asylum was established by the legislature and Dr. Amos Twitchell was made its first president and one of the locating committee, but the place selected for it was

the capital of the state. The next year the town voted to use the interest of the surplus revenue fund for paying poll taxes and ordinary town expenses, and afterwards it went into the town treasury, to be used for town expenses.

By act of the legislature approved July 2, 1841, towns were permitted to dispose of the surplus fund as they saw fit. Acting under this authority, the annual town meeting of 1842 voted to distribute the surplus held by the town of Keene among the taxpayers and those exempt from taxes by reason of being seventy years of age (provided they were American citizens). The taxes were first to be deducted and the surplus was to be paid in money.

At the annual meeting, upon the question of the erection of a fireproof building by the county for keeping its records, the town voted unanimously in favor, and such a building was ordered by the county convention at the session of the legislature in June; and it was built this year, of granite, 28x32 feet, on the site of the present courthouse. Henry Coolidge, of Keene, and Jonathan K. Smith, of Dublin, were the sub-committee to superintend the work. The Baptist society from West Keene built a brick church on Winter street this year, (now a part of the armory). Rev. John Peacock was the pastor, succeeded by Rev. Mark Carpenter, and he by Rev. Gilbert Robbins, who remained eleven years.

At this period the Ashuelot Manufacturing Co., consisting of Wm. Lamson, John H. Fuller, B. F. Adams, Phineas Fiske, John Wood, Thomas M. Edwards, Wm. Dinsmoor, Oliver Holman and some others, was in active operation. In 1835-6, the Winchester factory and other water-power properties in the village of West Winchester were purchased by those gentlemen and for several years they carried on the business of manufacturing fine cassimeres, under the general management of Benj. F. Adams. In 1853, they sold the factory and mill property to Joshua Ward, of Winchester.

The Twentieth regiment, Col. Levi Barker, of Westmoreland, mustered in Keene in 1839, and was reviewed by Gen. Wilson. The two light infantry companies were rivals as usual. The Westmoreland company had ten or

twelve more in number than the Keene company, but each had upwards of 100 men. A few days previous to the muster, the Keene company, Capt. Geo. G. Dort, had been presented by the citizens with "an elegant standard."

Among the deaths in 1839 were those of Hon. James Wilson, Sen., aged seventy-three; Quincy Wheeler, of the firm of S. & Q. Wheeler, thirty; John Emerson, a Revolutionary pensioner, seventy-five; Capt. Abel Blake, eighty; Mr. Luther Smith, the clockmaker, seventy-three.

The period of fifteen years ending with 1840 had brought great improvement to the village of Keene, and a marked increase in the wealth and population of the town. Central Square had been enlarged to its present dimensions, three-storied brick buildings had arisen on its north, east, and west sides, and most of the old plank sidewalks had been replaced with brick. The Cheshire House, the Unitarian church, the academy, and the Baptist church on Winter street, now a part of the armory, all brick buildings, had been erected near the Square; the Emerald House and Gen. Wilson's residence on Main street, and many tasteful dwellings on that and other streets. The Eagle Hotel had been greatly improved and enlarged by the addition of another story, and the annexation of the store on the south by building up the space between. The roads had been improved, and the stone bridges at the lower end of Main street and on the Walpole and Surry road had replaced wooden ones. At the close of this period both glass factories were still in operation, and there was a third one for a short time on Gilsum street. There was active manufacturing at South Keene, where Aaron Davis had established an iron foundry, and added the manufacture of firearms to his other works, in which Thomas M. Edwards, and later William Lamson, Jr., were interested. Faulkner & Colony were making fine flannels, and the mills in the various parts of the town were turning out large quantities of lumber and grinding thousands of bushels of home-raised grain. Alvah Walker had taken the Cheshire House and brought it up to the standard of his noted predecessor in the Phoenix, John Hatch; Asaph Harrington had succeeded his father, Col. Stephen, in the Eagle Hotel,

and like him, made it one of the most attractive inns in the country; and the Emerald House, under Edward Whitney, the Sun tavern, under Abijah Metcalf, and Sawyer's in the west part, were all excellent public houses. But with the advance of railroads the country taverns along the great thoroughfares gradually disappeared. The stores of A. & T. Hall; Adams, Holman & Dutton, with John Bixby's drug store in the corner room; William Lamson & Co.; Sumner Wheeler; J. & R. Shelly; Dinsmoor & White; S. A. Gerould; Keyes & Colony; Wales Kimball; B. G. Samson; Nathaniel Evans; the two Haskells; and James H. Freeman, in the store north of the Emerald House, besides many smaller shops for manufacture and sales, were carrying on a large amount of business. And yet, with all its thrift, which, continued to the present time, has made it one of the richest towns in the country in proportion to its number of inhabitants, it was a quiet country village, with an air of restfulness, content and refinement that was exceedingly attractive. A traveller, in a letter published in the *Claremont Eagle*, about this time, said: "Keene is one of the most delightful villages in New England. \* \* \* There is hardly another place in the Union (of its size, of course) that possesses more talent and sterling intellect than Keene." Francis Parkman, in his "Half Century of Conflict," vol. 1, page 230, says of Keene about this period: "A town noted in rural New England for its kindly hospitality, culture without pretence, and good breeding without conventionality." Rev. A. A. Livermore, years afterwards, "looked back upon it with fondness and called it 'The Happy Valley.'"

The census of 1840 gave the population of Keene:

Males.....	1,236
Females.....	1,366
Colored, males 3, females 5.....	8

Total.....	2,610
Number in 1830.....	2,374

Increase in 10 years.....	236 <sup>1</sup>
In 20 years.....	713

<sup>1</sup> Winchester had 2,065, a gain of 13; Walpole had 2,015, a gain of 96; Chesterfield had 1,767, a loss of 279; Swanzey had 1,751, a loss of 65; Westmoreland had 1,546, a loss of 101.

Engaged in agriculture.....	428
Engaged in manufactures and trade.....	267
Engaged in learned professions .....	28
Total population of the United States ...	17,069,453

The twelve highest taxpayers in 1840 were John Elliot, Phineas Fiske, James Wilson, admr., Azel Wilder, William Lamson & Co., A. & T. Hall, Sumner Wheeler, Betsey Smith, Charles Lamson, James Wilson, Aaron Appleton and Justus Perry.

Benaiah Cooke had been appointed postmaster in 1837 to succeed William Dinsmoor. He still kept the office in Wilders' building; and edited and published, in the rooms above, the Farmer's Museum, afterwards named the Cheshire Republican and Farmer's Museum, now the Cheshire Republican.

Doctors C. and F. S. Stratton, dentists, had rooms at the Cheshire House and soon afterwards took those over the Ashuelot bank, where F. S. Stratton, a very skillful dentist, remained for more than forty years.

Whitcomb French removed to Peterboro in 1834, and was succeeded by his brother, Stillman French, who kept an excellent stable for more than thirty years.

This was the year, 1840, of the great political campaign—the “hard cider” and “log cabin” campaign of the Whigs—which resulted in the election of William Henry Harrison, president. Gen. Wilson had been a delegate to the nominating convention at Harrisburg and there began that remarkable tour which gave him a national reputation as an orator. Daniel Webster was invited to make a speech here while on his campaigning tour. A committee consisting of Hon. Salma Hale and Dr. Amos Twitchell met him at Bellows Falls, and the next morning, July 9, escorted him to Keene, where he arrived at 12 o'clock and was received by Gen. Wilson on the steps of his residence with a brief speech of welcome. At 2.30 p. m., Mr. Webster, with Gen. Wilson and the committee, was escorted to the academy yard by the Keene and Marlboro Light Infantry companies, Capts. Dort and Converse, with military bands, followed by a large concourse of people. A platform had been raised sufficient to accommodate the speakers, the committee, the veteran soldiers and about

600 ladies. The audience was estimated to number upwards of 4,000. After a ringing speech of introduction by Gen. Wilson, Mr. Webster spoke for about two hours. While he was speaking a support gave way and the platform settled a few inches, producing some consternation among its occupants. Mr. Webster promptly stepped forward and said, "If the Whig platform goes down, I go with it," and went on with his speech.

After the meeting, Mr. Webster received a large number of people from out of town, in the drawing rooms of the Cheshire House; and in the evening Gen. Wilson gave him a public reception at his residence.

The printing office in Prentiss's block was the headquarters of the Whigs, and was a lively and fascinating place, where the wits of Keene—Dr. Amos Twitchell, Salma Hale, Gen. Wilson, Phineas Handerson, Levi Chamberlain, B. F. Adams, Henry Dorr, Elijah Parker, Aaron and Timothy Hall, T. M. Edwards and others—met and cracked their jokes and had friendly discussions.

Among those who died in 1840 were Elias Rugg, aged sixty-six; Samuel H. Kemp, of the United States army in Florida; Mrs. Ruth (Davis) Batcheller, widow of Major Breed Batcheller, formerly of Packersfield, ninety-five; Mrs. Phœbe, wife of Abijah Wilson, seventy-three; and Joshua Graves, seventy.

The winter of 1840-1, was one of great severity, "perhaps the coldest ever known in New England" down to that time.