

CHAPTER XIX.

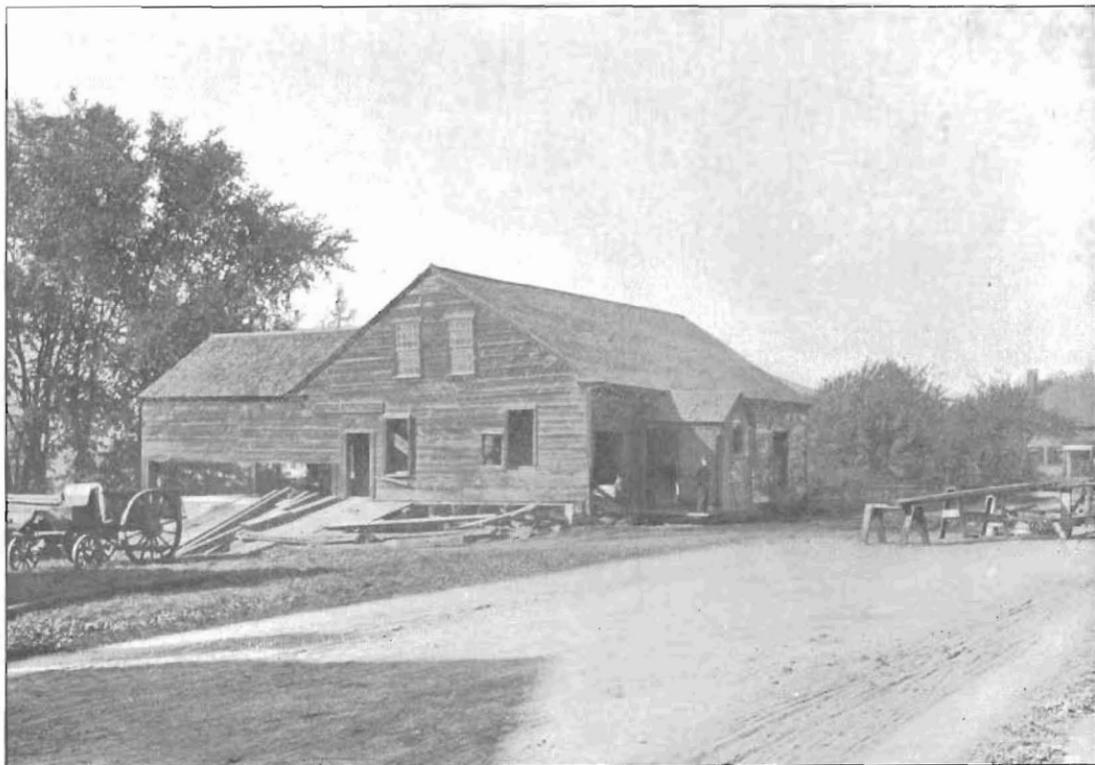
TOWN AFFAIRS.

1866—1874.

At the annual meeting in 1866 the town voted to raise and appropriate \$15,000 towards paying the town debt and interest; and again voted, 492 to 294, not to adopt a city charter. The selectmen were instructed to build a receiving tomb, and \$700 were appropriated therefor.

The failure of the water supply at the fire on the east side of the Square in 1865 gave a fresh impulse to the project of bringing aqueduct water into the village. The subject had previously been agitated for many years in consequence of the inadequate supply of water in case of fires, and for manufacturing and other purposes, and the first action of the town in relation to it had been taken at the annual meeting in 1860, when the town voted "That it is expedient to introduce into the compact part of the Town a supply of water for the extinguishment of fires;" and a committee of five was appointed, with Wm. P. Wheeler chairman, to report a plan and obtain the necessary legislation. Action was again taken in 1862 as stated, but the enterprise had not been pushed, and active interest in it had lain dormant until reawakened by the fire of 1865. At this annual meeting of 1866, a committee of seven was chosen to take the whole matter into consideration and report at a meeting to be called for that purpose. That committee, after examining several bodies of water, reported on the 2d of June, recommending "Goose pond" as the source of supply; but an adjourned meeting, on the 16th of the same month, voted to postpone the whole subject indefinitely—143 to 64.

The Fourth of July was celebrated in Keene this year, 1866. The day opened with the ringing of bells and the firing of a national salute. At 9 o'clock a procession of "Antiques and Horribles" marched through the streets, and at 10 o'clock there was a parade of firemen from



SAW AND GRIST MILLS OF FAULKNER & COLONY. BUILT 1838.

Saw and grist mills of Faulkner & Colony. Built 1838.

Fitchburg, Ashburnham, Troy and Keene, with military bands from Ashburnham, Gardner, Unionville and Keene. In the afternoon there was a trial of engines—the old-fashioned “tubs,” operated with hand brakes—in which the Fitchburg company won the first prize, throwing water to the height of 189 feet. At 2 o'clock an oration was delivered in the town hall by Rev. William Gaylord, and there were fireworks in the evening. Good order prevailed and there was an almost total absence of drunkenness and rowdyism.

During this season and the following one, the Cheshire railroad expended about \$80,000 in building shops and making improvements, under the direction of Francis A. Perry, master mechanic, who drew the plans and superintended the work. The main shop was 415 feet long by 52 to 65 feet in width. Charles Bridgman also built his block on the east side of the Square during that season.

Capt. Jesse Corbett, very aged, a prominent man in Keene in the early part of the nineteenth century—captain of the Keene Light Infantry and a public spirited citizen—died in August.

In January, 1867, Mr. George K. Wright and his brother, Charles, 2d, cut and hauled to Faulkner & Colony's mill fourteen logs from a single white pine tree and its two main branches. The tree measured 121 feet in height, eighteen and one-half feet in circumference four feet from the ground, and contained 9,000 feet of lumber valued at \$140 standing. The tree was sold for \$180, delivered at the mill. The decayed portion was estimated at 800 feet more. Its age was calculated from its rings to be about three hundred years—“believed to be the oldest inhabitant in town,” and the largest tree in Cheshire county.

The town having been indicted for allowing the two large elm trees—one now known as the “Cooke elm,” the other standing in the sidewalk near St. James' church—to stand in the travelled way, an article was inserted in the warrant for the annual meeting of 1867 to see whether or not the town would instruct the selectmen or highway surveyor to remove those trees. On that article the town

“Voted, Unanimously that the Selectmen and Town Agent be instructed to protect and defend” those trees “from all inditements and depredations whatsoever.” The trees were defended and still stand, vigorous and thrifty.

At the same meeting the town voted “to adopt an act entitled ‘An Act to establish the City of Keene,’”—460 to 430. But a petition to the legislature for leave to surrender the charter was immediately circulated, signed by about 600 legal voters of Keene, and in July an act was passed allowing another vote on the question; and at the next annual meeting the charter was rejected by a vote of 700 to 378.

At the organization of the legislature in June, 1867, Gen. S. G. Griffin, of Keene, was elected speaker of the house of representatives, and was reelected to that position in 1868.

On the 12th of August the large shops on Mechanic street were destroyed by fire. They were occupied by Nims & Crossfield for making sash, doors and blinds, and by several smaller manufacturing concerns and individuals. The houses of Mr. Arba Kidder and Mr. John F. Prindell and several small buildings were also burned. Loss, \$44,300; insured for \$13,075. The fire started in the engine-house of Nims & Crossfield. Soon afterwards a corporation was formed, called the Keene Steam Power Company, which rebuilt the mills at a cost of about \$40,000.

On the 15th and 16th of August there was a remarkably heavy fall of rain extending from Maine to Virginia. Crops were destroyed and much damage was done by the floods. The Concord road over Beech hill was completely washed out for nearly an eighth of a mile in length and from two to six feet in depth. A neighboring farmer estimated that five hundred thousand loads of gravel would be required to fill the cavity; but the road was repaired by cutting it down to the bottom of the channel made by the flood.

During this season the Unitarian church edifice on the corner of Main and Church streets was repaired and improved, and a steeple added to the tower; and about seventy-five new houses were built in town.

Notwithstanding the indefinite postponement of the subject in 1866, the demand for aqueduct water was imperative, and at a special meeting to consider that question held on the 5th of October, 1867, another committee of seven was chosen to take the whole matter under consideration. That committee reported on the 5th of November recommending Goose pond as the source of water supply; and on the 18th of December the town voted to purchase Goose pond, and a committee consisting of Samuel A. Gerould, Edward Joslin, Daniel H. Holbrook, Reuben Stewart and George Holmes was appointed to employ engineers, make examinations and estimates, and report at a subsequent meeting. That committee reported on the 13th of August following, and the town then voted, 381 to 86, to construct the works. A committee for that purpose was chosen consisting of Edward Joslin, Thomas H. Leverett, Samuel A. Gerould, Daniel H. Holbrook and George W. Ball. A contract was made and the water was introduced in November, 1869. The same meeting authorized the issue of bonds for a loan of seventy-five thousand dollars (the sum afterwards increased as the works were extended) and chose a "water loan committee" to prepare and sell the bonds, consisting of Thomas H. Leverett, Royal H. Porter and George W. Tilden.

On the 1st of July, 1868, the semi-centennial of the settlement of Rev. Dr. Barstow was celebrated. He had been settled by the town, and the commemoration was made a town affair. The ceremonies were under the direction of a committee of twenty gentlemen and ladies. The interior of the church edifice was decorated, and embellished with appropriate inscriptions. Religious services were held in the forenoon, at which Dr. Barstow preached a historical sermon, wearing the robes in vogue at the time of his settlement, and the choir sang two of the anthems used at his ordination. At the close of the exercises a procession of about 600 persons moved from the church to the town hall and sat down to dinner. Hon. Thomas M. Edwards presided, and addresses were made in response to toasts by Rev. Dr. Bouton, of Concord; Rev. William S. Karr, Dr. Barstow's successor; Rev. William O. White; Hon.

George S. Hale and Horatio Parker, Esq., of Boston, natives of Keene; J. Whitney Barstow, M. D., of New York, son of the guest; and by Hon. John Prentiss, John H. Elliot, William P. Wheeler, S. A. Gerould and R. H. Porter, of Keene. Mrs. Barstow had a seat at the table next her husband and shared in the honors and encomiums showered upon him. A purse of two hundred dollars and a life annuity of five hundred dollars were presented him, and the exercises closed with a benediction. On the 19th of August following, Dr. and Mrs. Barstow celebrated their golden wedding, at their life-long residence, the old Wyman tavern, a full account of which was published in a neat booklet—"A Golden Remembrance"—by their son, Dr. J. Whitney Barstow.

The agitation for the resuscitation of the Young Men's Christian Union, which began in 1866, resulted in December of this year in an organization—the term Union changed to Association—of which L. C. Doolittle was president, John Humphrey vice-president, A. B. Skinner secretary, and George E. Holbrook auditor. Its rooms were in Bridgman's block.

The Keene Five Cents Savings bank was incorporated in 1868 and on the 1st of January, 1869, began operations. For many years it was very successful, its deposits reaching, in 1892, \$3,100,000; but the financial panic of 1893 caused the depreciation of some of its securities, created alarm among the depositors, and large amounts were withdrawn; and the bank was compelled to close its doors.

On the 15th of January, 1869, the steam mills on Ralston street owned by Madison Fairbanks and used for saw and grist mills and the manufacture of sash, doors, blinds, pails and other articles, were destroyed by fire. Loss about \$50,000; insured for \$22,675.

The velocipede mania reached Keene early in 1869, but after a run of some months it subsided until the bicycle came years later.

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

In the early part of this year the Farmers' and Mechanics' Club was organized in Keene—the precursor of the grange—and held frequent meetings, with spirited and profitable discussions.

At no time, probably, in the history of Keene did its military band take so high a rank as at this period, when for several years it was under the direction of Professor W. T. Allen. It furnished the music for commencement exercises at Middlebury college, Vt., in 1869, and at Kimball academy, Meriden, N. H.; and it had frequent calls from out of town for its services at public functions.

In November the town voted—540 to 207—a gratuity of three per cent on its valuation for 1869 to aid in building the Manchester & Keene railroad—the money to be raised by loan on thirty-year bonds at six per cent. After much opposition and delay the bonds were finally issued by the city in 1874 to the amount of \$160,000. The road had been chartered in 1864, and the line surveyed in 1865 by James A. Weston, civil engineer, afterwards governor of the state.

At the annual meeting in 1870 the town authorized the water board to employ an engineer to make surveys and estimates for a system of sewerage for the town, but at subsequent meetings articles in relation to that subject were passed over, and nothing was done towards constructing the works until after the town became a city.

At the expiration of his term in July, Dr. Thomas E. Hatch retired from the office of postmaster, and was succeeded by Capt. Henry C. Handerson. The census of this year gave Keene a population of 5,971.¹

During this season the Cheshire Provident Institution for Savings built the large brick block on the east side of Central square, known as the Bank block. For several years the postoffice occupied one of its rooms, the entrance being on Roxbury street. In the same year Mr. Timothy Colony built a similar block on the adjoining north lot.

At the annual meeting in 1871 the town voted to exempt from taxation for ten years a manufacturing establishment then contemplated, since known as Beaver mills,

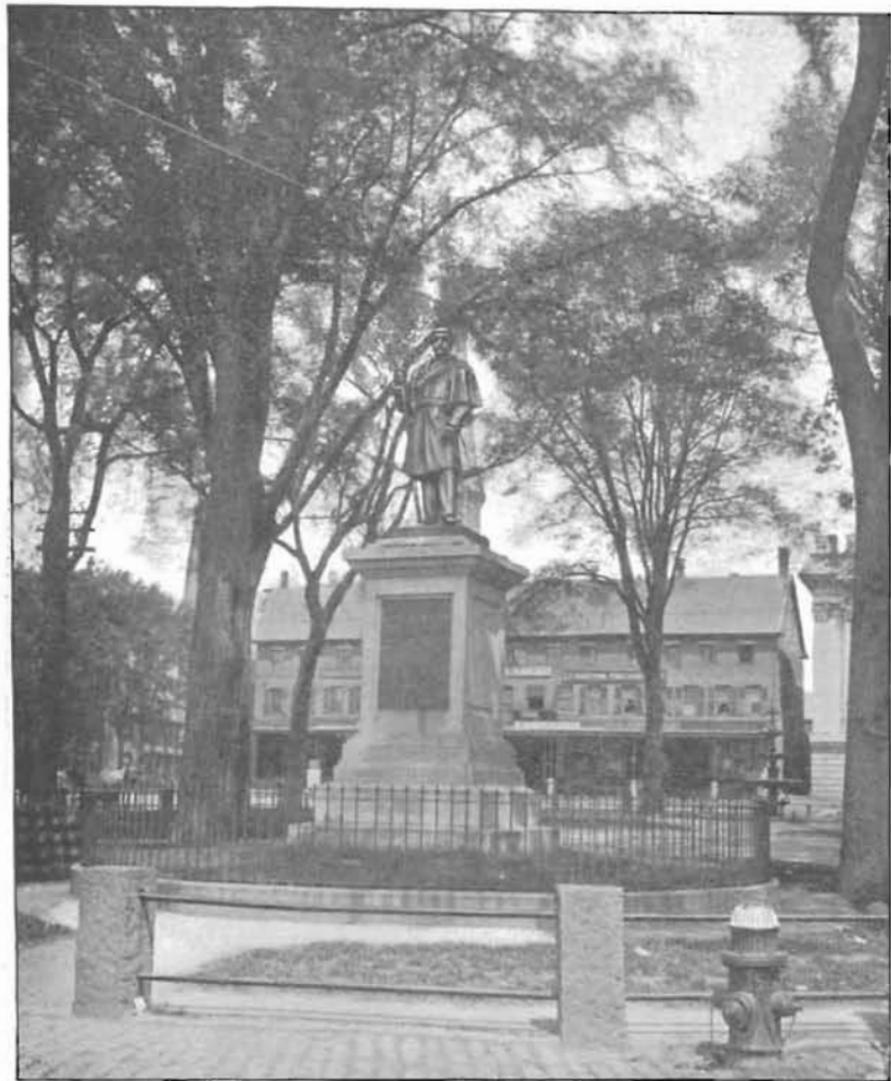
¹Swanzy had 1,626; Winchester, 2,096; Chesterfield, 1,289; Westmoreland, 1,256; Walpole, 1,830; the state, 326,073.

provided that not less than fifty thousand dollars should be invested in the plant. That sum was subscribed, a stock company was formed, and the mills were built during that season; and the Cheshire Chair Company and the Keene Furniture Company removed from Mechanic street and took up quarters there. Those companies had been organized respectively in 1868 and 1869, with Edward Joslin as principal owner in each, and F. L. Sprague in the furniture and G. W. McDuffee in the chair company, managers. John Humphrey's machine shop and waterwheel works and other manufactories also found rooms at the Beaver mills.

The pottery at the lower end of Main street, J. S. Taft & Co., and the glue factory at the upper end of Court street, founded by E. E. Lyman, soon succeeded by O. W. Upham, were established during this season.

A military company, composed of veterans of the Civil war and named the Keene Light Infantry, was organized this year, with John W. Babbitt, captain, and Solon A. Carter, lieutenant. It had its armory in the old Methodist church, on Vernon street.

At the annual meeting in 1868 the town had voted to build a monument to the soldiers of the Civil war and appropriated two thousand dollars for that purpose; but that sum was considered inadequate and no farther action was taken until August, 1870, when the additional sum of five thousand dollars was appropriated—and afterwards five hundred dollars for the dedication—and a committee consisting of Dr. George B. Twitchell, Gen. S. G. Griffin, Lieut. C. F. Webster, R. H. Porter and John Humphrey was appointed to carry out the work. Col. Solon A. Carter, Joseph G. Perry and Capt. John W. Sturtevant were afterwards added to the committee. The monument, built in 1871, consists of a bronze figure of a soldier in the uniform and equipments of the Union army in the Civil war, designed by Martin Milmore of Boston and cast by the Ames Manufacturing Company, of Chicopee, Mass. The figure stands on a pedestal of Roxbury granite cut by Charles S. Barnes from designs furnished by the committee. On the die a bronze tablet bears the inscription:



SOLDIERS' MONUMENT.

KEENE

WILL CHERISH IN PERPETUAL HONOR
 THE MEMORY OF HER SONS
 WHO FOUGHT FOR LIBERTY
 AND THE INTEGRITY OF THE
 REPUBLIC.

1861

1865

THE HONOR
 OF THE HEROIC DEAD
 IS THE INSPIRATION OF
 POSTERITY.

On the 20th of October, 1871, the monument was dedicated in the presence of a large concourse of people. Posts of the Grand Army of the Republic, with bands, were present from Brattleboro, Claremont, Newport and Peterboro; and military companies from Fitzwilliam and Hinsdale. A procession consisting of posts of the G. A. R., military companies, firemen, civic bodies and citizens in carriages, headed by the Keene Military band and escorted by the Keene Light Infantry, Col. John W. Babbitt commanding, all under the marshalship of Col. Solon A. Carter, marched through the principal streets. The dedicatory exercises were held in a tent pitched on the south side of the monument. Among the distinguished guests present were Governor Weston and staff, Gen. James A. Garfield (on a visit with his mother to her birthplace in Richmond), Gen. Judson Kilpatrick, Senator James W. Patterson, Col. Carroll D. Wright, and Martin Milmore, the sculptor. Gen. S. G. Griffin was president of the day, Gen. Kilpatrick delivered an oration, and Lieut. George A. Marden read an original poem. Other short speeches were made and excellent music was rendered. At 4 o'clock the invited guests and citizens, to the number of about one hundred and fifty, sat down to dinner at the Cheshire House. Grace was said by Rev. Dr. Barstow. At the close of the dinner the following toasts were announced by the president of the day: 1. "The President of the United States;" responded to by Senator Patterson. 2. "The Governor of New Hampshire;" responded to by Gov. Weston. 3. "The Volunteers in the Late War;" responded to by Gen. Garfield. 4. "The Right Arm of the Government—the Army and the Navy;" responded to by Gen. Kilpatrick. 5. "Our Patriotic Dead;"

responded to by Col. Carroll D. Wright. 6. "The Loyal Men and Women Who Encouraged and Sustained the Army in the Field;" responded to by Hon. Thomas M. Edwards.

A few other short addresses were made, and, altogether, it was an exceedingly rich intellectual feast, and a brilliant display of oratory. The visiting military and civic bodies and other guests, to the number of about five hundred, were also abundantly entertained. In the evening Gen. Griffin gave a reception to Generals Garfield and Kilpatrick, Senator Patterson, Mr. Milmore and other guests; and Mr. Henry Colony, in his new house on West street, now the public library building, paid a similar compliment to Governor Weston and staff and others. Both parties were serenaded by the Keene Military band.

At the annual meeting in 1872 the town authorized the water board to procure land for a reservoir on Beech hill—the old natural reservoir, improved by increasing the height of the dam.

The large tannery at West Keene, established in 1872 by Mr. John Symonds (Bigelow & Co.), and successfully operated for about twenty years, was exempted from taxation for five years by vote of the town.

On the 20th of June, at an evening meeting held at the town hall to consider the subject of a charter for a city, Dr. Geo. B. Twitchell, chairman, Francis A. Faulkner, George F. Starkweather, Kendall C. Scott, Horatio Colony and Edward Joslin were appointed a committee to make a draft of a charter to be submitted to the legislature; and the act was passed at the next session, approved July 3, 1873.

The Keene Natural History Society was organized this year, through the efforts of Mr. George A. Wheelock and others. Its collection of specimens is kept in the hall of the high school building.

The 24th of December, 1872, was a remarkably cold day, the mercury falling to 28° below zero here, and to 40° and 45° below in some places in the state.

At the annual meeting in 1873 a committee, consisting of William P. Wheeler, Stephen Barker and George A.

Wheelock, appointed in November to consider the question of enlarging Woodland cemetery, reported in favor of purchasing additional land, and George B. Twitchell, George H. Richards and Horatio Colony were appointed a committee, acting in concert with the selectmen, to make the purchase, but the next year the whole matter was referred to the city government. This year the town sent seven representatives to the legislature.

On the 1st day of May a festival was held by the ladies of the Unitarian Sewing Society, who for two years had been at work for this object, for the purpose of raising funds for the establishment of an invalids' home in Keene, and an entertaining booklet called "The May Flower," copies of which may still be found, was published and sold to aid the cause. An impulse had been given to the movement by a bequest of one thousand dollars from Mr. Charles F. Wilson, a farmer who had come from Sullivan to Keene and lived on Marlboro street. A house on Beaver street was purchased and the invalids' home established.

At the close of Rev. Gilbert Robbins' ministry in the Baptist church—1846 to 1857—Rev. Leonard Tracy was pastor for six years, Rev. William N. Clarke upwards of five years, Rev. A. V. Tilton nearly three years, and in 1872 Rev. William H. Eaton accepted a call to that position. Through his efforts the society decided to build a new church edifice, and their present one on Court street was begun in June, 1873, and dedicated in May, 1875.

The old town bell on the First Congregational church having been cracked, an effort was made to procure a new one. At the annual meeting in 1873 the town voted, as it had already done in 1840, to relinquish all its rights in the bell and belfry of the church. The society purchased a new bell, which was used for the first time on the first Sunday in June.

"At the suggestion of Mr. Jonas Parker, one of our best local authorities in such matters, the new bell was tuned in the key of A, so that the discord alluded to is partially remedied, and wholly overcome in case certain three of the bells are sounded at the same time. The Unitarian bell is keyed in F sharp, the Episcopal in D, and the

new bell in A, and when rung in concert produce a perfect major chord; the Baptist bell is keyed in C sharp, and this with the Unitarian (F sharp) and the Congregational (A) produce a minor chord. When the four are sounded together, of course they produce a discordant sound, but not so harsh and grating as when the old bell formed one of the quartette." (Sentinel, June 5, 1873.)

In the autumn of this year some of the leading women of the town, aided by a few of the men, organized the Keene Social Union for the purpose of providing young men and boys with a reading room and social advantages during the winter evenings, to draw them away from the saloons. Mrs. William O. White was the first president, and the society was successful for several years. At first it occupied chambers on the east side of the Square.

In business affairs at this time—when the town became a city—Elliot & Ripley in the hardware store on the corner of Main and West streets had been succeeded in 1866 by Spencer & Co., who remained there for thirty-five years; C. T. & G. B. Buffum, clothiers, were in the north half of the old A. & T. Hall store, and Joslin (Edward) & Gay, grocers, were in the south half, succeeding C. Bridgman, who had removed to his new block on the east side of the Square. Keyes & Stratton were in the old Keyes store on the corner where the postoffice building now stands; Whitcomb & Dunbar, clothiers, were in the Whitcomb store; G. H. Tilden & Co. still occupied the south store in Gerould's block; and Richardson, Skinner & Day were in the store next north of Tilden, in the Gerould block, afterwards called the "Museum." J. R. Beal & Co. and W. H. Spalter, succeeding his father, were in Ball's block, formerly Wilders', where Spalter still remains. A. H. Grimes kept a general assortment of goods under the town hall; Knowlton & Stone had established their hardware business next north of Bridgman, as at present; and D. B. Silsby & Co. dry goods merchants, were on the east side of the Square. Ball & Whitney, formerly Ball & Alden, dealers in furs, hats and caps, succeeded Henry Pond & Co. in the northwest corner of the Cheshire House; Reuel Nims still kept his store in the Nims building (formerly Cooke's); and G. W. & G. E. Holbrook were grocers

and grain dealers on the east side of Main street, where Gurnsey's block now stands. Davis & Wright had succeeded O. H. Gillett in stoves and tin ware near the depot, where the Sentinel building now stands, and Gillett had opened another store of the same kind on West street.

The druggists and apothecaries were O. G. Dort & Co., afterwards Dort & Chandler, and Chauncey Hills. Harris & Wetherbee had done a thriving business in that line some years before. Allen & Wadsworth (Samuel) were the principal jewelers. In the millinery business were E. R. Gilmore, Hatch & Johnson, and Mrs. E. H. White, all on Central square, Mrs. L. A. Alexander on Winter street, and Miss Marietta N. Taft, who had succeeded Mrs. Caswell in the south half of the Nims building. Miss Taft carried on a successful business there for thirteen years. Chester Allen, S. C. Dustin, and French & Sawyer (Daniel H.) were still taking photographs; and Joseph and Ephraim Foster still made parlor organs and melodeons. M. T. Tottingham was in the furniture business; J. & F. French continued the manufacture of sleighs and carriages on Church street; Breed & Holton were in the same business on Mechanic street, and Edwards & Harlow on the north corner of Mechanic and Washington streets; and Wright & Wilkinson made harnesses, trunks, etc. The machinists were John Humphrey & Co. at Beaver mills, and Sanborn & Hubbard on Elm street. The civil engineer for the town and county was George W. Sturtevant; and the plumbers—the first in town—were George Goodhue & Co., soon succeeded by James Donnelly and others. The principal carpenters and builders were H. P. Muchmore, Daniel Buss, John Proctor, O. S. Gleason, and A. R. & E. S. Foster.

The principal blacksmiths were W. H. Brooks, Spencer & Sons, and Waldo & Jones on Church street, T. C. Ellis on Mechanic street, and F. B. Benton. The principal boot and shoe dealers and manufacturers were the Ashuelot Boot & Shoe Company, on the corner of River and Leverett streets, George Kingsbury, George P. Drown, David Hutchins, C. Cummings & Son, and W. O. Wilson. The Keene Chair Company, S. D. Osborne and others, were at South Keene; S. W. Hale, A. B. Heywood and others were

running the Ashuelot Steam mills on Ralston street; and Crossfield & Scott were making sash, doors and blinds in the steam mills on Mechanic street.

The fire department consisted of a chief engineer—Virgil A. Wright—and six assistants; two engine companies, the Deluge and the Neptune, of twenty to twenty-five men each; the Washington Hook and Ladder Company of twenty men; and the Phoenix Hose Company of sixteen men. The engines still in use were the old-fashioned tubs, with hand brakes, and the hydrants of the aqueduct water were the chief dependence in case of fire in the village; but the question of procuring steam fire engines had begun to be agitated.

The Cheshire House was kept by Morgan J. Sherman, who was its landlord for many years; the Eagle Hotel by Wright & Mason (John A. Wright and Andrew R. Mason); and the Emerald, with the name changed to American House, by Greeley & Wellington, soon succeeded by J. W. Starkey.

The lawyers in practice were Wheeler & Faulkner, Farnum F. Lane, Don H. Woodward, C. C. Webster, Silas Hardy, Daniel K. Healy, Hiram Blake, Leonard Wellington and C. F. Webster; the physicians and surgeons were George B. Twitchell, Thomas B. Kittredge, A. S. Carpenter, Ira F. Prouty, Gardner C. Hill and Mrs. Hill, Henry H. Darling, J. Homer Darling, and Francis Brick; and the dentists were F. S. Stratton and M. E. Loveland, over the Ashuelot bank, Russell & Mellen and George H. Russell.

In the management of the Sentinel, T. C. Rand & Co. had been succeeded by George Ticknor & Co., and they by Olin L. French & Co. and later by the Sentinel Printing Company; and in the Republican, Horatio Kimball had been succeeded by Julius N. Morse.

The population of the town at this time was a little over 6,000; the total valuation for taxation was \$4,081,088.00; the number of ratable polls was 1,879; state tax, \$18,354.00; county tax, \$8,228.31; school tax, \$10,706.50; tax for highways and bridges, \$8,000.00; tax for town paupers, \$2,200.00; tax for fire department,



WILLIAM P. WHEELER.

\$1,500.00; tax for lighting street lamps, \$1,400.00; total tax assessment, \$52,925.45.

The fifteen highest individual taxpayers were Charles S. Faulkner, John Henry Elliot, Morgan J. Sherman, Horatio Colony, George D. Colony, Timothy Colony, Edward Joslin, Samuel A. Gerould, Charles Lamson, Noah R. Cooke (estate), Thomas M. Edwards, Henry Colony, George W. Ball, Lucian B. Page, and William O. White.

At the annual meeting in 1874, held on the 10th of March, the town voted to adopt the city charter—783 to 589. The article to choose selectmen was passed over, the board of 1873 holding over until the organization of the city government. Articles relating to highways, the public library, sewerage and other matters were passed over or referred to the incoming city government. In compliance with the provisions of the charter the selectmen prepared check lists and called meetings in the several wards, and on the 14th of April city and ward officers were elected, the selectmen receiving, counting and declaring the votes. On the 5th of May the officers then chosen organized as a city government, the chairman of the board of selectmen presented them with the original charter of the town of Keene from the state of New Hampshire and surrendered the municipal affairs of the town into their hands; and the town of Keene, as a corporate body, ceased to exist.