



HEATON HOUSE. BUILT ABOUT 1750. OLDEST HOUSE IN TOWN. NOW 500 MARLBORO STREET

CHAPTER III.

THE RETURN OF THE SETTLERS AND THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CHARTER.

1749-1754.

Massachusetts discharged most of her troops, but in the unsettled state of affairs left a small force at Fort Dummer and another at No. 4 for the protection of the frontier; and "Capt. John Catlin of Deerfield had a company of 56 men, raised from the Middlesex and Worcester regiments, mustered July 13 (1749), discharged Oct. 12. This company was billeted one half the time at Northfield and one half the time at Keene. The allowance for billeting per man per week at Northfield was 8 shillings, at Keene, 10 shillings 7 pence 3 farthings, new tenor." (Massachusetts Archives.)

This record from the Massachusetts Archives makes it evident that some of the proprietors had returned to Upper Ashuelot in the spring or early summer of 1749, with their families, for soldiers could not be "billeted" without inhabitants upon whom to billet them. (John Kilburn, the first settler of Walpole, came there in 1749, which shows that the advance of pioneers had been resumed.) And this evidence is corroborated by the following documents copied from the New Hampshire State Papers, where twenty "Inhabitants of the upper Ashuelot"—and of "the Upper Township on Ashuelot River where we Dwell"—signed petitions dated here on the 11th of Feb., 1750, showing that they spent the winter of 1749-50 here; and to do that they must have been here in the summer of 1749 to rebuild the cabins in which to dwell:

"We whose Names are Hereunto Subscribed Inhabitants of the upper Ashuelot for a Long time Labour under many Great Difficulties for want of Town Priviledges we Do Therefore Hereby Constitute and Impower our Trusty friend Cap^t Jeremiah Hall to Represent our Difficulties to his Excellency the Governor of New Hampshire and to Any

Others Concerned In that affair that we may be Incorporated Into a Town and Likewise we give power to him to Chuse a man to asist him In the affaires.

“Upper Ashuelot February y^e 11th 1750.

William Smeed	Jonathan Underwood	Michael medcalf jr
Ebenezer Nims	John Rogers	Oliver Medcalf
David Nims	Nathan Blake	Abijah medcalf
Ephraim Dorman	Ebenezer Day	Jabez Hill
Nathan Fairbanks	Gideon Ellis	David Foster
Joseph Elles	Michael Medcalf	Amos Foster.”

“We the Subscribers Do hereby Impower Cap^t Jeremiah Hall to Pertition In our behalf for the Upper Township on Ashuelot River where we Dwell to his Excellency the Governour of New Hampshire and all Concern'd in that affair In the same form that it was laid by the Massachusetts

“Upper Ashuelot Feb^{ry} 11th 1750

William Smeed	Ebenezer Day	David Foster
Ebenezer Nims	Gideon Ellis	Oliver medcalf
David Nims	Michael Medcalf	Michael medcalf jr
Ephraim Dorman	Jabez Hill	Abijah medcalf
Nathan Fairbanks	Jonathan Underwood	Samuel Hall
Joseph Elles	John Rogers	Jesse Hall
Nathan Blake	Elijah Dorman”	

“We whose Names are Hereunto Subscribed Being Propriators of the Upper Ashuelot Township so called Do hereby Impower M^r Benjamin Guild to joyne with Cap^t Jeremiah Hall in Petetioning His Exelency the Govoner of the Province of New Hamshire He observing the Instructions Given by others of the Propriators to the said Cap^t Hall

“Wrentham Feb^r 20th 1750.

John Whiting	Asa Richardson	Abigail Guild
Daniel Haws	Sarah Greene	Robert Blak
Joseph Fisher	Joseph Richardson	Seth Heaton
Samuel Fisher	Daniell maceene	Elijah Blake
Benjamin Guild	William Hancock	Josiah Fisher for
Obediah Blake	Samuel Danils	the hares of
Ebenezer Daniels	Esther Messenger	Aaron Fisher
Nathaniel Ware	Jonathan Whiting	Nathan Bucknam
Hannah Dale	Jacob Bacon	
Abner Ellis	Nath ^l Fairbnks.”	

(State Papers, vol. 12, pages 307-9.)

But no notice of those petitions was taken by the authorities of New Hampshire. In their estimation, the little settlements in the southwestern corner of the province were too far away, and it would cost too much to

protect them if they were admitted to the body politic. So the little band of pioneers on the Ashuelot had to wait three years longer for recognition. Mr. Hale in his Annals, page 28, says:

"On the restoration of peace, the settlers who had been driven from their lands, by the war, made preparations to return. The exact time when Upper Ashuelot was again occupied, has not been ascertained. It was, probably, some time in 1750; certainly as early as 1751; as it is within the recollection of Thomas Wells, now living, who came to reside here in 1752, that eight or ten dwelling houses had then been erected."

But Mr. Hale, writing merely the "Annals of Keene," evidently did not deem it necessary to examine thoroughly the archives of Massachusetts or the records of the province of New Hampshire, and did not discover the above data, which prove clearly that some of the settlers had returned in 1749.

"Prov of Newhamshore

"To his Excellency Benning Wentworth Esq^r Govorⁿ
&c In & over his Majestys Province of New hampshire

The peti^{on} of John Densmoor & Ruth his Wife Humbly Shews that Josiah Fisher of upper Ashaulott In the Province of New Hamshore decesed Late Husband of the said Ruth had In his Lifetime a Grant from the Massachusettets Government of one Whole Wright or Share In s^d township & that In his Lifetime Bult an house & Cleard & In proved Near forty acres of Land In s^d township & In the Begining of the War with y^e Endins the s^d Josiah Was Killed & the s^d Ruth y^e Wedow of the Dec^sd was left with out any Children by the deces^d But she still Continued att y^e said Ashualuett & In proved s^d Lands tell y^e Endins Drove of the In habitance of s^d town & Sence the Sasition of arms the s^d Ruth with hir Present Husband hath fenced & In Proved the s^d Lands afore s^d wharefore your Petitioners Humbly Pray that your Exellency Would be plesed to Grant to your Petioners the s^d Lands afore s^d upon the Condition that your Exellency grants to others y^e Kings subjects In s^d Province & your Petioners In duty Bound Shall Ever Pray—

"Nov^m y^e 8th 1750

John Dunsmoor
Ruth Dunsmoor"

Hinsdale, Winchester, Westmoreland and Lower Ashuelot were reoccupied about the same time with Upper Ashuelot, and settlements had been made, now soon to

be revived, at Peterboro, Rindge and Hillsborough. No. 4 had been first settled in 1740, and like the other advanced settlements had been abandoned for a time from fear of the Indians; but peace restored its prosperity and in June, 1750, it had a population sufficient to organize a military company of its own citizens numbering twenty-nine officers and men. John Kilburn, at No. 3 (Walpole), was followed in 1752 by Col. Benjamin Bellows.

Migration flowed in all directions to the cheap and fertile lands which might now be occupied in safety. The population of New Hampshire, then about 30,000, increased rapidly. The governor and his friends encouraged immigration, for the business of granting townships was exceedingly profitable. In each case, the governor reserved a large tract of land to himself—usually 500 acres, as in the case of Keene—and he and his subordinates received remunerative fees.

The rich meadow lands on the upper Connecticut and its branches, about the present town of Haverhill, were also occupied by settlers about this time. But this aroused the jealousy of the St. Francis Indians and their allies, the Squawkheags, who still claimed ownership of those lands, rich in fish and game, which had been the hunting ground of their fathers. The whites persisted, and the Indians retaliated by committing some outrages in the eastern and central parts of the province. But, with those exceptions, the Indians were peaceful for several years.

“The sketch here presented of Keene Village [page 101], as it was in 1750, has been drawn by the compiler from the recollection of descriptions of it given him by Thomas Wells, and other aged people, who resided here near that time and had heard people older than themselves talk about it. No building was then standing, and the sites of such only as are designated on the sketch have been precisely ascertained. There was a dwelling house on the road to Boston, near Beaver Brook. The well used by the family, who occupied it, was at the foot of the declivity South of it, near where now grows a large elm tree. It had a high curb, made of small round timber, like a cob house, with a platform leading to it from the top of the bank. When the alarm was given at the time of the attack by the Indians, a man, whose name has not come down to us,

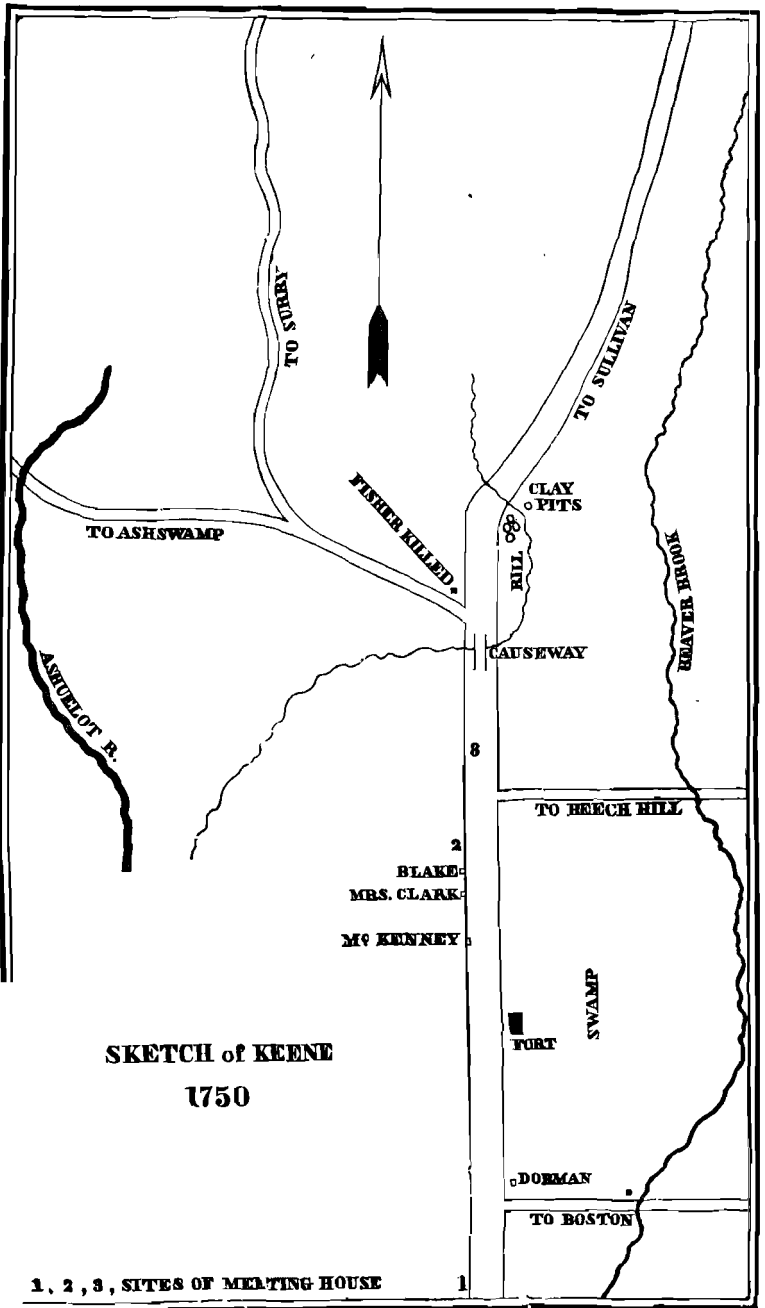
descended into this well, remained there two days, and then ascended, unharmed. When Keene was abandoned, it contained about forty dwelling houses in all.

“It may be worth while to put on record a few facts in regard to Main-street. Where the back part of the Cheshire House now stands, was once a bog, or quagmire which continued South to Church-street, and beyond it. About opposite the Railroad Station, but rather North of it, there was a considerable depression in the street; men now living remember walking erect under the causeway, the top of which was several feet below the present surface; and younger men than they remember when the water (Beaver Brook in a freshet overflowing its banks) was so deep, at this place, that boats were guided, and men swam, from one point on the street to another. On the West side of the street, just South of Gen. Wilson’s garden, was a pond surrounded by alders, and after this period visited by wild ducks. A little South of this pond, in the middle of the street, was a conical hill, on which the third meeting-house was placed. And many men now living have most disagreeable recollections of the horrible travelling caused by the deep, adhesive mud which, in the spring of the year, covered many portions of Main-street, as well as of West-street and Court-street. But all the streets have become so dry that but little inconvenience is now felt in travelling, at the worst season of the year. This change has been effected, partly by deepening and clearing out the channels of the Ashuelot River and Beaver Brook, partly by agricultural drains throughout the valley, and partly by carting on gravel, and thus raising and hardening the surface of the streets.”

(Annals, pages 28-30.)

The map on the opposite page is printed from the original wood cut which was used in the publication of the Annals of Keene.

In March, 1751, Gov. Wentworth was again petitioned by Jeremiah Hall and Benjamin Guild “in behalf of them Selves and others Inhabitants Settlers and Proprietors of a certain Tract of land Called the upper Township on Ashuelot River,” for a charter of incorporation; setting forth “that in the year 1737, in virtue of a Grant from the massachusetts Government, a plantation was begun on said Tract of land—That in the year 1738 a minister was settled there and a meeting house built—That before the last Indian War with the Indians there were Thirty one



SKETCH of KEENE
1750

Dwelling houses built on said Tract of land Sundry barns and a Fort of near a hundred foot square having eighteen fire Rooms within said fort a Saw mill and Grist mill built—that the settlers and others who were preparing for settling there before the Indian War had made large Improvements there and laid out their Substanc in doing the same—

“That in the Spring of y^e year 1747—The Indians burnt down all the dwelling Houses there except four—also burnt down all the Barns but one also burnt down the meeting house and the Fort also much household Stuff and killed Considerable Cattle Horses Sheep and Swine That the s^d Settlers and Proprietors are returned and returning on to the said Tract of land in order to cultivate and Improve the same and in case a peace Continues with the Indians in a few years there will be forty or fifty familys in case there was an Incorporation—Wherefore

“March y^e 4th 1750-1

Jeremiah Hall
Benjamin Guild”

This petition met the same fate as the former ones, no notice being taken of it so far as the records show. Neither do we find any record of what was done here in the next two years. But we find the following in the New Hampshire State Papers, vol. 12, page 310:

“Upper Ashuelot Feb^r y^e 2nd 1753

“We whose names are underwritten Do hereby Authorize and Impower our Trusty Friend M^r Ephraim Dorman to Prefer a Petition to his Excellency the Governour of New Hampshire for a Township known by the Name of the Upper Ashuelot and to Pray his Excellency to Grant a Charter of this Land to the Inhabitants and others Concerned in said Lands and to Insert a Clause in said Petition Praying his Excellency that if it might be Consistent with his Pleasure he would Insert a Clause in his Charter whereby every man may be Intitled to those Lands which he Thought himself to be the Honest owner of he Paying the Charges that have arisen on said Lands to Prevent Endless Law-Suits and other Difficulties Impending over us and to set forth in said Petition the Great Cost and Expence we have been at in Building two Forts and Defending the Kings Lands and the Great Losses we have Sustained by the Enemy as set forth in the Petition Lodged with M^r Atkinson Secretary and to take the Names Lodged with M^r Livermore and annex to said Petition

Jeremiah Hall	Samuel Reed	Isaac Clark
William Barnes	Benjamin Larrabee	Nathan Blake
Ebenezer Daniels	David Foster	Michael medcalfjr
Jabez Hill	Benjamin Twitchell	Joseph Elles
Timothy Harrington	David Nims	Gideon Ellis
Daniel Twitchell	Ebenezer Day	Eleazer Sanger
Amos Foster	William Smeed	Jonah French."
Titus Belding	Ebenezer Nims	

From the statement above made, and from the list of grantees, it is evident that the original petition, with a larger number of names, had been "Lodged with Mr. Atkinson Secretary" of the province; also that there was an order of the citizens appointing and authorizing Benjamin Bellows to go to Portsmouth as their agent, with Mr. Dorman, to procure the charter, but neither of those papers can now be found.

"At a Council holden at Portsmouth by his Excelencys orders, on Wednesday April 11th 1753.

Present

"Theodore Atkinson	} Esqrs	Samuel Solley	} Esqrs
Richard Wibird		Daniel Warner	

"The Secretary by his Excelencys order laid before the Board the petition of Benja^a Bellows in behalf of & as empower'd by the claimers & settlers of that tract of land called & known by the name of the upper Ashuelot praying that as they had settled the said tract of land by virtue of a grant from the Massachusetts Governmen^t before the line of Governmen^t was run and continued there till drove of by the Indian War &c and that a grant may be made so as not to break in upon their former surveys & laying out but to those persons that claim the same & have made improvements thereon &c and then asked the Council wheither they would advise his Excelency to make the said grant agreeable to the said request—To which they did unanimously consent & advise."

(Prov. Papers, vol. 6, page 21.)

Claiming the right to name the town, the governor named it Keene. In his business as merchant at Portsmouth, previous to his appointment as governor, Mr. Wentworth had contracted with an agent of the court of Spain to supply that government with a large quantity of oak timber. To meet the expense involved he borrowed money in London. When he delivered the timber at Cadiz the agent with whom he had made the contract was out

of office and the new agent declined to pay. On his voyage home his ship foundered and he was saved with the crew in a boat, to find himself bankrupt. Afterwards he made another voyage to Spain and claimed payment for his timber. Sir Benjamin Keene was then the English minister to Spain, and he used his influence to aid Mr. Wentworth, who, though unsuccessful in his suit, formed a warm friendship for Sir Benjamin, and his gratitude, and his admiration for the man, led him to name this town in his honor. (See sketch of Sir Benjamin Keene.)

The charter covered the same tract granted by Massachusetts with the addition of a narrow strip on the east side extending to the "Patent Line"—the west line of the Mason grant of 1629, a curve which formed the original west lines of Fitzwilliam, Packersfield, Stoddard; the east lines of Richmond, Keene, Gilsum, Newport, Croydon, and so on through the state;—thus ratifying the Massachusetts grant and confirming the proprietors in the possession of their lands. The town then contained 39.45 square miles, or 25,248 acres.

CHARTER OF KEENE, 1753.

The following is the record of the charter of Keene found in the Book of Charters, pages 149-152:

 { P-S- } 	Province of New Hamp ^r George the Second by the Grace of God of Great Britain France & Ireland King De- fender of the faith &c ^a To all Persons to whom these Presents Shall come Greeting Whereas Sundry of our Loveing Subjects before the Settlement of the Dividing Line of our Province of New Hampshire aforesaid and our Other Government of the Massachusetts Bay had by Permission of our Said Gov- ernment of the Massachusetts Bay begun A Settlement of A Tract of Land on Ashuelot River so Called and made Sundry Divisions of & Improvements upon the Said Tract of Land And there remain'd till the Indian Warr forced them off and our Said Subjects being Desireous to make an Immediate Settlement on the Premisses & having Peti- tioned our Governour in Council for his Majestys Grant of the Premisses to be so made as might not subvert & Dis- troy their former Surveys & Laying out in severalty made thereon as aforesaid Now Know Ye that we of our Especial
Keene	

Grace Certain Knowledge & mere motion for answering the Ends above said and for the Due Encouragement of Settling the Said Plantation by & with the Advice of our Trusty & wellbeloved BENNING WENTWORTH Esq our Governour & Commander in Chieff in & over our Said Province of New Hampshire in America and of our Council of our s^d Province Have upon the Conditions & Reservations herein after made Given & Granted and by these Presents for us our heirs & Successors Do give & Grant unto our Loveing Subjects Inhabitants of our Said Province of New Hampshire and our Other Governments in New England And to their heirs and Assignes for ever whose names are Entered on this Grant to be Divided to & amongst them into So many & Such Shares & Proportions as they now hold or Claim the same by Purchas Contract Vote or Agreement made amongst themselves All that Tract or Parcel of Land Scituate Lying & being within our Said Province of New Hampshire Containing by admeasurement Twenty three thousand & forty Acres which Tracts is to Contain Six Miles Square & no more out of which an allowance is to be made for highways and unimprovable Land by Rocks Mountains Ponds & Rivers One thousand & forty Acres free According to a Plan thereof made & Presented by our Said Governours orders And hereunto Annexed Butted & bounded as follows—Viz—Beginning at A Beach Tree the North West Corner & Runs South Six Degrees an an half East four miles & Seventy rods to A Beach Tree marked Thence runs East Ten Degrees & a half South Six miles & one hundred & Eighty Rods to A heap of Stones thence runs North Seventeen degrees East Six Miles & Eighty Rods to A Tree marked being the South East Corner of Boyle thence runs West five Degrees and an half South Eight Miles & Two hundred & fifty rods to the Bounds first mentioned And that the Same be and hereby is Incorporated into A Township by the name of Keene and that the Inhabitants that Do or Shall hereafter Inhabit the Said Township Are hereby Declared to be Enfranchized with and Intituled to all & every the Previledges And Immunities that Other Towns within our Said Province by Law Exercise & Enjoy and further that the Said Town as Soon as there Shall be fifty families Shall have the Liberty to open & keep A Market one or more Days in Each week as may be tho^t most Advantagious to the Inhabitants also that the first Meeting for the Choice of Town officers & other affairs Agreeable to the Laws of our Said Province Shall be held on the first Wednesday in May next which Meeting Shall be Notified by M^r Benjamin Bellows who is hereby Also Appointed the Moderator of the said first Meeting

which he is to Notify & Govern Agreeable to the Law & Custom of our Said Province And that the Annual Meeting for ever hereafter for the Choice of Such officers for the Said Town Shall be on the first Tuesday in March annually—To HAVE & TO HOLD the said Tract of Land as above Expressed together with all Priviledges and Appurtenances to them or their respective heirs and assigns forever upon the following Conditions (Viz) that every Grantee his heirs & assigns Shall Plant or Cultivate five Acres of Land within the Term of five years for every fifty Acres Contained in his or their Share or Proportion of Land in the Said Township & Continue to Improve & Settle the same by Additional Cultivations on Penalty of the forfeiture of his Grant or Share in the said Township and its reverting to his Majesty his heirs and Successors to be by him or them re-granted to Such of his Subjects as shall Effectually Settle & Cultivate the Same—That all white & other Pine Trees within the Said Township fit for masting¹ our Royal Navy be Carefully Preserved for that use & none to be Cutt or fell'd without his Majesties Especial Lycence for so Doing first had & obtaind upon the Penalty of the forfeiture of the right of Such Grantee his heirs or assigns to us our heirs and Successors as well as being Subject to the Penalty of any Act or Acts of Parliament that now are or hereafter Shall be Enacted.

That before any further Division of the Said Land be made to and amongst the grantees A Tract of Land in the most Comodious Place the Land will admit of Shall be reserved & marked out for Town Lotts one of which shall be allotted to Each Grantee of the Contents of one Acre Yeilding & Paying therefor to us our heirs & Successors for the Space of Ten years to be Computed from the Date hereof the rent of One Ear of Indian Corn only on the first day of January next Ensueing the Date hereof—And every Proprietor Settler or Inhabitant Shall Yield & Pay unto us our heirs & Successors Yearly & Every Year for ever from & after the Expiration of the Ten years from the Date hereof Namely on the first Day of Jan^{ry} which will be in the Year of our Lord Christ One thousand seven hundred & Sixty three One Shilling Proclamation money for every hundred Acres he so owns Settles or Possesses and so in Proportion for a Greater or Lesser Tract of the Said Land which money shall be paid by the Respective Persons abovesaid their heirs or assigns in our Council Chamber in Portsmouth or to such officer or officers as Shall be appointed to receive the Same and this to

¹The mast trees were marked by the surveyor general or his deputy, and there was a fine of 100 pounds for cutting a tree thus marked.

be in Lieu of all other rents & services whatsoever In Wittness whereof We have Caused the Seal of Our said Province to be hereunto affixed Wittness BENNING WENTWORTH Esq our Governour & Com'ander in Chieff of our Said Province the 11th Day of April in the year of our Lord Christ 1753 & in the 26th year of our reign—

B Wentworth

By his Excellencys Com'and with Advice of Council

Theodore Atkinson Sec^{ry}

Entred & recorded According to the Original under the Province Seal the 11th Day of April 1753—

Ⓢ Theodore Atkinson Sec^{ry}

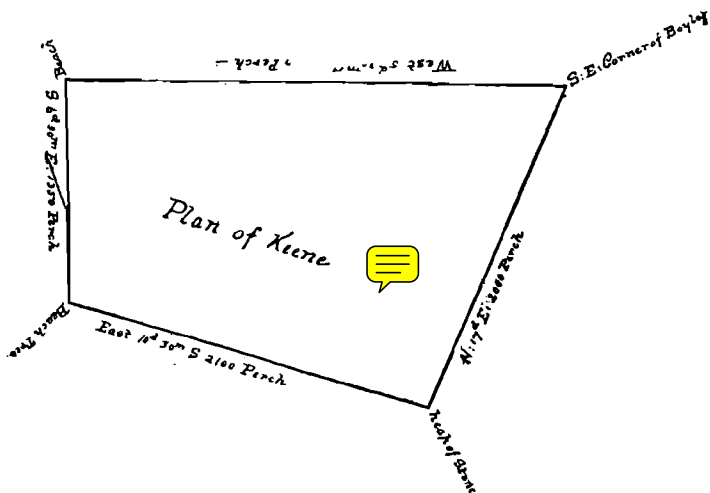
The Names of the Grantees of Keene—Viz—

John Adams,	Jacob Bacon,	Thomas Bacon,
Stephen Blake,	Nathan Blake,	Obediah Blake,
Elijah Blake,	Sam ^l Brigham,	Nathan Bucknam,
John Ballard's heirs,	Isaac Clark,	Ebenezer Daniels,
Edward Dale,	Eph ^m Dorman,	Sam ^l Ellis,
Joseph Ellis,	Gideon Ellis,	Titus Belden,
Eleazer Sanger,	Benj ^a Bellows,	Joseph Fisher,
Samuel Fisher,	Benj ^a Gile,	Ebenezer Forces's heirs,
Jacob Gibbs,	Sarah Green,	Joseph Gile's heirs,
Jeremiah Hall,	Benjamin Halls' heirs,	Daniel Hawse,
Nathaniel Heaton,	Seth Heaton,	Jabez Hill,
Daniel Kingsbury,	Richard Man,	Henry Messenger's heirs,
John Fairbanks,	Michael Medcalf jun ^r ,	Ebenezer Nims,
Joseph Peabodys heirs,	David Nims,	Samuel Read,
Israel Houghton,	Timothy Puffer,	John Richardson,
Josiah Willard,	Moses Richardson,	Asa Richardson
John Rogers,	Will ^m Smeed,	Samuel Smith,
Benj ^a Twitchell,	Jon ^a Underwood,	Andrew Wilder,
Joseph Whitcome,	John Whiteing,	Amos Foster
David Foster,	Jeremiah Hall jun ^r ,	Jonah French,
John French,	Philemon Chandler jun ^r ,	His Excellency

Benning Wentworth Esq one Tract of Land of the Contents of five hundred Acres One Sixty forth Parte of the Said Tract for the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign Parts, One Sixty forth Parte of the Said Tract for the first Settled Minister of the Gospel in S^d Town One Sixty forth Parte of the said Tract for A Glebe for the Church of England as by Law Established Philemon Chandler, Ebenezer Day,—

Recorded from the Back of the Charter for Keene the 11th Day of April 1753—

Ⓢ Theodore Atkinson Sec^{ry}



Taken from the Plan on the Back of the Charter of Keene & record the 11th April 1753

⌘ Theodore Atkinson Sec^{ry}

The original charter, framed, hangs in the office of the mayor and city clerk in city hall building.

In compliance with the terms of the charter, "Mr. Benjamin Bellows" of Walpole gave the required notice, and the first town meeting was held in the fort on Wednesday, the second day of May. The record is as follows:

"At a Legal meeting of the Proprietors and Inhabitants of the Town of Keen Held on Wednesday the second Day of May ADom. 1753 Assembled at the Fort in s^d Town: The Following votes were Passed—

"1 Choose Ephraim Dorman Michael Metcalf and William Smeed Selectmen, 2 Choose David Nims Town Clerk Choose David Nims Town Treasurer, Choose Ebenezer Nims Constable, Choose Gideon Ellis and Isaac Clark seveyors of the Highway, Choose Jonah French And William Barran Hog Reifes, Leut Seth Heaton and Nathan Blake Fence Veivers, Choose John French and Samuel Hall Field Drivers. Voted that Town Meetings shall be Warned for the Future by Posting up a Notification in the most Publick Place in This Town Fouteen Days before the meeting.

Benjamin Bellows } Moderator
David Nims } Town Clerk."

On the same day, a meeting of the proprietors was also held in the fort. The proceedings were recorded as follows:

“Province of New Hampshire.

“at a Legal Meeting of the Proprietors of the Township of Keene held on the first Wednesday of May Anno Dom. 1753 according to a warrant Set up to Notify the Proprietors of said Township of Keene by Benjⁿ Bellows which by Order of Charter was to Notify the Same Said Meeting being Held at the Fort in Said Township on the Day above Said Benjⁿ Bellows being Moderator.

“2^y Voted on the Second article and Chose Benjⁿ Bellows Proprietors Clerk for the Township of Keene.

“3^y Chose M^r William Smeed M^r Isaac Clark M^r Nathan Blake Cap^t Jeremiah Hall and M^r David Foster to be a Committee for to see to the Survey of the Lands that have been voted to be Laid out in Said Township which is not as yet Laid out and also to See to the Running the Bounds of what has been already Laid out and approve of the same that they may be Recorded in the New Proprietors Book—”

The vote on the 4th article provided for the calling of proprietors' meetings similar to that already in force.

“5^y Voted to Benjamin Bellows one Hundred and Twenty two Spanish Milled Dollars for his Service and Expence in getting the Charter of Keene.

“Voted to M^r Ephraim Dorman Eight Dollars for his Service in going to Portsmouth.

“Voted to Raise one Hundred and Twenty Two Pounds old tenor for the Use of Preaching the Present year.

“Voted that they Renew all the Bounds of all the Lotts that have been Laid out in Said Township and where any Lot has not been Laid out that the Committee Chosen Lay out with a Surveyor those Lots to those men according to the Former votes of the Prop^{rs} and that the Plans of the Same be allowed of by the Committee In order to be Recorded and that every mans Land be Recorded according to what he now holds or Claims and that Each man be at the Cost of his Land being Surveyed and Recorded.

“6^y Chose M^r Michael Metcalf Jun^r Prop^{rs} Treasurer.

“7^y Chose M^r Isaac Clark M^r Obadiah Blake M^r Ephraim Dorman assessors.

“8^y Voted and Chose M^r William Smeed Collector to Collect y^e Dollars that was voted—voted and Chose M^r Amos Foster Collector to Collect the money Granted for the Use of Preaching the Present year.

"9^{ly} Voted to Theodore Attkinson Esq^r Three Hundred acres of Land to be Laid out in the undivided Land in Sd Township to be Laid out in good Form Said Land to be Laid out by Benjⁿ Bellows M^r William Smeed and Cap^t Jeremiah Hall a Committee appointed to Lay it out according to the best of their Discretion.

"Also voted to Cap^t Jeremiah Hall Three Hundred acres of Land to be Laid out in Said Township by a Committe for his Extraordinary Cost and Trouble in Time Past he Giving a Discharge to the Proprietors for what money was Due to him from the Proprietors, Said Land to be Laid out in that Part of Land that is added on the East of the old Line by the New Charter and that M^r Nathan Blake & M^r William Smeed and Benjⁿ Bellows be a Committe to Lay out the Same then voted to Dismiss the meeting.

Benjⁿ Bellows moder
Benjⁿ Bellows Prop^{rs} Clerk."

"The inhabitants immediately directed their attention to the concerns of religion. As a place for public worship, they erected a building, on a green plat near the house of Aaron Appleton.¹ It was built of slabs, the earth serving as a floor. And, with the inhabitants of Swanzey, they made a joint arrangement for the settlement of a pastor."
(Annals, page 31.)

A second town meeting was held at the fort on the 13th of June:

"1. Choose Ephraim Dorman Moderator.

"2 made Choice of the Rev'd Mr. Carpenter for Our Minister—

"3 For Incouragement or Settlement, voted to give the Rev'd Mr. Carpenter the Sum of Fifty Pounds Silver money at Six shillings and Eaight Pence pr Ounce.—Or Equivalent in Our own Province Bills. 4^{ly} Voted that the Town Yearly Find Mr. Carpenter Twent Cord of Fire wood.

"5^{ly} Choose Capt Jeremiah Hall Michael Metcalf and William Smeed For a Committe to Lay the Proposal made by the Town before the Rev'd Mr. Carpenter.

Ephraim Dorman } Moderator
David Nims } Town Clerk "

"Keen June 13th 1753.

At this time the inhabitants of Keene expected to support a minister without assistance, but the churches of Keene and Swanzey agreed to unite and each bear half the expense.

¹ Where the Roman Catholic church now stands.

It appears from the records of the church in Swanzey, where Mr. Carpenter resided, that the two churches not only "covenanted together to hire preaching in connection" but that the members of each "met at the school house" in that town on the 21st of August, 1753, and "agreed to become one church." The members from Keene present at that meeting were Jeremiah Hall, David Foster, William Smeed, Nathan Blake, Joseph Ellis, Ebenezer Nims and Ebenezer Day.

The following was copied from Mr. Carpenter's own handwriting:

"The towns of Swanzey and Keene in New Hampshire (formerly stiled Lower and Upper Ashuelot) having mutually and unanimously agreed to be one Religious Society and to Worship together for the space of three years, the Towns being at Equal Expense In the support of the Gospel During the Term. * * * * The Chh also having Signed the Covenant Consequent on said agreement and become one Church The Pastoral Care of these Chh's & Towns was solemnly Committed to me on Oct. 4th 1753.
* * * *

Ezra Carpenter."

But each town had its own meetinghouse. Mr. Carpenter was permitted to choose his place of residence and he chose Swanzey.¹ At the expiration of the three years the connection was continued yearly for four years more.

At the installation of Mr. Carpenter over the two churches "there were present by their elders etc., the First Church in Hingham, the Third Church in Plymouth, the Church in Kingston in the County of Plymouth, the First Church in Lancaster, the Church in Nichewong, the Church in Poquoiag (Athol), the Church in Deerfield, the Church in Sunderland, and the Church in Northfield." (Swanzey Church Records.)

"Feb. 29, 1754,

"It was voted that the Three Deacons should be dropt, viz. Deacon Foster, Deacon Brown and Deacon Hammond and a New choice made at y^e same time Mr. David Foster & Mr. Jonathan Hammond were chosen again into Sd office. It was moreover Voted that the Sacrament of y^e Lords Supper be Celebrated the first Lords

¹ For description of that residence see personal sketch of Rev. Ezra Carpenter.

Days in March, June, September and December if provision can be made & nothing Intervene to hinder it—This Method to Continue till we may see Reason to alter it.”

And it was also agreed that “Six Shillings old Tenor Massachusetts Money be paid by each Communicant to support the Communon Table.” (Swanzey Church Records.)

Another meeting of the proprietors, held at 10 o'clock in the forenoon on the 19th of December, 1753, chose Benjamin Bellows moderator, and David Foster clerk.

As above quoted from the Annals, the proprietors had provided a temporary building for worship and other public uses, and this meeting was held “at the meeting house (so called) in said Town.” It was sometimes called the “Public meeting place.” The committee formerly chosen to take care of the blacksmith's tools were instructed to look them up and deliver them to a committee consisting of Ebenezer Clark, William Smeed and Michael Metcalf.

On the same day at 2 o'clock in the afternoon a town meeting was held at the same place, Ephraim Dorman, moderator. That meeting “Voted to Build a meeting House Forty Five Feet Long and Thirty Five Feet wide and Twenty Two Feet Between Joints,”—and “adjourned to Wednesday the Second Day of January Next att one of the Clock in the afternoon and To meet at the Public meeting Place.”

Apparently there were doubts about the legality of that meeting, for on the same day the selectmen, in writing, directed the constable—Ebenezer Nims—to “Warn the Freeholders and Inhabitance of the Town of Keene Qualified to vote in Town Meetings, To meet at the meeting House in s^d Keen on Wednesday the Second Day of January Next at Three o'clock in the afternoon.”

That meeting was warned and held as directed, and Capt. Jeremiah Hall was chosen moderator. But the records say it immediately “adjourned to Two of the Clock¹ in the afternoon and Then to meet at the House of Michael Metcalf.” It then “Voted to The Rev'd Mr. Carpenter for a Sallary for this pres^t [present] year Twenty Six Pounds Silver Money at six shillings and Eaight Pence

¹ Apparently adjourning backwards one hour, and leaving the meetinghouse to the other meeting which had adjourned to meet there at one o'clock the same afternoon.

pr oz. or equivalent in our own Province Bills." The records of this meeting are signed:

"Jeremiah Hall } moderator
David Nims } Town Clerk."

The other town meeting, adjourned from the 19th of December to one o'clock of the same afternoon as the above—Jan. 2, 1754—at the "Public meeting Place"—Ephraim Dorman moderator, David Nims town clerk—"Voted to set the meeting House in the Croch of the Roads¹ so called, one of the Roads Leading up the River and the other Leading over the River to ash Swamp so called—

"Voted that one Hundred Pounds in Bills of New Tenour of this Province be Raised on the Pools and Rateable Estates of this Town and Paid into the Treasury To Defray the Charges that shall arise in the Building s^d House.

"Voted Michael Metcalf Ebenezer Clark Nathan Blake Isaac Clark and Dea. David Foster be a Committee to manage the affair in Building the House."

"Ephraim Dorman } Moderator
David Nims } Town Clerk."

"Keen Jan^r 2^d 1754."

A meeting on the 28th of the same month, at the same place—Michael Metcalf, moderator—reconsidered the vote locating the meetinghouse, "upon Consideration of the Unfitness of the Ground to set a meeting House and the Exposedness to Fire and to the Enemy in Case of a war," and "Voted that the meeting House be set upon the Road that goeth From the Town Street to the Mills on the Highest Ground Between the Causeway by William Smeeds and the Bridge by the Clay Pitts Near Eleazer Sangers Land Lying on sd Road."

"The mills here mentioned must have been the mills on Beaver Brook, and the road Washington-street. At this time, probably, there was no road where the East end of West-street now is. Mr. Guild states, from his own recollection, that the South side of the meeting-house was about on a line with the North line of West-street, as it now runs."

(Annals, page 32.)

William Smeed lived on the east side of Main street next south of the present track of the railroad, and the "causeway" was in the line of the street a little north of

¹Near where Hon. C. J. Woodward now lives,

that track. The "bridge" was a little northwest of our present city hall. This "highest ground" was on a line with West and Roxbury streets as they now run, and the meetinghouse was built about where the soldiers' monument now stands.

The first annual town meeting was held at the "Public meeting Place" on Tuesday, the 5th of March, 1754, as required by the charter.

Michael Metcalf was chosen moderator; David Nims, town clerk; Dea. David Foster, Ephraim Dorman, Michael Metcalf, David Nims and Nathan Blake, selectmen; and Benjamin Twitchell and William Smeed, surveyors of highways. William Smeed and Gideon Ellis were added to the committee to build the meetinghouse.

The fifth article in the warrant was "To se if they will Reconsider the vote pas'd at Our Last meeting Relating to the Place of the setting the meeting House." Voted to dismiss the article.

The next meeting of the proprietors was opened "at the House Commonly used for a Meeting House" on the 24th of December in the same year—Michael Metcalf, moderator, and David Foster, proprietors' clerk—and adjourned to the house of Joseph Ellis.

"Upon the fourth Article Voted that those that have Lands in the Township of Keene make out their title to their Lands at or before the first Day of October which will be in the year of our Lord 1755 Unto a Com^{tee} Chosen for that Purpose.

"Upon the Fifth article Chose M^r David Nims, Lieut Ephraim Dorman, Cap^t Michael Metcalf, Lieut Seth Heaton, Sergeant Eben^r Nims a Com^{tee} to See that Prop^{rs} title to Lands in this Township be Lawful and good and upon their making out a good Title to give them Liberty to have the Same Recorded in the Prop^{rs} Book of Records."

The 6th article, "to See if the Prop^{rs} will Dispose of Some of their Lands to Defray the Charge of the meeting House in s^d Township," was dismissed.

Among the earliest roads opened in town was the one now named Beaver street, laid out by the selectmen in 1754. It had been used as a highway previous to that time.