

CHAPTER IX.

REVOLUTIONARY WAR—CONCLUDED.

1778—1783.

A town meeting held at the schoolhouse, Jan. 19, 1778, Col. Isaac Wyman, moderator, "after reading and conferring upon the articles of Confederation of the Continental Congress," voted to instruct the representative to vote in favor of calling a convention of delegates from the towns with a view to forming a plan of government for the state, in accordance with the recommendation of the house of representatives passed on the 27th of December previous.

"Voted to adjust the sums paid to Continental soldiers so as to put all on equality."

The legislature met at Exeter on the 11th of February. Major Timothy Ellis represented Keene. On the 25th, the articles of confederation of the states were adopted, and a convention of delegates from all the towns was called to meet at Concord on the 10th of June, to form a plan of government for the state. In the effort to relieve the financial distress of the people, another issue of 40,000 pounds of paper money was added to that already afloat.

The courts were reëstablished, and Col. Samuel Ashley of Winchester was appointed first justice of the court of common pleas for Cheshire county, with Col. Benjamin Bellows of Walpole, Col. Samuel Hunt of Charlestown, and Dea. Thomas Applin of Swanzey, associate justices. Other appointments had been made, but no regular courts had been held since 1774, until this year. Col. Isaac Wyman was appointed one of the justices to administer the oath to the judges.

In April, the town chose Capt. Jeremiah Stiles delegate to the convention which met at Concord on the 10th of June, "to form a Constitution and plan of government for the state."

In May, three of the selectmen, Jeremiah Stiles, Silas Cook and Simeon Clark, petitioned the legislature for permission to set up a lottery for the purpose of raising money to build a bridge across the "East Branch," at South Keene. The sum needed, in the currency of the time, was estimated at \$6,500. The petition was supported by another signed by the selectmen of Dublin, Jaffrey and Rindge; but the request was not granted. The bridge which had previously been built there had been nearly destroyed by high water.

When Gen. Clinton left Philadelphia in June, to march across New Jersey to New York, Washington moved out from his encampment at Valley Forge to strike him on the flank. He had formed a light infantry corps of 1,500 men, giving Col. Cilley of New Hampshire command of one of the regiments, with Henry Dearborn promoted to lieutenant colonel. That corps, and particularly Cilley's regiment,¹ was composed chiefly of New Hampshire men—acknowledged to be among the best in the army—and, from tradition and other indirect data, it is believed that the Keene company, under Capt. Ellis, was in that corps, though the records which doubtless would have established that fact were destroyed by the British at Washington, in 1814.² Poor's brigade and all the New Hampshire troops were in the division of Gen. Charles Lee, who was sent forward by Washington to make the attack on Clinton. But Lee was a coward and a traitor, and skulked to the rear, leaving his troops to be attacked at disadvantage and thrown into some confusion and compelled to retreat. Two miles to the rear they met Washington, who reformed them behind a battery of twelve pieces of artillery, which he had placed on a ridge. It was just at the close of the day, and the British began to retire. Without knowing what troops they were, Washington sent orders to Cilley to advance

¹ "Cilley's New Hampshire regiment was the most distinguished corps in the battle of Monmouth, and the salvation of the army was owing to their heroic courage." (Col. Swett, in Appendix to Humphrey's Life of Gen. Putnam.)

² Ziba Hall (a member of Capt. Ellis's company), "son of Jesse Hall & Achsah his wife Dyed in the army at Pennsylvania state January 28 1778 aged 21 years wanting one Day.

"William Nelson (of Keene) Dyed in the army Novem. 3d 1776 in the 46th year of Life.

"William Nelson son of the above Dyed in the army April 14th 1778 in the 18th year of Life." (Town Record of Deaths.)

and attack, and the order was promptly obeyed. When within 200 yards of them, the enemy turned to repel the attack. Col. Cilley deployed his regiment into line; but there were two rail fences between the two lines of combatants. The New Hampshire men marched up and coolly took down those fences—the last one within sixty yards of the British, who poured in a heavy fire which our men did not deign to return—then deliberately shouldered arms and advanced to charge them with the bayonet. The enemy fled, fled off by their left into a swamp, and renewed the fight. Cilley's men wheeled to the right and again advanced upon them, and when within four rods halted, dressed lines, and gave them a volley from the whole battalion front. The enemy again fled and joined their main body.¹ Poor's brigade was engaged to the left of Cilley. Our army now advanced and recovered the field of battle.

In the early part of this year, a regiment under Col. Timothy Bedel was raised and stationed along the frontier, for the protection of the Connecticut valley, now exposed to invasion by Indians, Tories and Canadians; and Col. Hazen's regiment of Continental troops, composed partly of New Hampshire men, marched from Springfield, Mass., to No. 4, and thence to the upper Connecticut valley for the same purpose.

A brigade under Gen. Whipple was also raised for Gen. Sullivan's campaign against the British in Rhode Island. Col. Moses Nichols joined that brigade with nine companies of his militia regiment; Col. Enoch Hale, of Rindge, went with four of his companies—one commanded by Capt. Samuel Twitchell, of Dublin, another by Capt. James Lewis, of Marlboro—and Capt. William Lee, of Chesterfield, commanded a company in the battalion of Col. Moses Kelly, of Goffstown. The men from Keene who enlisted in that campaign were Joseph Brown, Ephraim Witherell, Walter Wheeler, Thomas Morse, and Arthur Cary, who went for Surry.

When Washington's army went into winter quarters, in November, Putnam's division, in which were our New

¹ Washington sent an aide to inquire what regiment it was. "Cilley's of New Hampshire—full blooded Yankees, by God, Sir," was Dearborn's reply. (Col. Swett, in Appendix to Humphrey's Life of Gen. Putnam.)

Hampshire troops, marched to Danbury, Conn., built log-huts and quartered there. Lt. Col. Dearborn, with 400 New Hampshire men, did garrison duty a part of the winter at New London.

In November, the legislature passed an act confiscating the property of certain prominent and obnoxious Tories in the state. Among them were Breed Batcheller, of Packersfield; Simon Baxter and William Baxter, of Alstead; "Josiah Pomeroy, physician; Elijah Williams, Esq.; Thomas Cutler (or Cutter), Gentleman; Eleazur Sanger, yeoman, and Robert Gilmore, yeoman, of Keene." Benjamin Giles, of Newport, Major Timothy Ellis, of Keene, and Elijah Babcock were appointed the committee to enter and take possession of the confiscated estates in this county. Those estates were placed in charge of the judge of probate, and in 1780, Daniel Newcomb, who had come to Keene in 1778, and begun the practice of law, was appointed administrator of the estates of Dr. Pomeroy and Elijah Williams, and their estates were settled the same as in case of deceased persons; and the other confiscated estates were disposed of in a similar manner.

The annual town meeting this year voted to seat the meetinghouse and chose Silas Cook, Abraham Wheeler, Simeon Clark, Reuben Partridge and Ichabod Fisher, a committee to direct the work.

The adjourned constitutional convention met in June, and sent out a "Bill of Rights and Plan of Government" to be voted on by the people. That plan was rejected, Keene voting unanimously against it; and the laws continued to be administered under the temporary government adopted for the war.

The legislature met at Exeter on the 16th of June, Lieut. Josiah Richardson representing Keene. On the 18th, the resignation of Samuel Ashley of Winchester, as colonel, and the next day, that of Joseph Hammond of Swanzey, as lieutenant colonel "of the 6th regiment of militia," were received and accepted; leaving Major Timothy Ellis of Keene in command of the regiment, and he was soon afterwards promoted to the colonelcy.

During that month, another call came for troops for

Rhode Island, and a battalion of 300 men, under Col. Mooney, was raised for a short term. Ephraim Witherell of Keene was a sergeant, afterwards promoted to ensign, in the company of Capt. Ephraim Stone of Westmoreland; and Arthur Cary enlisted on the quota of Surry in the same company, but John Hill went as his substitute. Joseph Brown of Keene also enlisted in the same battalion.

The legislature offered a bounty of \$300 to each man who would enlist, in addition to the \$200 offered by congress. The quota of Major Ellis's regiment for that service, that year, was thirty-three men. Three enlisted for Keene—Lemuel Tucker,¹ John Green and John Hill—hired from out of town to fill the quota in accordance with a vote of the town. Keene was still a recruiting station, and Major Ellis, the muster-master, and forty-seven men mustered by him, marched from here during the summer to join the Continental army. They were paid six pounds each for billeting from here to Springfield, Mass.

In 1778, the Seneca Indians, aided by the British, had destroyed the village of Wyoming, in Pennsylvania, massacred or carried away captives all the inhabitants, and burned every dwelling. With the opening of the spring of 1779, upon the solicitation of Washington, Gen. Sullivan was appointed to the command of an expedition into the country of those Indians to chastise them, and prevent further outrages of that kind. Sullivan asked for the New Hampshire troops, and Poor's brigade, in the Third regiment of which was the Keene company, Capt. Ellis, was assigned to him. Early in April, the command left its quarters and marched via Peekskill, N. Y., and Easton, Pa., to Wyoming, and thence up the Susquehanna river into the beautiful Chemung valley in New York, destroyed the Indian town of that name and the crops and villages wherever found. Near the junction of the Tioga and Susquehanna rivers, Sullivan was joined by a force from the Mohawk valley, which gave him three brigades, numbering about 4,000 men. On the 29th of August, at the Indian village of Newtown, near the present Elmira, he

¹ Revolutionary Rolls, vol. 3, pages 700-2, give an account of the pay and bounties received by the soldiers named above.

attacked the savages under Joseph Brandt, with about 200 British under Capt. Butler, and routed them. Three Americans were killed and thirty-two wounded. Capt. Elijah Clayes, of Fitzwilliam, and one lieutenant were mortally wounded. The village was burned and the crops destroyed. The expedition advanced to Seneca and Cayuga lakes and thence to the Genesee valley, sending out detachments and burning and destroying everything as they went, among them the large Indian town of Canandaigua. All through those beautiful valleys of western New York, they found a surprising degree of civilization, thriving villages, extensive peach and apple orchards, luxuriant crops of all kinds, and everything to indicate prosperity, wealth and happiness. The stronghold of the Senecas, near the present Geneseo, was a town of 128 comfortable houses, with well kept gardens and a general air of comparative luxury and refinement. All these were destroyed. Not a building or a field of crops was anywhere left standing. The army penetrated to within twenty miles of Lake Ontario, and then returned, reaching Easton, Pa., on the 15th of October. The New Hampshire troops, Stark's brigade joining them, again wintered in Connecticut, at a place called Wild Cat.

At an adjournment of a town meeting, held on the 7th of September, 1779—the one that voted against the proposed plan of state government—the following preamble and vote were passed: “Whereas the Selectmen of Portsmouth sent an address to this and the rest of the towns in this State, desiring their presence and assistance, by their delegates, to meet at Concord, in convention, to see if they can come into some agreement to state the price of the several articles bought and sold in this state; therefore, voted, that Capt. Jeremiah Stiles attend said convention, as a delegate from this town.”

At another meeting on the 20th of October, the town voted 330 pounds to pay the expense of raising men for the Rhode Island campaign, and 431 pounds for that of raising men for the Continental service.

Article 6, “To see if the Town will do any thing towards providing stuff for Building a new meeting house,” was dismissed.

In November, the legislature granted the petition of Gen. James Reed for "the use and improvement of a certain house and about twenty-five acres of land adjoining in Keen, being the confiscated estate of Dr. Josiah Pomeroy, an absentee, until further order of this Court, and that he enter into possession as soon as the present Lease expires." The judge of probate was directed "not to sell the confiscated estate of Dr. Josiah Pomeroy." The location of Dr. Pomeroy's residence has already been described (page 215). Gen. Reed came to Keene soon after this time and occupied those premises. "This Gen. Reed, whose ordinary place of residence was Fitzwilliam, is remembered here as an aged blind man, and as almost daily seen, after the close of the war, walking up and down Main-street, aiding, and guided by, Mr. Washburn, who was paralysed on one side. He received a pension." (Annals, page 51.)

A town meeting on the 7th of December, 1779, chose Lieut. Josiah Richardson representative to the legislature; and dismissed the article, "To see if it be the mind of the Town to choose a committee to state the price of Articles bought and sold, agreeable to the convention of this state."

The winter of 1779-80 was one of great severity and hardship, and there was much suffering both among the people and in the army. The crops had not been abundant, and provisions were so scarce in New Hampshire that the legislature prohibited their export except in certain cases. The paper money of congress was now so depreciated that it took thirty dollars of it to buy one dollar's worth of commodities, and its value was still waning. People in the vicinity of the army declined to take it for provisions, even to keep the soldiers from starving, until they were told that the provisions must be had and would be taken in any event, when they reluctantly sold at exorbitant prices. The soldiers were dissatisfied, and desertions and failures to reënlist reduced the army to a skeleton. Very few accepted the large bounties offered. Many soldiers were at home on furlough, and officers on leave, most of them destitute of money. An act was passed by the legislature granting \$400 to each private and \$500 to

each non-commissioned officer "in part of depreciation" of the currency; and in February it was voted "That there be advanced * * * * towards depreciation, to each colonel \$4,000, to each captain \$2,000," and other officers according to rank, "to enable them to repair to the army." Congress made a requisition on New Hampshire for \$15,000,000, which was voted to be raised by taxation, notwithstanding the poverty of the people.

"In this year [1779], Capt. Mack, of Gilsum, probably incited by some of the zealous whigs in Keene, collected a party with a view of apprehending several tories, who resided here, and who were suspected of furnishing the enemy with provisions. On the evening of the 30th of May,¹ they assembled at Partridge's tavern, near Wright's mills, on the road to Surry. In the night, Mack sent forward several men, with directions to place themselves separately at the doors of those houses where the tories resided, and prevent their escape. At sunrise he rode into Keene, at the head of his party, with a drawn sword; and when he came to the house of a tory, he ordered the sentinel, standing at the door, to 'turn out the prisoner.' The prisoner being brought out, and placed in the midst of his party, he proceeded onward. Having gone through the street, collected all of them, and searched their cellars for provisions, of which he found little, he returned to the tavern of Mr. Hall, situated where Dr. Twitchell's house now stands, and confined them in a chamber.

"But when he first made his appearance, information was sent to Mr. Howlet, who then commanded the militia, of the commotion in the village. He instantly sent expresses to warn his company to appear forthwith in the street, with their arms and ammunition. They came about the middle of the forenoon, were paraded, facing South, in front of the meeting-house, then standing South of where it now does—on a line with the North line of West-street—and were ordered to load their guns with powder and ball. Mack paraded his company across the street from the tavern to the Watson house, facing their antagonists. Col. Alexander, of Winchester, who then commanded the regiment, had been sent for, and now came. He asked Capt. Mack if he intended to pursue his object? I do,

¹ The first lines of a song, remembered by an aged citizen, fixes the day when this party visited Keene:

"Upon the thirty-first of May,
"Appeared in Keene, at break of day,
"A mob, both bold and stout."

Those who lived in these times, well remember that the muses were not silent amid the din of arms.

replied he, at the hazard of my life. Then, said the Colonel, emphatically, you must prepare for eternity, for you shall not be permitted to take vengeance, in this irregular mode, on any men, even if they are tories. This resolute speech cooled the ardor of many. After deliberating a while, Mack ordered his party to face about, and led them a short distance southward; and the militia then went into the meeting-house. Not long afterwards the mob faced about again, and marched silently, by the meeting-house, towards Surry; but though silently, they did not march in silence, for the women, as they passed, furnished noisy and lively music, on tin pans and warming pans, until they disappeared from view.

"This occurrence is now [1850] related on the authority of John Guild, who then lived in the village, is now eighty-one years of age, and distinctly remembers what then took place. He says, moreover, that one of the tories taken was a Mr Wadsworth, a blacksmith, who lived in a house situated where Dr. C. G. Adams's house now is, and was called the Fort House. The relics of a blacksmith's shop are still visible on the lot adjoining Dr Adam's, North.

"The relater's father, Dan Guild, settled in Keene, in 1758, and lived in a house situated where the Judge Newcomb house was afterwards built and yet remains. He remembers that there was one room, in his father's house, the walls of which consisted of timber nearly a foot square, and presumes such timber was used as a protection against the Indians.

"Dan Guild was a somewhat distinguished man in those early times. He is described, in the town records, as Lieutenant Dan Guild; he was one of the committee appointed to 'judge, determine and act' on all violations of the laws of Keene, when all other laws were silent; he was jailor of the county, and removed the jail from the place where it was first established, near where the Emerald House stands, to his own house, then situated between the Field house and the Washburn house; or, to speak intelligibly to the present generation, between Dr Smith's house and the compiler's; a few years afterwards he was appointed one of a committee to build a new jail, and built one, of wood, in Washington-street, where the stone jail now stands."

(Annals, pages 54, 55.)

The winter of 1779-80 was the most severe that had ever been known in this country. "Chesapeake Bay is covered with solid ice from its head to the mouth of the Potomac. At Annapolis the ice is five to seven inches

thick, so that loaded teams pass over it." (Jefferson's notes.) "Snow was so deep in all New England that all roads were closed for some weeks." "People travelled only on snow-shoes." "Travel has not been so much obstructed for forty years." (Boston Chronicle, Jan. 28, 1780.)

The annual town meeting in 1780 voted to instruct the selectmen to adjust Mr. Hall's salary with him, in consequence of the depreciation of the currency, the equivalent sum to be ascertained in the month of September. (In October of that year the ratio of paper money to specie was 67 to 1.) Two thousand pounds were raised for the support of schools, the selectmen to act as school committee.

"Voted the Sum of Five Thousand pounds to be assessed on the pools and Estates for mending the roads in said Town said sum to be paid by the Inhabitation in Labour on said Roads at four Dollars for Each hours Labour per man and for Oxen and other utensils Equivalent as usual."

The article to reimburse the Continental soldiers for the depreciation of the currency was dismissed.

"Voted that the Singing in publick worship be performed without Reading Line by Line as they sing."

The 19th of May was remarkable for a thick darkness that extended over all New England, and adjacent parts of New York and Canada. Candles were lighted and fowls went to roost in the middle of the day. The cause was believed to be the smoke of extensive forest fires mingled with the vapors of a rainy morning.

In June, 1780, upon a requisition for more troops for the Continental service, the legislature ordered a draft, if found necessary, from the militia, and designated the quotas of the several regiments and towns. The quota of Keene was five men; and Peter Wilder, Daniel Day, Oliver Osgood and Nehemiah Town,¹ volunteered, and John Curtis was hired as a recruit from out of town. The term was for six months, and the town voted them a bounty of fifty dollars each, in currency "as it is valued and stipulated in the act of Court." The three first, and probably all, went into Lt. Col. Dearborn's corps of light infantry.

¹Josiah Reed of "Chickaby in Springfield" went as substitute for Nehemiah Town.

The legislature also called upon the towns "to furnish their respective proportions of the Quantity of Beef required by Congress for the supply of the army; That the Committee of Safety be directed to purchase such quantities of Rum as they shall see necessary from time to time, for the supply of the army; That each Town & place within this state be called upon to supply the Board of War their several quotas of clothing (especially shirts, stocks & stockings) for the supply of the army," etc. The people of the Connecticut valley were requested by the committee of safety not to sell their wheat and flour, but to hold them for sale to the state authorities.

A town meeting on the 20th of July, 1780, "voted to raise 11,309 lbs. Weight of Beef each person to have Liberty to pay his equal Proportion thereof in Beef or to pay so much money in Lieu thereof as he was taxed in the Last state and continental Tax."

A pressing call was also made in June for immediate reinforcements for the army, to serve three months. Two regiments were raised and sent forward via Worcester and Springfield. One of these was commanded by the veteran Col. Moses Nichols, of Amherst, in which was a company from Winchester, under Capt. Nehemiah Houghton. In that company, Joshua Durant was ensign, and Elijah Blake, Walter Wheeler and Joseph Brown were privates, all of Keene. The regiment was designed especially for the protection of West Point and joined Arnold's army at that post. Col. Nichols, with his regiment, encamped near Arnold's headquarters at the Robinson House, on the 10th of August, and were there at the time of his treason. Those troops were discharged on the 21st of October.

The legislature also ordered two companies of sixty men each to be raised for the protection of the western frontier of the state. Capt. Ephraim Stone of Westmoreland, commanded one of the companies, and Ebenezer Billings of Keene was a sergeant in his company.

About the middle of October, a party of 300 British and Indians under Lieut. Horton made a raid on Royalton, Vt., and towns in that vicinity, killed a number of the inhabitants, took twenty-five prisoners, burnt buildings and

plundered and destroyed property. The alarm spread rapidly, and that evening several hundred men collected at Royalton and organized, and pursued the enemy so hotly that they abandoned their plunder, but retained their captives. The alarm continued to spread—exaggerated in some cases until it became a panic—and volunteers rallied in all the towns in the Connecticut valley, and even in the central and eastern parts of the state. Col. Timothy Ellis went from Keene with two companies, under Captains John Houghton and Josiah Richardson, and marched as far as Haverhill. Nearly every town sent a company, and several of the larger ones sent two. But the marauders escaped with their prisoners and took them to Canada. One died, but the rest were exchanged and reached their homes the next summer.

During this season, the more active scenes of the war were in the South. The New Hampshire Continental troops were stationed in New Jersey, and upon the discovery of Arnold's treason, they were immediately ordered to West Point to defend that stronghold. Capt. William Ellis had resigned on the first of January, and, in July, Lieut. Benjamin Ellis was promoted to fill his place. Upon the approach of winter, the troops again built log-huts for quarters, at a place called Soldier's Fortune, on the Hudson river, and spent the winter there. The camp was called "New Hampshire Village."

Capt. Benjamin Ellis was at home that winter, on recruiting service, stationed at Charlestown. Col. Timothy Ellis was the muster-master here, and Keene was still a rendezvous for recruits and a depot of supplies. In January, the legislature had apportioned among the towns the number of recruits called for by congress for the Continental army, the towns to receive a bounty of twenty dollars for each recruit mustered into the service. At a meeting on the 7th of February, 1781, the town voted to raise its quota of twelve men at once; and chose a committee to divide the ratable inhabitants of the town into twelve classes, each class to furnish one man "upon their own charge" as soon as may be. That committee consisted of Capt. Josiah Richardson, Ichabod Fisher, Lieut.

Dan Guild, Lieut. Reuben Partridge, Major Davis Howlett and Silas Cook. Naboth Bettison and James Eddy, Keene men, who had already served one term of three years in Capt. Ellis's company, besides performing other service in 1775 and 1776, reënlisted for three years or the war, Eddy on the quota of Westmoreland. Silas Porter, sixteen years old, and John Morehouse, both of Charlestown, were hired and enlisted for the war, on the quota of Keene.

The annual town meeting in 1781 voted Mr. Hall's salary in the same way as the previous year; and raised eight thousand pounds for highways, "in Bills of old Continental Currency," to be paid in labor at the same rates as in the year before; and four thousand pounds in the same currency for schools. At an adjournment of that meeting in May, another quota of beef was voted to be raised for the army. On the same day, May 30, at a meeting warned for the purpose, Daniel Newcomb was chosen a delegate to the convention which met at Concord in June, "to form a constitution and plan of government for this state."¹ The same meeting nominated Thomas Baker for justice of the peace, and he was appointed and served as a magistrate for many years.

Again, in the spring of this year, the militia of the Connecticut valley was called upon for two companies of sixty-five men each, in addition to Whitcomb's battalion already in the field, to protect the western frontier of the state. Col. Ellis's quota was one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign and forty-four enlisted men, to serve till November. The rolls of those companies have not been preserved.

In June, upon the earnest solicitation of Washington, the legislature ordered another regiment of 650 men to be raised for the Continental army—to march to West Point. Keene was called upon for five men, and the names of those enlisted were Peter Rice, Zenas Lebourveau, Caleb Balch, Cyrus Balch and Asa Brittain. Rice died in the service, Nov. 20. The others were discharged Dec. 21. The regiment was commanded by Lt. Col. Daniel Reynolds (or Runnels), and had marched as far as Springfield, Mass.,

¹ That convention continued for more than two years and held nine sessions. (Belknap's History of New Hampshire.) Daniel Newcomb was the delegate from Keene during the convention.

when it was ordered to Charlestown, N. H., for the protection of the interests of New Hampshire in her controversy concerning the "New Hampshire Grants."

At that June session of the legislature was authorized the first public mail route in this part of the state, upon the proposition of John Balch of Keene; and on the 27th of July, it was established by the committee of safety. Mr. Balch was appointed post-rider, and he was to "set out from Portsmouth on Saturday morning & to ride to Haverhill by the way of Concord & Plymouth, and thence down the River to Charlestown, Keene and to Portsmouth again, which Tour is to be punctually performed once in each & every fourteen days."

"The said Balch is to Convey all public Acts, Letters & Dispatches free of Charge—For which Service he shall receive from this State seventy hard Dollars or paper money equivalent.—

M. Weare Prest^t"

"I, John Balch do hereby agree to the foregoing proposals and engage punctually to perform the duty of Post-rider agreeably thereto.

John Balch."

The first term was for three months, but Mr. Balch continued to ride for two years, and then Timothy Balch, of Keene, took the contract and rode two years, and was reappointed in 1785. The journey was made on horseback except in winter. The route remained substantially the same for several years. No appointment of a postmaster in Keene at this time has been found.

In August and September, 1781, Washington quickly transferred his army from around New York to Yorktown, Va., and on the 19th of October, Cornwallis surrendered. The war was virtually ended, and joy and exultation filled the hearts of the people.

Whether our soldiers from Keene were present at the surrender is not certainly known, but some of the New Hampshire troops¹ were in that movement. Upon their return, one regiment under Lt. Col. Henry Dearborn went into winter quarters at Saratoga, the other under Lt. Col. George Reid, on the Mohawk river, both in a department

¹"A majority of the American army that captured Cornwallis was composed of New England troops." (Daniel Webster—speech in United States senate.)

commanded by Gen. Stark, the three New Hampshire regiments having been consolidated into two.

A town meeting in November, 1781, chose Dea. Daniel Kingsbury representative for the ensuing year.

A meeting on the 11th of December, discussed the plan of government sent out by the convention for examination by the people, and though objecting to one paragraph, voted to accept it as it stood, rather than reject it. But that plan was rejected by the people of the state.

During the winter many officers and soldiers came home, as there was no call for their services. Most of them were destitute of money, and the state had no funds with which to pay them. In January, 1782, the legislature voted them one month's pay in beef and rum. The poverty of the nation and of the people was distressing. Congress had no power to impose taxes or collect duties—had no revenue whatever—and its paper promises to pay had constantly depreciated in value, until they were practically worthless. The nation, the states, and the towns were all deeply in debt.

In a letter to Col. Samuel Hunt, commissary at Charlestown, dated July 28, 1781, Mesech Weare, chairman of the committee of safety and acting governor of the state, had said:

“The Difficulty respecting the money is truly alarming—as for hard money, we have none, nor can it be procured on any terms. The Com^{tee} have sent you, by M^r Balch who is employed as a Post Rider three hundred pounds of the continental new Emission and will furnish you with more as necessity may require, if this will answer, and if the Continental Currency will not answer we have it not in our power to furnish any other.”

The country was still almost wholly covered with forest, and the people had been too poor to make roads, build bridges, or, except in a few cases, erect any but the cheapest dwellings. Specie was so scarce that trade was carried on chiefly by barter. The people were mostly farmers and subsisted on what they could raise, or obtain by exchanges, and clothed themselves with their own manufactures; while the few mechanics, merchants and professional men bartered their skill, their labor, or their goods for the

products of the soil and the skill and labor of others. The people, always inclined to expect too much from political measures, were disappointed at the results of their scheme of national independence, and some of them "longed for the flesh pots of Egypt." In some places they became refractory and mutinous.

In December of this year, a strong petition of Cheshire county men was sent to the general assembly representing:

"That your Petitioners together with Other Inhabitants of this State Labour under great and almost Intolerable Grievances for want of Currency; there being among us not One fourth part of hard money for a medium of Trade. Our Distance from the Seaports and our Situation in many Respects such that it is impossible for us to Obtain hard money in a way of trade—the consequence is that Law-suits are Daily increasing and Lawyers (tho often Necessary) take Exorbitant fees by means of the Laws being imperfect (in that Respect) all which Grievances have a tendency to stir up mobs, Riots, Anarchy & Confusion— We therefore humbly pray that your honours in your Wisdom will Devise means by which said Grievances may be Redressed by making State Securities Live Stock and Country Produce of all Kinds a Lawfull Tender to answer all Executions Levied on Debtors—said Securities Computed at their Nominal value and Country produce to be appraised by Substantial men; * * * * * we therefore pray your honours to take the same under your wise Consideration and grant us Such Relief therein as you shall think best and we as in Duty bound shall Ever pray—

"Decem^r 16 1782."

The names of citizens of Keene on that petition were:

"Stephen Griswold	John Griggs	Josiah Willard
Sam ^l Daniels	Benja Hall	Jonas Prescott
Thaddeus Metcalf	Caleb Tucker	David Nims Jr.
Michal Metcalf	Benja ⁿ Willis	Ebenezer Carpenter
Jesse Clark	Ezra Harvey	Timothy Ellis Jr.
Josiah Ellis	Aaron Willson	Abijah Metcalf."
Abijah Wilder	Thomas Fisher	
Ichabod Fisher	Elisha Briggs	

The controversy concerning the New Hampshire Grants threatened serious consequences. The western frontier of the state was still in danger from incursions of Indians and Canadians, and the state continued to maintain troops along that border. But negotiations were in progress for

a permanent peace, and the people looked forward eagerly and hopefully for better times.

The annual town meeting in 1782 voted eighty pounds for Rev. Mr. Hall's salary, and "one Hundred and Fifty Pounds for mending the Highways to be paid in Labour allowing to Each man four pence p^r hour for Every hours faithfull Labour and Two pence p^r hour for Each yoke of oxen and for other Utensils the price common among Neighbours." The paper currency had become so nearly worthless that the people had gone back to specie in their reckoning of values, although there was very little of it in the country. Fifty pounds was voted for schools and a bounty of forty shillings for every grown wolf "killed within this or any of the circumjacent towns and twenty shillings for a Wolfs whelp as aforesaid."

April 16, the town chose Ichabod Fisher, Capt. Josiah Richardson, Thomas Baker, Esq., Dea. Daniel Kingsbury and Lieut. Dan Guild a committee "to make an account of the Service Each man has Done in the present war and make an avaridge so that Each man may have credit for what he has already done in said Service, and also Divide or class the Inhabitance of said Town into Twelve Equal classes (credit for what Each man has Done to be given him) and Each class to provide or hire a man for the Space of three years or During the war upon their own cost (said classes to be so made that Each class pay Equal Taxes)." Four of the classes furnished men—Caleb Fitch, Levi Goodenough, Moses M. Howe and Archelaus Temple—who were mustered by Capt. Benjamin Ellis. It is not known whether more than one of them, Levi Goodenough, were residents of the town. The town had now advanced £135 9^s 5^d to her soldiers in the Continental army, which sum was afterwards allowed on her account for depreciation.

The plan of government was again discussed, and a new draft sent out by the convention was acted on in November, but all those first drafts were killed, with amendments proposed by the towns.

The legislature met at Concord in June. About 500 Indians, Iroquois, Ottawas and Chippewas, had appeared

at Chamblee on the St. John river, with the intention of making incursions into New York and New England. Two companies of fifty men each were ordered to be raised and sent forward immediately, to reinforce the troops already on the upper Connecticut for the protection of the north-western frontier. Col. Ellis was called upon for one captain and fourteen men from his regiment, and he sent Capt. Jonathan Smith of Surry. Elijah Blake and Abijah Hall—son of Jesse Hall, twenty-two years old—both of Keene, enlisted in that company. The Indians were dissuaded by Sir Guy Carleton, then in command of the British forces in America, from making raids; and this was the last menace of the enemy in the war of the Revolution.

A town meeting, on the 13th of September, 1782, chose Nathan Blake, Jr., Abijah Wilder and Elisha Briggs a committee "to oversee the Business of Building the Rev^d Mr. Hall's house and to agree with proper workmen for Carrying on the Same." The house, two stories high, fronting on Pleasant street, with an L running north, and a barn beyond, was built on the lot now occupied by the Keene Public Library. It stood a little nearer the street and a little farther east than the present edifice,¹ and had a large garden on the west which was highly and artistically cultivated by Mr. Hall, and after his death by Judge Joel Parker.

A town meeting on the 5th of November re-elected Dea. Daniel Kingsbury representative and chose Lieut. Benjamin Hall, Daniel Newcomb, Esq., and Thomas Baker, Esq., a committee "to give Instructions to said Representative."

Although the state had confiscated the real estate of obnoxious tories for its own benefit—in the cause of the patriots—it permitted the towns in which the property lay to tax it, the sums assessed being paid out of the state treasury or allowed in the settlement of the accounts of those towns, for state taxes, or for money raised to hire Continental soldiers. Certificates of the payment of

¹The lot was bought in 1864, by Henry Colony, of Julia E. Hall, a granddaughter of Rev. Aaron. In 1869 Mr. Colony built his house—now occupied by the public library—and to give place for it, the main part of the old parsonage was taken down but the L was removed by John Ahern, and is now the L of his present residence, 63 Castle street. The timbers of the main part were also used in the construction of his dwelling.

those taxes by the state, which continued for several years, may be found in New Hampshire State Papers, vol. 12, pages 320-2. There were two assessments in Keene in 1782, one for the state tax, the assessment being on

"Elijah Williams' land	£	1..	8..	9 ^d
Josiah Pomeroy's land	10..	14..	11½;"	

and one "for raising continental men * * *

Elijah Williams' land	£	1..	10..	10 ^d
Josiah Pomeroy's land	11..	10..	9	

"The above are true extracts from the Original assessments

Attest	} assessors for the year 1782.
Ichabod Fisher	
Reuben Partridge	

"Feb. y^e 4th 1785—

R^d an order on the Treas^r in behalf of the Selectmen for the Above Benjamin Hall"

The resignation of Timothy Ellis as colonel of the militia regiment in this part of the county was accepted by the legislature in February.

The annual town meeting in 1783 voted sixty pounds for schools, the districts to "provide their own masters and regulate their own affairs."

Peace having been declared, and the independence of the United States acknowledged, on the 19th of April—the eighth anniversary of the beginning of the war at Lexington—Washington issued a proclamation to the army announcing the cessation of hostilities. The troops were dismissed on furlough, but were not disbanded till October.

Upon the recommendation of congress, the several states "set apart the second Thursday in December as a day of public Thanksgiving;" and the day was religiously observed throughout the country.

Keene had furnished 225¹ enlistments for the war—217 of them by 134 citizens of the town, some volunteering more than once; and eight men hired from out of town.

A town meeting, June 19, 1783, "Voted unanimously that the Representative be instructed to Use his Influence that all absentees who have absented themselves from any

¹Probably these figures are too small, for the names of some volunteers were never entered on the rolls—as was the case with the Nelsons, father and son—and many rolls have been destroyed.

of the United States of America and Joined with or put themselves under the protection of the Enemies of the United States of America be utterly Debared from Residing within this state."

In October a petition was presented to the legislature by the "Gaoler" and others of Keene who "humbly shew that they conceive it would be very beneficial not only to the Public but to the Town of Keene in general, and the Poor Prisoners in Gaol here in particular, that y^e Limits of the Yard of the Prison here might be extended beyond what it now is by law, sixty feet, so as to take in a Barn and Shop that would be very convenient for them to labour in and thereby Earn something for their Support during their being obliged to remain in said Gaol until they can sware out; * * * * And as in duty bound will ever pray

Dan Guild, Gaoler	Abner Sanger
Thos Baker	Nathan Blake jur
N: Cooke	Thomas Field
Benja Hall	Israel Houghton"
Jer Stiles	

We also find the following:

"State of New Hampshire: In Committee of Safety, Exeter, Nov^r 21, 1783.

"Pursuant to an order of the General Court, the Excise on Spirituous Liquors will be farmed at Public Vendue for the term of one year from the first day of October last by Committees appointed for that purpose, and at the times and places hereafter mentioned, viz.

* * * * *

"For the County of Cheshire at the House of Mr. Aaron Eames,¹ Innholder in Keene, on Thursday the 22d day of January next at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. * * * *

M. Weare, Presid^t.

"By order of the Com^{tee}"

The committee for the sale of said excise in Keene was "Mr. Daniel Kingsbury & Capt. Josiah Richardson or either of them for Cheshire."

In the distress of the times a convention met at Peterboro, in October, to consult upon grievances with a view

¹Aaron Eames was keeping the Ralston tavern in 1786. (Deed to Wm. Todd, grantee.)

to laying them before the legislature, and Major Davis Howlett was sent as a delegate from Keene; but nothing came of that movement. On the 31st of October, the state convention at Concord adopted a constitution which was accepted by the people and became the fundamental law of the state.

The number of ratable polls in town this year, as returned by the selectmen to the general assembly in December, was 228.