CHAPTER VIII

THE MEETING-HOUSE AND THE GUNS OF BUNKER HILL

The old Jaffrey Meeting-house is beautiful for situation, but is not in itself more beautiful or stately than a dozen meeting-houses that may be seen in a two hours' drive in New England on a summer afternoon. No famous architect drew its lines; it lacks the pillared portico and dentilated cornice that distinguished many of later years. In its plain exterior it is one of the few remaining examples of the early type known as the barn meeting-house. And yet it is prized in Jaffrey as the town's dearest possession; a barn, if you will, but a barn glorified and sanctified by its uses and associations. Its rough posts exposed to view with the ax-marks of the hewers upon them the people of Jaffrey would not exchange for alabaster columns inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The old Meeting-house is treasured because of its associations with the heroic age in town and nation, with love of home and country and all that knits the human heart to its environment. Maxwelton's banks are bonny, not because they are more beautiful than the banks of a thousand meadow brooks unknown and unsung, but because they are associated in poetry and song with a sentiment universal in its appeal to the human heart. Association has made shrines of a dozen old country inns because at some time when on a journey Washington spent in them an uncomfortable night. Independence Hall in Philadelphia is not the greatest or most beautiful building in the city, nor is Faneuil Hall to be compared with Boston's marvels of modern architecture. They are prized because they are associated with the birth of the nation and because from them were disseminated the principles of government by the people upon which was founded the great united fabric of town, State, and Nation.

The old Jaffrey Meeting-house was our fathers' temple and forum and it remains our only relic of Colonial days and of the Revolution. When it was erected the town as an organized community with the power to levy taxes was less than two years old. And simultaneously with this charge upon its slender resources came the burden of the war. (See Revolution; Hard Times.) Already the battles of Lexington and Concord had been fought and sixteen or more of the young men of the town had responded to the call for military service in defense of their liberties.

Never in the history of Jaffrey has any public work been undertaken in the face of such difficulties as beset the people in taking their first steps in ordered government. They had voted money to the limit of their resources for roads, for the support of the gospel, and for building the meeting-house. So unfavorable were the times that the building committee could not even produce the essential barrel of rum for the festivities that should by custom accompany the raising of the town meeting-house. In these straits Captain Henry Coffeen, a public spirited citizen, came to the relief of the burdened town officers by providing the rum on credit, and by the loan of all he had to spare, two Spanish milled dollars, silver money, as will appear hereafter.

The raising of the Jaffrey meeting-house was the first important community event in the history of the town, and it was rendered especially memorable by the extraordinary circumstances under which it was undertaken. The story of the raising was a fireside tale in every old Jaffrey family for nearly one hundred years, and always as its most essential part it was related that while the fathers and their invited guests were engaged in their heavy work they heard down over the eastern horizon, the far-off rumble of the guns of Bunker Hill, signifying that war had begun.

From the scanty record that has been preserved in Jaffrey, many details are omitted, but the raising of a meeting-house in New England had become so standardized that in the many accounts preserved in other towns may be read, with a fair presumption of accuracy, the story of the raising in Jaffrey. It is not to be supposed that the great posts and beams of

an old-time meeting-house were lifted to their final position one at a time, as in modern construction. The sills were first laid and levelled upon a temporary or permanent foundation, with cross sills and floor joists, all framed together into a single unit. The upright portions were framed in "broadsides" on the ground, a "broadside" being a full side of the building. In the absence of modern lifting devices, these framed sections, sometimes weighing tons, were lifted to their upright positions by a multitude of men with "spike poles" of varying length, from eight to twenty feet, succeeding each other in the order of length of implements, each manned by as many men as could gain a hand-hold. Thus the broadside rose by intermittent lifts from the horizontal to its perpendicular position.

Even when a dwelling house was to be raised, it required the aid of all the neighbors for the task, with labor freely contributed, but with the owner supplying adequate refreshments to maintain the strength and interest of the workers. But when a meeting-house was to be raised all business was suspended and surrounding towns were invited to share in the labors and festivities of the occasion. Such a gathering furnished a theatre for feats of daring and strength; wrestling and lifting matches were held before a gaping assembly. The properly conducted raising opened with the saying of a prayer over the heads of the throng and closed with the breaking of a bottle of spirits over the ridge pole. To attract the necessary multitude of workers there was one unfailing expedient—an unlimited supply of intoxicants. In all the ages no inducement to stir an indifferent citizen to patriotic endeavor ever was devised comparable to the opportunity to "wet his whistle" without cost. On one such occasion it is recorded that only by surreptitious hiding was a small bottle of spirits saved from prior consumption for the final ceremony.

The *History of Hancock, New Hampshire,* records that on November 4, 1788, the town voted to purchase three barrels of rum for the raising which was to occur the following September 15. On September 2, 1789, a committee of four was appointed to invite fifty men for the raising as well as the town preacher, while on September 7 a committee of six was appointed "to take care of and deal out the Liquor" as well as "to provide half a hundred of shugar, two Barrells Beer, and all needful vesals for holding and carring drink." Many other town histories record similar supplies. Rindge, which had two meeting-house raisings, records that "seldom has the town had the honor of welcoming so many strangers" as on those occasions. An examination of many records of the building of early New England meeting-houses has revealed no instance where the work of raising was included in the building contract or where it was performed for hire. But the labor of cutting, drawing, and preparing the lumber required long and careful planning while that of framing with mortice and tenon the immense timbers and laying them out in proper place for the raising called for the knowledge of men skilled in carpentry. Thus the records show that almost invariably this preparatory work was done by contract and that frequently the contractor called to his aid men of experience from other towns.

The great day of the raising having come and passed and the frame timbers having been securely pinned in place, many weeks and even months sometimes elapsed before the skeleton of the building finally was covered, while it might be years before the limited finances of the community allowed the building to be completed for actual use. In Francestown, New Hampshire, the historian relates that the frame was raised in June, 1775, but the house was not completed for several years.

Our few records show that Jaffrey proceeded according to the accepted custom of the times and it requires only a knowledge of those customs derived from a study of other records of the period to make the picture complete. On April 26, 1774, it was voted

> to build a meeting house on the common near the senter this and the ensuing year —Roger Gilmore, William Turner Alexr McNeil a Committee to see the same affected, the above Committee to Vendue sd house to the last bidder.

At the same meeting it was voted that the house should be forty feet wide, fifty-five in length with posts twenty-seven feet high. At a meeting in July following it was voted

> to Reconsider their vote in Building a meeting-house also their vote in Chose of a Committee, then Voted sd meetinghouse Sixty feet in Lenth, Forty-five wide, the Posts twenty-seven feet in Lenth also voted to have a Porch at each end of sd hous. Voted Mr Roger Gilmore Mr Willm Turner Mr Matthew Wallace be a Committee to see the work affected in Building sd house.
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> Voted that the Comee shall expose sd house to sail at Public Vendue by the first wednesday of Sept next, also Voted that the Great timber of sd house be hewed by the first day of Decemr next, also voted fifteen pounds L. M. towards building sd house, to be paid by the first day of December Next, also Voted that sd house shall be Raised by the Middle of June Next at the towns Cost.

Roger Gilmore, William Turner, and Matthew Wallace all had come from Londonderry, where a meeting-house had been raised with the aid of "four hundred weight of cheas and 2000 Biskit and 3 Barl of Rum & 5 Barl of Syder," so they knew what was required for such occasions.

The contract for building the house was let to Samuel Adams, then of Rindge, a young man twenty-four years of age, who was the lowest bidder. No copy of the contract with Adams has been found, but it is clear by the several votes recorded that the raising was not included, but reserved to the town committee, to be effected in the customary manner at the "towns Cost," as a later discussion and vote made special mention of all necessary "utensils" for the raising to be provided by the town.

The timbers for the Meeting-house were cut on a school lot easterly of Thorndike Pond and probably were drawn to the Common over the snow in December, 1774. On the first Monday in May, 1775, citizens gathered to clear the Common. Doubtless about this time Samuel Adams commenced the work of framing. But since he was young, although having experience in connection with work on the Rindge meeting-house, progress was not so rapid as he hoped and the skill required to frame a building sixty feet long and forty-five feet wide without supporting posts perhaps was beyond his capacity. In view of the time set for the raising—"the Middle of June next"—he sought expert assistance. His brother-in-law, Jeremiah Spofford, of Georgetown (now Groveland), Massachusetts, was a skilled mechanic, having had much experience in the construction of large buildings. Adams secured his aid, and Jeremiah Spofford, with Jacob Spofford and Joseph Haskell, also of Georgetown, came to Jaffrey to assist the work. That their aid was effective is evident from the fact that the raising was accomplished during the week ending June 17, 1775.

That the tremendous task was accomplished with the attendant ceremony demanded by the customs of the times is indicated by the statement of Thomas K. Goff, descendant in the fourth generation of the chief character (see Vol. II), that John Eaton, the town's Jack-of-all-trades, stood on his head on the ridge-pole. No current record shown as to refreshment, but that Henry Coffeen, active at the raising of the first Rindge meeting-house, knew what was needed on such occasions and met the requirement, is shown by a vote of the town in March, 1780, that he be paid "for the barrel of rum expended at the raising of the meeting-house and two dollars silver money he lent the town."

As already stated, it is the dearest tradition of the town of Jaffrey that its first meeting house was raised on the day of the battle of Bunker Hill, and that while engaged in their heavy undertaking the fathers heard the rumble of guns of that battle as they paused for rest between lifts and especially during the noon intermission. This tradition fixes the date of the raising as June 17, 1775. It is certain that this story was repeated without contradiction during the life of many responsible people who were present at the raising and knew the facts and who had no interest in perpetuating a tale without foundation; and no evidence has been found that it ever was questioned until reviewed by Judge Joel Parker in an address at the Centennial celebration on August 20, 1873. Judge Parker's address was of great historical value, but his adverse verdict upon the old tradition of the raising of the Meeting-house was a blow to many who had treasured the story told by the fathers.

Following the Centennial celebration the years passed rapidly into history with such changes that a new town of Jaffrey rested upon the old foundations. Judge Parker's opinion remained a matter of record as published in Cutter's *History of Jaffrey* and was generally accepted, while the fireside tale of the fathers almost faded from the memory of the living. But the story constituted one of the town's most cherished possessions and its loss seemed to shatter the foundations of the faith. Thus it appears a worthy undertaking again to examine all the records pertaining to the story with a view to establishing its truth or falsity in the light of all pertinent evidence and probabilities.

Judge Parker's newly discovered evidence and his decision thereon are best presented in his own words:

> There is a tradition that the Meeting-house was raised on the day of the battle of Bunker Hill and that the guns of the battle were heard here. But this must be a mistake. When the matter is examined the probabilities are against it. It is hardly probable that guns fired at Charlestown could be heard here, with the New Ipswich hills and the forest intervening, even on a quiet day when there was no meeting-house to raise. Moreover, the battle was on Saturday, which is as good a day for a battle as any, but would hardly be selected as a day to raise a meeting-house, lest there should be some work remaining which ought to be performed the next day.
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> The conclusion to be derived from improbabilities is fortified by direct hearsay evidence. I received a letter a few days since from Dr. Jeremiah Spofford, of Groveland, Mass., in which he says, "My father, Jeremiah Spofford, as a master carpenter, framed that church. He was employed to do it by Captain Samuel Adams, whose wife was his sister. Jacob Spofford and Joseph Haskell went up with him to work on the frame. . . . My father often related, seventy years ago, that they raised the house, and that, ending his job, they set out for home the next day, travelling 'ride and tie', three men, with one horse to carry tools and ease the men in turn; and that, coming down through Townsend, in the forenoon, they heard the roar of cannon, which proved to be the cannon of Bunker Hill, and coming over the Westford hills, in the evening, they saw the light of Charlestown burning. . . . Captain Adams was one of the contractors to build the house, and was a carpenter himself."
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> It may be objected that "unlucky" Friday was as little likely as Saturday to be selected as the day to begin such a work. But the explanation seems easy. The town had voted to raise by the middle of June. There would be a desire and time for compliance. The fifteenth of June was Thursday. If we suppose that to be the day selected and there was some unfinished work to be done on Friday to complete the job, we shall have the carpenters on their homeward way on Saturday, in the localities in which Mr. Jeremiah Spofford placed them. We may give up the tradition without a sigh. Neither the Meeting-house nor the battle suffers by the loss of it.

The evidence upon which Judge Parker rests his conclusions may be resolved into uncontroverted and controvertible points. The uncontroverted points are:

1. That Jeremiah Spofford and his associates were the carpenters who assisted in framing the Meeting-house.

2. That they had completed their work and were on their way home on Saturday, June 17, 1775.

3. That at Townsend they heard the sound of cannon firing and at Westford in the evening saw the lights of burning Charlestown. That they heard the sound of cannon-fire is supported by evidence hereafter to be cited; that they had left Jaffrey sometime on Friday, their work completed, may be assumed from the fact that they were God-fearing men, against whose principles it would be to travel on the Sabbath, and that they were making their slow journey "ride and tie" as rapidly as possible to reach Georgetown, where Jeremiah Spofford was deacon, by Saturday night.

4. That the Meeting-house was not erected on Friday. Friday was the "witches' Sabbath," universally regarded as an unfortunate day upon which to initiate any undertaking, even those relatively unimportant, much less one of the magnitude of raising a meetinghouse. Sailors would not go to sea nor workmen undertake new employment on that day. There was a current saying that she who bakes bread on Friday will get little bread. Only vinegar could be made successfully on Friday. "He who laughs on Friday will

weep on Saturday."

The controvertible points are:

1. That Jeremiah Spofford and his associates assisted at the raising. As has been shown before, the raising was a community undertaking, requiring a vast number of men, and in this case as well as in other towns was carried out at "towns cost," and was not a part of the building contract which usually ended with preparing the timbers and framing. The work of the Georgetown men was done; doubtless raisings were an old story to them; they would receive no pay for labor after the framing; while, if they remained for that occasion, they would be forced to be absent from home on the Sabbath. If it be assumed that Dr. Jeremiah Spofford in his letter to Judge Parker inadvertently used the term *"raised* the house," instead of "framed," as is entirely possible in quoting a conversation had with his father seventy years before, which latter word he used earlier in his letter—"work on the frame"—it will appear that the Spoffords and Haskell might well have been far on their way to Georgetown while the raising was going on at Jaffrey.

2. That because the work might not have been fully completed in one day it would not have been commenced on Saturday. It has been mentioned above in one case (Francestown) that the frame remained uncovered for several years after raising; and certainly it cannot be maintained that, if the Meeting-house had been raised on Thursday, all necessary work would have been completed in two, more days. In fact the building was not satisfactorily completed until at least twenty-five years later. (See Meeting-house and Minister.) Last and perhaps most important, the impressive ridgepole ceremonies customarily were carried out in the presence of the assembled multitude as a proof that their work was good and would stand.

3. That it was improbable that the guns of Bunker Hill could have been heard at such a distance. This "improbability" is entirely discredited by undisputed evidence that the sound of this cannonade was heard not only in the vicinity of Jaffrey but even farther away from the scene of action, and that undoubted records exist of the transmission of such sounds for distances of over one hundred miles when atmospheric conditions are favorable.

That atmospheric conditions were favorable at this time is shown by the records. Ridpath's *History of the United States* records that Prescott's men working upon the breastworks on Bunker Hill distinctly heard the "All's Well!" of the sentinels as they paced the decks of the British warships in the harbor. From the *History of Groton, Massachusetts,* it is learned that Colonel Prescott, anxious lest the work of his men be discovered prematurely by the enemy, went back and forth between hill and shore and was reassured by hearing at intervals the monotonous call. The cannonade on Saturday and Sunday was reported to have been the heaviest ever carried on in the history of the world up to that time, being heaviest toward noon of Saturday and pointed to the northwest in the general direction of Jaffrey. All historians agree that it was bright warm weather under a cloudless sky, so no thunderstorms could have misled anxious listeners.

The following authentic records indicate the distances at which the sound of the cannon was heard:

a. Jeremiah Spofford and his companions heard the noise at Townsend, Massachusetts, two-thirds of the distance from Boston to Jaffrey.

b. In Winchendon, Massachusetts, ten miles south of Jaffrey, tradition has preserved a story similar to that current in Jaffrey.

c. On June 17, 1852, Dublin, adjoining Jaffrey on the north, celebrated its centennial. Dr. Jeremiah Morse, of Walpole, New Hampshire, a native of Dublin, was unable to attend the celebration but sent an interesting letter in which he related that, as a boy, he had "heard old Mr. Johnson, his neighbor, say that on the seventeenth of June, seventy-seven years ago today [1775] he was half-hilling his corn and every time he stopped to rest and lean on his hoe-handle he could hear the distant roar of the cannon that was dealing death on the heights of Bunker Hill."

d. The History *of Washington, New Hampshire,* records, “Jacob Burbank, a farmer, stated that he heard the firing at Bunker Hill on the seventeenth of June.”

e. Colonel James Ripley, a settler in Cornish, New Hampshire, forty miles north of Jaffrey, wrote his sister in 1821, “We arrived in Cornish on the fourteenth day of June, 1775; and on the seventeenth the sound of cannon fired at Bunker Hill thundered through the woods.”

f. On June 19, 1775, President Eleazar Wheelock of Dartmouth College (Hanover is nearly twice the distance from Bunker Hill to Jaffrey Common) wrote to Governor Trumbull of Connecticut, “Last Saturday and Sabbath we heard the noise of cannon, we suppose at Boston, and we are now impatient to be informed of the occasion and the event.” At the same time, with a slip of date common to diarists, he records in his diary, “June 16 (Saturday) The noise of cannon supposed to be at Boston heard all day 17. the same report of cannon, we wait with impatience to learn the occasion and the event.”

In a note to the *History of Hanover and Dartmouth College,* by Professor Chase, it is recorded: “The sounds of cannon was heard that day in other towns, in Hartford, Vt., Lebanon and Plymouth, N. H. They were first noticed by one of the Indians, David Simmons, a Narragansett of the class of 1777, who chanced to be lying with his ear to the ground and afterwards by others whose attention he called to them. They were universally attributed to the battle of Bunker Hill and were certainly contemporaneous with it—they could, indeed, have come from no other source—strange as the facts appear they are too well authenticated to be doubted.”

g. Reverend Laban Ainsworth, first pastor of the Jaffrey church, was a student at Dartmouth College in 1775; and among a collection of Ainsworth family papers, written apparently by a grandson about the time of the venerable preacher’s death in 1858 is the following: “It must have been early in the season when he came to Hanover, for he has frequently related that while he was there he heard the report of the ordnance at the battle of Bunker Hill. He said his attention was called to it by an Indian who was with him at college. He scooped up a little earth with his hand, then lay flat upon the ground with his ear in the excavation, when he could hear the sound with perfect distinctness.”

Science records extraordinary distances at which sounds have been heard, far greater than the distance from Charlestown to Jaffrey. The greatest distance of which a record has been found is of a cannonade at Antwerp, heard at the Eisgebirge Mountains three hundred and seventy miles away. Professor Benjamin Pierce, of Harvard University, in his *Natural Philosophy* published in 1836 states, “Guns fired at Carlseroom were heard across the southern extremity of Sweden as far as. Denmark, a distance of at least one hundred and twenty miles. The cannonade of a sea fight between the English and Dutch in 1672 was heard a distance of upwards of two hundred miles.” Judge Parker remarks upon the New Ipswich Hills, as a certain barrier to sound waves; but in *Notes and Queries,* Series 4, Vol. II, page 23, is the information that the guns of Gettysburg were heard at Greensburg, Pennsylvania, a distance of one hundred and twenty-eight miles, with seven ranges of the Allegheny Mountains between. The evidence could be multiplied many-fold.

But the most convincing evidence of the truth of the story seems to lie in its prevalence in Jaffrey, to the extent that it was mentioned as a fact both by Dr. Cutter, the historian, and by Miss Mary I. Fox, daughter of an early settler, on the very occasion on which Judge Parker sought to discredit it. Edward H. Bailey, grandson of Oliver Bailey who attended the raising at the age of seven, repeated in his ninety-fourth year the story of hearing the guns as told to him by his grandfather, even to the detail that the sound was particularly noticeable at the noon intermission, although Mr. Bailey never informed himself, so he said, that, as a fact of history, the cannonade was of “redoubled intensity” at that hour. Mr. Bailey also heard the story from his aunt, Ruth (Perkins) Stone, born in 1782 and daughter of one of the pioneers who fought at Lexington. (See Vol. II.) Alfred Sawyer (see Biography) when a boy lived as neighbor to Colonel Benjamin Prescott, who came to Jaffrey in 1772 and raised his own two-story dwelling a few days before the battle of Bunker Hill. Questioned in his ninety-second year, Mr. Sawyer, with the fire of

conviction in his voice said, “Judge Parker was wrong; I heard the story a hundred times and always in the same way. They heard those guns when they were raising the Meeting-house. “William B. Robbins, great grandson of William Turner (see Vol. II), member of the committee chosen to build the meeting-house, was equally emphatic, saying, “Judge Parker never convinced me.”

What were the attendant circumstances which embedded the occurrence so deeply in the recollections of the fathers that they repeated the identical story so many times around their firesides without apparent. collusion? They had a special reason to associate the town’s greatest event with the date because, like the signs and omens that accompany great events, the thunder of guns, borne by some mysterious agency across woods and mountains, came to their ears. There was scarcely a cloud in the sky, yet at intervals all day they heard with growing anxiety a heavy sound as of thunder down in the direction of Boston. But it could not be thunder. They had never heard its like before and yet they knew it for what it meant. It was the unmistakable rumble of distant guns. It was a time of intense anxiety; their military spirit shortly before had been aroused by the alarm from Concord and Lexington and sixteen of the town’s young men were now in service near Boston whence came those ominous sounds so long continued that it might mean the destruction of the city and with it their little untrained army. They must wait in suspense for days before they could learn the cause of the firing and its result. Can it be supposed that they would connect these portentious sounds with an experience such as this if the raising had been on Thursday with the battle on Saturday?

That something stirred the people to the depths is shown by their immediately subsequent action. A town meeting had been called for Tuesday, June 20, 1775, to elect officers for a military company as ordered by the provincial Congress the preceding month. Just before this meeting was to be held, something of such an alarming nature occurred that a good share of the townspeople came together on Monday, June nineteenth and elected the officers called for in anticipation of the town meeting legally called for the next day. What occasioned this illegal action is indicated on the town books, recorded so hastily that not even the month or year is noted, as “an alarm from the Armey and it was thought proper for severel resons to choose Military Officers.” (See Militia.) The confusion resultant upon this summary action and the action of the next day in choosing “other officers which makes a Discord in the Company” required regular action by the town a week later. But what was this “alarm from the Armey” if not the unexplained sound of cannon which, upon conference seemed to require forthright protection from the unknown danger? Henry Coffeen, who furnished rum for the raising, was chosen captain; Roger Gilmore, chairman of the raising committee, was first lieutenant; Jonathan Stanley, active at the raising, was second lieutenant. Everything points to the conclusion that the military action taken resulted directly and at once (after the Sabbath) from the alarm received at the raising on Saturday.

Judge Parker said that the old tradition may be given up without a sigh—that neither the Meeting-house nor the battle will suffer by it. But there is something here the loss of which cannot be afforded. Both the battle and the Meeting-house have suffered from his well-meant but poorly-substantiated statement. The record should be set right if it may be done with truth. There is in the story of the rude town-makers raising their Meeting-house on Jaffrey Common on that fateful day in June, 1775, with thunder-heads of war on the horizon and the deep diapason of those distant guns, an epic strain unsensed by the legal mind of Judge Parker, which made them tell it by every fireside for a hundred years and which will keep it alive while the town endures.

The framing of the Jaffrey Meeting-house is a credit to Samuel Adams and his relatives and assistants from Georgetown. There is character in every line and honesty in every tenon and joint. Bowman F. Cann, a master-workman of experience, who carried out the restoration of the old house in 1923 says, “I do not find any ties, bolts or any other iron work; everything is mortice and tenon and firmly pinned. All joints are perfect and the long chord timbers have a slight crown, showing the stability of the whole construction after one hundred and fifty years of gales.”

The story as told by the fathers may be repeated to coming generations in full credence of its literal truth. The old Meeting-house is in itself a symbol of truth, and its honest workmanship should be an example and inspiration for those who build the town of the future. It stands today an illustration of what can be done with the good, sound beams grown in New England, in meeting-houses or in bodies politic.

CHAPTER IX

THE MEETING-HOUSE AND MINISTER

THE MEETING-HOUSE

When the Masonian Proprietors granted the township of Middle Monadnock to Deacon Jonathan Hubbard and his thirty-nine associates, November 30, 1749, it was made a condition of the conveyance "that a good and convenient Meeting House be Built in said Township as near the Center of the Town as may be with Convenience within six years from this date and Ten Acres of Land Reserved for Publick Uses."

The Proprietary failed in its obligation, owing in large measure to conditions beyond its control, and by the indulgence of the original grantors, it evaded the building of a meeting-house altogether, leaving the work to be finally undertaken twenty-five years later in 1775, after the incorporation of the town. This evasion was a fortunate circumstance for the new town of Jaffrey, as the proprietary meetinghouses generally proved inadequate for their purpose and were soon replaced by structures more suited to the changed conditions.

In the earliest Massachusetts townships in present New Hampshire territory, as well as in the Masonian townships, there was the invariable provision for a meeting-house and the support of the ministry. Any action that may have been taken in Middle Monadnock township toward the fulfillment of these obligations has disappeared with the loss of the proprietors' records. A surviving fragment only reveals that James Nichols was appointed a committee to provide supplies of preaching before the incorporation of the town in 1773.

Never did the town of Jaffrey enter upon a great public undertaking under such unfavorable conditions as in the building of its meeting-house. The town was less than a year old as a body politic. It had only 351 inhabitants, a large majority of whom were women and children; its roads were only marked trails or cartpaths; there were probably not a dozen framed houses in the township; and the necessities of everyday living imposed a severe limitation upon the labor that could be devoted to the public service. Moreover, there were already rumblings of the impending war with the Mother Country, that was to create an incredible drain upon the resources of the town during the Revolutionary period.

With the incorporation of the town the inhabitants had for the first time a responsible government of their own with authority to levy and collect taxes, and their first thought was for those two essentials of community living—improved roads and a meeting-house for public worship and the transaction of town business. The people of early New England never called their house of worship a church. To them the church was the organized body of worshipers which assembled within its doors. It was rightly called the meeting-house because it was their stated place of assembly for action upon their common concerns both spiritual and secular. It was the seat of the authority of the people and the symbol of their community life.

At the second meeting of the voters of Jaffrey, held September 23, 1773, acting upon an article, "to see what Methord they will take to have the Gospel Preached among us," Captain Jonathan Stanley, Alexander McNeill, and James Caldwell were chosen a committee to provide supplies of preaching, and by supplementary action, the town voted eighty pounds to be worked out on roads, and "six Pounds L. Money to support the Gospel in sd town." If these amounts seem disproportionate, it must be remembered that

roads were a first essential of community life and that having previously had no power to assess taxes. or lay out highways their only means of communication were such rude trails as necessity had compelled the individual settlers to cut out from their holdings to the nearest gristmill and to the center of trade in the adjacent older and more highly developed towns. It is not to be supposed that during the previous twenty years of proprietary management the inhabitants had been entirely without religious services. It appears from early records that some of the inhabitants of the south part of the town were members of the church in Rindge; in the east part some attended service in Temple; and our first Scotch-Irish pioneers met often with their own sect in the old Presbyterian church in Peterborough. The first religious services were held at private houses and lay services were also held, especially among the new denominations, for among their number were skilled theological disputants who could argue learnedly upon points of doctrine and would miss no opportunity to exercise their powers. The people of the new towns had been trained in Sabbath observance in their previous places of residence and the building of a meeting-house naturally became the immediate concern of their newly organized communities.

On April 26, 1774, the people of Jaffrey again voted six pounds for support of preaching, indicating that the previous appropriation had been spent, and at the same meeting they "voted To Build a Meetinghouse on the Common Near the Senter this and the insuing year."

The next move, to "see how far the town will proseed to finish sd house and Likewise how soon the Committee are to see the same effected," was a prudential one following the precedent of surrounding towns, by which they provided only for raising and covering the frame, leaving the interior to later consideration. Upon this subject they voted that the frame should be "well underpinned with good stone and lime," the outside completed and colored like the Rindge meeting-house, the lower floor laid double, the pulpit like that in Rindge, all of which was to be completed by the middle of June, 1776.

In the question of ways and means much discussion was given to the sale of public lands to raise funds. There were obstacles in the way of such action and objections were made by law-abiding citizens that the lands were held by the town in fee for specified purposes—three lots for the first settled minister not yet engaged, three lots for the support of the ministry without limit of time, and three lots whose income was to be used for the support of schools—and these lots or their income could not be appropriated for any other purposes.

The framing and covering of the meeting-house was awarded to Samuel Adams, the lowest bidder, then of Rindge and only twenty-four years of age. The great timbers of the house, it is said by tradition, were cut on the highlands near the old Stickney place east of Thorndike Pond. They were undoubtedly drawn to the Common by oxen on snow in the winter of 1774-75. The people, by voluntary labor, worked at clearing the Common on the first day of May, a labor continued at intervals for many years. Meantime the dreaded clash of arms with the Mother Country had come in the alarm from Lexington that had sent the best and strongest of their young men hurrying down the road to Cambridge, some of them to remain for months with the patriot forces. But no less disastrous to their purpose was the financial cataclysm in which they found themselves involved. They had obligated themselves to meet extraordinary expenses at home and now over night the pounds, shillings, and pence of Great Britain disappeared almost to the last farthing. The difficulties of the financial situation is told in the chapter entitled Hard Times. The way they raised and covered the meeting-house likewise has its special chapter. It is sufficient for our present purpose to say that the meeting-house was raised and the first town meeting held under its roof in the month of June, 1775.

The same year, with the burden of the war and the meeting-house to bear, they again "Voted Six Pounds L:M: to Pay for Preaching the Gospel in Sd town." In November, acting under stress of demand from the contractor for money, a meeting was called "To See if the town will Agree to Pass A Vote to Sell Lott No. 14 in the 2 Range which Lott Was granted by the Lord Proprietors for the Benefit of A School," and, if voted, "to See if the

town will Aggree and so pass a Vote to Hire the Price of Said Lott in Order to Defray a Part of the Cost of Building the Meeting-house the town Paying the Interest Yearly for the use of a School or Otherwise as they Shall think Proper." This vote having been passed in the affirmative, various committees were chosen to make sale of public lots, even the one reserved for the first settled minister, to help build the meeting-house. Despite objections previously made to such action, and to give a semblance of legality to these transactions, a form of lease for 999 years was adopted in place of a deed in the conveyance of lands so disposed of. By this means some help was derived from the lease to Simon Stickney, of the school lot first considered for sale, and to Samuel Adams of a portion of the ministerial land as an offset for payments on his contract.

In 1778 the town increased its appropriation to one hundred pounds to provide "supplys of preaching." At this time Samuel Adams the contractor, and Jonathan Stanley, Jr., were appointed a committee to lay out the meeting-house ground, or floor space, and thirty pounds were voted to build the body seats, and other charges. These were the first seats built in the house and for a time were occupied by the congregation. The following November it was "voted to finish off the meetting house this year and Next, also Chosen Eleazer Spofford, Joseph Bates, Phinehas Spaulding, John Cutter, Benja Spaulding, a Comme to Effect the Same." (John Cutter, whose name does not again appear, was probably an older brother of Joseph Cutter. He was later a resident of New Ipswich, where he died May 1, 1812.) On January 14, 1779, after long consideration of ways and means for finishing the house, it was voted to sell the pews in advance from a plan in hands of Dea. William Smiley, vendue master, "on the 21st day of January instant at Nine of the Clock before Noon and the Vendue Master is to deliver up what money he gets to the Comee." Payments were to be made in three installments, the last when the pews were finished. To have the conditions clearly understood, it was further "Voted that if any man Neglects to pay the first payment, his Vote Shall afterwards be taken no Notice of but the pew exposed to sale again. Votted that if any man does pay the first and second payments and Neglects to pay the third, he Shall forfeit all he has paid and his pew Exposed to Sale again."

There are no treasurer's records to be found for the first twenty-five years of Jaffrey town government, and this leaves much to conjecture upon many important subjects in the town's history. Seventy-five pounds were voted in advance for the building of the meeting-house, and later thirty pounds were voted toward the finishing the interior, but even if these amounts were raised in money they could have paid only a small part of the expense incurred. The first Rindge meeting-house, smaller than that in Jaffrey, is shown by detailed account to have cost, including pews, 1,537 pounds under normal monetary conditions in 1766. Under the disturbed conditions of the following war period, when inflation of the currency upset all prices and estimates, the cost of the Jaffrey meeting-house must have reached fantastic figures. Francestown, New Hampshire, raised its meeting-house frame in 1775, the same time with Jaffrey, and allowed it to remain uncovered for several years because of impossible financial conditions. But Jaffrey proceeded with the work of building under such handicaps that the meeting-house, which was to be finished and the whole cost paid in a year, was twenty-five years in building. As in many other towns the final decision on the question of ways and means was to raise the necessary funds by the advance sale of pews, as previously related. As a consequence of the unstable currency of the war period, eight years after the vendue, "An Accompt of what is due on Pews in Jaffrey Meeting House" reveals the sum of 974 pounds and seventeen shillings in arrears on pews that, by condition of the sale, should have been forfeited and resold. The explanation of so much latitude allowed to the buyers is apparent. If the bidders could not pay for the pews when payment was due, neither could they nor any one else pay for them if they were sold again under the same conditions. The sum here named, with no allowance for inflation, if reckoned in American dollars that afterwards came into use, was the equivalent of $3,243.42, which under favorable conditions would have gone far toward

completing the meeting-house. How it was ever paid does not appear. At this time there was no alternative but to wait the turning of the tide.

A vote was taken in September, 1789, "to post those pews that are unpaid for—for sale the first monday of Octr. Next Unless paid for before and that the pay answer So much on the Execution Capt. Samuel Adams has against the town." It does not appear that the pews were either posted or sold at this time. Evidently no one cared to buy a law suit. The next step appears to have been taken as a test of title.

In 1787 Captain William Pope had bought of Hugh Dunlap a pew on which there was a default of payment of ten pounds. The committee resold the pew to Thorndike and Page, merchants, across the Common from the meeting-house. Other pews were sold in the same manner. The Pope case alone was contested to final judgment, and, to the consternation of the committee and half the town, the verdict was awarded to the defendant. This result, which seemed to invalidate all claims of the town against delinquent pew owners, proved a blessing in the end. A townmeeting was called "to inquire into the failyer of the action Thorndike against Pope and act anything relative to said action as shall be thought proper." Upon this inquiry, after due deliberation, it was voted to drop the action and pay costs. Times were improving and as there is no record of further litigation or forfeitures, it is assumed that after a long moratorium to the pew owners, the payments were made and the claim of the contractor satisfied. The pew owners previous to 1791 were as follows:

PEW NO.	OWNER
1	Roger Gilmore
2	Capt. Joseph Cutter
3	Ensign Joseph Wilder
4	Dr. Adonijah Howe
5	Joseph Brooks
6	Capt. Benjamin Spaulding
7	Lt. Moses Worcester
8	Oliver Bailey
9	Phineas Spaulding
10	Phineas Spaulding
11	Capt. Joseph Perkins
12	John Davidson
13	Joseph Thorndike
14	Capt. Jonathan Stanley
15	Lt. Joseph Bates
16	Alexander Milliken
17	Thorndike and Page
18	Lt. William Turner
19	John Gilmore
20	Isaac Bailey
21	Capt. Daniel Emery
22	Dea. Daniel Emery
23	Thomas Mower
24	Robert Harkness
25	Lt. John Harper
26	Capt. Samuel Adams
27	Eleazer Spofford

PEW NO.	OWNER

28 Lt. James Stevens
29 Capt. James Gage
30 Benjamin Nutting
31 Simon Warren
32 Oliver Proctor
33 Eleazer Spofford
34 John Briant
35 Rev. Laban Ainsworth
36 Abel Parker
37 Dr. Adonijah Howe
38 Lt. Samuel Buss
39 Eleazer Spofford
40 Nathan Hall
41 Benjamin Dole
42 John Kent
43 Lt. Jacob Pierce
44 Widow Lois Stanley
45 Joseph Turner
46 Samuel Pierce
47 Capt. Samuel Adams
48 Ebenezer Stratton
49 Francis Wright
50 Peter Jones
51 Dea. William Smiley
52 Nehemiah Green
53 Oliver Hale

PEWS IN THE GALLERY

1 Lt. Jereme Underwood
2 Ebenezer Thompson
3 Abraham Ross
4 Charles Davidson
5 Dr. Adonijah Howe
6 Daniel Priest
7 Jonathan Priest
8 Kendall Pearson
9 Capt. Joseph Perkins
10 Lt. Samuel Buss
11 Benjamin Whitmore
12 Eleazer Spofford
13 David Cutter
14 Dr. Adonijah Howe
15 Collins Hathorn
16 Josiah Belknap
17 Nehemiah Green
18 Samuel Stanley
19 Daniel Priest
20 John Buckley
21 Samuel Adams
22 Isaac Bailey
23 Abijah Carter
24 William Emery

The old meeting-house in Jaffrey was of the common form of its period, of which an almost perfect specimen remains in the original town meeting-house of Sandown, New Hampshire. In appearance it was like a large two-story house with its front door on the south side. It had one-story porches at each end, resembling diminutive ells, dwarfed by the towering sides of the main structure. In its severity of lines and absence of ornament, it was of the type called the barn meeting-house. Its front door opened directly to the broad aisle leading to the high pulpit on the opposite side of the house. The pulpit standing eight or ten feet above the lower floor was entered by a flight of stairs at the left which by a turn near the top led to the enclosed pulpit. The pulpit, high and dignified in appearance, displayed in its frame and paneling the finest craftsmanship of the period. An arched window at the rear admitted light upon the desk and upon the form of the preacher as he expounded his chosen text, and over the pulpit hung a curious device suspended from the ceiling by an iron rod, which has been described as resembling a truncated turnip. It was called a sounding board and was deemed indispensable as a means of diffusing the speaker's voice to all parts of the edifice. On the floor in front of the pulpit was a pew for the deacons, to which was attached a hinged table used for christenings and ceremonial occasions. Facing the pulpit on three sides of the house was the gallery supported by fluted columns from the floor beneath. The breastwork of the gallery was in paneling of old pine lumber without knot or blemish. The walls from the floor to the lower windows were wainscoted in pine in common with the finish of the pews, and the walls between and over the windows and the ceiling were finished with plaster. Above the wainscoting the posts of the house projected from the walls at intervals in the form of pilasters enlarged at the upper ends to support the plates and cross-beams, which in turn supported the ceiling and roof. The posts were left unfinished and today still show the untouched ax marks of the workmen of a hundred and sixty years ago. The pews on the lower floor were of two classes, called the body and wall pews. The body pews were first built and were considered the most desirable in the house. They were oblong in form with dimensions of about five by six feet, while the surrounding wall pews, of similar pattern, were raised one step above the floor level and were five feet square. Between the body pews and the pulpit were the free seats, mere plank benches, at first occupied by the congregation but later assigned to the boys and young people from the overflowing pews, where they were kept under the parental eye or the watchful care of the deacons or tythingmen. The pews were enclosed by divisional walls of panel work three feet in height, surmounted by a balustrade, called a banister, fifteen inches in height, made with spindles or balusters seven inches in the clear between cap and base rails each four inches in depth, as shown by a section of one of the original pews in the historical collections of the Village Improvement Society at Jaffrey Center. The doors of the pews were about twenty inches in width, and the seats consisted of boards hinged to the front and rear walls so that they could be raised during prayer and in other parts of the service, allowing a standing position for the participants. This arrangement had its objections in the discordant clatter and clang, likened to a volley of musketry or pandemonium let loose upon the solemnity of the occasion, when the seats fell to their former positions.

Reliable tradition tells us that John Eaton, who was one of the first members of the church, turned those thousands of balusters in his mill in the present Squantum Village. He was a maker of flax wheels, among the many products of his hand, and these balusters were only a slight variation from the common pattern of spokes used in the drive wheel in the familiar pattern of flax wheels then used. A like tradition ascribes a share at least in the fine paneling in pulpit and pews and gallery to John Buckley, the Hessian cabinetmaker (see Genealogical Volume), who learned his trade in the Old Country and found his services in demand not only in the finishing of the Jaffrey Meeting-house but also in those of surrounding towns.

With the increased demand for pews the space occupied by the free seats on the lower floor was eventually used for six additional pews, one of which was reserved for elderly people and the rest sold for $274, which in 1823 provided in part the funds for the purchase of a bell. In the gallery there were twenty-five similar pews lining the outer wall, in front of which on a lower platform were free seats occupied by the younger portion of the congregation. In 1787 it was "Voted to Grant the two middle Seats below men and womans Side for the Singers," and four years later, with an enlarged choir and the modern fashion of singing in view, it was "voted to grant half of the Front Galery for the Singers and take it out of the Senter." To provide further funds toward the cost of the bell, pew ground in the gallery occupied by free seats was sold at vendue, bringing $59.95, making the total amount $333.95, the successful bidders to build their own pews uniform in design and finish with the pews already installed.

No photograph of the interior of the Jaffrey meeting-house as originally laid out is in existence. However, the meeting-house at Rockingham, Vermont, was nearly an exact replica of the Jaffrey structure, and the accompanying view of that interior is presented here, through the courtesy of the town clerk of that place, to illustrate the gallery and pew arrangement of the Jaffrey meeting-house prior to 1870.

By the Census of 1790 there were eleven Negroes in Jaffrey. That they attended upon the ministrations of the Gospel appears in the later record of the town meeting in 1800 when action was taken upon an article: "To See if the town will prepare a piece of the Seats in the North end of the Gallarys, in the Meetting house for the use of the Negroes . . . ." The intention of this article was undoubtedly to impound in an inconspicuous corner an element of the congregation previously scattered and perhaps, in the opinion of some, too much in view. The plan adopted, probably after free discussion, was "to purchase a pew either Below or in the Gallarys in the Meetting house for the use of the Negroes." The pew thus set apart, according to tradition as remembered by Joel H. Poole, was in the north end of the west gallery. The seats in the Jaffrey Meeting-house not having been "dignified" as in Rindge and other towns, we cannot say just what social rating for the people so honored was implied by this action, but that there was one among them who could rise above the slights of prejudice will appear hereafter.

For more than forty years the town stubbornly resisted every effort to warm the meeting-house in winter. Such comfort did not comport with its Puritan theology. In 1816 a motion "to See if the town will put a stove into the meeting-house or give liberty to have one put in" was passed over, but, despite stout protests, convictions yielded to comfort and a stove was installed by private subscription before 1822, when the town, still resisting, voted "not to furnish wood for the stove in the meeting-house." In 1825 the majority had so far overcome the rigor of the old faith that the town paid for the wood, which thereafter became an annual charge. In 1826 bids were asked for "Four solid cords good green hemlock, pine or spruce wood cut and split for the stove in the meeting-house to be cut two feet long in the month of May and put into the portches by the first of November next with the bark on the same." Moody Lawrence, at a dollar a cord, was the lowest bidder that year.

In 1792 the meeting-house was at once unfinished and out of repair. The roof leaked, the windows were broken, the door steps were hewed logs or temporary plank, the contractor was only partially paid, the minister's salary was far in arrears, and prompt action was necessary to save the meeting-house from total loss. Instead of the paint they had voted, it was colored only by wind and sun, and instead of the underpinning "of good stone and lime," it still stood on temporary wooden blocks and stones that had supported its sills on the great day of the raising. The front door, shattered by the constable's hammer that had nailed countless calls and summonses to its long-suffering panels with coarse blacksmith's nails, was open to winds and vandals alike. In 1793 it was voted again to paint the house and repair the underpinning, shingling, and glass. These repairs were immediately limited to repairing the "wood work and the Glass that Shall be found wanting and no farther." There was no money to complete the undertaking and the vote to paint was

rescinded with the laconic instructions to the committee "to settle with the men engaged to paint the meeting-house the easiest way they can." To such neglect had it fallen that in 1795 Captain Joseph Cutter was given permission to move it northward to the position occupied by the present horse-sheds because it interfered with the approach to his tavern. It was specified that "the back Side Sill of the meetting-house Should Stand on the South end line of burying yard, and that the North west corner thereof be as far west as the third post from the west end of the horse Shades." This record proves the existence of horsesheds nearly fifteen years before those at present on the premises were erected.

In this connection it was "voted to Underpin the meeting-house with faced Stone, Equal to the Stone in Lt. Alexr Milliken's house underpinning, the Largeness of the house to be considered, . . . the ground ... to be dug down to hard pan." Fortunately, Captain Cutter failed to comply with the conditions imposed by the town and the following May (1796) it was voted to repair the meeting-house "where it Now Stands by underpinning it with good hewn Stone fifteen inches thick and Repair the Clapboards . . . . corner boards and door casings by adding New ones where they are Split or broken. Nails where they are wanting so as to be painted, and painted with a light Stone colour ... the Roof and windows Repaired this Summer, the Underpinning together with the Repairs of Clapboards and painting by the 20th of June 1797."

The financial clouds were now lifting and satisfactory settlements had been made with the minister and contractor for accounts long overdue. The minister's salary was raised one hundred dollars, to $333.33 annually, and $200 was voted for the repair and underpinning of the meeting-house, to which the next year (1797) the sum of $150 was added.

The repair of the meeting-house was one of the great undertakings, measured by means and conditions, in the town's history. In the first place, the enormous weight of the building with its contents had to be raised sufficiently, with the crude appliances then available, to allow room for excavation and the setting of the heavy stone foundations beneath its sills. This was accomplished by home made wooden jackscrews which, it is supposed, were made at John Eaton's turning mill in the section now called Squantum, where in excavation on the site of an old grist mill, about the year 1900, a decayed specimen of such a device came to light. Benjamin Cutter, Samuel Buss, John Joslin, and John Coughran, the last a millwright, were paid $112.66 for raising the house and setting the underpinning stones. Joseph Newhall, probably from a neighboring town, received $99.50, besides his board, for splitting stones. Jacob Danforth was paid for making and sharpening his drills and also for a generous supply of rum and sugar to encourage the work. Paul Powers, Abraham Ross, Phinehas Tyler and others, all of Jaffrey, were also employed as stone splitters. Micah Munroe, as assistant to Newhall, hewed the doorstones for the main entrance and the porches, and Jonathan and Daniel Emery placed the finished stones at the meeting-house doors.

The foundation stones, in whole or part, were quarried in the so called Stanley and Spaulding pasture in lot 2, range 3, on the west slope of Monadnock, on land recently given to the State of New Hampshire by Mrs. Paul W. Kimball of Jaffrey. A few perfect unused specimens of these foundation stones may still be found on the lot. To haul the stones over the mountain road to the meeting house was a heavy undertaking for the oxen, which were mercifully allowed a breathing spell at favorable intervals of time and distance, particularly alongside the Milliken Tavern and at the Mineral Spring House. There was no charge for relief to the oxen but both houses presented bills to the town for refreshments, other than spring water, furnished to the teamsters and charged to underpinning the meetinghouse. Esquire Thorndike's store at the edge of the Common was another source of "encouragement" to the workers in the heat and burden of the day, duly charged to the undertaking and paid by the town. The liquor charged to underpinning is in some instances included with other items so that the exact sum so expended does not appear, but it may be conservatively stated that a barrel of rum was expended by our frugal ancestors in underpinning the meeting-house and that none was wasted.

But one difficult part of the task of the committee remained. On March 6, 1798, the town had voted to paint the meeting-house and $167.67 was appropriated for the purpose. Dr. Adonijah Howe, one of the most efficient citizens of his day, was the active member of the committee, with Deacon Spofford and John Coughran acting in an advisory capacity. To paint a meeting-house was not the simple matter that might be imagined. Doctor Howe was no Caliph of Bagdad to utter the cabalistic word and without care or thought see the people's palace dipped in vermillion or stone color by necromancy before his eyes. There was not, so far as known, a painted house in the township. People who lived in painted houses were talked about. Even a painted chair offered a guest was tested with a cautious finger before the distrustful visitor could accept the courtesy. To paint a meeting-house was not an everyday undertaking, but Dr. Howe, by great good fortune, found a man for his purpose in Lieutenant Joseph Kimball, who had come to town from Boxford, Massachusetts, two years before. Lieutenant Amos Stickney repaired the outside of the house preparatory to painting, renewing the corner boards, windows and door casings and clapboards where split and renailing all that were loosened. Lieutenant Jereme Underwood made new outside doors and Jacob Danforth, blacksmith, was paid four dollars for handles and latches, probably those still in use.

A great quantity of flaxseed was needed for oil. Nathan Cutter had two bushels at $1.50; Robert Harkness, four and one half bushels, for which he received a credit of $3.37; Peter Bates, one bushel and eighteen quarts, $1.17. Josiah Mower also supplied flaxseed and went to Peterborough and Keene on the business of painting the meeting-house. Thomas Adams was paid $2.29 for flaxseed and Spanish brown. Jonah Carter had two bushels for the job at $1.50. Hugh Smiley received $5.36, "it bing in full for flax seed and oxen to Peterborough for oyl to Paint the Meetinghouse." On March 4, 1799, Dr. Howe received from the selectmen $24.97 "for Paint for the Meetinghouse at Esqr Hartwells." Esquire Hartwell owned the Linseed Oil Mill at New Ipswich. From all accounts it appears that more than seventy bushels of flaxseed were required to produce the oil for painting the meeting-house. It was hauled to Peterborough to Samuel Smith's oil mill or to the mill at New Ipswich and exchanged for oil. The white lead came from Concord and from Keene by ox power. Captain Adams boarded the painters, Lieutenant Kimball and his man Cromby. George Barrett of New Ipswich was paid $45 for flaxseed which he lent the committee for painting the meetinghouse. The parties in all these transactions were far apart and their only means of communication were by many weary miles of travel over primitive roads.

On March 11, 1800, the town paid Nathan Barnard, a public spirited citizen, one dollar in full for furnishing the use of his house and kettles and firewood "to boil the oil to paint the meeting house." A year later, February 27, 1801, three years lacking one week from the beginning of his service, the painting was done and honest Doctor Howe gave his receipt for "Nine dollars in full for Service as Comee man for Repairing the Meetinghouse."

THE HORSESHEDS

In 1808 the selectmen were authorized to lay out and dispose of a strip of ground on the north side of the Common for "the erection of horsestables in such a way and manner as they shall think proper." Proceeding with the deliberation appropriate to their charge, two years later they reported that certain responsible citizens had built and occupied "a range of stables north of the meetinghouse pursuant to a vote of the town and an agreement with the selectmen founded on said vote." This concession was made "only for the space of 999 years," upon conditions stipulated on March 13, 1810, when it was

> Voted that the aforesaid persons their heirs and assigns forever shall severally be entitled to the use of the ground on which said stables are nowe erected in the order & number following, beginning at the barn of Joseph Cutter Esq.—viz. Josiah Mower No. 1,—James Stevens No. 2. Samuel

> Peirce No. 3.—Parker Maynard No. 4.—Roger Brigham No. 5.—Jereme Underwood No. 6.—Eleazer Spofford No. 7.—David Gillmore Jr. No. 8.—David Gillmore No. 9.—Edward Spaulding No. 10—Moses Worster No. 11, and Abner Spofford No. 12. And that they & their heirs & assigns hold the same severally upon this express condition & no other, viz. that each one severally his heirs or assigns keep & maintain on the spot where his stable now stands, a stable in decent repair; and that no other use be made of said ground, and upon failure of keeping said stable in decent repair, or upon converting said ground to any other use, each ones right is to be forfeited and lost.

Of the twelve stables thus provided, number one adjoining Captain Cutter's barn was long ago removed to make another gateway to the burying yard as at present in use. Accordingly, the numbers of the sheds as now standing are one less than the figures here recorded, the present shed number one being that owned by Lieutenant James Stevens, and shed number eleven at the west end of the line being the number twelve, originally owned by Abner Spofford.

Much that is good and bad may be said of the old horsesheds. In a horseless age they serve to perpetuate some strong flavors of the early days. Beneath their shade on town meeting or sultry Sabbath days tongues were loosened and much that was wise and quaint and good and bad, that has escaped the historian and town clerk, was wafted to the confines of the town. The horsesheds still stand and, in the minds of many good people, something irrecoverable that we can ill spare will be lost when the homely, humble horsesheds no longer stand like a worn out servitor, hat in hand, beside the stately meeting-house.

THE STEEPLE

A meeting-house on a hill with its spire pointing heavenward is the most perfect symbol of a New England country town. After the painting was completed, the Jaffrey Meeting-house waited twenty years for its crowning feature. Neighboring towns all had steeples and bells for their meeting-houses and Jaffrey never willingly remained at the rear. In 1822 the meeting-house was extensively repaired with new clapboards and finish where required, and repainted, and the same year the belfry was built at the expense of public spirited citizens on condition that the town buy the bell, to which it assented with remarkable unanimity. The story of the bell is related in another chapter.

The steeple was built by the town's master carpenter, Joel O. Patrick, in connection with the general repairs for which he was the successful bidder. The scion of a gifted family, he displayed in his work a skill and taste that might have made him a successful architect in a larger field. The steeple of the Jaffrey Meeting-house for its beautiful proportions and perfect adaptation to the main structure has received the praise of many people competent to judge its merits. In construction it is heavily timbered like the adjoining structure, to which it is firmly yoked by two long beams fastened to the heavy chord timbers for about two-thirds the length of the building and keyed to a cross timber connecting the tops of the sturdy posts of the tower. It is called a Christopher Wren tower, one of its distinctive features being that it stands on its own base and not upon the roof of the meeting-house. Its beauty and symmetry will be best appreciated from illustrations in these pages.

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

Following the passage of the Toleration Act in 1819, other denominations, having contributed their share in taxation toward the building and care of the meeting-house, felt themselves entitled to their proportionate share of its benefits. Because of differences of creed there was no thought of union services. The Baptist denomination offered to sell its interest in the meeting-house to the town or would have accepted a proportionate

contribution from the town toward building its own meeting-house and supporting its preaching that had been granted to the Congregationalists. Both of these proposals were rejected by the town. The Toleration Act was not immediately given full effect in Jaffrey. The meeting-house was kept in repair and Minister Ainsworth's salary was annually assessed upon all who had not formally claimed exemption until 1831, when the last minister tax was assessed. The repairs upon the meeting-house in 1822, to which all had likewise contributed by taxation, brought the occupancy of the house for religious services to an issue, and, notwithstanding some practical difficulties, among them the ownership of the pews which were nearly all held by supporters of the Congregational Society, the occupancy of the house was apportioned to the different denominations according to their taxable property. In 1829 the apportionment was as follows: the Congregationalists, 21 Sabbaths; the Universalists, 13 Sabbaths; the Unitarians (a short-time organization) and the Baptists, 9 Sabbaths each.

This arrangement was not long continued as at this time the Baptists were already building a meeting-house of their own, and two years later the Congregationalists were ready to move into their new brick meeting-house across the road from their old place of worship. From this time until 1844, when their new house, called the Union Church, was built at East Jaffrey, the Universalists, against the protests of many tax-payers, continued to hold their services in the old meeting-house.

Left now to secular uses, the old meeting-house stood alone, its doors seldom opened except for March meetings and fall elections. The great bell in its tower each Sabbath day sent out its summons to new houses of worship while its own doors remained shut. Its silent pulpit looked down upon empty pews gathering the dust that was to be their sepulture. Where strong sweet voices had raised the sacred hymn there was heard only the drone of the bluebottle fly beating against the windows of its prison. Only memories and the ghosts of ,old theologies remained. With the closing of its doors ended, after nearly fifty years, the active ministry of Reverend Laban Ainsworth, the first and only settled minister of the town. With its square box pews, occupying nearly all its floor space, its gallery and high pulpit unused, the meeting-house, as it still remained in common parlance, was ill-adapted for the transaction of town business or for public gatherings. It was no longer a meeting-house in the old sense and on July 5, 1855, by a vote generally forgotten, it was named the Town House, its true and legal designation today.

After twenty-five years of neglect, to meet the changing needs of the town in 1870, the former meeting-house was remodeled by the removal of the pulpit, gallery, and pews, and the addition of a middle floor with a town hall above and school rooms below. At this time Hon. John Conant gave a fund of one thousand dollars to the town, the income to be used for keeping the outside of the Town House in repair. By the alteration made at this time, and the use of alien southern pine finish in place of native lumber, though meeting the immediate needs of the town, the character and spirit of the interior of the former meeting-house were utterly destroyed. After a few years' use, due to a shifting of the center of population and the abolition of the former school districts, the new school rooms in the Town House were abandoned, and, in 1914, the place for town meetings and the transaction of town business was removed to East Jaffrey.

In 1922 the Village Improvement Society of Jaffrey, with true appreciation of the character and associations of the old meeting-house (see later chapter), offered to cooperate with the town in restoring, so far as compatible with present day uses, its former appearance and condition. In this work nearly nine thousand dollars were expended, three thousand of which were provided by a town appropriation. The middle floor was removed, restoring the ancient lofty interior and making a dignified hall of colonial design, with a narrow gallery on three sides, supported by square fluted columns, in the spirit if not in the exact form of the original edifice. The same two rows of windows light the interior as in former days and the same arched window that once admitted light to the high pulpit has been restored to a place slightly above its former position.

As a result of its restoration to its former dignity, a new interest in the old meeting-house was created, which was well expressed in its first use on a public occasion of importance when the exercises in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of the town during the week of August 11 to August 18, 1923, were held in the newly restored building.

The old meeting-house, surrounded by its green Common, with its "Verry Great Mountain" beyond, still stands as true of line as when the builders raised it one hundred and sixty years ago. It is the town's dearest possession, and its perfect memorial of its heroic age. Behind the house and the rude sheds it overlooks is the Burying Place where the builders sleep. Not often in a single picture is found so much of majesty, so much of beauty and repose, so much of the spirit of Old New England as are mingle here.

THE MINISTER

For seven years following the erection of the meeting-house only temporary supplies of preaching were obtained. A people who could pick flaws in the State and Federal Constitutions and advise the Provincial and Continental Congresses, had also their own opinions upon theological matters. They voted to have "yong men suply the pulpet," but the mere fact of youth and inexperience made it all the more necessary that their orthodoxy should be carefully scrutinized. Hence they prudently voted "that no Committee Shall imploy no Minister except those that Preach on Probation." Candidates came and went. Six pounds were appropriated for the support of the Gospel in 1773, and a like amount for 1774. During this probationary period, the services were probably held in barns, a not uncommon custom, or perhaps out of doors, as there were no houses that could hold more than a handful of the congregation. In 1777 a growing inflation of currency, rather than increased preaching, called for fifty pounds, and the next year one hundred pounds were "voted for the support of the gospel."

In this year, Jonathan Allen was tried on probation as a candidate, with the decision after three months "to omit a call to Mr. Allen for the present." Soon after a vote is recorded "to hear Mr. Reed until the Next annual meetting."

After the meeting-house was shingled, the services were held within its walls with the congregation seated on piles of lumber and such rude benches as could be improvised for the occasion. In 1779 the body pews had been built and between them and the pulpit were plank benches, or free seats, that were occupied without restriction until the demand for more pews caused their removal. From about this time the congregation was comfortably seated and a fair hearing could be given to a half dozen candidates unknown to modern fame. After Mr. Reed, came Mr. Stearns who was chosen "for all the Supplys this fall," and after him Mr. Colby was engaged for three months. In the spring of 1780, the name of Caleb Jewett appears as a candidate. In this year, on May 18, the church was incorporated and afterward acted jointly with the town upon matters of common interests. The membership of the church when instituted represented but a small portion of the population of the town. Their names, as recorded, were:

Kendal Briant &	His Wife
Daniel Emery & Jane—	His Wife
John Briant	
Eleazer Spofford &	His Wife
John Coombs & Bathsheba	His Wife
James Gage &	His Wife
Oliver Proctor &	His Wife
Isaac Bailey &	His Wife
Isaac Baldwin &	His Wife
John Wood &	His Wife
Nehemiah Green &	His Wife

James Haywood & Keziah	His Wife
Jonathan Priest &	His Wife
Ephraim Whitcomb & Elizabeth	His Wife
Jereme Underwood &	His Wife
John Eaton	
William Slack	

Caleb Jewett, the first candidate after the incorporation of the church, met with the immediate approval of church and town. In March of this year, the town raised a thousand pounds for preaching, a considerable rise from the six pounds voted five years before. This might appear to be a tempting sum to the young candidate, but it was in the period of extreme inflation of the currency, when the minister of a town not far from Jaffrey is said to have paid his entire year's salary for a little pig. On June 1, 1780, the town "voted to hear Mr. C. Jewett More if he Can be Obtained also voted that the Committee treat with Mr. Jewett to Come to us again to Preach on Probation in Order to give him a Call." They later voted him "for an Incoragement" lots No. 11 in the 6th range, No. 3 in the 2nd range, one hundred pounds in lieu of the lot the town had sold that was drawn in the right of the first settled minister, and two acres for a house site west of the road and south of the Common, provided he accept the call of the town. A call was then draughted by the church and accepted by vote of the town. But "all is not gold that glisters." Lot No. 11, range 6, was of passable value, being the lot west of the present Common and south of Shattuck Inn, generally low and uninhabited, and still belonging in part to the descendants of the first settled minister in Jaffrey. Lot No. 3, in the second range, was rocky waste due west of the summit of Monadnock and of no conceivable value. Moreover, upon the question of whether his seventy pounds salary should be "in species or otherwise," it was "voted to Give Mr. Caleb Jewett for A Salery £70 L:M: to be Paid to him after the rate of Rye at four Shillings Pr Bushells indian Corn at 3 s 4 d Pr Bushells Beaf Poark Butter and Cheas as they were in the years 1774-75—Money and Other Articles Equivalent for three years to Come then 980 Annually as Long as he is the Gospell Minister of sd town." Mr. Caleb Jewett was plainly a young man of parts and personally acceptable to church and town alike, but for reasons not stated he saw fit to decline the unanimous call that was tendered him. Perhaps his theological training did not fit him to cope with the mathematical complications involved in computing his salary in the "Species" proposed, or he may not have estimated at its true worth the rocky "Incoragement" offered. Mr. Jewett was known to later fame as the honored minister of Gorham, Maine, and as a trustee of Bowdoin College.

But the disappointment of the good people of Jaffrey in the loss of their chosen minister proved a blessing in disguise, when, in the following year, the committee on supplies were prospecting far afield, they found at the commencement exercises at Dartmouth College a young divinity student after their own hearts. They induced him to come to Jaffrey to preach. His name was Laban Ainsworth and he proved to possess just that combination of wisdom and grace which fitted him for ministry and leadership among the people he found assembled to greet him in Jaffrey. He passed successfully the period of probation; he was satisfied with his "Incoragement," probably without seeing it; and he was accepted unanimously by church and people as "the Gospell Minister of said town."

THE ORDINATION

The ordination of the first settled minister was a historical event of consequence in nearly every early New England town. In April, 1782, the town "voted to hear Mr. Ainsworth on probation, in order to Give him a Call." On July 8, the town having by vote unanimously concurred with the church, the matter of the encouragement to be offered was considered. The "encouragement," or "settlement," usually offered a young minister at the beginning of

his pastorate, was not reckoned a part of his salary but was a gift, or premium, from the church or town as an aid in setting up housekeeping and establishing himself as a member of the community. The encouragement offered by the town was not extravagant, considering the fact that in the grant of the township 300 acres of land had been set apart for the first minister, but in the stress of hard times two of these lots had been disposed of for which he was expected to give a quitclaim to the town. And now by vote of the town, the young Mr. Ainsworth was offered the mountain lot previously offered to Mr. Jewett, "the north end of the two senter lots," and thirty pounds in money. He was also given the privilege to visit his home friends twice a year, "two Sabbaths at each time," and "seventy pounds salary as long as he is the Gospel Minister in sd town." Having accepted the call with the conditions stated, Mr. Ainsworth's ordination was fixed by vote of the town for the second Wednesday of December, 1782.

To engage the ordaining council, "Mr. Elezr Spofford, Lieut Emery and Mr. John Gilmore were selected; and Samuel Pierce, Captain Spaulding, Nathan Hale, Lieut Buss and Samuel Emery were chosen to take care of the meeting house on said Days."

The preparations for the event were not on the lavish scale customary in more prosperous times, when a grand Ordination Ball was often a prominent feature of the event and refreshments that might be considered more appropriate for a raising were provided. The ordination brought many men of distinction from surrounding towns to Jaffrey to 'bear a part in the ceremonies. Among them were the Reverend Aaron Hall, second minister of the church in Keene, Reverend Stephen Farrar, of the church in New Ipswich, and Reverend Edward Sprague of Dublin. An Ecclesiastical Council was convened in Jaffrey on December 10, 1782, with churches in New Ipswich, Temple, Fitzwilliam, Dublin, Keene, and Woodstock and Ashford, Connecticut, represented. Reverend Stephen Farrar was chosen Moderator and Noah Miles, Scribe. After routine business and the examination of the candidate, the Council adjourned until the following day, when it reassembled and "Unanimously agreed to proceed to ordination." The introductory prayer was given by Noah Miles, Scribe; the sermon, by Reverend Mr. Farrar; the ordaining prayer, by Reverend Mr. Hall; the charge, by Reverend Mr. Brigham; the Right Hand of Fellowship, by Reverend Mr. Judson; and the concluding prayer, by Reverend Mr. Sprague.

The ordination of the Reverend Laban Ainsworth to the ministry of the church in Jaffrey was blessed far beyond the usual measure, and the life-service of the man so inaugurated remains a memorable chapter in the social and religious life of the town.

Laban Ainsworth was born in Woodstock, Connecticut, July 19, 1757. In his childhood he suffered a severe attack of scarlet fever which caused his right arm to wither and to be nearly useless to him for life. This disability, which barred him from many of the active pursuits of life, probably led to his education for the clerical profession. It was intended that he should enter Harvard College in 1775, but 'owing to the military situation around Boston at the time, he was sent to "Dartmouth in the woods," where he entered the Sophomore class, and was graduated in 1778. He studied theology under Rev. Stephen West, D.D., at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and while still under tuition he preached for two years at Spencertown, in the District of Claverack on the Hudson River, where he served a few months as chaplain with Major McKinstry's Corps in the Revolutionary Army. Having become established in his profession and in the confidence of the people he served, he was married, December 4, 1787, to Mary Minot, daughter of Jonas Minot, Esquire, of Concord, Massachusetts. During the preceding year, he had been engaged in all the time that could be spared from the duties of his profession, in building the house which he hoped might be his permanent home. The people of Jaffrey, sharing in his anticipated happiness, had lent their aid in every possible way in providing and furnishing his new home.

Directly after their marriage, Mr. Ainsworth and his bride came on horseback to Jaffrey, and, when nearing their destination, were met by a cavalcade of their parishioners and escorted to their new home. As they approached the house, they found the townspeople assembled in a company which opened to the right and left as they were

escorted between the lines to the door. “Within everything was in perfect order. Fires were lighted and tables were furnished in the most generous style, so the day and evening were passed in gladness and social delight.” Mrs. Ainsworth was the descendant of a family noted for high character and thrift, and she inherited the fine qualities which immediately gained for her the confidence and esteem of the townspeople, which she retained through life. But with the best of prospects for comfort and happiness, the great tragedy of their lives was not far away. On the 12th of the following February, they were awakened in the night by smoke and found their house in flames. In leaping from their chamber window, Mrs. Ainsworth received an injury from which she never fully recovered, and, saddest of all, Isaac Spofford, a child of eight years of age, son of Deacon Spofford, who was visiting Mr. and Mrs. Ainsworth, lost his life in the flames. The deepest sympathy was aroused for the young minister and his wife in their distress and a town meeting was called to provide means for their relief. At this town meeting it was voted to call on the people for donations, and five influential men were chosen to circulate subscription papers among the inhabitants of the town. The response was generous and a committee, the strongest that could be named, consisting of “Roger Gilmore, Esq., Capt. William Pope, Esqr Underwood, Capt. Perkins and Mr. Samuel Emery,” was appointed to direct the work of rebuilding. Labor and materials were freely given and the united efforts of pastor and people soon resulted in the dignified and substantial Ainsworth Manse, which has been in possession of the first minister of the town and his descendants from its erection to the present time.

Laban Ainsworth fulfilled the promise of the engaging personality that had recommended him so strongly to the Jaffrey committee at the Dartmouth Commencement. He found equal favor with the people of Jaffrey in the probationary period of his preaching. Living conditions were then crude beyond our present conception, yet he offered no criticism and found no fault. The Revolution was still in progress and often he had to take his pay in promises that waited long for their realization. But times changed with the new century and prosperity came to pastor and people.

Without detracting from the divinity that hedged a minister of the old days, Laban Ainsworth entered into the everyday life of his people. He bought and sold and bartered with them. He was an extensive owner of real estate. He cleared away forests, grubbed out stumps, fenced mountain pastures, loaned of the fruits of his thrift to those less fortunate on real estate mortgages. He went hunting and fishing, shot foxes and bears. He belonged to the Masonic, Fraternity and the Library Society; he debated with the schoolmaster before the Washington Benevolent Society; he was superintendent of schools; he visited the sick and the well; he catechized the children; he knew the fathers and their children unto the third and fourth generations. He was fixed in his religious beliefs and yet was tolerant of the opinions of others. He advised in town meeting and no one’s counsel carried greater weight. He was a business man but the title of Parson came first. In the old sense, he was above all the shepherd of his flock. As he grew older, his people called him Father Ainsworth. Some times they called him priest, which to them bore the same meaning, but parson, not minister, was the accepted term of endearment and respect. He had a keen sense of humor and could bandy words or play a harmless practical joke with the best of them. He was addicted to the weed, that is, he was a prodigious chewer of tobacco, a social accomplishment that had its uses in the argumentative circle before the tavern fire, but, withal, he had a profound sense of the dignity of his office and was ceremonious to a degree unapproached in these latter days.

Since the winds were born there has been no parallel to the quietude that brooded over the landscape on the old New England Sabbath. The swallow twittered softly, the crow hushed his strident call, and the solemn tones of the bell, undulating from the steeple, fell upon the uttermost confines of the town with solemnity and volume undiminished. Even those who furtively traded cows beneath the eaves of the horsesheds on the Sabbath, talked in subdued voices. And when the bell left off its wide swinging summons and settled into its measured funereal toll, the doors of the close-shut houses that bordered the

Common opened and prim porcelain ladies, with ringlets over their ears, in silk bonnets and spreading skirts, emerged and, by no visible engines of propulsion, glided slowly and silently across the Common to the meeting-house door. Away to the south of the Common, the front door of the parsonage swung open and from it emerged the minister of the people. In clerical attire, knee buckles, shoe buckles, and all that, he bore well the part. His pace kept time with the slow tolling of the bell.

Glancing backward upon the pastoral approach, the people entered the meeting-house by the south, west, and east doors. Conscious of squeaky boots and uncouth apparel, a shy husbandman from the fringe of the woods paused a moment upon the threshold, ostensibly to read the notices posted in the green box with the glass door at the right of the main entrance, but in reality to brace his will for the ordeal before him. The tythingmen and deacons went about on tiptoe, decorously seating the stranger within the gates; and admonishing the obstreperous bubbling-over urchins who failed to succumb to the spirit of their surroundings. When the minister entered the door every head was bowed. The sexton then peeping through the oval aperture in the door of the tower, and seeing the clerical countenance mount above the breastwork of the gallery, at the precise moment when the presence assumed its appropriate place and authority, ceased his solemn function. The voice of the preacher broke the silence, as with words and presence that befitted the occasion he took up the service of the day.

THE SERVICE

The church services in the early days were to the minutest detail subjects for discussion and action in town meeting. In 1778, before the pews were built in the meeting-house and in the midst of war alarms, the people made choice of Deacon William Smiley and David Stanley to read the psalm, and Jonathan Priest, Abram Bailey, and David Stanley to tune the psalm. They voted in 1787 to sing “a Verce at a time, once in the forenoon and once in the afternoon.” With no musical instrument or even a pitch pipe to set the tune, occasional lack of harmony occurred, as indicated by a later vote “that Jacob Balding assist Dn Spofford to tune the psalm in his absence or inability to set it.” At the same town meeting, March 29 1787, it was “ voted to grant the two middle body seats below men and woman’s Side for the Singers.” Deacon Smiley faithfully discharged his duty of reading the psalm for many years, as shown by the notes of a church meeting held on January 2, 1792, when “De’n Smiley moved and it was seconded to dismiss him from readin ye Pms in Publick Worship & desire Dn Emery to read it—Passed in ye negative.”

In 1791, having the subject of psalmody under consideration, the scribe made the following record, of which the conclusion has not been discovered.

> After many observations on the subject of Psalmody, it was moved and seconded to put ye Question whether ye Psalm in afternoon should be sung without reading either verse or line & ye forenoon as usual, there appeared 12 in the affirmative & 9 nuters it was concluded on ye whole to continue use for ye present ye method of Salmody according to ye vote for tryal and take up ye subject at the adjournment of this meeting.

In 1785 Captain David Sherwin was employed to teach the rules of music. He was the first singing master in Jaffrey, and four of Deacon Smiley’s children, James, Sally, David, and Robinson, came under his instruction. Among other pupils were, Thomas and Lois Mower of a musical family long represented in the choirs of Jaffrey, two Turners, two Gilmores, and three Spoffords. This was the beginning of the new order of church music in Jaffrey. The change was not made without controversy, which persisted for several years, as shown by the consideration given to the subject of psalmody already mentioned.

On March 1, 1791, the singers were granted the central half of the front gallery, indicating a choir of largely increased numbers. This change and the different methods of

singing adopted, made the lining of the psalm impracticable and not long after it was discontinued. The hymns of Dr. Isaac Watts also came into use in this period and their adoption, with the greater use of hymn books, rendered unnecessary the "lining of the hymn." But a large element was reluctant to give up the old order in which all could join, for the hullabaloo of the young singing school pupils singing by rule. The deacons were tenacious of their prerogative and in some towns less considerate than Jaffrey, could only be silenced by "singing them down." In Jaffrey both Deacon Smiley and Deacon Emery had sent their children to Sherwin's singing school and, no doubt, surrendered gracefully and with pride to the superior qualifications of their children. Novelties in music were practised by the new singers to show their skill and among their innovations that became a favorite exercise was the fugue, for many years very popular but seldom heard in the services of recent times.

After the choir came instrumental music, which also had to win its way to public favor. First came the double bass viol, irreverently called the Lord's fiddle, or, by some, Dagon, after the old heathen god of the Phillistines. Edward Bailey, whose son, Edward H. Bailey, is still a resident of Jaffrey, was one of a musical family which for many years was represented in the church choirs. He played the big fiddle, which also responded to the deft fingers of Miss Abiah Warren, a talented young lady who was also a portrait painter. With the big fiddle came also the little fiddles, the flute, the clarionette, trombone, and cornet, either singly or in combination. These parts added much to the variety of the musical offerings, especially when the players all began to tune their instruments just before the long prayer was ended.

The first pipe organ was made in town by Almon Bailey, a musician and mechanic, assisted by his brother, Edward, at their mill on the Mountain Stream. It is described by Edward H. Bailey, from boyhood memories, as about six feet wide by nine feet high. The pipes were made of wood, and were square in form, the largest five or six inches inside measurement, and varying in length up to four or five feet. The pipes were covered by three panels or shutters of the common window blind form, set between upright supporting columns, the central section being wider than those on the sides. The organ was not sold, but only loaned to the church and was placed in the gallery behind the singers, where two wall pews had been removed to provide space. It was an object of great curiosity, and when it became known that the Bailey boys were setting up the organ in the meeting-house, there was quite a gathering on hand to watch the work. Merrill Parker of Peterborough, who is related to the Smileys, now tells the story as it was told to him by Jane Dinsmore, who was present, that when the work was done, to everybody's surprise and the delight of some, the first piece played on the meeting-house organ, to show its quality, was "Fisher's Hornpipe." Some thought this was going a little bit too far. Almon Bailey removed to Marlborough about 1836, where he became a recognized organ builder. The use of the Jaffrey meeting-house for church services declined with the building of new houses of worship by the different denominations, and the Bailey organ, correspondingly out of use, was taken out and finally removed to Marlborough.

There was another part of the church services that no doubt, brought some people to meeting, the always interesting possibility that the town clerk might have banns to announce. The knowing ones, of course, had guessed what was coming, and when the secret was out, a little ripple of satisfaction ran around the house resting upon the blushing occupant of some well-known pew. This interesting custom was continued in town until probably the middle of the last century. The last one noted, with reference to meeting days, was of the marriage intentions of Benjamin L. Baldwin and Rosaline French, April 30, 1838, "published on three several public meeting days." Another of earlier date is here given in full:

Jaffrey, January 1, 1815

This certifies that the intentions of marriage between Mr. Abel Nutting and Miss Rachel Cutter, both of Jaffrey have been published on three several public meeting days in Jaffrey—

Saml Dakin Town Clerk

MEMBERSHIP AND DISCIPLINE

The credentials of candidates for church membership were carefully scrutinized, especially upon adherence to the creed. Parson Ainsworth was himself strict upon this point and his constant question to applicants for membership was, "Are you orthodox?" This insistence upon the strict Calvinistic dogma caused general comment because Mrs. Ainsworth, who had a mind of her own, never became a member of the church. This adherence to creed undoubtedly served to keep the membership of the church smaller than it otherwise would have been for many years.

A few random notes from the records of the church afford evidence of the many perplexing cases presented for consideration.

On May 21, 1789, the church met for the transaction of routine business.

> 1. On Reading to the chh a Letter of Recommendation & dismission of Amos Fortune from chh at [name illegible] Voted to receive him to Communion.
>
> 2. Mr. Joseph Horton being absent it was thought not proper to act on Qn of Receiving him.
>
> July 23, 1789, at chh meeting immediately after Lector preparatory to sacrament of the supper as usual Voted to Receive Roger Gilmore into our Communion on his desire.
>
> 2. Put the Qn whether the chh will receive Mr. Joseph Horton into our Communion. Voted in the negative. 4 for, 4 against & 4 nuters.
>
> June 26, 1790, the chh convened immediately after lectur as usual. Read a letter from the chh of Xt in Starling commending Mr. Moses Burpe and wife to our Communion.
>
> 1. Voted to receive Mr. Burpee and wife to our Communion.
>
> 2. Voted that the determination of the Qn whether we will receive Mr. John Kent into our Communion be referred to the next chh meeting then to be decided.
>
> 3. That Bro N. hardy be required to be present at the next chh meeting by the pastor.
>
> 4. That the standing Committee prepare the call of Mr. J. Kent and Bro Hardy other simmular matters & lay before the next chh meeting.
>
> June 29, 1790. Opened by prayer. Mr. Kent appeared but desired, for his own reasons to have his call postponed & the Committee agree.
>
> Although Bro Hardy did not appear yet have obtained knowledge [of 1 his situation. We think it our duty to Report—yt—That he denies ye Doctrine of Total depravity, of Election, of Regeneration & Calvinism in general-held to ye Validity of Works in justification & our ability to perform them-and says That he cannot commune with us until we conform to him.
>
> June 5, 1790. Meeting.
>
> 2. Voted to admonish Bro Nathaniel Hardy to return to his duty.
>
> 3. Letter from chh in Townsend commending Leml Maynard and wife to our communion. Voted to receivethem.
>
> Church meeting August 30, 1792—1 Voted to receive Samuel Snow 2 Dorothy his wife & 3 wid Lowis Burdoo. Abel Parker disents from infant baptism & pd clergy.

It appears from the church records that difficulties were constantly arising that required the services of outside arbitrators, for example, July 4, 1792, Mr. Ainsworth recorded an invitation to himself, the Reverend Sprague of Dublin, and Reverend Hall of Keene, to go to Stoddard and advise "upon a Difficulty In said church abought the Confession of Faith." The Conference was to be held on a certain date "in order to have a Lector Preached in the afternoon."

Upon the case of Jedediah Foster who, in the face of heretical statements previously made, had asked admittance to membership in the Jaffrey Church, admission was made conditional upon his "expressing to ye chh in ye presence of ye council his assent to ye whole the result of ye late mutual Council," upon which "solemnly reminding him of his imperfections which have subjected him to so many bitter reflections & as scripture teaches

you to avoid even ye appparance of [evil] so let experience teach you whatever may prevent your future usefulness." This controversy was not settled upon these solemn admonitions, but became bitter with talk of false testimony and accusations of irregularity in business transactions, which resulted in arbitration by outside parties. A Mr. Beals of Rindge and a Mr. Wardwell and Mr. Beard, residences unknown, were selected as arbiters. Witnesses were called by whom conflicting testimony was given. Mr. Foster retorted, to a request for a statement of his position, " 'tis dangerous to speak for you have proved what I never said." No decision is recorded and the case apparently ended with the last state of the applicant no better than the first.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL SOCIETY

The first Sabbath School in Jaffrey was held in the summer of 1825. In May of that year, a few people interested in the movement were invited to meet at the Center Schoolhouse in Jaffrey to consider the formation of a Sabbath School. As a result of the meeting an organization was formed known as the Sabbath School Society of Jaffrey. Its object was "to promote the establishment and instruction of a Sabbath School." Laban Ainsworth was the first president of the Society and other officers chosen were a secretary, treasurer, librarian, and two superintendents, chosen by ballot on the first Monday in April annually. Twenty-five members are recorded for the opening year. The superintendents were to appoint teachers, arrange classes, restrain irregularities, and give general personal attention to the school. The school was to begin each year "on the first Sabbath in May and be discontinued at the pleasure of the President and Superintendents." The school seems to have been successfully established and in 1828 it was voted to continue its sessions through the winter. The following year the society received from Jonas M. Melville, Esq., a fund of $200, "to be used exclusively for the support of the library of the Society." The school seems to have received pupils of all denominations, but the presidents were usually the pastors of the Congregational church, of whom the names of Reverend Laban Ainsworth, Reverend Ebenezer Everett, Reverend Giles Lyman, Reverend J. D. Crosby, and Reverend Leonard Tenney are recorded in succession. The record ends in 1848.

It was fitting that the active ministry of Mr. Ainsworth should end near the time when the use of the old meeting-house for religious services was discontinued. In 1830 and 1831 the Congregational Society built its new brick meeting-house across the Common from the old house. No better evidence can be found of the respect and esteem in which the people of Jaffrey held the old and faithful minister than in the action of the town in paying his salary even against his expressed request, long after it had been freed from this obligation by the passage of the Toleration Act in 1819. From the beginning of his service, when he was voted a salary of "seventy pounds as long as he is the Gospel Minister in sd town," his salary remained unchanged until August, 1796, the equivalent of $233.34 in the silver money of the period. On the date named the town "voted to add to the Revd Laban Ainsworth's Salary one hundred dollars yearly from this date as long as he is to have the other sum of two hundred and thirty-three dollars and 34 cents by the agreement when he was settled in the ministry in this town." This salary was accepted without complaint from the recipient during the many succeeding years of prosperity that amply warranted its increase until toward the close of his ministry, when at his own request it was reduced to its original figure of $233.34. Fortunately the papers in his own handwriting leading to this action have been preserved in the archives of the town and are a fine testimonial to the spirit of service and self-sacrifice for his people that characterized the man. The first is as follows:

Jaffrey April 12, 1827

To the Selectmen of Jaffrey

Gentlemen

I hereby request that the assessment of the Minister tax for the current year be made one hundred dollars less than the usual sum as voted at the March meeting-And I do hereby agree to discharge the town for my salary with that deduction.— LABAN AINSWORTH

Notwithstanding this generous request which was without doubt presented to the assembled voters in town meeting, his full salary was voted and assessed. Two years later, when an assistant had been employed—not by the town but by the church and society—to bear a part of his labors, he again asked by the following letter that the town be relieved of its burden by the omission of his entire salary as a town charge.

To the Selectmen of the Town of Jaffrey

Gentlemen

Arrangements having been made by the society of which I am pastor to Supply the desk for the current year by Mr. Everett—I shall not claim of the town any pay for my salary during the present year—

You will please to communicate this to the town with the request that the money for my salery should not be raised for the current year—

LABAN AINSWORTH March 10, 1829.

Again his salary was voted by the good will, not only of his parishioners, but also by a majority of the people of the town. In March, 1830, the request was again repeated without effect, and the following year, 1831, the town voted to raise the Reverend Laban Ainsworth's salary as usual. This was the last minister tax assessed in Jaffrey. On November 21, of this year, the church "voted Unanimously at a Meeting to give Mr. Giles Lyman a Call to settle with them as a colleague Minister with the Rev. Mr. Ainsworth."

Reverend Giles Lyman, his new colleague, was installed in 1831 and resigned in 1837 on account of ill health. He was succeeded by Reverend Josiah D. Crosby, who was followed in 1845 by the Reverend Leonard Tenney who was dismissed in 1857, less than a year before the death of his venerable colleague whose funeral sermon he was called to preach, March 20, 1858. From the review of his life and work in this discourse are gleaned some of the facts of his last years. For half a century Reverend Laban Ainsworth worked alone and saw pass from the scene of their labors, one by one, almost to the last man, the sturdy pioneers who, in their prime, had built the meetinghouse and had called him to his appointed field of labor. The Bible was his constant companion in his declining years, and until the last two years of his life, when his sight became dim and his strong faculties began their rapid decline, he retained his interest in his people and the world. It is said of him that he was a man remarkably guiltless of affectation himself and intolerant of it in others. The doctrine he preached in young manhood was to him the living truth and the solace of his old age. "He used to say, 'We want in the pulpit plain, sound doctrine, even if men scorn it. It is better than some pleasing error that shall lead the soul to ruin.'"

On his one hundredth birthday he was able to meet with his people in celebration of the day, and on the Saturday before his death he led the devotions of his family circle in prayer. For seventy-six and one-half years, in sickness and in health, he had been the minister of his people. On March 17, 1858, at the great age of one hundred years, seven months, and twenty-eight days, like a prophet of old, he "fell on sleep."

Three days later he was laid at rest by the people he had known and loved. His life was an honor to his church and to humanity, and his memory remains a precious legacy to the town he greatly served in a pastorate that it is believed has not been surpassed for duration in the church in America. Above his grave, his life of service is fittingly epitomized on his tombstone which bears this inscription:

IN MEMORY OF

Rev. Laban Ainsworth,
first minister
of the town of Jaffrey.
Born July 19, A.D. 1757,
at Woodstock, Conn.,
Settled Dec. 11, A.D. 1782.
He continued in that office
until his death which
occurred Mar. 17, A.D. 1858.
"I have fought a good fight,
I have finished my course,
I have kept the FAITH."

[Pp 260-63]

BELL RINGING

Fortunately for the memory of the Good Old Times there was one luxury which the people allowed to themselves against which no complaint is recorded. As soon as their means permitted, every town looked forward to a steeple on its meeting-house in which might hang the town bell, to be the voice of the people and the call to worship and public duty. Bell ringing as a means of communication was a custom in the older towns brought by the people from their early homes in Europe. Like the modern fire alarm it had its code understood by all the people. It was the clock and glass to travelers and to workers in the field. The first church bells were imported, but when they became common in New England, it was a matter of special pride to a town to own a bell from the foundry of Paul Revere.

Among the Monadnock townships Fitzwilliam was the first to own a bell. Its first bell from the Revere foundry was bought in 1815. This was destroyed when the meeting-house was struck by lightning and burned after only nine Sabbaths' use. On the succeeding house a heavier bell was hung, weighing 1,128 pounds, and was used until 1881, when it was cracked by ringing on a cold night. It was replaced by one presumably still in use. Rindge bought a bell in 1817, and Dublin in the following year.

The example of these neighbors could not fail to arouse a similar interest in Jaffrey, which led to the building of the present shapely steeple on the old Meeting-house, which was paid for by private subscription with the expectation that with this provided, the town would supply the bell. In February, 1823, the town voted to accept the belfry as a part of the Meeting-house, and at the same meeting voted to purchase a bell to be paid for by the sale of additional pew ground in the Meeting-house at that time "occupied by the body seats on the lower floor." On the 20th of the same month, the town bought from the Revere foundry its 282nd bell, which was received March, 1823, and placed in the new tower of the only meeting-house in town at that time. The cost of the bell in Boston was $440.30. It was used constantly until 1850, when it was cracked, but was soon after recast by Henry N. Hooper of Boston. For many years it continued its service until after the installation of the town clock, since which it has served as a clock bell, except for occasional use upon

events of ceremony or special importance. In 1824 it was voted to raise money to ring and toll the bell, a custom that was continued until after the Civil War.

Upon the erection of the Baptist Meeting-house in 1830, an appeal was made to the town to provide a bell, or to assist in its purchase by the Baptist Society. This proposal was rejected, but in 1835 in addition to providing for the ringing of the Town House bell, the selectmen were authorized to contract for ringing the bell on the Baptist Meeting-house "for religious meetings and at 12 by the clock at noon and at 9 by the clock in the evening on every day of the week except Sundays, and on Sundays at eight by the clock in the evening, also for deaths and funerals when required and for fires should any happen, and also the towns bell on all town meeting days."

In 1825, the following "Regulations to be observed respecting the ringing the bell" were adopted and were continued without change for many years.

> The bell shall be rung precisely at twelve o'clock at noon and at nine at night on each day of the week, Sundays excepted, and be rung at least five minutes each time.
>
> On Sundays from the annual fast to thanksgiving it shall be rung at half past nine A. M. and half past ten and again one hour after the morning service is ended and at eight P. M. and shall ring five minutes at each time and at the last time in the forenoon and in afternoon before meeting after ringing at least five minutes it shall toll till the preacher enter the pulpit and then cease.
>
> On any death happening and application being made it shall be rung sufficiently to give notice and then strike four times four for a man and three times three for a woman and twice two for a child, and strike their ages respectively.
>
> On town meetings and other public days it shall be rung so much as the selectmen shall direct.
>
> In case of fire it shall be rung as fast as possible and as long as shall be necessary.
>
> From the annual Thanksgiving to Fast it shall ring at ten o'clock and at Eleven and again in one half hour after the forenoon session is over and at eight P. M. and toll as before mentioned.
>
> Should the person who undertakes to ring the bell fail to ring the bell regularly as is stated in these conditions the selectmen reserve the right of making such deductions from pay as they shall think reasonable.
>
> March 12, 1825.

A bell in the steeple of an old New England meeting-house meant as much and more to the people of the old days as an imported carillon in a singing tower means to the luxurious and populous communities of wealth and culture today. It was their only concession to sentiment, the poetry of sound in joy and sorrow, and their first use of the language of emotion that is above words and universal in its appeal. A New England town without a bell was a people without a voice, a community of the dead. What a gap in the memory of the old times, were there no church bells speaking of time and eternity! Never in the city street is the message quite the same as in the clear air of the country when on a June Sabbath morning the church bell speaks,—then even the atheist owns a God.

The church bells of New England had their code known by all. There was the note of alarm in the fast ringing bell that made the steeple rock and creak when fire, the uncontrollable scourge of the forest or the treacherous enemy of homes, raged in some home or outlying forest. It might be that a child was lost or an enemy was at the door, when they heard the bell calling them to come like armed men with their buckets and their guns and their lanterns to lend their aid in need. It might be the joyful acclaim of a battle won by their soldiers far away, or the wedding bell for some one they knew. It summoned them to church in tones more appealing than the law of the tythingman or the preacher's warning from the pulpit week by week. It carried the message of death in their midst to the far corners of the town when there was no other instantaneous means of communication.

What did it mean when the bell struck at an unwonted hour? It brought a hundred people to their doors, with questioning eyes and lips. Men stopped at their labors in the field and stood in silence as they counted. It was not a fire because the ringing was in the tempo of the ordinary Sabbath day summons. They waited in suspense the five minute

prelude that seemed to say, “Hear all ye people!” Would it be four times four, three times three, or two times two? Was it a man, a woman, or a little child who had gone from their midst? One—two—three—four—it is a man. One—two—three—four—someone may have missed a stroke. Again and again it is repeated to make the message sure. Now every one knows a man and neighbor is gone. What family is bereft? Is he old or young? Waves of intense solemnity roll away over the hills and waters as the deep-toned bell takes up its tolling the years of the dead. Everyone counts; there is much sickness about. Twenty and thirty and forty years have passed their count and still the bell goes on. A sense of relief comes to a few; it is not the friend for whom they feared they must mourn. Fifty and sixty and seventy—all nature is hushed while the sexton completes the count. The plow-horse in the furrow droops his head and waits. Eighty and eighty-one, and it does not stop. Eighty-four—eighty-five—eighty-six does not come. It is finished. Women, standing in the dooryards with their work aprons over their heads as improvised hoods, go back to their household duties, weeping. Some one known to all has gone from among the living and saddened by their loss the people take up their daily tasks again.

The bell at the old Meeting-house was rung, at least to mark the noonday, until April 1, 1904. But by 1906 the people at Jaffrey Center missed the sound to such a degree that the present town clock was installed at an expense of $553, $350 being appropriated and $203 being raised by popular subscription. The Baptist bell at East Jaffrey was rung until about 1880, when a transfer was made to the Universalist bell as being of louder tone and nearer the center of the village. When in 1884 a town clock was installed in the latter belfry, the noon bell was discontinued.

People had a fancy for ringing bells and there was no lack of applicants at a pittance of pay—about thirty-five dollars annually. As the bell-ringers paused on the down pull on the rope they listened to hear the full round tones roll away over the hills to catch the antiphon as of deep calling to deep, of the kindred bell in its distant unseen tower. Something of haunting beauty was lost, a voice of the old New England peace was silenced when in the name of progress the bells in the steeples of Jaffrey ceased to send out their message of peace and brotherhood to all the people.