

1904-1954

Fiftieth Anniversary

**OLD HOME
CELEBRATION**

Farmington, New Hampshire

August 21 and 22, 1954

Published by The Board of Directors

for the

50th Anniversary

**OLD HOME
CELEBRATION**

In Farmington, New Hampshire

The photographs of Farmington in these pages were taken by

BROTHERS STUDIO, Farmington, N. H.

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**THE FARMINGTON - NEW DURHAM
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**

Compiled by Ned Leon Parker

Honorary Chairman

August 21 and 22, 1954

Mr. Ernest Gray, Chairman of Publication

Early History

The underlying causes that made it necessary for our Colonies to seek separation from the mother country was the primary reason for the people of the Northwest Parish to become a township in their own right and that cause was objectionable taxation.

The establishment of a place of worship was among the first acts of any newly founded town and when Rochester was granted the charter and became incorporated it proceeded at once to erect a church. Since that edifice was situated on Rochester Hill some two miles below the present center of the city and ten or twelve miles from the Northwest Parish it was obviously impossible for the inhabitants of this section to attend worship at so great a distance, yet they were taxed for the main-



MAIN STREET LOOKING SOUTH

tenance of the church and the support of the minister. These obnoxious conditions were tolerated by our people through the years. These taxes becoming increasingly burdensome until in the 1790's when a movement for the establishment of a separate township gained considerable momentum and appeal to the legislature for a charter was made. This in brief was the background of the movement that culminated in Farmington's first town meeting held at the home of Simon Dame on South Main street on Monday, March 11, 1799. This building is now the pleasant home of Mr. and Mrs. James Hoage on Elm street and huge elm trees now grow on the spot of this historic meeting of 150 years ago.

Three

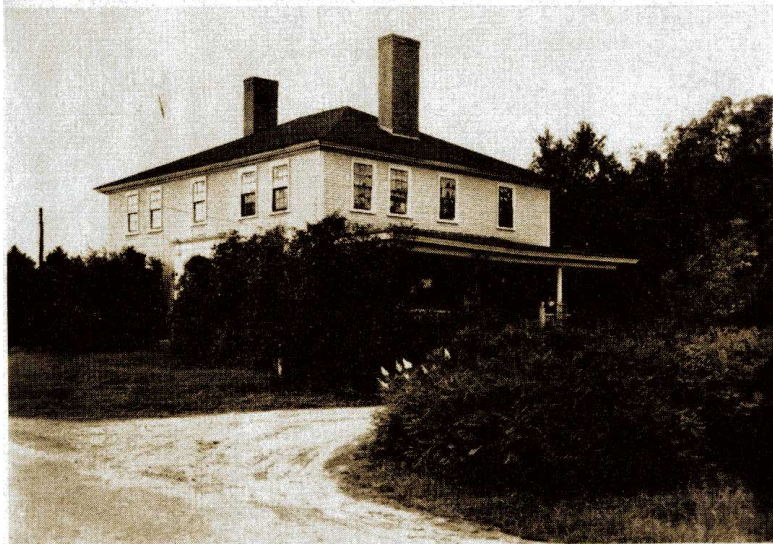
In compiling this historical data acknowledgment is hereby given to Mrs. John F. Cloutman, secretary of The Farmington-New Durham Historical Society, Inc., to Mrs. Katharine Fall Richmond, Mrs. Annie Edgerly Thayer, Miss Ruby Barrett, Attorney Eugene F. Nute and to Mrs. Eleanor Prescott.

NED L. PARKER.



HOME OF MR. AND MRS. CARL C. BLANCHARD

The charter was finally granted December 1, 1798, and forwarded to Judge Aaron Wingate who was to serve as moderator at the meeting. Now we are to assume that the Judge sent word to his good friend, General Richard Furber at Merrill's Corner, and immediately this worthy saddled his favorite horse and hied himself to the "Dock." Here in the tap room of Wingate's Tavern are assembled Jonas C. March,



WALDRON HOUSE

Four

son-in-law of Mr. Wingate, Ichabod Hayes of the Chestnut Hill neighborhood, Anthony Peavey and several other influential citizens. So on that fateful Monday in 1799, 141 citizens marched through Simon Dame's house and cast their ballots for Aaron Wingate for moderator, Jonas March for town clerk, Ichabod Hayes, Ephraim Kimball and his brother-in-law, David Roberts, to serve as selectmen. Richard Furber was elected representative to the legislature for the term of one year. The important office of town constable was sold to the highest bidder and it was voted to pay fifty-seven cents a day for work on the road.

Immediately the newly elected officers were confronted with problems galore. A renegade dog destroyed some sheep and their irate owner demanded financial redress. Cattle strayed from their pastures and a need of a place to impound them became apparent. The erection of a pound was a question that came up at a later meeting and its location was the cause of complete agitation. The pressing need for funds to conduct affairs became necessary and a tax collector was appointed.

If you wonder why Mr. Furber was the only member of note from the section that was as populous as our village the answer is found in the fact that while we fought a war with the mother country to a successful conclusion and had established a government of our own, yet there remained throughout the Colonies a considerable number of Patriots who were called Tories. In this group was to be found the conservative class of landowners and well to do farmers who had prospered under British rule and they were not in sympathy with the leaders whom they looked upon as radicals. Besides this group was a goodly number of Quaker families who were not taxed for support of the church on Rochester Hill and they were not especially interested in the movement. So with these factors confronting the small group of progressives it was not surprising that wire-pulling was necessary for the success of the meeting.

While we have no way of knowing the population dwelling within the boundaries of the new town, a conservative estimate is 1000 people. Yet at this meeting only 141 men were interested enough to cast votes on this memorable day. A backstage view of this movement to break away from Rochester was not as you may have believed a mass uprising of the people of the Parish. In fact, the principal actors in this historical drama consisted of less than a score of citizens and they, either by kinship or through business relations, formed that group. Judge Aaron Wingate was head of the movement here in the village and associated with him was his son Johnny, the storekeeper; Jonas March had married Sally, the daughter of the Judge; Ichabod Hayes, aspirant for the office of selectman in the newly created town, was the father-in-law of Simon Dame at whose home the meeting was held. Ephraim Kimball and David Roberts, the other members of the board of selectmen, had married sisters and were selected as representing the Ridge Road and the Bennett Hill neighborhoods. Richard Furber was a business asso-

Five



G. F. MOONEY & SON WOODTURNING MILL

ciate of Judge Wingate. He was an ardent patriot and had seen service in the forces of his country and was appointed a general in the second war with Great Britain, 1812-1815. He is credited with giving the new town its name of Farmington. He died at the ancestral home in 1848 at the age of ninety-five.



CENTRAL HOTEL

Six



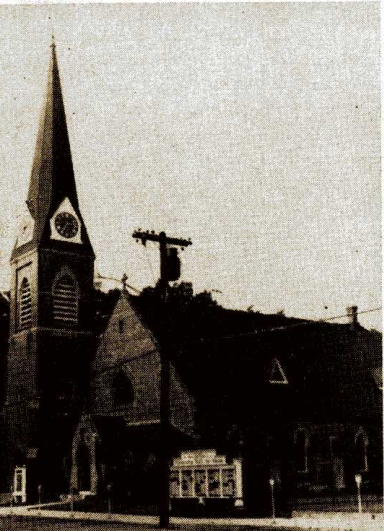
FARMINGTON COUNTRY CLUB

Responding to a demand for the erection of a pound, bids were posted and Lt. Anthony Peavey was the successful bidder. The cost was \$20.00. From the humble beginning of this first town meeting the wheels of government were soon turning and Farmington was destined to take its place among the progressive towns of the state with justifiable pride in its record of existence.

Churches

The history of all New England towns is so closely interwoven with the history of their churches that the records are very similar. Around the year 1800 and soon after the incorporation of Farmington, a meeting-house was built on a site two miles below the village on an elevation that still is known as Meeting House Hill. Here town business was transacted and meetings were held by various denominations. Though meetings had been held previously in halls and the one school-house on South Main street, the First Congregational church was organized September 15, 1819, with eight persons as members, and on May 29, 1820, the First Congregational Society of Farmington was formed. In 1834 a non-denominational church building was erected on Peavey Hill, and was used more or less down to 1845. In 1844 the First Congregational church building on Central street was dedicated and was used until abandoned when the new wooden church was dedicated on the site of the present brick church on October 18, 1870. ✓ The wooden structure was burned in the disastrous fire of 1875 and the present brick church was immediately erected on the site of the burned

Seven

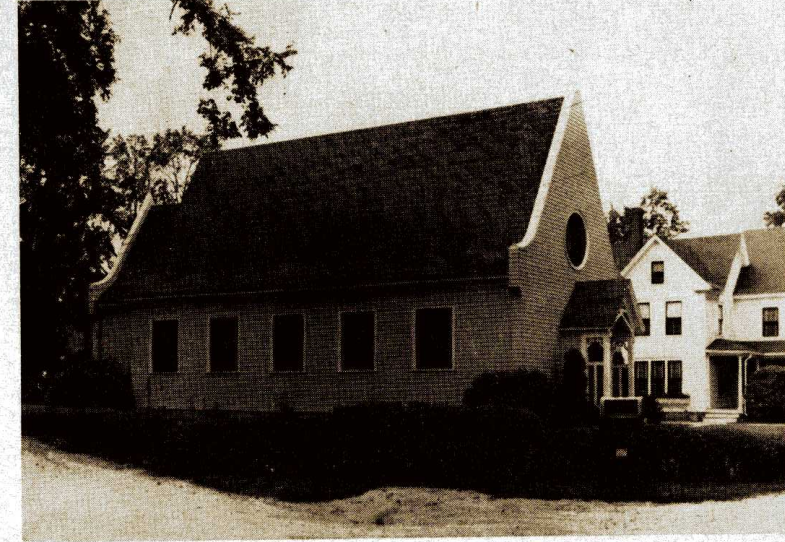


FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

building. The first Baptist church was organized October 21, 1854, under the pastoral care of the Reverend Dexter Waterman. This church, soon to observe its 100th anniversary, is a leading factor in the religious life of the town. The Advent church on Orange street has grown through the years and the society has recently erected a parish house across the street. The first services of the Roman Catholics was held in 1920 in the chapel that is now located in the rear of the imposing edi-

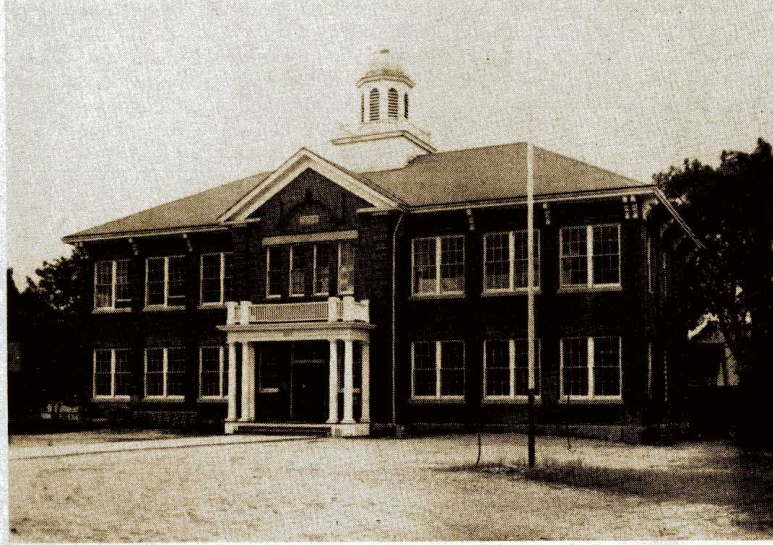


ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

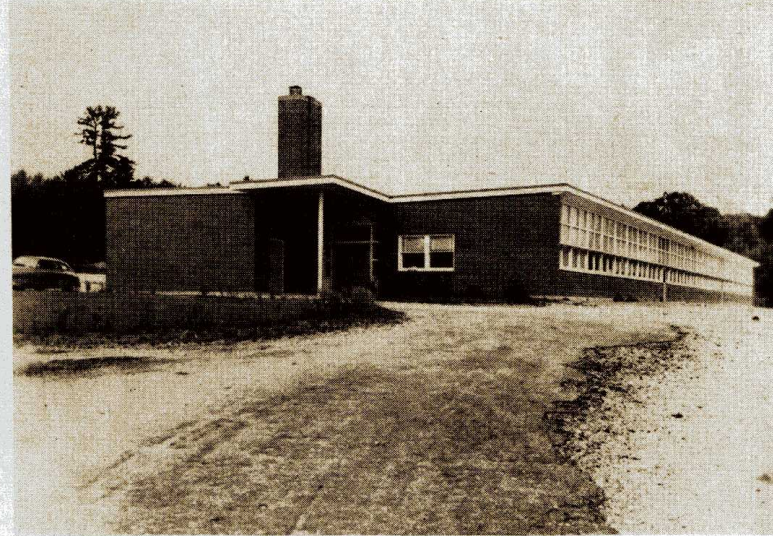
Eight

fice at the corner of Central and Tappan streets. Tradition says that in 1692 at a clearing in the deep woods that is now Wagon Wheel Ranch, Jesuit Fathers held mass for a group of Indians that had encamped there. A more recent addition to places of worship is the Pentecostal church, a modest building located on Elm street.

Schools



FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL



MEMORIAL DRIVE SCHOOL

Nine

Our first schoolhouse was at Merrill's Corner, then a populous rural community in 1791. Later we established schools in our village and in 1875 we erected the brick building on South Main street and with necessary additions it now serves as our high school. The Glen street, High street and the School street buildings house elementary grades. As the town's population grew the enrollment of pupils crowded to capacity our school buildings. At the 1951 school meeting it was voted to build the new elementary school building and a location was selected at Memorial drive, a very central and scenic spot at the extension of School street. Immediately work was commenced and a twelve-room building, modern in every detail, was ready for occupancy the following March. The cost of building and equipment was \$135,000.

Parks and Playgrounds

Public-spirited citizens have contributed parks to beautify the village. The late James B. Edgerly, cashier of our National Bank for years, presented beautiful Edgerly Park in which an imposing monument to the memory of Civil War Veterans stands. At the corner of Central and Tappan streets is a spacious playground where the young-



FERNALD PARK

sters play baseball and romp at will. This land bearing the name of Fernald Park was presented to the town during the exercises held there on Old Home Day, August 20, 1914, by Mrs. Elizabeth Fernald Washburn of Ware, Massachusetts, in memory of her father, the late George Whitehouse Fernald, who with his father, Mr. James E. Fernald, a leading merchant, founded The Farmington News in 1879.

Ten

A project that has the enthusiasm and support of the community is the playground located off Summer street. Here a large tract of land donated by Dr. and Mrs. William Ellison has been transformed into a baseball ground with grandstand and all the necessary equipment. While at adjacent spaces is playground equipment for the girls and little tots. This enterprise sponsored largely by the young businessmen is maintained by the sale of admission tickets and enthusiastic crowds cheer on the Little Leaguers as they battle for supremacy. Mr. Rufus Rundlett, a pioneer in the movement, has been president since its inception. Mr. Walter Rouillard is now serving as president.



500 BOYS' CLUB PARK AND PLAYGROUND

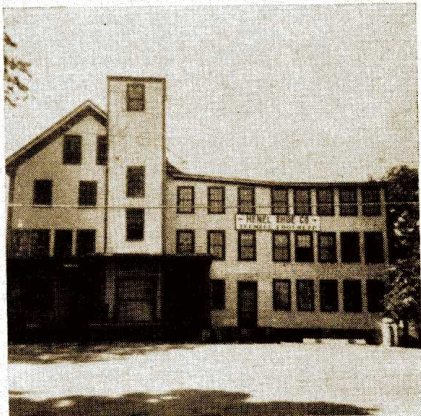
Statesmen

The saga of Henry Wilson, Vice President under President Grant, is an ever interesting story. He was born Jeremiah Jones Colbath of parents so poor in worldly goods that this boy was bound out at an early age to a neighboring farmer. Here he labored until 21 when with his brother, George Colbath, he walked to Natick, Mass., to learn shoemaking. On advice of interested friends he had, on attaining his majority, changed his name to Henry Wilson. From the office of member of the Massachusetts Legislature he climbed the political ladder to U. S. Senator and then to the Vice Presidency. Living descendants are a grandson of his brother, Mr. George Colbath of Concord, now serving as U. S. Marshal, and a granddaughter, Mrs. Ada Colbath Taylor of Whitefield, who has represented her town for several terms in our State Legislature. That we have not produced more vice presidents or presidents is due to the fact that we have been busily engaged in the

Eleven



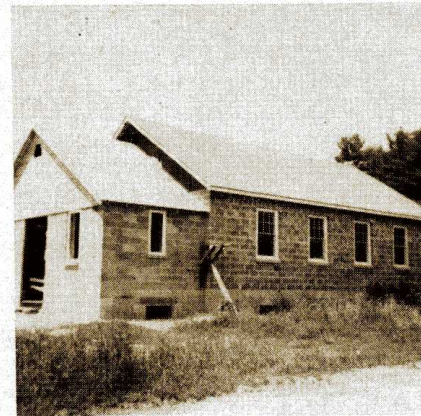
ADVENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH



HENEL SHOE CO.



BROWNE BRUSH FACTORY
SHOWING TRIANGLE



PENTECOSTAL CHURCH UNDER
CONSTRUCTION



GLEN STREET SCHOOL



H. O. RONDEAU SHOE FACTORY
NO. 2



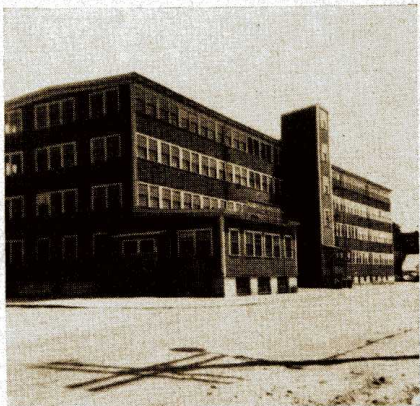
GOODWIN LIBRARY



FARMINGTON NATIONAL BANK



CENTRAL STREET, LOOKING EAST



H. O. RONDEAU SHOE FACTORY
NO. 1



SCHOOL STREET SCHOOL



TOWN HALL

shoe industry. We have, however, sent to the National House of Representatives our full share of able men. Nehemiah Eastman of Gilmanton who married a sister of N. H. Governor Levi Woodbury, opened a law office here and in 1813 erected the fine old colonial house on South Main street now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Blanchard. Mr. Eastman was elected to Congress and represented this district in 1825-27. He was followed by Dr. Joseph Hammons, a local physician, who served from 1829-33. Again in 1889 the Honorable Alonzo Nute was elected to Congress and served the state and the nation with credit to themselves and honor to our states. The Honorable Aaron Wingate was a member of the Governor's Council from 1797-1803. The Honorable Charles W. Talpey served as Councilor from 1885-87. From the State Senatorial District we have sent eleven men, the first senator being the Honorable Nehemiah Eastman in 1820, and the last, the Honorable



EDGERLY MEMORIAL PARK

Samuel S. Parker in 1904. The Honorable Eugene P. Nute served as U. S. Marshal from 1899-1914 and was marked by a long term of faithful and efficient duty to the exacting requirements of this office. Honorable Jeremy O. Nute served as Railroad Commissioner in 1857-60. Honorable Alonzo Irving Nute was Banking Commissioner from 1887-90 and Honorable John B. Lyman served in that office from 1872-83. General Winfield Scott Edgerly grew up here, graduated from West Point and saw distinguished service in the armed forces of our country.

While we were supplying men to fill important places in the political arena of state and nation, contributions in the literary field are no less important. An early writer of stories for New York weeklies was Mrs. Clara Augusta Trask, who wrote under the pen name of

Fourteen

Clara Augusta and also under the pseudonym of Kate Thorne. Mrs. Adelaide Cilley Waldron, talented writer of poetry and historical subjects, her "Here and There" column a weekly feature of the "News," was widely read. Mrs. John H. Gray, as Virginia Hollis, wrote entertaining poems and articles of interest. Haydn Pearson columnist of the Boston Herald, son of a Baptist minister, was born here. George Haigh, author of widely read articles over the signature of Dan Stiles, grew up here while his father served as pastor of our Congregational church. Miss Shirley Barker's poem of note, "The Ballad of Betsy Staire," won the Thomas Olson Quill Prize in competition with 132 poems offered by authors of 50 colleges. Today Miss Barker's numerous historical novels are widely read. Prof. Raymond Pearl with 712 publications in the scientific field and Mrs. Katharine Fall Richmond with her contribution of distinction in the genealogical and historical compilation, John Hayes of Dover, N. H.," have both added lustre to the town of their birth.

Town House

In 1881 the need of a public building with offices for town officials and for public gatherings was apparent. At the annual town meeting it was voted to purchase a plot of land and to erect a town house. The site purchased was land formerly occupied by the George M. Herring shoe factory. The building was a two-story structure with offices and court room on the first floor and a spacious hall with stage on the upper floor. The basement was arranged for a banquet hall and a police station. The cost, including land and equipment for the building, was \$21,355. On February 10, 1928, this structure was destroyed by fire. Its replacement is a one-story modern town house complete in every detail, acknowledged to be one of the best municipal buildings in the state. It cost approximately \$125,000.

Sports

If you think it is a sleepy old town in midwinter when the fields are white with drifted snow and the thermometer hugs the zero mark, you just drop into the Farmington Fish & Game Club's annual Sportsmen's Show. This club is 27 years old, has a big enrollment of real sportsmen. At New Durham the club owns a large tract of land in which a sizable pond of stocked fish furnishes sport in all seasons. Albert LaChance is president and Arthur Webster collects dues.

Another equally attractive sportsmen's organization is the Farmington Kennel Club with membership of nearly 200 local huntsmen. This club maintains open house at its club rooms on Mechanic street and is busy with shooting contests and field trials. The fact that Mr. Everett "Jack" Howard is at its head is assurance of its success.

Fifteen



MAIN STREET LOOKING NORTH

Public Library

Our first public library dates back to 1853 when Rufus K. Pearl and a group of public-spirited men organized a Library association. Our present library building, a gift of the late George H. Goodwin, was formally dedicated with appropriate exercises May 10, 1929. Former Governor Charles W. Tobey was the orator of the day. The present officials are Ned L. Parker, president of the association, and a board of directors; Mrs. Stanley Dolliver has for the past eleven years served as efficient librarian. The building also houses The Farmington Woman's Club, founded in 1910, and The Farmington-New Durham Historical Society, Inc., which was founded November 11, 1949.

Among the most interesting and progressive organizations in this community is The Farmington-New Durham Historical Society, Inc., organized for the purpose of bringing to light facts and traditions of old time Farmington and its neighboring town of New Durham. From a small membership this society has grown until it numbers 140 enthusiastic members. Much credit for the success of this society and for execution of countless details of this Old Home program is due to the untiring efforts of the efficient secretary, Mrs. John F. Cloutman. The present officers are Mrs. Irene N. Wentworth, president; Henry Johnson, vice president for Farmington; Mrs. Izah P. Berry, vice president for New Durham; Mrs. John F. Cloutman, secretary; James E. Thayer, treasurer; and Fred W. Browne, auditor. Miss Ruby E. Barrett serves as membership secretary.

Public Buildings

It is doubtful if any town of its size in New Hampshire has so many modern business blocks as Farmington is able to boast of. The Odd Fellows block, an imposing three-story structure facing the square, has modern stores on its first floor with offices above and a Grange hall, while the top floor has a large well fitted lodge hall with anterooms. The Masonic organizations own the substantial block on North Main street where J. P. Hurd occupies the ground floor. The two upper floors are given over to a spacious banquet hall and lodge room for the Masons and Eastern Star. Until the Knights of Pythias sold their fine building on Central street, the spacious hall on the top floor was a well-appointed lodge room with convenient anterooms. The second floor was given over to offices, while the ground floor harbors the moving picture theater and a candy store. This building was sold some years ago to Mr. Walter Young, who also owns the picture franchise.

Other imposing buildings are the Wilkins block on Central street, where Robert Wilkins has an electrical and hardware business. The Palmer block on South Main street is the home of the Palmer Hardware Company with Oscar Aiken its progressive proprietor. The Farmington Gas & Appliance Company occupies a substantial building on North Main street. The Fred Richards block on North Main street houses the post office and the Farmington Grill on the ground floor, while the upper floors are divided into apartments and single rooms.

The most modern public building is the Chris Paul block on the square which occupies with pride a spot which for years was the unsightly ruins of a fire that menaced the business area. For several decades the hotel on Central street has been widely known, first as the Central House and in recent years as the New Central Hotel, under the proprietorship of James F. Beaudry.

The Farmington News

The Farmington "News" has passed its diamond anniversary without change of location or the principles for which it was established in the year 1879. Much of the history of the town during the seventy-five years has been documented in the weekly pages and the bound volumes are frequently consulted for detailed accounts for many and sundry reasons. From birth to death and important events in between, the "News" has figured in almost everything of historical significance in the old home.

Fire Department

Sometime around 1855 the need of fire protection became apparent so the precinct had a hand tub and other fire fighting apparatus. Today we have the most modern equipment obtainable. Here is the set-up in the fire house ready at a minute's notice: 750 gallons per minute pump manufactured by Seagraves, a Ford truck of 500-gallon

capacity, a Ford ladder truck of 500-gallon capacity, a tank truck of 650-gallon capacity and a 150-gallon pump. For water supply we have a 20-foot well carrying a capability of supplying 250 gallons per minute and a 55-foot well supplying 300 gallons per minute. The reservoir at the top of Main hill has a capacity of 750,000 gallons. Neither extensive drouths nor serious conflagrations have impaired this supply.



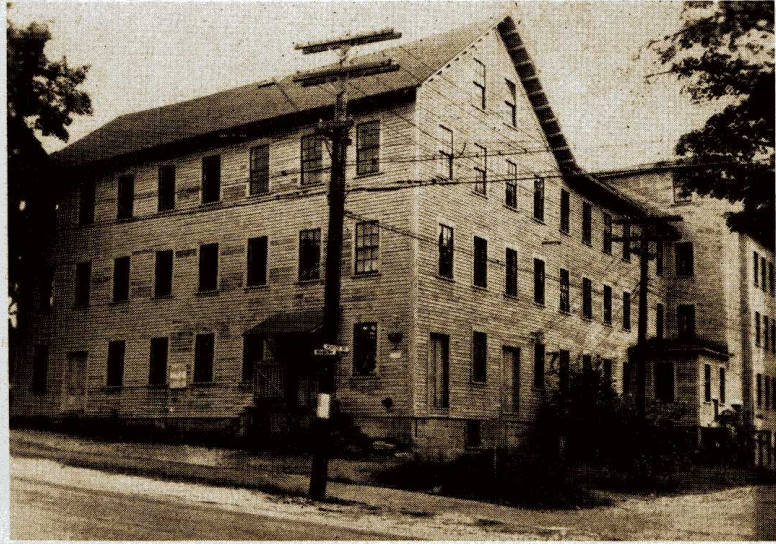
FIRE DEPARTMENT AND EQUIPMENT

The entire Precinct Department has for seven years been under the careful and efficient supervision of Mr. Marshall Gibbs, chairman of the Board of Engineers. In this work he is ably assisted by Carl Worster and Melvin R. Eaton. Hercules Fire Association has Ernest J. Kelley as chairman, while the Hook and Ladder company is presided over by Harry Knox.

Buildings

Following the fire that destroyed the wooden factory in the early 1870's, the late Alonzo Nute immediately began the construction of a four-story brick factory at the corner of North Main and East Grove streets. Here for many years the firm of A. Nute & Sons did a successful business in the manufacture of men's shoes. The remodeled building is now the home of the A & P store. Sometime in 1877, the Hon. John F. Cloutman, whose business had expanded to a point where more room was necessary, built the first brick factory known as Central block, and this construction was followed a few years later in 1884 by another brick factory called the Cloutman block. These two structures were known as the Twin Factories. Martin Luther Hayes had already built a factory on Spring street and this was added to by an extensive

wing that now houses the Fred W. Browne Wire Shop. The shoe manufacturing business so prospered that factories mushroomed here with amazing rapidity. Edward F. Jones occupied the long two-story factory on South Main street that was later known as the Tripe Hotel. The Mooney Mill on South Main street occupies the site of a former sawmill, also an underwear mill. This corporation furnishes steady employment to 25 or more people and it manufactures a finished enameled handle. In a tall narrow factory at the corner of South Main and Garfield streets once known as the Berry factory, the Hon. John F. Cloutman, Sr., with his partners did a thriving business. A manufacturer for over 50 years, beginning in 1854, Mr. Cloutman introduced the first wax-thread sewing-machine used in New Hampshire and was the first in town to manufacture ladies' footwear. Following Mr. Cloutman's decease, his son, John F. Cloutman, Jr., continued with the business, manufacturing shoes for over 25 years. In 1917 the factory was sold to Joseph Dailey and James Brown. It was completely destroyed by fire, and the present modern plant built by them was bought back by young John, as he was affectionately known, in 1919. At the present time this building is owned by the H. O. Rondeau Shoe Company, Inc., where shoe manufacturing has continued under the management of Mrs. H. O. Rondeau, who succeeded to operation of the business following the untimely death of her husband and his partner, Abraham Burtman, and has furnished employment for large numbers of people in this section. A branch of this firm, known as the Henel Shoe Company, also manufactures shoes in what for years was known as the Edgerly factory, operated for many years most successfully by the late Frank E. Edgerly. Tradition is that the original building was an old church moved from Peavey hill by ox-team, and it may have been the old



H. O. RONDEAU SHOE CO., INC.—FACTORY NO. 4

meeting house of that name. It is now locally owned by the Farmington Holding Corporation. The Twin factories on Central street and the old Jones factory on North Main street are all property of the H. O. Rondeau Shoe Company, Inc.

Banks

Yankees are traditionally thrifty and a safe place to put their spare dollars demanded a savings institution, so a state bank was organized in 1854 and that in turn was succeeded in 1872 by the Farmington National Bank with John H. Barker as president and a board of directors composed of able and conservative businessmen. This institution has through the years grown in volume of business and has the confidence of this and surrounding communities. In 1933 Mr. James Edgerly Thayer, grandson of James B. Edgerly, who for many years had been the bank's able cashier, assumed control of the bank. Four years' study at Yale, majoring in finances together with two years of practical training in the home bank fitted him for the duties of management. That Mr. Thayer was eminently fitted for the position is proven by the fact that in the ten years from 1944 to 1954 the bank's resources have increased from \$1,000,000 to nearly \$3,000,000. The present officers are James E. Thayer, president; Fred W. Browne, vice president; Norman Fall, cashier, and Donna Osgood, assistant cashier. Dr. Joseph L. McLaughlin serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Another financial institution that has been instrumental in enabling the people to put away something for a rainy day is the Farmington Building & Loan Association, organized in 1922, this organization has enjoyed a healthy growth. Mr. Carl Thomas serves ably as its president with Mrs. Maude Barker Horne as secretary.

Conclusion:

The late Adelaide Cilley Waldron in an article published in 1895 in the now defunct *Granite Monthly* summed up the town's characteristics in these brief sentences: "It is a mighty good town to live in especially for poor folks and it may be truthfully added that people of wealth also find Farmington a pleasant place to reside. It is a clean American town of about 4,000 inhabitants and it is a community that minds its own business, but part of that business, accepted without question, is to be the kindest and most helpful people to each other conceivable"

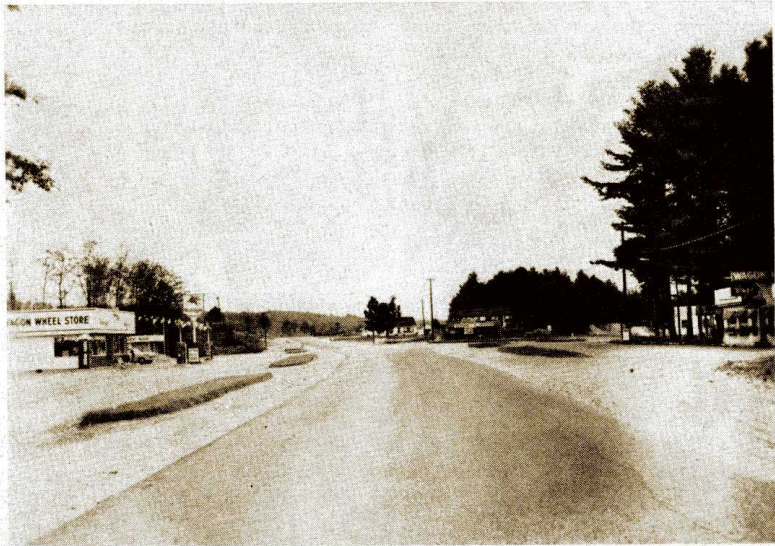
On May 4, 1904, the Farmington Old Home Week Association came into being and on May 18, 1904, the following officers were elected: President of the Association and president of the day, Mr. John F. Cloutman; vice presidents, Mr. Charles W. Talpey, Mr. Frank R. Marston, Mrs. W. H. W. Colomy and Mr. Frank J. Smith; secretary, Mrs. Adelaide Cilley Waldron; and treasurer, Mr. James B. Edgerly. At the time of the first Old Home Week celebration, August 20 to 26,

1904, an anniversary booklet entitled *Souvenir of Farmington* was published with pictures of the town and a brief history of the town by Mrs. Waldron. These have been treasured through the years so it seemed highly appropriate that another be published on this occasion of the 50th Anniversary Old Home Celebration, the tenth to be held in the town, the last one celebrated thirty-five years ago on August 20, 1919.

To you who have come home to renew old friendships, you know you are welcome. To the strangers within our gates, we extend the welcoming hand of friendship and hope sincerely that your visit may lengthen into a permanent stay so that you may share with us the pleasure of living in an ideal community.



CENTRAL STREET LOOKING NORTH



NEW BY-PASS ON ROUTE 11