# Jaffrey Meetinghouse

15 Laban Ainsworth Way
Jaffrey, New Hampshire

## HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT

Town of Jaffrey, New Hampshire
and
The Jaffrey Meetinghouse Committee

By

MICHAEL PETROVICK ARCHITECTS, PLLC
51 Railroad Street
Suite 140
Keene, NH 03431
(603) 636-7056

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## Acknowledgments

1. Historic Preservation Consultant Mae H. Williams researched and prepared Part 2: History and Development of the Property for this report. Ms. Williams work is part of a project to produce historic documentation of the Jaffrey Meetinghouse completed in 2015. This historic documentation project was funded by the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources (NH 725) and followed the HABS (Historic American Building Survey) guidelines. In addition to the building history documented by Ms. Williams the project also included digital architectural drawings prepared by Catlin + Petrovick Architects, PC (now Michael Petrovick Architects, PLLC) and photographs by Paul Wainwright.

2. Some of the photographs included in this report were provided by Robert Stephenson, member of the Jaffrey Meetinghouse Committee and long-time steward of the Meetinghouse.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


| | |
|---|---|
| **Acknowledgements** | **page 2** |
| **Part 1: Introductions** | **page 4** |
| **Part 2: History and Development** | **pages 5 – 31** |
| **Part 3: Existing Conditions Assessment** | **pages 32 – 49** |
| **Part 4: Recommendations** | **page 51** |
| **Cost Estimate** | **page 52** |
| **Part 5: Supplemental Information** | **page 53** |

## Part 1: Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist the Town of Jaffrey and the Jaffrey Meetinghouse Committee evaluate the existing conditions of their historic building on a comprehensive basis. Working with the Meetinghouse Committee, the architect examined the existing building and gathered information on present and future need of the Meetinghouse.

A previous Historic Structures report dated December 18, 1990 had been completed by Structural Technology and Sara B. Chase and included the Meetinghouse among other historic structures in the Town of Jaffrey. The report was funded by the then Jaffrey Historic District Commission, Jaffrey Historical Society and the Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society.

This Historic Building Assessment is intended to provide a current assessment of the Meetinghouse and will reference work completed base on the information in the previously completed report. This HBA will follow the standard format as described by the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program.

The conclusions of the investigation and discovery phase show the building to be in very good condition, especially given is significant years of service. The 1775 Meetinghouse has been continually maintained by the Town of Jaffrey through the Meetinghouse Committee. While continually in use by the Town, the tower was added in 1822-23, and after serving as a school, the building interior was restored in 1922 and included the installation of a Colonial Revival interior.

A complete architectural digital three-dimensional model was prepared for the building as part of a Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in 2014 by Catlin + Petrovick Architects (now Michael Petrovick Architects, PLLC).

The building is currently in excellent condition. The primary findings of this work are:

- The building has been very well maintained for its entire life, and especially since the 1923 rehabilitation.
- Structurally the building is mostly sound with the exception of some work which is required to one section of the tower.
- The exterior siding and paint are in very good condition.
- The exterior windows have been well maintained and are in very good condition inside and outside.
- The exterior woodwork and paint have been well maintained and are in very good condition.
- The existing wood shingle roof was installed in 2017 with a NHLCHIP Grant
- The tower, clock, lantern and spire are in generally in good condition. The belfry section is in need of repairs. The section from the lantern up to the spire had been reconstructed in 1993.

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse is located at 15 Laban Ainsworth Way in Jaffrey Center, Cheshire County, New Hampshire.

## Part 2: History and Development of the Jaffrey Meetinghouse

The following history of the Jaffrey Meetinghouse was prepared in 2014 by Mae Williams, Architectural Historian of Unlocking History as part of the Historic American Building Survey of the Meetinghouse for the State of New Hampshire Property Documentation project (NH State No. 725). This information has been included in the HBA with permission of Ms. Williams.

LOCATION/SETTING/LANDSCAPING

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse is located at the crest of Meetinghouse Hill[1] in Jaffrey Center, Cheshire County, New Hampshire. Jaffrey Center is primarily a residential village with the Meetinghouse at its center. The village was entered onto the National Register of Historic Places as "Jaffrey Center Historic District" on June 11, 1975. The Common is located to the south of the Meetinghouse, across the gravel Meetinghouse parking lot. Directly to the north of the Meetinghouse are the ca. 1774 Old Burying Ground and ca. 1810 Horsesheds. The ca. 1795 Benjamin Cutter Tavern is located to the northeast, and the 1831 First Congregational Church is located to the east.[2] The Jaffrey Meetinghouse shares its setting with the ca. 1822 Little Red Schoolhouse (moved to the site in 1960 by the Jaffrey Historical Society).[3]

**Figure 1: Location Map of Jaffrey Meetinghouse in Jaffrey Center relative to NH Route 124**

[1] Anne R. Wardwell, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form for the Jaffrey Center Historic District." (National Park Service website, www.nps.gov/nr, composed 1975), 2.

[2] National Register, 7.

[3] National Register, 9.

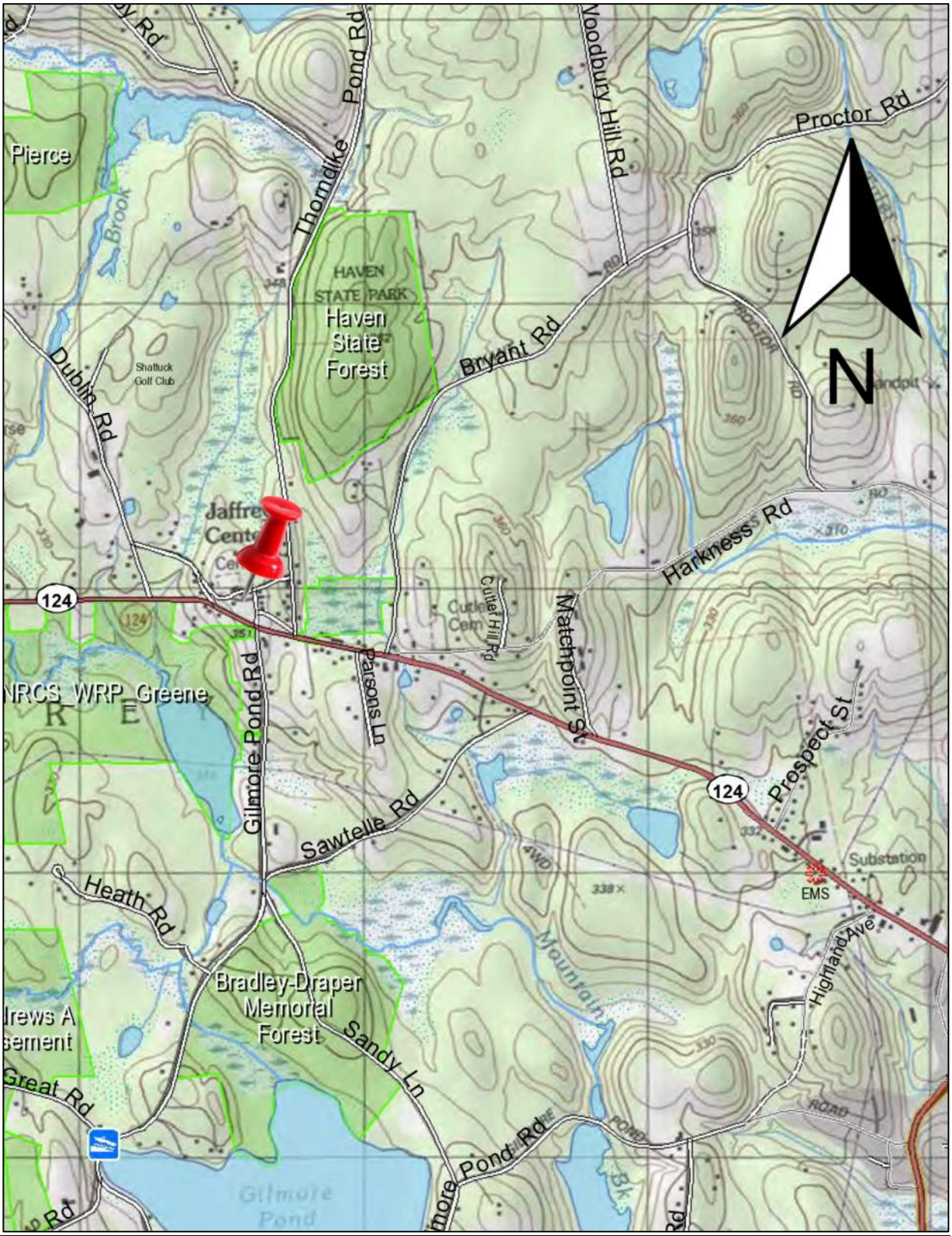


**Figure 2: USGS Location map of Jaffrey Meetinghouse in Jaffrey Center**

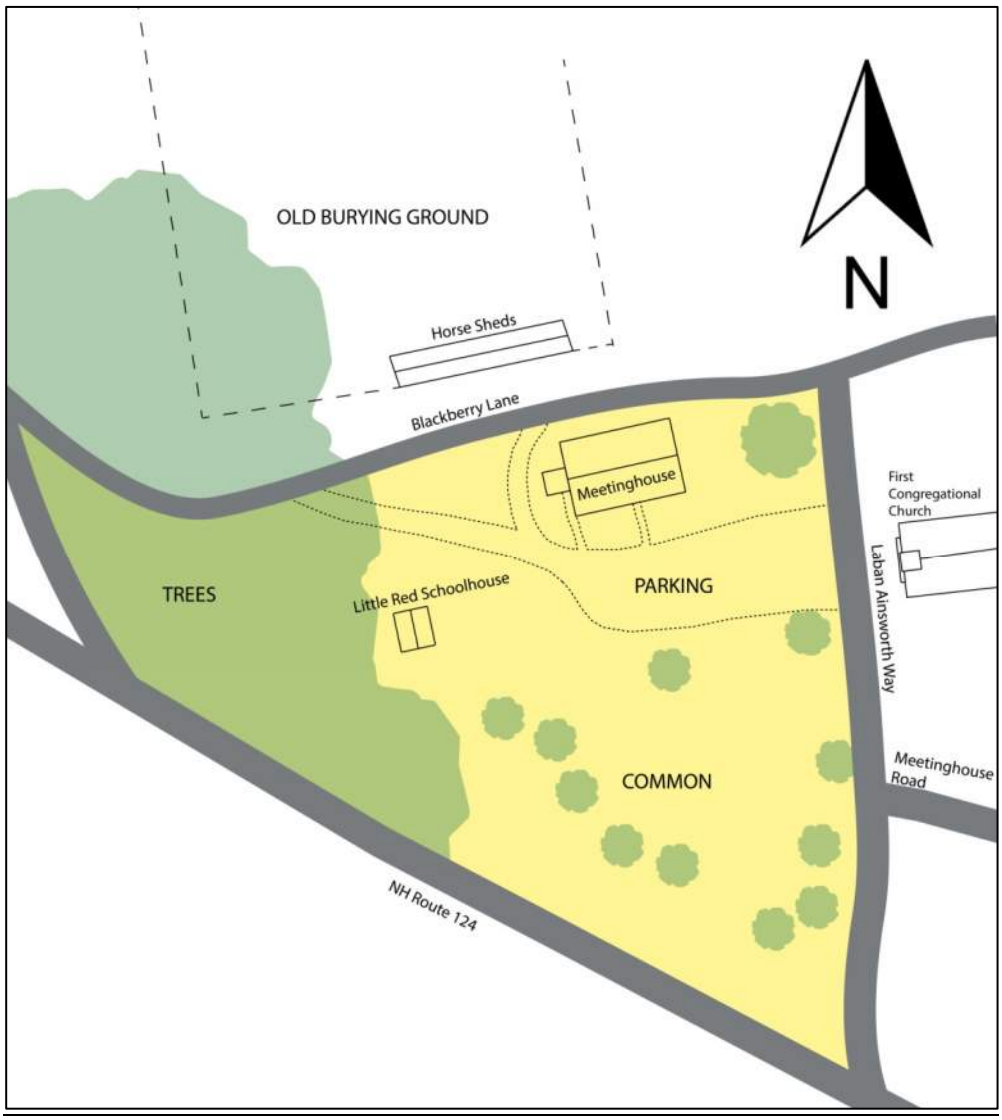


**Figure 3: Jaffrey Meetinghouse Site Map**

EXTERIOR

The 1775 Jaffrey Meetinghouse is a two story barn-type second period meetinghouse. The building faces south, onto the Common. The main structure is seven bays at the façade and five bays at the gable ends with roughly east-west oriented side-gable roof. The structure is covered by narrow painted clapboards with wood shingle roof and sits on a granite foundation. A square five story bell/clock tower is located at the west end of the structure and was added in 1822.

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse has a rectangular plan and is roughly 60 by 45 feet. Aside from the addition of the tower on the west end, the building adheres to a strict symmetry. This is typical of the Georgian architectural style that was prominent between ca. 1700 and ca. 1780 in English colonies.

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse is a fine example of Georgian architecture and exhibits many characteristics typical of the Georgian style. Meetinghouses were built as houses for the purpose of holding religious and secular meetings. “To its builders, therefore, the meetinghouse was an architectural expression of the Reformed point of view that the

'house of God' was not a sacred place."[4] Typical Georgian buildings have a side-gabled roof and a centered paneled front door with decorative crown supported by pilasters. Most often they are of wood-frame construction with clapboard walls and a central chimney. The cornice is usually emphasized by decorative moldings, most often dentils. Windows are aligned vertically and horizontally in symmetrical rows and are usually five ranked at the façade (sometimes they are 3 or 7 ranked). Windows are double-hung with many small panes.

The foundation is composed of large cut granite underpinning. The blocks have a hammered face and do not have visible splitting marks from the exterior. Thin mortar joints are visible between the large blocks.

The walls of the Jaffrey Meetinghouse are covered in white painted wooden clapboards that have been set at regular intervals. There are flat cornerboards at the corners of the Meetinghouse. A torus molding circles the building at the intersection between the walls and foundation, creating a water table.

The side-gable roof is set at roughly a medium pitch. It is covered in sawn wooden shingles that are set in a plain pattern. The narrow eave is boxed. There is a shingle molding at the narrow fascia, flat soffit, bed molding and narrow frieze. There is a row of curved corbels at the bed molding. The Meetinghouse has a close rake (no overhang of the roof at the gable). There are shallow cornice returns at the rake, and the shingle molding and fascia treatment on the gable-end match that of the eave.

The windows along the façade are evenly spaced with seven windows on the second floor and six on the first, with three set on either side of the central entrance. Similarly, there are five windows on the second floor and four on the first at the east gable-end of the building. The window pattern on the north side is similar to that of the south, with the exception of the middle bay. Here, instead of a door below a window, an arch-topped window is set approximately 2/3 of the way up the wall and below the second floor. This window would have illuminated the original pulpit. The window has a decorative upper casing with decoratively cut glass in the upper section above a regular pattern of 20 lites. The bottom sash is 15 lites.

All of the windows have narrow casings with a bead around the outer edge, narrow sill and narrow drip-molding. The sash is double-hung 16/16 with narrow muntins. There is a small semi-circular fan window at the east gable-end, allowing some natural light into the attic space.

Seams in the clapboards above many of the windows may indicate that both the first and second floor windows were moved down roughly six to eight inches ca. 1870 (See historic photographs page 13 and Historical Information, page 26.). Similar clapboard patterns below the pulpit window may indicate that it was raised over a foot to its current position in order to accommodate a second floor that replaced the gallery.

The main entrance to the Jaffrey Meetinghouse is at the center of the south façade. The entrance has double six panel doors. The panels of the doors are raised slightly and there is an applied ogee molding around each panel. The doors are secured with a thumb latch. Pilasters on either side of the doors support a heavy entablature above. The entablature has a narrow architrave, wide plain frieze, and dentil moldings below the cornice. The doorway is reached via two large granite steps with hammered finish that is similar to that of the foundation. An iron rail is attached to either side of the stairs and there is a modern built-in boot-scraper to east side of the door. The railings and boot-scraper were added in 1993. A Colonial Revival light fixture, with eagle finial, is located directly above the door.

An additional entrance is located at the center of the east end of the building, and is reached via six steps and a small landing. This door is also six-panel with applied ogee molding around each panel. The door has a metal knob and a large rectangular escutcheon plate. The door is reached via a set of wooden stairs and small landing. There is a wooden bulkhead to the north of this door, leading into the small cellar and crawl space.

There are no longer extant exterior chimneys at the Jaffrey Meetinghouse. The chimneys were taken down to the roofline in 1995 (See Historical Information, page 28).

[4] Peter Benes & Phillip D. Zimmerman, *New England Meetinghouse and Church: 1630-1850 (*Boston*:* Boston University Scholarly Publications, 1979), 1.

In 1822 a square five-story tower with belfry and spire was built at the west end of the Meetinghouse to house a bell that was purchased from Revere & Company in 1823. The tower is covered in clapboards to match the main structure. It has similar corner board decoration as well, and the eaves also match those of the main structure. The roof of the tower is Acrylic.[5] The foundation of the tower is very similar to that of the main structure, with the addition of two small holes at the north side, located below a former privy. The eastern of the access points appears to have once had a window-well, allowing access to a small compartment below the tower. These vents have been covered with rectangular screens.

Two small windows occupy the north side of the tower, directly above the privy. The windows are fixed two-lite sashes that are set horizontally.

There are three windows at the west side of the tower, one at the first, second, and fourth floor levels. Apart from the ground floor windows, which are 12/12 sash, the windows of the tower are 16/16 and match those of the main building in terms of configuration and molding details. There is an additional oval fixed window to the east of the door to the tower, enabling someone standing inside the tower to see anyone approaching the building.

The entrance to the tower is at the center of the south side, at the end of an accessibility ramp. There are two granite steps below this ramp. The door is a six panel “Christian” door. This Federal-style door is arranged with a pair of small panels at the top, with two pairs of longer panels below, creating a cross in the siles and rails of the upper part of the door. The panels are flat, with ornate applied quirk ogee moldings around their edges. The door is operated with a Suffolk-style latch. The door casing is flat with applied beaded moldings around the order edges of the frame with a similar quirk ogee pattern to that of the door panels. There is a plain entablature above the door with wide flat frieze and decorative crown molding. A light fixture has been added on a block of wood above the center of the door.

A large clock occupies each side of the fifth floor of the tower. The clock face is painted black with gold roman numerals and gold hands. Small gold squares indicate the minute markings on the dial.

There are pinnacles at each of the four corners of the tower roof, at the same level as the belfry. Each side of the belfry has a large arched opening between paired pilasters. The scale of the moldings on the belfry is very monumental, with elements carved boldly so as to imitate stone. The openings have horizontally elongated Roman arches that are supported by pilasters on either side with a large wooden “keystone” at the center of the arch. A balustrade stretches across the opening on each side. The soffit below the lantern (above) is flat with dentils at the bed molding above a frieze of punch-carved diamonds between paired reeds.

Above the belfry is the first of two lantern levels. The lantern itself is octagonal. A balustrade runs around the four sides of the belfry roof with urns over each corner post. There is a pilaster at each of the eight corners of the lantern. A curve-topped louvered opening occupies the walls of the lantern, with triangular “keystone” detail above to mimic the detail in the side of the belfry. The pilasters support a heavy entablature that runs around the top of the lantern. There is a wide soffit below the second level of the lantern that is decorated with mutules.

The treatment of the second level of the lantern is similar, with matching balustrade with urns at each of the eight corners. At this level, the arched louvers of the level below have been replaced by oval panels, centered on each side of the structure. Again, the eight corners have heavy pilasters. Above, the entablature has dentil moldings below the final level.

A balustrade surrounds the base of the octagonal spire. The balustrade at this final level has urns at each of the eight corners and a decorative lattice pattern. The spire itself is octagonal with a slightly belled roof and is covered in white painted wooden shingles. A cylindrical wooden bead at the tip of the spire supports a metal early nineteenth century weathervane. The scroll type weathervane is gilded. There is an arrow at one end of the directional with an openwork scroll, stylized lyre, and large eight-pointed star or sunburst at the tail.

INTERIOR

[5] Town of Jaffrey, *1995 Annual Report of the Town of Jaffrey,* 91.

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse has one very large meeting room with a stage at the east end. Two small rooms are located at the east, off of the stage area. The main room is two floors in height, with galleries around the north, west, and south sides. Stairways to the galleries are located at the northwest and southwest corners of the space. The interior treatments are largely Colonial Revival in style, owing to the 1922-1923 renovation. Very few architectural details remain on the interior from the original construction. Original elements include the exposed framing posts, and possibly some of the wainscoting.

The flooring of the main hall is composed of narrow maple boards. Walls and ceiling are plaster. There is beaded wainscot around the main space, stretching from the floor to the bottom sill of the first floor windows. The wainscot is capped by a half-round molding. Window and door trim is flat. Several interior doors have ovolo moldings above the flat door head. There are three circular holes in the ceiling, below the ridge pole. Likely, these holes were added during the 1922-1923 renovation to allow for convection cooling through the flow of hot air up from the gallery of the hall and into the attic.

Many of the vertical members of the framing structure are visible inside this main hall. The walls throughout the Meetinghouse are of inconsistent thickness. As a result, most of the posts are covered on the first floor level, with the exception of the southwest corner of the building. All posts are exposed on the second floor level. There are several notches in the exposed posts at the southwest corner of the Meetinghouse, indicative of historic changes in the door location. The posts all have champhered exposed corners.

The second floor gallery is supported by ten Doric columns. The gallery is located along the entire west end and extends from the west wall to the stage area along the north and south. There are four columns on each side with pilasters against the stage at the east end.

A large stage occupies the east end of the space. The opening to the stage is framed by a large horizontally elongated Roman arch. Large pilasters with Corinthian-style capitals frame either side of the stage. These pilasters have flat shafts with molded edges. The capitals are carved with acanthus leaves. The front of the stage protrudes slightly into the room and is finished in beadboard. Doors at the first floor level on either side of the stage lead into backstage areas. These doors and the doors below the stairs at the opposite corners of the room are six panel Christian-style doors with flat panels and thumb latch closures.

There is a short boxed railing along the front of the gallery. The edge facing the center of the room is decorated with large flat rectangular panels below a heavy entablature. The gallery inner side is finished in horizontal bead board. An additional railing was added above in 1994 to increase the height of the existing boxed rail. This new rail has plain spindles, square posts with turned tops, and a connecting hand rail. Stylistically it is very similar to the balustrade at either corner staircase.

The walls of the second floor are thinner than those of the first. The vertical elements of the building frame are raised from the surface of the wall on this level, above a narrow sill that runs approximately 25 inches below the second floor windows. This sill has been extended on the north and south sides to create a narrow bench. Below this sill the wall is thicker, and the posts are hidden. The adze marks on the hand-hewn posts are very clear. Between the gallery floor and the bottom of the windows is a flat horizontal wainscot that terminates in a narrow molding beneath the windows.

The floor of the gallery is stepped to accommodate three levels of settee benches. The gallery floor has medium-width fir flooring boards. The walls are curved in at the top to meet a Colonial Revival crown molding that is clearly visible from the gallery. There are three large flat plaster panels at the second floor of the stage (east) end of the room with molded frames: one is centered above the stage and the others are balanced on either side.

The stage is centered on the east end of the main room and is raised three feet above the floor level. The stage flooring is composed of dark stained narrow fir boards. At the center of the rear of the stage is an exterior door. This door is composed of four flat panels and opens onto a landing and set of stairs. It has cast iron loose-joint butt hinges and a door knob. A chimney is located on either side of the door. The plastered-over brick masonry is located inside the room. These two chimneys are all that remains of what was taken down to the roofline in 1995.

A door to the north of the stage leads from the main hall via a small hallway to a bathroom and a stair to the side of the stage. This six-panel door has slip pin butt hinges and a thumb latch. The floor of the hallway is pine. The bathroom door is a modern hollow-core door and the bathroom walls are modern gypsum wall board. From the stage one can access a small janitor's closet at the northeast corner of the building. Stairs lead up from the north side of the stage to a small dressing room.

Similarly, a door to the south of the stage leads from the main hall to a small hallway, and up to the stage. A small electrical/storage room is accessible from the southeast corner of the stage. This room has plaster walls with a hook rail around the room. An antique light fixture from the 1920s hangs from a chain at the center of the space and may date to the 1922/23 renovation. Stairs lead up from the south side of the stage to a small dressing room that has been divided to create a small storage closet.

The walls of the side rooms are finished in bead board. This has been painted white at the first floor. Above, the walls have been varnished. In some locations on the second floor, where wood had previously been painted, it was repainted an ochre color to match the varnished bead board. The floors are fir. The narrow bench that is visible along the north and south sides of the gallery is incorporated into the exterior walls of the second floor dressing rooms, and the associated flat wainscot remains. In these spaces, however, horizontal bead board covers the walls between the wainscot and ceiling.

There is a four panel raised door between the tower vestibule and main hall (nave). This door has a strap hinge and pintle. The closure is a Suffolk pattern thumb latch. The interior side of the door has four raised panels; the exterior (vestibule) side of the door is composed of vertical planks. The interior of the vestibule has a wooden floor that is composed of narrow fir boards. The walls and ceiling are plaster. There is a wainscot that is composed of flat horizontal boards. Posts in the corners and to the side of the door protrude from the walls. There is a very wide flat trim board above the door between the tower vestibule and main room. The area below this, to the south of the door has been finished in horizontal paneling. This section does not match the plaster and wainscot found elsewhere in the room. There is a peg board in the room, as well. Historically, there was a two-stall toilet at the north side of this vestibule, the clean-outs for which are still visible at the exterior foundation. There is a fire annunciator panel on the east wall, just north of the door to the hall.

There is a four panel door between the gallery and the second floor of the tower. The panels of this door are very slightly raised. There is a slight step down into the second floor tower room. This room has plaster walls with flat trim and no crown molding. Plaster at the ceiling has failed. Several large patches have fallen, revealing vertically sawn split lath below. The wall lath, as revealed from the tower stair, is sawn and not split, suggesting a later date of construction. This small second floor room has been divided by a small room that once served as a bathroom.

A four panel door leads from the plastered second-floor room to the tower stairs. The door has flat panels and sits on cast iron loose joint butt hinges. The corner posts are clearly framed in the square rule, with the seats of joints brought a uniform distance from the center of the timber through the use of careful chiseling. The corner posts and girts are all hand hewn, while cross-braces, studs, and the walls show vertical saw marks.

The fourth floor of the tower is slightly above the attic space of the main building. At the top of the third floor of the tower, and from the fourth floor, the yoke that fastens the tower to the main structure is clearly visible. (See Historical Information page 26 and framing plans page 37) From this level there is a clear view into the interior of the attic. The roof is supported by a modified king post truss system. The roof has a double rafter system with principal rafters inside the roof. Bracing struts connect the king post to the principal rafters, which in turn are connected to the common rafters by spacers at every purlin.

There is much historic graffiti inside of the fourth and fifth floors of the tower. Most of the graffiti has been left by workmen to commemorate their repairs to the building.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Georgian-Era:
- Strict symmetry of fenestration
- Side-gable roof configuration
- Narrow window muntins and sash configuration

Federal-Era:
- Curved corbels at cornice
- Entrance surround on South side
- Tower ornamentation

Colonial Revival:
- Interior Trim
- Stage Surround

ALTERATIONS

The first major alterations to the Jaffrey Meetinghouse occurred in 1796, when the Town repaired the underpinning and installed a hewn stone foundation. At this time they also repaired and replaced clapboards, corner boards, door casings and painted the entire exterior of the building a light stone color for the first time.

In 1822 the original side entrance porches were removed and the tower was constructed at the west end. (See Figure 4, page 12) The clapboards and trim were redone, as well. Most likely, this is when the curved corbels were added to the cornice to update the Georgian structure to the more modern Federal Style. The building was also repainted in 1822.

In 1870, the entire interior of the Jaffrey Meetinghouse was rebuilt. The pews, pulpit and gallery and central chimney were removed. A second floor was added, the windows were lowered, and the main entrance door was moved one bay to the west. The polychrome paint was added to the doors and an end chimney was installed. The first floor was used as Conant High School at this time with town offices and meeting space on the second floor. See Figures 5 and 6, page 13)

In ca. 1894 the single end chimney was replaced with two separate chimneys on either side of the ridge. (See Figures 7 to 10, pages 14-16) The clock, manufactured by George M. Stevens & Co. of Boston, was added in 1906 and was electrified in 1977. (See Figure 11, page 17) The outhouse was removed from the tower vestibule at an unknown time.

In 1922-1923, another major remodeling was undertaken by the Town of Jaffrey and the Village Improvement Society in an effort to restore the interior space as much as possible to its original condition without compromising the current uses of the space. The second floor was removed and the entrance door was returned to its central location. The tower door was moved west, and the oval window was installed next to it. The windows were restored and the pulpit window was reinstalled.

Very few visible changes have been made to the Jaffrey Meetinghouse since 1923 and the majority of work to the building has been related to maintenance and updating the structure to comply with building codes. Between 1991 and 1993 the Meetinghouse underwent major non-visible structural restoration work. In 1994, the upper railing was added to the gallery. In 1995 the roof was redone and the chimneys were removed to the roof line.

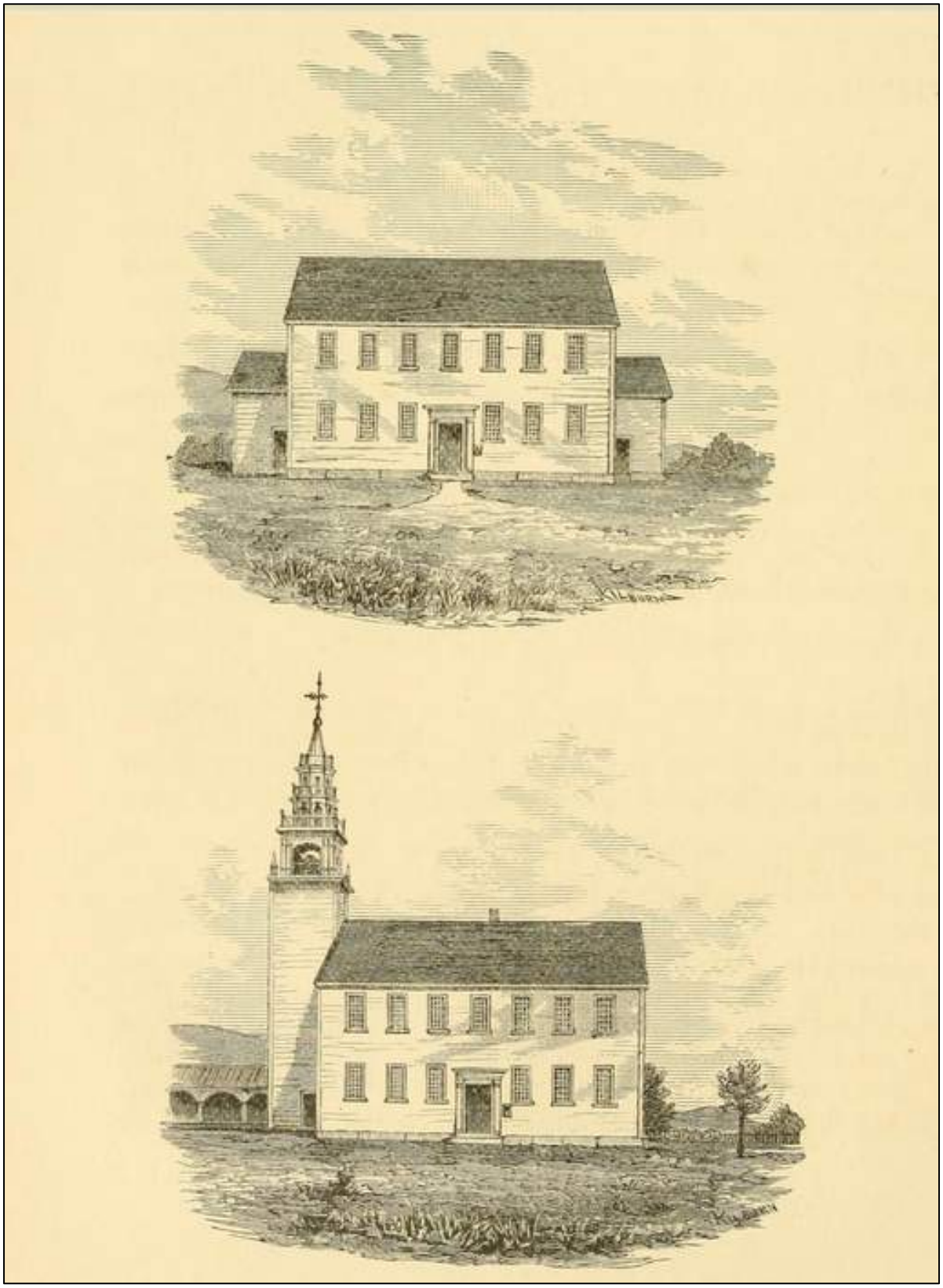

**Figure 4: Meetinghouse before 1822 removal of side entrance porches (above) and after construction of the tower (below) from Cutter, page 59.**

**Figure 5: Meetinghouse prior to 1870 renovations (ca. 1865). Note center door and chimney and window height. Image courtesy of the Jaffrey Historical Society**

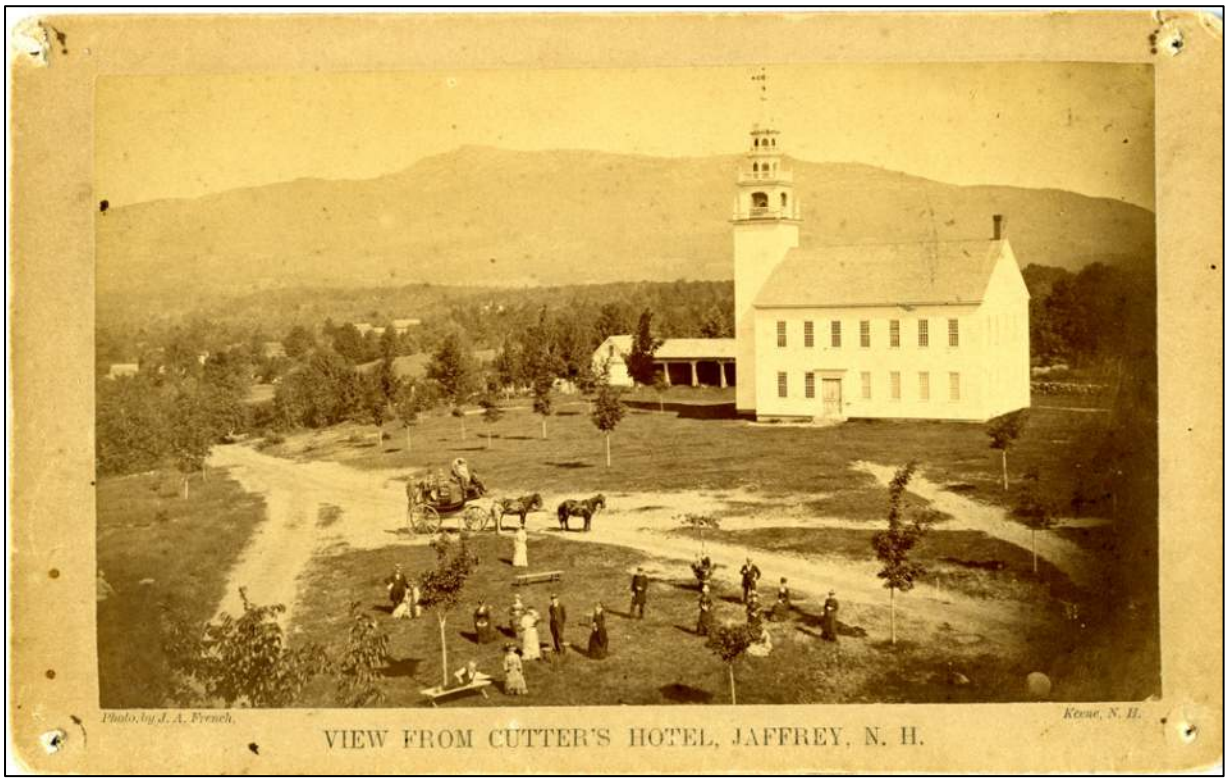


**Figure 6: Meetinghouse in 1874, after 1870 renovations. Note end chimney, off-center door, and lowered windows. Photographed by J. A. French, courtesy of the Jaffrey Historical Society.**

**Figure 7: Meetinghouse ca. 1894. Note double end chimneys. Courtesy of Jaffrey Historical Society.**

**Figure 8: Jaffrey Meetinghouse and Common October 20, 1894. Courtesy of Jaffrey Historical Society.**

**Figure 9: School children on Meetinghouse steps ca. 1900. Courtesy of Jaffrey Historical Society.**

**Figure 10: Meetinghouse between ca. 1895 and 1906, prior to addition of tower clock. Courtesy of Jaffrey Historical Society.**

**Figure 11: Meetinghouse between 1906 and 1922, after addition of clock but before 1923 restoration. Courtesy of Jaffrey Historical Society.**

COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse is one of the few remaining examples of a second-period barn meetinghouses in New Hampshire. "Out of an estimated 1,155 structures built during the second-period architectural style (roughly between 1699 and 1820), about 190 remain – a survival rate of a little more than 16 percent[6]. These early meetinghouses were built on a wood frame, using the technology and building practices employed in English domestic, barn, and industrial architectural traditions.

The original layout and general form of the Jaffrey Meetinghouse were typical of a Reformed meetinghouse of the Revolutionary War era. Though the earliest Colonial meetinghouses were of a square (or nearly square) plan that is often referred to as a "four square", the second-period meetinghouses were often built to resemble large barns or houses in overall shape. Like the contemporary Georgian houses, meetinghouses were usually side-gabled and windows were usually five or seven-ranked. Paneled doors were located at the center of the façade, beneath a decorative crown supported by pilasters. Windows were double-hung with 9 or 12 panes per sash and were set rigidly symmetrical. Second floor windows were set just below the cornice, which was often decorated with dentil moldings.

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse was originally built with a twin-porch layout. One of the first uses of the twin-porch plan was in New Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1772. At this time stairwell porches were added to either end of the fifty by forty foot Meetinghouse that had been built in 1752.[7] Because the stairwells were exterior, there was additional gallery space available for pews. In addition, one of the porches could provide a base on which to construct a belfry, should the finances become available to do so. The twin-porch layout was fairly common between 1785 and 1795.

[6] Peter Benes, *Meetinghouses of Early New England* (Amherst & Boston MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 5.
[7] Benes, *Meetinghouses of Early New England,* 169.

Inside the Meetinghouse, the pulpit was located on the north wall, directly opposite the entrance door. Usually, a compass-headed window was located at the center of the north side of the building, allowing natural light to fall upon the pulpit. Box pews were located on either side of this short central aisle, around the outer walls of the building, and in galleries at the second floor level. Men and women were separated within this interior space with women sitting on the minister's left and men on his right.[8] The favored pew positions were those to the immediate left and right of the pulpit or directly in front of it at the Communion table. These were reserved for the clergyman and his family, deacons, elders, teachers, principal landholders, and important militia officers.[9] The distribution of the remaining pews was based on a merit-based system. There were also segregated stairwells leading up to the gallery and a Communion table that folded down from the front rail of the deacons' pew for convenience.[10] Furthermore, meetinghouses were located in close proximity to a burial ground.

The Old Meetinghouse in Sandown, New Hampshire (ca. 1773) is very similar to the Jaffrey Meetinghouse in age and form. And is also an excellent example of a second-period meetinghouse. Like at Jaffrey, the main entry to the Sandown Meetinghouse is at the center of the south façade. The two-story Sandown Meetinghouse is slightly smaller than the Jaffrey Meetinghouse and is 5 x 5 bays with smaller windows (16/12 windows). Ornamentation on the exterior is also very similar. Like at Jaffrey, there is a compass window at the center of the north side, at the location of the pulpit.

Unlike the Jaffrey Meetinghouse, the interior of the Old Meetinghouse in Sandown has been preserved. The pulpit remains *in situ* on the wall opposite the entry door. A set of stairs leads to the pulpit, which is located directly in front of an arched window and below a sounding board. Galleries still line the south, east and west walls of the second floor and boxed pews remain at the first floor.

The Fremont Meetinghouse is a rare surviving example of a twin-porch meetinghouse. This structure was erected in 1800, making it a late example of the type. The form of this meetinghouse is very similar to what the Jaffrey Meetinghouse may have once resembled. Like Sandown, the Freemont Meetinghouse is significantly smaller than the Jaffrey Meetinghouse.

Other examples of second-period meeting houses include the Rockingham Meetinghouse in Rockingham, VT (ca. 1787)[11]; the Lempster Meetinghouse in Lempster, New Hampshire (ca. 1794); and the Canaan Meetinghouse in Canaan, New Hampshire (ca. 1793).

**HISTORICAL INFORMATION:**

Deacon Jonathan Hubbard and his 39 associates were granted the township of Middle Monadnock on November 30, 1749. At this time, a condition was placed "that a good and convenient Meeting House be built in said Township as near the Center of Town as may be with Convenience within six years from this date and Ten Acres of Land Reserved for Publick Uses."[12] This condition of requiring every town to provide a meetinghouse for public assembly and to hire a minister and school teacher before it could be recognized as a town and elect representatives to the colony or state

[8] Benes, *Meetinghouses of Early New England*, 62.
[9] Benes, *Meetinghouses of Early New England,* 62.
[10] Benes, *Meetinghouses of Early New England,* 221.
[11] Richard Ewald & Curtis Johnson, "National Historic Landmark Nomination for the Rockingham Meetinghouse in Rockingham, Vermont." (National Park Service website, 2000), 4.
[12] Albert Annett & Alice E. E. Lehtinen, *History of Jaffrey (Middle Monadnock): An Average Country Town in the Heart of New England* (Jaffrey, NH: Town of Jaffrey, 1937.), Vol. 1, 181.

assembly was standard under New England's colonial and early national laws.[13] Three hundred acres of land were gifted for this purpose,[14] but there is no evidence that a meetinghouse was built at this time.

It was not until April 26, 1774, that Jaffrey revisited the issue of the Meetinghouse, when it was voted to build a meetinghouse on the Common, near the center "this and the ensuing year."[15] The house was to be forty feet wide, fifty-five in length with posts twenty-seven feet high. The following July Jaffrey

> Chose of a Committee, then Voted s[d] 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 s[d] hous. Voted M[r] Roger Gilmore M[r] Will[m] Turner M[r] Matthew Wallace be a Committee to see the work affected in Building s[d] house. Voted that the Com[ee] shall expose s[d] house to sail at Public Vendue by the first Wednesday of Sept next, also Voted that the Great timber of s[d] house be hewed by the first day of Decemr next, also voted fifteen pounds L. M. towards building s[d] house, to be paid by the first day of December Next, also Voted that s[d] house shall be Raised by the Middle of June.[16]

Samuel Adams (1750-1813) was awarded the contract for building the Meetinghouse. The 24 year old from Rindge was the lowest bidder and had strong connections with other meetinghouse builders. Samuel Adams was the brother-in law of Jeremiah Spofford, the nephew of Colonel Daniel Spofford.

During the winter of 1774-1775 the timbers for the Meetinghouse were cut on the highlands east of Thorndike Pond and drawn by oxen over the snow to the Common.[17]

The actual construction work on the Meetinghouse was begun on the first Monday in May, 1775, when citizens gathered to clear the Common. In 1775, Jaffrey had only 351 inhabitants (the majority of whom were women and children), no real roads (cow paths only) and not even a dozen framed houses.[18] The erection of the Meetinghouse marked the first important community event in the history of Jaffrey. At this time, Jaffrey was just beginning to take shape, and the Meetinghouse served as the anchor around which it grew, determining the site of roads, stores, taverns, and the building of farms and houses.

Captain Samuel Adams most likely began his work on the Meetinghouse frame at this time. The Town had voted to have the frame raised by June,[19] creating a very tight deadline for his work. Despite his prior experience in connection with work on the Rindge meetinghouse,[20] it did not take long for Samuel to realize he was in need of assistance. He called on his brother-in-law Jeremiah Spofford of Georgetown (now Groveland), Massachusetts. Jeremiah "was a skilled mechanic, having had much experience in the construction of large buildings."[21] Jeremiah also brought his cousin Jacob Spofford and Joseph Haskell from Georgetown to Jaffrey to help with the work.[22]

With all of this help, the frame of the Jaffrey Meetinghouse was raised, according to the town histories, on June 17th, 1775. Some sources say that the frame was raised on the day of the Battle of Bunker Hill, with distant cannon fire being heard from the Meetinghouse rafters. This tale has been refuted, especially by Judge Joe Parker at the Centennial celebration of August 20, 1873. He did not believe the guns could have been heard from such a distance and also thought it unlikely that the Meetinghouse would have been raised on a Saturday in case there was any

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[13] Benes, *Meetinghouses of Early New England*, 20.

[14] Daniel B. Cutter, MD, *History of the Town of Jaffrey, New Hampshire, From the Date of the Masonian Charter to the present Time. 1749-1880 with a Genealogical Register of the Jaffrey Families and An Appendix Containing the Proceedings of the Centennial Celebration of 1873* (Concord, NH: Republican Press Association, 1881), 59.

[15] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 8. Committee for the Restoration of the Meetinghouse, 6.

[16] Cutter, 59.

[17] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 172.

[18] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.

[19] Cutter, 60.

[20] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 172.

[21] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 172.

[22] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 172 and Benes, *Meetinghouses of Early New England*, 59.

remaining work to be performed the next day.[23] He concluded that it was probably done on Friday June 16th. In their 1937 *History of Jaffrey*, Albert Annett and Alice E. E. Lehtinen concluded that "the Meeting-house was not erected on Friday. Friday was the 'witches' Sabbath, and was 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."[24]

The raising of a meetinghouse was a communal affair, with all other business suspended and surrounding towns" 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.[25] Thomas K. Groff stated that "John Eaton, the town's Jack-of-all-trades, stood on his head on the ridge pole."[26] We also know that Captain Henry Coffeen supplied a barrel of rum for the raising.[27]

The first Town Meeting to be held in the New Meetinghouse occurred shortly after the raising,[28] despite the fact that the structure remained unfinished for many years. In 1776, the Town 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."[29] Apparently, these things never happened as Jaffrey voted again in 1777 "to finish the meeting-house this year."[30] Again, progress was stalled. In April 1778, the Town appointed Samuel Adams and Jonathan Stanley, Jr. to lay out the Meetinghouse ground (floor space) and chose Simeon Stickney, Joseph Bats and Daniel Emery to build pews.[31] On November 26, 1778 the town voted again to finish meetinghouse this year and the next.[32]

On January 14, 1779, the Town voted to sell the pews in advance as a means of finishing the Meetinghouse. The purchaser was to pay 1/3 price down, 1/3 in six months, and 1/3 when the pew was finished.[33] Anyone who missed a payment would see their pew exposed for sale again. By 1780, many of the pews had been sold and on August 30, 1791 Adoh Howe, Town Clerk, recorded the names of the pew owners.

[23] Committee of Arrangements, *Jaffrey Centennial: Proceedings of the Centennial Celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town of Jaffrey, NH August 20, 1873* (Winchendon: F. W. Ward & Co., 1873), 32.
[24] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 8.
[25] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 8.
[26] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 172.
[27] Something the Town did not pay for until March 1880, when the Town repaid the two dollars silver money he lent them for this expense. (Cutter, 61)
[28] Committee for the Restoration of the Meetinghouse, "The Jaffrey Meetinghouse: Commemorative Program issued in Celebration of the Major Renovations to the Jaffrey Meetinghouse undertaken during 1991-1993" (Jaffrey, NH: Committee for the Restoration of the Meetinghouse, 1993), 6.
[29] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[30] Cutter, 60.
[31] Cutter, 60.
[32] Cutter, 61 and Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 184.
[33] Cutter, 61.

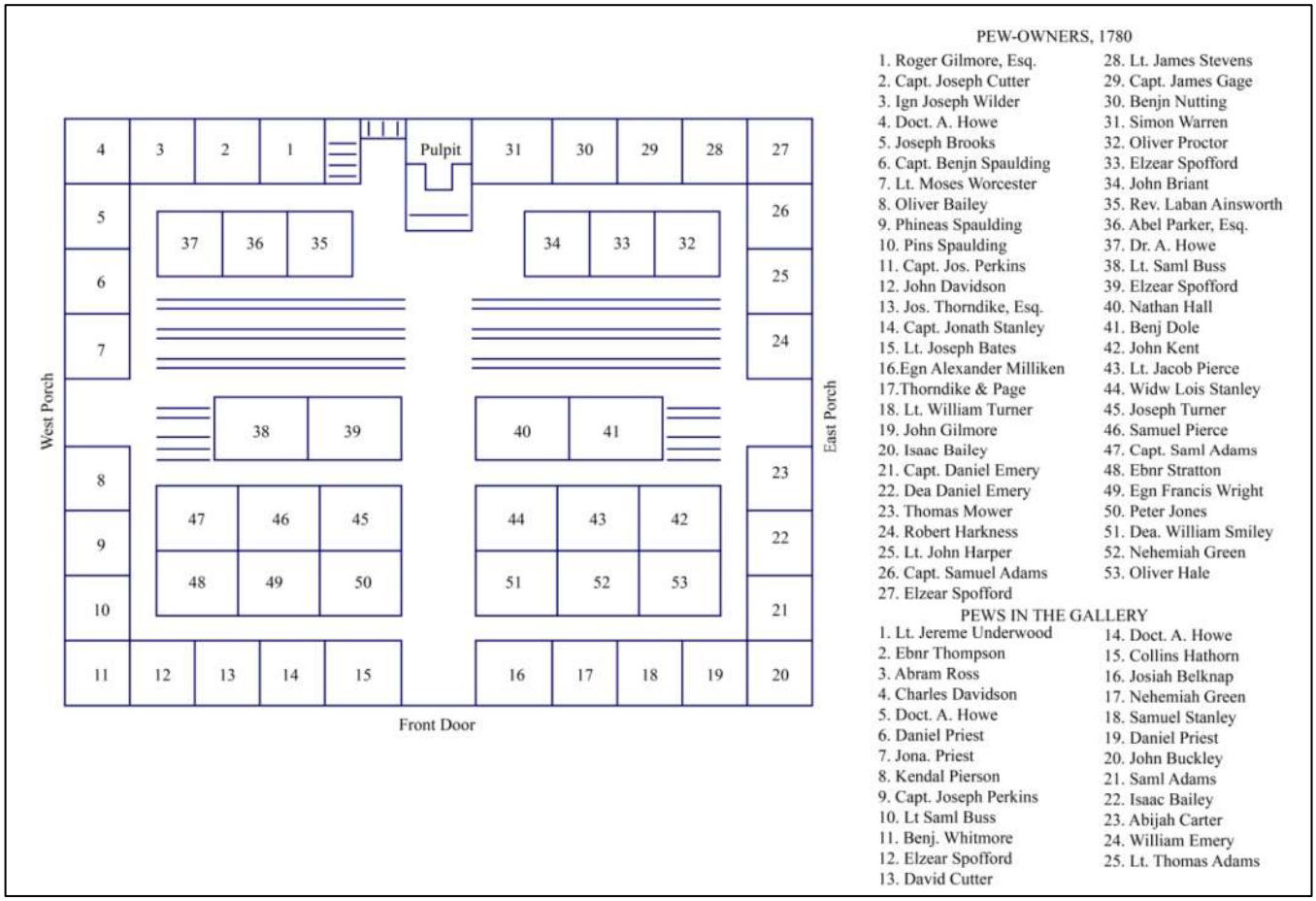


**Figure 12: Pew-Owners as recorded by Ado[h] Howe, Town Clerk on August 30, 1791, from Cutter pages 62 & 63.**

During this period, the interior space of the main floor was divided into square pews with a gallery around three sides. The gallery was supported by fluted pillars. The pulpit was along the north side of the Meetinghouse, opposite the main entrance and was constructed in the English-style and reached by two flights of stairs. There was a pew directly in front of the pulpit for the elders and a slip for the deacons. A sounding board of huge dimensions was suspended from the timbers of the attic, and was located above the pulpit. The house was entered either by the main door or through porches at either end. There were 25 pews in the gallery. The wall pews in the lower part of the house were one step higher than those in the body. "They were all about five feet square, with a seat on two sides, and room for a chair in the centre, usually occupied by some elderly lady belonging to the family."[34] The seats were hinged to be raised during prayers. At the front of the room, near the pulpit, were free seats for the poor and aged.

By 1792 the Meetinghouse was already in need of major repairs.

> 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 painting they had voted, it was colored only by the wind and sun, and instead of the underpinning 'of good stone and lime' it 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 blacksmiths nails, was open to winds and vandals alike.[35]

[34] Cutter, 65.

[35] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 191.

On August 27, 1792, the Town voted to have a box put up with a glass door for the purpose of displaying notices.[36] They also voted to paint the house, repair the underpinning, shingling and glass. Despite the positive vote, there was no money to pay for the undertaking, and the vote to paint was rescinded with instructions to the committee "to settle with the men engaged to paint the meeting-house the easiest way they can."[37]

In 1795, Captain Joseph Cutter was given permission to move the Meetinghouse northward, to the position occupied by the horsesheds, "because it interfered with the approach to his tavern."[38] He proposed that the Meetinghouse be slid up the hill so that the north sill lined up with the south side of the burying ground and the northwest corner as far west as the third post from the west end of the Horsesheds.[39] The structure was never moved and remains in its original location.

August 29, 1796, the Town voted again to approve the repairs at the Meetinghouse. Dr. A. Howe, John Coughran, and Deacon E. Spofford were tasked with assessing the condition of the building and making recommendations as to its repair. They recommended a "good underpinning of hewn stone, fifteen inches thick, and that the house be painted with a light stone color."[40] They also recommended that the clapboards, corner boards, and door casings be repaired, with replacements installed where they were split or broken and that the roof and windows be repaired. The structure was lifted with homemade wooden jackscrews that had been manufactured at John Eaton's turning mill in Squantum.[41] The foundation stones were quarried at the Stanley and Spaulding pasture in lot 2, range 3 on the west slope of Monadnock.[42] Benjamin Cutter, Samuel Buss, John Joslin and John Coughran were paid $112.66 to raise the house and set the underpinning stones.[43] Joseph Newhall, received $99.50 for board and for splitting the stones. Additional stone splitters included Paul Powers, Abraham Ross, and Phineas Tyler. The fine door stones at the main entrance and porches were hewn by Joseph Newall's assistant, Micah Munroe, and placed by Jonathan and Daniel Emery at the Meetinghouse doors. Jacob Danforth was also paid for making and sharpening drills and supplying rum and sugar to encourage the work.

Lieutenant Amos Stickley repaired the outside of the Meetinghouse prior to applying paint. He renewed corner boards, windows, and door casings and clapboards.[44] New exterior doors were made by Jerome Underwood, and Jacob Danforth was paid $4 to forge new handles and latches in his smithy.

On March 6, 1798, the Town voted again to paint the Meetinghouse for $167.67.[45] Painting a building of such great size required huge amounts of materials. Nathan Cutter supplied two bushels of flaxseed

> 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 Mowler 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.[46]

The white lead was brought from Keene by oxen and all of the painters boarded with Captain Adams for the duration of the project. On March 11, 1800, Nathan Barnard was paid one dollar for furnishing the use of his house, kettles, and firewood to boil the oil to paint the Meetinghouse.[47] A year later, on February 27, 1801, the painting was completed.

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[36] Cutter, 64.
[37] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 191.
[38] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol 1, 191.
[39] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol 1, 191.
[40] Cutter, 64-65.
[41] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[42] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[43] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[44] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[45] Committee for the Restoration of the Meetinghouse, 6 and Cutter, 65.
[46] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[47] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.

John Eaton, one of the earliest members of the church (and the same fellow who stood upon the ridge pole in 1775, when the building was raised), turned all of the balusters in the pews in his mill in Squantum Village.[48] Local cabinetmaker John Buckley, "who learned his trade in the Old Country", constructed the paneling in the pulpit and pews of the Jaffrey Meetinghouse and in those of several surrounding towns.[49]

At the turn of the 19th Century, the Jaffrey Meetinghouse had no steeple, and sat in a small cluster of buildings near the Common. The house of The Reverend Ainsworth was located at the southeast corner of the Common, Danforth's Tavern and the stores of Joseph Thorndike, Esq.[50] and David Page on the East side, Cragin's Saddlery Shop on the Northeast corner, and a large grouping of buildings belonging to Joseph Cutter, Esq. at the north.[51] The house of The Reverend Laban Ainsworth was constructed in 1788[52] and still stands at the southeast corner of the Common, just across Route 124. Danforth's Tavern stood on the location of the Cutter Park, and was purchased by Ethan Cutter in 1821 (See Figure 13). Joseph Thorndike's store, constructed ca. 1793 is located on the corner of Laban Ainsworth Way and Meetinghouse Road. David Page's store is no longer extant, nor is Cragin's Saddlery Shop. Only the main building of Joseph Cutter's Tavern (ca. 1795) remains, just to the northeast of the Meetinghouse.

[48] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.

[49] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.

[50] Thorndike's store is the same as Wright's Store, which appears in the 1826 map of Jaffrey Common, figure 12. Captain John Wright ran the store from 1824 to 1827 and the building is still standing.

[51] Committee of Arrangements, 35.

[52] Wardwell, 6.

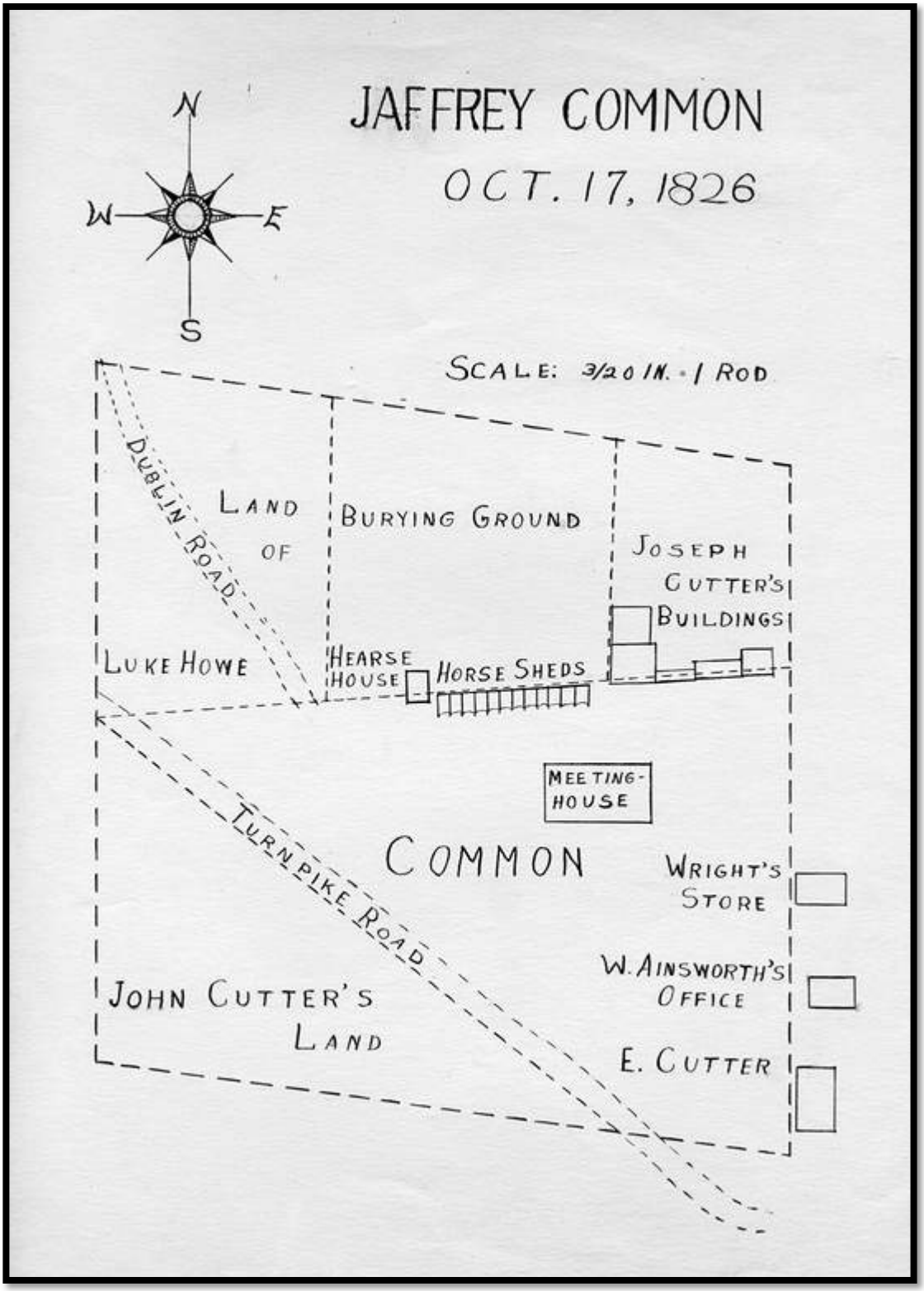


**Figure 13: 1826 map of Jaffrey Common, courtesy of Jaffrey Historical Society.**

The early 1800s was the installation of the first pipe organ in the Meetinghouse. It was constructed by a musician and mechanic named Almon Bailey with the assistance of his brother Edward, at their mill on Mountain Road.

> 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.[53]

Local legend says that the first piece of music played on the organ, to showcase its quality, was the "Fisher's Hornpipe." Mr. Bailey removed to Marlborough in 1836 and gained recognition as an organ builder. Eventually, as the use of the Meetinghouse for church services declined in the 1830s, the organ was taken out and moved to Marlborough.

The Horsesheds to the north of the Meetinghouse were constructed in 1810.[54] In 1808, the selectman had been authorized to lay out a strip of ground at the north side of the Common for the erection of horse stables. 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.[55] With the advent of the automotive age, the Horsesheds fell into disuse and disrepair. In 1926, at the Annual Meeting of the Village Improvement Society, Mrs. Joel Poole stated she "was interested in the removal of the horse sheds behind the Old Meeting house. Her husband had wished them removed, and a wall of some kind built in their place, thus eliminating some undesirable features, lessening fire risks, and opening up a view of the burying ground."[56] In 1943 another Village Improvement Society member, Mrs. Wetherell, referred to the Horsesheds as "this unsightly blot." By 1949, the town placed an article in the warrant to have them dismantled. After extensive debate, a committee was formed to improve the Horsesheds at no cost to the town, using volunteer labor. In 1954, the Village Improvement Society voted to take over the care of the sheds.

In 1816, a motion was made to "see if the town will put a stove into the meeting-house or give liberty to have one put in."[57] It was not until a few years later, between 1818 and 1820 that a stove was placed in the broad aisle, in front of the pulpit.[58] This marked the first heat inside the Meetinghouse. Prior to this date, the only heat source was foot stoves carried by old ladies. In winter, during intermission and at noon-time, the women from the congregation would retire to some neighboring house, try to warm themselves by a good fire, and re-stock their foot stoves for the afternoon service. The men went to the tavern and drank flips to warm up for the afternoon service.[59]

The Toleration Act was passed in 1819. Prior to this date, the minister was hired by the town with his salary raised by tax dollars paid by everyone, regardless of their individual belief. The Orthodox Church was a town function and town responsibility with Town Meeting and church often held in the same "meeting house." The Toleration Act stated that no person shall be taxed against his will to support a specific religion and called for the legal, and often physical, separation of church and state. Separation was a slow process because ministers with pre-existing contracts were allowed to continue to receive public support until their contracts ran out.[60]

After the passage of the Toleration Act, the Town of Jaffrey voted on April 20, 1822 to allow "every religious denomination in Jaffrey to have the use of said house on Sabbath days in proportion to the valuation of their property."[61] Occupancy of the Meetinghouse was apportioned to different denominations according to their taxable property.

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[53] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 207.
[54] Committee for the Restoration of the Meetinghouse, 6.
[55] Stephenson, *Marshal the Willing Forces.*
[56] Stephenson, *Marshal the Willing Forces.*
[57] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[58] Cutter, 66.
[59] Cutter, 66.
[60] Everett S. Stackpole *History of New Hampshire*, Vol. IV (New York: The American Historical Society, 1916), 230.
[61] Cutter, 67.

Because the townsfolk were still sharing the structure, it was voted on May 6, 1822, to be worthy of repair. They found it necessary to strip the clapboards off of the body of the house, put up new clapboards, trim and paint.[62] This same year, the bell tower and spire were added and constructed by Joel Oakes Patrick, and paid for by donations to the Town with the bell to be supplied by the Town of Jaffrey.[63] The tower was "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 of the length of the building and keyed to a cross timber connecting the tops of the sturdy posts to the tower."[64] February 20, 1823 the Town of Jaffrey purchased Revere & Company's 282nd bell for $440.30.[65]

In 1823, the majority of the residents of Jaffrey were followers of the Congregationalist denomination. This denomination supported The Rev. Laban Ainsworth, Jaffrey's first and only settled minister and was proportioned 27 Sabbaths in the Meetinghouse. By 1829, the proportions had changed and apportionment was as follows: 21 Sabbaths for the Congregationalists, 13 for the Universalists, 9 for Unitarians, and 9 for Baptists.[66] The bell was installed in March 1823 and used constantly until it cracked in 1850 and was recast by Henry N. Hooper of Boston.

Over the next few decades, the different religious groups in Jaffrey constructed their own church buildings to use for worship. In 1830, the Baptists built a meetinghouse in East Jaffrey. In 1831, the First Congregational Church was constructed to the east of the Meetinghouse. The Universalists continued to use the Meetinghouse for worship until their smaller Union Church was finished in 1844. By this time, the Meetinghouse was left for secular meetings only and was seldom used except for March town meetings and fall elections. On July 5, 1855, Jaffrey voted to change the legal name of the structure from Meetinghouse to Town House.[67]

The Jaffrey Meetinghouse was heavily altered after the Civil War in 1870. At this time, the "town voted to raise the sum of $1,000 to defray the expense of finishing a hall for the purpose of holding town-meetings, and a room for a high school."[68] The pulpit, gallery, and pews were removed and a middle floor was added. The main entrance door was shifted one bay west from its central location, and the first and second floor windows were lowered. The tower entrance door was also shifted. The interior of the first floor was remodeled to accommodate Conant High School alternating every-other year with space in the District 2 Schoolhouse on School Street.[69] Town offices and a meeting room were housed on the second floor. Though John Conant, Esq. created a perpetual fund for keeping the exterior of the house in repair in November of 1872,[70] the "character and spirit of the interior of the former meeting-house was utterly destroyed."[71]

The use of the Meetinghouse for town offices and a school was relatively short lived. The population center in Jaffrey shifted to East Jaffrey. In 1896, the Jaffrey Public Library opened in East Jaffrey. A few years later, the former school districts were abolished and the new rooms in the Town House were abandoned.

Despite this lack of use, the Meetinghouse bell was rung at noonday until April 1, 1904. The present town clock was installed in 1906 with $350 appropriated by the Town of Jaffrey and $203 raised by popular subscription after Jaffrey citizens expressed the fact that they missed the noonday bell.[72] This was the same year that the Village Improvement Society (VIS) was founded.[73] In 1911, the VIS had the Meetinghouse painted.

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[62] Cutter, 67.
[63] Committee for the Restoration of the Meetinghouse, 6.
[64] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[65] Cutter, 66.
[66] Cutter, 68 and Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 260.
[67] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, 197 and Committee for the Restoration of the Meetinghouse, 7.
[68] Cutter, 69.
[69] Robert B. Stephenson, "Seats of Jaffrey Government" (*Monadnock Ledger-Transcript,* August 30, 2010.).
[70] Cutter, 69.
[71] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[72] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[73] Robert B. Stephenson, *Marshal the Willing Force: A Centennial History of the Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society* (Jaffrey: Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society, 2006), Ch 4, 4.

In 1914, the Town Offices were moved to East Jaffrey and into the second floor of the 1896 library. The vault in the library had been used to store documents since its construction in 1896 and some town officials had already been using the second floor as a meeting space. In 1915, Town Meeting was also removed from the Meetinghouse to the Union Hall in the District 2 schoolhouse (this structure was located on School Street at the approximate site of the present school). This remained the location for Town Meeting until 1937, when the building was replaced by the current Jaffrey Grade School.

In 1921, the VIS began to discuss the project of restoring the interior of the Meetinghouse after Miss Swansey was identified as the owner of a fan window that once belonged to the structure.[74] The VIS wanted to recreate as much of the original interior atmosphere as possible without interfering with the present uses of the structure. In 1922, it undertook the major remodeling in cooperation with the Town. Allen W. Jackson of Cambridge, Massachusetts was appointed as architect with a proposed budget of $6,000.[75] The Town voted to expend $3,000 for the purpose of the restoration and the VIS voted to raise the remaining funds.[76] Bowman F. Cann was hired as contractor. The second floor was removed, restoring the open interior space, and the galleries were rebuilt and orientated toward the stage instead of the pulpit window. The entrance was returned to its original location and the windows were restored, with that above the pulpit raised slightly from its former position.[77] The original latch to the front door was reinstalled after it was returned from the possession of Mrs. Nightingale.[78] A large stage was added at the east end. The entrance to the stage was added at the east end. The door was elevated at the level of the new stage, but in the approximate location of one of the original porch doors. Two small rooms were added on either side of the stage, one above and one below, for three dressing rooms and a store room. Electric attachments were added "for heating water for tea, etc."[79] Galleries were returned to three sides of the room and accessed via stairs in the northwest and southwest corners. The project ended up costing $9,000[80] and was completed in time for the Jaffrey Sesquicentennial celebration to be held inside on August 11-18, 1923.[81]

On July 27, 1929, a furnace was installed in the Meetinghouse for $600 and lightning rods were installed for $275 by Hawkeye Co. of New Hampshire on July 26, 1930.[82]

The Meetinghouse continued to be used by the townspeople during the summer months. After World War II, in 1947, the Amos Fortune Forum lecture series was established in the Meetinghouse. In 1968, the first Monadnock Music concert was held.

In the 20th Century, there were several restoration projects undertaken at the Meetinghouse. Between 1949 and 1954, the 1810 Horse Sheds were restored. In 1964, the clock faces were refurbished.[83] In 1971, Jaffrey raised $5,980 to replace the wood shingle roof under warrant article 13.[84] The work was done by Veilleux Roofing for $3,040.[85] In 1976, the Town attempted to electrify two Town clocks,[86] but the article did not carry.[87] In 1977, the

[74] Stephenson, *Marshal the Willing Forces*, Ch 4, 5.
[75] Stephenson, *Marshal the Willing Forces,* Ch 4, 5.
[76] Interestingly the VIS was composed of almost all summer residents, most of whom were from Boston. Because of this, the Boston Globe published an article on the project on July 22, 1922 under the headline "Boston Summer Folk Mix Play with Work for Old Town Hall."
[77] Annett & Lehtinen, Vol. 1, Chapter 9.
[78] Stephenson, *Marshal the Willing Forces*, Ch 4, 6.
[79] Stephenson, *Marshal the Willing Forces,* Ch 4, 6.
[80] Committee for the Restoration of the Meetinghouse, 6.
[81] Committee for the Restoration of the Meetinghouse, 7.
[82] Stephenson, *Marshal the Willing Forces*, Ch. 4, 8.
[83] Town of Jaffrey, *1964 Annual Report of the Town of Jaffrey, 7.*
[84] Town of Jaffrey, *1970 Annual Report of the Town of Jaffrey, 9.*
[85] Town of Jaffrey, *1971 Annual Report of the Town of Jaffrey*, 73.
[86] One of the clocks was located in the Meetinghouse in Jaffrey Center, the second was located in the Universalist Church (now Women's Club) in East Jaffrey.
[87] Town of Jaffrey, *1975 Annual Report of the Town of Jaffrey, page 0 and* Town of Jaffrey, *1976 Annual Report of the Town of Jaffrey, 8.*

Town again voted to appropriate $2,850 for the repair and electrification of the two Town-owned clocks. This time the vote carried and the Meetinghouse clock was converted by Tower Clock Specialists.[88]

Between 1991 and 1993 the Meetinghouse underwent a major restoration project. A building inspection was undertaken by Conor Power of Structural Technology, Inc., and Sara B. Chase and presented in December 1990.[89] $35,000 was appropriated into the newly created Meetinghouse Trust Fund. The project was conducted in phases with Phase I work by Colonial Renovations of Acworth and Phase II by Abet Construction Company of Salem. In 1991, Colonial Renovation of Acworth removed the steeple by crane. The entire steeple was rebuilt as a reproduction by Dovetail, Inc. then Vermont Timber Frames of Bennington, Vermont.[90] Though the fate of the original belfry is unknown, some of the original decorative architectural elements are located in the second floor of the tower. The weathervane was re-gilded by Walt Hautanen of Walt's Signs. Extensive foundation work was also undertaken at this time, the clock motor was replaced, and fixtures were repaired.[91]

In 1994, several small changes were made to the Meetinghouse in order to bring the structure into compliance with building codes. A railing was installed around the balcony at this time and new railings were installed at the accessibility ramp at the tower entrance by Andy Webber.[92]

A new roof was installed on the Meetinghouse in 1995. At this time, the two chimneys at the east end of the structure were taken down to below the roofline. The new roof was finished in red cedar shingles. Additionally, new stair treads were installed in the belfry and an Acrylic roof was applied to the belfry roof.[93] Plans were made to paint the Meetinghouse the following season.

Ongoing repairs have been made to the Meetinghouse over the past fifteen years. Stage curtains have been replaced with minor adjustments made in the attic to give them greater support. New screened doors were completed and installed in 2002 by Andy Webber and a few small sections of clapboard have been replaced. A fire alarm system and associated phone lines were also installed in 2002. In 2004, all of the double-hung sash and some of the fixed windows were removed and taken by Jade Mortimer to Hawley, Massachusetts for restoration. The restored windows were reinstalled. In 2009, the bulkhead was rebuilt with pressure-treated lumber by Andy Webber and some electrical work was performed by Mike Shea of Shea Electric of Rindge. In 2010, Dennis Wright removed, reglazed, and repainted several windows. Between 2012 and 2013, Dennis Wright painted much of the interior, including the ceiling of the Meetinghouse. The lightning protection system was upgraded in 2014 by Smokestack Lightning Inc. of Brookfield, Massachusetts in 2014.

**PROJECT INFORMATION:**
The Jaffrey Meetinghouse was documented between December 2014-April 2015 in accordance with the New Hampshire Historic Property Documentation Program by Catlin + Petrovick Architects, PC of Keene, New Hampshire. The report was compiled by Mae H. Williams, Architectural Historian. Paul Wainright conducted and processed the large-format film photography in accordance with HABS/HAER standards.

[88] Town of Jaffrey, *1977 Annual Report of the Town of Jaffrey*, 33.
[89] Stephenson, *Marshal the Willing Forces*, Ch 4, 10.
[90] Dovetail, Inc. was awarded the original contract for the reproduction but went out of business before they began the project. All of the construction and erection of the belfry was undertaken by Vermont Timber Frames.
[91] Town of Jaffrey, *1993 Annual Report of the Town of Jaffrey, 125.*
[92] Town of Jaffrey, *1994 Annual Report of the Town of Jaffrey, 94*
[93] Town of Jaffrey, *1995 Annual Report of the Town of Jaffrey, 91.*

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## Part 3: Existing Conditions Assessment

**Introduction**
The *Final Report on Jaffrey Historic Structures* prepared by Structural Technology, Inc. of Boston, MA and Sara B. Chase dated December 18, 1990 assessed the structural condition of the Meetinghouse and outlined several interior and exterior of the original meetinghouse and the added steeple. Since the 1990 report was prepared work as been completed to address the areas of concern raised in the report and to maintain the building as a usable resource for the community and the region.

### A. Exterior Conditions

**Site**
The 60 by 45 feet Jaffrey Meetinghouse (ca. 1775) site is very simple in period of the 18th-century building. The Meetinghouse faces south onto the gravel parking area and the Common, with Laban Ainsworth Way to the east, ca. 1810 Horsesheds and ca 1774 Burying Ground to the north, and Mount Mondadnock in the distance to the northwest. The ca. 1831 First Congregational Church across Laban Ainsworth Way and the ca. 1822 Little Red Schoolhouse is to the west.

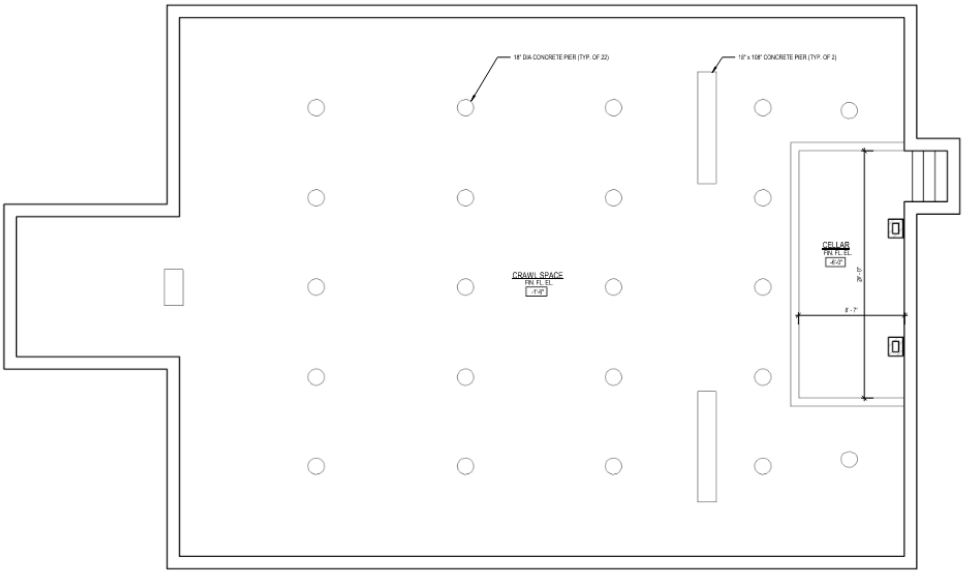
The adjacent parking and perimeter driveway are gravel.

**Foundation**

The foundation consists of perimeter granite underpinning on dry-rubble foundation below grade. The 1990 Structural Technology report raises several issues regarding movement of the building due to issues with the foundation. In 1993 the existing perimeter foundation was repaired following the guidelines include in the report and a 3'-0" high concrete foundation was installed to provide a partial basement under the eastern end of the building. This concrete foundation provides access from the exterior Bilco (bulkhead) entrance and headroom to stand.

The 1993 foundation project also included installation of twenty-two 12" diameter concrete piers to support the first floor structural system. Work was also completed to upgrade the structural integrity of the first-floor framing system which is discussed later in this report.

The current condition of the exterior perimeter foundation is very good, and the building appears to be very stable with the items and areas listed in the 1990 report having been appropriately addressed. The basement and crawl space are very dry and there is no evidence of moisture or water infiltration.


18" DIA CONCRETE PIER (TYP. OF 22)
10" x 108" CONCRETE PIER (TYP. OF 2)
CRAWL SPACE
TRN. FL EL.
-1'-0"
CELLAR
TRN. FL. E.
-6'-0"
7'-6"
8' - 7"

**Jaffrey Meetinghouse Exterior Conditions**
Overall the Meeting house is in excellent condition. The building, owned by the Town of Jaffrey and managed by the Meetinghouse Committee appointed by the Town, has been very well maintained and stewarded since the 1990 report by Structural Technology, Inc. Structurally the building is very sound, however the belry section to the tower and the balustrade around the belfry roof are in need of rehabilitation and painting. The building does not have central heating or cooling, the electrical system is in good condition, and there is running water for two restrooms located on the first floor.

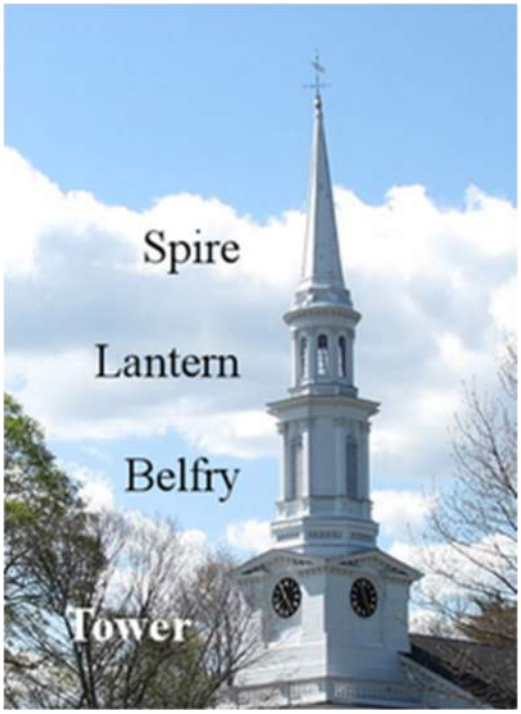
The exterior character-defining details are intact and, for the most part, in very good condition. The belfry portion of the tower, as discussed above, is in need of some work. The site immediately surrounding the building is well maintained and does not create any adverse conditions on the Meetinghouse.

The exterior character defining features of the Meetinghouse have been maintained and are not at risk for deterioration.

**Tower/Steeple/Clock**
The base of the five-story tower (ca. 1822), which includes: the tower, the belfry, a double lantern and the spire, now serves as the primary entrance to the building at the first floor and includes an ADA accessible ramp.

The tower section is in very good condition. The clock which occupies the fifth story of the tower has been electrified. The four clock faces are in need of repainting and new gold leaf on the numerals. The four sets of clock hands also need to have the gold leaf applied.

The belfry section needs to have the balustrade repaired or replaced in-kind, the exterior of the belfry needs to have clapboards repaired or re-nailed and repainted. The interior of the belfry has some areas of deterioration and will require repair and repainting. The roof of the belfry will require closer inspection to verify its integrity and the balustrade on the roof of the belfry will require rehabilitation in-kind and repainting. The bell cradle is structurally sound and it is not believed to required repair.


Spire
Lantern
Belfry
Tower

There are five floors or levels inside the tower. The first floor of the tower aligns with the first floor of the Meetinghouse. The second tower level is several steps below the gallery of the Meetinghouse and is accessed through a door from the Gallery. There are narrow, steep open-riser stairs which traverse from the second level of the tower up to the roof atop the tower above the clock and below the belfry level. The floorboards and stairs need repair due to many broken boards. The Jaffrey Fire Department has expressed deep concern regarding the condition of these elements for the safety of fire fighters during an event or for the safety of those in the tower for maintenance and maintenance of the clock.

The stair stringers should be inspected for structural integrity, and minimally new treads installed.as required to provide safe use of the stairs. The broken or poorly aligned floorboards should be replaced in-kind in order to provide a more even walking surface for safe access through the tower.

The second floor of the tower contains what appears to be the remains of a restroom enclosure. This is likely from the early 20th century prior to the removal of the previous second floor which was install for the school to occupy the second floor of the building.

The octagonal double-height lantern and spire were removed and reconstructed in-kind in 1993. These upper sections remain in very good condition. The lantern and spire should be inspected and repainted along with the work required on the lower belfry section for continued preservation.

**Roof**

The Meetinghouse roof was replaced in September 2017 with Alaskan Yellow Cedar wood shingles. The project was completed with a partial grant from NH LCHIP (Land and Community Heritage Investment Program). The design and documentation for the roof replacement project was prepared by Catlin + Petrovick Architects, PC. The roof replacement was completed by B. Davis Construction of Peterborough, New Hampshire.

The roof replacement maintained the inner roof covering boards (sheathing) and included the installation of water barrier over the covering boards, 1x4 sleepers vertically and 1x4 nailers horizontally for attaching the new wood shingles.

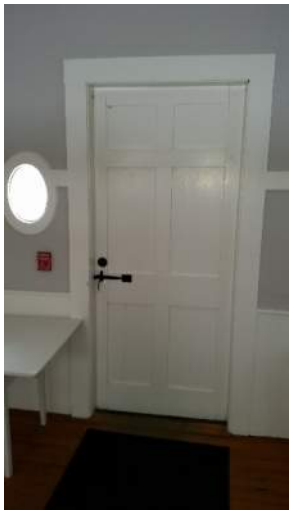
**Exterior siding and Woodwork**
Upon visual inspection the exterior clapboard siding and woodwork appear to be in very good condition. The well-maintained exterior shows no signs of deterioration. The paint finish is also in good condition and appears to be well maintained. The immediate site around the building is maintained to minimize splash back onto the lower siding.

**Exterior Doors**
The south elevation exterior doors appear to be original to the building. The primary entrance door into the tower and the entrance on the east façade appear to be newer doors. All exterior doors are in very good condition, including paint. Much of the door hardware also appears to be period as well. The history of the building shows the entrance was moved off-center while the building was used as the school on the first floor and the town offices on the second floor. The 1920's restoration repositioned the original primary entrance to its original centered location on the south elevation.

**Windows**

The 16/16 single-hung windows appear to be original to the building. There is a large Palladian window centered in the north elevation above where the original pulpit would have been located. There is also a small fan window in the gable of the east elevation and a small ellipse window adjacent to the tower entrance door.

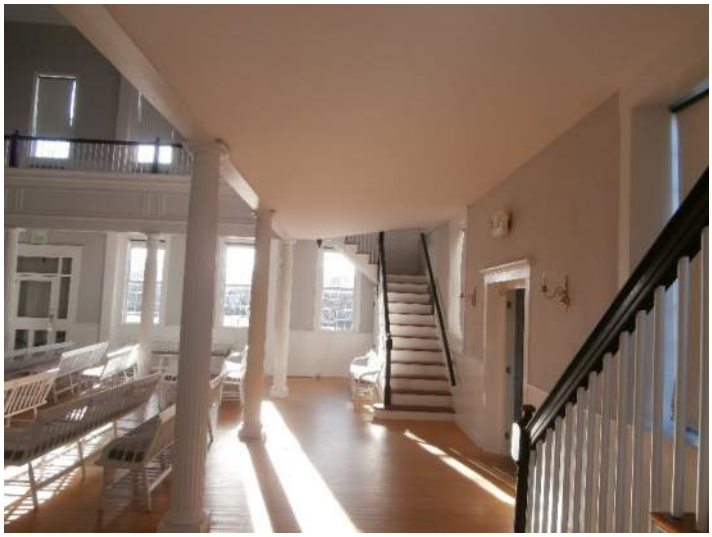
The windows are in very good condition and appear to have been well maintained. It should be noted the building is not heated and therefore is not used in colder months eliminating the risk of condensation on the window which is often the source of significant deterioration of the muntins and sash frames.



**Meetinghouse Interior**
The current plan of the interior dates to the 1922 restoration which removed the 1870 second (middle floor) floor which had been installed to provide space for the school.

The building was again restored between 1991 and 1993. Since the completion of the restoration, the Meetinghouse has remained under the oversight of the Meetinghouse Committee, appointed by the Town to manage the maintenance of the historic resource.

The building's interior is in excellent condition. The building has suffered no neglect and therefore no deterioration. The character-defining features and finishes have been well maintained and are in excellent condition.



**Utilities**
The Meetinghouse is not used in the colder months and is not heated. There is running water for an ADA accessible restroom. The building is does have a modern electrical service provide interior and exterior lighting and wall and floor receptacles.

**ADA Accessibility**
The building has an accessible entrance from the parking area by way of a wood ramp to the tower door. The first floor of the building is accessible. There is an ADA accessible restroom on the first floor of the Meetinghouse.

**Conclusion**
Overall the Jaffrey Meetinghouse is in very good condition. The building, the site and the community at the base of Mount Monadnock remain among the many draws to the region. The one area of the building needing attention in the near term is the belfry region of the tower where the balustrades among other elements are requiring repair and repainting.

# Part 4: Recommendations

Recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the structure to date reflect the condition, potential for preservation, and relative costs for preserving this piece of state history, keeping in mind the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

After providing an opinion of continued restoration of the Jaffrey Meetinghouse the building will remain an icon of the historic fabric of the region and New Hampshire while continuing to serve the residents of Jaffrey and the Monadnock Region.

### Continued Restoration

Repair needs:

1. Repair belfry exterior and interior in-kind as required and repair following the recommendations of:
    a. **Preservation Brief 10: Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork**
    b. **Preservation Brief 16: The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors**
    c. **Preservation Brief 19: The Repair and Replacement of Historic Wooden Shingle Roofs**
2. Repair belfry balustrade and belfry roof balustrade in-kind and repaint following the recommendations of:
    a. **Preservation Brief 16: The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors**
    b. **Preservation Brief 45: Preserving Historic Porches**
3. **Repair and repaint four clock faces including gold leafing of numeral and clock hands.**
4. **Repair in-kind interior tower stairs as required to provide safe passage.**
5. **Repair in-kind tower wood floors as required to provide safe passage.**

### Scope of Work

The work is suggested by the findings of the previous sections of this report.

a. Coordination of Town for funding sources.
b. Removal of existing debris stored on several levels of the tower
c. Retain an architect to coordinate the project and prepare project documents, including specifications and requests for proposals.
d. Requests for proposals from qualified contractors to undertake the scope of the work
e. Select and enter into contract with selected contractor
f. Execute work according to Secretary of the Interior's Standards
g. Substantial completion

## Cost Estimate

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Architectural Fees:** | | **$ 8,500** |
| • **Design Services and Construction Documents** | | |
| • **Project Administration** | | |
| **Construction as outlined above:** | | **$125,000** |
| • **Scaffolding** | **$30,000** | |
| • **Tower Exterior Repairs** | **$23,500** | |
| • **Clock Face Repairs and Refinishing** | **$20,000** | |
| • **Tower Stair and Floor Repairs** | **$20,000** | |
| • **Tower Gallery Level or (Second Level) Restoration** | **$10,000** | |
| • **Staging** | | |
| **Project Total:** | | **$133,500** |

# Part 5: Supplemental Information

## Jaffrey Meetinghouse
## The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Restoration
National Park Service, U.S Department of the Interior

The Standards are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing, and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. The provide practical guidance for decision-making about work or changes to a historic property. Applicants for the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) and some other preservation grant programs must be willing to adhere to these Standards. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility. Of the four treatment approaches, the Standards for Rehabilitation apply to most buildings in current use.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or given a new use that interprets the property and its restoration period.

2. Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection and properly documented for future research.

4. Materials, features, spaces and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.

5. Distinct materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features from the restoration period will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials.

7. Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.

8. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

9. Archeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

10. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

When the properties design, architectural, or historical significance during a particular period of time outweighs the potential loss of extant materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods; when there is substantial physical and documentary evidence for the work; when contemporary alterations and additions were not planned, Restoration may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a particular period of time, i.e., the restoration period, should be selected and justified, and a documentation plan for Restoration Developed.

More on the Standards and associated Guidelines, which offer general design and technical recommendations to assist in applying the Standards, can be found at https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm. Together, the Standards and Guidelines provide guidance and a framework for decision-making about work or changes to a historic property.