

## CHAPTER XXIII

### PROGRESS IN COMMUNICATION AND TRAVEL

#### POST-RIDERS AND POST OFFICES

The first post office in New Hampshire was established about 1692 by Andrew Hamilton, a merchant from Edinburgh, Scotland, who came to New Jersey in 1686 and was made deputy postmaster-general in April, 1692. It was located at Piscataqua (Portsmouth), from where a route was laid out through Boston to New York and Philadelphia, and thence to Richmond, Virginia. In May, 1775, the Fourth New Hampshire Provincial Congress established post offices at Portsmouth and Exeter, and from the latter place a post-rider rode to Haverhill, Massachusetts. The first postal route into Cheshire County was established June 27, 1781, a few months before the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown, when the New Hampshire Legislature ordered a postal route from Portsmouth through Plymouth to Haverhill, New Hampshire, returning by way of Charlestown and Keene. John Balch of Keene was appointed post-rider over this route, which also served Keene and vicinity, and in July, 1781, he signed an agreement with Meshech Weare, President of the State:

to ride to Haverhill by the way of Concord and Plymouth thence down the river to Charlestown, Keene, and to Portsmouth again, which tour is to be punctually performed once in each and every fourteen days, during said term [three months] unless this Committee shall think it most convenient for the public good that the said Balch should sometimes alter his Rout. The said Balch is to convey all public Acts, Letters and Dispatches free of charge. For which Service he shall receive from this State the sum of Seventy hard Dollars or Paper money equivalent.

In 1785 two postal routes were directed by the legislature; and in February, 1791, four routes and ten post offices were established. The first route began at Concord and led through Weare, New Boston, Amherst, Peterborough, Dublin, Keene, Walpole, Claremont, Newport, Hillsborough, Hopkinton, to Concord. The rider went on horseback, carrying in his saddle-bags, letters, documents, money, etc. Compensation was fixed at £12 semi-annually, and "postage on all private single letters be six pence for every forty miles and four pence for every number of miles less than forty and other letters and packetts according to their weight and bulk, which shall be exclusive perquisites of the post-riders carrying the same."

One of the ten post offices established at this time was at Keene,

which became the general office for the whole County. For several years lists of letters addressed to persons in Jaffrey and other towns were advertised weekly in the *New Hampshire Sentinel*, to be called for subject to postage. Letters were also advertised in the *Boston Gazette* and held at the Boston Post Office for postage to be paid when called for by addressee or his agent, a common service performed by teamsters and travelers to Boston. Abner Sanger of Dublin tells in his diary under date of July 19, 1794,

Capt. James Adams got up from Boston and tells me of his seeking of letter that was for me in Boston Post Office and sent it in to me. Yn he seeked for Brother Ben Johnson [his brother-in-law] found him and gave ye letter yt I sent by said Adams.

For the ordinary citizen, personal correspondence was extremely limited. People were governed by the prudential maxim of Poor Richard, "Never write when you can send word." To write a letter was a laborious and time-killing performance little indulged in, which even the clerky Abner found wearisome, as we gather from his diary, August 10, 1794:

Sunday Morn lousy & Wet. I write a Letter to my Brother Eleazer Sanger at Nova Scotia & another to Bro Benj Johnson at Boston. a hard days work.

Those having letters to mail handed them to the post-rider or left them at some appointed place to be called for by the post-rider on his rounds.

After the opening of the Turnpike road, the stage-drivers were employed to carry the mails. The *New Hampshire Sentinel* of May 23, 1801, announced the opening of a new mail route from Boston through Concord, Littleton, Groton, New Ipswich, Jaffrey, Marlborough, Keene, to Brattleborough, once a week, leaving Boston, at nine o'clock Thursday mornings, and arriving at Brattleborough the following Thursday evening at seven o'clock, leaving there on the return trip on Friday afternoons at two o'clock. In 1806 the Boston and Keene stages began to operate, making at first three trips a week, but later, after the custom of frequent changes of horses was adopted, they made the trip in a day, greatly improving the mail service. Horses were changed at Concord, Groton, New Ipswich, and Jaffrey.

Before 1800 newspapers were delivered by the publishers or sometimes the subscribers took turns in going for their papers on date of issue. On May 2, 1793, Benjamin Ellis of Keene, announced in the *Columbian Informer*,

that he now rides Post from Keene for Messrs Henry Blake & Co. Printers, through the towns of Westmoreland, Chesterfield, Hinsdale, Winchester, Rich-

mond and Jaffrey. It is his purpose to supply weekly any gentleman in the above mentioned towns with copies of the *Columbian Informer* if he should wish to become a subscriber. He promises also that greatest care and attention on reasonable terms to any private business entrusted to his care.

Benjamin Ellis was succeeded on the "eastern route" by John Balch, the pioneer post-rider already named, who in turn was succeeded by John Batchelder & Son as post-riders for the *Columbian Informer*. That there were subscribers in Jaffrey is apparent from the following notice under date of February 5, 1795:

Those persons who take the paper on the Eastern Route carried by Mr. Balch are earnestly requested to pay up for the first six months. Those who cannot pay cash will be kind enough to pay it in produce. They may leave it at the following places: Stoddard, Mr. Evans or Israel Towne; Packersfield, Maj. Melvin; Dublin, James Adams; Jaffrey, Spofford's Mills; Rindge, Moses Rodd's store; Fitzwilliam, Mr. Crosby's store or Fox & Goldsmith.

The following postal rates were in effect May 1, 1816:

Single letters under 30 miles, 6c.; 30 to 80 miles, 10c.; 80 to 150 miles, 12½c.; 150 to 400 miles, 18½c.; over 400 miles, 25c. Newspapers up to 100 miles, 1c.; over 100 miles, 1½c. Within the state where printed 1c. regardless of distance.

In 1845 there was a great reduction in postal rates. At this time a "single letter" was defined as weighing half an ounce, and the rates were as follows: Under three hundred miles, five cents; over three hundred miles, ten cents; and "drop" or local letters two cents. Postage stamps were not in use until 1847 and stamped envelopes not until 1852. In 1851 a three-cent letter rate was established, and on October 1, 1883, a two-cent letter rate came into effect. Postal cards were first issued on May 1, 1872. Parcel Post was established in January, 1913.

#### POST OFFICES

From the records of the Post Office Department in Washington it appears that a Post Office was established in Jaffrey on April 1, 1801, with Peter Lawrence postmaster. He held the office until July 1, 1802, when Samuel Dakin was appointed his successor. On April 1, 1812, Abel Parker was appointed and January 1, 1817, Luke Howe received the appointment and held it until 1842. Up to this time the Post Office was probably kept in the houses of the postmasters. Samuel Dakin and his successor, Luke Howe, lived in the house now (1933) owned by the Misses Mary B. and Kate W. Fox, and Abel Parker in the house now owned by his great-granddaughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Cabot. On January 24, 1842, William Lacy was

appointed postmaster, and doubtless at this time the Post Office was moved to his store, the present dwelling of Charles S. Phelps.

By 1845, or earlier, Factory Village had become a trade center of so much importance as to become a rival of the long established center of the town, and had made several attempts to have a post office established there, being each time defeated by the opposition of interested parties at the Center. In this movement, Alonzo Bascom, owner of the mills in Factory Village, and Peter Upton, store-keeper and leading citizen, were the principal supporters and jointly paid the expenses of an advocate to Washington, with the result that a Post Office was established in Factory Village on April 1, 1846, and the old post office at the center of the town discontinued. This removal of the post office was not received by the people at the Center without protest. The *New Hampshire Sentinel* on April 22, 1846, carried the following elucidative news item:

Alonzo Bascom has been appointed post master at Jaffrey in place of Mr. Lacy and the office removed to the "Village," two miles east. This is not the worst of it; the direct mail has been cut off to Keene by that great geographer, the Tennessee Post Master General and now the route being circuitous more than thirty miles, although Jaffrey is but 15 miles direct from Keene. The postmaster threatens to charge postage on newspapers. It is said a miserable tool, 20 miles from Jaffrey, has been the agent in removing the post office two miles from the center of the town.

Alonzo Bascom was appointed the first Postmaster in the new Post Office, which was located in Mr. Upton's store where Upton "fitted up a set of post-office boxes—quite an innovation at the time, and in marked contrast with the dingy old show-case in use at the Centre." Eight months later, December 8, 1846, the name of Factory Village was changed to East Jaffrey, and Alonzo Bascom continued as Postmaster until May 8, 1849, when Lewis L. Pierce was appointed postmaster. At this time the location of the office was changed to the store of Foster & Brown, now occupied by the Abbott Clothing Company, where it remained until December 20, 1849, when on the appointment of Ebenezer Upton as postmaster, it was returned to its first quarters in Upton's store. On April 11, 1853, Alonzo Bascom received his second appointment and moved the office to his factory counting room, where it remained until 1861, when he was succeeded by Peter Upton who moved the office back to his store. The full list of postmasters to the present time (1933) with dates of appointment follow:

Apr. 1, 1801	Peter Lawrence	Apr. 13, 1861	Peter Upton
July 1, 1802	Samuel Dakin	Mar. 11, 1884	Marcellus M. Bascom
Apr. 1, 1812	Abel Parker	Aug. 20, 1885	James S. Lacy
Jan. 1, 1817	Luke Howe	May 21, 1889	Marcellus M. Bascom
Jan. 24, 1842	William S. Lacy	Apr. 18, 1893	James S. Lacy
Apr. 1, 1846	Name of Office changed to Factory Village	July 26, 1897	Marcellus M. Bascom
Apr. 1, 1846	Alonzo Bascom	Mar. 17, 1899	Lewis W. Davis
Dec. 8, 1846	Name of Office changed to East Jaffrey	Oct. 1, 1899,	Office made Presidential
Dec. 8, 1846	Alonzo Bascom	Dec. 19, 1899	Lewis W. Davis
May 8, 1849	Lewis L. Pierce	Jan. 1, 1915	Herbert Baldwin, acting
Dec. 20, 1849	Ebenezer Upton	Apr. 14, 1915	George H. Duncan
Apr. 11, 1853	Alonzo Bascom	June 1, 1918	Bert O. Eaves, acting
		Sept. 19, 1918	Russel B. Henchman
		Sept. 1, 1931	Herbert Baldwin, acting
		July 1, 1932	James H. Fitzgerald

The location of the East Jaffrey Post Office continued to change with the incumbencies of the postmasters until 1897, when it came to rest in the former Upton's store, then occupied by M. M. Bascom & Co. On January 1, 1915, it was moved to new quarters in the recently erected Duncan Block, where it remained until 1929, when it was moved to its present location in the Bean Block.

On November 6, 1846, slightly more than seven months after it had been discontinued, the Post Office was reestablished at Jaffrey Center, where the following persons have held commissions as postmaster since that date:

Nov. 6, 1846	Ethan Cutter	Mar. 10, 1902	Frank H. Chase
July 23, 1861	Gurley A. Phelps	Mar. 4, 1915	Joseph H. Paradise
July 14, 1888	Joseph T. Bigelow	Jan. 1, 1920	Office made Presidential
Apr. 24, 1889	S. Herbert Mower	Feb. 25, 1920	Hubert F. O'Neil
	Dec. 21, 1921	Charles Meyers	

#### THE RAILROAD

When viewed from the standpoint of a single community, the history of the construction of a railroad line passing through many towns, is of necessity fragmentary. Thirty-five years after the building of the Third New Hampshire Turnpike through Jaffrey (see Roads and Taverns), the first railroad in New Hampshire, the Nashua and Lowell, was chartered in 1835 and began operating trains between the two cities in 1838. Thereafter agitation for a railroad through Jaffrey was not wanting; and at a meeting held in East Wilton in 1842, Oliver Prescott of Jaffrey was appointed on a railroad committee. Representatives from the town were also present at a meeting to consider such a project at Fitzwilliam on January

17, 1844; and a similar meeting or convention was held at Jaffrey a week later, while other conferences were held at about the same time in other towns in the region. A petition was presented by the promoters to the Legislature in June, 1844, for a charter for a railroad "from the southern boundary of the state at Fitzwilliam or Rindge through any or either of the towns of Jaffrey, Troy, Marlboro . . . ." No action on this petition was taken, and in January, 1845, a meeting was held at New Ipswich to consider a route from Shirley, Massachusetts, through "New Ipswich, Mason, Jaffrey, Peterborough and Dublin to Keene." Later that year a report of a survey "from Troy through Jaffrey, Rindge, Ashburnham, and Ashby to Fitchburg" was made, but the route finally chosen was the present Cheshire line from Fitchburg to Keene, through Winchendon, which was opened to Keene in 1848, while the "Peterborough and Shirley" never succeeded in scaling the Temple Range, its nearest approach to the Contoocook Valley being Mason Village, now Greenville (see Melville Biography). Meanwhile, about thirty thousand dollars of stock in the Cheshire Railroad had been subscribed in Jaffrey.

Efforts for rail connection continued in Jaffrey and vicinity, and during the 1860's proposals were made for lines from Wilton, the terminus in that vicinity, through Peterborough and Jaffrey as far as Claremont, and also in other directions, the most feasible apparently being from Parker's Station in Goffstown on the Manchester and North Weare Railroad, through New Boston, Mont Vernon, Francestown, Peterborough, and Jaffrey, to the Cheshire Railroad at Winchendon. Peterborough, it appears, was the key point and almost every issue of the *Peterborough Transcript* at that time contained communications, editorials, or quotations from other papers as to the best direction from which it might be approached. In the meantime, the Legislature had authorized towns to aid the construction of railroads by a grant of five per cent of their valuation; and in 1867, Peterborough voted to give sixty-three thousand dollars "to any company that will build a railroad to this village." After the organization of the Monadnock Railroad, Jaffrey, on March 13, 1867, voted it a five per cent gratuity, amounting to about thirty-five thousand dollars, "when it shall complete its railroad through East Jaffrey."

That year James A. Weston, civil engineer of Manchester, New Hampshire, made a survey of the route from Peterborough to Winchendon, which took a line through East Jaffrey at the foot of Cretia Hill, near the present residence of P. S. Gilbert, to the great disgust of many citizens but saving about one-third mile of track; thence

to Winchendon by way of Squantum and East Rindge. An alternative route was considered through Blakeville, (West Rindge,) to a junction with the Cheshire Railroad at State Line in Fitzwilliam.

Controversy in Peterborough ran high as to the relative advantage of building first in a southerly direction or to the north, and decision in 1869 was left to a committee of nine which decided, apparently five to four, in favor of the south route. Although construction work was started at Winchendon toward Blakeville (West Rindge), discord continued and a special town meeting was held on August 14, 1869, which by a vote of 184 to 91 supported the committee. But when this failed to quiet the objectors, suit was brought to compel Peterborough's funds to be expended on the line to the north. Monadnock Railroad also brought suit for its sixty-three thousand dollars, and on August 29, 1870, when trains were running as far as Blakeville, the court rendered decision that the whole action of Peterborough had been illegal and no funds were available for any gratuity. A compromise then was effected and at a special town meeting on October 8, 1870, forty thousand dollars was voted for the Monadnock Railroad, the other twenty-three thousand dollars to be withheld until a line was completed northerly to Parker's Station in Goffstown. The importance of Peterborough's contribution is indicated by an item in the *Peterborough Transcript* of May 15, 1869, where the estimated cost of the line is given as three hundred thousand dollars, with available funds as follows:

Peterborough stock subscription	\$82,000
Peterborough gratuity	63,000
Jaffrey stock subscription	34,000
Jaffrey gratuity	35,000
Winchendon gratuity	32,000
Cheshire Railroad stock subscription	30,000
Contractor's stock subscription	60,000
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Total	\$336,000

At this time the organization of the Monadnock Railroad was: Jonas Livingston, Peterborough, president; R. B. Hatch, Peterborough, secretary; Clarence A. Parks, Jaffrey, treasurer; J. H. Fairbank, Winchendon, general superintendent of construction; the directors were Jonas Livingston, James Scott, Joseph Noone, H. K. French, all of Peterborough, Peter Upton, O. H. Bradley, both of Jaffrey, and J. H. Fairbank of Winchendon; and the land damage committee, H. K. French, O. H. Bradley, J. H. Fairbank.

With Willis Phelps of Springfield, Massachusetts, as contractor,

and after many delays the rails reached East Jaffrey late on the evening of Saturday, August 27, 1870, after the almost superhuman exploit of laying one and one-fourth miles that day. A train drawn by the locomotive "Monadnock" was greeted at the station by a large crowd, by the ringing of bells and firing of cannon. There was music by the Peterborough and Winchendon bands, and speeches by O. H. Bradley, Peter Upton, F. S. Pierce, Rev. E. J. Emery, and prominent men from other towns on the line. The first regular trip between Winchendon and Jaffrey was run on November 22, 1870, delay having been caused in part by the financial difficulties already mentioned, neglect by subscribing stockholders to pay assessments and, in September, by the sinking of a part of the track south of the so-called "Spile Bridge," under a load of gravel cars, which mishap fortunately was not accompanied by any personal injuries. The road was completed to Peterborough the following year and in the meantime H. K. French of that town drove a coach-and-six from the railhead at East Jaffrey to his hotel in Peterborough for the accommodation of through passengers.

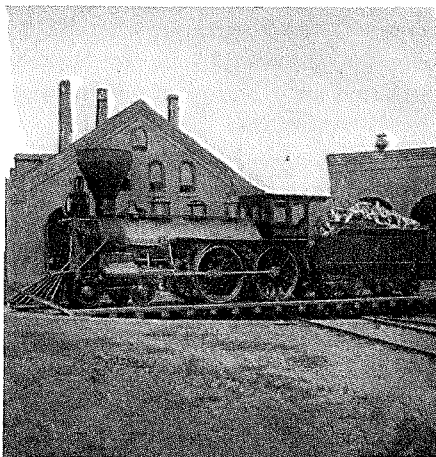
The Monadnock Railroad operated until 1874 under its own officials, J. H. Fairbank as superintendent, with modest success, the report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1873, showing gross receipts of \$32,843.90; operating expenses, \$21,117.36; interest on debt, \$8,689.66; surplus, \$3,036.88. The total debt at the time was \$124,575, which the *Worcester Spy*, of September 15, 1874, explained by stating the cost of construction as having been \$350,000, with interest during construction, and equipment at \$50,000.

On August 20, 1874, Monadnock Railroad was leased for ninety-nine years to the Boston, Barre, & Gardner Railroad, running from Winchendon to Worcester (never reaching either Boston or Barre) at an annual rent of twelve thousand dollars for the first two years; fifteen thousand dollars for the next three years; and eighteen thousand dollars thereafter. This arrangement continued until 1880, when the lease was transferred to the Cheshire Railroad, both the Monadnock and the Cheshire Railroads passing into the control of the Fitchburg Railroad about October 1, 1890. After that date local direct interest ceased, although a mortgage of the Monadnock Railroad given October 1, 1871, to Peter Upton, of Jaffrey, Willis Phelps of Springfield, Massachusetts, and Hiram A. Blood of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, to secure bonds, was not discharged until 1895.

During the period up to about 1887 wood was the fuel used in the locomotives, and at each station huge woodsheds were erected, hun-

dreds of cords of wood being drawn in by the farmers during the winter months, sawed, and piled to season under cover. Refueling was required on each trip at the termini as well as at East Jaffrey, and it was a spectacle attractive to all the boys of the village to watch the "Monadnock," the "Jaffrey," and later the "C. W. Cartwright," come puffing to the station, belching great clouds of smoke, sparks, and steam from the bell-crowned smokestacks some three feet in diameter, when all the train crew formed a passing line to pile wood mountain high on the tender.

As already stated, considerable local financial support was given the Monadnock Railroad at its beginning, although not all that was desired, as is indicated by the following excerpt from a communication in the *Peterborough Transcript* of early 1869:



LOCOMOTIVE "JAFFREY" IN  
KEENE YARDS

Jaffrey is doing well, though the friends of the enterprise there labor under some disadvantages. . . . The larger capitalists of Jaffrey are, unfortunately, men retired from active business, with a few honorable exceptions, who do not feel the interest in an enterprise of this kind which younger men feel . . . It is not unreasonable to hope that such men as John Conant and John Fox who have the ability to give this enterprise a lift without any sacrifice, will yet see . . . an opportunity afforded them to help Jaffrey.

No list of the original stockholders is available, but the town tax list for 1882 shows that eighteen persons then owned 187 shares of Monadnock Railroad stock. The composition of this list indicates that most of the names there appearing were those of subscribers, and it is interesting to note that the above appeal must have borne fruit, since the estate of John Fox appears in the list. Later, when this stock was exchanged for that of the Fitchburg Railroad, a considerable increase in ownership took place owing to the custom of that corporation to allow a free ride to stockholders to Boston to attend the annual meeting. This privilege doubtless accounts for the large number of single shares owned as the privilege was accorded to all regardless of the number of shares. In 1900, 512 shares were

owned by fifty-one persons, twenty-nine owning only one share each. The date of the meeting usually coincided with one of the city's great attractions, the Boston Food Fair, and the privilege was used everywhere. It is reported to have been the annual custom in this period of a frugal lady of the village, a stockholder, to pack a basket with a light lunch, on her arrival at Boston to consume the lunch and then repair to the Food Fair, where after the payment of a modest admission fee, she would refill her basket with the samples generously distributed and then return home the same night with her wealth, already substantial, slightly augmented. It is said that few stockholders attended the corporation meeting and, in fact, their attendance was not industriously sought by the majority stockholders.

About 1900 the Fitchburg Railroad, with its leased lines, including Monadnock Railroad, passed to the control of the Boston and Maine Railroad, by which it has since been operated.

#### THE AUTOMOBILE

Twelve years after C. A. Duryea operated the first gasoline automobile in the United States on April 19, 1892, Alfred M. Butler became the first to own a car in Jaffrey. The *Peterborough Transcript* of June 23, 1904, reported, "A. M. Butler is the proud possessor of a new 'Ford' automobile of ten horse-power, manufactured by the Ford Motor Company of Detroit, Michigan." But he was not long allowed to hold this unique distinction, for the issue of the same publication dated July 14, 1904, carried the news that "Asahel S. Annett has recently purchased a ten horse-power Cadillac." It is noteworthy, in view of the thousands of manufacturers who have entered and left the field in intervening years, cars of the same makes, though of vastly different model, still pour from the assembly lines.

But the general public viewed askance the new contraption and even then, as now, official regulation of excessive speed was attempted. The same issue of the *Transcript* which bore the news of the purchase of the Cadillac stated that "The selectmen have recently posted notices warning drivers of automobiles not to exceed a speed of eight miles an hour in the village or fifteen miles an hour outside."

#### THE AIRPLANE

Seeking a landing place on account of a crippled wheel, the first airplane ever seen in Jaffrey landed in the field north of the farm buildings of B. G. Wilson on the old Turnpike soon after noon on Labor Day, September 1, 1919. Piloted by a lieutenant of the

United States Army Air Service, it had left the aviation field at Mineola, Long Island; had stopped at Pittsfield, Massachusetts, en route, and had crushed one landing wheel while landing or taking off at the latter place. After repairs at the Wilson farm, it proceeded to Keene to take part in the Welcome Home Day celebration there.

The following Saturday, September 6, 1919, it was arranged that a plane from Camp Devens, Massachusetts, would be sent to take part in the Welcome Home Day exercises at Jaffrey. The plane arrived about noon, but being unable to locate a suitable landing-place from the air, it circled high over East Jaffrey Village but did not land.

#### THE TELEPHONE

Jaffrey made its first telephone connection with the outside world about 1890, when a long-distance telephone was installed in the old Goodnow store (now owned by E. Belletete) on North Street. Upon the removal of the Goodnow business to its School Street location in 1897, "the telephone," still the only public one in town, was removed to the M. M. Bascom store on Main Street. In 1899 a small switch-board was installed there, with Miss Edith B. Spaulding, the store book-keeper, as operator. In 1906 the exchange was removed to the Duncan Drug Store at the corner of Main and River Streets, where it remained until 1913, during which period Miss Charlotte E. Mellen was operator and a cable was substituted for the numerous wires on Main Street. From 1913 to 1919 the telephone office was located in what was formerly the parlor of the Granite State Hotel, Miss Katherine C. Bartlett and Miss Gladys M. Leighton being in charge. In 1919 the exchange was removed to the house belonging to C. E. Sweatt on Depot Square and ten years later to its present location in the Bean Block on Main Street, Mrs. Ella M. Grass serving as manager at the two latter places with about five hundred stations connected.

In 1896 a private line using the Bell-type instruments was installed at Squantum between the Annett factory and two dwellings of the family, later extended to East Jaffrey, with seven telephones connected, including the Railroad Station. Subsequently this line was connected with the switch-board above mentioned, to be purchased by the New England Telephone & Telegraph Company in 1916.