

CHAPTER X

NEW BUILDINGS

THE BEAN BLOCK

To keep growing, a town must have new buildings, both dwelling houses and business establishments, from time to time, and Jaffrey is such a town. In 1928 Vernon J. Bean saw the need of a business block in the heart of the village and erected the Bean Block after acquiring the former Crombie house site for the purpose. The Crombie house was moved a few feet back on Blake



LEFT TO RIGHT: BEAN BLOCK AND DILLON BLOCK

Street. Already the U. S. Post Office quarters in the Duncan Block at the corner of Main and River Streets had become cramped, and was one of the first to move into the new block. The Derry Electric Company, fore-runner of the New Hampshire Electric Company, took up quarters in the new block. The local exchange of the New England Telephone Company occupied space on the second floor, with living quarters for the supervisor, Ella M. Grass, and her husband, Philip Grass. In 1933 The Jaffrey Recorder office moved from the Burpee Block to second floor rooms in the building. Stores rented the first or ground floor space, including the Rexall Store of Felix O'Neil, now the Sawyer Pharmacy, which business has remained in the block for over forty years. Other

stores came and went, as the exigencies of their being demanded. In 1948 the Bean Block was sold to Leonard St. George, the present owner.

THE DILLON BLOCK

Encouraged by the success of the Bean Block, the late Oscar J. Dillon, a prominent local automobile dealer and garage man, envisioned another business block on the opposite side of Main Street and set about to acquire the unsightly corner of Main and Peterborough Streets. Eleven years after the erection of the Bean Block, he purchased the White Brothers' "corner lot," White Brothers' mill house No. 3, and White Brothers' boarding house, for which he was taxed on April 1, 1940. In 1941 he erected the large business block, known as the Dillon Block, of yellow brick construction. The first floor space has been devoted entirely to stores, while the second floor rooms furnish accommodations for a legal office, beauty and barber shops, and during World War II the local rationing board had its quarters in one of the rooms. The back part of the second floor has provided bowling alleys since the erection of the block.

Following the death of the builder in 1945, the Dillon Block was purchased by the Godin Realty Company of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and is still owned by the Godin firm.

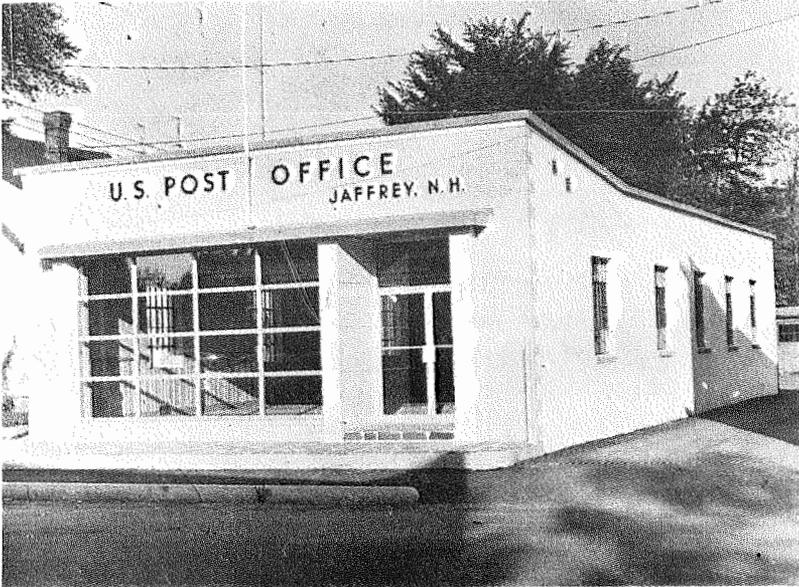
DILLON'S GARAGE

In 1936 Oscar J. Dillon acquired the premises on Peterborough Street across from the so-called Bascom house, on which he built a spacious automobile garage, including a new car show room and a service lubritorium. The following year the new building had an assessed valuation of \$7,000.00. Following Dillon's death in 1945, the garage was acquired by William I. Wade who continued the automobile franchise and repair business for many years. In 1959 the building was purchased by Rene and Leo Forcier and for several years was used in their beverage business as a storehouse. Meanwhile, their store business had been expanding and the former garage building was remodeled into an attractive super-market facility, operated by Rene and Adelaide Forcier.

THE POST OFFICE BUILDING ON BLAKE STREET

The first separate Post Office building in Jaffrey was built in 1958 by Leonard St. George when the quarters in the Bean Block

became inadequate on account of increased postal business. St. George leased the building to the United States Post Office Department until the Post Office was moved to its new building on the site of the former Baptist Church in 1968. The building is now vacant. It was erected on the site of the relocated Crombie house which was moved from Main Street at the building of the Bean Block.



FORMER JAFFREY POST OFFICE

HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Over the past decades several housing developments have been in progress, but there has been no actual count of new houses as such. Perhaps the earliest development may be called that of A. M. Deschenes, who in 1930 and 1931 was called upon to build new houses immediately to accommodate the influx of the W. W. Cross & Company personnel from the Brockton, Massachusetts, area. At that time every available, house, apartment, and room was filled by the families of the newcomers. Deschenes developments were on Stratton Road and North Street.

More recently, Charles J. Letourneau has been active in the Riverside Ridge development on part of the former William F.

Coolidge property. He has also had an interest in remodelling and other developments.

In the Hillcrest Lodge and Hillcrest Road area, Homer and Reynold Belletete of Belletete's Inc., have created an attractive development, with many new houses. Other developments have been contemplated by them.

Since 1930 new houses built for homes by individuals have been "popping" along all the roads leading out from the villages, and no one has kept a separate tally of them.

In the Burlington Court section of the village, Harry J. Sirois carried on a development for several years, resulting in a number of attractive houses in a quiet section not on any main thoroughfare.

Individually built houses have extended the residential area Dublin-ward on Lincoln Corner Road.

TOWN OFFICE BUILDING

For many years the town office was located in the upstairs room of the Clay Library Building, but during the early 1950's, with the Jaffrey Public Library expanding its facilities and the work in the town offices reaching full time proportions, the available room in the library building became inadequate for the needs of the town officers. A new location with more room was an urgent need, and since Jaffrey did not have a town hall building, this became a problem. The only recourse was to build.

The town owned the site of the former Granite State Hotel on the village green, which in 1923 was given to the town by Julius Elwood and Ada (Pierce) Prescott for a future town hall site. The Granite State Hotel had been visited by an early morning fire on May 28th that year which had left only its brick walls standing. With a large auditorium in the recently erected Grade School Building, and with another auditorium in the offing in the soon to be built Conant High School addition, there did not seem to be any necessity for a new town hall, but a town office building was a critical need.

The town had created a Town Hall Fund and Town Hall Capital Reserve Fund in 1927, and at the annual town meeting in March, 1953, the sum of \$5,000.00 was again voted to be transferred from the unencumbered surplus to the Town Hall Capital Reserve Fund. The need for a place for the town officers to do their work

was a pressing one and consequently at the same meeting the town appointed a committee consisting of Ralph E. Boynton, Elizabeth D. Sawyer, and Alfred S. Despres to "investigate the feasibility of locating and erecting a structure of the 'Colonial' type, in harmony with traditional New England architecture."

The committee reported its findings at the next town meeting, March 9, 1954. At this time it was "voted that the Town authorize the construction and partial furnishing of a Town Office Building on the site donated by Mr. and Mrs. Julius E. Prescott, said building to conform with the report and plans submitted by the committee appointed at the town meeting of March 10, 1953; and a sum not exceeding \$50,897.59 plus any accruing interest, being the amounts now in the Town Hall Capital Reserve Fund and the Town Hall Fund created in 1927, to pay the cost of construction and partial furnishing of such building . . ." At this same meeting the town voted to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500.00 for the completion of the furnishing of the Town Office Building.

Ralph E. Boynton, W. Arnold Seale, Alfred S. Despres, and Elizabeth Sawyer comprised the Town Office Building Committee, and soon after the 1954 annual meeting they proceeded to have the architect, Alfred T. Granger Associates of Hanover, New Hampshire, draw up the specifications of the adopted plans for the structure. After the project was offered for bids, T. H. and E. H. Bergeron of Keene, New Hampshire, submitted the lowest bid, but even their bid was nearly ten thousand dollars more than the available funds. After court denial for a special town meeting for the additional money, the old plan was rearranged and scaled down to a smaller building in line with the available funds.

After several conferences with the lowest bidding contractor, for a new bid in line with available funds, the foundation was started in September, 1954, and the building was completed in the summer of 1955. The building has suitable accommodations for the Court Room, Police Department, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Selectmen, Water Commissioners, and a garage for the police cruiser and the V. F. W. ambulance. The total cost of the building, of brick construction, amounted to \$56,526.76.