

CHAPTER XIV

BANKS AND POST OFFICE

THE MONADNOCK BANKS

When correlated in time with important milestones in our national history, many Jaffrey events assume a fuller meaning. This is true with the Monadnock National Bank, which for over one hundred and twenty years has been serving the people of Jaffrey and vicinity and has been the backbone of Jaffrey's financial economy. The first bank was organized under the Laws of the State of New Hampshire in 1850. That was the year the United States stretched out to meet the Pacific Ocean with California becoming the thirty-first state in the Union. Jaffrey had grown from its pioneer beginnings under the shadow of Monadnock, and its factory village on the Contoocook River had gained new proportions as a bustling, thriving village which has since become the metropolis of the town.

John Conant was president of the Monadnock Bank when it opened its door on January 6, 1851, with Peter Upton as cashier. The incorporators held their first meeting in the counting room of Alonzo Bascom's factory, but from the beginning the bank's place of business was in rooms in the west side of the cashier's house on Main Street.

THE MONADNOCK NATIONAL BANK

The Monadnock National Bank was established in 1865. The Civil War had drawn to a close, and the country had mourned its great President Abraham Lincoln, when Jaffrey's first bank was reorganized and granted a national charter. There was little change in management or control of the bank. Peter Upton continued as its cashier and its active manager. The bank's place of business continued to be at his home.

Finally, in 1873, Jaffrey's first bank building was raised at a cost of \$15,000. It stood about where the Town Office Building now stands. It was "built of brick and was of unusual height, with a French roof." There were stores on the lower floor, with the bank's own rooms on the second floor. Two years later it was burned on Sunday morning, March 25, 1875, along with the neighboring hotel. (See page 698, Volume I.)

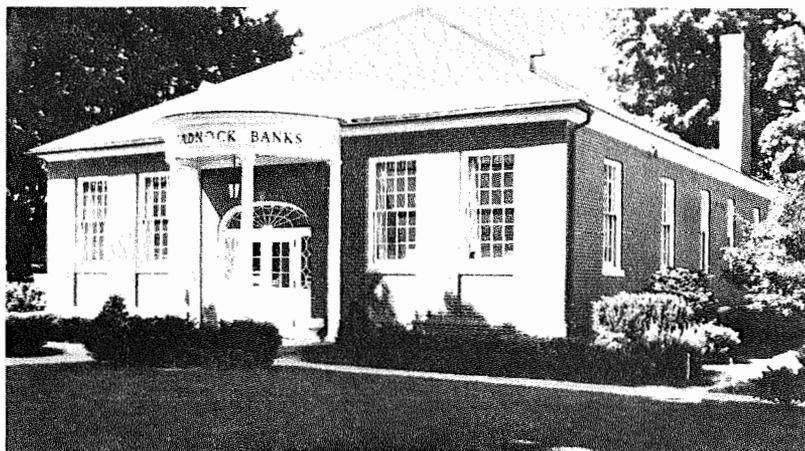
The structure was rebuilt, much as before, on the same site, only to end in flames just two years and five days after the original building was burned. A third building was erected in 1878, which stood until 1961, when the present building took shape around it.

The present officers of the Monadnock National Bank are as follows:

President, Donald S. Proctor
Vice President, Gerald DeGrandpre
Cashier, Gerald DeGrandpre
Assistant Cashier, Robert W. Allen

THE MONADNOCK SAVINGS BANK

The Monadnock Savings Bank was established in 1869, when the United States tied together with a transcontinental railroad



THE MONADNOCK BANKS

the year of its incorporation, and a golden spike was being driven at Ogden, Utah, about the time Peter Upton was asking the New Hampshire legislature for the act of incorporation.

The Monadnock Savings Bank was organized on Tuesday, November 23, 1869, in a meeting at the counting room of Alonzo Bascom's new factory. The bank's first president was, fittingly, the man who worked closely with Peter Upton a year later to bring the Monadnock Railroad to Jaffrey. He was Oscar H. Bradley, M.D., who continued as the bank's president through its first forty years.

The bank's place of business was originally at the Bascom factory counting room, and Frederick W. Bailey was its first treasurer and clerk. It remained there for only three months, however, until Bailey resigned to join a law firm in Keene, New Hampshire. Peter Upton was chosen to succeed the treasurer and clerk, and the business was moved to his house, where it remained until Jaffrey's first bank building was erected three years later.

The Monadnock Savings Bank and the Monadnock National Bank continued since that time, to be neighbors under the latter's room. They are drawn even closer together now, as joint owners of the new bank building.

The Savings Bank officers are as follows:

President, Donald S. Proctor
 Vice President, Rufus S. Fenerty, III
 Vice President, Gerald DeGrandpre
 Treasurer, Robert W. Allen

U. S. POST OFFICE

In 1929 the United States Post Office was moved from the Duncan Block, where it had occupied quarters since 1915, to the new Bean Block across the Contoocook River. Larger quarters had become necessary for the handling of an increased volume of mail and the new building provided this essential. At that time, Russell B. Henschman, who had been postmaster since 1918, continued in the post at the new location. In 1931 Herbert A. Baldwin replaced Henschman as acting postmaster until the appointment of James H. Fitzgerald the following summer. Henschman had died in August, 1931. Fitzgerald remained postmaster until 1936 when he took over the managership of the new State Liquor Commission store.

Appointed by the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration in 1936 to the postmastership vacancy thus created was Jaffrey's young enterprising, and a former school teacher at Conant High School, Homer J. Forcier. With the entry of the United States into World War II, there occurred a temporary vacancy while Forcier was in the service. This vacancy was filled by Barbara (Messing) Kiniry as acting postmistress until the former's discharge from the armed forces. Forcier then continued to hold the office until his retirement in 1970, and in October, 1970, Joseph O. Morgan, a long time employee and assistant postmaster, became acting postmaster until his official appointment, April 17, 1971.

By 1957 the quarters in the rear of the Bean Block had become

too small to carry on the increased volume of mail efficiently and expeditiously. Larger space was needed. While many prominent persons were anxious for a separate government building for a post office, no one came forward. This left things pretty much on the shoulders of Leonard St. George, owner of the Bean Block and then landlord for the Post Office. His was the only bid submitted for the new building. The new building was erected by him just an alley apart from the former quarters, on the site of the former Crombie House on Blake Street. The Crombie House once occupied the corner of the lot upon which the Bean Block was built. It had been moved by the builder, Vernon J. Bean, to the site where it remained until torn down to make room for the separate post office building. The new Post Office Building was completed in time to be dedicated during the Jaffrey Jubilee celebration in 1957.

But changing times make changing demands and again the Post Office became too small for the handling of the ever increasing volume of mail. A larger separate post office building became a necessity. For this, the site of the former Baptist Church was deemed the best locale and in 1968 the former landmark on Charity Square was torn down. The new post office building was built by the Parlmont Realty Trust Company of Chelmsford, Massachusetts, and is owned by them. It was occupied by the United States Post Office in January, 1969.



JAFFREY POST OFFICE