

CHAPTER XX

UNHAPPY THINGS

It is too soon to narrate the casualties of the past few decades. Many of these unhappy things are still close to the hearts of persons and families now living and to list them here would serve only to recall the poignancies of many sorrows. Tragedies of many kinds have continued to occur in Jaffrey. Fire and water have claimed their victims. Some minds and spirits have broken under the burden of years or their lives' hopelessness and perplexities. In Volume I the chapter entitled "Old, Unhappy, Far-off Things" closed with the turn of the century. The purpose of the following pages is to continue from that time into the 1930's. Casualties omitted here are left to become the "unhappy things" for future historians.

Dennis Provincial or Provencal, age 41, a laborer in the White Brothers' cotton mill, fell into a vat of hot dye. After rescue he is said to have run home along the street to the horror of people on their way to work. He died Oct. 21, 1901, twelve hours after the accident. He was born in Canada, May 12, 1860, the son of Octave Provencal. The Provencal family lived in Little Canada in the house on Cross Street now owned by Robert Archambault.

On April 21, 1902, Michael B. Crowe, who was born in Ireland, Sept. 29, 1844, committed suicide by hanging.

John Akeley, who had come to Jaffrey two months earlier from Winchester, New Hampshire, died instantly, March 3, 1903, from a fractured skull by a falling limb of a tree.

Jonathan Page died Jan. 31, 1904, from injuries received in a fall and exposure.

Charles R. Kittredge, age 40, died May 29, 1904, from an accidental gun shot wound. For the story of this untimely accident and death, see Charles Russell Kittredge biographical sketch in Volume I.

Frank E. Wright, age 47, was a suicide by shooting, Aug. 18, 1904.

On December 25, 1904, Karl Kyta, age 34, was found frozen to death. Alcoholism was a contributing cause. He had come to Jaffrey from Fitchburg, Mass., three weeks earlier.

Orin Santerre, the five year old son of Frank Santerre, died on April 4, 1907, from internal injuries a half hour after being run over.

T. Burton Morris, age 46, was a suicide by drowning, April 6, 1909.

On Oct. 19, 1909, Adele Pelletier was a suicide by drowning. She was born in Canada in December, 1870, dau. of Felix Pelletier, and was a weaver in the cotton mill.

Yvonne Despres, aged seven years, nine months, and twenty-one days, died June 24, 1917, as a result of her hair catching fire while playing with lighted candles at her home on East Main Street, while her mother, Marie Louise (Mercure) Despres, was attending the first Mass in the newly finished St. Patrick Church. She ran down stairs with her hair aflame as Charles Bean happened to be passing by. He put his coat about her to smother the flames. She died ten hours later.

On July 11, 1917, Edward B. Crowe and his daughter, Mary L. Crowe, were accidentally drowned while visiting in Kittery, Maine.

THE DEAN MURDER

On the morning of August 14, 1918, Jaffrey was rocked to the core by news of the disappearance of Dr. William Kendrick Dean and the subsequent finding of his body in a rainwater cistern near the "big house" on the Dean farm, brutally strangled and murdered with a blunt instrument. The body was wrapped in a horse blanket and weighted down with a 27-pound rock. In the village the people had seen Dean only the night before, with his horse and buggy, doing his weekly shopping of groceries. Before returning home he had stopped at the home of his friend, the village banker, and upon arriving at home he had unloaded his provisions and gone to the barn about midnight, as was his custom, to milk his Jersey cows. Added to the bizarreness of the case was the fact that his milk pail was never found, and the discovery of an initialed cigarette case in the bottom of the six-foot cistern after the recovery of his body, which immediately disappeared.

When, in due course of time, he did not return, his frail and invalid wife became alarmed and in the morning relayed news of his disappearance to authorities. The day was a beautiful sunny August one, as the search was initiated by Chief of Police Perley H. Enos, and the three Jaffrey Selectmen, Edward C. Boynton, William F. Coolidge, and Peter E. Hogan. Later developments divided the town, turning friend against friend, neighbor against neighbor, as the developments unfolded themselves, and the repercussions are still being felt over half a century later.

Since the case was fraught with possible espionage and deep mystery, it was carried to Washington, D. C., by the local authorities, where it is still classified, at latest reports, as one of the nation's ten most interesting unsolved cases. In Jaffrey it was seemingly otherwise, as the town became divided. There was a segment of the population who, in their own minds, had "solved the case," basing their conclusions upon the fact the horse blanket in question admittedly belonged to the town banker, Charles L. Rich, and the fact he had appeared at the bank that morning with a blackened eye and lacerated cheek. In his testimony, however, he explained that he had pressed the blanket on the victim the night before to ward off the chill of the mid-August night on his trip home, and that his facial disfigurement was due to a kick from his horse.

Dean was a gentleman farmer on one of Jaffrey's sightliest hilltop farms, having abandoned his chosen medical profession on account of the threat of pulmonary disease, which brought him to Jaffrey where in 1889 he bought the former Elijah Smith farm. His wife was his cousin, Mary Dean; and he himself was born in Wilmington, Delaware, February 12, 1855, the son of Rev. William and Maria (Main) Dean. He was educated at Hamilton College in western New York State. In Jaffrey he was highly respected as a man of culture and refinement and a good neighbor, virtues which his wife shared with him.

For a long distance the writer's parents' farm was only a road apart from the Dean farm, and the writer, then a schoolgirl, remembers the Deans well. As neighbors they were of the best. By that time, as a matter of finances, they had moved from the "big house" to the bungalow nearby, renting their former home to a couple from New York, Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Colfelt, Jr.

Strange things were happening in Jaffrey about the time of their arrival, including reports of lights flashing on Mt. Monadnock over a period of about two years. It was known that Dean, whose barn chores were midnight duties, had watched these lights, gathering as much information along with them as he could. Later it became known that holes had been bored in the window casing of the big house overlooking the eastern mountains, Pack Monadnock and Temple. Through them signal lights were said to have been flashed to the mountains from where they were relayed to Mt. Monadnock. It was believed by intelligence that these lights were associated with the movement of troop ships from the coast to the theatre of operation of World War I in Europe. At any rate, President Woodrow

Wilson had demanded the recall of two top ranking German citizens, Capt. Franz von Papen, military attache at the embassy, and Capt. Karl Boy-Ed, naval aide, back to Germany. Both were reportedly connected with German espionage in the United States since the start of World War I. Spy reports continued to float around the countryside, alarming its citizens.

The writer recalls Colfelt as a courteous man who was frequently seen on horse back on Old Peterborough Road, and sometimes assisted her mother in turning her horse and buggy around at a point beyond the Dean farm road, after taking her children part way to school. But he appeared to be a man of few words and rather mysterious. Shortly afterward Dean had asked the Colfelts to leave and they moved to Greenfield, New Hampshire.

The Parmenter house in Peterborough had just recently been donated for a hospital and on the thirteenth of August, 1918, Mrs. Horace Morison of that town was driving along the countryside soliciting articles for a sale for the benefit of the proposed hospital. When she called at the Dean farm, Mr. Dean took her aside and asked her when she was going to Boston next. She answered she was going the next day. He confided to her that he had carefully verified information which he was ready to give to the proper authorities and would she ask the secret service in Boston to send one of their best men to Jaffrey to confer with him. The information he had he said was "too dangerous for a woman to know." While the two were talking, there was a crash of twigs or underbrush in the nearby woods, the cause of which was never explained.

When pulled from the six-foot deep cistern, Dean's neck was garroted with a horse tie rope, his head wrapped in burlap, and his body wrapped in the horse blanket. With the gruesome find and the evidence available, the people went wild with excitement, fantastic stories were told, and "sides" were chosen by the people which are still in evidence locally, more than fifty years later, with most of the principles in the case now deceased. Secret Service agents and Pinkerton detectives arrived to search and study the case and interrogate the people. Among those who came to Jaffrey then was Bert Ford of the Boston *American* who obtained information on his own which he collected into a book, which, if it were available today, would classify among the best sellers. The County and State officials, however, were reluctant to act, ostensibly for lack of sufficient evidence. An attempt was made by some to incriminate Mrs. Dean, who was a frail and nearly invalid woman. After the murder she

made her home with the Rev. Francis R. Enslins and died September 15, 1919, at the age of 68 years, three months, and four days.

Dean's father, the Rev. William Dean, was one of the first American missionaries to China. In 1860 he moved to Siam with his family and there became closely associated with the king of Siam. His son, William, then a lad of five years, became a playmate of the prince of Siam. Returning to the United States, he was educated by his uncle, Dr. Henry Dean of Rochester, N.Y., and while still a medical student he was placed in charge of the Rochester Hospital. This is the boyhood and youth story in brief of the man who later met such a tragic fate in Jaffrey.

No inquest of the murder was held and there was no autopsy until five months later. Grand jury action was delayed for nine months, and finally the case was publicly dropped unsolved, although there are still periodical eruptions, and the "sides" taken over fifty years ago are still being felt.

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Gerald Moore, the five-year-old son of John A. and Catherine (O'Leary) Moore, died Dec. 6, 1919, in three minutes after his head was pinned between the freight house platform and a backing store delivery wagon.

Romeo Vanni, age 31, died Sept. 30, 1921, from accidental shock from electric current. He was born in Italy Nov. 2, 1890, and conducted a store in the old Riverside Block on the site of the present Korpi Service Station on Main Street.

Scott James Appleton, age 61, died Nov. 28, 1922, from suffocation from smoke from an oil stove in a closed room. He was born in Antrim, New Hampshire, June 23, 1861.

Byron E. Martin, who lived on the farm on the road to Jaffrey Center still called the Martin farm, died Aug. 8, 1923, five hours after sustaining a broken neck in a fall from a mowing machine.

Lyman W. Prince, a visitor in Jaffrey, died Sept. 23, 1923, from a fall down stairs in which he received a broken collar bone.

A drowning accident on April 11, 1924, claimed the life of Edward E. Peters, age 46. He was a laborer and was born in Greenville, New Hampshire, Aug. 31, 1877.

Clarissa S. Johnson, formerly of Peterborough, New Hampshire, a resident of Jaffrey for 27 years, died from burns March 22, 1925. She was born July 21, 1845.

A native of Mt. Holly, Vermont, Charles E. Morton, age 24, was accidentally drowned on Aug. 8, 1925.

Roderick Alfred Robichaud, the two-year old son of Arthur and Mabel (Burgoyne) Robichaud, was accidentally drowned Jan. 7, 1926.

Accidental drowning claimed the life of fifteen-year-old Adolphus Bruno, July 18, 1926. He was the son of Nelson and Amanda Bruno. He was swimming with others at Contoocook Lake.

Henry Buckwold, age 63, died Sept. 6, 1926, from a fractured skull when struck by an automobile.

Eulala Therrien, age 74, died Dec. 30, 1927, from an accidental fall at Cheshire Mill.

Charlie Soucie, five-year-old son of Charlie and Katherine (O'Leary) Soucie, died July 8, 1928, twenty-four hours after sustaining a fractured skull in an automobile accident.

On Friday, Feb. 14, 1930, a car driven by Mrs. Mary Louise (Mercure) Despres, collided with a Boston & Maine train at the railroad crossing on K-K Road, now Webster Street. She received a fractured skull and died the following Monday, Feb. 17.

Antoine Avard, age 82, a native of St. Hyacinthe, P. Q., Can., died July 18, 1931, from heat exhaustion of a half-hour's duration. He came to Jaffrey in 1881.

Philip Cournoyer was instantly killed on June 6, 1932, when he stepped in front of a Boston & Maine freight train after getting a jug of water from the spring near the railroad crossing at Hillcrest Road.

While working on his house on Stratton Road, Joseph Francis P. Labonte fell from a ladder and died from internal hemorrhage and other injuries, June 30, 1932. He was 69.

While harvesting ice on Contoocook Lake, on February 24, 1933, Charles Gobeil, age 41, and John Tolman, age 34, were drowned when their truck broke through the ice and sank in several feet of water. Their bodies and the truck were recovered.

Allan M. Dumas, of Temple, New Hampshire, lost his life July 12, 1934, by accidentally drowning in Contoocook Lake.

On February 14, 1937, Etta Corning, age 81, died from a fractured skull in a fall at her home.

On October 31, 1937, Neil D. Strachan, age 50, of Arlington, Mass., was thrown from a horse to instant death while a weekend guest at the E. V. Hickey home on Old Fitzwilliam Road. The

horse had not been ridden for some time and was believed to have shied at some object.

Henry Erickson, a resident of Jaffrey for forty years, was a suicide by shooting, Dec. 26, 1937.

Frederick Gile, age 18, died Friday morning, September 8, 1939, from injuries received in an accident on Thorndike Pond Road the preceding afternoon. He was believed to have been riding on the running board of an automobile when, rounding a curve, he was thrown on to a culvert marker stake.

PROSPER LASAULCE

Prosper LaSaulce was a man who would "a-fishing go." Seventy-two years of life and work lay behind him and now there was time for his favorite sport in the haunts of the hare and fern, where the rippling waters merrily sang their seaward way.

He had long since learned to love the dewy freshness of the morning air, the songs of the birds, and the whispering of the trees in God's world. He knew the woodland paths that led to rippling streams where the speckled trout played in leaf shadowed or sunlit pools. He had come to know, also, long since, the tonic effect on ruffled nerves and troubled minds, and on man's entire physical well-being that these things of Nature have. And he felt the better for them.

It was spring again, and the May morning dawned beautiful and exhilarating. He picked up his reel and all the things he needed on a fishing trip and after breakfast he sauntered out. As had been his wont for many years past, he went alone. He had learned that in aloneness there is time for meditation, time to think of the things one can not find time for in a busy life of work and activity. In aloneness one can become aware more fully of man's infinitesimalness in the universe. And, somehow, these things are good for man.

The day wore on until noon, when his non-return home for dinner first became a concern to his family. Afternoon came and went, and still he did not return. By evening word flashed through town that Prosper LaSaulce had not returned from his fishing trip. A search was begun. But darkness came. The next morning the search was renewed. Each morning for a week it was renewed. Airplanes hovered overhead in an attempt to locate him. Bloodhounds were used to track. Men searched woods and fields, walking along the brooks lined with fishermen's paths. A week went by and not a trace could be found.

On the ninth day, Philip C. Tremblay said, half in earnest, half in jest, that he would find Prosper LaSaulce, as he started out in the renewed search. He took the path from Hillcrest Road leading toward a well known trout brook — Pratt Brook. Another fisherman, Jared Pratt, long years before him had discovered this favorite water of the speckled fish and fished it so much that his name stuck to the stream. Mr. Tremblay searched the area about a thousand feet from the road, parting a thick cluster of young spruce, and there he found him. On his way to the brook he had sat down by the trunk of a tree either to rest in the shade of the spruce growth or else he felt ill. And as he sat there, with his fishing tackle beside him, he had fallen on his long last sleep on the twentieth of May, 1961.

FIRES

Even with today's efficient fire fighting equipment, there still remains the dread of fire, particularly in the outlying districts that are not served by fire hydrants. Fire is an enemy that does not ask but strikes without warning. During the years covered by this volume, Jaffrey has lost several old landmarks and buildings, often for lack of sufficient water. However, the valiant effort of the town's volunteer fire department has rendered yeoman service through the years and saved many others from total destruction. The record of fires in Volume I ended with the year 1931. The purpose of the following pages is to record some of the major fires since then where considerable property loss resulted.

On October 16, 1932, a fire broke out in a restaurant in the annex to the present Abbott Block now occupied by the United Auto Supply Store. Damage to the building was set at \$6,000.00.

On March 9, 1933, a fire at Red Mill Inn did an estimated \$5,000.00 damage to the building.

On September 9, 1933, Maple Lawn Villa on Mountain Road was destroyed. Of undetermined origin, the fire was discovered by passersby who rushed to the nearest telephone to call the fire department. The building had been unoccupied for some time and was owned by the E. C. Shattuck Estate. It was formerly operated by Lewis W. Ingraham as an inn. The place was later purchased by Dr. Roland Isherwood who built a cottage on the site.

On January 16, 1934, the Jaffrey Fire Department and volunteer townspeople fought a stubborn blaze for nearly three hours in the D. D. Bean house on Main Street, then occupied by Captain and Mrs. Francis M. Flanagan and their seven children. Captain

Flanagan, U.S.A., was in command at Camp Annett, CCC. The Flanagans were obliged to find shelter at Shattuck Inn as the house was badly damaged by smoke and water and the roof was partially destroyed.

Shortly before twelve o'clock on Monday night, January 30, 1934, the fire department was called to extinguish a fire in the Goodnow Bros. Co. storehouse. The cause was not determined but was believed to have been of incendiary or spontaneous combustion origin. Two unidentified men were seen hurrying from the store premises shortly before the fire was discovered.

In a chicken house fire at the farm of Zoel and Archie Coll on April 15, 1934, several hundred chickens suffocated and the house was badly damaged by the blaze.

On June 26, 1934, the two-story house on the Fred Miller farm in the northeast part of Jaffrey was leveled by a fire. The house and ell were a total loss.

The prompt and efficient work of the Jaffrey Fire Department saved Monadnock Inn from total destruction in an early Sunday morning fire on October 28, 1934. It had gained considerable headway in the ell connecting the kitchen and barn and quickly spread to the roof of the new three story addition before it was brought under control.

On December 29, 1934, a fire of undetermined origin but believed to have been caused by crossed wires, did considerable damage to Red Mill Inn. It was confined to the attic and third floor and broke through the roof in several places. Twenty guests were scheduled to arrive for the holiday but their reservations had to be canceled.

A Sunday morning fire on September 22, 1935, completely destroyed a cottage belonging to L. W. Davis in the Trotting Park section of Contoocook Lake. It was occupied by the Joseph Scannell family who lost many of their possessions. Apparently the fire was caused by a flooded oil stove in the kitchen and quickly spread to all parts of the building.

On May 11, 1936, the chicken houses on the Coll farm were burned.

On August 4, 1936, an East Boston to Montpelier, Vermont, bound plane was destroyed in a \$1,000.00 fire. It had landed near Cretia Brook on the Turnpike to refuel but failed to make the take-off, hitting the 35-foot treetops and crashed head-on into the brook. The pilot and his passenger crawled out and their pers-

onal belongings were removed from the cockpit. Shortly after they were taken for medical treatment, the plane burst into flames.

On October 13, 1936, a shed on the Harling farm was completely destroyed by fire.

On April 26, 1937, fire destroyed a small building on the Fred Miller farm.

On March 4, 1938, a \$10,000.00 fire damaged the A&P and Ben Franklin stores in the Swig building on Main Street. Firemen battled the blaze for two hours before it was under control. The block sustained damages amounting to \$3,000.00.

The barn and garage at Chislehurst Farm owned by Pope Yeatman were destroyed by fire of undetermined origin but believed to have been caused by wiring defects. Firemen kept the blaze from spreading to other nearby buildings. The barn was completely filled with hay. All livestock were saved but the farm machinery was lost. The fire was on October 11, 1939.

On October 17, 1939, a spectacular fire fanned by high winds destroyed Pine Knoll Inn off Old Peterborough Road. It was caused by a spark from the chimney which set the roof ablaze. The property was built in the late 1890's by Albert Baldwin for a summer home and known as Baldwin Manor. It was owned by Flora Garabrant and operated as a summer hotel.

Fire on December 29, 1939, destroyed the Eaves Hardware store and barn on River Street. It was formerly the Fred Lynch paint shop. Don A. Eaves built the present building on the site.

A \$12,000.00 fire damaged the interior of the E. V. Hickey home on Old Fitzwilliam Road, Sunday evening, October 20, 1940. Of undetermined origin, the fire was discovered by four unidentified girls who were passing by and saw the flames shooting from the ell of the three-story house. They drove to the summer home of Paul Draper and called the fire department.

On Thursday afternoon, September 18, 1941, the barn on the Horace Deschenes farm, in Cheshire Village was completely destroyed by fire. Fire hose was laid from Cheshire Pond but because of the high wind the flames could not be controlled before destroying the barn. The house, though damaged in the ell part, was saved and restored.

On December 9, 1943, the home of Archie Coll at Pierces Crossing was destroyed by a fire. The original house attached to it was saved.

On August 10, 1948, a fire destroyed the cottage occupied by the

James Sullivan family on South Hill in Jaffrey Center. It was owned by the Greene estate.

On June 2, 1949, a fire and explosion rocked the Match Shop. Carter Bemis sustained smoke inhalations and died that afternoon at the Monadnock Community Hospital. After a clean-up and repairs work was resumed at the plant.

On June 8, 1951, a nighttime fire destroyed the VFW building interior and damaged two apartments in an adjoining building. The post canteen with dozens of valuable war trophies and two plaques which had been awarded to the post for outstanding community service were also lost in the blaze.

The barn and shed on the Dominic Pomponio farm, on Rindge Road, formerly the Fred Bass farm, were destroyed by fire on April 16, 1952. The house was saved.

On October 19, 1953, fire broke out on Mount Monadnock.

The Half Way House on Mount Monadnock was burned flat in less than an hour in a spectacular fire on Wednesday night, April 14, 1954. The fire was of undetermined origin and the building was closed for the winter. The loss was set at \$50,000.00. The place was run for the Society for the Protection of Mount Monadnock under lease to Professor Pinard of Boston University.

On August 16, 1954, a flash fire destroyed the barn owned by Mark Stratton, off Main Street. The blaze was believed to have been due to spontaneous combustion. It was full of hay cut three or four weeks earlier.

Lightning struck the barn at Silver Ranch at noon on September 7, 1954, and set fire to the building. It burned one barn and badly damaged another. It was full of hay at the time. The Jaffrey Firemen were able to save the recreation barn nearby. A valuable stock of riding tack was damaged in the blaze.

The building and fireworks were lost in a fire at the Atlas Fireworks on January 30, 1955.

In a nighttime fire in the camp of Henry Plante on Lincoln Corner Road on September 29, 1956, the camp was a complete loss. Henry Plante lost his life in the blaze.

On Christmas Day, 1958, the home of Harold Chase on Howard Hill was consumed by fire.

The barn on the former Simeon Butters farm near Contoocook Lake, then owned and occupied by John LaFreniere, was destroyed in a fire on January 24, 1961.

On February 5, 1962, a small house on the David Jewell farm on Old Dublin Road was destroyed by a fire.

On December 12, 1962, a fire occurred at the sawmill at Annett Lumber Company in Squantum.

The unoccupied buildings on the former so-called Wellman farm off Hadley Crossing were destroyed by fire on October 5, 1963. The blaze was of suspicious origin.

The new house of Axel Heden near the former Will Cutter place in the southwest part of Jaffrey was destroyed by fire on November 11, 1963. It was not rebuilt.

On the evening of February 4, 1965, the cottage occupied by Rev. and Mrs. Danno D. Johnson on Lehtinen Road was completely destroyed by a flash fire. Rev. Johnson, 87, succumbed to effects of smoke inhalations February 10. His son, John A. Johnson, who received burns, was hospitalized for several weeks.

Considerable damage was done to the D. D. Bean & Sons Co., Inc., plant at Cheshire in a fire on March 25, 1966.

On July 22, 1966, the Annett Lumber Company plant at Squantum village was destroyed by a fire. It was rebuilt.

A fire on April 19, 1967, damaged the interior and stock in trade at Porter's Sports Goods store on Squantum Road.

The E. Channing Stowell house on Shaker Road in the extreme northwest corner of Jaffrey was destroyed by a fire on August 24, 1967.

On Christmas Day in 1967 a house trailer owned by Roderick Duval on Pine Knoll Road and occupied by Christine Carpenter and her three children, was completely destroyed in an early morning fire. The family lost all their belongings, including their Christmas presents.

On June 2, 1969, the house on Old Fitzwilliam Road owned and occupied by the Girard D. Marrotte family was destroyed in a blaze which broke out while Marrotte's wife was on a trip to Keene. The house was rebuilt.

The barn and shed on the former Hyrk farm, owned by Albert C. Deschenes and occupied by tenants, were completely consumed by a fire on October 19, 1969.

The garage belonging to Ruth (Dorr) Champney on Fitzwilliam Road was burned on December 4, 1969. A car housed there was saved.

The barn on the Mary Brown Estate farm on Old Dublin Road was burned to the ground in a daytime fire on August 26, 1970. The

summer's crop of hay had been stored in the barn. The fire is believed to have started on top of the hay near the roof. When the fire men arrived on the scene the barn was completely enveloped in flames and they concentrated their efforts on saving the house. This farm is the former George R. Brown property, and one of the oldest places in Jaffrey.

The house occupied by the Daniel L. Jewell family off Dublin Road was completely destroyed in a daytime fire on January 26, 1971. No one saw the flames due to the extremely foggy condition of the weather. When Jewell returned home from his work in Peterborough late in the afternoon, he found only smouldering ashes where his house had stood. His wife and children were visiting her family in Bennington, Vermont, at the time.

The old historic Mann house on the west shoulder of Monadnock, owned since 1906 by the Hamlen family, was burned to the ground, leaving only the two chimneys standing, on Sunday morning, February 14, 1971. The house was closed for the winter. The fire was reported to the fire department at 1:50 A.M., but when the firemen arrived on the scene the house was completely destroyed and they concentrated their efforts on saving the nearby barn. The Meadowood, Fitzwilliam, and Troy fire departments arrived to assist the Jaffrey department but due to lack of space for trucks they returned home. The Jaffrey firemen stayed on the scene until seven o'clock in the morning. A large number of valuable antiques belonging to the Hamlen's were also lost in the blaze. The property was the summer home of Richard Hamlen of Schenectady, New York, son of Capt. Ewing W. Hamlen who bought the place in 1906.