



*Monadnock 4  
Jaffrey's Fire  
Museum*

## *Introduction*

IN THE EARLY 1800s the State of New Hampshire required each town to appoint three 'firewards' and to have each household possess fire buckets and a ladder for fire suppression. The State's dictates were often ignored, but by 1827 the Town of Jaffrey had elected John Stone, Isaac Jewell and John Cutter as the Town's firewards.

In 1829 the **Jaffrey Fire Engine Company** was formed. The engine company, like those that would follow, was a private organization dedicated to the protection of property. The company purchased the 'Fire-Fly' and built a building to house the engine on the south side of Main Street in what is now Jaffrey Center. At some point the company disbanded and the 'Fire-Fly' was stored at least for a time by the Village Improvement Society. In the early 20th century the present Monadnock 4 Firehouse replaced an earlier one built in 1857 on the same site.

The growth of East Jaffrey Village—now downtown Jaffrey—led to the creation of an additional company. The **East Jaffrey Suction Engine Company** served the downtown village and perhaps more importantly the mill. This organization ultimately disbanded and turned over its funds and equipment to the **East Jaffrey Fire Company**. This company was incorporated in 1848 and has a direct link to the current Fire Department. The *Contoocook*, an engine made by Stephan Thayer of Boston, was probably included as part of this transfer.

In 1857 the Fire company purchased land

on what is now River Street and erected a new building to house equipment and serve as a meeting place for the Company. They named the building **Contoocook Hall**. It would serve as the Town's primary fire station until 1932 when it was raised and replaced by a new building erected on the same site.

In 1858 the Town appropriated \$705.60 to purchase a new 'Button' fire engine. Mr. Alonzo Bascom was made agent for the purchase but he would have to wait a year for the Town to reimburse his \$31.96 for expenses in purchasing the new engine.

In 1932 George Emory donated to the town the first motorized engine, a **Seagrave Suburbanite**. The only caveat of the gift was that the Town would have to build a station suitable to house the new engine. The new brick Emory Fire Station was dedicated on Labor Day 1932. That building served as the primary fire station for the next fifty years.

On display at **MONADNOCK 4** are three of the original fire engines that served Jaffrey as well as assorted memorabilia and artifacts relating to Jaffrey fire service. ★





### *The Fire-Fly*

THIS ENGINE is Jaffrey's first known piece of fire fighting apparatus. It was built in Windsor, Vermont, by Cooper, Campbell Phelps in 1828. It features a rotary vein engine and was in active service for almost half a century. For many years after the Fire-Fly's retirement it participated in numerous fire equipment competitions (called 'musters'), parades, and other civic happenings. Neglected for the latter part of the last century, it was mechanically restored for operation in 1999.

Historical records note that in 1919 the Fire-Fly was almost sold to Henry Ford for display in his museum in Dearborn, Michigan. Fortunately the offer of purchase was declined by town officials. ☆



### *The Contoocook*

THE CONTOOCCOOK, a piston pumper, was built by Stephen Thayer in Boston sometime between 1822 and 1838. Research is still continuing to learn the precise year of manufacture. What is certain is that it was put into service by the newly formed East Jaffrey Fire Engine Company when they incorporated in 1848. Since the engine was known to have been in Jaffrey prior to 1848, it is fairly certain that it was used for fire protection in one of the existing mills in town. ☆



### *The Seagrave Suburbanite*

THE 1931 SEAGRAVE was the first motorized fire truck to be put into service in Jaffrey. The engine was donated as a gift to the Town from George Emory, who had advocated for some years for an upgrade to the town's fire fighting capabilities.

After retirement in 1964 the truck sat dormant for almost 40 years. Restoration began in 2001 and the Seagrave is now fully operational and is frequently displayed at civic events, parades, and gatherings of antique fire engine enthusiasts. ☆



The MONADNOCK 4 FIRE MUSEUM is owned by the Jaffrey Historical Society. It is located on Main Street (Rt. 124) in Jaffrey Center, opposite The Monadnock Inn. Printed by Savron Graphics, Jaffrey, New Hampshire. August 2014.