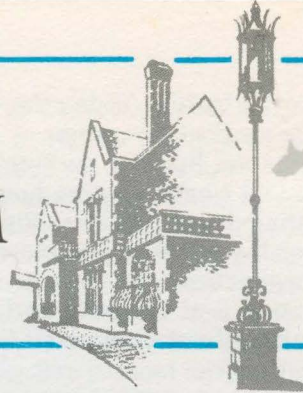


QUARTERLY NEWS  
MARY BAKER EDDY MUSEUM  
and Historic Sites



VOL. 12, NO. 4

PUBLISHED BY LONGYEAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINTER 1975-76

**CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – A Bicentennial Tribute**



**Part II**

View of Concord, circa 1899. Rays from sun are shown encompassing Pleasant View estate. [Courtesy Gustaf H. Lehtinen]

Mary Morse Baker was baptized in Concord, New Hampshire by Reverend Nathaniel Bouton. He was her loving mentor and early recognized her spiritual genius. Nathaniel Bouton had succeeded Rev. McFarland in October 1824; he had come from Norwalk, Connecticut and had graduated both from Yale and Andover Theological Seminary. With his coming, two important changes were made in the religious tradition of the town. The old meeting house passed from the ownership and support of the community and became the respon-

sibility of the Congregational membership. No longer was the meeting house and its minister the religious center of the whole community. The change was due to the growth of the town and the increase of diverse religious groups all having their own churches.

A wave of temperance reform swept over Concord in the late twenties which had strong community support for many years. During this time much effort was made to secure pledges for total abstinence. Rev. Bouton was the first to speak from the pulpit on the evils of strong drink. Fifty years after these early sermons, Rev. Bouton gave a memorable address at the celebration of Concord's Third Semi-Centennial in which he pointed out the construc-

tive changes that had taken place morally and socially in community life during the intervening fifty years.

During his long service as pastor of the Congregational Church, Rev. Bouton saw his congregation move from the Old North meeting house to a new church building, and he saw the old historic meeting house pass into new hands in 1847 — the Methodists, who established within its walls the first Methodist General Biblical Institute — anti-Calvinist — for training ministers. They carried on the Institute successfully until 1867, when it was moved to Boston to become the nucleus of Boston University. In 1870 the old meeting house, this "venerable edifice,...garlanded with historic memories", was

*Quarterly News*

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©Longyear Foundation 1976 Vol. 12, No. 4

Subscription, \$5.00 Annually

(Includes Activities at Longyear)

Sent without charge to Members of Longyear



destroyed by fire. Today the Walker School marks its location.

Nathaniel Bouton, the final minister of Old North meeting house, left a lasting legacy in his *History of Concord*, written at the close of his pastoral retirement. It is an invaluable source of intimate and knowledgeable information about Concord in his day.

The tempo of Concord was much increased in June, 1825 with the approaching visit of the Marquis de Lafayette, who was touring the young nation as a "National Guest." Arriving by stagecoach from Boston, he was met at the Pembroke, New Hampshire line, south of the new capital, by the Concord delegation who escorted him into town through an impressive military formation which volleyed a welcome. The cavalcade with the French hero of the American Revolution passed over the bridge to Main Street where fences and windows were festooned with flowers, flags, and evergreens. Thousands from all parts of the state had come to welcome the beloved Lafayette as he moved along the street to the home of Col. Kent where he was to be an overnight guest. There he was greeted by the Hon. Daniel Webster and other New Hampshire notables. Dinner was served at mid-afternoon on the grounds of the new State Capitol to six hundred guests, two hundred of whom were veterans of the Revolution. Dinner was enlivened by toasts, songs, and cannon discharges. An elm tree was planted the next day on the spot where Lafayette had sat in the sun. It was felled in the 1938 hurricane and pieces became cherished gavels and coffee tables.

In order to account for the practical underpinning of Concord's political and religious development, and its cultural and social expansion in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is desirable to review briefly the material innovations made during these centuries. From early days the builders of this community were quick to see the resources at hand, both natural and human, and how to turn these to account for the community. Early in the 1800's an important business project was undertaken, known as the Merrimack Boating Company, for the purpose of shipping freight by water from Concord to Boston.

Through cooperation with other communities along the Merrimack, they opened canals, built locks, and cleared the river when necessary. By 1815 the first shipment by water had been successfully made. From this time until the coming of the railroads, the company carried on a flourishing business with an annual return of some \$25,000. At the time Concord had an extensive lumber business of choice woods from nearby forests, and granite was in great demand after the building of the State Capitol. Also carried by water were many items made by small industries — chairs, clocks, iron products, and furniture of various types.

Through the industry and genius of Lewis Downing, who came to Concord as a young man in 1813, the successful manufacture of carriages was established. He was joined in 1829 by J. Stephens Abbot and together they developed the Concord stagecoach which was to be sold on at least three continents. During the Civil War they made many wagons for the army. Their work was greatly valued for integrity of workmanship and quality of materials.

Meanwhile the town government was providing practical utilities to meet the need of a growing city. A deep source of pure spring water was early discovered yielding many thousands of gallons daily which sufficed until the town turned for greater supply to the ponds within its own boundaries. Service and maintenance facilities were provid-

ed for this water supply, for effective sewage disposal, for fire protection, and for the building of better roads. When gas was introduced, limited street lighting was provided.

In 1800 most people walked, rode horseback, or used horse-drawn vehicles. The first street cars were drawn by horses; then followed steam cars and later electric cars. The railroads arrived in Concord in 1842 and for the first time the city became seriously aware of the control of outside capital and the influence of great wealth. Albert Baker, Mrs. Eddy's brother, was outspoken as a member of the legislature in his opposition to the railroads and their use of the law of eminent domain. He was also opposed to the tremendous growth of corporations. His writings raised provocative questions regarding the economic impact of business on society. A novel written by the American author, Winston Churchill, *Mr. Crewe's Career*, deals with railroad management policies in America at that time, and provides some suggested solutions to current problems, through the moral integrity of one of the characters, a noble young lawyer. It has been said that Gen. Frank Streeter, one of New Hampshire's most distinguished lawyers, was the prototype of that young lawyer. General Streeter was counsel to Mrs. Eddy on many occasions.

Nevertheless, the railroads proved to be a great boon to Concord as it increasingly became a legislative and judicial center with many



Columbus Day parade in Concord, October 12, 1893.





Fashion Parade featured in the 1899 Old Home Celebration.

trains passing through en route to cities in the east and west, as well as north into Canada.

By this time the question of slavery was agitating conversations at home and in public. Franklin Pierce, one of Concord's most honored citizens and fourteenth President of the United States, never completely regained the love of his fellow townsmen for his conciliatory "states rights" stand in relation to the Southern states in the 1850's. The statue of John P. Hale who debated the question of slavery with Pierce, stands near the entrance to the State Capitol and registers Concord's sentiments on the issues of the Civil War. It bears an inscription in bronze on the base, which reads in part: " 'He who lies beneath surrendered office, place, and power rather than bow down to worship slavery.' "

When the call came from President Lincoln for Civil War recruits, the answer was prompt and enthusiastic. Units of soldiers were called from the entire state for training in Concord's stalwart environment. Early contingents went by train to Washington — a journey of three days — ready to serve on any front. Many of them were as much motivated by a desire to save the Union which to them had brought freedom, as they were to settle the question of slavery.

Within less than a hundred and fifty years, the people of Concord had passed from the open wood fire of the log cabin to steam-heated houses, from pine-knot lights to

electricity, from English pounds to American dollars, from the ox-cart to the railroad, from a single public school to scores within the state's borders. It had been accomplished by conquest of the environment by both individual and joint initiative. It is not surprising that in 1855 Dr. George Cheyne Shattuck, a summer resident of Concord, should have elected to establish at Millville, near Concord, a boys' preparatory school where his own sons could be trained after ideals he had acquired when a student at Round Hill School, Northampton, Massachusetts. Through wise organization, and guidance under superior boards of directors and able rectors, this school, St. Paul's, within a quarter of a century became one of the leading preparatory schools in the country, sending forth to college young men who were later to fill positions of great responsibility in American life. As in many undertakings in Concord, St. Paul's School began as an individual project, the idea of a single inspired individual.

For twenty-two years — 1864 to 1886 — Concord sponsored an annual four-day State Musical Festival which greatly stimulated the appreciation and performance of music throughout the state. It was a year later succeeded by the Concord Choral Union established to further the study and presentation of sacred and classical music. Today it is known as the Concord Chorale.

That Concord residents had literary interests early is indicated by the fact that a library was set up in

a wing of the town house built in the 1790's. In 1827 a reading room was established in a business building and privately maintained by seventy subscribers. When the Fowler Library was presented to the town in 1888, it brought together books from the earlier libraries and provisions were made for regular additions to the collection to meet current needs.

There was much pageantry in the life of the town and nothing typifies this statement more than the Governor's Horse Guard, created in 1859 and serving until 1865. The Guard led the Governor's parade each year, the most important event of the season. Each member of the Guard sat firmly in his saddle while holding and playing his band instrument, guiding his horse by knee and foot. The members of this military corps were drawn from all parts of the state and included men of distinction, many of whom made important contributions to the achievements of the state. Mr. John B. Lyford of St. Paul's School and Editor of the *History of Concord* has written of this corps: "Its remarkable personnel, the attractive uniforms, its striking parades, its regal hospitality, its brilliant fetes, its patriotic public spirit, are a tradition preserved only in the recollections...such a company as a state seldom marshalls of her distinguished sons in one organization." The parade was climaxed in the evening by a brilliant ball at the Eagle Hotel, the great social event of the season.

Nothing is more vital to a growing community than its press, especially the daily newspapers. George Hough came to Concord from Windsor, Vermont in 1790 to install the first printing press in Merrimack County in a tiny building on what was to become the State House site. The first edition of the *Concord Herald and New Hampshire Intelligencer* — a weekly — was published on January 6, 1790. Mr. Hough, then thirty-two years of age, came originally from Connecticut. Some eighty publications including at least five daily newspapers were issued in Concord during the Nineteenth Century, mostly supporting partisan causes such as Andrew Jackson's presidential campaign, temperance, and anti-slavery. In general the press was constructive in purpose and did much to stimulate the

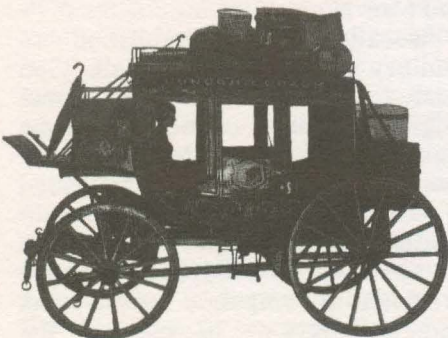


growth of Concord.

In this brief review of Concord's history up to about 1904, it is clear that the town gained its position through the individual efforts of its inhabitants. Great extremes of wealth and poverty never appear as matters of concern in the community they were building. Indeed serious poverty did not appear for almost a hundred years after settlement. In 1827 the problem came up for consideration by the town council and in Concordian tradition, a suitable committee was appointed to study how best to deal with poverty. Many months passed before the committee came up with a plan, one that was later widely adopted in other towns in the form of "poor farms." In Concord a farm with fertile soil and a good house was acquired and here the indigent had a home while working gainfully on the land or at other assigned tasks.

In commenting on the growth of this unique town of Concord, a serious student of history said, "It has been an aggregation of small undertakings and of close economies that has given Concord its standing and prosperity. Sturdy work and prosperity combined with insistence on education and order [law] made the town what it is. It has more wealth than is generally realized but it is largely the savings of one generation to another. The land surface comprises 40,000 acres. Most of it has yielded several growths of oak, hemlock, chestnut, spruce, pine, elm, and walnut, all contributing to the wealth of our people." Good workmanship and honest materials which characterized Concord products gave the hallmark of quality to their industrial output.

It is noteworthy that Concord



The Concord stagecoach used extensively in the 19th century.



President Theodore Roosevelt visited Concord on August 28, 1902. Here his entourage is shown enroute to the Concord Fair.

never utilized its abundant water power to build great industrial plants, but only as needed for such small industries as chair factories, iron fabricators, tinsmith and cutlery plants, saw and grist mills, and shingle shops. All were individually directed. Today many large and once prosperous towns have outmoded factory buildings standing idle while former workers, untrained in utilizing their own capacities, are at a loss as to where to turn. In Concord there are no slums even today. Workmen and presidents own homes side by side and jointly utilize the resources at hand that have been preserved over the decades. Two approaches to the building of towns have flourished in America. The first is the individual approach of a unified citizenry such as shared Concord and its resources; the second takes an aggressive approach utilizing opportunities for quickly accumulating wealth shaping the town or city and its people in an unplanned manner. The first requires energy, neighborly faith, and vision. The second evolves with uncertainty due to lack of community spirit, with little control as to direction of growth.

America can learn a great deal from the founding and development of the capital city of New Hamp-

shire. The founders of Concord were men of principle, energy and vision. This article has described the outstanding growth of the town into a small city within the Twentieth Century. During this period the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science was born in 1821 on the outskirts of the town of Concord, spent much of her life away from the area, and then returned as a resident in 1889. Her return as a famous religionist made an indelible impress on the capital city. Mary Baker Eddy along with its other distinguished citizens have made Concord a city worthy of national notice and celebration in this Bicentennial period.

Anne Holliday Webb

[Longyear Historical Society wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the following:

Concord [N.H.] Public Library for permission to reproduce photographs and drawings,

New Hampshire Historical Society for research assistance and permission to reproduce photograph, and

Leon W. Anderson, Legislative Historian, State of New Hampshire, for review of historical accuracy of text.]

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