

Chapter XV.

"Upon the Contoocook Road North of Nathan Colbee's."

With this phrase did the first town meeting of the Parish of Concord (1766) designate one of the districts where a school should be provided. Resuming self-government after seventeen years of proscription, the town again made free education for its children a major consideration and, since more than half of Concord's seven hundred inhabitants lived on farms away from the "Street," this experiment of districting schools was adopted. Formerly one teacher only had been employed for the entire town, keeping school in one neighborhood after another, "such part of the year as their rates for the school shall come to of polls and estates," and then spending the rest of the year teaching in the schoolhouse midway the village street. After some years this plan had merged into the custom of appropriating a definite sum for schooling and authorizing the selectmen to disburse it according to their best judgment. Now, in 1766, a district plan is to be tried.

Nathan Colbee's house was the most northerly in the village and it stood on the Contoocook (Boscawen) road near Wood's brook which flows across the highway (now concealed) near the entrance to Blossom Hill Cemetery. A deep ravine through which the brook runs, made it necessary for the road of that day to follow a course along the hillside west of the present highway. Colbee's farm combined several of the original lots on Island Range west of Horseshoe pond.

North of this farm there was no habitation until one reached Farnum's at the southern edge of Rattlesnake Plain. There Dea. Ephraim Farnum still made his home and would continue so to do until his death in 1775. The pioneer house had been replaced with a substantial frame house which years later, was recalled in memory by Joseph B. Walker, as "the ancient yellow building" of his boyhood, near the present site of No. 330 No. State St. This old house was kept as a tavern from 1831 till 1840 by Dea. Farnum's grandson, Samuel, and its great barn stood close to the

road north of the site now occupied by No. 324 No. State St. Years ago the tavern burned but a small house which the family built near by the tavern, is said to stand now in West Village as pictured. In this house family tradition says Dea. Farnum's son, Ephraim, Jr. and his wife, Judith lived and there their fifth child, Moses, was born in 1769.

Dea. Farnum had two sons and when this old pioneer and faithful church member was called home to God, the large farm was divided between the brothers. Ephraim, Jr. received the northern half which included land in present West Village through which the ancient highway to Boscawen passed. Tradition in the family tells of "the old rye field" northwest of the present cemetery, but long ago this north section of the farm followed the fate of most pioneer holdings and was sold in small portions by descendants.

The other brother, Benjamin (b. 1739) was given the south half of the original farm and on that land descendants have continued to live until 1945. Benjamin and his wife, Anna Merrill, lived in a house which stood on the site of the Charles H. Farnum house (now the Prison Farm). Two of their fifteen children had been born when the town voted this district and there were two little cousins in the "ancient yellow building" next north. A later generation moved Benjamin's house to a site near the present railroad crossing and there fire destroyed it. A grandson and namesake of Benjamin's - known as "Dea. Ben" - built the present house in 1845 for his wife, Emily, who was a grand-daughter of Ephraim Farnum, Jr. Dea. Ben's house is built in the old style with handmade laths and wooden pegs instead of nails. Until it passed into possession of the State, it had inside shutters, great fireplaces and a brick oven and the original wall paper still hung in the front hall. The shed on the north side of the house and the old cider mill standing between the house and the barn, are part of the original set of buildings.

In 1844 Dea. Ben assumed his title, following in the footsteps

of his pioneer ancestor, he was appointed deacon of First Church. He was a picturesque character, not to be forgotten by those who still remember him. Fifty years and more ago his fine oxen were the pride of Concord and one day in particular, Main St. beheld a sight not to be forgotten, as Dea. Ben drove eight yoke of oxen down our old highway, hauling four handsome pine logs worthy to be masts of some clipper ship. In memory one still sees that double line of big, gentle creatures swaying slowly down the street, obedient to the goad and the "Gee and Haw" of the good deacon as he proudly trudged alongside.

The next owner of this southerly farm was Charles H. Farnum (b. Dec. 30, 1837) and he inherited it undivided—house and accompanying land extending south to Fosterville and Wattanummon's Field. Mr. Farnum lived to celebrate his one hundredth birthday in the home of his fathers—a good farmer and a fine gentleman. Following his death the State took over the property for use as a Prison farm.

Long years ago a sweet young woman lived in this Farnum home—Lydia, a sister of Dea. Ben. She was one of the first young females in this part of New Hampshire, to overcome the taboo against higher education for her sex. She taught under Mary Lyon of sainted memory, and later she opened a school for young ladies here in Concord. Her career was cut short by her untimely death from "consumption" in 1834.

Next north of the Farnums on the Contoocook road, lived the families of James Abbot and his son, Amos. The Abbots and Farnums were more than neighbors for Mrs. James Abbot was Abigail Farnum, own cousin to Dea. Ephraim. There had been fourteen children growing up in the Abbot log house on the present site of Swanson's, but those sons and daughters were all grown now and with families of their own. Amos, the youngest son, lived at home and would inherit the homestead. In 1760 Amos married the widow of Abiel Chandler and built for her the large house across the road. Rebuilt and enlarged, it was originally of the box-trap

style a two-story main building forty by twenty feet, with a long sloping roof on the north side, coming down to eaves over a one-story lean-to. Its front hall had a winding stairway backed by a twelve foot chimney of bricks laid in clay. The main house provided two rooms on each floor which were panelled from floor to ceiling, for no plaster was used in the house. Each room had its fireplace with hearth of stone from Rattlesnake hill. The lean-to provided a long kitchen with a small bedroom at its east end. The kitchen walls were finished with feather-edged boards. All the floors were of rough, unplaned boards which years of wear alone could make smooth. There were no clapboards on the outside walls; in their place were inch thick boards with bevelled edges so matched that the entire outer surface of the house was a smooth plane. In this home in 1766 there were two sons and a daughter of school age.

The father was a man of talents, combining with his ability as a farmer, a skill in the use of tools and a real genius for whittling. His son, Simeon, used to tell that his father could make anything from a wooden spoon to an ox-sled. His wooden plates, pegs, latches and hair combs were in great demand among the farmers, and during the winter Amos Abbot carried on this craft in the roomy kitchen of his home. It was in the kitchen that all the activities of the household centered: there stood the housewife's spinning wheel and loom and it was there that the men of the family brought a deer or a bear from a hunting trip to skin and dress it before the broad hearth.

Sometimes the Abbots found game near at hand, as when, one early morning, Amos found deer grazing near the location of the present cemetery at West Concord. He shot two and then hurried to Lovejoy's, borrowed an ox team and arrived home with his spoils in season for breakfast. Son Amos, Jr. was a mighty hunter—a skilled marksman and as keen as an Indian in woodcraft. When farm work had slackened in the late fall, he would start on a long trip to the White Mountains or the Maine

woods, returning on snowshoes laden with the skins of otter, beaver and sable. He had a knack with bees and there are still bee hives standing in the garden of his old home.

During the Revolution, Amos Jr. and his brother John are said to have taken turns at six months service, so that one of them might always be at home to help on the large farm. Amos Jr. served several campaigns beginning as a minute man under Capt. Joshua Abbot in 1775. John Abbot fought at Bennington and was hit by a ball on the breast bone, but without injury. He made a fine target for he was a giant, six feet seven in height and weighed two hundred and thirty pounds. Although not quite as tall as Samuel Baker of the Borough, he was rated "the stoutest young man ever raised in Concord." Before the Revolution ended John Abbot died aged only twenty-two.

The father of these young men lived to the age of ninety-six and Amos Jr. lived to be eighty, leaving the homestead farm to his two sons, John 2d and Simeon. In 1807, the year before Simeon was born, the house was rebuilt and in 1864, it was enlarged by adding the third story. The house might be changed but certain family customs were to be kept religiously. When the pioneer Abbot arrived in Pennycook in 1735, he brought his seed corn from the old home in Andover, and for ninety years thereafter the Abbots planted the same corn. When the calendar was changed (Old Style to New Style) in 1753, the Abbots faced a dilemma. May 1st was the date sacred to planting, but the new calendar moved the dates ahead eleven days. The family decided to hold to the actual day and thereafter planted corn on May 12.

Rattlesnake hill was as familiar to these Abbots as their own dooryard, but they never dreamed of its store of wealth. Simeon Abbot once told of his father's purchase of thirty-six acres of ledge on the hill for pasture land, paying fifty cents an acre. The son lived to see the day when a single block of Granite quarried in that pasture brought

after cutting and finishing, a price of six thousand dollars.

Returning to the generation which grew up before the Indian wars we find that Amos Abbot's brothers received from their father, two farms on the shore of Long pond. Reuben (b. 1723) was given eighty acre Lot No. 61 originally allotted to Stephen Emerson, while James Jr. "cordwainer" received the eighty acre lot adjacent on the east, originally assigned to Rev. Bezaleel Toppan. As was customary in such provision for sons, the deed of this land to James Jr., was "in consideration of love and good will and affection". The lot next east - No. 59, was assigned to the Minister and it ran north to the top of the hill still called Parsonage hill.

The few farms around Long pond should be regarded in this chapter. Although they were not upon the Contoocook road, the children on these farms must have been dependent upon the school provided for the folks along Contoocook road. Reuben Abbot and his wife, Rhoda Whittemore, already had four children of school age. Reuben was only twenty when his father gave him this farm of one hundred and twenty acres and he began at once to clear the land, building a cabin in which he lived until about 1753, except for such times as Indian raids made it too hazardous. But even at such times, he in common with other men who owned isolated farms, cultivated and harvested his crops.

About 1750 Reuben was married and during times of danger he and Rhoda lived in one of the four cabins inside his father's stockade on the site of Swenson's. As soon as peace was restored, probably before 1760, Reuben built his frame house which stands today somewhat modernized and perhaps enlarged, on the corner of Lake View Drive and Little road. Its heavy oak frame is pinned with wooden pegs. As late as 1949 it remained in possession of descendants of Reuben and Rhoda. The early log cabin stood across Lake View Drive from this house.

These Abbots had ten children, the last being twin boys, Ezra and Nathan (b. 1765) who made their own homes in due time in District No. 4.

Reuben Abbot, one of the very last of the Concord pioneers, died just prior to his one hundredth birthday, having lived the life of a scriptural patriarch. He followed the teachings of his own father, and, like most of that pioneer generation, he maintained strict Puritan principles of living, neglecting not "to command his children and household after him to keep the way of the Lord." In the house here pictured he lived in his great age with a family which included a son, a grandson and a great grandson bearing his own name-Reuben.

Reuben Abbot came to town, a lad of twelve, driving his father's ox team from the old home in Andover. He grew to be a handsome man, six feet tall, with a fine figure, keen blue eyes and a fearless presence. His life was filled with adventure in his younger days and his vigor had the lasting qualities born of clean living and high thinking. At the age of eighty he could swing a scythe with his grandsons and take no odds from them. His memory was accurate until almost the last of his days and he loved to tell stories of his youth to the children around his fireside. He was an arresting figure-this venerable man-for he kept to the dress of his early years: leather breeches, homespun frock and an old cocked hat, refusing to discard them for newer fashions.

His tales included that of the August day in 1746 when, all hot and excited after running from the hayfield at the Fan, he stood at the place of the massacre and volunteered service which none else had courage to render: of the slow trip with ~~with~~ the ghastly load in the ox-cart, back to the main street and James Osgood's tavern. There were other tales, exciting but less harrowing: of the day when, rowing his boat on Long pond, he saw a big bear swimming toward him. His shot only wounded and enraged the beast and Reuben had to fight desperately with his oars before he could beat his way free and escape. There were tales of hunting trips when he killed enough deer to provide himself with frozen meat for the entire winter, with enough left over to salt down

for the next summer: of dressing the deer skins before his cabin fire and making them into breeches and mittens such as he still wore.

Still another story was of the day when he heard a hog at large in nearby woods, set up an agonized squealing. Seizing his gun he ran to investigate and found a bear devouring the hog. Three times he fired and three times his flint-lock missed fire and then the bear was at him. In desperation he jumped for a small tree which the bear was too heavy to climb. There he clung shouting for help, until his brother, James Jr. came on the run and shot the bear. This story always ended: "The old p... of the bear could just reach my leather breeches!" Such were the tales which wide-eyed children heard from Grandfather Abbot.

The Abbot homestead was inherited by Reuben, Jr. who was in Capt. Joshua Abbot's company which marched to re-inforce the Northern Army in September 1777. His descendants cherish a powder horn which he carried at the Battle of Bennington and which is delicately carved with elaborate scroll designs and the name-"Reuben Abbot, Jun^r, His Horn, Concord July 7, 1777, R.A. of A.M.A." Family tradition says that he did at least a part of this carving during the days of waiting for the battle.

Next east of Reuben Abbot's old home stands another ~~ancient~~ house on the farm of his brother, James, Jr. This brother joined the church in Rumford by letter from the Andover church and, in 1742, he married Elizabeth Bancroft. His father deeded this farm to him in 1746, so possibly he did not arrive in town with the rest of the family. Neither did he remain long for in 1762 he sold the farm "with my now Dwelling House Edifices and Appurtenances" to Cornelius Johnson of Andover. Then he moved to Newbury, Vt. In 1767, Henry Martin purchased the south portion of the farm where the house stands. His son, Henry Martin Jr. inherited the place-now known as "Sunnyside"-and it remained in that family for several generations. The house has been modernized but its interior

still shows traces of its age in panelled walls and other finish which stamp it as the home of well-to-do people of that generation.

These two Abbot farms are not far from the old Contoocook road school district which probably included the farm of Daniel Abbot(b.1738) higher on the hill which overlooks Long pond. Daniel, son of Dea. George Abbot, had thrilling experience during the Indian wars. Twice he was carried captive by the Indians as recorded in Chapter X. Returning the second time, he married Rachel Abbot(b.1743), daughter of Nathaniel Abbot at the North End of the village street, and he and his eighteen year old bride made their home in a little one-story, one room cabin here high above the pond. Except for an overhead loft reached by a ladder, this primitive home confined its every activity to the room on the ground floor which was sixteen feet square with a great fireplace which took eight foot wood. Here eleven children were born to the Abbots and all but one, who died in infancy, were raised to health and happiness.

It is well to ponder such facts in our day when much ado is being made over the so-called under-privileged. Our forebears chose the primitive life, expecting no ease, no luxury, until it could be won by their own toil and thrift. The young Abbots contented themselves with simple living: more than that, they gave the hospitality of their home to Jonathan Emerson and his young wife while their house was in process of building farther up on Pine hill. During their stay, the Emerson's first baby arrived in 1767, to be added to the Abbot's three little ones.

With a sizable family of his own growing up, Daniel Abbot had the means to build a frame house of commensurate size and so he erected the home which stands as pictured, on a spot closely north of his cabin. Its opening was a sad time, for Rachel Abbot was almost immediately lying dead in her new home, with her new-born babe on her bosom. On a fair June day in the year 1788, this mother and her twelfth child were borne on a bier carried by twelve men, to the Burying-ground at the Meeting-

house where she and her husband had long been faithful attendants.

With five children under teen age at home, Daniel Abbot was a fortunate man in finding very soon, a woman who would marry him and mother his family. In the next January, Mercy Kilburn came to the home and in the years to come, she bore five children to Daniel Abbot. The youngest of this large family was Nathan Kilburn who was doubtless the darling of his sixty-one year old father's heart, and it is not strange that he inherited the homestead farm and lived here all his bachelor life with his spinster sisters, Sarah and Lois. Miss Lois, the last of her generation to occupy the old house, died at the age of sixty-eight in 1881.

Nathan Kilburn Abbot won local fame as a schoolmaster and on his gravestone in the old Burying-ground, one may read:

"Nathan Kilburn, son of Daniel and Mercy K. Abbot, and grandson of Dea. George Abbot, born Aug. 30, 1799, died June 14, 1878.

A Teacher of the common Schools Twenty-five years in succession."

Nathan's half-brother, Samuel, (b. 1764) built his own home on the farm directly across the road from his father's house, but fire destroyed it many years ago. The children of his family were of an age with their young uncles and aunts across the way, and together they made a group keen to hear the tales which Daniel Abbot, the old Indian fighter, could tell of his adventures.

There was the story of a day in March when he was breaking flax in the barn of his father's garrison house on the main street of the village, and an officer recruiting for the Indian wars, came along. Having been once a captive of the savages, Daniel hastened to enlist and he went along with the officer to the rendezvous at one of the North End garrisons, without notifying his family. When he was missed there was great alarm lest he had been captured again by the Indians who prowled around, and equally great relief when he returned home safely at night.

A few days later Daniel started with his company on the long march to Quebec. As they neared the Canada line, they found signs of a large body of Indians in the vicinity and Daniel's company was detailed for scout duty. Night came on and so great was the danger to the entire force that each scout was ordered to stand with gun in hand ready for immediate action. What a night—that night in silent woods with a crafty foe prowling in the darkness! But daylight came and no sign from the Indians, so the scouts returned to the forward march. At noon the captain ordered an hour's rest and the men slept from exhaustion, only to be roused by a shout from their officers who saw two Indians and two equally stealthy Frenchmen, creeping into their midst with tomahawks and knives poised. "But", said Daniel at this point in his story, "we sprung upon our feet and made prisoners of them."

On another day during this expedition, Daniel was sent scouting with one companion. As he slept that night he dreamed that Indians were dancing and whooping around him and, being somewhat a believer that dreams could be interpreted, he told his companion that he believed he was to be taken captive. The man scoffed at the idea, and, as they started out on the day's task, he laughingly drank a toast to Daniel and to his good health. At noon they sighted a fine flock of pigeons and stopped to shoot some for their dinner; but that dinner was never eaten for almost immediately four Indians rushed upon them, capturing Daniel and killing and scalping his companion.

So, for the second time, Daniel was taken into captivity and, in the Indian village where he was held, he had experiences both tragic and amusing until his release a year later through exchange with French prisoners. His description of Indian methods of torture as he saw them, was no tale for children's ears, but the story of how he, himself, outwitted the old Chief who adopted him, must have tickled his grandchildren immensely. Sent out to work, Daniel pretended that he did not know how to

work, saying: "I am the son of a minister; I never learned to work", and then proved the fact by cutting down a large tree in such clumsy fashion that it fell in the midst of their corn field. When he was told to hoe he hoed up both corn and weeds, until the Chief concluded that he really did not know how to work. How the old man must have chuckled as he told such stories to the children about him.

The house which Jonathan Emerson was building while he and his family lodged with the Abbots, stood well up toward the top of Pine hill which is Concord's highest elevation on the west side of the Merrimack. Emerson, a native of Chester, had purchased his eighty acre lot several years before he began to build a story and a half house. Originally the house faced east with gable end to the road and Bouton says that for a number of years it had no windows - indicating the excessive cost of glass. Jonathan signed the Test Act of 1776 as all good patriots did. His descendants lived in this house for several generations and it was a grandson, Franklin Emerson, who enlarged the house and turned it to face the road. The old highway on which the house stood used to run west and over Beech hill in Hopkinton, but long ago it was abandoned beyond the Emerson neighborhood.

In the years just prior to the Revolutionary War, West Village was non-existent except for a few houses clustered about the mills on Rattlesnake brook. The Lovejoy enterprises were still active but the old garrison house and the grist mill had a new owner. About 1760, Josiah Farnum, brother of Dea. Ephraim, purchased this property and the younger children in his family were of school age while the older sons were helping to carry on the sizable farm and the mill. The farm land was mostly east of the Contoocook road and extended to the Merrimack river. It was, according to Levi Hutchins, a later owner, "partly permeated by a deep hollow", referring to the gully north of present West Church, now filled in for the highway. In his Autobiography, Mr. Hutchins also refers

to a fine orchard which covered the land between present Knight St. and Hutchins St. Josiah Farnum's son, Eben, inherited this farm and the adjoining mill. He fought in the revolution serving with his cousin, Abner Farnum in Capt. Daniel Livermore's company in 1777. An older brother, Theodore, fought at Bennington. Eben married Dolly Carter and they moved later to a farm on Rattlesnake hill.

Hutchins St. west of Knight St. is an ancient highway for it led from the mills on Rattlesnake brook to the farms of the Abbots and of Joseph Farnum. On this road was the homestead of Zebediah Farnum, one of the five Farnum brothers who pioneered in the section we call West Parish. Bouton says Zebediah lived "on a beautiful swell of land at the east end of Long pond" - that is, as distinguished from Forge pond - and identified the spot as the place "where Samuel Ames now lives." The Ames place in 1827 consisted of 150 acres on the south side of the road and 40 acres with buildings on the north side of the road. The house at No. 70 Hutchins St. now occupies the site and the ell is so ancient that it may well have been standing in Zebediah's day. The barn and part of the ell was burned in the fall of 1950 and the ell has been torn down since our picture was taken.

In Zebediah's day, Forge pond was separate from Long pond, the two being connected by a short stretch of Rattlesnake brook. A dam at the outlet of Long pond was crossed by a road which ran from farms on the west slope of Rattlesnake hill down to the highway now called Hutchins St., directly opposite Zebediah Farnum's home. Levi Hutchins testifies that he travelled it "on horseback and otherwise in 1793 and for many years afterward." Reference to this dam and the Rattlesnake hill road may be found in Chapter VII. A modern dam makes Long pond and Forge pond one.

In 1758 Zebediah Farnum increased his farm by purchase from the Proprietors of an eighty acre lot containing 140 acres lying north of his land and near present Bog road. His wife was Mary, daughter of Proprietor

Isaac Walker, whom he married in March 1738/39. During the Indian terror they lived in Capt. Lovejoy's garrison. There were three sons and two daughters in this family of school age in 1766. The two older sons, Timothy and Samuel, were involved in a strange visitation which shook steady Concord to its very foundations. Bouton's only reference to this affair is in a fine print foot-note in connection with the names of these two sons, in the genealogy of the Farnum family compiled by Simeon Abbot: "Left in the time of Ann Lee."

Ann Lee left husband and four children in her native England and came to this country with a handful of followers, to establish the cult of Shakerism. It is said that she followed the Continental Army in search of converts until, being under suspicion as a British spy, she was arrested and imprisoned for some time in Albany and Poughkeepsie. On release she established headquarters at Niskayuna (Watervliet) N.Y. and, in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Arriving at Harvard, Mass., she declared it to be the place revealed in her visions as the spot for her abiding place. The people of Harvard thought otherwise and, finding her to be "a disturbing presence", they drove her away again and again over a period of three years, the attacks increasing in violence until she abandoned the attempt.

Such reaction is understandable since Ann Lee proclaimed herself the new incarnation of Jesus Christ—the fulfilment of His promised Second Coming. To the orthodox Congregationalist, this was nothing less than blasphemy and not to be tolerated. Moreover Ann Lee preached celibacy as the condition of the millenium which she, "the female Christ", had come to establish upon earth. Husbands deserted their wives, under her spell, and wives forsook their husbands; susceptible girls renounced their sweet hearts and the weak-minded were infatuated to the point of insanity.

In the fall of 1774, "Four or five strangers, and outlandish, came to Concord, New-Hampshire—made tarry of a number of months—the name of those who appeared to be the head ones, were Ann Lee and William Lee—

their singularity caused many people to call and see them. Ann was short, thick-set-she wore a strap cap, and a large flat straw hat-William Lee was stout built, of sandy complexion. They proved themselves a people of most vulgar sort-they lived near us-we often saw them, was acquainted with much of their conduct."

Such is the sworn statement dated Dec. 10, 1821 and signed by Stephen Farnum and his wife, Marter: Joseph Farnum and his wife, Ruth: Henry Martin and his wife, Esther. All three families were neighbors of the camp made by the Lees on the highway now Hutchins St. not far from Zebediah Farnum's home, and Stephen and Joseph Farnum were cousins of the two Farnum brothers who "left in the time of Ann Lee."

This statement appeared in the local newspaper and in published pamphlets almost fifty years after Ann Lee's visit, prompted by the denial made by the Shaker colony at Canterbury, that Ann Lee ever visited Concord. Other documentary evidence was published including a statement more explicit by Samuel Farrington who testified from his personal knowledge of the visitants and quoted evidence given him by his cousin, Esq. John Bradley. Dr. Philip Carrigan who treated Ann Lee during her stay in town, was another witness. All these people were of high standing in the community.

In the fifty years between the Ann Lee visit and the above testimony, the Shakers had built up colonies at Canterbury and Enfield and despite the prejudice of an earlier generation, they had made a success of the communal life. Industry, thrift and simple devout living brought them prosperity and the respect of their neighbors. Gradually the membership has declined and only a handful of Shakeresses are left in the Canterbury family. Whether the Ann Lee who fled Concord under the wrath of the citizens of 1774, was genuine or an imposter, we may never know but to this day, descendants of the Farnum and Abbot families believe that they know.

John Farnum, younger brother of the two Shaker converts, married Sally West and stayed on the Hutchins St. farm until his father's death,

fter which he removed to Rumford, Me. where three of his married sons also settled. A fourth son, Nathaniel, was the only male descendent of Zebediah Farnum who remained in Concord. John Farnum, himself, was a Revolutionary soldier who volunteered in Capt. Joshua Abbot's company in 1777.

Zebediah Farnum was known for his fearless and resolute courage so it is not strange that in a time when wild beasts still prowled around these outlying farms, he should have been given to hunting. One day he proposed to his nephew, Ephraim, Jr., that they go hunting on Rattlesnake hill. Crossing the brook at the old dam, they had tramped but a short distance when the clamor of their dogs warned them to hurry forward. They found a big bear treed by the dogs and at Zebediah's first shot, the brute fell to the ground apparently dead. But as the dogs sniffed about him the bear began to snarl and fight and Zebediah, fearing for the dogs, jumped astride the animal, holding him by the ears while young Ephraim rammed the butt of his gun down its throat until the bear was too exhausted to fight. Then Zebediah loosed one ear long enough to draw his knife and slit the bear's throat.

Such contest with a wild animal sometimes came as an emergency. One day Zebediah was in the woods northwest of his home, near the site of the Ferrin place which overlooks Contocook river, when he was startled by a grunting and squealing. Having no gun, he picked up a pitch-pine knot for a club and crept cautiously forward until he sighted a bear with his head in a wasp's nest. When the wasps stung too hard, the bear pulled out his nose and squealed and then returned to the attack. Watching his chance, Zebediah crept up unheard and clubbed the beast to death.

The fourth Farnum brother to settle in this section was Joseph whose farm lay on the upland leading to Parsonage hill. His homestead place is the present Hobbs Hill Farm occupied by his descendents till The original log house stood in the field nearer Lake View Drive. Mrs. Farnum was Zerviah Hoit, daughter of the family near the Turkey

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river mills, and the first of their family of ten children was born in 1740. In 1746 the family lived at Lovejoy's garrison until it was closed when they were ordered to the Minister's garrison on the village street. In 1760, Joseph Farnum built his frame house and tradition says that at the time, there were only three other frame houses in all that section called West Concord today. The house faces east in anticipation of a hoped-for highway which the town voted in 1770 "through Joseph Farnum's field" - the beginning of West Parish road of today. About the same time - perhaps a little earlier - a school house was built in the angle this new road makes with present Lake View road, thus providing for the children multiplying on the Long pond farms.

Our picture of Joseph Farnum's house is reproduced from an old print made when the original door of the ancient double type was still in place. The head of this house was a most substantial citizen and in this year of 1766, he was one of the three selectmen of the town. Two of his sons, Abner and Daniel, served in the Revolution and a third son, Stephen, inherited the farm. In the next generation, Ens. Isaac Farnum lived on the farm until his death at the age of ninety-six, leaving the homestead to his son, Capt. Henry Farnum, who built the smaller house on a lot next east in 1847. Descendents lived on the farm until 1951.

Returning to the Contoocook road, we find no houses north of Josiah Farnum's until we reach Beaver Meadow. The original highway crossed the north end of the present cemetery site and followed through into present Abbot road as far as present Borough road. It formed the east boundary of the Wainwright lot of one hundred acres, which John Wainwright seems never to have claimed. Eventually the land reverted to the town. Adjacent was a "Parsonage lot" which, after the Toleration Act, was turned back with other similar lots to the town. This special lot was leased in 1826 to Abner Farnum for "nine hundred ninety-nine years" upon payment of \$210.50 and a "yearly rent of one cent annually if demanded." The lot contained thirty-five acres.

Jabez Abbot seems to have been the pioneer on Beaver Meadow. His father, Thomas Abbot, was a cousin of Dea. George Abbot and he had invested in three eighty acre lots bordering the Merrimack river between Sewall's Falls and Horseing-downs and bounded west by the original Contoocook road. These "eighty acre lots" which were the origin of so many of Concord's outlying farms, were often of larger acreage. It should be remembered that the name was for classification only. Thomas Abbot apportioned this fine farming land to three sons: to Jabez, then thirty-five years old, he gave the north portion of one hundred acres in 1756 and family tradition is that Jabez and his wife, Phebe, made their home there immediately in a small house which is now the ell of the large two-story house long known as "the Elms."

The house as pictured dates back to Revolutionary times and descendants of Jabez have lived in it until 1944. Nathan 2d (1765) inherited the homestead and he was followed by his son, Alfred C. Abbot (b. 1804). Meanwhile Nathan's older brother, Joseph 2d (b. 1759) served in the Revolution in Col. Peabody's regiment and, following the war, bought wild lands in Boscawen, cleared a farm and married Molly Macon of Salisbury. Molly's father and mother with their small children had been taken captive by Indians in 1753, sold to the French in Montreal, but finally recaptured by our colonists and returned to their Salisbury home.

The second son of Thomas Abbot received the south end of of the Beaver Meadow property near Sewall's Falls. There Nathan built the house shown in our picture which stood until very recent years a short distance north of the power station at the Falls and on the west side of the railroad track. Except for long neglect, it might be standing today as Jabez's house does. Nathan Abbot served with the marines in the army sent to Prince Edward's Island during the French wars, and a descendent tells of his old uniform and canteen kept for generations in this house.

Back from the war, Nathan married Betsy Farnum, daughter of Joseph Farnum on the hillside above Long pond. This very year of 1766 they were making their home in a log house down near the Merrimack. When Nathan built his frame house, he planned it for two families—an unusual thing in those days. It had two separate cellars, twelve rooms and a large open attic. He made the brick for its three chimneys, two brick ovens, two arches to support the chimneys and two arched potato bins in the cellars, digging his clay at Mast Yard. Ten children were born in this family and nine in brother Jabez's family. Nathan's son, Asa, inherited this homestead but he never married. His heir was his sister's son, Asa Abbot Blanchard who came to live with his bachelor uncle when he was nine years old. In the next generation, this was the longtime home of Emily and Anna Blanchard.

The third of Thomas Abbot's sons on Beaver Meadow was Jesse whose farm bordered on the river and lay between those of his brothers. Jesse Abbot lived in a small one story house which is now the ell of the Victor Engel house. Originally it stood across Sewall's Falls road and somewhat north of its present location. Jesse Abbot left no heirs and after his death his farm was divided between the heirs of his two brothers. Eventually seventy acres of his farm became the property of Samuel B. Knowles as early as 1826. Roughly, this farm covered the angle made by Abbott road with Sewall's Falls road today. The family home was the small house pictured as it stands today. Knowles probably built the frame of the house next north but did not finish the inside. He and his wife had much sorrow as indicated by the graves of several of their children in the nearby cemetery. Perhaps that is the reason why they sold the place in 1858 and moved west. Ten years later it became the property of John P. Engel and is now the Victor Engel place.

James Abbot who lived on the site of Swenson Granite Co., acquired land north of Beaver Meadow about 1760 by purchase of seventeen

acres at Horsing -downs in the loop which the hairpin turn of the Merrimack made at that time. Later he sold the land to Samuel Goodwin "late of Hampton, but now of Rumford" and its name was changed to Goodwin's Point. A son, Reuben Goodwin, married Susan Farnum, sister of Mrs. Nathan Abbot and Bouton says they lived "at or near Horsing-downs". When the tracks of the Northern Railroad were laid, the embankments cut off this curious bend of the river, leaving only a a low sheet of water in the old river channel today.

Beaver Meadow has interesting old roads. In his History of Concord (p.325) Dr. Bouton describes the course of the "old road" from Concord to Boscawen-the Contoocook road of 1766. There is no question as to the accuracy of his details until he reaches Beaver Meadow. There Dr. Bouton claims that just beyond the "Alfred C. Abbot place" (the Jabez Abbot house) the road turned west to the Borough and then on to the site of Fishersville (Penacook). This is accurate for a later period than 1756 when the pioneers settled on Beaver Meadow but there is a well-established tradition in certain old families in the section-a tradition sufficiently reasonable to deserve consideration.

The tradition is that the earliest Contoocook road to Boscawen ran north from Beaver Meadow, probably following an Indian trail along the high banks above Horsing-downs, and straight to the 1737 ferry at the mouth of the Contoocook river. This ferry was the only means of crossing either the Contoocook or the Merrimack north of Rumford village until a bridge across the Contoocook where Penacook village now stands, was built in 1765. There was no habitation at the Borough before that date but the Rolfe brothers were living before that time at the mouth of the Contoocook, the ferryman lived just across the Merrimack in Canterbury and the Boscawen people were not far away on the north side of the Contoocook. A straight road from Beaver Meadow to the ferry was the only sensible plan in those early days. Further evidence is to

to be found in deeds of a century and more ago, which refer to what is now Abbott road as "the old Boscawen road" in distinction to the "new Boscawen road" opened in 1822, which is the D.W. Highway of today. There are old deeds which refer to "the old Boscawen road" as the east boundary of a piece of land and to "the old road to the Borough" as the northerly boundary of the same land. Tradition is probably right as to the earliest road from Concord to Boscawen although that road may never have been an accepted town highway.

As the Borough grew more populous, a road thither from Beaver Meadow became essential and when, in 1765, the ancient ferry at the mouth of the Contoocook was superseded by a bridge built a little to the east of the center of present Penacook village, conditions were favorable for a change in the Boscawen road. Then, it appears, the Boscawen road was established as leaving present Abbott road to turn west into Borough road and north through present West Main St. to the Contoocook river bridge.

Present Abbott road was probably a rough cart way when Jabez Abbot built his frame house. In 1779 Town records tell of a vote for a road from the mill on Rattlesnake brook, owned then by Josiah Farnum, to Jabez Abbot's house. In 1796, a road was laid out "from Jonathan Runnels, Jr's Barn to the west end of the lane to Jabez Abbot's house." It was doubtless an old road which increased travel necessitated re-building. Jonathan Runnels, Jr. had recently invested in a share of Josiah Farnum's mill and a nearby dwelling house.

Another tradition tells that a loop road crossed Beaver Meadow beginning about at First St. and passing diagonally in the rear of the Golf Club House of today. It headed for the tall pines on the east side of the Golf Links, passed through the woods and across Beaver Meadow brook to Nathan Abbot's house on the river. Turning there it took a straight course to Jabez Abbot's house, making a rough triangle with the old Boscawen road. In company with the late Mrs. Benjamin Farnum, the writ-

er followed the general course of this road and was told the tradition long handed down in the Farnum family. There were evidences of an ancient but well-built highway and as it crosses Beaver Meadow brook for the second time in the rear of Jabez Abbot's old home, the evidence is clear and is substantiated in deeds of his old farm.

Other roads crossed Beaver Meadow in the old days, but their identity is lost except for one marked by a pair of tall rough granite posts on the west side of the Golf Links. This is the gateway where a continuation of the Bog road crossed the old Boscawen road on a direct line to the Merrimack. Lumber business was flourishing and men interested therein built a corduroy road through the Bog, over which logs could be hauled from Mast Yard to the bluffs near Nathan Abbot's house and there rolled into the river. The busy scenes of that long ago time are hard to visualize today when the whir of a motor car and the click of golf balls alone break the quiet across Beaver Meadow.

These, then, were the homes "Upon the Contoocook Road North of Nathan Colbee's" and their neighbors near Long pond in the year 1766. Until after the Revolution there were few if any others in all that north section of our town, west of the Merrimack river, except for the Rolfes at the mouth of the Contoocook river and the earliest Elliotts at the Borough.

Life on these farms was simple and wholesome with plenty of toil for father and mother and tasks for every child: there was comfort but but not luxury and but little ease. Life was well-balanced and well-disciplined, and rare was the family which did not sincerely reverence God in its daily life. From these old farm houses came generation after generation of men and women who played their part in the building of Concord—stable, honest, patriotic citizens, whose lives fulfilled the ancient promise "Thou shalt eat the labor of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy wife shall be a fruitful vine by the side of thine house: thy children like olive plants around thy table: thou shalt see thy children's children and peace upon Israel."