

Chapter XXXIII.

Concord: 1825-30.

The pageantry of that June day in 1825 when Lafayette made his memorable visit to Concord, had as its setting a town of simple dignity. The "Guest" had already seen most of the important cities of the young nation: he had visited the western frontier and had been entertained in St. Louis which was just emerging from its years as a trading post. In Concord he found nothing imposing, nothing of the picturesque: just a small town in process of assuming the dignity suitable to a capital city. Only a century had passed since the fields north of Horsehoe pond were claimed by Watanummon and his sons: only three generations had been born since log houses lined the main street. Each generation built for character for Concord had played her part in the exhausting Indian wars, in the Revolution, in the War of 1812. Her resources had been those of simple agricultural life and her citizens were men of godly faith and character.

The largest towns in New Hampshire in 1825 were Portsmouth, Dover, Gilmanton, Sanbornton, Londonderry and, sixth in size was Concord with a population of about 3,000. For ten years she had been the capital of the state and since the time (1823) when the northern towns of Rockingham and Hillsborough counties had been transferred to the newly created Merrimack county, Concord had been the county seat. Thus material growth and prosperity had been stimulated, but Concord's conservative mind suppressed any unseemly elation and thrift still prevailed in public and private affairs alike. As yet there was no crossing the Merrimack river except by fee at toll bridge or ferry but travel was so increasing that public demand had recently made the First N.H. Turnpike into a "free road," greatly to the advantage of trade. Over this route "with a course as direct as possible, avoiding the mountainous ridges", a traveller with good horses might cover the forty-three miles from Federal bridge to Portsmouth in about half a day.

It was in this year of 1825 that Rev. Nathaniel Bouton began his long

and fruitful pastorate of First Church. Fifty years later, in an anniversary sermon (June 17, 1875) he described the town as it appeared when he first arrived. Only about half the population lived in the village, the rest had homes on the outlying farms. The village houses with few exceptions, were along the main street and even there, many vacant and neglected lots were to be found. The new State House was drawing trade to the section between Centre road and Hopkinton road, but in all that area there were only fifteen dwellings which included three taverns. South of Hopkinton road there were only fourteen dwellings: indeed, the south end was still a neighborhood of small farms/ⁱⁿ which Lewis Downing's first carriage shop seemed strangely out of place.

Other streets in the village were almost negligible and had no official names. "Back Street" (now State St.) extended south only as far as Hopkinton road and on its westerly side there were only seven houses. These included the Hannaford tavern on the north corner of present Walker St. and a smaller house next south where Ruth Turner and her sister, Sarah Sweatt, lived adjacent to the Friends' meeting house. South of the Burying Ground was David George's house and next beyond, at the corner of present Franklin St., was Capt. Benjamin Emery's homestead. The granite prison occupied the land between present Tremont and Beacon Sts. and south of it on a lot next west of present No. 34 Washington St., stood a house which was probably built by John P. Gass and Dearborn Johnson who, as early as 1819 were partners in shipping via the Concord Boating Co., the granite cut by convict labor. This house was doubtless reckoned as on Back St. but it long ago disappeared.

In 1824 Peter Elkins, tinsmith bought the east half of this property^t and John Titcomb, wheelwright, bought the west half and jointly they purchased the lot next west. There they built the double house standing today at 46-48 Washington St. and both families made their homes there. John Titcomb occupied the west half of the house and built his shop close by. To-

day the shop has been made into the dwelling at 50 Washington St. The queer northwest corner at the intersection of No. State and Washington St. may date back to the time when a path was worn from Back St. to these oldtime homes. On the south side of Washington St. and a little west of Back St. there stood in 1821, "a small dwelling house" sold that year by Daniel Coolidge to Ruth Haseltine (Mrs. Joseph) who owned it until 1832. Very near it stood a large house built by John Emerson in 1817. It has been raised on a new foundation and otherwise modernized. It still stands, at 107 No. State St.

In 1825 there were no houses south of the Emerson house until one reached the Bell schoolhouse (site of Parker School). Next south of the school on the site of the Christian Science church, stood the mansion house of George Hough, completing the list of houses on the west side of Back St. On the east side of the street there were not more than two houses since this land was included in the house lots laid out on the west side of the main street. The Davis house (102 No. State St.) and the Buswell house (13 Franklin St.) seem to have been the only ones standing. According to Asa McFarland, Jr., dwellings on Back St. at this period were regarded as "somewhat bleak abodes" by the folk on the more thickly settled main street. To the west there was swamp land overgrown with alders and other shrubs, extending from the prison south for the entire length of the village. The rising ground still further west was pasture and tillage land, the northern part being known as "Sand Hill."

"High St." (Green St.) was half laid out from Hopkinton road toward the north with three small one-story houses standing thereon. School St. was merely a lane leading from the main street to the Bell schoolhouse, while our present West, South, Hall, Centre, Penacook and N. State St. - north of Penacook St. - were merely "country roads" leading to the outlying farms and to neighboring towns.

The main street in 1825 was still ungraded, cut across by deep brook gullies. Tanyard brook near the foot of present Montgomery St., was

so deep that during the winter, the boys of the town found excellent sliding from the vicinity of Bridge St. down into the brook bed. The new plank bridge over the gully was for pedestrians only.

Our picture of Main St. was taken in later years after the gully was filled in but it shows this neighborhood otherwise as it looked in 1825. At the left is the white fence in front of the home of Rev. Asa McFarland and at the right is the lot where the Court House was to^{be} built. Next south may be seen an old house with brick ends on the site now occupied by Lyster Block. This was known as the Susan S. Kneeland house and in 1828 it was the property of heirs of Dr. McFarland. Susanna Sewall Kneeland was the mother of Mrs. McFarland and the widow of a prosperous Boston merchant. Upon her death in 1808 here in Concord at her daughter's home, this house evidently was the inheritance of the McFarland family. It was sold to Isaac Clement, a Hooksett machinist, who moved to Concord about 1828 and shortly acquired the old tanyard next south of his house, including the oil mill which stood six rods up the brook from the highway. Down in the gully stood a shop kept in later years by James Eaton, gunsmith, and when the gully was filled in, this shop was raised to the new street level and, with alterations, still stands at 153 No. Main St. When Lyster's Block was built the excavation reached eighteen feet below the present street level and at that depth there were found scraps of leather from Capt. Ayer's old tanyard, testifying to the original depth of the old gully. In 1835 Isaac Clement sold his dwelling house to George Hopkinson, a hatter from Meredith, and the Eaton shop passed from owner to owner, at one time being occupied by Monroe Brothers as a confectioner shop.

Directly across from the tanyard and on the east side of the main street stood the hay scales famous among the small boys of the day. James Ayer, son of Capt. Richard, was in charge and when a hay cart appeared for its weighing, a crowd of youngsters always gathered around. It took skill for the driver to check his oxen at exactly the right spot so the load

rested on the platform. If he drove a little too far, he was obliged to swing around in a great circle and make a second approach. When the cart was properly placed the oxen were unhitched and the tongue of the cart suspended by a chain from the roof. Mr. Ayer turned a crank and the load was slowly raised from ^{the} flooring. The weigher made the crank fast and then disappeared into a little cubbyhole at the east end where a table of weights hung on the wall. There he figured out the exact weight of the load on a slate. This section of the main street was long known as "Smoky Hollow" a name which probably dates back to the years before the gully was filled in.

Education of her children had always been of prime importance to Concord and to that end, the town added two new schoolhouses to her equipment. For several years there had been agitation for the abandonment of the old pest house still in use as the North End school. At last, in the spring of 1820, it had been sold at auction and removed and the short thoroughfare now called Bouton St. (formerly Fiske St.) was opened across the lot. The 11th District leased a portion of the original parsonage lot south of David George's house and built thereon the first brick schoolhouse in the town. It was said to be the very finest school building in the county and possibly the finest in the entire state. Some of the citizens felt that it might be too fine and its cost was criticized as unnecessarily extravagant. The feeling came to a head when Capt. Joseph Walker, chairman of the building committee, presented a claim relative to its cost at a school meeting. The voters refused to approve the bill, whereupon the chairman got the key to the building and notified the district that no sessions should be held there until his claim was paid. The bill was speedily settled.

This school stood rather closely to present Church St. in the southwest corner of its junction with State St. as is shown by our copy of an old photograph. Some of the children in the picture are still living (1945)

in Concord. The building contained two rooms—one for the primary grades on the first floor and one for the grammar school on the second floor.

Shortly after this school was built, District No. 9 at the South End bought a small lot from the Shute farm on West St. and erected there a one room brick schoolhouse. It was furnished with the customary double desks with enormously heavy lids and, a real luxury for those times, a cast iron stove placed in the center of the room. Teacher's desk was near a window on the street side and the girls sat facing the south while the boys' desks faced west. Our picture shows the school as it was then. In 1845 it was purchased by Benjamin Rolfe who remodelled it into a dwelling and it stands at 8 West St.

The children in the central part of the town continued to go to the Bell schoolhouse until 1846 when that building was replaced by Concord's first High School, shown in our picture. The building provided for primary, intermediate and grammar grades as well as for High School classes.

In the neighborhood of the old West St. school, several old houses dating back a century or more are still standing. They will be found on Maj. Lewis Downing's map (Chapter XII). The Willey house, the various Shute houses and the Butters house have already been mentioned. The map is in error as to the Mills house which stands at 45 West St. on the corner of Mills St. which runs through the old Mills farm. The house has been remodelled and bears little resemblance to the story and half farm house of its early days. The house of John Scales, a pump maker, stood west (not east) of the Mills house until fire destroyed it years ago. The Glover house stands at 63 West St. and was built about 1812 by Ebenezer Glover who was a "stone layer" according to Concord's first directory. A later owner was Samuel Dakin whose son, John Dakin, was born in this house and gave to the writer the correct information about this group of old houses on West St. Opposite the Glover-Dakin house there stood a century and more ago, the house of Daniel Rogers. Moved later, it stands now at 65 Downing St.

Changes in the old farms along the south end of the main street have been noted in Chapters XII and XXII. The Haseltine farm recently owned by the Harris family was being sold in house lots and a newcomer to Concord, Sampson Bullard (b. in Mason, N.H.) had purchased the north section of the farm for development. Mr. Bullard arrived in town about 1819 and speedily identified himself with enterprises definitely affecting the development of Concord. In 1825 he was building the brick house which is now owned and occupied by the Masonic Grand Lodge. This old homestead has endured more drastic transformation than any other building now standing in town. One identifying mark remains: a granite keystone with the date "1825" over the front door.

In 1834 the place became the property of Benjamin Thompson of Andover who developed it into the Thompsonian Infirmary where he practiced a botanical cure. Our picture shows this institution with the original Bullard house at the north end. By 1842 the cure had gone the way of all such unscientific enterprise and the long wooden addition was converted into tenements which, in later years, were destroyed by fire. The next owner after the fire, was Benjamin A. Kimball who cleared the wreckage and enlarged and adorned the old brick house according to the standard of "Romanesque architecture". Mr. Kimball lived there until his death and his will provided that the mansion—then the most pretentious in Concord—should become the property of the state, to be used as a residence for the governor. In view of the cost involved in upkeep, the state declined the gift and the property was sold to Bektash Temple and the Capitol Theatre was built adjacent to the old Bullard house.

A few years after building this brick house, Mr. Bullard undertook to open up the South St. end of his portion of the Haseltine farm for building lots and he offered his friend, John Leach, a free lot on condition that he build a two-story house thereon. Current opinion was that "one might as well live in Bow" as on this old "country road" as Leach did

not accept the proposition. Sometime in the thirties, Bullard himself built the house at 12 South St. and probably lived there to prove that South St. was not impossible as a residential section. ^{-x-}

Sampson Bullard began his business career in Concord by keeping store next south of the homestead of Sherburne Wiggin, but by 1825 he had embarked in the distillery business in a large one-story building which he erected on Railroad Square on the site of Rice Paper Co.

A brook which ran east of this property was convenient to his purpose and he built a "subterranean water course" into it, taking his water from a supply on the main street which was piped from springs on George Kent's place (site of Home for the Aged). According to a temperance advocate of later years, the still house "began to send up its filthy fumes and smoke" and turned into potent rum innumerable hogsheads of West Indies molasses shipped via the Boating Company. During one of the recurrent freshets to which Concord is subject, it is said that a consignment of molasses was landed at the very door of the distillery.

Moral conditions in Concord were changing-not for the better- and many of the townspeople attributed the fact to the prevalence of hard drinking. Shortly after the distillery began operations, Rev. Nathaniel Bouton who was to lead the temperance reform movement in town, described the situation thus: "Every English and W.I. goods store in town-nine in number-sold ardent spirits, not only in large quantities, but by the glass, to be drunk at the counter. Every tavern-ten in number-kept open bar, every orchard produced cider and ten to twelve barrels were stored in the family cellar. Some farmers who employed a number of hands used twenty-five to thirty barrels of cider in a season. Habitual drunkenness, poverty and pauperism increased although the average liquor drunk in Concord was a little under the average for the entire U.S." (Discourse 12/10/43)

Sobriety, moderation, self-control were losing ground and a local distillery was the final disintegrating influence. The agitation for reform centered upon it and on Fast Day 1827, the young minister preached

the first of his many fearless attacks on intemperance. It caused a sensation and made some personal enemies for the minister, but it gave impetus to the temperance movement in Concord. Other fearless men rallied to Mr. Bouton and, as a direct result of the agitation then begun, the distillery closed its doors in 1836. Ten years later the building was consumed by fire.

On that June day when Gen. Lafayette rode up our main street, the Bullard house was unfinished but Sampson Bullard had already completed the brick residence which stands at 172 No. Main St. and Bouton says this was the only brick dwelling in the village in 1825 (Anniv. Sermon 6/17/75). The lot on which this brick house stands was purchased by Dr. Chadbourne from the Stickney estate and Mr. Bullard financed its building. In 1829 the house was sold to John Estabrook, an estimable young man from Hopkinton, who married the daughter of Nathaniel Abbot of the North End, in July of the same year. When President Jackson visited Concord in 1833, he lodged at the new Eagle Coffee House, but it was felt that no room in the hotel was properly furnished for the distinguished guest and Mrs. Estabrook loaned her best mahogany bed for his use. In the fall of that same year, Mr. Estabrook, returning from a trip to New York, lost his life in the tragic explosion on the steamboat "New England" on the Connecticut river opposite the town of Essex.

In 1845 the brick house was purchased by Onslow Stearns, the young building agent of the new railroad recently completed to Concord. Mr. Stearns was a man of unusual energy and great executive ability. The railroad was his opportunity and in a few years he had become its president and a financial and political power in the state. He justified his prosperity by a high type of citizenship. When Mr. Stearns bought the house its brick walls were covered with the mastic in fashion in that day, but in recent years that covering has been removed. Mr. Stearns enlarged and modified the house transforming it into a mansion of spacious elegance.

Mrs. Stearns was a gracious lady whose hospitality in her home made the mansion famous among the noted people who were its guests.

In 1869 Mr. Stearns was governor of the state and in August of that year, President Grant made an informal visit to Concord, accompanied by his wife, son and daughter, two members of his cabinet and his private secretary, Gen. Horace Porter. The party was entertained at the Stearns home for it was the governor's personal influence which had persuaded the President to tarry for a night on his way to the White Mountains. A great reception was held in the State House yard, followed by a dinner and evening party at the governor's home. Next morning, Nathaniel White drove around with his finest span and took the President (himself a lover of good horses) for a drive about the city before the party left for the north country.

Mrs. Stearns often told the story of her consternation when one of the fourteen guests invited for the dinner, was taken suddenly ill and could not attend. The dreaded number of thirteen sat down at table, but the hostess announced that she would incur the grewsome penalty by rising first from the table, thus putting any superstitious guest at ease. As a matter of fact Mrs. Stearns lived for many years to come, thus disproving the ancient superstition.

In 1877, President Hayes, his wife and sons, with Vice President Wheeler and other notables, visited Concord and were entertained at the Stearns mansion. Mr. Stearns took the party to Hanover to inspect Dartmouth college. Another famous guest was Gen. William T. Sherman who visited Concord soon after the Civil War. Thus, for many years, the first brick dwelling house on our main street ranked high as a home of hospitality, rivalled by no other in Concord history, save that of earlier days—the home of Col. William A. Kent.

At some later date a third brick dwelling was built which is labelled "Mrs. Harris" on Lewis Downing, Jr.'s map. It has been attributed to the period 1800-1820 but this conflicts with Bouton's statement that the

Chadbourne Estabrook-Stearns house was the only brick dwelling in the village in 1825. After Robert Harris's death (1822) the members of his family left Concord with the exception of a daughter, Harriet. In 1825 she bought an 8 acre section of the old Haseltine farm next south of the Ballard property and she may have built this house standing at 50 S. Main St. today. Until 1815 Ballard Haseltine had kept this remnant of his grandfather's old farm. In 1844 Elliott Chickering lived in this "Mrs. Harris" house and in later years it was the home of Hon. Ira Eastman and more recently, that of John M. Hill.

The most notable new building in 1825 was the First Baptist church. For nearly a century the old Meeting-house of the Congregational faith had been the only house of worship in the town, except for the small and simple building where the Friends held meeting. Since 1818 the Baptists in town had held services with more or less regularity and had so grown in numbers and importance that a church building was essential. Col. William A. Kent owned considerable vacant land along State St. in the vicinity of the State House and he donated a lot for the enterprise. There were various reasons for his interest: he was public spirited and felt that a down town church would be an asset to the community and, although he was an attendant at the old Meeting-house, he was a liberal in theology and hesitated not to show his sympathy with non-conformists.

Our picture shows the original edifice which, altered and enlarged, stands today the oldest church building in Concord. The small windows on either side the entrance of the present day church are original and indicate the size of all the original windows. A bell from the Revere factory in Boston was purchased by subscription and a clock was installed in the steeple. In later years when the Board of Trade clock was installed the church sold its clock out of town. The bell, unfortunately, was traded for a new one. Sometime prior to 1839 a vestry was built next south of the church—"a long, bleak two-story structure"—in the second story of which

Prof. Hall Roberts, a good Baptist, kept a private school. This vestry converted into a two family house now stands at 4-6 Tahanto St.

The position of the church broadside to the street is unusual and tradition explains the fact thus: The building committee met on the premises one day to discuss the location and an old sea captain, strolling by stopped to make friendly inquiries about the plans. The committee responded that the first question was how the church should be placed on the lot. "Why, brethren", said the captain, "place her broadside to the wharf; that's the way we always took on passengers." And so she stands today as she has stood through long years, ready to take on passengers for Heaven. In the early days the Baptists often held their ceremony of immersion in a pool which was the source of West brook located near Beacon St. between Jackson and Lyndon Sts. Frank West Rollins when a boy, had a boat on this pool and relates that he poled it down the brook as far as the wall of the old prison—a tale which seems fantastic today.

Heretofore, except for the State House, there had been no thought given to architectural style in the building enterprise in Concord. The old Meeting-house was just another barn-like structure such as might be found in many a New England community; the Town House had been furnished up in recent years with an ornamental colonnade utterly inconsistent with its general proportions, and the dwellings of the period were, as a rule, merely four walls and a roof to enclose the desired number of rooms. When Stuart J. Park designed the State House he set a standard for something beyond utilitarian values and proved to Concord that an architect's profession is worth while.

When the First Baptist Society prepared to build, John Leach of Dunbarton had just moved to town with aspirations to be an architect, although the first Concord directory (1830) lists him merely as "carpenter and joiner." Leach found his first real opportunity in building this new

church. Concord has later examples of his creative ability: the ~~Old Building of the N.H. Historical Society~~ *The building at 214 No. Main St.* built in 1826 for the Merrimack County Bank—a fine building which went far to solace the North End for its failure to locate the State house: the Unitarian church (1829) was destroyed by fire but a number of dwelling houses still stand. Two of these, unique in Concord at the time of building were the house on the north corner of Fayette St. and S. Main, built for Samuel and Philip Farrington of Hopkinton (grandsons of pioneer Stephen Farrington) and the house at 36 S. Main St. where Gen. Joseph Low lived in the north apartment. Both houses were built prior to 1830.

John Leach prospered and in 1826 he purchased an extensive property on the east side of the main street opposite Hopkinton road. It included land lately in possession of Nathaniel Ladd, tanner (and also known as the Shapleigh place), the Sherburne Wiggin house which was the tavern built by Hannah Osgood after her husband's death, and, across "a Gangway" twelve feet wide (now Depot St.) a vacant lot. On this lot, now the site of Fitch-Murray Co., Leach indulged himself by building a large house "famed for its unique bow windows and other architectural features." For years this big wooden building stood until all about it there rose tall brick blocks devoted to business. An old picture of Main St. shows a bit of its corner next south of the newly erected Phenix Hall. By that time John Leach's old home had been transformed into stores on the ground floor and cheap tenements above. Leach's last years were spent in the brick house which he built at 10 Fayette St. and which still remains much as he planned it. Our Main St. picture shows the original entrance of the present Phenix Hotel (built 1857) with its columns. Next north are two brick blocks and beyond that, on the present site of Emmons Store, is the famous Athenian Hall with its gable end to the street. The Hall burned in 1866.

In 1825 the town people still lived simply according to Asa McFarland, Jr. Few homes had carpets on the floor and a homemade one was consid-

ed a real luxury. Even the "best room" often had a sanded floor. Farm houses were seldom painted either inside or out, and while a cook stove might be found in the kitchen, the brick oven, the Dutch oven and the fireplace with its crane and kettles were still the dependables for cooking. People still travelled on horseback with a pillion for the goodwife, or in heavily built wagons; while winter brought out the high-backed sleigh filled with straw, blankets and comforters for warmth. The new minister owned a Downing chaise of the "bellows top" variety and a few other citizens indulged in similar conveyances.

There was not a piano in the entire town, although at the private school conducted at the North End by the Misses White, a harpsichord was a part of the equipment (1823). Horticulture was of the simplest: a few palatable apples were produced but there were not ten pear trees in the whole town and grapes were very rare. Garden flowers were limited: the red rose, China aster, pinks, marigolds, poppies, ladies' delight and sunflower were the only varieties common to the gardens.

The most notable progress of the period was the erection of two important brick blocks in 1826. When its charter expired, the Upper Bank officials obtained a new one under the name of Merrimack County Bank. The old Livermore house was no longer adequate as quarters and so John Leach was commissioned to design the building already referred to. It is a three story brick block built on the lot next south of the site of the Livermore house, planned to afford quarters for two banks on the ground floor and of five rooms on the second floor. The top floor was planned for a public hall but later it was used by the N.H. Historical Society (1840). The completed structure was "the pride of the North End" to quote Asa McFarland, Jr. again. Until recent years the building had two entrances, the north one opening into the Merrimack County Bank. The south door opened into the drug store of Dr. Samuel Morrill until the N.H. Savings Bank began business there in 1830. The second floor offices were occupied by various lawyers—among them

being young Franklin Pierce, and sometimes public officials occupied these quarters. Dr. Bouton used one of the rooms as a study when he wrote his History of Concord. In recent years this handsome old building was purchased by the N.H. Historical Society for use as a museum.

The South Enders were not left too envious for Isaac Hill began his new brick block on the lot next south of the State House in this same year of 1826. His success with the Patriot and the Franklin Bookstore had quite outgrown the ancient building on the site of present Emmons Store and he, too, employed John Leach to design the massive three story structure shown in our picture. It was a practical building but Leach, himself, is said to have held it in less esteem than the Bank building which was his special pride. The brick for Hill's Block and doubtless for other buildings of that date, was the product of Col. John Carter's brick yard near the Bow line.

Our picture of Hill's Block is reproduced from an old wood cut made, presumably, some years after its completion since the passway between it and the Columbian Hotel next south, is to be seen. This passway to land in the rear was opened by Landlord Mical Tubbs after he took over the tavern in 1835. Since Capitol St. was not opened until years later, this passway was a necessity not only for the tavern yard in the rear but for various small enterprises which flourished along the south wall of the State House grounds. Now and then a caravan show set up its equipment in area of the tavern yard and one of the first of these to arrive in town was "The Grand Caravan of Living Animals"-few in number, alas!-in the summer of 1828. A busy blacksmith shop operated then or later by Bradbury & Gill, was in the rear of Hill's Block.

As soon as the block was completed the Patriot moved in and the well-known sign of the Franklin Bookstore was hung over the north doorway of the building. There it remained until fire destroyed the upper part of the block in 1864, and when Sanborn's Block was built on approxi-

ately the same site, the old sign was rehung for a new bookstore and remained there until 1889. It is now in ^{possession of} ~~the old Building~~ of the N.H. Historical Society. William Low made and lettered the sign in 1810 and "an artist of some note" named Marshall, painted the portrait of the famous Benjamin ^{for} whom the store was named. After 1848, Franklin Pierce's law office was directly above the Franklin Bookstore in Hill's Block,

The first occupant of the middle store in the new block was Col. David Davis, Jr. who advertised in the Patriot (9/24/27) "dry goods, cloths, and groceries". In addition he secured the services of "William Restieaux of Boston, fashionable tailor"-a young man destined to become one of the town's most substantial citizens. The south end of the block was finished into a public hall called Franklin Hall, and, since it was the best in town, it was in demand for exhibitions, legislative caucuses, public meetings and occasional entertainments. A dramatic club called "The Myrtle Wreath" gave theatricals there and it was in this hall that Richard Potter of Potter Place, Andover, gave his famous show, "The East Indiaman", admission 25¢.

With growth in business and increase in stage travel, a new public house was needed and in 1827, William Richardson undertook the enterprise choosing for a site the south end of the Stickney farm. There, directly opposite the State House, he built a two story structure of wood which was painted white with green blinds. Appropriately enough, it was named for the proud bird perched upon the State House dome-Eagle Coffee House. On the east side of the house an ell was built in which Grecian Hall began active rivalry with Franklin Hall across the way. Of many scenes of gayety in Grecian Hall, the first was the Jackson ball which crowned the festivities marking the anniversary in 1828, of Gen. Jackson's victory at New Orleans in the War of 1812. It was here that the first repertoire troop of professionals appeared in Concord and, in the summer of 1828, produced among other classics the play of Othello. Concord was