

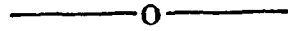
SKETCHES OF CONWAY.

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SKETCHES OF CONWAY.



THE town of Conway is situated among the beautiful hills that range along the western border of the Connecticut valley. It is admirably located for a pleasant summer resort, being far enough from the lowlands to escape the malarial atmosphere, while at the same time it is easily accessible from every direction. Only four and three fourths miles from Bardwell's station on the renowned Hoosac Tunnel route from Boston to the west, about the same distance from Conway station on the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad and six miles from South Deerfield on the Connecticut River Railroad. Good coaches make daily trips to the above named stations affording, with mail and telegraphic facilities, constant means of communication with all sections of the country.

The settlement of Conway was commenced in 1762, at which time the region was included within the limits of the town of Deerfield. In 1767 enough inhabitants had located here to secure its incorporation as a

separate township. Within the next thirty years so many settlers had been attracted here that it ranked as one of the largest towns in Western Massachusetts, having in 1790 a population of 2092, exceeded only by West Springfield with 2367 and Westfield with 2204. At that time there was a fair prospect of its becoming the leading town west of the river. At the time Franklin County was organized Conway was indeed mentioned for the county seat.

The population of the town was larger between the years 1790 and 1800 than at any other period during its history. This fact, however, does not demonstrate any decline in the business or prosperity of the town, since there has been a larger number of families residing here in later years than at the time when the census returns were as above quoted.

One object in publishing the following sketches has been to enable the reader to judge if the present generation have not, in a fair degree, maintained the institutions established by the fathers.



MAIN STREET. West View.

CONWAY NATIONAL BANK.

The first CONWAY BANK was chartered by the legislature of Massachusetts in 1854, and was one of the earliest pioneers among the financial institutions of Franklin county. The original corporators named in the Act creating the bank were Messrs. Elmund Burke, Charles Parsons and Austin Rice. Strange to say, Mr. Burke never entered the bank which he was most active in organizing. He was so deeply offended because of the final location that he declared he would never set foot within the institution.

Another prime mover in establishing the bank was Gen. James S. Whitney, father of ex Secretary of the Navy, Hon. Wm. C. Whitney. The first officers were Lewis Bodman, President and Wm. B. Hale, Cashier. The capital was originally \$100,000. This was afterward increased to \$150,000 and the institution was uniformly successful, passing but one dividend during its existence of a little more than a decade.

Jan. 12, 1865, the CONWAY BANK was reorganized and converted into the CONWAY NATIONAL BANK with John D. Todd as its first President and Samuel Swan its first Cashier. The career of this bank, like that of its predecessor, has been marked by continuous good fortune. It has always maintained a high position among its sister institutions of western Massachusetts and has experienced none of the violent ups and downs which have come to so many banks during the past twenty five years. Following the example of very many other country banks it has deemed a minimum capital more profitable than a larger one and early in the present year reduced its stock to the original amount of \$100,000 by paying back to the stockholders one third of their first investment.

This bank has never passed a dividend, having paid fifty one in all, aggregating \$280,500. Beside this it

has reserved a surplus fund of \$30,000 and other profits of \$7,182.08. The present board of directors and officers are Messrs. Carlos Batchelder, Chauncey Boice, William A. Forbes, Charles B. Merritt, John B. Packard, Franklin Pease and Charles D. Waite. Carlos Batchelder is President, William G. Avery, Cashier, and Edwin T. Cook, Teller.

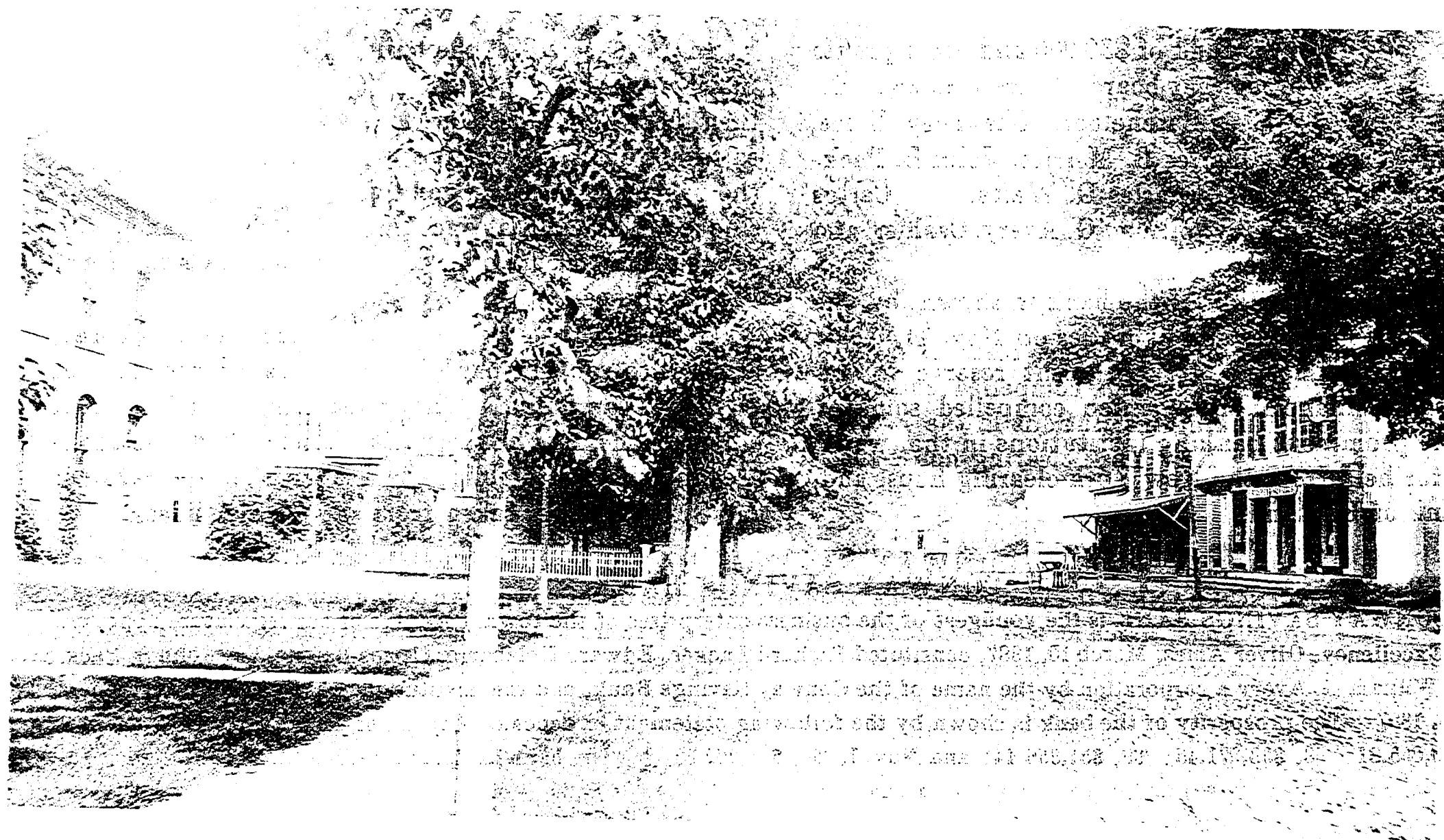
The sound condition of the bank is shown by the statement of resources and liabilities on Nov. 11, 1890, which shows almost a fifty per cent reserve in the midst of the financial crisis which compelled some of the most prominent banking institutions in the world to ask for help from the New York clearing house and the Bank of England.

In January, 1878, the building of the Conway Mutual Fire Insurance Company, in which the bank was then located, was destroyed by fire. The vault remained intact and its contents were unharmed, although the pages of the ledgers and journals were somewhat smoked. The bank at once purchased the lot and erected a substantial building of its own on the site of the former edifice.

On the night of Oct. 23, 1882, there was a desperate attempt to rob this bank by members of the famous "Paddy Ryan gang." They tried in five places to drill a hole in the door of the vault. Their effort was a failure, and they were obliged to flee with only a revolver and \$1.50 in silver taken from the Cashier's desk.

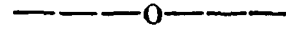
CONWAY SAVINGS BANK.

The CONWAY SAVINGS BANK is the youngest of the business enterprises of the town. An Act of our legislature approved by His Excellency, Oliver Ames, March 10, 1887, constituted Richard Tacker, Edward Delabarre, Carlos Batchelder, John B. Packard and William G. Avery a corporation by the name of the Conway Savings Bank, and the institution was opened for business April 16, 1887. The prosperity of the bank is shown by the following statement of deposits May 1st of each year: 1887, \$10,055.81; '88, \$38,271.45; '89, \$51,356.44; and Nov. 1, '90, \$91,262.83. The bank has paid interest at the rate of four per cent per annum since it started and has accumulated a guaranty fund and other profits of \$613.77.



MAIN STREET. East View.

SCHOOLS.



The large number of "Conway Boys" now filling important and responsible positions in various parts of our country affords abundant evidence that our people have ever taken a lively interest in the cause of education.

In September 1767 the first action was taken toward the support of schools, and but once has the town neglected to make an annual appropriation in their behalf. While unable to furnish all the accommodations afforded in larger towns, we provide reasonable facilities for acquiring an education.

In addition to the the schools furnished by the town "private schools" have been held at various times. As prominent among these we mention the school taught for many years by Dea. John Clary, and the excellent "Hill View" Boarding School for Young Ladies now ably conducted by Mrs. E. C. Perry.

The town has recently united with Williamsburg in securing the services of Prof. Justus Dartt as Superintendent of Schools and much improvement is expected to accrue to our public schools from the adoption of this system.

CONWAY HIGH SCHOOL.

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The Conway Academy was instituted in 1853 and successfully conducted until the school building was destroyed by fire in 1863. The house was rebuilt and in 1866 transferred to the town to be used as a public high school. Of late an increased interest is manifested in promoting the usefulness of this institution. A dinner is given each year and the proceeds applied to improvements at the school. At the last public dinner, August 6th 1890, a handsome nucleus for a permanent fund was created by generous gifts from Marshall Field, Henry Field and Wm. C. Whitney, natives of the town and former pupils in its public schools.



THE CONWAY TOWN LIBRARY

occupies a large room in the town hall. It is under the direction of a board of trustees elected by the voters of the town. At present it contains about 1750 volumes, and is an institution of great value to the towns-people.

SOCIETIES.

The Morning Sun Lodge, F. & A. M. is a large and prosperous society holding its meetings at Masonic hall on Main street.

The Order of the Iron Hall, and Order of the Red Cross are societies, of the endowment class, with rooms over the Bank.

Francis A. Clary Post, 164, G. A. R. and the auxiliary Ladies' Relief Corps have headquarters at Memorial hall.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union have a branch in Conway, holding meetings at the homes of its members.

CATHOLIC CHURCH.

This church is of comparatively recent organization. In the last twenty years so many people of this denomination became residents of the town that a need was felt of church accommodations, and in 1882 a church was built at Burkeville.

This church sustains regular services although they have no resident pastor. The pulpit is at present supplied by Rev. Mr. Jeanette, of Shelburne Falls.



VIEW IN BURKEVILLE.

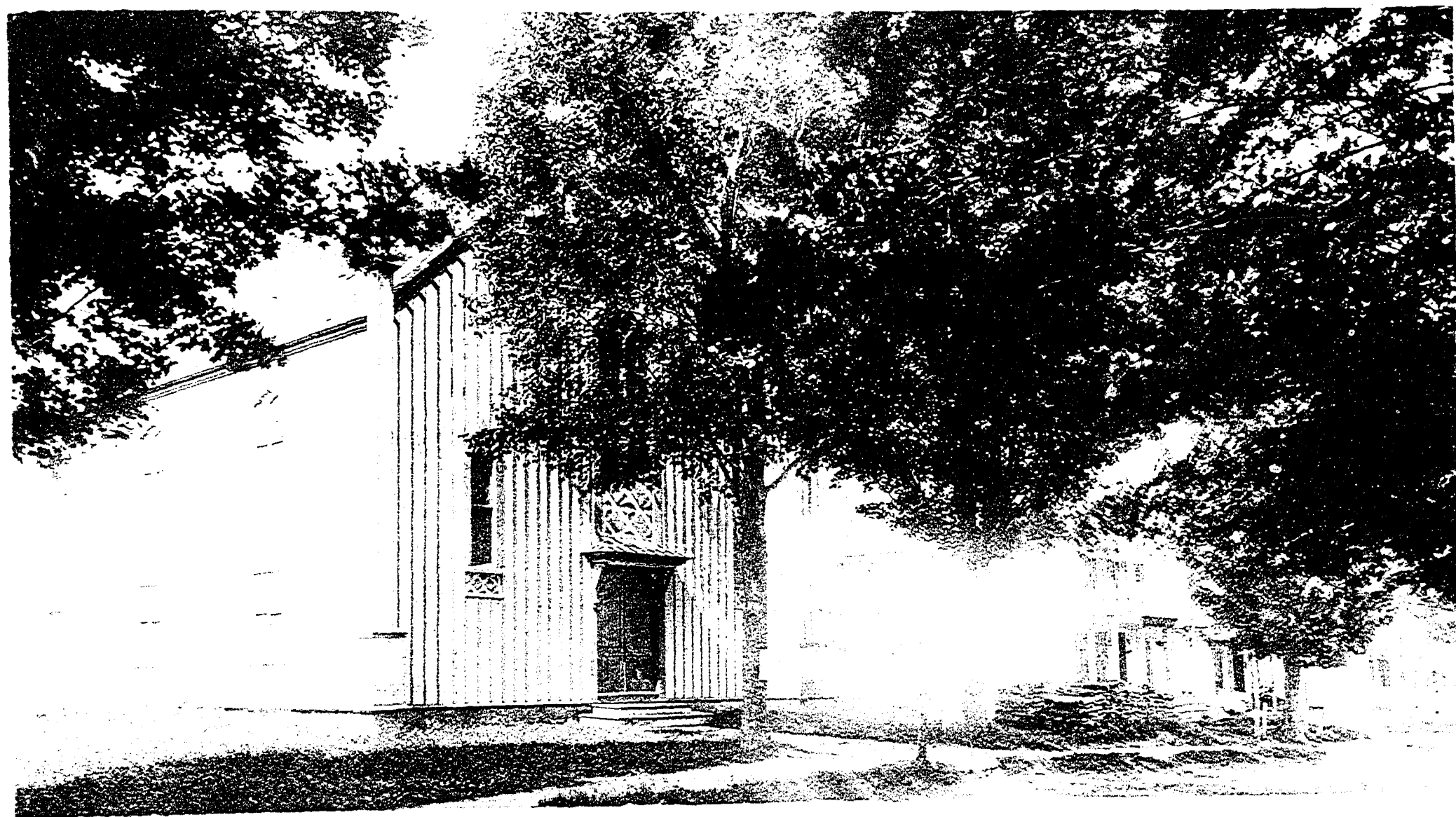
METHODIST CHURCH.

Previous to the organization of the Methodist Episcopal church in the village, several classes had been formed in the town, one at Shirkshire, one at Poland, and another at South Part. All these had for a time flourished, then the interest waned and meetings were finally discontinued. Among the preachers instrumental in promoting these meetings were Lorenzo Dow, Josiah Hayden, William Gordon, Orange Scott, Windsor Ward, J. Cadwell, Philo Hawks and other pioneers of Methodism.

In 1852 meetings were held in a hall over the store at Burkeville, and afterwards at a hall in the school-house, then in the brick building near the Burkeville bridge. At length the meetings were transferred to the village and held at Bigelow's hall on River street and Field's hall near Main street.

The present church was organized April 30, 1871. Their house for worship was built in 1872. Since its organization this church has had the following ministers: W. H. Cook, A. C. Manson, J. A. DeForest, W. N. Richardson, I. A. Mesler, H. Matthews, J. W. Fulton, G. H. Clarke and G. E. Sanderson.

The above sketch is abridged from Rev. George H. Clarke's "History of Methodism in Conway," written in 1887.



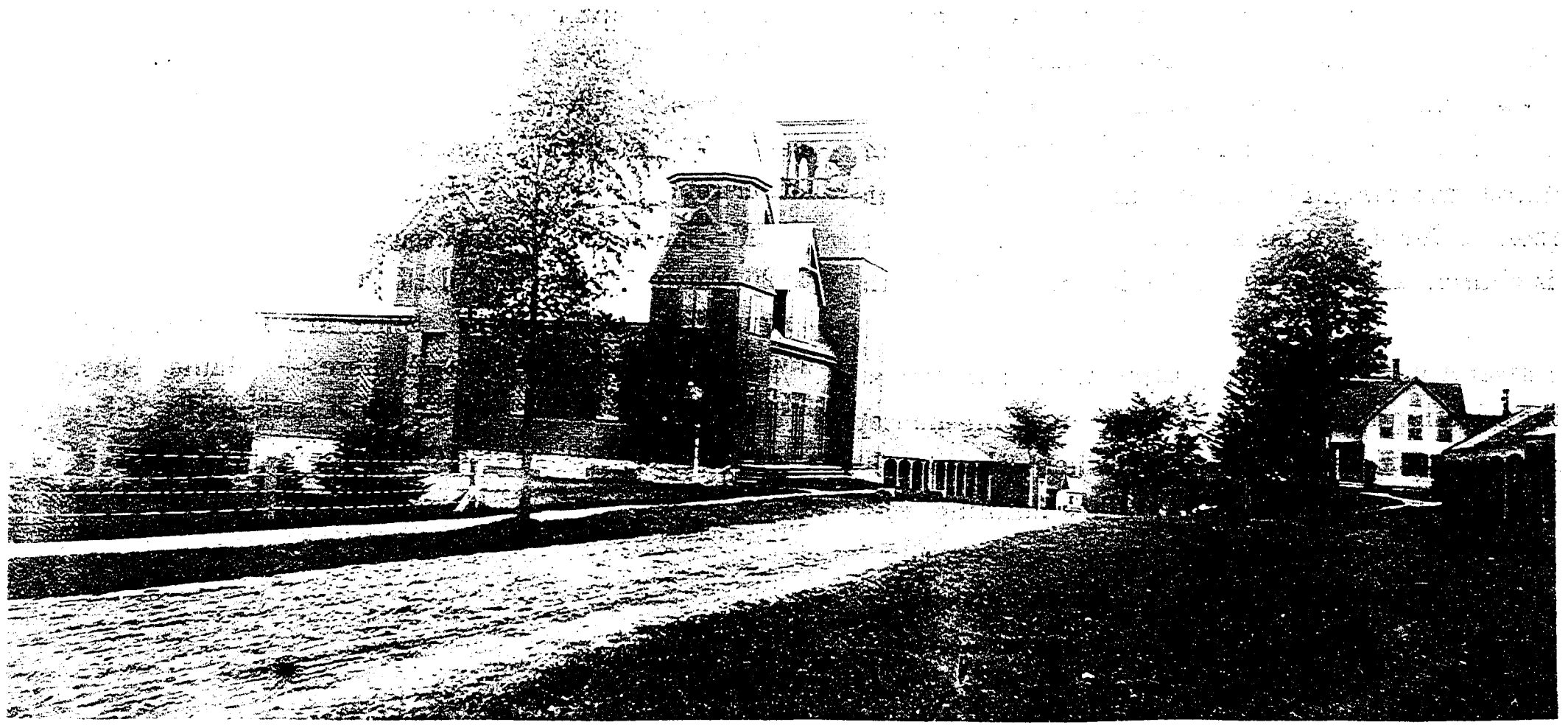
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

The history of the Congregational church begins with the history of the town, being organized July 14, 1768, less than a year after the incorporation of the town. For many years all action for the support of the church was taken at town meetings. Rev. John Emerson, of Malden, was called to become the pastor of this church, and commenced his labors on April 9th 1769.

For several years the leading topic at town meetings was the selection of a site for the first meeting-house. After much controversy it was built where the South Centre school-house now stands. This building was enlarged, as the congregation increased, and served as a place for worship, and for town meetings, until 1842. In that year a larger building was erected where the church now stands. This church was burned in 1885.

The new church edifice, shown on the next page, was built in 1885. It is well built and completely furnished throughout. The large and convenient audience room contains a fine pipe organ, and the chapel, parlor, and other rooms are models of convenience.

Mr. Emerson remained pastor of the church until 1826, Edward Hitchcock, D. D., L. L. D., serving as colleague from 1821 to 1825. Since Mr. Emerson the following ministers have labored here:— Daniel Crosby, Melancthon S. Wheeler, Samuel Harris, D. D., George M. Adams, Elijah Cutler, William A. Thompson, Arthur Shirley, A. B. Cristy, William A. Thomas, and the present pastor, Rev. E. B. Hillard.



ELM STREET.

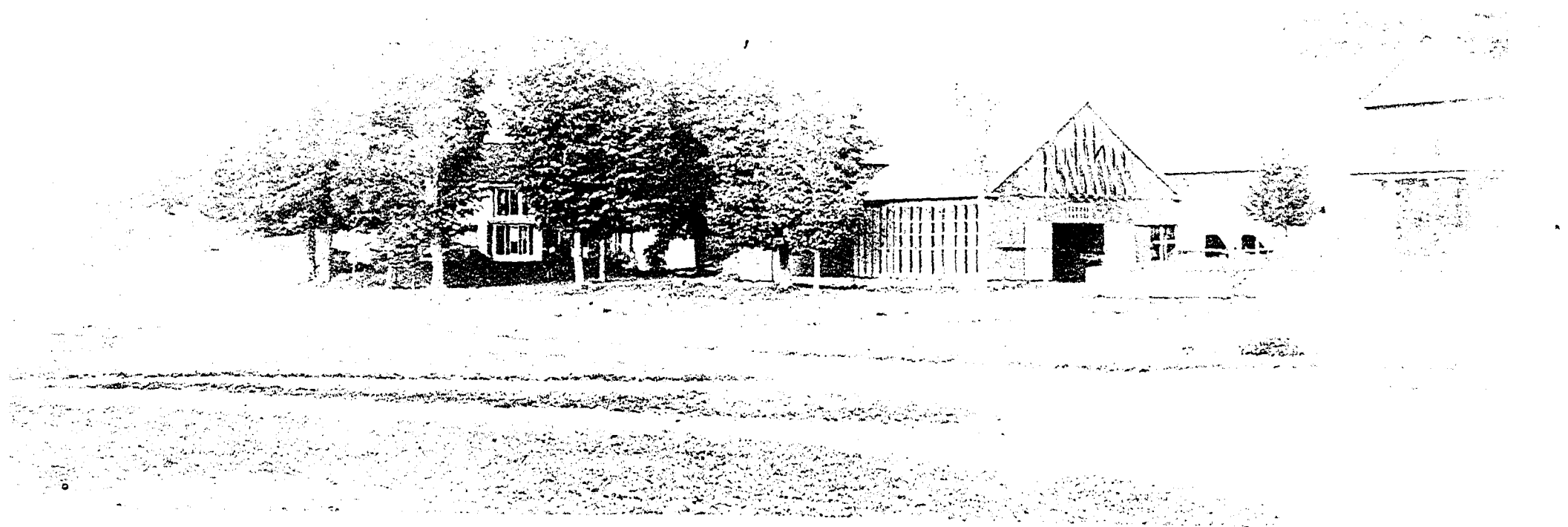


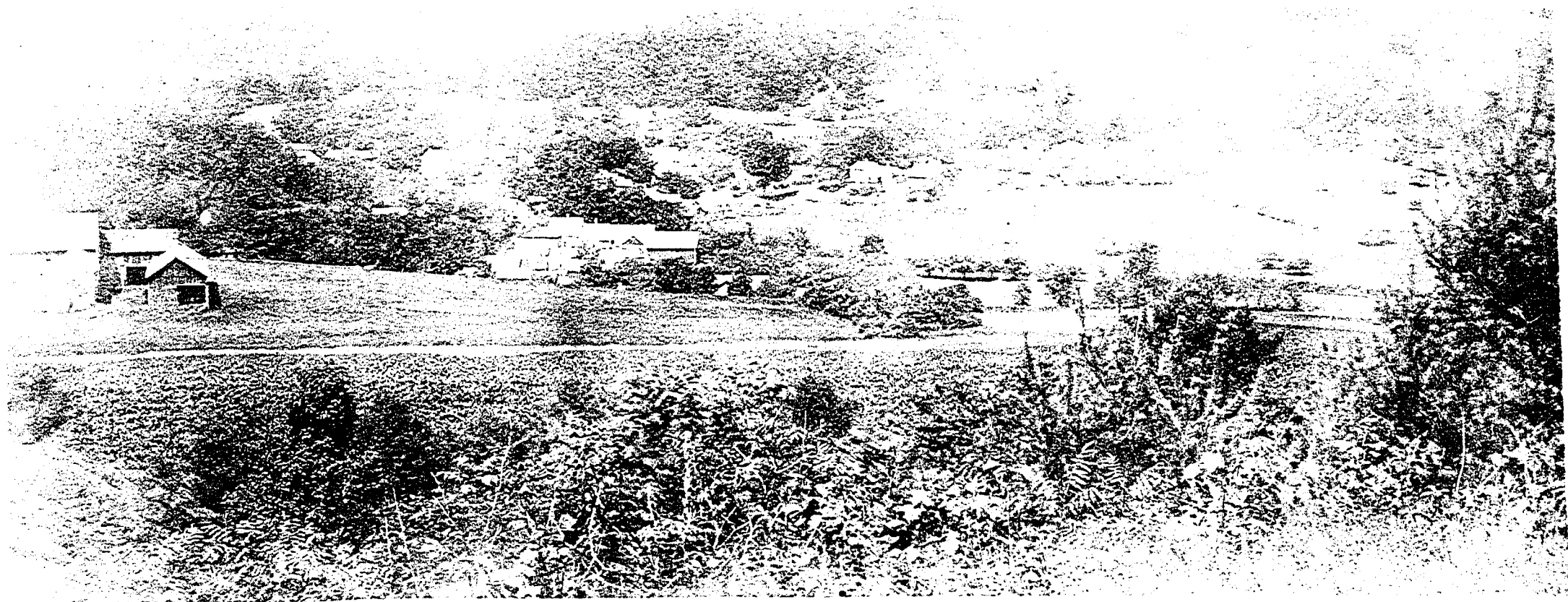
Former residents will recognize the picture on the opposite page as a view in "Pumpkin Hollow," and it is indeed doubtful if the title given in the heading, (by which name the locality has been re-christened,) is ever generally adopted. A former attempt to associate the name of "Church Green" with this hamlet proved unsuccessful, as the older people still cherish the original

and euphonious name given to the neighborhood where they attended church in their childhood.

It was near the common on this street that the first church was built, and in the old cemetery here, many of the first settlers found their final resting place.

In the picture may be seen the thrifty elm planted on the hundredth anniversary of the town's existence.





VIEW OF VILLAGE.

TOWN HALL.

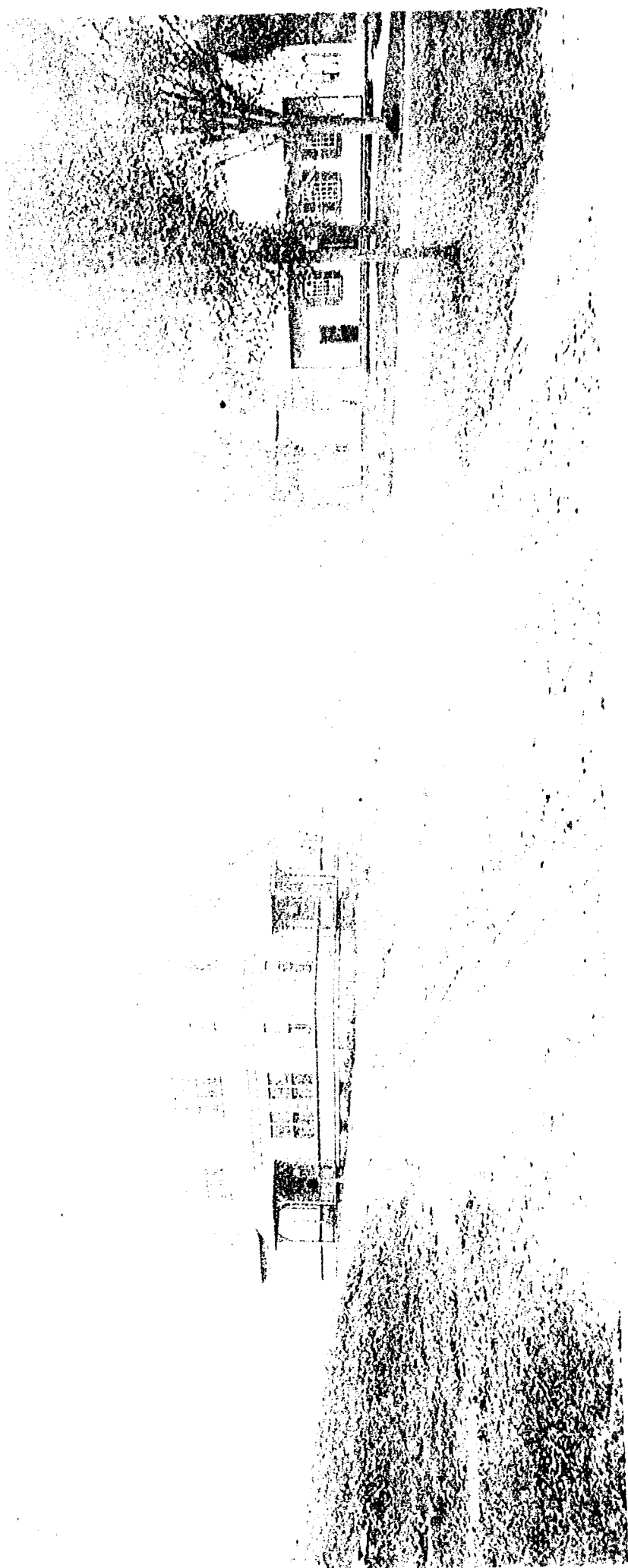


The town for a number of years owned, and used for its public meetings, a hall under the Congregational church which was burned in 1885, while rooms for the use of town officers were rented in the National Bank building on Main Street.

Soon after the fire had destroyed the old hall, Charles Parsons, (for a nominal consideration,) deeded a lot and the town contracted with C. N. Harlow & Co., of Northampton, for the erection of the handsome and commodious town building on the corner of Main and School streets. Work was at once commenced and the edifice ready for occupancy in the fall of 1885.

In the basement is ample room for storage of fuel; on the ground floor is a large room, (containing a fire proof vault,) for the use of town officers, a room dedicated as a memorial to the soldiers of Conway who served their country in the late civil war, and a room occupied by the Conway Town Library; the next floor is used for a public hall, being furnished with patent movable seats, having good stage, curtain, piano and other fixtures.

No town of its size in Western Massachusetts has a more convenient public building than that furnished the citizens of Conway.



BAPTIST CHURCH.

The Baptist Church was organized October 3, 1788, with about thirty members. A few years later their first house of worship was built near the Arms place, and afterwards moved to the lot now owned by the society. In 1840 the last house was erected. In 1884 extensive alterations and improvements were made on this building, the entire structure being raised and new rooms provided in the lower story.

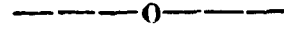
Several extensive revivals have resulted from the labors of this church and its preachers, the most prominent having occurred during the pastorate of Rev. Calvin Keyes in the early years of the present century.

This church, in common with all Baptist churches of New England, experienced no little difficulty in sustaining regular services in the earlier years of its existence. This resulted from being obliged to support their own church while they were also taxed to maintain the Congregational Society, and caused much enmity between the two churches, which happily disappeared when that custom was abolished.

Among the ministers who have labored here are the following: C. Keyes, D. Pease, J. J. Townsend, E. D. Stearns, D. Ives, H. R. Mitchell, F. S. Weston and J. P. Hunter.



INDUSTRIES.



For many years farming was the main industry of the town. Two or three grist mills and several tanneries were erected in different parts of the town. In 1780 Aaron Hayden set up a "fulling mill" near where the grist mill now stands. Several attempts were made to establish a broadcloth factory, and also a cotton mill but with indifferent success. A large tool manufactory, South River Cutlery Company, Conway Mutual Fire Insurance Company and several other business concerns have transacted business here but owing to various reasons are now dissolved or have removed to other places.

In 1837 the Conway Manufacturing Company was incorporated and built the woolen mill at upper village. This mill property was afterwards owned by Edmund Burke and from him the village derived its pres-

ent name of "Burkeville." Later the mill was bought by Edward Delabarre and an extensive business in the manufacture of woolen goods is now carried on by the firm of W. E. Delabarre & Co.

Gen. James S. Whitney and Charles Wells built the cotton mill in 1846. They were succeeded by L. B. Wright. This mill was burned in 1856 but rebuilt. A few years later the property came into the hands of Messrs. Tucker & Cook. This mill is now used by the Tucker & Cook Manufacturing Company in the manufacture of cotton warps. The same company also own the mill built by Gen Asa Howland in the lower part of the village.

Lower down the stream, on the road to Bardwell's Ferry, is another cotton mill owned by Messrs. Brown & Woodward.

Two grist mills are doing a good business at present, one near the tannery site in the village, owned by Emery Brown, and another under the management of D. Seffens two and one half miles north of the village.

F. C. Wells has a saw and lumber mill near Main street, and C. C. Flagg & Son have a similar mill one mile north of Tucker & Cook's lower mill.

The Conway Co-operative Creamery Company was organized in 1886 and their finely equipped factory, near the lower mill, was built the same year. The product of this factory has an enviable reputation which must increase the value of dairys in this section.

There are four firms dealing in dry goods and groceries: Eldridge & Boyden at the store near the Main street bridge, with a branch at "Burkeville;" W. E. Hawks at the cash store, above the bridge Main street; George C. Lee on Elm street; and H. Townsend, Main street, with watches and jewelry in connection.

C. C. Burdett has a drug store in Lawrence's Block, Main street. In his store is the Western Union Telegraph office.

On River street are the following business places:— Carriage manufactory of J. R. & F. Holcomb; blacksmith shop of H. J. Young; shoe shop of R. Adams; meat market of C. A. Smith; harness shop of Wm. M. Bartlett; stove and hardware store of R. G. Rice; barber shop of W. W. Newman; millinery store of Mrs. Freeman and dressmaking rooms of Mrs. H. D. Griggs.

On Elm street is the livery stable of Henry Nye, the lime and cement store of H. D. Boyden, and bakery of Mary E. Fiske.

The industries on Main street, not already mentioned, are: Conway House by A. C. Guilford; livery stable of G. H. Johnson; insurance business of H. W. Billings; printing office of H. E. Miller; upholstery and undertaking rooms of E. C. Foote; and the barber shop G. W. Boyden.

S. A. Pease has a trucking business at Burkeville. R. Germain is a blacksmith on School street. E. F. Flagg deals in lime, and H. D. Bartlett carries on the business of painting and paper hanging. The resident physicians are J. B. Laidley and C. W. Clough.