

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Jaffrey enjoys a rich cultural, agricultural and industrial heritage – a heritage that defines its distinctive small town character. To a remarkable extent, the history of Jaffrey can be told through the wide range of its surviving historical resources – houses, civic and educational buildings, religious structures, mills, cemeteries, farmsteads and surrounding open lands, stone walls, bridges and other transportation structures, and cellar holes – many of which owe their existence to Mount Monadnock or the water power afforded by the Contoocook and smaller streams. All of these resources are unique to Jaffrey and key to differentiating it from other communities. In order to ensure the character of Jaffrey is maintained, it is critical that the community plan for the future of these resources. With carefully managed growth, Jaffrey can retain its distinctive historic character while still meeting the myriad needs of the community.

This chapter includes an overview of how historical events have shaped Jaffrey’s landscape (a more detailed narrative can be found in the Appendix), a description of historic preservation efforts to date, a presentation of prior and current preservation-related issues, and current goals to ensure future preservation of the town’s historical resources.

While the focus of the chapter is on historical resources, the intertwined relationship of Jaffrey’s historical and natural resources cannot be ignored, and many of the goals acknowledge that the future character of the town is tied to careful management of both.

AN OVERVIEW OF JAFFREY’S HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

(Condensed from “A Brief Description of Jaffrey’s Historical and Architectural Development” found in the Appendix)

Jaffrey was laid out as a township in 1749 and incorporated in 1773, one of three Monadnock townships of that period. Farms and small mills were dispersed fairly evenly around the township, but early on a small mill village emerged in Squantum. In 1775 residents built a meetinghouse in what became a hilltop town center, Jaffrey Center, the hub of village affairs for over fifty years. When the Third New Hampshire Turnpike (present-day Route 124) opened in 1802, it passed through Jaffrey Center.

By the late 1830s, East Jaffrey (also on the turnpike) was home to a growing commercial and residential district oriented around a cotton mill and other industries. The railroad’s arrival boosted its development, and East Jaffrey evolved into today’s downtown. Various diverse village industries sustained the town’s vitality throughout the 1900s and fueled the growth of East Jaffrey’s neighborhoods and commercial district.

For nearly 200 years, agriculture was the mainstay for most Jaffrey households. Cattle grazing on the slopes of Mount Monadnock made several farmers wealthy men, but most farms were subsistence operations. For a period in the 1830s and ‘40s, large amounts of potatoes were raised to supply the local starch mills (which, in turn, supplied New England textile mills). Land clearing peaked in the 1850s, after which farming began a slow decline. In the late 19th and first half of the 20th century, dairy farming was a leading activity; a few farms developed specialties in poultry.

As early as the 1820s, summer tourism became an integral piece of the local economy. The lure of Monadnock and the town’s many ponds drew artists, literary figures and academics. Many purchased former farms and renovated them into gracious summer homes with attractive landscaping and

painstakingly maintained views of the mountain. A few summer residents developed model gentleman farms, and others played active roles in the town's history.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES SURVEY

Under the auspices of the Historic District Commission, Jaffrey has surveyed most of its historical resources, including residences, churches, schools, civic buildings, mills, farms and outbuildings, and cemeteries. A survey of the town's bridges, historic archeological sites, historic rural roads and significant stone walls is not yet complete.

Jaffrey Historical Resources Survey

This survey, undertaken in 1986, covered the entire town and provides minimum documentation for most of the historical and architectural resources erected prior to 1940. Each resource is documented on a form that includes a photograph, address, approximate construction date, brief architectural description and some historical information. The survey also includes an overview history of Jaffrey, a town map locating each resource, and recommendations for preservation planning. The survey is on file at the Clay Library.

Jaffrey Agricultural Survey

In 1996, all of the agricultural resources currently or formerly associated with an active farm and erected prior to 1936 were recorded on survey forms. The data includes addresses, photographs, sketch maps, approximate construction dates, and brief descriptive information for each property. The survey also included a summary of Jaffrey agriculture; an overview of the types of agricultural resources that survive; a town map locating each resource; and detailed documentation for three farms: Sawyer Farm (survey #89), Milliken Tavern/Chiselhurst Farm (#5) and Stevens Farm (#39). The survey is on file at the Clay Library.

Significant Historical Resources

- Mount Monadnock
- Jaffrey Meetinghouse and town clock
- All six town cemeteries (Conant, Cutter, Old Burying Ground, Phillips-Heil, Village and Small Pox)
- Downtown Jaffrey listed on the National Register of Historic Places (includes early residential structures that preceded the later commercial/institutional development, mills, commercial blocks, churches, civic buildings, school and later residences). Key resources include Clay Library, White Bros. Mill, Common, Cutler Memorial Building and town clock, Jonas Melville House (stone house at 74 Main St.), bandstand.
- Squantum Historic Area (includes Common, row of five early 19th c. workers' dwellings, brick industrial building, and several mill owners' houses, including one with Rufus Porter murals)
- Jaffrey Center Historic District (includes Common, Meetinghouse, horse sheds, school house, Old Burying Ground, Cutter Cemetery, Melville Academy, inn, and residences)
- Cheshire Village (includes unusual group of early 19th c. mill housing)
- Amos Fortune House, 76-78 Amos Fortune Road (in private ownership)
- Jaffrey's agricultural landscape (includes farm houses and outbuildings, stone walls, open spaces, and views)
- Grand hotels (Mountain Shade House, The Ark and former Monadnock Inn)
- Summer cottages and camps (particularly around Thorndike, Contoocook and Gilmore Ponds)
- Stone-arch bridges (located at Squantum, Old Sharon Road, and two on Old Peterboro Road) and railroad bridges (at least three near Route 202, in vicinity of DD Bean)

- Rural roads

SUMMARY OF PAST PRESERVATION ACTIVITY

Community Groups Involved in Historic Preservation

- Jaffrey Historic District Commission (HDC): municipal land use body with a regulatory function within the Jaffrey Center Locally Designated Historic District and advisory role throughout entire town
- Jaffrey Historical Society (JHS): non-profit, membership organization that is committed to preserving local history and historical artifacts
- Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society (JCVIS): non-profit, membership organization committed to maintaining and sustaining a vibrant and historic New England village
- TEAM Jaffrey, part of the NH Main Street Program, established 1999

Community Historic Preservation Efforts

- One of first towns in NH to introduce a Preservation Chapter in Master Plan
- Most of the town's historical resources surveyed at a reconnaissance level
- First town to undertake a town-wide agricultural survey
- Design guidelines adopted for Jaffrey Center
- Design guidelines adopted for downtown
- Downtown plaque program initiated, using data from the Downtown Jaffrey National Register nomination
- Distinctive street signs utilized within the Downtown Jaffrey National Register Historic District and within Jaffrey Center
- Meetinghouse restored
- Little Red Schoolhouse restored
- Horse Sheds restored
- Park Theater rehabilitated (in progress)
- Historic cemeteries well maintained (ongoing)
- Certified Local Government designation obtained through the NH Division of Historical Resources, enabling Jaffrey to receive technical assistance and training and to apply for matching grants. To date, Jaffrey has received grants for the following projects:
 - Historical Resources chapter for Master Plan, 2006
 - Jaffrey Center Design Guidelines, 1996
 - Agricultural Survey, 1996
 - Conference on meetinghouses and window restoration, 1994
 - *Jaffrey Then and Now*, 1994
 - Historical Resources Survey, 1986
 - Meeting House Window Restoration, 2004-2005
 - Jaffrey Center Walking Tour Guide, 2006

Historic Districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Downtown Jaffrey, 2002

Includes over 125 properties and encompasses historic limits of downtown (historically known as East Jaffrey)

Jaffrey Center Historic District, 1975

Includes 36 buildings and associated open space

NB: The boundaries of the locally designated and the National Register district boundaries for Jaffrey Center coincide.

Individual Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Jaffrey Mills, 41 Main Street, 1982

(also known as Stone Brothers & Curtis (White Brothers) Mill)

NB: Since included within bounds of Downtown Jaffrey Historic District

Locally Designated Historic Districts

Jaffrey Center Historic District, 1970

Includes 36 buildings and associated open space

NB: The boundaries of the locally designated and the National Register district boundaries for Jaffrey Center coincide.

Recent Publications Relating to Local History

“A Walk Around Downtown Jaffrey.” (TEAM Jaffrey and Jaffrey Historical Society, 2004)

Design Guidelines for Jaffrey Center Historic District (Jaffrey Historic District Commission, 1996)

Jaffrey Then and Now: Changes in Community Character (Jaffrey Historic District Commission, 1994)

Jaffrey Roads and Streets 1773-1980. (Jaffrey Historical Society, 1982)

Jaffrey Center, New Hampshire. Portrait of a Village. (Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society, Inc., 1976)

ISSUES AND GOALS

Status of Conservation & Preservation Issues Identified in 1997 Master Plan

This status report was prepared on behalf of the Jaffrey Historical Society by a private consultant in historic preservation specializing in historic building research, community preservation plans, design review guidelines and feasibility studies.

Diminishment of rural landscape:	Better	Same	Worse
Jaffrey’s countryside and historic agricultural and rural landscapes need protection			xx
Viewsheds, esp. along major roads, are being lost			xx
Open space is disappearing			xx
Strip development is redefining major roadways		xx	
Existing dirt roads are at risk of becoming paved		xx	

Diminishment of rural landscape:	Better	Same	Worse
New construction occurs without regard to its context, both in terms of design characteristics and setting			xx
Vistas of key sites, such as Mount Monadnock and the Meetinghouse, are not being maintained			xx
Downtown:			
Building rehab is not sympathetic to original building design	xx		
Storefront renovations are often unsympathetic to the historic design	xx		
Contoocook River aesthetics are threatened and/or unrealized	xx		
Traffic/parking tend to dominate/overwhelm downtown			xx
New development is out of character with neighboring structures			xx
Residential buildings are unsympathetically converted to commercial uses	xx		
Above-ground utilities are unattractive		xx	
Town-owned properties:			
There is no mechanism to ensure that additions and alterations to historic buildings in public ownership do not adversely affect their character		xx	
Cemeteries are not inventoried and lack a maintenance/restoration plan	xx		
Key public buildings, such as the Meetinghouse, lack an earmarked reserve fund for capital improvements	xx		
General:			
Landmark resources important to the community could be affected by development pressure (Mt. Monadnock, town commons, cemeteries, library and Meetinghouse specifically cited)		xx	
Planning Board lacks a mechanism to consider the impact of proposed projects on historical resources		xx	

New Issues Identified

- Historical resources are found throughout town and should not be considered limited to Jaffrey Center
- Jaffrey is losing green space, including farmland
- The future of all viewsheds is uncertain
- There is new construction on scenic hillsides
- The protection of views and green space needs greater attention
- Barns are disappearing at a rapid rate
- The role of scenic roads to the rural and historic character of Jaffrey needs stronger acknowledgement
- Jaffrey's ponds play a key role in the town's historic and rural character. Their ecology and viewsheds need to be protected; and the scale, screening and siting of structures along the shore need to be carefully monitored

- An inventory of Conant Cemetery was either never undertaken or has been lost
- Stone walls are always at risk

Issues pertaining to downtown Jaffrey:

- As residences are converted to commercial use, there is no mechanism to ensure their historic character is retained
- There is no trigger in Planning Board review for identifying historical resources and inviting review and comments by the HDC

Goals

- Continue to advocate for the preservation and sensitive development of Jaffrey's significant historical resources and landscape
- Continue to advocate and educate citizens on the importance of Mount Monadnock to the community – as a primary cultural, historic, economic and water resource
- Improve tools to protect Jaffrey's rural character
- Insure stone walls are protected
- Encourage development that reflects and respects the existing landscape
- Conservation Commission will continue to identify critical conservations sites, determine the feasibility of purchase of those sites, and continue to find financial support to maintain the fund.
- Identify historic archeological sites (cellar holes/foundations of houses, outbuildings, mills, etc.)
- Maintain the character of Jaffrey's roads, especially their vistas, historic architecture, and archeological sites
- Promote the protection and preservation of historic barns and other significant agricultural outbuildings
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of Squantum and Cheshire Villages
- Identify cohesive heritage neighborhoods and consider ways to manage future change
- Preserve scenic viewsheds

Descriptions of Preservation Planning Programs

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historical resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources. Resources can be buildings, districts, sites, landscapes, structures or objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture. Properties can be listed in the Register either individually or as part of an historic district. If a property is part of a district, it will be designated either a contributing or a non-contributing resource. Each contributing resource has all the same benefits of listing as individually listed properties.

Benefits of listing on the National Register, whether individually or as part of an historic district, are as follows:

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community
- Some protection from impacts caused by state or federally funded, licensed or assisted projects
- Eligibility for federal tax benefits if undertaking an approved rehabilitation project and the property is income-generating

- Qualification for federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available
- Special consideration or relief in application of access, building and safety codes
- Strong marketing tool for owners and businesses
- Leverage for the community when working with developers, in that listing publicly recognizes a significant community asset.
- Promotion of the unique features of buildings helps owners make sound decisions on rehabilitation and maintenance issues
- No restrictions on using or altering the property, as long as only private funds are involved

State Register of Historic Places

New Hampshire's State Register of Historic Places recognizes and encourages the identification and protection of historical, architectural, archeological and cultural resources. Resources may be buildings, districts, sites, landscapes, structures or objects that are meaningful in the history, architecture, archeology, engineering or traditions of New Hampshire residents and their communities.

A resource must meet at least one of the following four criteria for listing:

1. Tell a story about an event(s) that is meaningful to a community's history
2. Have an association with a person(s) who made important contributions to a community, professional or local tradition
3. Represent a local architectural or engineering tradition; exemplify an architectural style or building type; or serve as a long-standing focal point in a neighborhood or community
4. An identified, but unexcavated and unevaluated archeological site that is likely to yield significant information about the lives, traditions and activities of former residents

Generally, an eligible resource must be at least fifty years old. It must also retain enough of its historic character and physical attributes to illustrate what it is being nominated for.

Properties that are listed on the State Register:

- Are publicly recognized for their significance to a community
- Are considered in the planning phase of local or state-funded or assisted projects
- Qualify for state financial assistance for preservation projects, when such funds are available
- Receive special consideration or relief in application of access, building and safety codes

Owners of properties:

- Receive a complimentary one-year membership to the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance
- Are not restricted from using or altering the property, as long as only private funds are involved

National Register Historic District

A National Register historic district is group of related properties that, instead of listed individually, are listed as a grouping. Contrary to popular belief, there is no regulatory oversight of National Register districts: owners are free to make alterations of any type without seeking approval. For more information, see *National Register of Historic Places* above.

Locally Designated Historic District

A locally designated historic district is one of the most effective and comprehensive mechanisms to manage change in a historic area. Its purpose is to preserve the significant character of an area, while

accommodating and managing change and new construction in accordance with regulations developed by local consensus.

A locally designated historic district is a zoning (usually overlay) district. They are created at the local level by a town majority vote and administered by a historic district commission that approves exterior alterations, new construction and demolition within the district, using officially adopted regulations and guidelines.

Neighborhood Heritage District

A neighborhood heritage district (also known as a neighborhood conservation district) is similar to a locally designated historic district in that both are zoning districts, but the heritage district operates under more flexible, less stringent standards. A heritage district is a group of buildings and their settings that are architecturally and/or historically distinctive and worthy of protection based on their contribution to the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the community. Sometimes a heritage district lacks sufficient significance or integrity to be designated as a traditional historic district. Other times, the neighborhood or political climate favors looser standards.

Overall, heritage districts seek to limit the detrimental effect of alterations, additions, demolitions and new construction on the character of the community through a combination of binding and non-binding regulatory review as allowed by RSA 674:44B.

There is a high degree of citizen participation in creating a heritage district. The neighborhood initiates the process, with support and assistance from the historic district commission and planning board/staff. Residents develop the standards under which the district is administered, by deciding what the special qualities of the neighborhood are, and what type of change they wish to avoid. Once established, neighborhood representatives sit on the review board.

Demolition Review Ordinance

A demolition review ordinance (often called a demolition delay ordinance) can help prevent the loss of historically and architecturally significant buildings. While such an ordinance does not prevent demolition, it provides a valuable time-out to explore alternatives, and many communities with the ordinance report a high success rate in saving important buildings. The ordinance can apply to an entire community or only to designated areas. Some municipalities impose a longer delay for resources listed on the National or State Registers.

Generally, the ordinance is adopted as an amendment to the building code. It may be administered by the Town with input from the Heritage Commission. The delay period can be for any specified period of time, but usually runs from thirty to ninety days, or a sufficient time period to evaluate the significance of the building, meet with the owner to discuss concerns and options, hold a public hearing, document the structure and perhaps salvage distinctive architectural features. The criteria for triggering the ordinance typically requires that the building (or structure) be at least fifty years old; be visible from a public right-of-way; and be at least 250 square feet. However, if a qualifying building has been determined by the building inspector to be a public hazard, it is exempt from the ordinance. In crafting a demolition review ordinance, it is advisable to structure it so it can run in tandem with the timeframe imposed by other permits that might be required.

Preservation Easement

A preservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement that protects a significant historic, archaeological, or cultural resource. It provides assurance to the owner of an historic or cultural property that the property's intrinsic values will be preserved by subsequent owners. An easement grants partial interest in a property, through sale or donation, to a qualifying local governing board or non-profit historical organization (the grantee). With a preservation easement, the owner gives that second party the right to protect and preserve the historic and architectural features of the property. The property remains in private ownership, and the town continues to receive annual tax revenue.

Barn Easement

Under state law passed in 2002 (RSA 79-D), municipalities can grant property tax relief to barn owners who can demonstrate the public benefit of preserving their barns or other old farm buildings and agree to maintain their structures for a minimum of ten years by means of a preservation easement. The statute defines agricultural structures to include barns, silos, corn cribs, ice houses and other outbuildings, as well as the land on which they sit. The structure must currently or formerly have been used for agricultural purposes and be at least seventy-five years old. At last count, nearly 200 New Hampshire barns and other agricultural buildings in forty-eight towns had been protected in this manner.

The law is based on widespread recognition that many of New Hampshire's old barns and agricultural outbuildings are important local scenic landmarks and help tell the story of agriculture in the state's history. Yet many of these historic structures are being demolished or not maintained because of the adverse impact of property taxes. The law is intended to encourage barn owners to maintain and repair their buildings by granting them specific tax relief and assuring them that assessments will not be increased as a result of new repair and maintenance work. It is strictly voluntary on the part of the property owner, and it combines established criteria and guidelines at the state level with decision-making and implementation at the local level.

Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive (Downtown Tax Incentive)

Newly passed by the legislature, the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive (**HB 657**) encourages investment in downtowns and village centers by temporarily granting property tax relief in exchange for properties that have been substantially rehabilitated and on which the owner has granted an easement, ensuring there is a public benefit to the easement. Qualifying properties must be located downtown and undergo a rehabilitation costing at least 15% of the building's pre-rehab assessed value, or \$75,000, whichever is less. The rehabilitation must be consistent with the municipality's master plan or development regulations.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES CHAPTER APPENDIX

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF JAFFREY'S HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Geographic Context

The Town of Jaffrey is located on a ridge that forms the watershed between the Connecticut and Merrimack River valleys. Its landscape is dominated by the slopes and 3,165-foot summit of Mount Monadnock. Rolling hills, whose good drainage and sunny slopes provided fine dwelling sites for its early settlers and later for summer residents, characterize the rest of the town. Within the town's bounds are a number of bodies of water, including Thorndike, Gilmore, Cummings, Bailey, Cheshire, Garfield and Parker, Jones, and Gilson ponds, as well as a section of Contoocook Lake and Mountain Reservoir. The Contoocook River forms a major waterway, originating in Contoocook Lake and flowing through downtown Jaffrey, where it powered nineteenth-century industry. In addition to the river, there are numerous brooks, many of which provided water power for early, smaller mills.

Historical and Architectural Development

Jaffrey is one of three contiguous towns collectively known as the Monadnock townships (the others are Rindge and Dublin) that were laid out in the 1740s, shortly after the boundary line between Massachusetts and New Hampshire was resolved. Each was granted by the Masonian Proprietors, a group of wealthy Portsmouth citizens who operated essentially as a speculative land company and granted many of southern New Hampshire's towns. The recipients of Jaffrey's thirty-five-square miles of primeval forest in 1749 were forty individuals, most of them residents of Dunstable (now Nashua and Hollis). Their new settlement was known variously as "Monadnock No. 2," "Middle Monadnock," or "Middletown." The township was divided into 220 lots, of an average 100 acres each.

Scattered settlers were in Jaffrey even before it was set aside as a township, though until the cease of the French and Indian War in 1763, most were transient. A saw and grist mill stood in Squantum as early as the mid-1740s. By the late 1760s, some thirty settlers, nearly all of Scotch-Irish descent, had made Jaffrey their permanent home. In 1773, with the addition of another ten families, Jaffrey was incorporated as a town, named for George Jaffrey, a member of the governor's council and Masonian Proprietor. These early families initially lived in low, roughly constructed dwellings that do not typically survive.

As the town grew, saw and grist mills appeared alongside streams, providing early residents with lumber to construct buildings and edible grain. In addition to the mills at Squantum, a saw mill was erected on the Contoocook at Hadley's Crossing (near the intersection of Lehtinen Road and Old Route 202) prior to 1768. Another early saw mill stood on Mountain Stream, north of Gilmore Pond, in an area later called Mineral Spring Village or Ballou City; it was at this mill that lumber for the Meetinghouse was sawn. At Slab City, located on Gilmore Lane and the east shore of Jones Pond, were grist and saw mills, as well as the town's first carding mill. Other small-scale (and somewhat later) mills included clothespin and chair stock mills on Mountain Stream at Bailey Mills and a woodenware shop at Hodge Mill on Tyler Brook.

In 1775, residents fulfilled one of the primary requirements for the new town – erecting a meetinghouse. Located in the geographic center of town, the meetinghouse became the focal point of a small town center – Jaffrey Center. Citizens established a burial ground behind it and built a minister's residence nearby. Private dwellings far more substantial than those built in previous years and a system of streets that radiated out from the hilltop village quickly followed. With the opening of the Third New Hampshire Turnpike in 1802 (present-day Route 124), and the substantial trade it brought, Jaffrey Center enjoyed a spurt of growth that continued for several decades.

By the late 1830s, East Jaffrey—today’s downtown and also located on the turnpike—had begun to eclipse Jaffrey Center in importance. Its proximity to the Contoocook River and water power ripe for large-scale industrial development soon made it a thriving village that became the center of local affairs. Although town meeting remained in the Center until the early 20th century, East Jaffrey was home to a growing commercial and residential district, oriented around a major cotton mill and smaller industries, mostly based on wood products. Just east of the village – and contributing to its economy—was another cotton mill, Cheshire Mill, that was accompanied by an unusual group of corporate workers’ housing – all known as Cheshire Village. When the Monadnock Railroad arrived in 1870, it gave a boost to growth in the greater village, which continued to expand well into the 20th century.

For nearly 200 years, agriculture was the mainstay for the bulk of Jaffrey households outside of the three major villages (Squantum, Jaffrey Center and East Jaffrey). Farms were scattered throughout the entire community, as all but the upper reaches of Mount Monadnock proved arable or suitable for grazing. Thirteen district schools, each with its own schoolhouse, served the scattered farm families. The original 100-acre lots granted in 1749 were divided into tillage land, pasture land and woodlot. The Third New Hampshire Turnpike, which bisected the town, brought an enormous potential for prosperity; wagons loaded with beef, pork and farm produce crowded the roads as teamsters brought farm goods to urban markets, trading them for molasses, sugar, cloth and other city products. Large droves of animals – especially cattle – also traveled the route, in the spring to local and farther afield pastures for summer grazing, and returning in the fall, fattened and ready for the Brighton slaughterhouses. Though sheep was the principal livestock in much of New Hampshire between 1815 and 1840, Jaffrey specialized in cattle that grazed on the lower slopes of Monadnock. As pasture land in urban areas became too pricey for such use, cattle raisers looked to the slopes of distant mountains to graze their animals, and Mount Monadnock offered particularly fertile pasture land. As many as 5,000 acres around the mountain accommodated 2,000 cattle in the 1870s, and the owners of these mountain pastures profited greatly. In addition to these summer cattle, several local farmers maintained sizeable herds.

Most of Jaffrey’s farms, however, were small-scale subsistence operations with various specialty crops coming in and out of fashion. Large amounts of cheese and butter, products with ready markets in urban areas, were produced on local farms. In the 1840s, potato production surged for three reasons: (1) Irish immigration was at its height, and many immigrants settled on local farms; (2) the vegetable grew readily in the local soil; and (3) potato starch manufacturing, taking advantage of crop surpluses, had become a major local industry in the 1830s and 1840s. In 1811, a Wilton scientist was the first to commercially produce starch from potatoes. The usefulness of starch was quickly recognized by New England’s textile mills, and the new industry took off. The Prescott family, who had made substantial sums of money in cattle grazing, financed a substantial starch factory in Squantum in the early 1830s. Both Jaffrey’s potato production and starch industry declined ca. 1850, when a potato disease discouraged local planters, and local mills could not compete with the larger-scale production in Maine’s factories.

After the railroad came to Jaffrey in 1870, agricultural production changed. Refrigerated cars, invented in 1881, allowed many farmers to shift from butter and cheese production to more profitable milk, which could be shipped without spoilage to distant urban centers. Nearly all of Jaffrey’s milk came from four farms.

Land clearing for agriculture peaked in the decade prior to the Civil War, after which farming as an occupation began a slow decline. New England farms could not compete with the lure of western lands and factory work, to say nothing of the other opportunities revealed to young soldiers in the course of their war travels. Fields and pastures slowly grew over, and some farms were altogether abandoned. Between 1870 and 1880, the number of farms dropped from 165 to 153.

Dairy continued to be an important industry into the early decades of the 20th century, supplying both local and distant markets. In 1933, there were still forty-nine active farms. During that decade, however, local agriculture began to change quickly. Several farms ceased operations and others shifted their focus to produce what could be sold from roadside stands. A few farms developed specialties in poultry during the 1930s, a period when poultry raising gained strong interest throughout much of New Hampshire. The industry peaked locally in the late 1960s; with 30,000 hens and an accompanying egg hatching business, the Coll Poultry Farm was the largest such operation in the region by the 1970s. By the early 1960s, only five dairy farms remained in Jaffrey; in 2006 there are none.

As early as the 1820s, summer visitors came to Jaffrey, drawn chiefly by the lure and beauty of Mount Monadnock, making the town one of the first mountain resorts in New England. Visitors hiked up the mountain and stayed at one of the many spots on or near its slopes offering food and shelter. Authors wrote extensively of the mountain's lore and allure; among those so inspired were literary greats Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Hawthorne, Mark Twain, William Ellery Channing, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Willa Cather and Rudyard Kipling. The mountain also drew scores of artists. Monadnock has been called one of the world's best-loved mountains.

After the Civil War, tourism picked up markedly. There were no fewer than six grand hotels, and numerous private homes opened their doors to summer visitors, frequently adding porches or wings to accommodate the guests. Many visitors returned to purchase older houses, often rescuing them from deterioration, adding porticos, porches, fieldstone or cobblestone chimneys and foundations, and roof dormers. They also designed extravagant gardens with hedges, formal plantings, and granite walls, and created gracious, tree-lined drives and walkways. Of paramount importance, however, was opening up – or maintaining – the vistas of Mount Monadnock. Some summer residents maintained active farms, either reusing earlier barns or building larger, more modern barns. Some half-dozen model farms existed at the turn-of-the-20th-century, where cattle or horses were maintained year-round with the assistance of full-time managers, who followed the most up-to-date and innovative technology in animal husbandry.

Jaffrey's various bodies of water complemented Mount Monadnock in drawing summer residents. In the 1870s, after the arrival of the Monadnock Railroad transformed travel, the first attempt at promoting recreation on the shores of Contoocook Lake was made. A steamer offered lake cruises, and a trotting course provided the opportunity to ride or watch equestrian events. Summer residents from New York City first settled Gilmore Pond, prized for its beauty and serenity, in the late 1880s. At about the same time, professionals and merchants from Boston gravitated toward Thorndike Pond. Word of Jaffrey's beauty and cultural life spread among academic and professional circles, drawing clusters of New England college graduates.

Jaffrey was fortunate that, by the Depression, its manufacturing base had expanded beyond textiles. At a time when most New England communities were devastated by the loss of major employers, Jaffrey continued to prosper as a regional employment center.

In 1897 the Granite State Tack Company (later renamed W.W. Cross & Company and yet later a division of PCI) was founded; by 1930 it was the largest manufacturer of tacks in the world, and a small neighborhood known as KK Village developed around the mill just east of East Jaffrey. Bean and Symonds produced box hooks from 1912 into the 1960s. In 1938, D.D. Bean & Sons Company was established to manufacture matchbooks; the business continues to operate today. Other local industries in the post-World War Two era included several woodworking and electronic plants. Millipore Corporation began producing industrial filters in Jaffrey in 1972, and TFX Medical, Inc., has made medical tubing here since 1980. More recent industries of note include Medefab, makers of medical devices since 1990; Johnson Abrasives, producers of coated abrasives since 1979; and New England Wood Pellet, established in 1998.

Jaffrey's Major Villages

Squantum

Located in the southeast corner of Jaffrey, Squantum is a small village that included some of the town's first settlers who erected saw and grist mills in the 1740s. In the 19th century, starch, potash, woodturning, pail and clothespin factories and shops operated here, followed by Thomas Annett's manufactory of round, veneer boxes. In the early 20th century, Annett expanded production to include baskets, toys, wood finish-trim and boxes of all types. Though none of the historic mills survive, a cluster of buildings, including a brick structure that appears to be a former office for a mill, mill owners' houses, and an unusual row of Federal-style workers' dwellings, continue to convey the village's early history.

Jaffrey Center

Jaffrey Center is the original town center. In 1775 residents raised the Meetinghouse, which was used for town meetings and church services. Behind the Meetinghouse, the settlers laid out a large burying ground, and across the street they erected a house for the minister. A system of roads radiated out from the village. After the Third New Hampshire Turnpike (Route 124) opened, Jaffrey Center became an important stagecoach stop for travelers headed between Boston and Walpole. The village's two taverns, three stores and several shops prospered from the traffic, as well as from the merchants, wealthy farms and professionals who resided there. Cutter's tannery and currier shop operated throughout the first half of the 19th century. The first half of the 19th century brought fine examples of the Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival residential styles to the Center. Melville Academy, erected in 1832, drew students from throughout New England, many of whom boarded in local homes. By the 1830s, East (downtown) Jaffrey started to draw commerce and civic activity away from the Center, though town meeting continued to be held in the Meetinghouse until 1914.

Jaffrey Center played a critical role in the town's early tourism industry. In the post-Civil War era, many summer visitors stayed in the Center's inns, and more than a few residents opened their homes to seasonal boarders. The Center became an enclave for professionals and academics, a large number of whom had been classmates at Amherst College. They purchased abandoned farms and historic houses, which were often altered with Colonial Revival features, and painstakingly preserved the vistas toward Mount Monadnock. In 1906 a group of public-spirited citizens established the Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society which, over the years, has played a leading role in restoring key properties, such as the Meetinghouse, horse sheds and Little Red Schoolhouse, and improving open space and vistas within the Center.

In 1970, the citizens of Jaffrey recognized the historic and architectural significance of Jaffrey Center by designating it a local historic district. Five years later, the village was also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Downtown Jaffrey (East Jaffrey)

The first mill in downtown Jaffrey was erected ca. 1770 on the Contoocook River by John Borland, whose lot included a large part of the downtown. This saw and grist mill was soon joined by a linseed oil mill. East Jaffrey remained a minor village until the Third New Hampshire Turnpike passed through it, bringing with it travel and goods from points northwest and into Vermont. In 1814 a cotton mill was erected, completed only six years after the state's first such mill was built in nearby New Ipswich. Around the mill and the adjacent river crossing emerged a small commercial center, with stores, shops, church, parsonage, several hotels and dwellings. The Turnpike remained the spine of the village, but side streets soon joined it. In the 1840s the village acquired a school and post office, and its name was changed from Factory Village to East Jaffrey (in 1946, citizens voted to drop "East" from the village name).

During the mid-19th century, East Jaffrey enjoyed a spurt of growth, with additional streets, businesses and dwellings. In 1868, a brick cotton mill replaced the old wooden building, and a few years later, the facility added another brick building on the opposite bank of the river to house a boiler room, machine shop, picker room and dye house. Over 100 employees worked in the cotton mill or one of the company's other mills, which included grist, saw, planing mills that produced shingles, lath, finished lumber and boxes. Just north of East Jaffrey, but influencing its development, was Cheshire Mill, built in 1823 on the Contoocook River. Originally a cotton mill, it was rebuilt in 1828; a cluster of housing for its workers stood behind the mill. The owners of Jaffrey Mills ultimately bought this factory. In 1938 D.D. Bean & Sons purchased it for the production of book matches, an industry that continues to operate today.

The village's prosperity during the mid-19th century is still reflected in the dozens of houses built in the Greek Revival style. An influx of Irish and French Canadian immigrants to work in the mills resulted in the construction of the first St. Patrick's Church in 1887, to serve the Catholic population. The village continued to expand in the late 19th and early 20th century, with a wide range of domestic architectural styles spanning the economic spectrum, including a spurt of tenement and apartment construction between 1910 and 1920, a library (1896), a doubling of the cotton mill complex, and additional commercial buildings, many of which replaced or significantly updated earlier structures. A tree-planting program initiated in 1860 introduced maples on both sides of Main Street, some of which survive today.

During the Depression, the town undertook several municipal improvement projects, including a fire station, war memorial, and school. Both the 1936 flood and 1938 hurricane/flood caused tremendous damage to the village and fundamentally changed its appearance. To ensure against future such disasters, a dam was built on the Contoocook River next to the newly replaced Main Street bridge in 1938. This between-the-wars era was also one of increased automobile traffic, and three service stations were constructed within four years. Automobile use brought about the cease of passenger rail service in 1953.

Downtown Jaffrey illustrates the evolution of a village center over a 200 year period. It evolved without a deliberate plan, but its appearance today forms an intact and diverse small New Hampshire townscape. The village retains a wide range of distinctive civic, religious, commercial and industrial resources. Its residences represent a cross-section of architectural styles from the early 19th through the mid-20th century and include Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Stick, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, and Moderne – and variants on each. In 2002, Downtown Jaffrey's historic and architectural significance was recognized when the entire village was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.