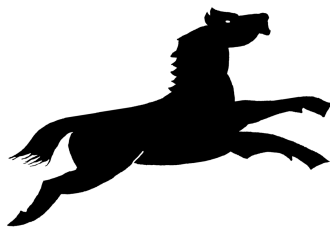


# THE MELVILLE ACADEMY MUSEUM

A WORK IN PROGRESS

FROM 1920 UNTIL TODAY AND INTO THE FUTURE



JAFFREY CENTER  
VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

SUZE AND KEN CAMPBELL

APRIL 28, 2017

## A GUIDED TOUR

### MELVILLE 1st FLOOR HALLWAY AND MAIN ROOM TOUR

#### VIEWING STATIONS AROUND THE FIRST FLOOR ROOM

As you enter the Melville Academy Museum building, you are facing NORTH with the SOUTH at your back. Thorndike Pond Road is on the right, or EAST side of the building. Mount Monadnock is on the left or WEST side of the building. There are two doors into the main first floor room. Start your tour by going through the right hand or East door.



Moving counterclockwise around the first floor room, the “viewing stations” are:

1. The reference table; *SE*
2. The Jaffrey Center Post Office; *E*
3. The “Hearth and Home” area, with the clothes wardrobe and the notable collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century Hannah Davis bandboxes; *E*
4. A table with collection of hats and clothing opposite the wardrobe. *E*
5. Hearth and Home: the bedroom and dining room corner; *NE*
6. The chimney area, with wood stove, and table opposite it featuring heating and lighting in the home; on its right side, the William Preston Phelps painting of Monadnock and Thorndike Pond, and on its left side, two early samplers above a home organ; *N*
7. The *NW* corner, devoted to five people important to Jaffrey Center: Amos Fortune; Laban Ainsworth; Hannah Davis; Jonas Melville; and Willa Cather; and a reading table.
8. The “Communication Center” table in the center area; *NW*
9. The kitchen area; *W*
10. A table with a collection of Shattuck and Cutter memorabilia;
11. The tool center; *W*
12. The model of the Meetinghouse made by Bowman Cann, V.P. of the VIS, in 1922 when he rebuilt the Meetinghouse on the Common; *SW*
13. Behind the Meetinghouse model, a display recognizing the accomplishments of the VIS and dedications to its outstanding members; *S/SW*
14. The teacher’s desk, with the clock, hand bell, gavel and globe. *S*

When you enter Melville Academy Museum, you will see in the **FRONT HALLWAY** items for sale and free brochures on the rust colored chest straight ahead of you. Above these is a newly acquired 1957 painting of the First Church and the houses on Laban Ainsworth Way in the heart of Jaffrey Center, done by Roy W. Johnson in 1957. This is a new gift to the museum from Eileen and Sam Hackler. On the wall to your right is a watercolor of Melville by Howard Hill, and above this is a Smith Dutton percussion rifle, a handmade bow and arrow, and a sword. The Smith Dutton rifles were famous for accuracy and were made in Jaffrey by local gunsmith John Smith Dutton (1820-1881). On the table underneath is a plexiglass donation box model of Melville Academy made by James McQueen. On the south wall (right as you enter) there is a Town proclamation congratulating the JCVIS for its accomplishments on its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2006. By the front door to the west (left as you enter) is a half-barrel cask used for fire extinguishing; Above the right side door to the main Museum room is a stained pine panel from the Old Meetinghouse, used for a tribute to Mrs. L. H. Wetherell, VIS President 1928-1948, who restored the interior of Melville Academy.

*Please sign our guest book. Thank you.*

1.) As you enter the main room, to your right behind the door, there is a reference table with books and scrapbooks containing information relevant to the VIS and the museum. On this table is a *Life Stories* notebook of VIS member obituaries. We welcome more obituaries of VIS members.

2.) Next you will see the old Jaffrey Center Post Office Boxes that were moved from the house seen in the picture on display. The Post Office and General Store were located in the house that stands at 371 Main Street, east of the Monadnock Inn. Meet Mrs. Meyers, Postmistress for 29 years, who greets you from behind the P.O. window. It is said that when she saw you coming, she would get your mail and hand it to you.

3. & 4.) The award-winning collection of famous Hannah Davis bandboxes is on new shelves, under which hang samples of various items of children's clothing. On the table opposite are bonnets, hats, other items of clothing and undergarments, and two dolls.

5.) In the NORTHEAST corner in the "Home and Hearth" area are china, crockery, a trundle bed and patchwork quilt; a cradle. Also hanging here are the prototype of the Spode plates sold by the VIS in 2006 showing scenes of Jaffrey Center, all with Mt. Monadnock in the background.

6a.) On the back or NORTH wall to the right of the chimney are an oil painting of Mt. Monadnock and Thorndike Pond, painted by William Preston Phelps (1848-1917), known as the "Painter of Monadnock." To its left is believed to be the first

known published picture of Mt. Monadnock, "Monadnock Mt. From Jaffrey," appearing in 1840 in New Hampshire State Geologist Charles T. Jackson's work, *The Geology of New Hampshire*. On the table is the pewter tea set given to Melville Academy Museum by Josephine Wetherell in 1963.

6b.) In front of the chimney is a new item, an old H. N. Clark Co. Boston heating stove from the Wesselhoeft/Russell farm house; it was originally in one of the bedrooms there. Above are a bellows and a bed warmer. Opposite the chimney is a table with a display of candle making equipment, examples of household lighting, and flax sorters. Under the table are three foot-warmers.

6c.) On the WEST or left side of the chimney is a George Woods & Co. Boston home organ. Above it are two samplers, the one on the left by Abigail Worster, age 20 in 1806, and the other by Rachel Underwood, age 15 in 1827. Rachel died at age 17, just two years after finishing the sampler. The hand-colored picture in the middle is of Rachel's younger sister, Rohanna Underwood Rollins, with her husband Joseph Rollins. Rohanna was 11 when Rachel died.

7.) In the NORTHWEST central area is the Communication Table with a 19<sup>th</sup> century "face book" – a little album of portraits as well as other desk items.

8.) In the NORTHWEST corner is an exhibit of five people important to Jaffrey Center, moving from right to left chronologically: Amos Fortune, the Reverend Laban Ainsworth, Hannah Davis, Jonas Melville, and Willa Cather. On top of the table are a selection of books, including the three that Willa Cather wrote in and around Jaffrey Center; and a shaving box belonging to Laban Ainsworth. Underneath the table is a basket that belonged to Laban Ainsworth.

9.) On the WEST wall is a display of early kitchen implements, photos of the kitchen interior and exterior of the old Baker House, probably built about 1770 by Thomas Dunshee. In front of the first window are butter churners; in front of the second window is a half-barrel cask used for fire extinguishing.

10.) In the WEST central area is a table with memorabilia relating to the Shattucks and Cutters, two families very central to the history of Jaffrey Center.

11.) On the WEST wall is a display of early farm and logging tools, including an Amos Fortune hay rake made from a tree branch, and an old auger for boring holes in logs. It was once owned by Mr. Edward Bailey and used by him to get his first water supply piped to his house by means of logs.

12.) In the SOUTH/SOUTHWEST corner is the model of the Meetinghouse made by Bowman Cann, vice president of the VIS who was instrumental in rebuilding the actual Meetinghouse in 1922 and restoring the door to the center of the west wall in accord with the plan of Cambridge architect Allen W. Jackson.

13.) On the SOUTH/SOUTHWEST wall behind the model are pictures of key figures in the Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society's involvement with

preserving the Meetinghouse, Melville Academy Museum, and the Horsesheds. They are Mrs. Benjamin (Margaret) Robinson; Mrs. Lawrence (Josephine) Wetherell; builder Bowman Cann, the Misses Fox and other founders. There are also pictures of major contributors to the JCVIS over the years.

14.) On the SOUTH WALL, in the middle of the room, is the teacher's desk, with globe, hand bell and gavel and above it, a wood encased wall clock.

As you exit this room, turn to the right. The hallway leads to The Muse's Stairwell, and the one room school and map display on the second floor.

15.) In The Muse's Stairwell you will see watercolors and photographs of the Meetinghouse, Mt. Monadnock, and Melville Academy Museum - iconic themes and inspiration for photographers and artists, such as J. N. Jones and Eunice Greene of Jaffrey, Frederick James of Kansas City, Howard Hill, formerly resident of Jaffrey, Steve Gehlbach of Jaffrey, Robert J. Kozlow, a NH photographer, and Ann Wardwell of Peterborough.

### MELVILLE SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY AND SCHOOL ROOM

Continue your tour upstairs to the schoolroom, where the mortise and tenon multi-student desk and benches are much the same as they were originally. The second floor has ancient machines, a ship model, antique maps of Jaffrey, Cheshire County, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire and the United States, framed newspapers reporting the Declaration of Independence and the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and memorabilia about the students and teachers of Melville Academy.

1.) At the top of the stairs you will first see a model of the ship "Liberia" made by Tom Page, a long time resident of Jaffrey. Above the model is an etching of the Boston Harbor. In the right hand background you can see the Bunker Hill Monument. It was said that on June 17, 1775, the day that the Meetinghouse was raised here in Jaffrey, people on the Common could hear the sound of the guns all the way from the Battle of Bunker Hill as the British and Americans fought.

2.) On both sides of the hall are examples of early machinery, including a "mystery machine." Prominent in the SOUTHEAST corner is the shoemaker's bench of Jonathan Danforth Gibbs (1796-1882). Above is Gibbs' large 1850 map of Jaffrey, his small, detailed map of the houses in Jaffrey Center, and his photograph. He was shoemaker, mapmaker and chronicler of deaths in Jaffrey. Gibbs (and later builder Bowman Cann) lived in the brick house at 385 Main Street, west of the Monadnock Inn.

3.) At the end of the hall is a display of signs and pictures of the Oribe Tea Barn and Tea House, which thrived between 1911 and 1980, and after that has alternated as a shop and a gathering place for parties and meetings. It housed the Jaffrey Center Post Office for a few years in the 1970s.

4.) As you enter the school room through the door at the EAST end of the upstairs hall, you see on the EAST wall, pictures of George Jaffrey I, and related pictures of houses where he and his heir, George III lived. It was George Jaffrey III, a member of the governor's Council, for whom the Town of Jaffrey is named, although he never visited here. Along the length of the East wall are photographs of *Jaffrey, Then and Now*, from the book of that title by Robert B. Stephenson and Catherine Seiberling.

5.) On the back wall are very interesting maps: one of Cheshire County in 1854, two US maps from 1843 and later, and a map of Hillsborough County in 1854.

6.) Along the WEST wall are framed newspapers relating to the Declaration of Independence and Abraham Lincoln's assassination, and a photo of William Henry Harrison, who was the first president to die in office. He died one month after his inauguration as US President in 1841 (the children named on the front wall were Melville Academy students in 1841). On this wall, nearing the exit door, there is a display of toys, and two pictures of school children entitled *Frowning and Smiling*. There is also a sample of wallpaper that hung in this room at one time.

7.) At the front of the school room on the right side of the blackboard are pictures of David Chamberlain, the longest serving principal of Melville; the Little Red School House; and Melville Academy. In the bookcase are various schoolbooks that may have been used by students, both in grammar school, and in older grades at Melville Academy.

8.) To the left of the blackboard is a catalogue of Melville Academy that lists the students in 1841 and the courses offered. Melville Academy was a secondary school, for high school age children. The 1835 class had 174 students, 87 girls and 87 boys, and they came from nearby NH towns and as far away as Vermont, New York and Massachusetts. On the school benches are fourth grade readers and sheets for penmanship practice.

9.) As you leave, in the hallway you will see a hand loom for weaving and a large cradle scythe, used in the 1800s to mow ripe grain and lay it in even rows on the stubble. Along the wall opposite the stairs are sections of the pews from the old Meetinghouse before it was renovated. Pew 65 was given by Carl C. Spofford (1893- 1969), owner of the Monadnock Inn from 1920 to 1950. You will notice a little shelf that extends; it is for resting your arm. A day at church meant just that – church services, with a number of sermons, lasted nearly all day.



*Have you signed our guest book? We hope you have enjoyed your visit and will be back again to see items newly added and further renovations. You are always welcome. And we value your suggestions and additions of historical reminiscences. Please write them down in the available book. Donations are welcomed in the Melville Model in the front entrance hallway. Thank you for visiting the Melville Academy Museum.*

## A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE MELVILLE ACADEMY MUSEUM COLLECTION

The Melville Academy Museum of the JCVIS contains a collection of hundreds of items dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. The items have been given to this museum by Jaffrey residents and people with connections to the village of Jaffrey Center and the town of Jaffrey, by people with a keen desire to preserve the history of the village, the town and the Academy, for the education of its current residents and for future generations. This local history museum contains a sampling of meaningful artifacts depicting the life and times of our small, iconic New England community. The initial collection of artifacts was started in 1920 when the Jaffrey Center Village Improvement Society (JCVIS) became guardian of the building. Donations to the collection continue to this day.

A very brief history of the development of the museum's collection and the people involved with its preservation and management follows. Miss Kate Fox, a VIS founder (who served as treasurer 1906-1940), was elected as Curator in 1921, with Miss Nannie Greene as assistant. Miss Fox was instrumental in the initial gathering, cataloguing, and arrangement of items for the museum. There are pictures showing the way the museum was in 1936 at a celebration of the 30th anniversary of the VIS, and pictures showing VIS activities that took place in the museum in its early days. Mrs. Benjamin (Margaret) Robinson (who served as President of the VIS from 1908 to 1928) and then Mrs. Lawrence (Josephine) Wetherell (who served as President of the VIS from 1928 to 1948) took very active roles in the preservation of the building and its contents.

In 1961 there was an open house at the Melville Academy Museum to celebrate the building's restoration, which cost approximately \$9,000, and was substantially underwritten by Mrs. Lawrence Wetherell. A 1961 Monadnock Ledger article said the following after Jaffrey voters had agreed to turn over the deed for the building to the JCVIS for \$1.00. "The open house on Saturday, June 22, 1961, has been prompted by the Society's offer to welcome visitors from time to time as part of the purchase agreement. The terms of the agreement as recorded in the Town Reports for 1960 are as follows: "For which conveyance the Society will raise sufficient funds with which to repair and restore the building, more especially its tower, and maintain the building as a historical landmark in the town, and in the event the Society is dissolved, terminated, disbanded or its activities cease, all the rights, title and interest it may have had in the above mentioned land and building shall revert to the town of Jaffrey."

In the 1960s renovation of the museum, Mrs. Wetherell installed a mini-kitchen in the office area. In 1973, Molly McCready with the help of Margaret Bean, Marjorie Shattuck, Ken Jewett, and Don Eaves, began to compile a comprehensive inventory of the museum's artifacts. In 1974 the collection was appraised and insurance was purchased to cover it.

According to several people who have said they visited the museum in the mid 1980s, the collection was in serious need of renewed attention by then. In 1989,

when Rob Stephenson was tending to repairs of the ceiling on the second floor, Jeanne Duval became interested in caring for the museum and in preserving the contents; she arranged them, labeled them, and she also inventoried the books in the museum; she photographed the museum's collection to match with the inventory. Mary Payson, President of the JCVIS at the time, eagerly welcomed Jeanne's assistance. Mary was curator in the mid 1990s.

In the late 1990s, the museum became the passion of Mary Jo Marvin and Sally Waters Larsen who took courses in historical preservation and museum management. Among their major accomplishments was the purchase of Past Perfect software which remains today the gold standard of museum software. Mary Jo along with Sally Roberts, owner of the Monadnock Inn and very active member of the community and the JCVIS, did the major job of entering data into this program, laboriously transferring it from the 1970s inventory of the contents of Melville and renumbering the items.

In 2014, Suze Campbell and Miki Osgood undertook the management of the museum. It entered a new stage of development, carefully built on the excellent and extensive work done by previous caretakers to whom they owe great amounts of gratitude. Looking forward to use of the new 5.0 version of the Past Perfect software, using a newly acquired dedicated laptop, many more labels will be created in the near future and the electrical system will be upgraded to include more outlets for added lighting and technical advances. The technical advances will permit a new dimension to the interactive museum experience of visitors. Much archiving, conservation and preservation remains to be done.

Newly installed exhibits are the "clothes closet and shelves" displaying the outstanding collection of Hannah Davis bandboxes and children's linens; a wood stove from the Wesselhoeft Farm; the NW corner about five people very important to Jaffrey Center; and the SW wall display of the people most responsible for the preservation and maintenance of the VIS Meetinghouse and the Melville Academy Museum. Various items, including an antique map, have been restored. All the work we have done has used appropriate archival, non-toxic materials.

*The museum is open in July and August on weekends from 2 to 4 pm, when it is tended by docents, and at other times by appointment, weather permitting. We aim to increase the number of summer visitors and expand the school tours program.*

Suze and Ken Campbell, with the help of Miki Osgood, Rick Stein, and the JCVIS Board, have been instrumental in making this latest transformation take place. Many thanks go also to Andy Webber and Dennis Wright, Ron Yantis of Inkberry, Sean Driscoll, and Randy Morse, long time participants in the life and times of the building and the museum's collection.



