THE PELHAM TOWN HALL.
This Building, 120 Years Old, Was Totally Destroyed By Fire Thanksgiving Morning.

Pelham Historical Society, Pelham, New Hampshire
William T. Hayes & Karen Genoter
But It Has a Debt, and Citizens Will Act Conservatively—Chance for Some Former Resident to Remember His Native Place.

Now that the old historic town hall has met its fate, many of the old citizens who have remembered the stirring scenes which have taken place within its walls, are becoming reminiscent.

And it is very interesting to listen to their stories. No one can hear them tell of the doings of their fathers or narrate events in which they themselves have borne a part which were in some way connected with the old hall, without being convinced of the fact that they feel that the town has met with a genuine loss.

As to the matter of rebuilding, the citizens in discussing the affair seem to approach it from a common sense standpoint. They do not forget that the town is already in debt on account of building a library a few years ago for the benefit of its people. The people of the town are far from being ungenerous. They are alive to their needs, nevertheless they do not want to take any action in a hurried manner which they will regret in after years.

How the town is feeling may perhaps be intelligently understood by the comments of some of its leading citizens.

F. M. Woodbury says: "This is no time to decide on rebuilding. Agitate the matter. Find out how the people feel. Discuss the matter soberly and intelligently. It may be better to rent the lower floor of the Pilgrim hall for town meeting purposes if it can be obtained. Let us not forget that the town is in debt. If, however, we decide to rebuild, would it not be better to try and procure a new lot and improve the looks of the common and make it a credit to the town."

First Selectman Charles Sear's also favors conservatism. He says: "There is no need for calling a special town meeting to discuss the matter. Nothing can be gained by being in too great a hurry."

G. H. Currier gives the following as his opinion: "I am not averse to rebuilding, but yet I am not sure as yet that such action would be the best policy for the town to adopt. If, however, the decision should be to rebuild, it might be best to build on the lot where the old sheds now stand, or on the lot opposite the library. Much attention should be paid to obtaining a building suitable to the town's needs."

M. Hillman says: "Do not build a building that is not convenient and tasteful. The old sheds are of little value and a building on the lot will be more convenient and tasteful."

Chas. W. Hobbs gave expression to some good ideas. He said: "Every town should have a suitable town house of its own. With us, however, it is a financial problem. We are interested in the question of building permanent roads in town and are spending money for such improvements. However, it is not policy to rebuild until another season."

Several of the town fathers, while speaking of the affairs transacted in the old hall mentioned an occurrence which they remember well. It was in 1861. The call went out for volunteers to fight for the Union. Speakers from abroad were present. The old hall was crowded to the doors. The excitement was intense. The regiment of the 13th New Hampshire volunteers was in process of formation, and Pelham boys were invited to join. Twenty-six of Pelham's boys signed their names to the roll. Kimball J. Chapin, who was buried here one week ago today was the first to sign, the others following.

In this hall, also, the women of the town met to knit socks, make shirts and other articles of clothing to send to the front.

"Golden" and "silver weddings" have been celebrated in this hall. The dead bodies of soldiers from the front were placed in the town hall, awaiting burial in the local cemetery.

Porch-light companies met there during the height of the political excitement accompanying national elections. It was the place where the old Pelham brass band met for its rehearsals.

The religious, patriotic, moral, political and educational interests of the town for 138 years have been affected by events that transpired in the building that is now only a heap of ashes.

Who can wonder that the citizens are today talking and thinking of what the old town hall has been to the community and the large place it has filled in the life of the people?

The town of Pelham has sent out many sons who have honored themselves and the town that sent them forth, by achieving large success in the commercial world. To these sons of hers, the town points with pride, and they likewise, through their visits in past days, have given abundant proof that Pelham still holds a large place in their hearts.

Definitive work one or more than one of these, to whom nature has been so kind and to whom Providence has been so generous, makes for themselves a perpetual memorial in the town of their birth by replacing an an.