

*The Laconia Historical  
and Museum Society*



*Proudly Presents*

# *History-To-Go*



*From The Incorporators Series  
(1855-1893)*

*Major Events  
in Laconia*



*The Laconia Historical  
and Museum Society*

*proudly presents*

*The last of three installments in our  
Notables Series:*

# *The Incorporators (1855-1893)*

*The last installment of LHMMS's 3-part Notables Series is  
organized chronologically from 1855-1893  
and color-categorized by areas of growth.*

*The Incorporators Series will explore such areas as  
Business & Industry, Transportation, Hotels & Tourism,  
Entertainment, Notable People, and more,  
to learn how they helped the Town of Laconia  
grow into the beautiful  
City on the Lakes  
that we enjoy today.*

# THE INCORPORATORS SERIES

~ Major Events ~

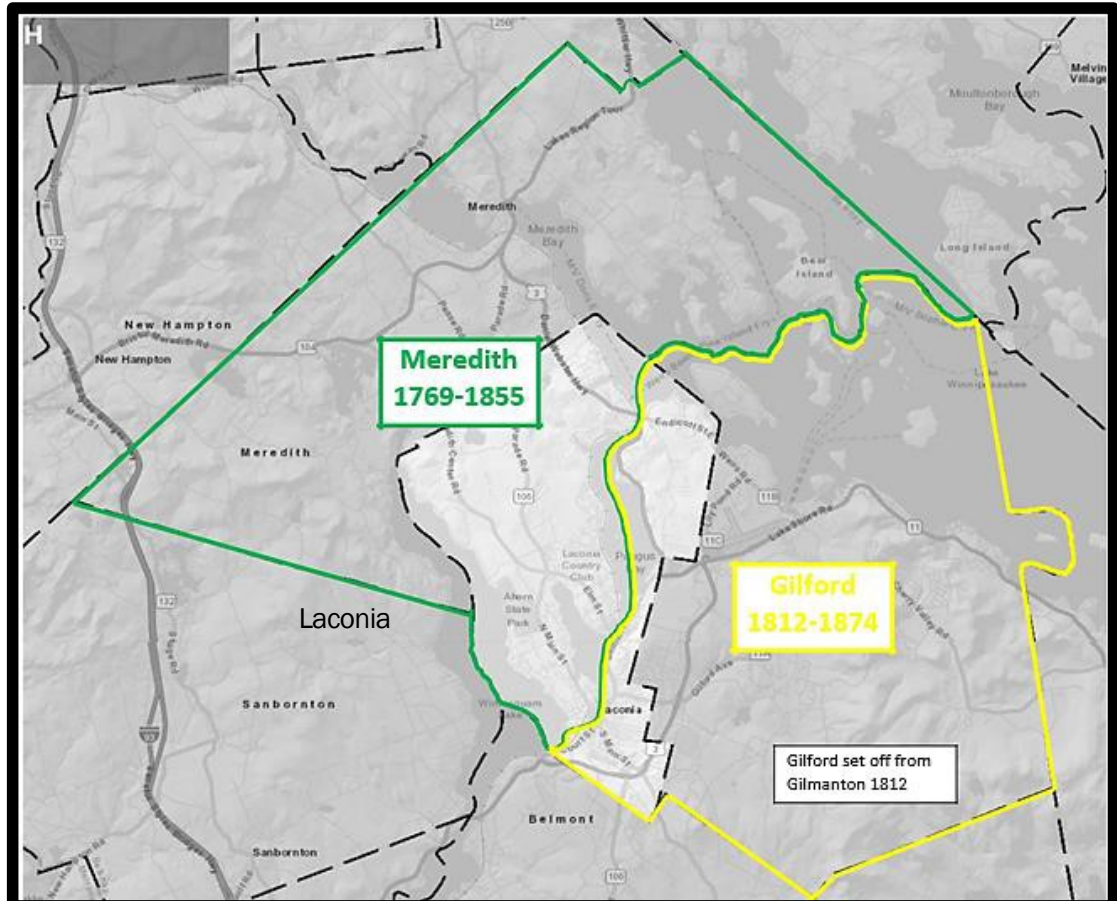
*Industries, Infrastructure,  
and Individuals that Built  
a City (1855-1893)*

*1855 ~ The Town of Laconia Was Incorporated*



On July 14, 1855, Laconia became incorporated as a town by the N.H. legislature. It was formed from lands at Meredith Bridge, Lake Village (Lakeport), and The Weirs. There had been a push for separation from Meredith for many years, and after The Great Catastrophe, when scores of men fell through the floor of the unfinished Meredith meeting house, the towns separated.

Laconia's current footprint is shown in white in the center of the map. The original Meredith, including most of today's Laconia, is outlined in green, and Gilford's borders are shown in yellow.



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## 1855 ~ Constables

At the first legal town meeting of Laconia in 1855, the town voted James S. Hoit, Hugh Blaisdell, Augustus Doe, Horatio N. Burnham, and John C. Davis as constables. Constables were citizens elected by the community to enforce laws and serve warrants, but little else is known about them. Constables at this time were called out as needed and paid for their services, but were not considered paid town officers. Payments for police services included coverage of special events like July 4th and these citizens may have acted as “special officers” on just those occasions. It should be noted that many of the men who provided police services to the town were also paid for other services to the town. These years were a time of great growth and much work was done breaking roads and building bridges, etc. Men like E.B. Harrington also provided masonry work and lumber while James Judkins, who was the town’s first night watchman, also worked for the steamer for the fire department.



Paid Morrill & Silsby, for record book,	2 50
“ J. R. Champliu, for labor on street lamps,	10 00
“ E. E. Cutting, for services as police,	15 00
“ D. H. Lewis, services as police July 3d and 4th,	5 00
“ C. J. Smith, “ “ “ “	5 00
“ C. Woodburn, “ “ “ “	3 00



Sources – *History of the Laconia Police Department 1855-1933*, by Chief John M. Guay; Lakes Region History Online



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## 1860 ~ The Great Fire of 1860 and the Fire Department

In 1860, early on the morning of November 21, a fire began in the stables of the Cerro Gordo Hotel on Main Street. The flames spread quickly from one wooden building to another. Tragically, three quarters of the downtown area from the Winnepesaukee River to Water Street was destroyed in a matter of 3 hours. The only structures that were spared were the Ranlet Car Shops and the Belknap Mill.



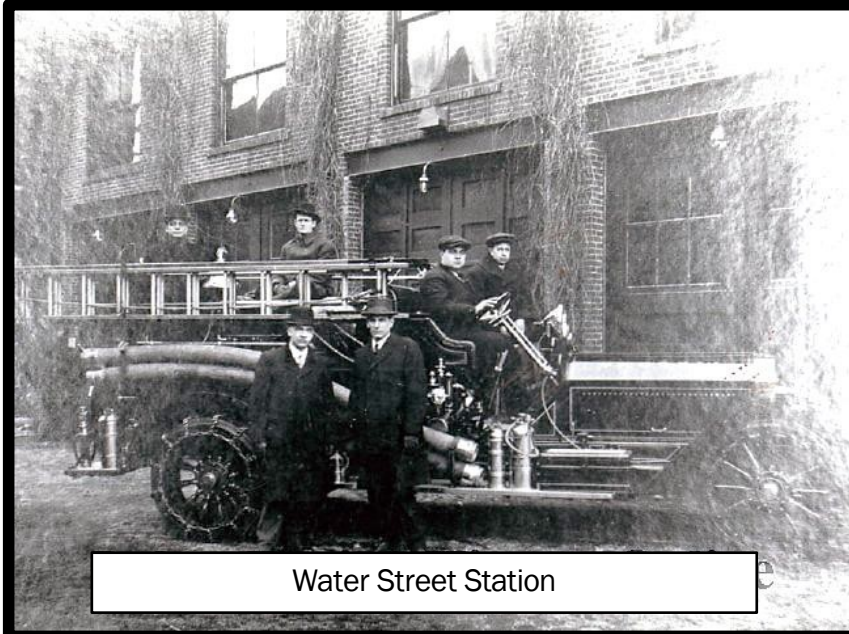
This catastrophe prompted the town to initiate the formation of private fire brigades which businesses established to protect their properties, and to increase fire prevention methods. The brigades were made available to the public as well. By the 1870s, these brigade companies were well outfitted with uniformed firefighters, firehouses, and modern equipment for the time.



# The Laconia Fire Department, continued



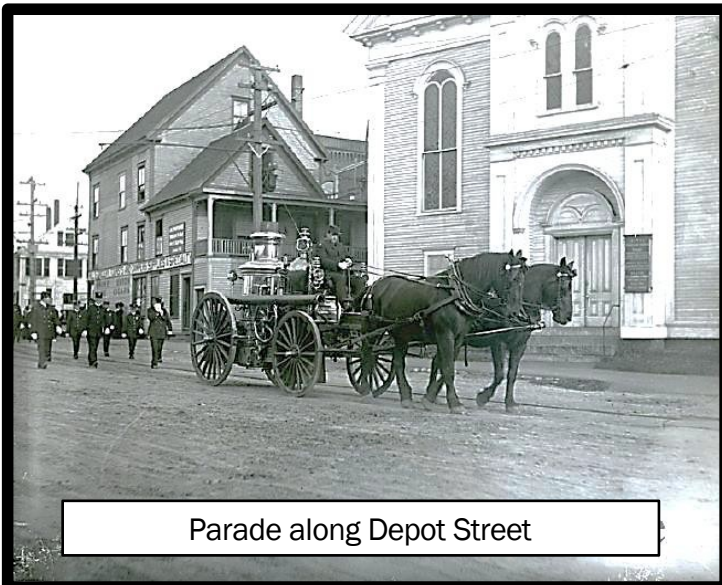
Two horse-drawn fire trucks with water storage tanks



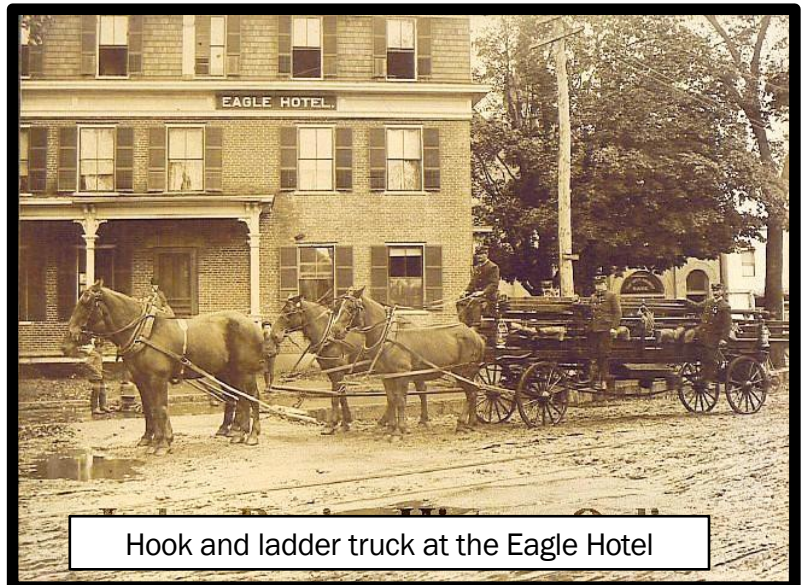
Water Street Station



Niagra pump engine in Lakeport



Parade along Depot Street

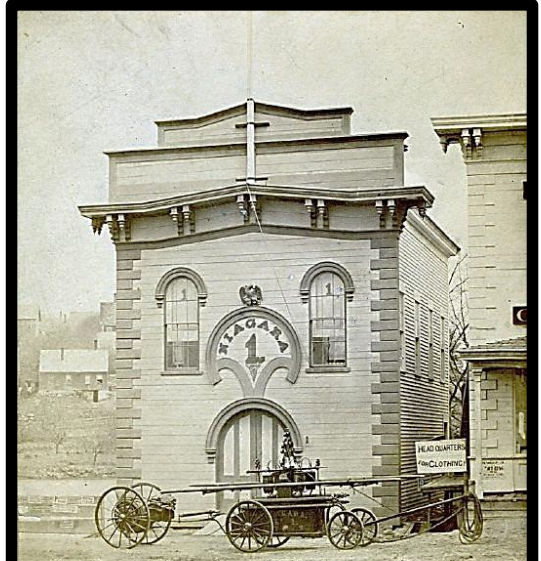


Hook and ladder truck at the Eagle Hotel

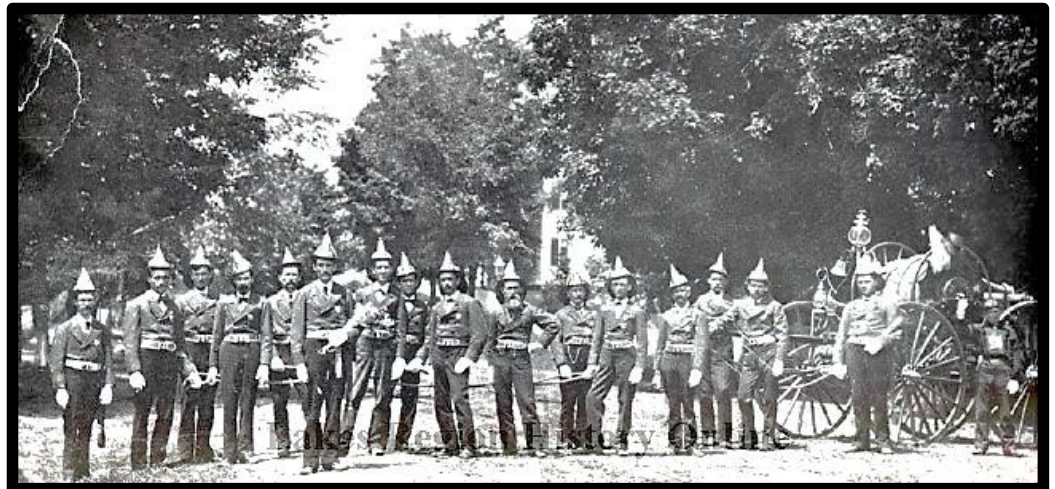
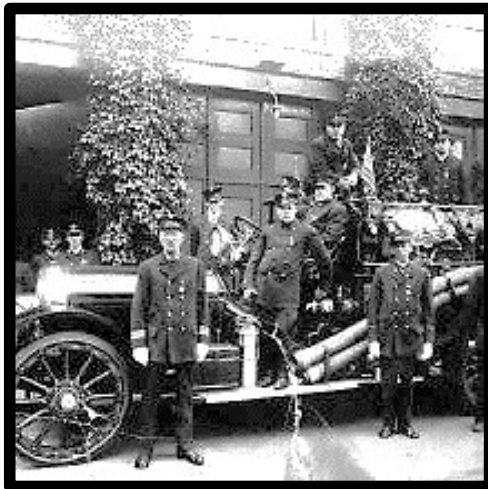
# The Laconia Fire Department, continued



Laconia Fire Department horse drawn engine/wagon.



Niagra No. 1 Fire House. Lakeport



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1861 ~ The Civil War



Laconia was definitely not lacking in patriotism during the Civil War. President Lincoln called for volunteers in 1861 when the 'War of the Rebellion' broke out. Hundreds of Laconia men and youths took up arms for the preservation of the Union. There were only 1800 residents in the whole town at the time.



Above: Company of Civil War soldiers, Lake Village, probably 1861

Right: Civil War soldier, Laconia  
Left: Sword of John P. Lane of the 12th NH Volunteers.



Lakes Region History Online



Laconia Historical & Museum Society



## 1861 ~ The Civil War, continued

In 1863 Laconia voted to pay a bounty of \$300 to those who might be drafted, or their substitutes, and the selectmen were authorized to advance all bounties, town, state, and national, to volunteers, to the amount of \$500 each. In 1864 it was voted to pay soldiers a bounty of \$100 for one year, \$200 for two years, and \$300 for three years, to all enlisted men, and \$200 to men who might be drafted. In December of the same year, it was voted to pay a bounty of \$600 to enrolled men who enlisted for three years.



Sources - *The Illustrated Laconian*, Charles W. Vaughan, 1899; Lakes Region History Online; Pinterest

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~ Major Events ~

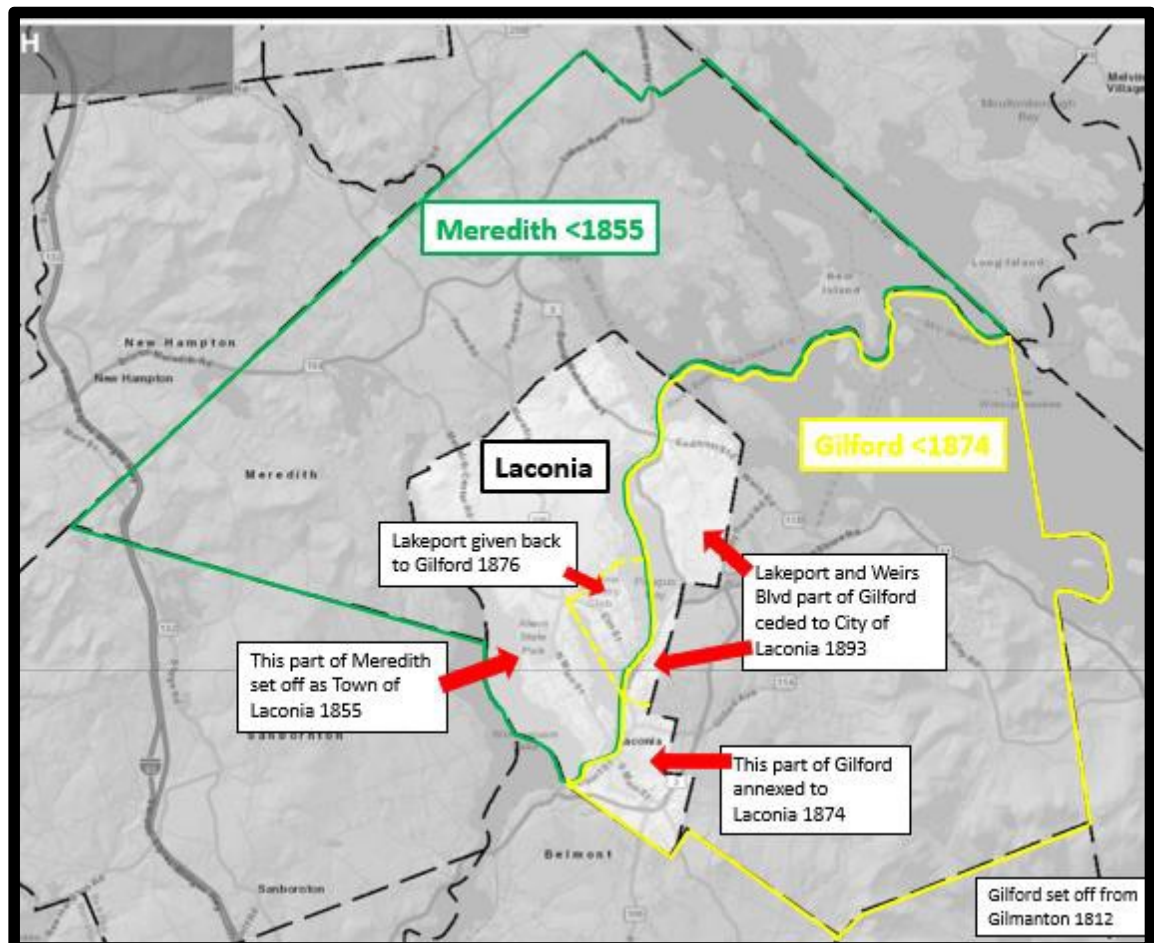
*Industries, Infrastructure,  
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## 1874 ~ The Annexation of Gilford

When the Town of Laconia was established in 1855, some portions of today's city were not included within its borders. Parts of The Weirs, Lake Village (Lakeport) and the southern part of Laconia were all contained within the boundaries of Gilford (which had been a part of Gilmanton until 1812).

This map shows that in 1874, the south end of Laconia was annexed from Gilford. Later, in 1893, the Lakeport and Weirs areas were also ceded to the city of Laconia.

Map Source -  
Virginia Hansen,  
LHMS



There was a short period of time when a part of Lakeport (originally part of Meredith) was ceded to Gilford, beginning in 1876. This portion was returned to Laconia in 1893, with the creation of the city.



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## 1891 ~ First Sewer Installation

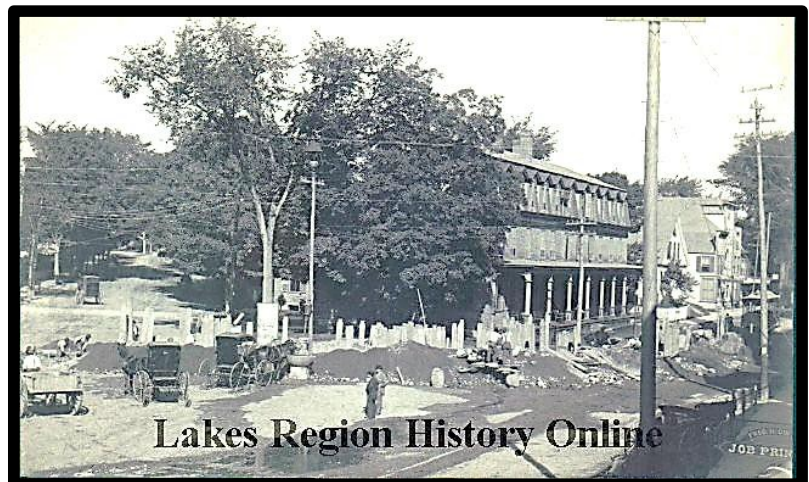
Wastewater infrastructure in the Lakes Region dates back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with portions of the collection system in Laconia constructed in 1891. Lakeport lines were added beginning in 1893. These early collection systems simply collected waste and discharged it to the nearest water body without treatment. For Laconia, this meant the Winnepesaukee River and Lake Winnisquam.



Top right: Installation of sewer lines on Union Avenue in Lakeport in the 1890s.

Above: c.1890s. Laying sewer pipe beneath Church St. Bridge. Note horsecar on bridge. Looking toward east.

Right: Pipe installation downtown in Bank Square. The Eagle Hotel is seen at center right (later the site of the Sundial Shop, etc.).



Sources - [Early History](#) - [Winnepesaukee River Basin Program \(state.nh.us\)](#); [Lakes Region History Online](#)

# THE INCORPORATORS SERIES

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*1893 ~ City of Laconia Incorporated*

In 1893, the Town of Laconia was incorporated into a city by the State of New Hampshire. The city charter was drafted by Col. Stephen S. Jewett (1858-1932).

*Laconia - City on the Lakes*



*The Illustrated Laconian of 1899 reported:*

The city of Laconia was chartered by the New Hampshire legislature of 1893, is located near the geographical centre of Belknap county, of which county it is the shire town, and is also near the geographical centre of the state of New Hampshire, twenty-eight miles from Concord, and just one hundred miles from Boston, Mass. Laconia is upon both sides of the Winnepesaukee river, while Lake Winnesquam on the south and west, Lake Opechee near the centre of the city, and Lakes Winnepesaukee and Paugus on the north and east boundaries, well entitle Laconia to be known as the "City on the Lakes," which title is inscribed upon the city seal.



## City of Laconia Incorporated, continued

The City of Laconia elected Charles A. Busiel (1842-1901) as its first mayor. Busiel later became Governor of New Hampshire. The collage below shows the city's first administration, with Busiel in the center of the group.



Copyright by E. A. Johnson.

### COUNCILMEN.

2. Horace W. Gorrell.
3. Geo. W. Weeks.
4. Chas. L. Pulsifer.
5. A. C. Moore.
6. W. J. Morrison.
7. F. H. Davis.
8. Chas. W. Vaughan.

### CITY MARSHAL.

16. H. K. W. Scott.

1. Chas. A. Busiel, Mayor.

## FIRST CITY ADMINISTRATION. LACONIA, N. H.

### CITY ENGINEER.

17. F. G. Berry.

### CITY SOLICITOR.

18. S. S. Jewett.

### SEWER COMMISSR.

19. Wm. Nelson.

### HEALTH OFFICER.

20. W. H. True, M. D.

### CITY TREASURER.

21. S. B. Cole.

### COUNCILMEN.

9. Julius Wilson.
10. Benj. F. Drake.
11. J. W. Ashman.
12. Jos. M. Folsom.
13. Edmund Tetley.
14. R. B. Priest.
15. Chas. E. Frye.

### CITY CLERK.

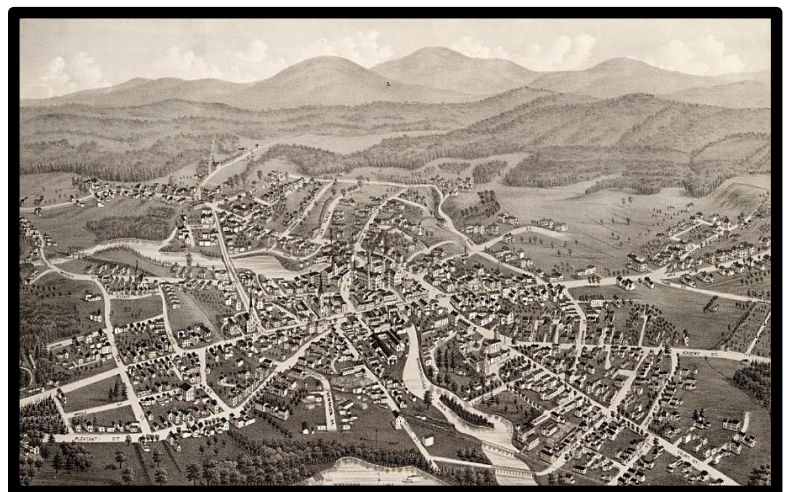
22. J. B. Moore.

**Laconia**   
CITY ON THE LAKES

NEW HAMPSHIRE



Sources - Lakes Region History Online;  
City of Laconia; *The Illustrated  
Laconian*, by Charles W. Vaughan, 1899



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*The End*

*Thank You for  
Joining Us!*

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*LHMS History-To-Go Presentations*

*The History of the Belknap County Farm  
Laconia's Origins and Rediscovery – Parts I and II  
Selections From Laconia's Past – Parts I and II*

*From The Incorporators (1855-1893):*

*Business and Industry*

*Notable Residents*

*Significant Structures*

*Major Events*

*Hotels and Tourism*

*Entertainment*

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