

ROBINSON PERKINS, CLOCKMAKER

ROBINSON PERKINS, the old-time clockmaker of Jaffrey, was a son of Captain Joseph Perkins (see Genealogy), and according to tradition was a fine workman with a genius for mechanics. He learned the blacksmith's trade, but finding it not to his taste and lacking physical qualifications for the work, he became a clockmaker and silversmith. Apparently he established himself early in the former trade, for, in a deed dated 1795, when he was twenty-nine years old, he is denominated "clockmaker." All the old-time artisans prided themselves on "working to a hair," but "hairs" must have varied with the trades, since a blacksmith's "hair" is said to have been three-fourths of an inch, all too great a variation for the clockmaker and cabinet-maker.

Robinson Perkins did good and lasting work, for the attention of the Jaffrey History Committee has been brought to several Perkins "Grandfather" clocks with wooden works still keeping time after a century and a quarter or more. Pride of workmanship caused him to mark on the dial of each clock "R. Perkins, Jaffrey, N. H.," and to identify each with its number, also on the dial.

Clockmaking must have been a profitable trade, for Robinson Perkins became the owner of the first "two-wheeled shay" in Jaffrey and was prominent in social affairs. He removed to Fitzwilliam in 1810, where he died in 1847. The foundation of his shop still may be seen near the summer residence of James J. Bowers on the Fitzwilliam road.

Source: Annett and Lehtinen, History of Jaffrey, New Hampshire, Vol I, Pp381-82