



Above: Judge J. Albert Lynch who presided over the Pelham Municipal Court from 1955 to 1992.

PELHAM MUNICIPAL COURT

Prior to 1955, all criminal and civil disputes were heard in Nashua District Court. At the town meeting in 1955, the Town of Pelham voted to create a municipal court in Pelham. J. Albert Lynch was named by the Administrative Office of the Courts to be the presiding Justice with Clement McCarthy sitting as Special Justice. After Mr. McCarthy resigned, in 1969, Attorney Philip R. Currier was appointed as Special Justice by Governor Walter Peterson and served for 5 years. In 1989, Attorney Michael E. Jones

was appointed as Special Justice and continues to serve as a Special Justice in the Salem District Court.

Judge J. Albert Lynch served the community for 37 years, retiring in April 1992. Ralph Harmon, Patricia Vining, Edwin Hartz and Joyce Mason all served as Clerk of Court for various terms during those 37 years.

When the court was first instituted in Pelham, sessions were held in the Pelham Library. As the court grew, court sessions were moved upstairs in the Town Hall. The first

year, 26 cases were heard. The last year court was held in Pelham, over 2000 cases were heard.

Juvenile sessions were handled very effectively from 1955 until 1973 in the Pelham Municipal Court. In 1973, by act of the Legislature, the juvenile cases were transferred to the Nashua District Court.

Pelham Municipal Court was unique in that the sessions were held in the evenings. Judge J. Albert Lynch was responsible for the evening sessions because he felt that most of the people who were defendants in the court worked days; therefore, they would have to lose time from work in order to attend the day sessions. The evening sessions remained until the court closed in 1992.

Until 1982, the court records were kept in the files at the homes of the clerks, but in 1982 the Administrative Office of the Courts felt the court should have an office in one of the town buildings. The records were all moved to a small room upstairs in the town hall and the office maintained regular office hours during the day for the convenience of the public in order to pay fines or conduct any other court business.

The Administrative Office of the Courts consolidated Salem District Court and Pelham Municipal Court, and in December 1992, the last session of court was held in Pelham.