

THE

Connecticut Quarterly.

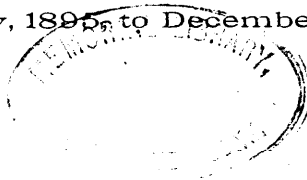
AN ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE.

Devoted to the Literature, History and Picturesque
Features of

CONNECTICUT.

Vol. I.

January, 1895, to December, 1895



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HARTFORD, CONN. :

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1895.

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THE SMALL-POX HOSPITAL ROCK *

AT FARMINGTON, CONN.

BY JAMES SHEPARD.

Dr. Eli Todd, the first superintendent of the Connecticut Retreat for the Insane, was for many years settled in Farmington, and before he began to practice there, Dr. Theodore Wadsworth was a practicing physician of Southington. The town of Farmington, December 12, 1791, " Upon the petition of Theodore Wadsworth of Southington and Eli Todd of Farmington, physicians, requesting permission of the town to establish and open a Hospital at some convenient place within the limits of the town and near the Southington line, which shall be approved of by the Authority and Selectmen, for the purpose of inoculating for the Small Pox during the ensuing Autumn, " voted to grant said petition.



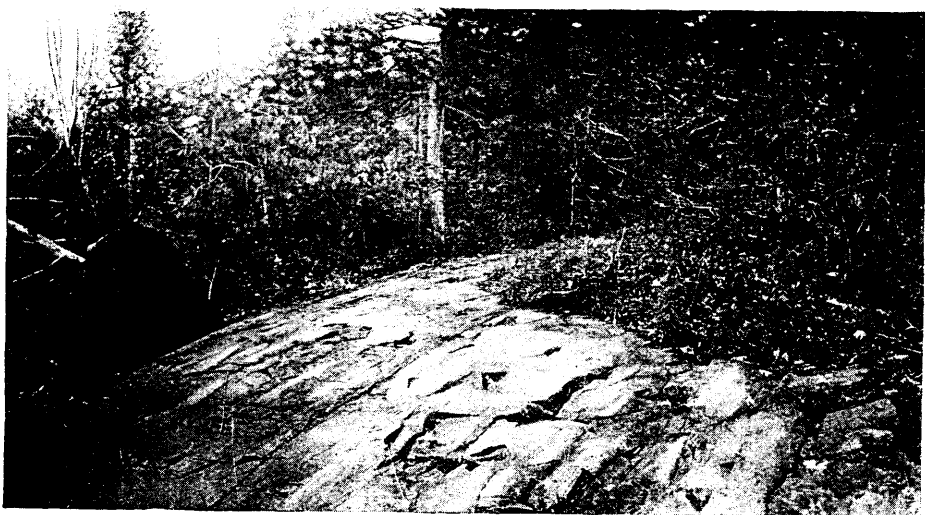
THE BROWN TRACT.

On the mountain southeasterly from Farmington, where the trap rock that largely composes the mountain itself comes to the surface and slightly projects above the surrounding soil, the rock has many inscriptions, representing at least sixty-six individuals, together with dates ranging from 1792 to 1794. From these dates we may infer that the hospital established in pursuance of this vote was near this rock. About fifty years ago an intimate friend of Dr. Todd pointed out this rock to a son, who is now living and then told him that Dr. Todd's

* The writer acknowledges his indebtedness to Mr. Julius Gay, Commander Edward Hooker, Mr. Wm. L. Cook, and all others who have kindly rendered him valuable assistance in the preparation of this paper.

Hospital was near this rock. There are men now living, who on returning home in their boyhood days, after a visit to this rock, remember hearing their father tell of incidents of hospital life that happened while he was a patient there. Time passed, vegetation flourished, until the rock in its wild seclusion was nearly hidden and seemingly forgotten.

But it was not wholly forgotten; a few, and only a few now well along in years and some who have only recently passed away, have talked about the days when their relatives had the small pox there and called to mind the many incidents connected therewith, how father told of the things that his mother sent him and other incidents preserved only in treacherous memories. A few years ago that son of Dr. Todd's friend determined to rediscover this rock, although he had not seen it for nearly fifty years. His first efforts were unsuccessful, but at length he found it, nearly covered with turf which he rolled away, and again brought to light many of the hidden inscriptions. Hunters from New Britain

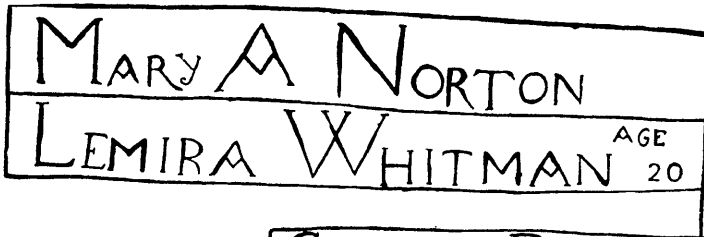


HOSPITAL ROCK.

soon found it and the papers were full of many strange conjectures as to its significance.

Following the old mountain road that runs from Farmington to New Britain and passes a little to the east of Will Warren's den, keeping on by the summit over the eastern slope of the mountain until about one hundred and fifty feet lower than the summit, we come to an abrupt angle where the road turns easterly, as shown in our illustration of what is locally known as the "Brown Tract." Elias Brown lived here for many years including the years inscribed upon the rock. Here, leaving the road and entering the field through the grassy path between the cedars, in continuation of the Farmington arm of this angle in the road, passing by the old cellar hole half hidden amid the clustering lilac bushes at the right, and continuing on through the bushy pasture, we reach a little brooklet in the edge of the woods when the path soon forks, and between its two branches is "hospital rock." Cedar trees were growing on its margin, but they have been overturned to peel their masses of roots from the rock in order to lay bare inscriptions which nature had concealed. Our view of the rock shows some of these overturned trees and the surface on which most of the inscriptions appear, although on too small a scale to show the carving.

The work is mostly well done and appears to have been made by persons of tact or by those skilled in the use of hammer and chisel. One of our cuts shows a group of six names just as they appear on the rock, and these with the name of Edward Hooker also shown by a cut, represent the average style of inscription. We also show the name of Salmon Clark in the ground story of



CYRUS CURTIS 23
AROCXY HART AGE 23
Anson Curtis AGE 21 1794.

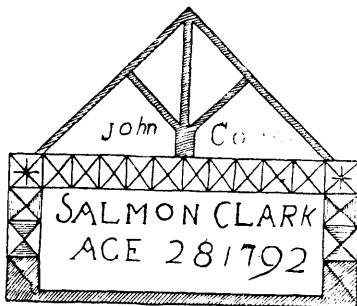
ONE-FOURTH ACTUAL SIZE.

the house — like figure which borders it, while John C — appears tucked away in the attic. John's surname cannot be determined although faint traces of the letters after the "C" appear. It is difficult to say whether or not John's name is a part of the original plan, but evidently a trespasser left the initials "W. H." with the "W" just outside the roof and the "H" within it, before the word

EDWARD HOOKER

AGED NINE 1794

ONE-FOURTH ACTUAL SIZE.



ONE-EIGHTH ACTUAL SIZE.

"John." We omit this trespassing H from our cut as not belonging to the original design. The most elaborate inscriptions are those showing the name of J. Bronson in several forms, two of which are illustrated. It is not at all probable that such

lettering could have been by Bronson himself who was then only ten years old. Many other names are duplicated on the rock, both in full and by initials. The following is a full list of the names and initials in so far as they are legible, excluding duplicates, and all initials that correspond with the full names and ages elsewhere given.

Kesia Allvord, 21. Timothy Arnold, age 12. J. Bishop Andrews, Ae, Shubael Brownson, age 9. J. Bronson, 10 y Sep. 1792. Sophia Bull. Laura Bull. Caleb Bacon, age 29, Oct. 1794. Cyrus Curtis, age 20, Oct. 1794. Rebecca Curtis, Ae. 25 y. Thirza Curtis, 18. Anson Curtis, age 21, 1794. Salmon Clark, age 28, 1792. Sally Cowles, 33. T. Cowles, 1794. Claramond Cowles, 16. Rena Cowles, 10. Daniel Cornwell. G. Cowle. Chester Case. Timothy C—. John C—. L. D. D. D. Eunice Gleason, 27. Nancy Gleason.

Edward Hooker, aged nine. 1794. Sally Hooker. Wm. Hooker, 1792. John Hull, 23, 1793. Peter Hull, age 18, 1794. George Hull. Amos Hull. Nimrod Hull. Amos Hawley, age 20. Aroxy Hart, age 23. P. H. Zenas Hart.

Amasa K——. M. K. S. L.

William Mathews. Anna Mix, 10, 1794. Betsy Mix, 12.

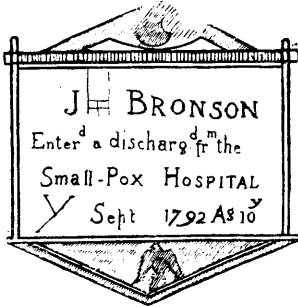
Mary A. Norton. R. S. Norton. (Reuben.) Nathan North, 15, 1794.

M. C. Pitkin. James Richard, age 10, 1794. Timothy Root, age 12. Roxana Root, 18. S. R. L. R. 1794.

Luther Seymour, of Hartford, Ct. 22. Anne Street, 19. A. S. 24. Abigail Scott, age 26. 1794. Norris Stanley, age 20. A. Stanley, 1793. J. B. R. Samuel Scott, October 1794. Age 21. P. Stanley.

Lemira Whitman, age 26. R. W. 16. C. W. Amos Wilkinson, Age 16.

There are various figures, borders, and embellishments which we can neither show nor describe, and the numerals 1 to 35 inclusive are strung in a continuous row across the rock, excepting where the rough surface caused the sculptor to skip a space. For the same reason blank spaces appear in many of the inscriptions.



ONE-FOURTH ACTUAL SIZE.

In these days of vaccination and anti-vaccination, inoculation for small pox is not a familiar subject. For over four thousand years small-pox was unknown, the first known cases having appeared in the sixth century. A person once having it is generally protected for life against a second attack, but not always, as cases have occurred where persons have had it three times. Formerly it proved fatal to about one-fourth, or one-fifth of all who were attacked. Inoculation

is the introduction under the cuticle of a minute portion of the virus of the real small pox, and it is remarkable that when thus communicated the disease is far less violent than if communicated by natural contagion, and yet a second attack after a person has had small-pox by inoculation is as improbable as in cases where persons take the disease in any other way. When taken by inoculation in some retired hospital, every thing could be prepared for, and the physician in charge could begin with the proper treatment without waiting for symptoms upon which to base a diagnosis and without any liability of making a mistake. The mortality was rarely greater than one in six or seven hundred, and no doubt, with young people as shown by the ages given on the rock, the danger of fatal results was very small. Danger was also largely avoided by selecting the cooler months, the heat of summer being one of the conditions that greatly enhance the terror of the disease. It was for this reason that the vote of permit was not to take effect until "the ensuing autumn" and that in other permits it was "provided that no person be allowed to take the infection after the 12th day of May next." The operation was introduced into Europe from the East by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and was first performed in London in 1721.

J. Bronson 109.

ONE-FOURTH ACTUAL SIZE.

Probably most or all of those whose names appear on this rock came to Dr. Todd's Hospital for inoculation. This was from two to four years before Dr. Edward Jenner learned that those who caught the cow pox by the act of milking diseased cows, were supposed to be incapable of taking the small-pox, and acting on this clue, he performed vaccination upon a human subject for the first time in 1796. The protective influence of vaccination cannot be greater than that of the small pox itself, nor that of inoculation, both of which are sometimes ineffectual. Mr. Erastus Scott, of Farmington, had small-pox by inoculation and when in after years, while as one of the selectmen, he had to look after a small-pox patient, he caught the disease again. He recovered, and lived

lived to own ships which were captured in the war of 1812 by Algerian pirates, and still later to receive from the United States an indemnity therefor amounting to a large sum. These names represent the best of families and were mostly from Farmington, New Britain, Kensington and Southington, while Luther Seymour, the only one whose "residence" appears on the rock, was from Hartford. They were mostly children and young people, only one age being recorded as over thirty and the fact that this person was a woman, indicates that some one else put down the name and age. Eunice Gleason is recorded as twenty-seven, but she had no reason to conceal her age as she was already a married woman. A small-pox hospital would seem a strange place for courtships, but I am informed that at least three marriages resulted from acquaintances formed there.

Among the living representatives of those whose names appear on the rock I may mention Commander Edward Hooker of the U. S. Navy, now of Brooklyn, New York, and his brother, John Hooker of Hartford, who married Isabella Beecher, both children of Edward Hooker of the rock. His brother William Hooker, also of the rock, was the Dr. William G. Hooker who died in New Haven Sept. 19, 1850, leaving highly respected descendants. There are many others on the list whose subsequent history is more or less known, and which may be further pursued with pleasure by those who are especially interested. It is also not improbable that by turning back from the rock more of the overgrowing sod, or by a closer study of the surface now exposed, still other names may be discovered.