A

HISTORY

OF THE

COPPER MINES AND NEWGATE PRISON,

AT GRANBY, CONN.

ALSO, OF THE

CAPTIVITY OF DANIEL HAYS,

Of Granby, by the Indians, in 1707.

By NOAH A. PHELPS.

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THE following sheets comprise a few chapters of a work, recently published by the author, entitled "HISTORY OF SIMSBURY, GRANBY AND CANTON"; and as these chapters relate to subjects of general interest, they are published, in this form, for a wider circulation than the History, in which they originally appeared, can command.

It is believed that this pamphlet will be found to contain some valuable information never before published, and many facts and incidents worthy of preservation. The only merit—if indeed it is entitled to any—claimed for it, is that it contains a *correct* statement of facts, drawn, in most cases, from record and other documentary proof.

THE COPPER MINES,

AT GRANBY, CONNECTICUT.

THE COPPER MINES. Discovery. Magnitude of the Works. Amount of Disbursements. Smelting Works at Hanover. The Phœnix Mining Company. 1705—1833.

THE copper mines, known afterwards as the site of the celebrated state prison, called Newgate, are situated on the west side of the east mountain in Granby. The place, for many years, was called "Copper Hill." It is not known at what period copper ore was first discovered here. The first record evidence relating to the mines is under date of December, 1705, when, at a town meeting of the inhabitants of Simsbury,* upon suggestion made "that there was a mine either of silver or copper found in the town," a committee was appointed to make search for the same and report to a future meeting.

The report of the committee does not appear on record, but is presumed to have been favorable to the discovery, for in 1707 an association, comprising all such proprietors of the town as had subscribed, or who within a limited time should subscribe the articles of agreement, was formed to work the mines. Copper-hill at this time was a wilderness;—and as none of the lands in that vicinity had been sold or granted, the right of soil remained in the "proprietors of the town," nearly all of whom came into this agreement. The association, after deducting the expenses of the works, was to allow the town ten shillings on each ton of copper produced, and to divide the residue among the partners of the concern in proportion to the amounts of their respective lists. The mining operations commenced about this time, and under this partnership concern.

* The mines then, and for eighty years afterwards, were within the town of Simsbury.

This company dug the ore only—they did not undertake to smelt it. But, in the same year, they entered into a contract with Messrs. John Woodbridge of Springfield, Dudley Woodbridge of Simsbury, and Timothy Woodbridge Jr. then of Hartford, all clergymen, by which these gentlemen agreed to run and refine the ore, and cast the metal into bars fit for transportation or a market;—and after deducting the tenth part belonging to the town, of which two-thirds thereof was to be given for the maintenance "of an able schoolmaster in Simsbury," and the other third to the "Collegiate school," Yale College,—the residue was to be equally divided between them and the proprietors or workers of the mine.

The business was carried on in this manner but a few years—probably because the smelting process was not understood, and could not be proceeded with to the advantage of either party. In 1712, the proprietors, or "association," appointed a committee to call the contractors "to account, and, if necessary, to sue them for the ore that had been brought to them at divers times."

The legislature, in consideration that "a public benefit" might result from these mines, and to aid the proprietors in the management thereof, passed an act in 1709, vesting the right to control all matters relating to the mines "in the major part of the proprietors according to the interest of each proprietor," and providing for organizing and holding meetings of the proprietors, and appointing a committee to manage their concerns. The act also provided for the adjudication of all matters in controversy between any and all persons connected with the mines, by a board of three commissioners, with power to summon a jury in cases where the sum in controversy exceeded a certain amount. This court held its sessions generally at the mines, though sometimes at other places. It had a clerk, and its jurisdiction, in amount of damages claimed, was co-extensive with that of County courts. A vast deal of business was disposed of by this tribunal, by the agency of which both time and expense was saved by the litigating parties.

The business on the part of the proprietors was managed under the provisions of this act, and other similar acts, by a committee appointed annually during the whole time that the mines were worked, (before the Phœnix company commenced operations,) a period of over sixty years. This committee, at various times, made leases to several individuals or companies, of certain portions or specified rights in the common lands where copper ore had been or might be discovered, during a term of years;—the lessees on their part agreeing to pay to the committee a per centage on the ore procured; or a certain portion, generally one-thirtieth part, of the copper extracted from the ore and manufactured fit for market. In no case did any of these leases extend beyond thirty years.

Some of the wealthiest capitalists in Boston and New York, took leases and embarked in the enterprise. A company too, belonging to Holland, and another company belonging to London, were for many years interested in the concern, and furnished large sums of money to carry on the works. The Woodbridge family, and at least one member of the Wyllys family, were many years largely engaged in the business. These mining operations were very extensively pursued from 1713 to about 1737, and to some extent until the war of 1775. The amount of money expended cannot be ascertained, but must have been very large. During a period of two years from August, 1716, one company, under the superintendence of Elias Boudinot,* expended about three thousand dollars. A petition, dated in 1723, states that "the copper works had brought into this plantation from foreign countries, about ten thousand pounds." Governor Belcher, of Boston, in a letter dated 1735, states that during about twenty-three years, he had disbursed upwards of fifteen thousand pounds.† The expen-

* This Mr. Boudinot resided for some time in Simsbury. He was ancestor of the late Elias Boudinot, of New Jersey, who was a distinguished statesman, and the first superintendent of the United States Mint at Philadelphia.

† This letter is addressed to John Humphry, Joseph Pettibone, and Samuel Pettibone, a committee of the proprietors, who had called upon him to settle

ditures of the other companies are not known, but in the aggregate must have amounted to a large sum.

After 1721, when a division of the mining lands took place among the lessees, each company worked at separate mines, all situated upon Copper-hill, and (excepting Higley's) within the compass of less than one mile. The works most improved, and where the greatest excavations were made, were subsequently purchased for a state prison. At this place, two perpendicular shafts were dug, chiefly through rocks, one extending to the depth of over seventy feet, and the other about thirty-five feet. From the bottom of these shafts caverns excavated for ore extend in various directions, some four or five hundred feet, including "levels" or drains for discharging the water. Some parts of these excavations are now entirely filled with water. At Higley's mine, which lies about a mile and a half south of this, extensive old workings exist, though commenced at a later period than the others. Mr. Edmund Quincy, of Boston, had a company of miners working at this place at the breaking out of the war of the revolution; soon after which the works were abandoned.

In 1731, a new company was formed, consisting of Adam Winthrop, George Cradock, James Bowdoin, Job Lewis, Joshua Winslow, Benjamin Pemberton and North Ingham, all of Boston, who took a lease by which a sixth part of the mines was conveyed to them for the term of thirty years. This lease was signed by Samuel Humphry, Joseph Case, and Joseph Phelps, a committee in behalf of the town proprietors. It is not known to what extent, or how long, this company pursued the business.

In addition to the persons already named as lessees, or otherwise interested in the mines, Jared Elliot of Killingworth,* Jahleel Brenton of Rhode Island, Charles Cromme-

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for back rents. The original letter is in the possession of Dositheus Humphry Esq. a descendant of John Humphry Esq.

* A clergyman and physician of great celebrity, who resided at Killingworth.

lin of New York, William Patridge of Boston, and sundry other persons, were concerned at various times, and in different companies.

Engineers and superintendents from Europe, some of them persons of distinction, and miners from Germany, were employed in these works. Among them were Major John Sydervelt, who remained in Simsbury until his death; Caspar Hoofman, who died here March 21, 1732; and John Christian Müller, a principal refiner, who married and died here.*

Connected with these mines were works for smelting and refining. These were erected about the year 1721, upon Hop brook, in Simsbury, a few rods westerly of the upper or Tuller's mills, and consisted of sundry buildings, in addition to a mill for crashing or pounding the ore, and a furnace. The place was called *Hanover*, a name yet retained, which was given to it by the workmen who had emigrated from a place of the same name in Germany. A portion of the ore dug at the mines was smelted at these works,—but to what extent this business was prosecuted, or with what success, is not known. In 1725, when this property was attached, there was found and levied upon one thousand seven hundred pounds of black copper, so called, it is supposed, because it was not refined. This branch of the business, however, being prohibited by the laws of Great Britain, was carried on secretly, and consequently at great disadvantage; and with the other embarrassments mentioned, relating to smelting, resulted in a probable loss. The Hanover works, of which but few indications now remain, were demolished many years since. The ore procured at the mines, which was not brought here for smelting, was shipped to England. One cargo was taken by the French, and another, according to report, was sunk in the English channel by shipwreck. Other cargoes arrived in Europe, where the ore was smelted.

* His wife was Hannah Weston, by whom he had two children before 1731. It is believed that after his death the name was changed to *Miller*, and that some of his descendants now live in Granby.

In these mining operations, but little comparatively was done after 1745, though at no time, it is believed, was the business wholly abandoned until 1778. In 1772, Captain James Holmes, an Englishman, then a resident of Salisbury, took a lease of the principal mine for twenty years, which he sold the next year to the state for a prison.

A coin made from this ore, called "Higley's Coppers," was at one time in some circulation in the vicinity of the mines. It is said to have passed for two and sixpence, (forty-two cents,) in paper currency it is presumed, though composed chiefly, if not entirely, of copper.

One of these coins, dated 1737, is in the cabinet of the Connecticut Historical Society. Its inscription on one side is, "I am good copper;"—on the other, "Value me as you please." These coppers were much used for melting up with gold in the manufacture of jewelry, and for this purpose were considered vastly preferable to ordinary copper coin. They were not in circulation as a currency after the peace of 1783. The inventor and maker, is supposed to have been Doct. Samuel Higley who, a few years before this, had attempted to manufacture steel, and was somewhat distinguished for enterprises of this character.

The Phœnix Mining Company, incorporated in 1830, having purchased the state prison property, consisting of about five acres of land, with sundry buildings enclosed by a stone wall, and having secured, by long leases, the right of mining upon large tracts of other lands lying in the vicinity, commenced mining operations in 1831, under the superintendency of Richard Bacon Esq. of Simsbury. Owing however to some unforeseen difficulties in the process of smelting and refining the ore, and other obstructions occasioned by the pecuniary embarrassments of the times, the works after a short time were discontinued. That they will be resumed at some future time under more favorable auspices, and with a fairer prospect of success, is confidently believed by those who are conversant with the business, and have devoted to these mines a critical examination.

A gentleman who has been extensively engaged in this

business in Europe, and who is said to be an experienced and scientific miner, speaking of these mines, says :—

"The principal vein is large, and one which, in mining phraseology, would be termed *a flat lode*, making with the horizon an angle of perhaps twenty-three degrees. Its matrix is a yellowish grey sandstone, nearly similar to the common sandstone of the neighborhood, but yet so perceptibly differing from it, as to allow of its being traced at surface, for at least a mile, north and south, by its characteristic color and general appearance. In this matrix, copper is pretty generally disseminated, principally in nodules of rich brittle grey sulphuret, interspersed here and there with minute strings of common yellow pyrites. The lode appears to be favorably disposed for yielding mineral and copper ore in particular."

The ore, it is said, produces on an average, from ten to twelve per cent of copper, but some large specimens have been obtained, producing from thirty to forty per cent. It is of the kind technically called "refractory,"—a species that ordinarily resists the usual process of smelting. Other processes, however, have led to more successful results. By skill, enterprise and new experiments, all impediments of this nature will, it is believed be easily removed.

NEWGATE PRISON.

NEWGATE PRISON. Establishment. Destruction of Buildings by Fire. Escape of Convicts. Confinement of Tories. Employment of Prisoners. Police Regulations. 1773—1827.

THE General Assembly, at the May session, 1773, in view of establishing a state prison, appointed William Pitkin, Erastus Wolcott, and Jonathan Humphrey Esq'rs, a committee "to view and explore the copper mines at Simsbury,—their situation, nature and circumstances, and to examine and consider whether they may be beneficially applied to the purpose of confining, securing and profitably employing such criminals and delinquents as may be committed to them, by any future law or laws of this Colony, in lieu of the infamous punishments in divers cases now appointed;—and at what probable expense the said mines may be obtained for the purpose aforesaid;" and make report to the then session of the Assembly.

Upon their report that the mines were subject to an unexpired lease of nineteen years, which could be purchased for about sixty pounds, and that by an expenditure of about thirty-seven pounds, the caverns could be so secured that it would be "next to impossible for any person to escape" from them; the same gentlemen were invested "with full power to agree with the proprietors of said mines, or the lessees thereof, *to receive, keep and employ* in said mines such criminals as may by law be sentenced to such punishment, or *to purchase* in the remaining term in said leases, for such purposes, and according to their best discretion effectually to secure said mines suitably to employ such persons as may be there confined by order of law."

The committee reported at the next session, Oct. 1773,

that they had purchased the remaining term of Holmes' lease, being about nineteen years, for £60—that by blasting rocks they had "prepared a well finished lodging room, about fifteen feet by twelve," in the caverns,—and had fixed over the west shaft a large iron door, which they "apprehend will be an effectual security for the confinement of persons that may be condemned there for employment." The whole expense, including the purchase money, amounted to three hundred and seventy dollars. The east shaft which extends perpendicularly about seventy feet, chiefly through a solid rock, was left open. There were no walls provided, nor were there any buildings upon the premises. At this session, an Act was passed "constituting the subterraneous caverns and buildings in the copper mines in Simsbury, a public gaol and workhouse for the use of the Colony;" to which was given the name of *Newgate Prison.* The prisoners were to be employed in mining. The crimes, which by the Act subjected offenders to confinement and labor in the prison, were—burglary, horse stealing, and counterfeiting the public bills or coins, or making instruments or dies therefor.

The first overseers of Newgate appointed, were Major Erastus Wolcott, Josiah Bissell and Jonathan Humphrey Esq'rs. Mr. John Viets,* who lived near the place, was appointed master, or keeper of the prison. Food for the prisoners was supplied by him.

The first convict received into the prison was John Hinson. He was committed Dec, 22, 1773, and escaped on the 9th of January following, by being drawn up through the eastern shaft by a rope, assisted, it is said, by a woman, to whom he was paying his addresses. On the 26th of February, 1774, three prisoners were received;—one of whom escaped on the 9th, and the other two on the 23d of the next April. One committed on the 5th of April, escaped on the 9th of the same month, having been in confinement

* The ancestor of Mr. Viets was a German, and came to this country with a company of miners, to which he was attached as physician and surgeon.

four days. It is not known how these escapes were effected. Besides the east shaft which was left open, there were other parts of the caverns which had not been properly secured. None of these prisoners, it is understood, were retaken. By this time, the overseers had probably changed their minds respecting the *perfect security* of the prison. A night watch was employed during part of this time.

Soon after the escape of Hinson, the General Assembly in January 1774, directed the overseers to cause the east shaft to be effectually secured with stone or iron, and to build a log block-house with two or three rooms, one of which was to be placed directly over the west shaft. These improvements were made during this year, but not until after the escape of the other prisoners mentioned above.

In the spring of 1775, three prisoners escaped, all of whom were retaken. At the May session of this year, the Assembly ordered the overseers to make sale of the ore dug at the prison. There were at this time nine convicts in confinement, all of whom were engaged in excavating copper ore under the charge of two persons employed as miners.

The block-house having been destroyed by fire in the spring of 1776, the Assembly, in May, ordered a new one to be constructed, and also a frame dwelling house, for the keeper of the prison, one story high, eighteen by thirty feet. This burning was by design, to favor the escape of the convicts, none of whom however escaped at this time.

In 1777. the block-house was again burnt, and another one ordered to be built. All the prisoners were removed to the jail in Hartford for confinement. It is supposed that the prison was not repaired, or used as such, until 1780. If it was repaired before that time, the buildings were again destroyed, for at the session of the Assembly in January 1779, the prison being represented "to be in a ruinous condition," and "altogether insufficient to answer the salutary purposes for which it was prepared," the overseers were directed to erect new buildings, with "a block-house on the surface of the ground over the mouth of the cavern, suitable and convenient to secure and employ the prisonors in labor

in the day time ;" and when completed to appoint a keeper of the prison.

The prison was completed in November 1780, and was supplied with a military guard consisting of a lieutenant, one sergeant, one corporal and twenty-four privates. Up to this time, the prisoners had been employed in the mines, and been furnished with food by persons not connected with the prison. Now they were employed in mechanical operations, and supplied with food prepared in the prison.

The prison had been left entirely unprotected by any wall until 1781. In February of this year, the overseers were directed by the Assembly to construct, at a convenient distance around the prison and buildings, a piquet fence with small bastions at the corners for defense. A work of this kind was much needed, and notwithstanding the combustible material with which it was constructed, it tended very much to strengthen the prison. In other respects too, the prison was in a much better condition than at any previous time.

But, one of the most daring and successful attempts ever made at this prison to overcome the guard and throw open the prison doors, was made after this time, and when, as was supposed, a general escape of the convicts was impracticable. On the 18th of May 1781, the prisoners, amounting to twenty-eight persons, most of whom were tories, rose upon the guard, seized their arms, and made good their escape—carrying their captured arms with them. Every prisoner left. The design was so well planned and executed, that but a small number of them were re-captured.

It was supposed that one or more of the guard had been bribed to favor the escape of the prisoners. About ten o'clock at night on the 18th of May 1781, when all the guard but two had retired to rest, a wife of one of the prisoners appeared, to whom permission was given to visit her husband in the caverns. Upon the hatches being opened to admit her passing down, the prisoners, who were at the door and prepared for the encounter, rushed up, seized the guns of the sentry on duty, who made little or no resistance,

and became masters of the guard room before those who were asleep could be aroused and prepared to make defense. One brave fellow, by name of Sheldon, who was an officer of the guard, fought valiantly, and was killed upon the spot, having been pierced by a bayonet through his body. A few others, belonging to the guard, received trifling injuries from clubs with which the assailants were armed. The guard was easily overcome. A few sought safety by flight,—but the greater number were disarmed by the prisoners and locked up in the caverns. The prisoners, having equipped themselves with the captured arms, escaped, and with few exceptions had the adroitness, or good luck, to avoid a re-capture.

The General Assembly, then in session, appointed a committee to investigate this matter, and ascertain the causes of the disaster. The committee after a critical examination, reported the testimony taken by them;—from which it appears that the discipline of the guard was defective—that their conduct at the time of the revolt was, with few exceptions, cowardly—and that at least one person, by the name of Lilly, was bribed and favored the escape of the prisoners. Lilly was afterwards prosecuted and convicted of this offence; and the guard was so remodeled as to give greater security to the prison thereafter.

On the 6th of November 1782, the prison buildings were once more destroyed by fire; but how, or by what means the fire was communicated, does not appear. No doubt, however, exists that the conflagration was by design, in order to facilitate the escape of the tories who were there in confinement. During the progress of the fire, one Abel Davis, who was a sergeant of the guard, opened the hatches and suffered as many of the prisoners, as were so disposed, to escape from the prison. A large number of them did escape, most of whom were re-captured in the neighborhood and secured. Davis, who seems to have been very illiterate, and altogether unfit for the station which he held, was convicted of the offence of aiding in the escape, and sentenced to a fine and imprisonment in the county jail.

The prisoners remaining after this conflagration, with those subsequently re-taken, were removed to the jail in Hartford. The prison was not repaired, nor used again until 1790. Indeed, it would seem that, at this time, the project of keeping up a prison at this place was abandoned altogether. No measures were taken to repair it,—on the contrary, in May 1784, all the property remaining at the prison and saved from the fire, consisting of iron, timber, clothing, &c. was ordered by the legislature to be sold, and the avails paid into the treasury. Little else but disaster had attended the prison from its establishment. More than one half of all the prisoners committed to it had escaped, and during the nine years of its continuance, the buildings connected with it had been destroyed by fire *three times.* In no respect had the prison been properly constructed or secured. The buildings were of wood, and so exposed as to be easily fired from without. Prison building in those days, as well as prison discipline, was not so well understood as at the present time. All the jails in the state were then constructed of wood.

And yet this prison had a reputation *abroad* for great strength and security. Its fame had spread through the country far and wide. For a long time it was considered the *strongest* prison in the United States. In 1775, Gen. Washington sent to it some prisoners for safe custody, whom he deemed such "atrocious villains," as to require a *stronger place* for their confinement than could be found near his camp.* And, in 1781, Congress proposed to make these

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* Letter from Gen. Washington, to the *Committee of Safety*, Simsbury.

Cambridge, December 11, 1775.

GENTLEMEN;—The prisoners which will be delivered you with this, having been tried by a court-martial, and deemed to be such flagrant and atrocious villains that they cannot by any means be set at large or confined in any place near this camp, were sentenced to be sent to *Symsbury in Connecticut.* You will therefore be pleased to have them secured in your jail, or in such other manner as to you shall seem necessary, so that they cannot possibly make their escape. The charges of their imprisonment will be at the Continental expense.

I am &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

mines "a state prison for the reception of British prisoners of war, and for the purpose of retaliation;" and asked from the Governor of this state a plan and estimates of expense. Governor Trumbull laid the matter before the General Assembly, who assented to the proposition, and requested him to furnish for Congress the plan and estimates required. What these were, do not appear, but the subject was dropped, probably for the reason that soon after this time a termination of the war was anticipated.

Mention has already been made of the confinement of tories in this prison. No person of this description was imprisoned here until 1780, when an Act was passed authorising the superior court to sentence to confinement in Newgate, such persons as should be convicted of certain specified crimes against the government not amounting to treason, but which consisted of certain overt acts deemed prejudicial to the cause of independenee. Courts Martial too, exercised the power of sentencing to this prison persons found guilty of similar offenses. The whole number of persons, called *tories*, imprisoned, did not, it is believed, exceed forty. At one time there were upwards of twenty in the prison, all of whom, as before stated, escaped on the 18th of May 1781. Among them were persons of some note and distinction. The leader of this rebellion was a Captain Peter Sackett, who had rendered himself notorious, as well as extremely obnoxious, by his adherence to the cause of the British government.

A new Act, more perfect and specific in its details than the former one, was passed in 1790, constituting the caverns at these mines, with a small quantity of land over them, a state prison, denominated, as before, Newgate. The act provided for the appointment of three overseers, who were directed to cause a workshop and a dwelling house for the keeper to be erected, and to enclose them with a piquet wall or fence,—and to appoint a keeper, with a guard not exceeding ten persons, to manage and protect the prison. The expense of rebuilding it was limited to £750. Persons convicted of burglary, robbery, horse-stealing, counterfeiting,

passing counterfeit money, knowing it to be such, and aiding in the escape of convicts from the prison, were to be confined at hard labor in this place for a term of years, or, in some cases, during the life of the culprit. Subsequently, for a few other crimes, the offender was subjected to imprisonment here.

The Hon. John Treadwell, and Roger Newberry, and Pliny Hillyer Esq. were appointed the overseers. A large workshop and a dwelling house, both of brick, were constructed, together with sundry other buildings of minor consequence. Under the west end of the dwelling house was a small room well secured by massive stone walls, from which led the only passage to the caverns beneath. This entrance was perforated through a solid rock, and contained a ladder by which passage to or from the caverns was made. The mouth of this entrance, as was also the one leading into this room from the guard-room above, was well secured by a trap door with lock and heavy bolts. A wooden fence, furnished with spikes on the top, enclosed these buildings with about half an acre of land for a yard.

The prison was finished in October 1790, and Major Peter Curtiss was appointed the keeper, to whom with a guard of ten men was committed its management.

From this time, the affairs of the prison assumed a new aspect. The prison was more securely built, and better managed than at any former period. Escapes from it were rare, and there were no instances of a general rebellion, or an entire clearing out of its inmates as formerly.

The system of discipline and employment, as at first adopted, continued to be followed, with but slight variations, until the removal of the convicts to the new state prison in 1827. As a general rule, the prisoners were lodged in the caverns. At day light, they were taken up and removed to the work shop, where they remained until four o'clock P. M., when they were returned to the caverns. They took their meals in the work shop. These consisted of coarse food prepared in the prison, which was dealt out to them by rations. Nearly all of them wore fetters strongly

rivetted to their ankles. The most refractory, and desperate of their number, were more heavily ironed. In general, when at work, they were chained at their respective blocks in the shop, and a portion of them were secured by an extra chain leading from a band around the neck to a beam in the building.

The punishment for misconduct, or offences committed in the prison, was whipping, short rations, extra ironing, and, in some specified cases designated by statute, an additional term of imprisonment. Each prisoner had a fixed amount of work to perform each day. Those who did extra work had the benefit of it in an allowance on the bills of costs incurred in their prosecutions.

At first, all the prisoners were employed in making wrought nails, the iron for which was procured at Canaan and Salisbury. This business was followed during the whole time of the continuance of the prison at this place, and was, for many years, the chief occupation of the convicts. A few other branches of manufacture were carried on, though not extensively. After 1820, a large number of the convicts were employed in the manufacture of shoes, wagons and various other articles, by which a greater profit was derived than from the nail making business. Indeed, the manufacture of nails at this place had always been attended with loss to the state.

In 1802, a substantial stone wall, twelve feet high, was built around the premises, having a gate which was never opened except by a sentinel under arms on duty. This wall was built by Colonel Calvin Barber of Simsbury. All the guards when on duty were under arms, and prepared at all times to use their weapons in any conflict or outbreak that might happen. Their number, at first ten, was subsequently increased to seventeen. The government, as well as the duties of the guard, partook strongly of a military character.

Additional buildings were subsequently erected. About 1815, a two story building, nearly fifty feet long, was put upin the south east corner of the yard. The lower story

was appropriated for cells, and the upper one for a chapel in which divine service was thereafter usually held once on each Sunday. Adjoining this on the west, was another building of about the same length, the lower story of which was occupied for a cooper's shop, hospital and kitchen, and the upper story as a shoe maker's shop. In the northeast corner of the yard was another building used for making wagons. The cells above mentioned being weakly constructed, were not much used. Still later, about 1824, a large edifice of stone and brick was built on the westerly side of the yard, which contained a tread mill, with the usual appurtenances for grinding grain,—a number of strong cells,—apartments for female convicts,—a kitchen, office, &c. This building was erected chiefly by convict labor. The tread mill, however, like all other similar ones, proved a failure—the labor of working it being found too expensive for the state, and quite too cruel for the convicts.

In the basement story of the guard-house, and near the entrance to the caverns, was a strongly built apartment about fifteen feet square, called the "jug." This room was used at first for the sick, and occasionally as a lodging room for that class of prisoners who were known to be well disposed, and from whom no danger of attempting an escape was apprehended. The other prisoners were lodged in the caverns, where their beds consisted of two large platforms supplied with straw and a few blankets. The novice in crime, and the most hardened villain, were thus promiscuously huddled together without any restraint, or immediate oversight by any of the guard during the night season.

The number of criminals in confinement after 1800, varied from about forty-five to sixty, until 1821, when the number of offenses, punishable by confinement in Newgate, was considerably increased by legislative enactments. This, with the increase of crime, and the change about this time of the law relating to the punishment of female convicts, by which they were subjected to imprisonment here in the same manner as, for similar offenses, the males were, caused a considerable addition to the number of prisoners. In

1827, when they were removed to the new prison at Wethersfield, they amounted to one hundred and twenty-seven.

The prison was never able to support itself from the avails of convict labor. The deficiency, which was paid from the state treasury, varied from five thousand to over thirteen thousand dollars per annum. It would average about seven thousand dollars a year, including outlays for new buildings.

The state having provided a new prison at Wethersfield, all the prisoners were removed so as to commence operations there on the first of October 1827. The old prison, with its buildings and some five acres of land, were sold in 1830, to the Phœnix Mining Company, for twelve hundred dollars.

This place was greatly resorted to by visitors, and especially so during the winter months, when there was sleighing.* Many of them descended into the caverns, and all had an opportunity to inspect generally the discipline and the labor-system of the prison. To those unaccustomed to the scene, a visit to the nail-shop presented a view extremely revolting, and to some even terrific. Here might be seen some fifty men, black and white, and so besmeared as to be hardly distinguishable, chained to their blocks, busily engaged in a noisy employment, and closely watched and guarded by a file of men under arms. Add to this, the appearance of the room with its inmates and implements, as viewed by strong lights proceeding from the various furnaces, and the continual clatter of hammers used in forging nails,—and some idea of the scene, though necessarily an imperfect one, may be imagined.

Besides the revolt under Capt. Sackett, which has already been mentioned, and which was so successfully carried out, there have been several escapes, and attempts to break the prison; a few of which are worthy of notice.

Shortly before 1800, a number of prisoners made their escape by opening one of the shafts which had been filled

* In a report made by the overseers in 1810, it is stated that the number of visitors to the prison would average four hundred and fifty *monthly*.

up and, as was supposed, well secured by stones strongly bolted together. It was a work of great labor, and must have been a long while in progress.

In 1802, when the keeper and nearly all the officers and guard were sick and off duty, the prisoners, at the time of being returned to the caverns, rose upon the small remnant of guard able to be on duty, and attempted to escape. By the prompt action and indomitable courage of Mr. Dan Forward, a private, and who was indued with great muscular strength, the prisoners were subdued and safely secured under the hatches. It is supposed that this revolt was ill matured, or not generally known, for it did not commence until a large portion of the convicts had descended into the caverns. Had it been well managed, it would, probably, have succeeded, as the guard was too weak to quell a general rebellion on an occasion like this.

There was another rebellion in 1806. Nearly all the convicts employed in the nail shop had been supplied with pewter keys, with which to unlock their fastenings, manufactured by some very skillful mechanics then in prison. At a given signal, the convicts were to unlock the chains which confined them to their stations, and make a concerted attack upon the guard. The signal was given—the men released themselves—and two of them commenced the attack by siezing the officer on duty so suddenly as to disable him from using his weapons in defense. A short scuffle ensued, during which one of the guard, not on duty in that shop, ran to the place and shot one of the ring leaders, a negro, dead upon the spot. This event so disheartened the rest that they immediately returned to their places and sued for mercy.

In the spring of 1822, nearly all the prisoners, then amounting to over one hundred, concerted a plan to overpower the guard and effect their escape. The time selected for the attempt was during the temporary absence of the keeper and three of the guard;—the force remaining on duty being fourteen persons. Their plan was to have a general rising in all the shops at a given signal. The sig-

nal was given in the nail shop, when the attack commenced. One of the guard was knocked down and his arms taken from him, and another was seized and mastered. During the scuffle which ensued, a reinforcement arrived upon the ground. Two of the insurgents were shot at and wounded, though not mortally, which terminated the affray. There was no outbreak in the other shops—probably the signal was not heard.

On the night preceding the removal of the prisoners to the new prison in Wethersfield, one of the convicts, by the name of Starkey, was killed in attempting to make his escape. The shaft, used for a well, communicated with one of the caverns about seventy feet below the surface of the earth. The top of this shaft was well secured by a hatch, which it was intended should be always fastened down in the night season. On this evening, the well was left open, and, as appearances would indicate, by design. Starkey attempted to ascend by climbing the rope used for drawing water. In making the ascent, the rope broke, by which he was precipitated to the bottom, where he was found dead.

The convicts, while at this prison, generally enjoyed good health. With but a single exception, which was readily accounted for by local causes, no contagious disease had ever occurred here. The caverns, as a lodging place, were generally deemed conducive to health. Those afflicted with cutaneous diseases were often cured. The temperature was uniform at all seasons of the year, being, as indicated by the thermometer, at about fifty-two degrees.

The inmates of this prison formed a motley group. Amongst them might be found rogues of high celebrity—the most hardened and reckless—the cunning and adroit—and often mechanics and artizans gifted with ingenuity and skill of a high order. Persons well educated, with a large class of the most illiterate and degraded—negroes and whites—young and old—were all to be found here as common associates, and generally as bed-fellows.

Some of the prisoners obtained a high reputation for their

roguery. One, by the name of Newman, published an account of his long career in crime and prison-breaking which, *if true*, would entitle him to the highest rank among villains. He was, at times, quite successful in playing off his deceptions. While in this prison, before his pranks were discovered, he avoided labor by feigning sickness. He could at any time raise blood, which his attendants supposed proceeded from his lungs. By feigning other symptoms of a pulmonary decline, he had strongly enlisted the sympathy of the guard, and was exempted from labor. His object was to avert the vigilance of his keepers, and thereby effect his escape. Being foiled in this, he proceeded still further and feigned fits. He contrived to manage these tricks so well, that it was some time before the deception was discovered. Succeeding in none of his deceptious practices, he was, after all his trouble, compelled to serve out the term of his imprisonment. In another prison, by counterfeiting death, he came very near effecting his escape;—at least it is so stated in his memoir.

Another convict, by name Parker, after his release from prison, had extraordinary success in deceiving the weak-minded, by assuming the name and identity of persons who, by long absence from their friends, were supposed to be dead. He passed, for some time, as the long lost son of an aged pair; and, at another time, imposed himself upon a woman as her husband who had been absent many years. He also at times pretended to be a clergyman, and had some success in this branch of his deceptive career.

A prisoner by the name of Corson, after his discharge, in 1826, published an account of his exploits, from which, it would appear, that his character for villainy was well earned, and correctly bestowed,—and that the safety of the public required a *permanent* abode for him in some strong prison.

But, one of the most desperate and dangerous of the gang was a convict of the name of Sloan, who, in 1821, was sentenced for a long term of years for passing counterfeit money, a large amount of which was also found in his possession. While in Hartford jail, before his commitment to Newgate,

he nearly effected his escape by a bold and daring plot. Indued with extraordinary muscular power—and being reckless and courageous, yet cool and circumspect—he became one of the most dangerous and troublesome prisoners at Newgate. He was the leader in all insurrections, and was kept in subjection only by loading him heavily with irons. In attempting to make his escape, he struck down one of the guard, injuring him severely, for which outrage he was subjected to an additional term of imprisonment.

The annals of Newgate furnish many incidents of an interesting character. Some of them, depending on tradition, are so intermixed with fiction as to become nearly valueless, and will soon pass into oblivion. A larger portion, resting on better authority, remain, and furnish a mass of information worthy of preservation.

As a place for criminals, this prison never fully answered the purposes intended by the government. The guilty were indeed *punished*—but rarely ever *reformed*. The free intercourse among all classes of offenders, allowed during the night season, was well calculated to make *all* adepts in roguery, and better fitted than ever for a new career in crime, when, at the termination of imprisonment, they should again mix with the world. No system, aiming at the reformation of an offender, could be worse than this. Under such a *schooling*, reformation could hardly be expected;—it certainly was never realized to any considerable extent. Few, if any, left the prison better men, or more favorably disposed to regard the rights of society, or obey its laws. As a general rule, the convicts left the prison more hardened, and more disposed than ever to engage in new criminal enterprises, and with a better knowledge of the manner both of committing offenses, and evading detection.

The state having erected a new prison at Wethersfield, which was completed in September 1827, all the prisoners remaining were removed from Newgate to this prison on the 30th of that month;—a few of them having previously been taken out to work on the new prison.

The persons appointed *overseers* of the prison, from its

first establishment, were,—Erastus Wolcott, Josiah Bissell, Jonathan Humphry, Asahel Holcomb, James Forward, Matthew Griswold, Roger Newbury, John Treadwell, Pliny Hillyer, Samuel Woodruff, Martin Sheldon, Reuben Barker, Jonathan Pettibone Jr. and Thomas K. Brace.

Keepers:—John Viets,* Peter Curtiss, Major Reuben Humphreys, Col. Thomas Sheldon, Salmon Clark, Charles Washburn, Elam Tuller, Alexander H. Griswold and Andrew Denison.

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* Mr. Viets, who was appointed by the General Assembly, resigned in 1776. From this time, until 1782, the office was held by a number of persons,—the keeper being the chief officer of the guard for the time being. Under the new act of 1790, the keepers were appointed by the overseers. Mr. Curtiss was the first one appointed after this time.

CAPTIVITY OF DANIEL HAYES,

BY THE INDIANS.

In the fall of 1707, Daniel Hayes, at the age of twenty-two years, was taken by the Indians and carried captive into Canada. He resided at Salmon brook, now the central part of Granby, which, being at that time the northern point of settlement in the town, was peculiarly exposed to sudden invasions by the Indians. The circumstances attending this transaction, as preserved by tradition, are as follows.*

Some two or three years before Hayes was taken, he was at a house-raising in Weatauge, when, very inconsiderately, and out of mere wanton sport, he cut off the tail of a dog belonging to an Indian, who, a stranger and entirely unknown, happened to be present. The master of the dog, though he uttered no complaint, manifested such emotions of ill will and revenge, that Hayes, before they separated, deemed it prudent for himself to attempt to pacify him. He sought therefore a reconciliation, by proposing to drink together, and offered, moreover, reparation for the injury. But the Indian rejected all overtures, and left the ground, evidently in a surly and unreconciled mood of mind, and,

* The materials from which this account is compiled, were obligingly communicated to the author by Samuel H. Woodruff and Ardon B. Holcomb Esq'rs, of Granby. Of the general correctness of the narrative, no reasonable doubt can be entertained,—as the facts have been derived, not only from the descendants of Mr. Hayes, but also from several aged people, all of whom concur in their statements regarding the main and important features of the transaction.

probably, with malice and revenge deeply impressed upon his heart. Nothing afterwards being heard of the Indian or his dog, the circumstance, in a short time, if not forgotten, became unheeded. But, the events which follow were supposed to result from this affair.*

On the evening before his capture, there was a corn husking party at the house of Mr. Hayes, when, in the course of conversation, he remarked that early in the ensuing morning, he should endeavor to find his horse, which was feeding in the forests, and, as supposed, westerly of the settlement. This conversation, as appears from the sequel, was overheard by Indians, who were, at that time, lurking about the house, and who, it is supposed, from the information thus obtained, devised their plans of operation for the next morning,

After the family had retired and were asleep, they were awakened by the barking of their dog, which manifested so much uneasiness as to induce Mr. Hayes to leave his bed, and, with his dog, to seek for the cause. Supposing the disturbance to have proceeded from the incursion of cattle into the corn-field contiguous to his house, (an ordinary occurrence in those days,) and finding it unmolested, he again sought repose in sleep. But the dog continued restive, and plainly made known, by his conduct, that there was something wrong in the neighborhood of the house.

The next morning, at an early hour, Mr. Hayes, taking with him a bridle, proceeded into the forests to find his horse. His route led him to pass Stoney Hill, a ridge of land stretching north and south about eighty rods westerly of Salmon brook street. Upon turning round the south point

* Thus goes the story. But the author must be allowed to say, for himself, that he very much doubts whether this affair had anything to do with the capture of Hayes, which took place some years afterwards. The Indians, it is well known, were incited to such deeds by the French in Canada, to whom they carried their captives, and by whom, as is supposed, they were rewarded for the service. The more correct supposition probably is, that the captors came into this weak settlement, to sieze and carry off any person who might be thrown in their way, and that they would have taken as readily any other person as Hayes, if an opportunity, equally as favorable, had occurred.

of this hill, he was seized by three Indians, who sprang upon him from an ambush where they had secreted themselves from view. So suddenly and unexpectedly came this attack upon Hayes, that he was deprived of all power to make resistance, or even any attempt to escape. One Indian seized him by the throat—another, enjoined silence by putting a hand over his mouth—whilst the other, with a tomahawk raised over his head, enforced obedience and submission. They immediately bound his hands at his back, with the throat-latch of the bridle, and, with their captive, hastily left the place, taking their course in a northern direction.

Another account states that Hayes was accompanied by a Mr. Lamson, who, being an agile and athletic man, outran the Indians and effected his escape—that the number of Indians, belonging to the party, amounted to five or more; and that the transaction was witnessed by a Mrs. Holcomb, wife of Mr. Nathaniel Holcomb, who was in the fields that morning milking, but who, from considerations relating to her own safety, was deterred from returning home, or giving an alarm, until the Indians with their captive had left the place.

Very soon, however, the usual alarm was spread, and a force was raised sufficient to make pursuit. Immediate effort was made to relieve the captive, and punish the aggressors. And notice of the calamity having been sent to Windsor, a larger force came from that town to the rescue. The route taken by the Indians was found and traced, and, at times, the marks of their tracks appeared so fresh, that strong hopes were entertained of overtaking them. But, their superior cunning in such exploits, with their fleetness in passing through the wilderness, enabled them to avoid their pursuers, and escape with their prisoner.

In the mean time Hayes, knowing that any symptoms of lagging on his part would probably cost him his life, and supposing, moreover, that in no event would his captors, if closely pursued, suffer him to live, exerted himself to keep up with them. And he soon found he could do this without

much fatigue, for he was robust, and accustomed to such traveling. On one occasion, during this journey, when his companions wished to test his fleetness, he outstripped them so far that they were on the point of shooting him to stop his progress. He might then have escaped, as he afterwards said, "if he had had his thoughts about him."

On the first night after his capture, the party encamped at the foot of Sodom mountain. He was secured during the night, by being placed upon his back, with each arm and ancle strongly fastened to a sapling, and with sticks so crossing his body as to be lain upon by an Indian on each side. He passed most of the nights, bound in this manner, during his long march to Canada. On the second day, the party crossed Connecticut river, by fording and swimming, and spent the ensuing night at the base of Mount Holyoke.

In this manner, they proceeded from day to day, up the valley of Connecticut river and through the wilderness, on their route to Canada. Many incidents occurred, which Hayes used to relate. One evening, the little savages, belonging to a village where the party had stopped, annoyed him by tickling his feet as he lay before a fire with his arms pinioned as usual. Bearing this annoyance as long as his patience would allow, he attempted to get rid of his tormentors by using his feet in self-defense—during which process, some of them were kicked into the fire. He expected nothing short of death for this aggression, but was agreeably surprised when the fathers of the burnt children, instead of offering violence, patted him on his shoulders and exclaimed "boon!"*

They were nearly thirty days on this journey, during all which time the sufferings of poor Hayes were excessive, and almost without intermission. Subjected to hard toil through each day, with no sustenance save what the forests and rivers furnished, and deprived at night of rest, by the man-

* If this word is correctly handed down, it was intended probably, for the French word *bon*, and used on this occasion to express approbation. The northern Indians, at this time, were in the habit of using a few words derived from the French.

ner of binding his limbs, he had that to sustain which, in most cases, would have brought the sufferer to the grave. But Hayes, if he must be a victim, determined that he at least would not voluntarily contribute to hasten the sacrifice. He possessed that happy faculty of making, at all times, the best of his condition. His cheerfulness, though assumed—his ability to endure fatigue and hardships—and his apparent stoical indifference to his fate, secured the good opinion of his comrades, and tended to lighten his burdens, and, possibly, to prolong his life. Indulgence in despondency could bring no relief, and would, as he well knew, but render more bitter the cup of his afflictions. He very wisely therefore made up his mind "to make a virtue of necessity," by submitting with the best possible grace to that fate which he too well knew awaited him.

The Indians told him, on the journey, of their lying about his house on the night before he was taken, and of their overhearing the conversation relating to his intention to proceed, on the next morning, into the wilderness to find his horse; which information, thus obtained, induced them to lie in wait at Stoney hill in order to capture him.

When they arrived at the great Indian encampment on the borders of Canada, the prisoner was delivered over to the council of the nation, to be disposed of as they should adjudge. By their decision, he was doomed to undergo the painful ordeal of "*running the gauntlet.*" Being stripped to his skin, and annointed according to custom, he commenced the course; and after many flagellations and hard knocks received, when approaching near the end of the line, being exhausted and faint, he bolted from the course to avoid a blow from an upraised war club, and sought safety by fleeing into a wigwam, at the door of which sat a superannuated and infirm squaw. He was pursued, but the squaw proclaimed the house *sacred*, and its inmates protected from injury. By her intercession, and especially by the deference paid to a place thus sanctified according to the rites of Indian superstition, "the appetite of the savage for blood was stayed."

The squaw, whose husband and only son had fallen in war, claimed the captive, and adopted him as her son. She was destitute, and so infirm as to be unable to walk. Hayes, in addition to minor duties, was compelled to provide for her sustenance and fuel. He administered to her wants, and devoted to her the kindest attentions,—and she, in return, evinced her gratitude, by calling him *her son!* He lived in this family about five years; and although, during this time, he fared better, perhaps, than most Indian captives, yet existence, in his then condition, had for him but few charms, and the future unveiled to his view no cheering prospect. He was in bondage, compelled to adopt the customs and modes of life of savages, and was deprived of almost every comfort deemed necessary by civilized people. Besides, he could entertain no reasonable hope of being restored to his home and kindred—and more than all, his life was at the mercy, whim, or caprice, of savage masters.

One of the tasks imposed upon him, in the winter season was to draw upon a sled his Indian mother to such places as she wished to visit, and especially to the feasts and council assemblages of her tribe. Upon occasion of a "dog feast," which, by the usages of her people, all were expected to attend, he proceeded with her, in this manner, until, ascending a hill which was steep and slippery, he found his strength, when put to its utmost power, barely adequate to make any headway. By perseverance and exertion however, he was enabled to reach nearly the summit of the hill, when he slipped and fell; and either by design, or inability to hold on, left the sled, with its mortal load, to find the bottom of the declivity without a pilot—secretly wishing, no doubt, that her appetite for riding would be cured by this trip. In this perilous adventure, the sled struck a stump near the foot of the hill, which capsized the squaw, who was severely injured by the fall. Whether an accident or not, Hayes professed much sorrow for the disaster, and managed the affair so adroitly, that he escaped every imputation of blame, and continued to retain the confidence and good opinion of the Indians.

Shortly after this event, he was sold to a Frenchman in Montreal, through the agency, it is said, of a Papist priest. His new master was kind, and allowed him many of the necessaries, with some of the luxuries, of life, of which he had been so long deprived. Learning that Hayes was by trade a weaver, he started him in this business, and by allowing him a share of the profits, Hayes was enabled, in the course of about two years, to earn money enough to purchase his freedom. The good Frenchman not only emancipated him, but supplied him with clothes, provisions, and a half breed guide to conduct him safely through the warring tribes on his journey homeward. The guide proceeding with him as far as Mount Holyoke, pointed out to him the smokes of his friends, "the pale faces," wished him a happy return to his family, and departed, in another direction, to wend his way back to Canada. In about twenty-five days after leaving Montreal, Hayes had the happiness to reach his home, and to exchange hearty greetings and congratulations with his friends, to whom he appeared almost "as one raised from the dead."

Thus, after an absence of about seven years, the captive was restored to freedom, a home and a happy circle of relatives and friends. He had heard nothing from his family since his capture, nor had they received any tidings of him, though they either knew, or had good reason to suppose, that he had been taken and carried off by the Indians. His friends had flattered themselves, for a long while, that he would be spared to return to them, but his long absence had extinguished every vestige of hope, and he had for some time been given up as lost.

With buoyant spirits, renovated courage and unshaken resolution, he set himself to the task of making up for the *lost time* he had spent with the Indians. His constitution, naturally robust, had suffered nothing by his long captivity, and his ambition had lost none of its fire. He married, settled down upon a farm, and within a short time, became a thriving agriculturist. In 1720, he built a house which is now standing, and is the oldest building in town. It is

situated on the east side of Salmon brook street, in the lower or southern part of the street, and is at present owned by Mr. Henry Gillett. In this house religious meetings were held during some four or five years before the erection of the first meeting-house in that society, in 1743.

Mr. Hayes became a prominent citizen, was often employed in civil affairs, and during many years, was a pillar in the church at Salmon brook, of which he was a member at its organization. He lived to see the infant settlement, so long exposed to Indian barbarities, a populous village, with no crafty enemy to disturb its repose, and strong enough, had danger existed, to protect its inhabitants from plunder or capture. But, long before his death, all Indian difficulties had ceased.

He died in 1756, at the age of seventy-one, and was buried in the cemetery at the north end of the village. A red free-stone monument marks the spot of his last resting-place, on which is inscribed the following epitaph:

HERE LIES, YE BODY OF

MR. DANIEL HAYES,

Who served his Generation in steady course of Probity and Piety,
and was a lover of Peace, and God's Public Worship;
And being satisfied with Long life,
left this world with a Comfortable Hope of life Eternal,
Sept. 3d, 1756,
in ye 71 year of his Age.