

# ABOUT TEWKSBURY

## SUMMARY OF THE WEEK'S TESTIMONY IN THE ALMSHOUSE INVESTIGATION.

### ACCOUNTS OF HORRIBLE ILL-TREATMENT OF INMATES—ONE DEAD MAN SKINNED.

The committee investigating the Tewksbury almshouse held sessions four days this week, the last, which was the 13th of the series, being had on Thursday, when the committee adjourned till Monday next. The first witness of the week was Mrs. Jennie E. Pope of Middletown, Ct. She was at Tewksbury from May 8, 1876, to August 10, 1877; she had sewed for Mrs. Marsh, making dresses; one she made was for Dr. Nellie Marsh; she had seen Mrs. Marsh bring things from the baggage room which looked like dresses; some looked like silk dresses; she had seen her bring up these articles frequently; she saw one of the Davis girls, her granddaughter, have on a dress which looked like one brought from the baggage room; had seen the paupers making rugs from the dresses, but had never seen these rugs used in the building; she had seen large packing boxes in the corridor, which her husband said were directed to Exeter; she saw them on different occasions and they disappeared occasionally; Mrs. Thomas J. Marsh, Jr., had charge of the sewing room, and was often gone over Sunday; one of her absences was five weeks long. Witness also testified to seeing Mr. French kicking an insane woman; also that as much as a week's notice was had of official visits to the institution, and everything put in shape, though Capt. Marsh used to say to visitors that he had had only half an hour's notice.

Dr. Sherman H. Sanborn of Woburn was sworn. In February, 1878, he was student at the Tremont street Dental school; while there a man with a gray beard, with a covered wagon, came there with a corpse to sell, he asked \$14; the students chipped together and bought it; the man said it came from Tewksbury; it was the body of a grown woman.

Thomas Hill of Woburn, one of the selectmen, identified a small piece of negro skin shown by the Governor; Mr. Bancroft, a tanner at Woburn, gave it to me as a curiosity; said it was tanned at his tannery.

John F. McGovern was the next witness. He testified that he came from Woburn; was a tanner by trade; worked for Eustace Cummings & Bancroft; at one time the untanned skin of a negro was brought to him.

The Governor—Did you tan it?

"Yes, sir."

"Do you suppose you could recognize that particular piece?" (showing him a piece).

"Yes, sir; I know it by the spot where I rubbed the flock off." McGovern said there was brought him at that time part of the skin of the back, breast, and left arm down to finger nails; name, "W. F. Morrison" was on the card of the one who brought it; he said he brought it from Harvard, and that it came from Tewksbury; witness had never tanned a human skin before nor since.

Frank Barker and his wife, who were at Tewksbury from 1876 to 1879, in charge of the insane ward, testified to cases of ill-treatment of patients, who were left for days without food, and unattended by a physician when sick; patients had holes eaten in their heads by vermin, which crawled about on the beds; Dr. Lathrop and the Marshes had their attention called to these matters at the time but showed cruel indifference; patients, about 70 in all, were bathed without any change being made in the water, though many of them had running sores.

Mrs. Johanna King of Salem testified that her husband, having lost a leg while at work on the Eastern railroad, went to Tewksbury and died there; got a letter one Thursday noon announcing his death; went up that afternoon, taking a coffin, but they told her he had died Tuesday, and had been buried; when she returned to Salem with the empty coffin there was a hearse and coaches waiting for her; the expense of the trip was \$20 to her.

Charles B. Marsh testified in regard to his methods of book-keeping at the almshouse, and admitted that his accounts were irregularly kept as to time; the money of dead or absconded inmates is turned over to the State, and I have the Treasurer's receipt for it; don't know that anybody but myself knows whether I return enough or too much or too little; the entries on the cash book show from whose effects the amount comes; except this, there is no account opened with the effects of deceased inmates. Governor Butler asked that the journal, one of the account books presented, might be closely examined by the committee, with a view to determining if it were not a copy which had all been made at one time.

A little sensation was created Wednesday and Thursday by the fact that one of the witnesses, known as Mary Eva Bowen, did not want to give her real name, as it might bring discredit upon her among her friends in New York, where she now lives; she testified that she was an inmate of the almshouse in 1875; sent there by her father after the birth of her illegitimate child. She confirmed the statements by previous witnesses as to the filthy condition of the beds and closets and the vermin infested wards, also as to the manner of bathing the patients; thought Dr. Marsh killed her baby with morphia; thought Dr. Helen Marsh tried to poison me too, as my father, who was under the influence of my step-mother, wanted to get rid of me; he was rich but at his death left me only \$25; she never knew Dr. Nellie Marsh to give her child (a boy) any medicine except morphia, cod liver oil and whiskey.

Other testimony given was to the effect that there were rats in the hospital, some of which gnawed the toes off a sick old woman; Mrs. Catherine Powers, who was employed at Tewksbury, testified that her baby had got sore eyes by being washed in the same tub with children thus afflicted; her child was wiped with the same towel

as the other children, and has had sore eyes ever since, but it never had them before; he was not allowed to wash her child herself.

Adjourned till 9 a. m. Monday.