



THE PLYMOUTH ALMS HOUSE

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Pilgrim Society Note, Series One, Number Two, 1954

At a Meeting held at Plymouth on the 13th day of November 1727 it was "Voted that there be an Alms House built for the Entertainment of the Poor of the Town of Plymouth." On Dec. 29, 1728 it was "Voted that there be sixty feet square of Land laid out of the training green by the Pound to sett the Alms House & Correction House on and for yard Room."

The training green referred to here was established "At a Town meeting held at Plymouth on ye 21 Day of March 1711... At sd meeting it was voted That all the land lying to the northward of the Raing of the land between Samuel harlows and John barnes that is to say to Run up the same point of Compas sd Raing of harlow and barnes Rang Runes to Run up to ye top of the hill and all the land to ye northward of that Rang shall ly for a perpetuall Comon or training plase never to be granted any part thereof but ly perpetually for publick and Comon benifit."

This tract of common land laid westerly of what is now Pleasant Street, and included all the land on Watson's Hill, between Town Brook and South Street, as well as the section of town land located at our present Infirmary and our present Pound at Poor House Pond.

The Training Green of today is a new one and was probably established in 1798, at which time the old path (then known as the King's Highway leading to Wellingsley and to Sandwich) crossed Town Brook and ascended the southerly bank as Pleasant Street does today, turning more sharply to the left and passing over the land now occupied by our present new Training Green. "In 1798 Jesse Harlow, the owner of the land near the northerly corner of Watson's Hill next to the town brook, sold to the town a strip of land along his westerly line for the purpose of making or widening Pleasant St., taking as a consideration in exchange a strip of land fifteen feet wide," this being the old original path way and the only highway for many years that led southerly from the center of early Plymouth. Doten's land which now connects South Green Street to South Street is undoubtedly part of the original old pathway.

On the fifteenth day of March 1731 it was "Voted that the Selectmen should settle and adjust the accompts about the Alms & Correction House," built as we say today at Poor House Pond.

In 1735 at a town meeting, the following was considered : "The matter about Benejah Pratt, whether they will allow him for his service in the Alms House is continued till next Town meeting."

May 16, 1757 "The Committee chosen By the Town of Plymouth at their meeting in March Last to Take into Consideration the safety of the Town Stock of Armes & Ammunition for the safety of the Town & said Town Stock and where & how it may Be Best To keep the same &c have considered this affair and are of opinion that the Almes House where the said stock is now kept is not a Place of

Safety for the same nor can they recommend any other Place already Built as more Safe, and that unless the Town shall see Cause to Build a small Powder House in some Convenient Place the sd stock is as safe where it now is as it can be in any other Place."

"Monday ye 20th day of March Anno Dom: 1758... Then the Town Voted that the Selectmen take the Care of ye Repairing the House of Correction & Almes House in Compliance with ye Vote of the Court of Sessions respecting the same."

"Monday ye 7th March Anno Domini 1774... Then Voted the Selectmen Shall procure a Keeper of the Almes house & Agree what Allowance he shall have for his trouble &c."

Thacher wrote "In 1826 the town erected a very commodious brick house and out houses at the expense of from four to five thousand dollars, where the poor are well accommodated under the care of an overseer, and amply and comfortably provided for. The average number in the house is thirty-three, and the expense to the town for their support, overbalancing their earnings, is about one thousand dollars annually. This sum includes the expense of a few individuals partly supported out of the house."

This first brick Alms House, built in 1826 at Poor House Pond, was erected northerly of the old Alms & Correction House built in 1761, and was joined by a passage way to the old construction, as it is today.

In November 1883 a second part was joined to the first brick construction, the old original Alms House having been moved back and again attached to the rear of the brick building as we see it at the present time.

The land on which our Infirmary stands still remains common land and the Town lot on Watson's Hill above and joining this location is part of the Training Common overlooking Poor House Pond, that was set aside in 1711 for "publick and Comon benifit."

Russell L. Dickson, the present superintendent, is the oldest in years of service in the State, now on his 48th year, having followed his uncle Obed C. Pratt, who was overseer until 1907. Oliver Wood preceded Mr. Pratt as the Alms House Overseer.

Supt. Russell L. Dickson and Matron Sarah A. Dickson have served faithfully the Town of Plymouth for more than 47 years. They have together conscientiously attended and comforted, during this long period, the distressed inmates of our Alms House. They have cared for all the inmates that have been sick, and it has been learned that one particular case required their constant care and attention, day and night, for a period of considerably more than a week, before death brought peace to the suffering soul.

The Town of Plymouth should be proud of this institution, its cleanliness and the beauty of its location, both of its past and present. Its historical background probably cannot be duplicated. Situated on one of the few remaining sections of common land that still retains its original Pilgrim setting of a spring path, the Town Brook, the old training common, and Strawberry Hill; it should be retained for some useful "publick and Comon benifit"; cherished and guarded always.