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THE WINTER OF 1747-1748 IN ESSEX COUNTY

As we enter the winter of 1987-8, perhaps you would be interested in hearing about the winter of 1747-8 in Essex County.

"The winter of 1747-8 was one of the memorable winters that used to be talked about by our great-grandfathers when the snow whirled above the drifts around their half-buried houses. There were about thirty snow storms, and they came storm after storm until the snow lay four or five feet deep on the level, making traveling exceedingly difficult. On the twenty-second of February, snow in the woods measured four and a half feet; and on the twenty-ninth there was no getting about except on snow shoes.

"There was apparently more snow in Essex county than in any other section of New England, and it came very early in the season. On December fourteenth, it was so deep and the wind blew so fiercely that John Bowles was smothered to death on the Neck at Salem.

"In that period the highways were not cleared of snow; neither was any attempt made to path the snow. If it was too deep for travel, gaps in walls or fences were made, and the traveller turned his horse into the open wind-swept field or pasture.

"There is an incident connected with the snow storms of this winter of 1747-8 which will fix it in the minds of readers. In the West Parish of Newbury, on majestic Crane Neck hill, lived a family by the name of Dole, whose little son, but six years old, lay sick with a fever as the storms of December raged. On the twenty-second of the month the boy died.

(continued next column)

"Their kindred slept a mile or two away,
The snow lay deep in drifts upon the
ground,
The roads unbroken no one could discern,
Twas hill and vale of deep untrodden
snow.

'Where should the little boy be laid to
rest?'

Was asked by anxious hearts. 'He must
lie there,

Where generations gone beneath the sod
Repose in peace, beneath the hallowed
ground.'

Was answered by the father.

"Across the fields and pastures,
Down through the vale they started
The saddest Christmas morn they yet had
known.

They soon stopped, the horses wallowing
deep

Were fastened in the snow. Now on again
They move, but in a moment more they
stop.

They start and stop, and start and stop
again.

And fail to gain upon their funeral way.
Discouraged in his vain attempts to
reach

The sacred burial-place so far away,
The father said, 'We cannot further go;
Let us bury our dead here where we are.'
And there beneath the deep snow they
laid him

Alone upon the valley's trackless
stretch

Then turned their faces back to their
lone home,

From which the light had gone, no more
to shine,

At least on earth.

"Around the little grave
Others laid their dead, till in that
lowland

(continued next page)

*Mical
Dole
Summer 1884*

WINTER OF 1747-8 continued

Scores lay buried. Today it is a place
Where antiquarians love to wander:

And looking round for the oldest grave-
stone

They find this one of Micah Dole, whose
date

Is seventeen hundred forty-seven,
And looking further down they read that
he

Was first of all to lie upon that lea."
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pages 86-87.]