

**CHARLES HUDSON, IN
MEMORIAM: A PAPER READ AT
THE MEETING OF THE WORCESTER
SOCIETY OF ANTIQUITY TUESDAY
EVENING MAY 17TH, 1881**

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Charles Hudson, In Memoriam: A Paper Read at the Meeting of the Worcester Society of Antiquity Tuesday Evening May 17th, 1881 by Henry M. Smith

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HENRY M. SMITH

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CHARLES HUDSON

His Memoriam

A PAPER READ AT THE MEETING OF THE WORCESTER
SOCIETY OF ANTIQUITY, TUESDAY EVENING
MAY 17TH, 1881

BY HENRY M. SMITH



Worcester, Massachusetts

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WORCESTER:

FRANCIS OF SNOW, WOODMAN AND COMPANY.

CHARLES HUDSON

BORN AT MARLBOROUGH, MASS., NOVEMBER 14TH, 1795

DIED AT LEXINGTON, MASS., MAY 4TH, 1881

AGED 85.

"We have reason to rejoice that our lives have been prolonged so that we have witnessed the extension and growth of our country and the adaptation of our institutions both to peace and to war; and above all that we have lived to see the foul stain of human servitude blotted out from our escutcheon."

[His Farewell Address to the Veterans of 1812.]

CHARLES HUDSON.

SINCE our last meeting, an esteemed honorary member of this Society has ended his long and useful life. Hon. Charles Hudson died at his residence in Lexington, Mass., on the 4th of May, in the eighty-sixth year of his age. There are very few human lives that, like his, resemble some rare day in summer, when the sun, from rising to setting, shines through every hour on fruitfulness and occupation. His relations to this Society we have had frequent occasions to value. The more broadly serviceable and eminent portion of his life was associated with Worcester County. Throughout two generations he has had identification with important facts of the history and progress of his own State of Massachusetts, and of this nation. My associates have, therefore, desired to bring into suitable form for the records of our Society, some of the features of his extended usefulness, and have devolved upon me this duty, on an occasion when I would prefer to sit a listener among you.

Every human life of fourscore or more years, however humble, if given in faithful record, registers the essential common facts of its epoch. Too much of permanent history has been written without the light that biography supplies. When, as in the present instance, a single mind well endowed, and well trained, and helped by opportunity, which even endowment and training do not always command, leaves its own impress and shaping on the events of over sixty years, the story of such service is part of the history of its period.

CHARLES HUDSON was born at Marlborough, Mass., in 1795. Of his birth and ancestry he says, in his Address at the Celebration of the 200th Anniversary of that town, in March, 1859 :

"My parents and grandparents have been residents among you. My maternal ancestors extend back to the first settlement of this township. My paternal ancestor, John Hudson, with two of his sons, took the field with other stout-hearted citizens to defend the colony against the combined attack of French and Indians. And in the struggle for Independence, the same ancestor, with eight hardy sons, showed their devotion to Liberty by arming in its defence. My parents and three sisters found a resting-place beneath your soil, while I, the sole member of the family, remain. Here were the sports of my childhood. In your venerable meeting-house I was offered up to Him in whose service I have attempted to labor in this community. In your schools I received my first lessons of instruction, and in the same little seminaries, forty years ago, I attempted to impart the rudiments of science to your children."

This strongly outlines the common characteristics of New England village life and training in that earlier day. In Mr. Hudson's instance, it was the case of a boy early taught by circumstances and surroundings to be earnest and self-reliant, and to struggle upward and outward. So well was this life duty accomplished that Marlborough holds him as one of her most honored sons, and when her territory was divided the new town was given his name, — Hudson.

His first work was as a farm helper; his first step forward was towards self-sustaining, sturdy industry. But books were his companions and teachers, and from farm work he passed into the charge of the village school. All the testimony of those who knew him in this period of his life, declares that he was a great reader and student, with a strong, retentive, mental grasp, good in selection of models, and close in power of analysis. He taught with acceptability, and far in advance of the common modes of those times, in several Massachusetts towns. A merchant of Worcester, whose own head is now well silvered, showed me, a few days since, a little pile of carefully treasured "*Rewards of Merit*" given to himself, in his boyhood, in a district school in Leominster, signed by Charles Hudson, in 1819. And this early pupil remembers his school-master as a man of great