

## Small Pox and Inoculation

Clifford Shipton writes that Parkman "was always keenly aware of the importance of studying and recording the symptoms of disease, but on one occasion he received some unfavorable publicity because of an error resulting from his ignorance of botany." *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, 6:515, citing *Boston Gazette*, February 18, March 24, 1752; Ezra Stiles, *Literary Diary*, 1:75-76.

1729 April 15. About five months agoe I set down some account of the more remarkable Mercies of God to Me in the Course of His Providence in and Since that my memorable dangerous Sickness when I was a Young School Boy; Having made Some (though I confess very imperfect) Record of what went before, in a little Book bearing Date August 24, 1719, and Several other Dates from thence, but in a great deal of Confusion, and with too many other marks of my puerility, when I Scribbl'd them however honest and upright my intention was to have Some Remembrances of those (to me) important Things by me; Having of late experienc'd So much of the divine Goodness as gives me new and the greatest Reason forever to esteem and admire the various Expressions thereof to me, and every way to manifest my greatfull Returns to my unspeakable Benefactor for what He has, in infinite Tenderness done for Me, I have here transcrib'd a Sort of Catalogue or Memorandum of those abovesaid Mercies to God to Me, have carry'd it along with what I have received Since.

### Divine Benignity and Providence

5. What acceptance I met with (the Same year [1721]) in keeping School at Newton, and Preservation from the Infection of the Small Pox, by which many of my Friends were remov'd into the Eternal World.

1738 December 5 (Tuesday). P.M. I rode to Boston. Small Pox in Town, in several places. Lodg'd at Brother Elias's.

1745 March 9 (Saturday). Captain Maynard, who came up from Boston last Night, brings Me Brother Samuels Mournfull Letter of the Death of his Wife,<sup>1</sup> on Monday Eve last, about 6 o'clock.... N.B. Small pox Said to have been at Boston.

1749 May 14 (Sunday). Preach'd at Shrewsbury a. and p.m. on Jer. 8.4.5.... At Eve I went in to Colonel Wards to Weep with him and his Family, he being bereaved of his son Ithamar, of about 28 or 9 years by the Small Pox. He dy'd at the Pest House below Boston.<sup>2</sup> I return'd home.

1752 February 11 (Tuesday). My Wife and I rode to Marlborough and carryed the child, Mr. William Winter and his Wife and his Wife's Sister at Colonel Williams -- the ladys are fleeing to Worcester from the smallpox which is now in Three familys in Boston.

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<sup>1</sup>Dorcas (Bowes) Parkman died March 14, 1745.

<sup>2</sup>Ithamar Ward, son of Nahum and Marther, b. 28 Dec. 1721; *Shrewsbury VR*, 106.

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1752 February 13 (Thursday). Read Sydenham on smallpox.<sup>3</sup>

1752 February 29 (Saturday). Mr. Winchester comes from Boston here. Smallpox doth not spread as t'was reported. May the Lord Pitty his People! Thus has the Lord carried us through the tedious Winter and the changes of it. Blessed be His Name for all his Goodness to Us!

1752 March 20 (Friday). We hear that the Small Pox greatly Spreads in Boston.

1752 March 23 (Monday). My Kinsman Trask rode with me to Grafton. I proceeded to Mr. Hutchinsons where was Mr. Wellman and we din'd together.... N.B. Mr. Wellman tells me that Cousen Nat Parkmans Wife at Boston has the small pox.

1752 March 25 (Wednesday). Dr. Samuel Gardner to see us (having lodg'd at t'other House) and din'd here. We hear the Small Pox So spreads that they begin to inoculate in Boston. May God in infinite Mercy Shew his Compassion to the Distress'd Town.

1752 March 26 (Thursday). Publick Fast on occasion both of the Small Pox and the Season. I preach'd a.m. on 2 Sam. 24.14. In my preparations I Spent my Time upon the forenoon sermon. P.M. preach'd on Zech. 12.10, to page 7, and made Some Additions according to the Business of the Day. A rainy Day, yet considerable many People out: I wish it might be to Some good Purpose. N.B. Not only Mr. Seth Rice went out of Meeting from the forenoon sermon, but Mr. Robert Bradish also.

1752 March 28 (Saturday). Mr. Winchester from Boston and brings us account that now the Small Pox prevails there very much. I am dissatisfy'd with Mr. Prince's misimprovement of the Materials etc. which I Sent him about Mechoachan.<sup>4</sup>

1752 March 30 (Monday). Prepar'd something in reply to Benevolentius in the last Boston Gazette.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Walett: Thomas Sydenham, the English physician, was the author of numerous works in Latin and in English. The reference here may have been to Walter Lynn, *An Essay towards a...Cure in the Small Pox...and a Review of Dr. Sydenham's Works* (London, 1714).

<sup>4</sup>Walett: Sometimes spelled mechoacanna. Any of several plants of the morning-glory family with roots used as cathartics. It is not clear whether there was another connection between EP's concern over Prince's "misimprovement" and Prince's publication of Nathaniel Williams, *The Method of Practice in the Small-Pox* (1752), or whether there was any discussion of small pox in the exchange with "Benevolentius" (see March 30, below).

<sup>5</sup>Walett: The *Boston Gazette or Weekly Journal*, Dec. 17 and Dec. 24, contained an article entitled "The Cure of Cancers," taken from the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1751. Parkman became involved in a dispute over the nature of phytolacca, poke-weed, and mechoacan. A note from Parkman appeared in the issue of Feb. 18, 1752, in which the Westborough minister asserted "That at New Haven he made a Business of discoursing with Capt. Dickerman; who told him, it was Mechoacan that he used for his Cancer in his Cheek." Another correspondent, "Benevolentius," argued that Parkman was mistaken. *Boston Gazette*, March 24, 1752. The March 31 issue of the paper did not contain Parkman's response and there are no known copies of the next 2 issues.

## Smallpox and Inoculation

1752 March 31 (Tuesday). Mr. Beeton to Boston. Sent by him to invite Mr. Stoddard to come up to us this Small Pox Time. Sent by Mr. Richard Kelly the like to Brother Samuels Children and to Dr. Parkmans Widow -- to this last because: She had writ to my Daughter Molly that she had rather come here than go to Weymouth. And Sent a Letter to Mr. Kneeland, for the Press, -- in Vindication of Captain Dickerman.

1752 April 10 (Friday). Receiv'd Two Letters per Mr. Winchester from Brother Samuel Parkman, dated the third Instant -- one of them writ by Billy Bows, who with his sister Nabby and Cousen Sarah Tyley were inoculated on the second. As soon as I had read I burnt both the Letters.

1752 April 11 (Saturday). Mr. Richard Kelly brings Word from my Brothers that yesterday the Pox was come out favourably upon Billy etc.

1752 April 17 (Friday). Mr. Winchester from Boston informs that many die of the Small Pox there, and Some Number of those who were inoculated: particularly we hear that Mr. Robert Breck being inoculated, is dead.

1752 April 30 (Thursday). Mr. Winchester from Boston and his Wife from bring News of Colonel Brattle's Lady's Decease by the Small Pox.

1752 May 27 (Wednesday). The General Election is at Concord, because of the Small Pox at Boston.

1752 June 12 (Friday). Dr. Samuel Brigham and his Wife here, and din'd with us, as did Mr. John Green of Boston, printer. Hear that Cousen Peam Cowell is dead by small pox.

1752 June 26 (Friday). Mr. Phinehas Rice (of Grafton) from Boston brings me Dr. Nathaniel Williams late of Boston, his Method of Practice in the Small Pox.<sup>6</sup>

1752 July 2 (Thursday). Publick Fast on the Account of the Small pox and other Malignant Distempers at Boston and divers other Towns.<sup>7</sup> N.B. We had no proclamation, but read what is inserted in the Boston Gazette. However there was So much Said of there being no Proclamation in the County of Worcester, and that in several parishes there would be no Meeting, as at our North End; at Shrewsbury etc. that I doubted of an Assembly (some number did go to work and came not at all: some came from their work in their Sweat and Dirt). I therefore threw aside my design'd sermon for the forenoon, and took that on 1 Pet. 5.6 which I deliver'd. But there was So considerable a Congregation that I took Heart, and p.m. preach'd on 1 Kings 8.37.38, and may God please to add his Blessing! N.B. Dr. Willson of Hopkinton here at Eve.

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<sup>6</sup>Nathaniel Williams (1675-1738; Harvard 1693), *The Method of Practice in the Small-Pox, with Observations on the Way of Inoculation. Taken from a Manuscript of the Late Dr. Nathanael Williams, of Boston in N.E.; Published for the Common Advantage, More Especially of the Country Towns, Who May Be Visited with That Distemper* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1752; Evans 6947).

<sup>7</sup>Walett: A study of the extent of smallpox at this time may be found in John Duffy, *Epidemics in Colonial America* (Baton Rouge, [1953]), 57-61.

## Smallpox and Inoculation

1757 August 31 (Wednesday). N.B. Some persons who have come from the Forts, have the Small Pox: In *Shrewsbury* one has lately dyed of it, and another is Sick of it. Mr. William *Crawford* at Worcester, is Sick of it.

1759 April 9 (Monday). Was at Mr. Isaac Johnsons. Visit Mrs. *Gourdots* (or *Gurdow*) who has lost her son, his wife and a Child in *Canada*, at the Isle de *Orleans* of the small pox: and tells me 700 Neutral French had dyed of the same Distemper.

1759 November 12 (Monday). Mr. *Campbell* called to see me in his Return home. Also Mr. *Dix* of Watertown who informs me that Mr. *Clark Pain*, Coll. Chandlers son in Law of Worcester, dyed there lately of the Small Pox, and that that Distemper spreads in New York, in Albany etc.

1760 December 3 (Wednesday). We hear Dr. Gott has the Small pox in Brookfield.

1760 December 6 (Saturday). Mr. Fessenden here. Daily Conversation is about the Small pox, which we hear of here and there. Tis feared that Jacob Garfield at Capt. Maynards has it. We don't carry home *Hephzy* (who has been with us all the week, from Monday) because of it.

1760 December 7 (Sunday). The Small pox not yet come out upon Jacob Garfield, and tis hoped will not. Hephzibah goes home. At Eve a Letter to Sarah from her Brother Baldwin at Brookfield, informing that last Thursday night Dr. *Benjamin Gott* dyed of the Small Pox. I Sent for Capt. Wood, who was lately come home from a Journey to Brookfield to come here and acquaint me with what he had heard of it. He came; but had not returned home that way -- and therefore could say but little new, of the Matter. How sorrowful this stroke to poor Mrs. Gott! And to that Neighbourhood. But the Lord has done it!

1760 December 10 (Wednesday). Fresh News that Jacob Garfield has the Small Pox at Capt. Maynards. Mr. Fessenden came from the Very House, and informs here that it is now beyond all Doubt. May God please to pity the poor Youth -- all immediately concerned; and all of us!

1760 December 13 (Saturday). P.M. Mr. Fessenden here. He has been at Capt. Maynards Barn and conversed with Mrs. Maynard -- but went not into the House. *Jacob* Somewhat bad, but not dangerously. Mrs. Maynard was glad of a Pamflet I Sent containing Directions published by Mr. Prince from Dr. Williams of Boston's Manuscripts, about the manner of managing the Small Pox.

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1760 December 22 (Monday). N.B. This Day was a Precinct Meeting, at which by the Warrant they were to hear what I had to lay before them and act upon it. While I was preparing for it, Mr. *Stone* came to See me, and dined with me. Desires me to assist him in a Fast on next Wednesday, occasioned by the Small Pox among them.

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<sup>8</sup>Nathaniel Williams (1675-1738; Harvard 1693), *The Method of Practice in the Small-Pox, with Observations on the Way of Inoculation. Taken from a Manuscript of the Late Dr. Nathanael Williams, of Boston in N.E.; Published for the Common Advantage, More Especially of the Country Towns, Who May Be Visited with That Distemper* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1752; Evans 6947).

## Smallpox and Inoculation

1760 December 24 (Wednesday). I rode in Deacon Tainters Sleigh with him, his Son and Daughter, to Southborough-Fast, which was on account of the small pox there. Mr. Bridge prayed a.m. and Mr. Smith preached on Isa. 32.9. P.M. Mr. Martyn prayed, and I preached on 1 Pet. 5.6. May God Himself accept us and add His Blessing!

1761 January 27 (Tuesday). At night came Mr. Forb. and his Wife, and Miss Sarah Welch from Brookfield in a Two-Horse Sleigh and lodged here. Fears of the Small pox in their Neighbourhood over.

1761 February 1 (Sunday). Omitted the Public Reading, both a. and p.m. by reason of the Season. Preached a. and p.m. on Ps. 1.6, last Clause. Widow Thurston dined with us. Jacob Garfield, who had the Small pox, came out to meeting.

1761 February 4 (Wednesday). Squire Jabez Ward dines (after his Fashion) here. He informs that Dr. Breck of Sheffield has lost his eldest Son by the Small pox.

1761 April 1 (Wednesday). At Eve Mr. Fessenden brings Mrs. P\_\_\_\_\_ and the Child home, having lodged at Capt. Maynards, and brings a Letter from Brother Breck relating their state last winter by the Small Pox.

1764 September 3 (Monday). P.M. returned home, calling to see Reuben Bellows -- the Warrins etc. A Stranger broke out with the Small Pox at the North End.

1764 September 11 (Tuesday). John brings news from Mill (where he goes again to Day) that the Man who had the Small Pox at Bartlets is dead and was buried last sabbath.

1764 September 23 (Sunday). The Select Men who were of our Congregation were called to go to the North End, on occasion of one of the Children of Mr. Jotham Bartlet, a youth of about 14, who 'tis thought has the small Pox.

1772 April 23 (Thursday). N.B. Mr. *Luke Brown* of Worcester lately dyed there of the Small Pox.

1773 September 5 (Sunday). In the morning came Capt. *Samuel Wilder* of Ashburnham being upon a sorrowful urgent Journey to *Providence* to see his Brother *Nahum* who lies Sick there: in a Relapse after the Small Pox. Mr. *Levi* and his Sister *Sally* went over Yesterday. May God graciously appear for the poor young man, and prepare him and his dear Relatives for His holy will!

1775 January 28 (Saturday). Hear that the Small Pox has broke out at *Hopkinton* on Capt. *Thomas Mellen's* Wife: also that it is in several places in *Mendon*. May the Lord prepare us for His holy and Sovereign Pleasure concerning us!

## Smallpox and Inoculation

1775 February 27 (Monday). Deacon Wood informs me that his Sister *Mellen* dyed last Saturday night, very Suddenly, when she had not wholly recovered from the Small Pox: and was buried after the Exercises Yesterday.

1775 March 28 (Tuesday). We ride into *Boston*, though 'tis Said the Small Pox spreads.

1776 May 2 (Thursday). My Son *Alexander* returned from *Boston* -- the News that 30000 Troops are coming -- 3 Destinations, viz. *New York, Virginia* and *Quebec* -- and *small Pox* at *Brookline* etc. He leaves us to go to *Leicester*.

1776 June 22 (Saturday). *Ripley* came from *Brookfield*. Says my Daughter *Baldwin* has had a Letter from her Husband informing that he has been inoculated with the Small Pox at [*St. Ours?*] near [*torell?*] in *Canada*.

1776 September 12 (Thursday). *Breck* goes to the Hospital at *Uxbridge* to be inoculated.

1776 October 5 (Saturday). *Breck* returned from *Uxbridge*, where he has been at the *Inoculation Hospital*. Has had the Small Pox on [the?] Method, and is Recovered, through the Goodness of God and is come home in Safety. D.G.

1776 November 11 (Monday). When I got home received a Letter from *Elias* who Seems to desire to go to the Hospital to be inoculated. I wrote an Answer permitting him -- but know not how to send it.

1776 December 7 (Saturday). *Elias* came home from *Cambridge*. He has been *inoculated* at the Hospital, at *Sewels Point*, under the Care of Dr. *Aspinwall*. The Charge for Every Thing is 12 Dollars.

1776 December 10 (Tuesday). Dr. *Crosby* goes to *Cambridge* for his son. I sent by him *Twelve Dollars* to young *Prince* at College which *Elias* borrowed of him to pay the Charges of his Inoculation, and 2 Dollars for *Hastings* for a Load of Wood.

1777 January 6 (Monday). *Elias* goes to *Uxbridge* and *Mendon* for what cloths etc. *Breck* left after his Inoculation.

1777 February 14 (Friday). *Phinehas Hardy* being occasionally with us, tells us his Sister *Lydia* is thought to have the Small pox.

1777 February 15 (Saturday). N.B. Miss *Lydia Hardy* is broke out with the Small Pox, having, as 'tis supposed, taken the infection from a Soldier as she passed in the high Way.

1777 February 26 (Wednesday). N.B. Mr. *Constantine Hardy* breaks out with the *small pox*.

## Smallpox and Inoculation

1777 March 3 (Monday). I am informed that the *Small Pox* increases; that *Joseph, Daniel* and *Lucy Hardy* are so under the Symptoms or Fears of it, that they have gone into the House, and into the Room of Infection.

1777 March 9 (Sunday). Preached a.m. on *Amos* IV.11, last Clause. P.M. on occasion of a great Number of persons putting up Notes to desire prayers under their Bereavements I preached on *Heb.* 2.15. N.B. Lieut. *Hezekiah Ward* of *Grafton* dy'd Suddenly on the 6th. Mr. *Josiah Newton* dyed lately at *Brookfield*. AEtatis 29. He received the *Small Pox* by Inoculation but was seized by a bilious Cholic, which proved fatal to him.

1777 March 16 (Sunday). In the morning came Mr. *Elijah Hardy* and informs that Since Day light his Brother *Constantine* dyed -- but it was by means of the *Dysentery* setting in with the *Small Pox*. Another, and very worthy, member of this Church hereby taken away from us! Help, Lord!

1777 March 24 (Monday). The Town Meet [*torn*] they shall do about *raising Men* whether there s[hould be?] Hospital for *Inoculation* etc. As to this last ther[*torn*] Vote.

1777 March 29 (Saturday). The Talk of the Day is of Inoculation. My Daughters very much set upon it.

1777 March 31 (Monday). The select Men are together upon the important affair of *Inoculation*.

1777 April 1 (Tuesday). Mr. *Tainters House* is improved as an Hospital, and a Number of young men are inoculated to day. May God be pleased in the midst of Wrath to remember Mercy!

1778 April 3 (Friday). Letter from Mr. *Moore* of *March* 21 to Me, and to *Sophy*. He writes that he, himself and *Jonathan* have been inoculated for the Small Pox at *Dartmouth*, and, through Great Goodness, are recovered.

1777 April 3 (Thursday). *Sophy* and *Hannah*, I am informed, are *inoculated* this evening, by Dr. *Hawes*. I could not resist their Importunity. May God be gracious to us all, as the Matter now requires!

1777 April 4 (Friday). My Daughters are recluse in the Back Chamber, and are dieting them selves.

1777 April 5 (Saturday). The Girls take Physick, but none of us go to 'em, but Mrs. *Crosby* who having had the Small Pox, waits upon 'em.

1777 April 6 (Sunday). Mr. Benjamin *Tainter* and his Wife desire prayers for a Number of their Family who are inoculated. Miss *Lydia Hardy* recovered from the Small Pox, comes to Meeting and returns Thanks. Mr. *Andrews* desires continuation of prayers.

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1777 April 8 (Tuesday). I have some Serious Thoughts and Employments on my Childrens present Condition in the Hospital, and of the many that resort there for the same purpose: May God graciously forgive our Sins [*illegible*] pull down his Judgments! And prepare us for Mercys needed!

1777 April 9 (Wednesday). Dr. *Jenison* dined here, as did four Young Women going to Hospital.

1777 April 10 (Thursday). *Elijah Brigham* here from the Hospital.

1777 April 12 (Saturday). Hear that *Hannah* has Symptoms of the Distemper upon, but *Sophy* not much altered. The Doctor tells me there are 43 persons, men, Women and Children belonging to this and the nei[gh]boring Towns, at the Hospital.

1777 April 13 (Sunday). Squire Baker acquaints me with the general Requests of those who are at the Hospital, that public prayers be made for them. I preached a.m. on *Rom.* 8.1. P.M. on Occasion of the Judgment of God upon us in the Small Pox, I preached on *Isa.* [64.9?]. The body of the Discourse was what I delivered in the year 60 but with Introduction, alterations, Additions, and especially Applications Suited to the present Circumstances which may God graciously be pleased to own and bless! [Mr. *Elijah Brigham?*] and Cousen *Davis* dined here. Am informed my Daughters are both of them broke out. May God sustain and preserve them! May they have Grace to profit Spiritually hereby and prepare them for His holy Will!

1777 April 21 (Monday). A town Meeting concerning Inoculation.

1777 April 23 (Wednesday). Squire *Baker* here, acquaints me with the dangerous state of his Daughter *Sarah* at the Hospital.

1777 April 24 (Thursday). My Daughters *Sophy* and *Hannah* return from the Hospital, as they hope cured of the Small-Pox. To God be Glory and Praise! And may they ever live devoted to the Service and Honour of their almighty Healer and Saviour!

1777 April 25 (Friday). Mr. *Solomon Baker* is very ill of the Small Pox at the Hospital. So is his Neece, Miss *Sally Baker*, Daughter of the Squire.

1777 May 4 (Sunday). Preached on *Gal.* 5.16 a.m. and 25th p.m. Administered the Lords Supper. Mrs. Maynard dined with us. *The Lord pardon* my unpreparedness and add His Blessing to my weak Endeavours. Accepting my renewal Engagements to be His, and *His only*. At Eve *Breck*, *Suse* and *Elijah*. N.B. Read publicly *Sam. Goodenows* Recommendation and Request for a Contribution. N.B. a Number of persons gave Thanks for recovering from the *Small Pox*.

1777 May 6 (Tuesday). I went to Squire *Bakers* to see his Daughter *Salley* remarkably recovered from the Small Pox and got home.



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1777 May 22 (Thursday). Mr. *Hall* returning from *Roxbury* (he went not into *Boston* for fear of the Small Pox) was with with us.

1777 July 16 (Wednesday). *Elias* returned from College. *Parkman Bradshaw* came with him in the *Baldwin* Chaise. They inform that yesterday there was a Funeral Oration in the Chappel occasioned by the Death of Mr. *Benjamin Wadsworth*, who departed by the Small Pox. Very much lamented, especially by his Class, to which *Elias* belonged.

1778 May 7 (Thursday). Hear that Several of those who were inoculated and are at the Hospital, are very bad -- particularly [Abner?] (Son of *Jonathan Bruce*).

1778 May 26 (Tuesday). We are Alarmed with the Report that [the?] small Pox has broke out at Capt. *Jonas Brigham*s. They are [illegible] and Miss *Polly Martyn*, that [illegible] Hospital from thence.

1778 July 21 (Tuesday). I rode to *Brecks* Mare to Ministers Meeting at [*West Sudbury*?]. But no one came besides Mr. *Smith*. N.B. Mr. *Bridge* and his Wife [illegible] lately had the Small Pox. He by Inoculation but she, after repeated Inoculation had it in the Natural Way.

1779 February 12 (Friday). At Even I rec'd a Letter dated January 25, from my son Forbes, acquainting with the Death of one of Mr. Forbes' Daughters, by a Fever, and the Distress Cape Ann is in by the Small Pox, that he, being desired by the Selectmen and the Doctors Plummer and Coffin to assist, has innoculated and administered physic to near 100: Col. Stevens and his Wife have got safely through. But alas for the poor people, who want Bread, and Cloths and Fuel! May God pity them and grant Supplys, especially of his Almighty Grace and Spirit: that they may duly improve providences, and the Seasons and means of Salvation!

1782 March 28 (Thursday). Mr. B. has received Several Letters from *Elias*, by which he is informed that Mr. *Nathan Fisk* junior of *Brookfield* is dead; that our Cousen *Whitney* of *Brookline, Connecticut*, has lost their eldest son by the small Pox; but that *Robert Breck* Esq. has lately had a Seventh son which was baptized *Theodore*.

1782 April 1 (Monday). Received a kind Letter from Mr. *Sumner*, relating to the Troubles of our Kinsman Mr. *Josiah Whitney* of *Brookline* (Connecticut) in the Death of his two principal Sons, by the Small Pox.

1782 April 26 (Friday). N.B. Mrs. *Wood* has been to *Brookfield* and informs that my Daughter *Baldwin* is now under *Inoculation* of the *Small Pox* and is like to do well.

1782 April 28 (Sunday). Many in *Grafton* are inoculated for Small Pox.