

Dr. William Vail's Water Cure

DR. VAIL'S GRANITE STATE HEALTH INSTITUTE,

IS AT HILL, N. H.

PRICES REDUCED.

To favor persons in limited circumstances, and to extend the blessings of Hygienic treatment, I will take patients at the Granite State Health Institute, until further notice, at \$5 to \$9 per week, instead of \$8 to \$11, as heretofore. This will make our Cure, for the time being, the cheapest establishment in America, as it has long been one of the best.

W. T. VAIL,
Hill, N. H.

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The following is an excerpt from the book, *A Devilish Smart Woman*, by Gillian Gill.

“Mary Patterson was exploring many sorts of therapeutic options in the spring of 1861 when she set off to Dr. William Vail's Hydropathic Institute in Hill, New Hampshire. Mrs. Patterson boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Taylor during her sojourn at the Institute. She ate simple meals that dovetailed with the health regime advocated at the Vail's, but diet was not the key to any cure, as Mrs. Patterson had long known. Hydropathy, like other health systems and alternative medicines of the nineteenth century in America, had a strong spiritual flavor. The baths, the long draughts of pure water, the long hours wrapped in damp cloths like a mummy were designed not only to cleanse and invigorate the body, but also to rouse the soul. Health was linked to salvation, sickness to sin.”

Thus describes Dr. Vail's Hydropathy Institute and the “water cure” that was offered in Hill between 1859 and 1870. During that time, Hill became a destination resort for many seeking a cure of their various ills.

It seemed to make no difference that the source of the water for Dr. Vail's water cure was the spring that fed the whole town at that time... people flocked to Dr. Vail's hospital and many satisfied customers left praising “the cure”.

It's most interesting to note that the opening paragraph above is from the biography of the founder of Christian Science. Mary Baker Patterson later married Mr. Eddy. Although Mary Baker Eddy is credited with codifying the principles of Christian Science, we see that there were many pockets of similar belief and practice contemporary to her work.

It's fun to imagine the importance of our town in the total “health system” of the mid-19th century. The spring is still visible on the walk at the back of the park where the trail cuts through to New Chester Road by the horse coral.



This photo of Newton's Inn, c 1897 is one of the many pictures in the HHS archives and publications. This fine brick building was located on Main Street in Hill village and was owned by Dr. Vail from 1859 to 1870, as he carried on the business of the Granite State Health Institute.