

**Source Documents referencing the naming of the fall(s) on Connecticut River in
Massachusetts. Sometimes referred to as “Great Falls” or “The Falls”**

The American Journal of Science and Arts Vol. VII 1824
Geology, Mineralogy, and Scenery of the Connecticut, with a geological map, and drawings of
organic remains, by the Rev. Edward Hitchcock, A.M.
Pp 13-16

1.

Turner's Falls.

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These cross the Connecticut, near the point where the towns of Greenfield, Gill and
Montague meet. There is no distinctive name by which they are known in the vicinity,

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and I have ventured to denominate them Turner's Falls, for a reason that will appear in the
course of the description. The river at this place runs in a northwest direction, crossing the
rock strata nearly at right angles; and an artificial dam is raised upon these rocks of the coal
formation, so that the whole stream, which is here more than one thousand feet wide, falls
thirty feet perpendicularly. This sheet of water, however, is divided near the middle by a
small island on which the dam reposes. For three miles below the principal descent, the
water continues to descend so as to render a canal necessary.

The proper and almost the only spot for viewing this cataract In advantage is on the
elevated ground forty or fifty rods below the falls on the northeast shore. * Standing on this
spot, you have the principal fall of water nearly in front, or at right angles with the line of
sight and you can see the river above and below the dam one or two mites. The contrast, is,
however, very great. Above the cataract the water is unruffled to the very verge of the
precipice, down which it rolls in graceful majesty. Below, it tumbles and foams among the
rocks as far as the eye can trace it. A little farther down the stream than the station of the
observer, the river strikes directly against a greenstone ridge, two hundred feet high, by which
it is forced to curve to the left, more than, a quadrant, and afterwards runs nearly south. The
rocky island that divides the cataract, with the white foam dashing against the base of its cliffs
and its top crowned with a few pines and other shrubbery, is a picturesque addition to the
scenery. Several rods below this island Another is planted of similar aspect, but smaller, and
at a much lower level, and apparently inaccessible. The upper island may be reached by a
canoe in safety; and then we can descend to the very foot of the falls and find the voice
drowned by their roar; and in favourable circumstance, see the rainbow arching over the
falling sheet.

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The country around these falls is little cultivated and there are but few settlements on either
side of the river. In almost every direction you see gently rising hills covered with trees; of
which the pine forms a large proportion. For three miles above the falls is a fine spot for a
sailing excursion. You immediately enter between wooded, and moderately elevated hills,
exhibiting all their original mildness; and so placid is the stream, gently curving among these
hills, now and then spreading out so as to form coves along the shore, and here and There
chequered by small islands, that you fancy yourself to be in the midst of a romantic mountain
lake. To the coves along the shore, parties frequently resort for taking fish.

These and other circumstances render Turner's falls and the vicinity an attractive spot to any one who takes an interest in the wild and sublime scenes of nature. By a reference to the preceding part of this sketch, it will be seen that the geologist and mineralogist will find here much to awaken and gratify curiosity*

Bellows and Turners falls are in many respects very dissimilar. At the former, the river is narrow and the Fall, viewed by itself, is not the principal object of interest; but at the latter, the Connecticut pours a broad and unbroken sheet of water over a precipice comparatively lofty, producing a roar that is frequently heard at the distance of twelve miles.

One hundred and fifty six years ago, a party of Philip's Indians, having joined those residing in Hatfield, Deerfield, &c, all being at war with the white inhabitants, resorted to Turner's falls to take fish, and encamped on the north east shore. On the 17th of May, Captain Turner from Boston, marched from Hatfield with one hundred and fifty men, consisting of the garrison and militia from Springfield, Northampton and Hatfield, and came by surprise upon the Indian camp the next morning at day light. The Indians were totally unprepared for the attack, and fled in every direction. Some sprang into their canoes, and pushing front the shore without paddles, were hurried over the cataract

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and dashed in pieces—while some, reached the opposite bank. Three hundred Indians are said to have been killed and only one Englishman. Yet the Indians who survived, being joined by another party, fell upon the English troops as they were returning and made dreadful slaughter among them. So that before they reached Hatfield, Capt. Turner was killed, and thirty seven of bis men.

After reading this is piece of history, no one will doubt the propriety of denominating this cataract Turners Falls.

* I am at a loss to account for it, that these falls have excited so little attention and draws so few visitors. They are but three miles from the village of Greenfield, the road is good, and the accomodation s descent, at a public house on the bank.

2. Report on the Geology, Mineralogy, Botany, and Zoology
of Massachusetts,
Made and published by Order of the Government of That State
By Edward Hitchcock
Professor of Chemistry and Natural History in Amherst College
1833



Water Falls. Turner's Falls Pp 99-101

“Three miles above Turner's Falls, Miller's river empties into the Connecticut, over a dam about ten feet high. I apprehend these falls have been confounded with Turner's; and hence the latter are sometimes called Miller's Falls. They cannot, however, be said to have as yet any well established name. For a reason which will be mentioned below, I ventured some eighteen years since, in a geological account which I published of the Connecticut valley, to denominate these falls, Turner's Falls; and Gen. Hoyt, in his History of the Indian Wars, has given them the same designation. I am aware, however, how very difficult it is to make popular and prevalent, a new name for any natural object; although in the present case, I doubt not, that every man acquainted with the history of this spot, would say that to prefix the name of Capt. Turner to this cataract, is appropriate and just.”

Note: The above quote is likewise published in the 1835 and 1841 reports under the heading; Turner's Falls. Ref. next two entries. 1835 and 1841.

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3. Report on the Geology, Mineralogy, Botany, and Zoology
of Massachusetts,
Made and published by Order of the Government of That State
By Edward Hitchcock
Professor of Chemistry and Natural History in Amherst College:
Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences: Of the Academy of Natural
Sciences, Philadelphia: of the American Geological Society, &c
1835

Water Falls. p 107 Turner's Falls Pp 108-109

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4. Final Report
On the
Geology of Massachusetts
By Edward Hitchcock, LL. D.
Professor of Chemistry and Natural History in Amherst College:
Geologist to the State of Massachusetts
1841

Water Falls. Turner's Falls Pp 275-277

5. Antiquarian Researches:
Comprising
A History
of the
Indian Wars
In the Country
Bordering Connecticut River and Parts Adjacent,
and
Other Interesting Events,
The landing of the Pilgrims, to the Conquest of Canada by the English, in 1760:
with
Notices of Indian Predations
in the Neighboring Country:
And the First planting and Progress of Settlements
in New England, New York and Canada
By E. Hoyt, Esq.
Dec. 1824

As a footnote to an entry; p 131, ¶ 1.

“The Indians followed Holyoke to the village now called the *Bars*, at the south end of Deerfield meadow. *”

*As the cataract where Turner cut off the Indians has not received an appropriate name, that of Turner’s Falls is suggested, in commemoration of that officer, as well as for convenience. In a geological communication in Silliman’s Scientific Journal, by the Rev. E. Hitchcock, the name is already adopted.

Next . . . Maps referencing the name of Turners Falls.



Plan
of the projected
City at Turners Falls,
in the Town of
Montague, Mass.
March, 1868
By
William P. Crocker. Civil Engineer



Atlas
of
Franklin Co.
Massachusetts
From Actual Surveys by and under the Direction
of
F. W. Beers
Assisted by
Geo. P. Sanford and Others
1871

Villages. Turners Falls Map(s) 44-45 Turners Falls, Town of Montague
Towns Wherein Located. Montague
History of Franklin County p4.

Description of Montague p5, ¶5. “—The Turner’s Falls Co. have here built dams which render the whole force of the Connecticut available for manufacturing purposes, *and the city of Turner’s Falls, as it is called*, must occupy at no distant period, a prominent position as a manufacturing village.”



Plan
of the projected
City at Turners Falls,
in the Town of
Montague, Mass.
September, 1873
By
William P. Crocker. Civil Engineer

I've gleaned all reference from the two-page edition with mentions of the name **Turners Falls** or **Falls**; of which there are eleven (11). *Ed G.* 8.2020

Articles penned by newspaper staff . . . creditable or otherwise.

Local Matters

-The busiest man in **Turners Falls** is George Hance.

-Measles were quite prevalent in the **Falls** last week, and a few cases still exist.

-We understand that the **Turners Falls** Company have generously given the German and Episcopal Churches building sites in this town.

-The Fire District of **Turners Falls** held a meeting on Saturday evening last, and decided to purchase a fire-engine, at a cost of \$1,500, a hose cart at \$200, and 1,000 feet of hose, which they expect to get for about \$1.15 a foot. The **Turners Falls** Company have given a lot of land on which to build an engine house, and the District have concluded to expend \$3,000 in its erection.

-Who own all the dogs seen in **Turners Falls** every day? Look in what direction you will, not less than half-a-dozen dogs, representing as many different breeds, will present themselves to your sight, and the other day they had a fine time to themselves in a rough and tumble fight on Second Street. It is a pity that some man would not set up a sausage shop in this place, and then we would see if we could not get along with fewer dogs.

-The **Turners Falls** Company are laying down sewers in the lower part of the town; and havoc is being made among hog-pens, cesspools, privies, and other nuisances in the vicinity of Second and Third Streets. Rome was not built in a day, and **Turners Falls** cannot be thoroughly cleaned in a night, though we have no doubt that the proper authorities will attend to this matter promptly and faithfully. Gentlemen, "cleanliness is next to godliness."

-Persons ought to be more cautious about going down to the **Falls** to bathe during the warm weather. The spray from the **Falls** makes a delightful and tempting shower baths, but we notice in the Boston papers several deaths recorded from bathing while the bathers were in a fever with the intense heat.

Our Advertisers.

Some genius at one time or other wrote a paragraph on "How to Build a Town," and act its pilot on the sea of literature. Though it is a long time since the paragraph was penned, we have decided to let the people of **Turners Falls** have this first class recipe, and hope that they will store it up in their memory.

End

TJ Reporter.

Turners Falls content gleaned from articles published in Greenfield Newspapers

Articles penned by newspaper staff . . . creditable or otherwise.

Gazette & Mercury 1837-1841

Gazette & Courier 1841-1900

JANUARY 29, 1839

Perhaps the Connecticut River valley was never ravaged by a more destructive freshet than that occasioned by the storm which commenced Friday night and continued without intermission until Saturday night. Raining most of the time with a good deal of violence. As the ground was frozen there was no receptacle for the water but the streams which were filled to overflowing and raised the rivers with great rapidity. On Saturday evening alarm was felt for the store-house at Cheapside, belonging to Allen & Root. Early measures were taken to clear it of goods and we believe the contents were all removed. The water rose so as to stand two feet or more above the floor of the business story, but as it was comparatively still, the building was not disturbed. The "Father" of New England waters however, rioted in destruction to an alarming extent. The bridge at Montague City which had just been completed and put in excellent order was shortened more than a hundred feet, by the loss of the western pier, and the two spans supporter by it. That portion from the shore to the pier had been standing some years but was sound strong; the other portion was entirely new. The bridge would probably have sustained the mere pressure of the water had not the pier been struck by fragments of the dam at **Turners Falls**, in which a large gap was made by a part of a bridge from above, supposed to be the lower one at Charlestown, The lumber thus set free closed the passage under the bridge, produced an extraordinary rise of water on the upper side and finally bore away the pier and incumbent structure. The damage to the bridge is probably about \$3000. The Upper Dam or that across the Connecticut, below Miller's River, we learn, is entirely gone together with the Locks adjacent; and a good portion of the Lower Dam, or that of **Turners Falls**. The breaches upon the Gill and Montague shores are extensive, while the works below the islands remain entire.

APRIL 18, 1843

A rain storm and freshet. We had a powerful rainstorm Saturday which has raised all of the streams in this vicinity to an unprecedented height. We have not yet heard of any damage being done. P.S. The Connecticut River is higher than it has been for several years, and a part of the dam at **Turners Falls** has been washed away.

OCTOBER 17, 1843

The Rain Storm and Freshet. The rain storm of Sunday the 8th was much more destructive in its effects, than we anticipated when we went to press last week. The damage done in this vicinity was great. A friend has handed us the following account kept by E. P. Thayer, Esq. of **Turners Falls** of the rise of the Connecticut River, which will show with what rapidity it rose during Sunday night, the 8th.

APRIL 27, 1847

Damage by Freshet. That portion of the dam across the Connecticut River at **Turners Falls**, from the Gill shore to the island has been carved away by the late freshet in the Connecticut River.

JULY 20, 1847

We learn that Mr. Cephas Loveland of Montague, was drowned at **Turners Falls**, on Friday last. He was at work on the dam, from which he slipped into the river below. He was 31 years of age, and has left a wife and two children.

FEBRUARY 12, 1855

On Wednesday, in the State Senate, a petition was presented from the Proprietors of the Upper Locks and Canals on the Connecticut River, (**Turners Falls**) for leave to sell land and water power, of the Vermont & Massachusetts Railroad, for State aid.

MAY 18, 1860

Part of a skeleton, supposed to be that of an Indian who possibly might have fallen in the battle of **Turners Falls**, was found last week, buried upon Temples Island (Smead's Island) above the Montague City Bridge.

NOVEMBER 6, 1865

Six or eight capitalists, headed by Alvah Crocker of Fitchburg, have purchased the water power of the Upper Locks and Canals on the Connecticut River at Montague City, and are going to rebuild the dam at **Turners Falls**, and a railroad to Grout's Corner to connect with the Vermont & Massachusetts or New London Northern Railroad. They have also purchased S. Sawyer's place for \$2800. P. Hastings for \$1000, and part of the Grover farm of J. Green, and offered \$6000 for the Town Farm, which Montague bought two years ago for \$5000. It is the intention of the Company to develop the water power and build up a manufacturing city. The Town of Montague would do well to encourage this enterprise all in its power, for if successful, it will be of great benefit to the town.

NOVEMBER 13, 1865

Montague has voted to sell its Town Farm to the new Company at **Turners Falls**, for \$6000 and buy another. Its cost the town \$4000.

MARCH 5, 1866

Two eminent engineers and a contractor visited the new city of **Turners Falls**¹ at Montague last week to take measures for the building of the new dam at **Turners Falls**². It is expected to be built this season.

AUGUST 31, 1868

The Vermont & Massachusetts Railroad, have surveyed a route to **Turners Falls**. Commencing about 200 feet of their Connecticut River Railroad Bridge, and running north through Montague City. The route will probably be adopted.

¹ "the new city of **Turners Falls**" . . . veritably names the village.

² "the building of the new dam **at Turners Falls**" . . . Locates the dam at the falls . . . **Turners Falls**.

The Life & Times of Alvah Crocker

1923; Douglas Crocker - private printing

Pp 41-42

Mr. Crocker was ever on the alert for the greater development not only of his own town but of neighboring communities. Hence, while searching for a more direct route between Greenfield and Millers Falls than that afforded by the Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad, his attention was attracted by Turners Falls. Seeing its possibilities as the site of a manufacturing town through the proper development of its water power, he organized the Turners Falls Company in 1866. He had dreams of a city which might some day rival Lowell and Holyoke as a manufacturing city, and although falling short of this accomplishment the town stands next to the Fitchburg Railroad and Hoosac Tunnel as the finest monument to Mr. Crocker's genius and foresight.

The Company acquired the property and franchises of an old organization known as "The Proprietors of the Upper Locks and Canals of the Connecticut River in the County of Hampshire." Large land-holdings were also secured in the town of Montague on the river front near the falls, where a dam with a thirty-foot head and a capacity of 30,000 horsepower was erected. From then until the day of his death Mr. Crocker worked hard for the prosperity of the new town, spending large sums of money in promoting its interests and sparing no effort to enlist the aid and interest of other capitalists and manufacturers.

Incomplete as was his work there, Turners Falls owes its existence as a town to him. He was a director of the Keith Paper Mill there, in the Montague Mills, and in the Turners Falls Pulp Company. He was also instrumental in inducing the removal of the John Russell Cutlery Works, of which he became a director, from Greenfield to Turners Falls. He organized and was president of the First National Bank of Turners Falls, now the Crocker National. He was active in organizing the savings bank, which has been named for him "The Crocker Institution for Savings." Charles T. Crocker succeeded his father as director of the national bank and trustee of the savings bank.

Compiled by
Ed Gregory
8.2020