

The South Danvers Observer

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The South Danvers Lyceum and the Danvers Mechanic Institute

1868—Even before George Peabody coined his famous phrase, *Education: A Debt Due From Present to Future Generations*, South Danvers was known for its commitment to education.

The first teacher in our town was Katharin [sic] Hodges Daland. In 1708, she was asked to start a school and was given a place across from the present day Northshore Mall on what is now Prospect Street. Her work continued when the Middle Precinct (Peabody) was formed. The precinct voted to open their own school on Central Street. By 1737, there would be 4 schools in the town.

When the Lyceum movement began in England, our nation did not take long to follow. London opened its first Mechanic Institute Lyceum in 1824 and in November of 1826, a Lyceum was formed in Millbury, Massachusetts. Only two years later, before either Salem or Concord, South Danvers started its own Lyceum on December 16, 1828.

It was first known as the "Literary Circle" and met at Joseph Shed's apothecary at 156 Main Street, across from the South Danvers Bank. Dudley Stickney (1798-1829), as president, gave the opening address. Other lectures soon followed. The founders of the Lyceum included Fitch Poole, Rufus Choate and Dr. Andrew Nichols. By 1832, the

Lyceum had a permanent location on Washington Street and published the first catalog of their library in 1836, listing 333 volumes in the collection.

When the Danvers Mechanic Institute was formed in 1841, it was voted by members of the South Danvers Lyceum on February 5th of that year to transfer the Lyceum's Library to the Mechanic Institute. The DMI's first meetings were held at Union Hall on Union Street, but by 1844, they had moved to Upton Hall on the corner of Foster and Lowell Streets.

Their Library held over 2,000 books and those who lectured at the Institute's Lyceum covered a wide range of topics, including literature, travel, American and world history, Mesmerism, progress in Education, physiology and manners. Speakers included Frederick Douglass, Charles Sumner, Theodore Parker, Caleb Cushing, Horace Mann, William Northend and Rufus Choate.

When George Peabody donated the funds for the creation of the Peabody Institute in 1852, a library that would be free to all, members knew the days of the DMI were numbered. Their last meeting was held on January 29, 1855 and it was then that they voted to donate most of their collection to the Peabody Institute.

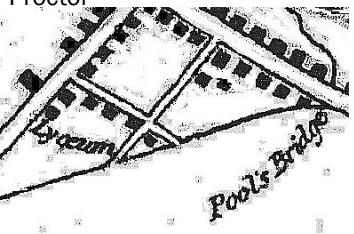
"The committee chosen to endeavour [sic] to procure the Lyceum Library reported that a meeting of members and officers of the Lyceum had been held and it was voted unanimously to transfer the Library to the Mechanic Institute."

From the Minutes of the Danvers Mechanic Institute, February 5, 1841.

"That owing to the establishment of a Free Public Library in this part of the town, they find that the interest formerly taken in this Institute has greatly declined. . . the committee unanimously recommend the adoption of the following vote. . . That it is expedient and desirable to close the concerns of the corporation and that a proposition of that effect be presented to the members."

From the Records of the Danvers Mechanic

Location of South Danvers Lyceum on Washington Street, From *Map of the Town of Danvers, 1832* by John W. Proctor



Katharin (Hodges) Daland, Our Town's First Teacher

—Katharin Daland has the unique honor, not only of being the first teacher of South Danvers, but also of being the first woman teacher in our town. Considering the hardships of her life, it was quite an achievement. Though, perhaps, like so many other women through the centuries, it was these very obstacles which gave her the strength to do what needed to be done.

Katharin was born in Salem in 1664, the daughter of George and Mary (Huston) Hodges. Though her mother died soon after her birth, it seems it was because of her mother's family that she received an education. During her visits to her maternal relatives in Boston, she was allowed to attend school there.



Old Ipswich Road, now Prospect Street, near site of original school

In 1681, she married Benjamin Daland of Beverly and together they had five children, Mary, b. 1682, Benjamin, b. 1686, John, b. 1688, Elizabeth, b. 1690 and George, b. 1691. Only a few months after George's birth, Katharin's husband died and she was left with five small children. She remained in Beverly for a time, but in 1700, Katharin deeded the house and land she inherited from her father George to John Masury of Salem. It must have been about this time that she settled back in Salem.

Rev. Joseph Green of Salem Village hoped to find a teacher, both for his children and for other families in the town. In April of 1708, Katharin Daland agreed to begin a school in James Houlton's home, located on what is now Prospect Street. She taught at this location for three years. Her scholars came from both the Village and from the section of town that would become the Middle Precinct of Salem.

Not long after the borders of the Middle Precinct were laid out in 1710, the people here petitioned "for a reading, writing & Cyphering School for their Children." [From Salem Town Records, March 24, 1711-12]

This school was located on the present day Central Street and Katharin, whose reputation must have been well known in this area, was paid a sum of 5 pounds to teach that season.

By 1737, such appropriations for women were unheard of. The five male teachers in our town that year received 2 pounds a month, while the ten women teachers each earned 2 pence a week or something close to 1/4 of a pound a month.



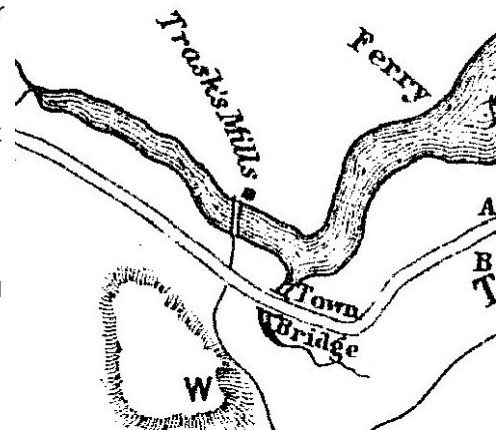
Thorndike Proctor house on Prospect Street, site of James Houlton house where Katharin Daland first taught school. That house burned down in 1816 and was replaced by this one.

Changing Landscape, Changing Name

—Gone are the days when the North River ran from the Wallis Mill Pond in downtown Peabody to flow into Salem and empty into the harbor. At one time thousands of Alewives swam there, necessitating the election of men to insure the laws regulating the taking of these fish were enforced. Just as our land has been altered with the passage of time, so has the name of this river varied. While it was known as North River from early

on, it was also called the River on Mill Pond, the Mill River, Trask's Mill Pond River (because of the William Trask's grist-mill) and The Salt Water, among other names.

To the Right
North River as it once flowed into what is downtown Peabody from *Map of Salem Village, 1692* by William P. Upham



Salem and Danvers Aqueduct Company

“No person having a post from said Aqueduct shall suffer the water ever to be wasted; that he shall never give away any water, or suffer it to be used by any person or persons living in any other house.”

From the Salem and Danvers Aqueduct Records, November 1797

—Just one year after the creation of the United States and Jamaica Pond Aqueduct Corporation in 1795, Salem and Danvers joined together to create their own aqueduct company, the second to be formed in Massachusetts.

The Town of Salem petitioned the General Court on Nov. 22, 1796 to consider forming an aqueduct company to deliver water from Spring Pond which lay in both Salem and Danvers and Brown’s Pond in Danvers to the people of Salem. One month later, on December 30th, 1796, a committee was formed to begin the acquisition of the necessary logs to create the first wooden pipes for the transfer of water, this time from Gallow’s Hill in Salem to homes in both Salem and Danvers. The incorporation of the company gave them the power to “enter upon, dig up & open any part of the Streets, highways or Townways in Salem or Danvers, or any Town adjoining or near to them, or either of them, for the purpose of placeing [sic] such pipes as may be necessary for the building & completing of said Aqueduct.” [Salem and Danvers Aqueduct Records, March 8, 1797]

Their goals were lofty. The actual results were not. Complaints didn’t take long to stream in. Just months after the first construction was completed in 1798, those people with posts or branches—the actual pipes where they could obtain their water—reported they were not receiving the amount promised. Many refunds were issued and there were a number of repairs in 1800. Fees rose from \$5 a year to \$7.20 a year. And the value of the shares in the corporation rose from \$30 to \$90 a share.

In an effort to improve service, the corporation purchased more

land and went from boring the center of the logs from 3 inches to 5 inches. They also prorated their fees by the size of the family, charging those with less than 5 children \$8 a year and those living in mansions twice that amount.

Again, water delivery was inadequate. In July of 1813, reports that people living on high ground were not receiving the water due them caused the corporation to investigate. Their findings stated that people must be sharing the water with those they shouldn’t or they were wasting it.

“The Clerk [of the Corporation] was directed to have the Town-crier to go round the Town in the several Streets & up as far as the Bell Tavern (so called) in Danvers and give the following notice viz. *Where as many person that have branches from the Aqueduct are in habits of wasting and giving away the water. . . this is to give Notice that unless they desist from such conduct they will immediately be deprived of the use of the Aqueduct water.* [Salem and Danvers Aqueduct Records, July 6, 1813]

The complaints still didn’t end. One year later, the company realized more repairs were needed and suspended customer’s fees until the work was completed. Problems with the system persisted and numerous leaks were discovered. In 1816 they hired Benjamin Clark Gilman of Exeter, NH to repair them. After his work, things began to improve.

In 1818, they contracted with the Salem Iron Works to bore the logs for future pipes. By 1834, the system continued to function as anticipated and

prices for had dropped to \$5 for families with 3 children and \$8 for families with 9 children.

In the late 1840s, the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Factory asked for an increased supply for their work. With the system as it was then, this was impossible. So in 1850, the State Legislature agreed to allow them to lay logs to Spring Pond to increase supply for the Factory. Not long after, the first iron pipes were laid and over time, the old wooden pipes were replaced.

By 1850, the company had laid 40 miles of pipe and they served 3600 customers. Despite all their work, problems with supply didn’t end. In 1865, the company turned to Brown’s Pond for extra water.

Now that our town has just recently voted to change our name from South Danvers to Peabody, there have been stirrings within the Aqueduct Company to consider turning over control of the supply of water to each town. Salem has already expressed an interest and many in Peabody believe the same should happen here.

“Great complaints have been made by persons who have branches of the Aqueduct that they have not been supplied with the water sufficient for the use of their families, the Proprietors were induced at their meeting in January last to direct that all the Distell-houses, tan-yards, stables &c. should after the first day of May be deprived of water from the Aqueduct and that for the future, the water should be furnished for the use of Families only. . .”
From the Salem and Danvers Aqueduct Records May 7, 1816

An Historical Timeline of Life in Early South Danvers

- *1633—First people begin to settle in town
- *1633-1640—Grants for land are given to William Trask, John Humphreys, John Philips, Richard Adams, John and Anthony Buxton, Richard Bartholomew and many, many others.
- *1637—Severe earthquake strikes the town.
- *1638—Severe winter.
- *1642—Another severe winter freezes area so that Salem harbor is frozen to Baker's Island.
- *1643—Corn scarce. Another severe earthquake strikes.
- *1646—Caterpillars destroy corn, wheat and barley crops.
- *1648—People declare day of fasting "on account of sin, blasting, mildew [sic], drought, grasshoppers, caterpillars and smallpox."
- *1652—Comet appears.
- *1653—Another severe earthquake.
- *1659—Lawrence and Cassandra Southwick, their son Josiah, Samuel Shattuck, Nicholas Phelps and Joshua Buffum, banished from town for being Quakers. Attempt made to sell Southwick's other children, Provided and Daniel, into slavery.
- *1663—Three severe earthquakes.
- *1666—Salem Village expresses first interest in separating from Salem.
- *1670—Great drought.
- *1675—Tornado sweeps through town.
- *1676—Thanksgiving Day, terrible storm strikes the area.
- *1680—Another comet seen in the sky.
- *1682—John Putnam empowered to "Take care yt ye law relateing [sic] to the Chatechising [sic] of children be dully attended at the Village. . ."
- *1685—Another earthquake. Severe drought.
- *1689—Several men from the town killed by Indians.
- *1692—Witch Hysteria.
- *1696—Coldest winter ever in New England.
- *1699—Numerous bears enter town to destroy corn and cattle.
- *1700—Two earthquakes hit town.
- *1708—Katharin Hodges Daland is asked to begin school for area children.
- *1710—Citizens of Middle Precinct petition to have church of their own built, which allowed the formation of the South Church the following year.
- *1712—Petition to create the first school in town. It opens on Central Street, with Daland as teacher.
- *1720—Tea is first used in town.
- *1723—Town floods, forcing many people to seek refuge in trees.
- *1727—Severest earthquake ever to hit the area.
- *1728—Seven earthquakes in area.
- *1730—Several more earthquakes.
- *1731—Another seven earthquakes.
- *1732—Salem Village (north parish of Danvers) petitions Salem to separate to form its own town.
- *1735—Caterpillars destroy foliage in forest.
- *1740—Middle Precinct (south parish of Danvers) joins with Village in petitioning Salem to separate.
- *1751—Committee formed to examine possibility of whether the Middle Precinct and Village should separate from Salem.
- *1752—District of Danvers formed.
- *1757—Town of Danvers incorporated.
- *1755—Another violent earthquake strikes town.
- *1760—Town votes to help Boston after severe fire.
- *1762—Severe drought in area.
- *1765—Town protests Stamp Act.
- *1772—Town votes to alternate Town Meetings between North Parish and South Parish, to honor agreement made July 2, 1751.
- *1773—Town votes to act in order that their civil liberties may be protected.
- *1774—Town votes on proceedings of Continental Congress.
- *1776—Town orders meeting to assemble in name of the People of Massachusetts instead of the king.

Information for newsletter gathered from:
—Town of Danvers Records, 1752-1855
—History of the Town of Danvers, From Its Earliest Settlement to 1848 by John W. Hanson, 1848.
—Salem and Danvers Aqueduct Records, 1796-1873.
—Address by George H. Martin at Unveiling of the Tablet in Memory of Katharin Daland, Peabody Historical Society, 1910.
—Account of the Transfer of the Salem Water Works to the City Authorities, 1869.
—Danvers Mechanic Institute Records, 1841-1855.
—Catalogue of Books in the South Danvers Lyceum Library, 1836. [Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society]
—History of Peabody, Massachusetts by Theodore Moody Osborne, 1888.
—The Driver Family: A Genealogical Memoir of the Descendants of Robert and Phebe Driver, of Lynn, Mass. by Harriet Ruth Waters Cooke, 1889.