

# The South Danvers Observer

The South Danvers Observer is published quarterly.

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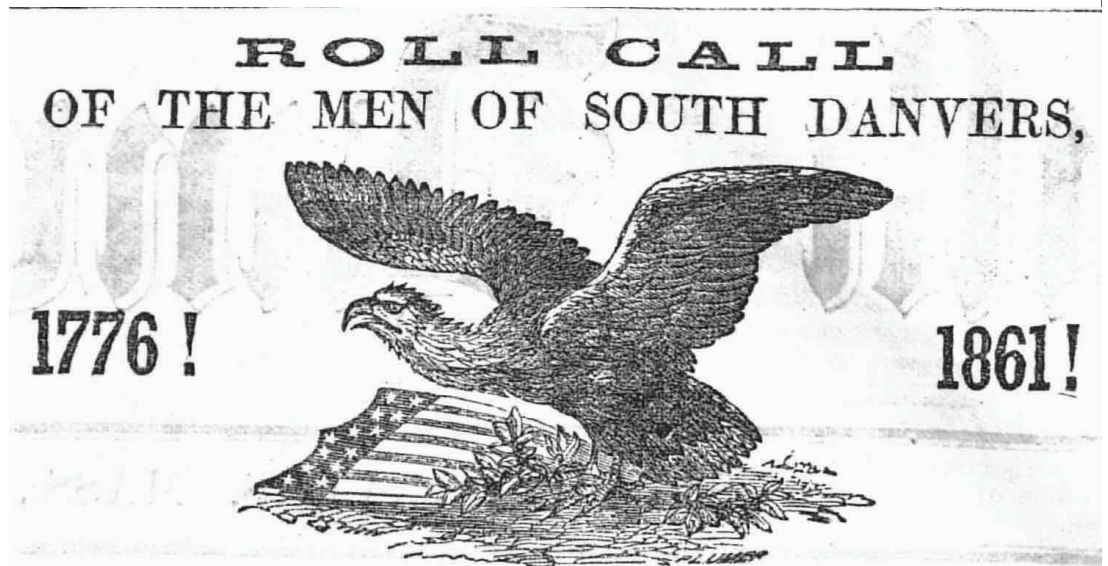
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*"War begun! With awful clearness  
On my ear those dread words fell,  
And I saw in sudden nearness,  
Sorrow which no tongue could tell,*

*Brothers in a war engaging,  
Which must bring such direful woe  
In our land war's tempest raging  
Oh! To think it can be so!*

*From the South Danvers Wizard,  
May 1, 1861*



Summer 1861— This past spring, the citizens of our town wasted no time in responding to the attack on Fort Sumter. Within days, 45 of our young men enlisted to defend our cause. And in answer to their commitment, a meeting was scheduled for Thursday, April 18 at the Town Hall.

Never has South Danvers witnessed such an outpouring of feeling. By 7:30 that evening, the Hall was filled to overflowing. Even in the doorways and halls, people stood shoulder to shoulder.

Once it became known that so many of our men had already left to serve, a subscription was begun to help outfit those willing to enlist. By the following Saturday, April 20, \$2929 had been raised.

In addition, Dr. Thomas Sweetser promised he would

provide all the medicine that would be needed for the men from our town.

In less than a week after this rousing meeting, the number of those enlisting rose from 45 to 70.

One of the very first to join this noble cause was young Moses Shackley who is now with the 8th Massachusetts Regiment. Not long his departure, he wrote his parents to inform them of his progress toward Washington City.

We print his letter here to demonstrate the dangers he and all those offering their service to our cause now face. The letter was written April 19th, on that infamous day when the 6th Massachusetts Regiment was attacked by rioters in Baltimore.

Astor House, New York  
"Dear Parents:

We have just arrived here in good health and spirits. We were on the cars all night. Have not slept any yet. We are going from here to Washington right off, as soon as we take breakfast. It is about 9 1-2 o'clock now, and we have been going all the time since we left Salem.

The Southern army are not going to let us pass through Baltimore, so we have got to fight our way there. Most of us are armed with a six-barreled pistol and a rifle musket. We are ready to meet them."

Mr. Shackley echoes the sentiments of many in our town. We, too, are ready to do whatever might be needed in the months or years to come.

## Volunteer Companies to Be Formed!

*"Dr. T. A. Sweetser has generously and considerately forwarded a quantity of his Iceland Moss Candy and Troches to our South Danvers Soldiers. These must be timely remedies for the colds and coughs which they experience, owing to sudden changes and irregular living. One letter . . . mentions that coughs were so prevalent in the 5th regiment, that it was a great interruption to their religious services on Sunday in Washington."*

*South Danvers Wizard  
May 22nd, 1861*

## The Fervor in our Town

Ever since our historic town meeting on April 18th, our town has been festooned with so many flags and bunting, that it might be the Fourth of July. The flag flying from our Lexington Monument reminds us of the blood shed in our land eighty-five years ago and which is now again being shed down south.

Men from our town are now serving in the 5th, 8th, 10th, 14th, 17th, 19th, 22nd, 23rd, and 24th Regiments, in the 1st and 2nd Company of Sharpshooters and the Navy. Not all South Danvers men serve in Massachusetts regiments, however. John Tibbetts and Charles Gardner now serve in a Maine regiment, William Flynn, Edward Splain and Thomas Hennessey in two New York Regiments and Horace Poole, the son of Fitch Poole is serving in the 1st Iowa Regiment.

In addition, another company has formed and will be attached to General Butler's brigade and will be required to transport the wounded off the battlefields and to bind their

wounds. Two men from our town have joined, the artist Asa Bushby and S. Stanley Hart.

And we cannot forget one military unit in our town, which is responsible for the many parades and music up and down Main Street. They are not quite tall enough to join the regular army, but what they lack in size, they more than make up in spirit. This company—comprised of a number of local boys—has as its captain, young Eben Dale Sutton. In a recent visit by the Fitzgerald Guards, drum salutes were passed between the two units.

And, as Abigail Adams once reminded her husband, we must "*remember the Ladies.*" No one has worked harder or with as much devotion as the women of our town have since the war began. The South Danvers Ladies Soldiers' Aid Society was formed on April 24th. Under the guidance of Eunice Cook, they have so far sewn 130 flannel shirts, 120 pairs of drawers, made bandages, collected lint and have knitted several pairs of socks. And they will not cease in their labors, not until all our young men have returned home.

## The Riot in Baltimore

We recently received a letter from a woman of our town who was in Philadelphia and saw the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment on its way to Baltimore. Her words do more than any news account to remind us of the horror of the riot which occurred in that city this past April 19th. And which was responsible for the deaths of three young men from our state: Sumner Henry Needham, Addison O.

Whitney and Luther C. Ladd.

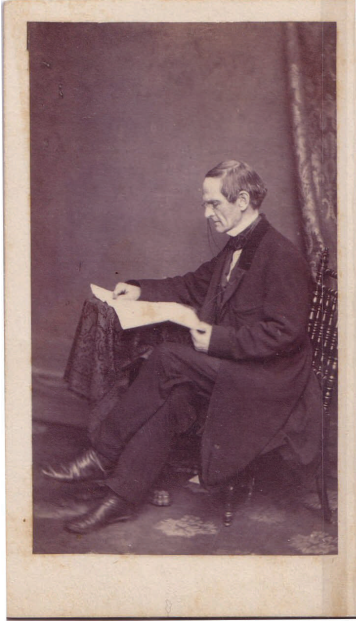
She says, "Does it seem possible that we are living in the midst of bloodshed and war? Night before last, we saw the Massachusetts troops as they marched to their quarters, and yesterday we spent the day in intense anxiety, hoping every minute to hear of their safe arrival in Washington, when the news came that some of the soldiers of our own state had fallen so soon! I was wholly overcome,

to think that innocent men, so quietly proceeding on their way to the Capital, should be attacked by a mob, and after some had fallen, be obliged to resort to their arms for self-preservation. . . A corps of ladies is forming here who are determined to go as nurses, whenever their services are needed."

*". . . three companies only. . . bore the brunt of the fight, the remainder of the regiment having gone safely through the city. The cars which contained these companies were cut off by the mob, but the soldiers disembarked and fought their way through the city, surrounded by an infuriated mob, estimated at eight thousand in number."*

*South Danvers Wizard  
April 24, 1861*

## Onward to the Capitol



Fitch Poole

Not satisfied with second hand accounts from our nation's Capitol, our very own Fitch Poole has made plans to travel to Washington City himself to witness the work of our legislators during this crisis.

His promise to partake in the proceedings of our federal government and report to us what he has seen, should be taken in the same serious vein in which he makes such a noble offer.

He says:

"Having in early life been a soldier, and raised to the rank of disorderly sergeant in that well disciplined company, the old Danvers Light Infantry, we feel that our military education has not been

wholly neglected. Beyond this, we had the honor to serve as Captain of that corps for one whole day! This was while the commissioned officers were under arrest. We have also encountered the fatigues and perils of three campaigns, which is one more than Louis Napoleon can boast of. We can keep step to the bass drum or the tolling of the bell, as well as to the 'music of the Union.' We feel competent to instruct soldiers which end of the gun to put to their shoulders when firing at the enemy, and we think we could set an excellent example of a speedy retreat. . . . we thus offer our services to the country.

If, in our absence, stirring news of conflict and victory come over the telegraphic

wires, we very naturally desire to have the credit of such results of our advice and plans.

If, as we do not apprehend, the news should be of disaster and defeat, be assured that we are not responsible, and had no part in the movements. . . While at the seat of government, we shall feel that we have, in some measure, the good name and honor of South Danvers in our keeping. The President and heads of Departments. . . will naturally feel interested to learn much about a place so important in past history and present condition. We shall, if asked . . . be ready prepared with a full list of our subscribers!"

When word of his findings are forwarded to us, we will publish them in the next edition of the *Observer*.

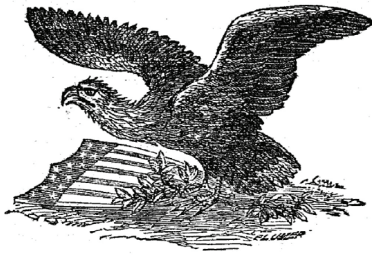
## War Reading at the Peabody Institute

With little else but the war on everyone's mind, and with nearly every conversation turning to the latest battle, we thought it would be helpful to remind the people of our town of the vast military collection owned by the Peabody Institute. There are too many to list here but we present a short sample to whet your appetite.

- ⇒ Soldier's Guide.
- ⇒ Cavalry Tactics.
- ⇒ Civil Wars in France.
- ⇒ Military Surgery
- ⇒ Shot Gun and Sporting Rifle.
- ⇒ Militiamen's Manual and Swordplay.
- ⇒ Rifle and Rifle Practice.
- ⇒ Bayonet, Manual of.
- ⇒ Soldier's Companion.
- ⇒ Rifle, and how to use it.
- ⇒ Camp Fires of the American Revolution.
- ⇒ Bayonet Exercises.
- ⇒ Siege of Boston
- ⇒ Instruction in Field Artillery.
- ⇒ Rebellion in Scotland.

*"Histories of our own and of the French Revolutions are full of incidents of sanguinary hostilities. Biographies of eminent military characters, as they generally include the history of their conflicts, are usually full of details of military operations. The Library is now well supplied, fully up to the demand, with good works of history, English and European, in all of which, unhappily, there are narratives of sanguinary strife."*

*South Danvers Wizard  
June 12, 1861*



## From Near and Far



“We dropped into Sutton Hall the other day and found it a real ‘Temple of Industry.’ There were as many as eight patent sewing machines, besides an uncounted number of living machines, the latter plying the needle and shears, cutting up acres of flannel and sewing it together again into garments for our brave Massachusetts soldiers. This is the spirit which animated the women of the Revolution.”

From the South Danvers Wizard  
May 1, 1861

### *A HINT TO VOLUNTEERS*

Do not wear cotton stockings; you feet will be blistered by a six hours march. Wear woolen stockings, and if you can find the means to dip the soles in melted tallow before starting, your feet will not be blistered at all.”

From the South Danvers Wizard  
May 22nd, 1861

“The Government is organizing a telegraph corps to accompany the army in the Southern campaign, and several expert operators have been selected from Boston to form a part of this company.”

South Danvers Wizard  
May 15, 1861

“We have received orders to pack up in half an hour, and it is a busy scene I assure you. We have as yet received no orders to march, but expect them every moment. It may be that the order was given to see how quick we could get ready—but I think not, as we have been expecting it for a week.

We have rumors that we were going to Norfolk or Harper’s Ferry, but we do not know anything about where we shall go.

The South Danvers boys received a box of clothing from Mr. Jacobs, yesterday, for which we are duly thankful, the clothes being very much needed. The men are in first rate spirits at the prospect of leaving, and cracking jokes at each other as though they were on a pleasure excursion.”

J. H. Estes to friends in South Danvers  
May 19, 1861

“A lad named George Stone, residing on the corner of Aborn and Boston Streets, was severely injured by the wad from a small cannon being driven into the calf of his leg, at the flag raising on the big tree in Boston Street. Dr. Lord attended him and has shown us the wad extracted, which would almost fill a cup.

A little lad, so of Mr. Hiram Plummer of this town, was badly injured in one of his eyes by the explosion of a fire cracker. It is feared the sight will be destroyed.”

From South Danvers Wizard  
July 10, 1861

“I received your letter this morning and was very glad to hear that you were all well. I have been almost sick with a cold the past two days, but I feel almost as well as ever to day. . . .When we were on board the steamer Ariel, on our way from New York to Annapolis the living was rather poor, we got nothing but hard dry bread and half cooked salt pork and beef, of the poorest quality with an occasional cup of very poor coffee. I think it was owing to the mismanagement more than anything else, for I know there was plenty of good plain food on board. I do not think any one need to go hungry if there had been any order at all. When there was anything to eat it was ‘rush up and grab,’ and those that stood nearest got most. . . . A great many of the soldiers have never seen any hardships, and it seems harder for them than it does for me, although they all hold out bravely. . . .”

Dennison P. Moore to his brother  
May 5, 1861

“Some of our manufacturers are busily employed in making shoes for the soldiers—Messrs. White & Fiske are making a very substantial article, which will stand severe usage and afford good protection to the feet, which cannot be said of many of the shoes supplied by army contracts given to favorites of the appointees. As our own soldiers are already destitute of shoes, their first pair being worn out, they are having a new supply.

South Danvers Wizard  
July 17, 1861

# **SOUTH DANVERS TO DO HER DUTY!**