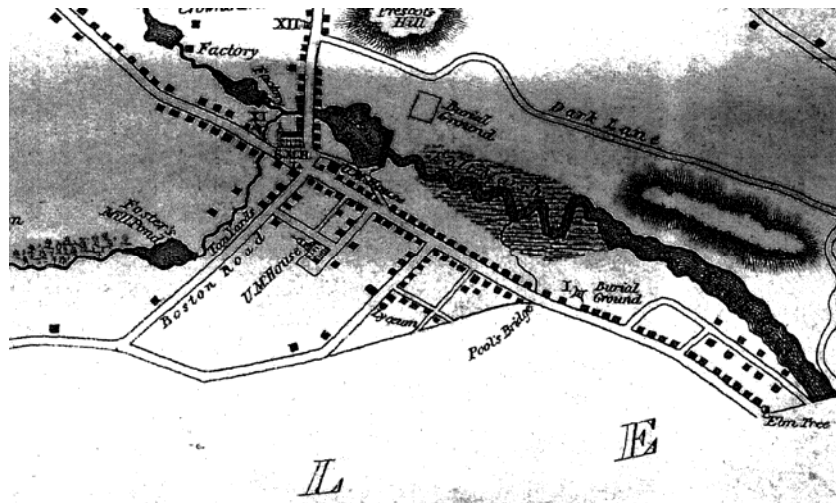


# The South Danvers Observer

## South Danvers—Then and Now



South Danvers Center about fifteen years ago

The South Danvers Observer is published quarterly.

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### Inside this issue:

South Danvers' Growing Pains	2
History of Danvers Pottery	2
Scourges of the Past and Present	3
Danvers Winter Sweet Apples	3
From near and Far	4

*"These changes have passed gradually and in detail before our eyes and we have hardly regarded them, but let one who has not seen Danvers since 1815, now visit us and he would scarcely see anything in the place to remind him of its former appearance. Place him almost anywhere in the streets and to what familiar and unchanged objects could you point to identify the place!"*

*From the Danvers Courier August 30, 1845*

May 1846—With the recent decision by the residents of the North Parish to change the name of Blind Hole to Puthamville, rumors have begun to fly that names of other well-beloved areas in our town may also be lost.

What would the South Parish be without Hog Hill, or the Devil's Dishful? Or the North Parish without Muddy Boo?

There are those who would decry any and all change. Most, however, realize that with progress comes the possibility for transformation. Whether this will bode well for our people, only time will tell.

Most agree there is much power in a name. And to change the name of a town or place alters the perception people have of its history and purpose. And so, with that in

mind, we thought it might be pleasant to recall a Danvers of the not-so-distant past

In a mere thirty years, our town has more than doubled in size. In 1810, there were 2,643 residents and today, though a census is not yet complete, we can safely estimate that there are more than 6,500 people.

Once, we had but one meeting house. Now we have five. Many remember the tiny lane leading to General Foster's Chocolate Mill. No longer a lane, it is now a street and all are pleased it has been named in his honor.

Those who might insist that only the old names are best, would probably concede that Skunk's Cabbage Lane is better served by being called Holten Street.

And they would be grateful that the "Raccoon's Box," so called to alert people to the character of the residents of that decrepit black structure, is long gone.

Where our proud eagle once stood, we now have a monument to those who fell at the Battle of Lexington. Our eagle has not taken flight, however, but is located across the street from the monument.

That a bath house now graces the North Street Bridge, just a short walk to Salem, is a boon that we did not once have.

And most importantly, on our horizon is the promise of a railroad, one that will allow our citizens easier access to Boston.

Surely this is the best sign of all that better times are to come.

## South Danvers' Growing Pains

*"The Salem Gazette in its remarks on our article entitled , Danvers Thirty Years Ago, intimated that the extent of our territory, and the diversity of interests in the two sections of the town will cause its division into two separate towns.—We hope the time for any such division is far distant and its evils may be averted by a proper regard on the part of the citizens of one section to the rights of the another."*

*From Danvers Courier  
September 13, 1845*

May 1846— It can't be denied that our town has gone through many growth spurts. And as we all remember from our youth, with growth comes some pain.

Long before we separated from Salem in 1752, we expressed a desire to become our own town. In 1666, the Middle and Village Parishes made known their wish to govern themselves and build their own church. Though the idea of a separation was not taken seriously by the officials in Salem at the time, this discontent with the status quo did not end. In 1689 and again in 1695, there were petitions for better roads and grumbings from some to become independent from Salem.

For a time after that, the desire to separate seemed to vanish. But in 1732 and in 1749, petitions were circulated to ask "that they May Be set of to Be A Distinct and separate town ship without here, and with our part and propotion of the annual economy of ye town according the

lines hereafter Mentioned."

At last in 1751, a committee was organized with the intent to create just such a town. While the report was accepted, the decision only allowed our citizens to form the *District of Danvers*, not the town as we had hoped. But with persistence, we prevailed in the end and were incorporated as the separate Town of Danvers in 1757.

Times never change though. Because in 1815, attempts to annex parts of our South Parish to Salem were halted. But the efforts of Salem to claim certain portions of South Danvers have not ceased. We certainly oppose such an action and have appointed Lewis Allen, Elias Putnam and John Page to assert our rights.

It cannot be ignored, however, that we have nearly outgrown ourselves. With two vibrant parishes, each with its own character, many are beginning to wonder, will a time come when we will indeed decide to separate once again?

## History of Danvers Pottery

Just forty years ago, pottery was the primary manufacture of our town. Created from clay collected from the Waters River, *Danvers China* was well known until recently.

During our last war with Great Britain in 1812, cups, saucers and other *Danvers China* fetched a high price.

Once, we had 30 potteries, mostly located on Lowell and Central Streets. But the passage of time has brought a decline to this ancient craft and today we have only six potteries in our town.

The coarser clay found at the Waters River is of less use to people today than in the past. Much china is produced abroad for less cost and many view it as more beautiful and of greater strength than our own Danvers China.

As the old adage tells us, though, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. And to those who have an appreciation for the past, there is a certain charm found in the less refined *Danvers China* than cannot be reproduced by potteries from across the ocean.



*Danvers China Creamer*

*"This town was formerly celebrated for the manufacture of coarse earthen ware, which business was formerly carried on to much greater extent than at present."*

*From Danvers Courier  
April 26, 1845*

## Scourges of the Past and Present

Continued		Continued	
Age		Age	
7	Sukoy Osborn 18/9	25	James Osborn 18/9
5	Polly Smith 18/9	20	Jane Osborn 18/9
25	Daniel Whittemore 18/9	10	Stephen Osborn 18/9
29	John Osborn jun 18/9	13	Lydia Taylor
10	William Roberts 18/9	10	Gideon Taylor
23	Nabby Osborn 18/9	7	Jno. Taylor
19	Lydia Braxton 18/9	5	Mary Taylor
27	David Osborn 18/9	12	James Gillchrist 18/9
23	Richard Osborn 18/9	21	Stephen Rice 18/9
24	Daniel Osborn 18/9	13	Edwin Osborn
15	Sally Hartshorn 18/9	11	Sylvester Osborn
Age Next Chamber		6	Nancy Osborn
Age 27	Jno. Osborn	9	Jane Chapman
26	Lydia Osborn	6	Joseph Sprague 18/9
7	Polly Osborn	6	Haffels White X 18/9
5	Lydia Osborn	27	Josiah Taylor
	Mary Osborn	24	Henry Braxton

Danvers Hospital Register for those receiving

Though we'd like to say that Smallpox is one scourge relegated to the past, sadly we have heard of several cases in Boston, Marblehead, Lynn and more recently, in Salem.

With the promised railroad soon to become a reality, commerce between citizens of our town and those of Boston will become ever more frequent. And since this dreaded disease is so easily contracted, we wonder why everyone has not yet received the vaccine.

As far back as 1778, efforts were made to inoculate people living Danvers. The need for a "Pest House" in which those who'd been vaccinated could be isolated was discussed. Unfortunately, the early vaccines caused nearly as many deaths as the disease itself. These attempts at thwarting the spread of Smallpox were soon ended.

The subject of Smallpox

once again came up for discussion at the Danvers Town Meeting on October 13, 1792. It was then voted to license specific locations for the inoculation of those who wished the vaccine.

The town "voted liberty for persons to be innoculated for the Small Pox & to take the whole care respecting the Same. Voted . . . to choose five persons seperately for said committee—Gideon Foster, Caleb Low, Samuel Page, Samuel Fowler & David Prince were . . . chosen. . . [they] voted every person that shall be innoculated for the Small Pox shall bare his or her own expence in every particular. "

Though the exact location of the Danvers Hospital created for this inoculation in 1792 is not certain, we believe it was located off Andover Street at the old Derby Farm which is now owned by Kendall Osborn.

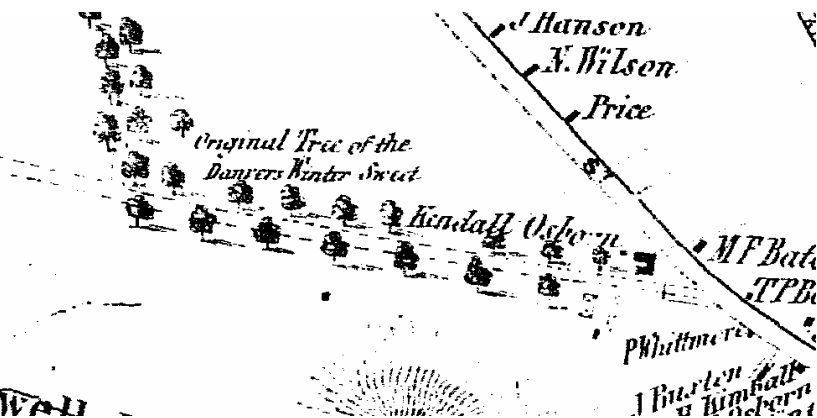
## Danvers Winter Sweet Apples

The fame of the Endicott Pear tree, located on the old Orchard Farm, now owned by Benjamin Porter, is well known. Said to be planted by Governor Endicott himself, this ancient tree still bears fruit to this day.

But another tree of lesser renown bears fruit as sweet as that of the Endicott pear tree. Just a little over

a mile south of its famous neighbor, northwest of Wilson's Corner, on the property of Kendall Osborn, stands the original tree bearing the Danvers Winter Sweet Apple.

Known for its bronze skin and sweet flesh, the fruit is ready late in the season and if properly stored in root cellars will remain sweet until spring.



Location of original tree of the

## From Near and Far

"It has become one of our painful duties to report one of the greatest calamities that ever befell our village and town. . . We can only say at present that the entire line of Railroad between Salem and Malden is utterly destroyed. . . We are at this moment only able to state that the whole road has sunk into the earth and. . . that all the directors, engineers, ticket and baggage masters, the superintendent, clerk and treasurer were in the cars and have by this sad event come to an untimely end! . . . The prevailing opinion however appears to be, that this disaster was caused by the Directors of the Eastern Railroad, a rival corporation, who had been suspected of being engaged in undermining the railroad. . . . After a long and laborious investigation the jury have agreed on a verdict. One of the jurors, an honest Hibernian, wished to render it 'accidental murder.'

Another of the jury was desirous of calling it 'suicide by hanging by parallel lines.' Others were for 'willful murder,' but whether by the hands of the Eastern Railroad or by the Massachusetts Senate, they could not determine."

From the Danvers Courier  
April 18, 1846

"The Newspapers now-a-days are so wrapt up in politics, that it would be as preposterous to attempt to find an article of *news* in them, as it would be to stop the progress of a slanderer's tongue, or to sow barley in the deserts of the Sahara, with the expectation of reaping a harvest."

From the Danvers Eagle  
September 18, 1844

"Last winter it is said a cow floated down the Mississippi on a cake of ice and became so cold that she has milked nothing but *ice-creams* ever since."

From Danvers Eagle

"We are informed by General Foster, that six large rattle-snakes have been killed in his neighborhood, during the past summer. Two were killed some two months since, by two women who were in the pastures picking berries. One having *twelve rattles* was killed last Wednesday by Mr. J. Harrod. But the largest was killed last week, by Mr. Wm. Very, which on opening, was found to contain *eighty young rattlesnakes, alive!* When Mr. Very first saw the snake, the young ones were all out, playing around her, but upon notice of his approach, the old snake opened her mouth, and the young all ran down her throat. We have not the slightest reason to doubt the truth of this, although it surpasses many of the *manufactured* snake stories."

From the Danvers Courier  
August 16, 1845

*"To the Inhabitants of Danvers, more particularly those who live in the vicinity of Goldthwait's brook and Wallis Mill Pond.*

. . . We refer to the condition of Goldthwait's brook, its tributaries and the Wallis Mill Pond, so called in South Village of this town. This brook and pond, receiving as they do all the filth from the extensive tanneries, glue and morocco factories, and currier's establishments, as much as from the sinks and sewers of the dwelling houses along its valley, is constantly during the dry and hot weather of summer emitting effluvias exceedingly offensive to the senses and highly injurious it is believed to the health of those who are obliged to inhale it night and day."

From the Danvers Courier  
August 16, 1845

"On Tuesday afternoon, the house of Captain Benjamin Porter, known as the "Crowninshield House" situated near the Iron Factory, took fire in the one story attachment, occupied as a kitchen, and was confined to this part of the building, in which was stored a large quantity of blinds, which were entirely consumed. The whole amount of the damage was estimated at \$50. The engines were soon on the spot, and but for the very active exertions of the firemen the house must have been wholly destroyed."

From the Danvers Courier  
March 7, 1846

"We have frequently heard suggested the advantage to each resident and strangers visiting town of having our streets numbered. We think if some persevering individual would undertake the task of ascertaining the minds of our citizens in regard to the matter, it would be found out that but for few if any would object to paying their part of the trifling sum necessary to accomplish this desirable object."

From Danvers Courier  
Dec. 20, 1845

"A fever seems to be somewhat prevalent in the Village of South Danvers, in relation to the expediency of having a *clock*, to be placed in some conspicuous place, for the accommodation of the citizens, and the traveling public. What a grand idea it be to have one placed on the new Orthodox meeting house. There are enough to *talk* about it, but few to *act*."

From the Danvers Eagle  
September 25, 1844