

Local History Resource Center
Peabody Institute Library
82 Main Street, Peabody MA 01960

Peabody Institute Library Local History Vertical File Collection, 1752-2018

Reference Code: MPeal

Repository: Local History Resource Center, Peabody Institute Library, Peabody, MA

Call Number: VFC

Creator: Peabody Institute Library

Title: Peabody Institute Library Local History Vertical File Collection

Dates: 1752-2004; 1801-1881 (Bulk)

Size: .751 LF

Language(s): Collection materials are in English.

Abstract: Materials pertain to the history of South Danvers / Peabody including some information concerning surrounding towns.

Organizational History

The Peabody Institute Library was begun with the June 16, 1852 donation from George Peabody.

George Peabody was born in South Danvers (now Peabody) in 1795 and by the year of 1851 had risen in the business world to become an investment banker in London.

Proud of their native son, the Danvers Mechanic Institute named George Peabody an honorary member on January 5, 1852. This subscription based institute, located in South Danvers, was both library and lyceum. Though the committee selected to inform Peabody of this honor waited until after Danvers was informed of the donation, it is possible his awareness of this institution influenced Peabody in deciding the type of institution he wished to create.

Later that spring, the Danvers Centennial Committee issued an invitation to George Peabody, asking him to join the citizens in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Danvers' separation from Salem. His response, sent on May 26, 1852, announced his intention to donate \$20,000 for the creation of the Peabody Institute. Though like the Danvers Mechanic Institute in that it would be both a library and a lyceum, the Peabody Institute would be open to everyone, free of charge. By the time of his death in 1869, George Peabody would have donated over \$217,000 just to the Peabody Institute.

The architect chosen for the Peabody Institute was Richard Bond (1797-1861). A well-known New England architect of the day, Bond was also responsible for Salem City Hall,

the Essex County Courthouse and Gore Hall at Harvard University. Franklin Merrill of Danvers, and Russell & White of Salem were the contractors for the project.

The Peabody Institute Library opened on October 18, 1854. Fitch Poole had been chosen as the first Librarian on January 3, 1854. His participation in founding the Danvers Mechanic Institute in 1841 and his work with it until it closed in 1855 made him a natural choice. He was instrumental in selecting many of the original books for the library, as well as organizing it. He resigned just before the library's opening on September 27, 1854. Eugene B. Hinckley was then elected Librarian and he served until May of 1856. Upon his resignation, Fitch Poole once more became Librarian, continuing his work with the Peabody Institute until his death in 1873.

The Library would expand in 1977-1978 and in 2001 the Library would start the Local History Resource Center where the archival material is held.

Scope and Content

This collection features primary sources concerning the City of Peabody including information on surrounding towns such as Beverly, MA. The materials in this collection include, but are not limited to, letters, programs, advertisements, newspaper clippings, sermons, and annual reports among other topics. Subject areas include specific clubs and businesses, churches, schools, celebrations and ceremonies, general features such as bridges and cemeteries, historical documentation.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation: [Identify the item], [Folder Number], Peabody Institute Library Local History Vertical File Collection, Local History Resource Center, Peabody Institute Library.

Provenance: The provenance of much of the materials is found in collection and purchases from eBay.

Acquisition Information: Much of the materials in this collection were Found in Collection. Some materials were purchased from various sellers on eBay.

Processing: Processed by Nancy C. Barthelemy, 2007. Reprocessed by Erik R. Bauer, 2014.

Access Rights: Collection is open for research.

Physical Access Restrictions: None.

Technical Access Restrictions: None.

Restrictions & Copyright: Copyright has not been assigned to the Peabody Institute Library. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts or other material must be submitted in writing to the archivist. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the Peabody Institute Library as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained by the researcher.

Conservation Work: Papers were unfolded and tears mended.

Related Collections: None.

Search Terms

Peabody (Mass.)
 South Danvers (Mass.)
 Holten, Samuel 1738-1816
 Jordan Lodge
 Genealogy
 Correspondence
 Menu
 Account Book
 Grand Army of the Republic
 Deeds
 South Danvers National Bank
 Warren Bank
 Probate(s)
 Northwest Territory Celebration Commission
 South Congregational Church
 St. Michael Society

Collection Inventory

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