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# The Administration of Public Welfare: A Comparative Analysis of Salem, Danvers, Deerfield, and Greenfield\*

Louis J. Piccarello

For the past twenty-five years historians have demonstrated a sustained interest in the study of public welfare institutions. Although the origins of social welfare history date back to the late 19th century, the first major study of poverty in America written by a professional historian was not published until 1956.<sup>1</sup> Since then, dozens of monographs and articles have appeared describing what contemporaries "said" and "thought" about poverty, and what kinds of institutions were created to ameliorate the problem.<sup>2</sup> While no general synthesis has emerged, the methodological and conceptual similarities in this literature suggest that a generally accepted framework for understanding social responses to poverty in the antebellum period does exist. This paper will discuss some of the major problems with the current historical perspective in the area of dependent poverty, suggest an alternative research strategy and demonstrate its usefulness by way of a comparative analysis of four communities in Massachusetts, from the colonial period to the Civil War.

There are at least two major issues evident in the histories of public welfare written during the last two decades. One area of focus seeks primarily to answer questions about change in the "level" or "amount" of poverty over time. Studies of this kind are most often informed by some variant of the question—"When did poverty become a significant social problem in America?"<sup>3</sup> Another area of interest explores the relationship between social attitudes and modes of "treatment." Historians concerned with this issue attempt to explain when and why certain social customs and institutions appear and disappear; they attempt to explain the social policies adopted in terms of contemporary beliefs about the nature and causes of poverty.<sup>4</sup>

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The prevailing interpretations divide the history of poverty before the Civil War into two broad periods. Most historians have argued that prior to about 1820 poverty was virtually non-existent or affected only a small number of persons. During the colonial period poverty was believed to be the result of divine providence and was not regarded as a major social problem. Because the poor were not held responsible for their own condition, little effort was made to reform or rehabilitate them. They were relieved in their own homes or in neighboring households, and remained valued members of the community. Beginning in the 1820s, however, historians have noted significant changes in the level of poverty, beliefs about its causes, and the modes of treatment adopted. At about this time, and increasingly so throughout the 19th century, dependency emerged as a central social problem. Poverty was no longer seen as evidence of divine providence, but as proof of individual moral failure. As such, the pauper could be reformed through a program of education, religion, temperance, and work. The locus of relief would no longer be the community, but the "well ordered" almshouse. As this essay will demonstrate, the interpretation just summarized presents an overly simplistic view of historical reality and the process of social change.

The reasons behind the emergence of the current historical interpretation are methodological and conceptual in nature. In terms of any underlying research strategy, historians have begun by examining the emergence of large-scale institutions for the care of the poor in 19th century urban centers such as New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. Only then do they look back to the colonial period, and for the purpose of pointing out how different things were. This type of approach presents historical time as a "static succession" instead of a "dynamic sequence" of events and processes. As a result, undue emphasis is placed on the distinctiveness of the particular period under study, important continuities are overlooked, and the subtle, often incremental, nature of historical change is misunderstood.<sup>5</sup>

One way to avoid a static notion of time is simply to broaden the period under study. In order to make a valid comparison between the 18th and 19th centuries, the place to begin is in the colonial period, not the 1820s. To successfully examine change over time, the historian must begin the analysis at the earliest point possible. In this case, we need, first and foremost, a solid understanding of social welfare practices in the colonial period. Only then can the story be traced forward in time. An analysis of this kind is likely to demonstrate the crucial elements of continuity and persistence rather than the revolutionary nature of 19th century social change.

In addition to a more sophisticated approach to historical time, the current interpretation of public welfare history needs to be given a spatial or geographic dimension.<sup>6</sup> We cannot assume that the nature and timing of change in urban areas occurred uniformly throughout the entire society. In a state with over 300 cities and towns, the historian is likely to find some

degree of variation among them with regard to both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of dependent poverty. The historian must attempt to explain this variation both "within time" and "over time." Only then is it possible to make any conclusions as to whether the historical changes observed were manifestations of broad socio-cultural trends, or the expression of particular local needs. Historical transformations in the administration of public welfare must be understood in light of each town's individual history, as well as within the broader context of social change.

The four towns selected for this study were Salem, Danvers, Deerfield, and Greenfield. Salem and Danvers are located in Essex County, 25 miles north of Boston; Deerfield and Greenfield are located along the Connecticut River in Franklin County, 95 miles west of Boston. Each town experienced a different rate, level and direction of socio-economic development, from the time of its initial settlement until the middle of the 19th century. Before examining specific developments in these towns, it is useful to summarize the potential methods available for aiding the poor in colonial Massachusetts. The two major categories of assistance were outdoor and indoor relief. Outdoor relief could include one of four practices: boarding indigent persons in neighboring households; the pauper auction, where care of the poor went to the lowest bidder; the contract system, where one individual contracted to care for all the town's poor on a yearly basis; or outright grants of cash and provisions. Indoor relief consisted of gathering the poor under one roof in an almshouse or on a poor farm. Each of these alternatives derived from English practices with which the colonists were familiar. They constituted the cultural vocabulary of poor relief as it existed in the 17th century.<sup>7</sup>

The town of Salem was first settled in 1626, making it one of the oldest towns in Massachusetts. Although subsistence agriculture was the primary economic activity during the first few decades after settlement, the fishing and shipbuilding industries gained an early prominence. Before the close of the 17th century Salem was already the most important commercial center in Massachusetts outside of Boston and had entered on a course of mercantile expansion which would last for over a century. The town had a population of approximately 2,200 in 1690, and the development of a commercial economy produced a marked pattern of social stratification. The occupational structure was already quite diversified, consisting of farmers, merchants, artisans, seamen, and unskilled laborers. The town's growing prosperity was not, however, equally distributed. In the period 1661-1681, 20 per cent of the population controlled 75 per cent of probated wealth. As one historian has noted, Salem of the 1680s was a "complex and troubled society," "rife with tensions and divisions."<sup>8</sup>

The pattern of economic development which had emerged in Salem by the late 17th century was a primary factor in the transformation of poor relief administration. In 1698 and 1707 the town appropriated money to construct an almshouse, and in 1709 the town received a bequest of 100 pounds for the same purpose. The building was not constructed until 1719.

In the meantime, the selectmen continued to provide for the poor as they had since the town's settlement through the use of "boarding out" or grants in cash and kind. Even after the house was completed, the selectmen did not abolish the familiar practices of outdoor relief. Instead, each case was considered on its own merits and the selectmen chose whichever solution was cheapest and most convenient.<sup>9</sup>

By the middle of the 18th century, Salem had grown into a densely populated seaport of 3,300 inhabitants. The character of its economic life was well expressed in a petition to the General Court, which read in part:

We need only to observe that this is a maritime town—that of all of the families belonging to it not more than a dozen depend on the culture of the ground for their support—that the rest in part or wholly derive their sustenance from trade and fishing and the various handicrafts thereon depending.<sup>10</sup>

High levels of transiency and unemployment contributed to a growing problem of poor relief. It became necessary to repair and enlarge the almshouse in 1749 for the "reception and employment of the idle and [the] poor." After the repairs were made, a "Master of the House" was hired for the first time (previously the house had been under the care of the selectmen), and "Rules and Orders" for its "Regulation and Government" were adopted. The office of the overseer of the poor was separated from that of the selectmen a few months later, providing further evidence that the administration of poor relief had become an increasing burden. Finally, the overseers were "directed not to make any allowance . . . to any poor persons that are out of ye Work House saving in cases of ye utmost necessity and then but a small sum."<sup>11</sup> Although the size and location of the almshouse were altered in later years, no fundamental changes in administration occurred. Indoor relief was adopted as a permanent and primary response to poverty in Salem well before the Revolution and nearly three-quarters of a century before the Quincy Report of 1821.

The growing predominance of mercantile interests in Salem during the late 17th century became a source of considerable tension between residents of the town and its agricultural interior, known as "Salem Farms." After nearly a century of bitter conflict, Salem Farms was set-off as a separate district in 1752, and incorporated as the town of Danvers in 1757.<sup>12</sup> Officials in Danvers were confronted with the problem of poor relief soon after the town was established. In 1756 the selectmen voted "to sell up the poor . . . at publick vendue to such persons as will appear to keep them cheapest." A proposal to erect an almshouse was put before the town meeting two years later and defeated. From then on, in each year between 1761 and 1766, the residents of Danvers considered building an almshouse, and in each year the proposal was either defeated or dismissed.<sup>13</sup>

Both the proposal to build an almshouse and the town's refusal to do so are easy to explain. Danvers retained its character as an agricultural outpost

throughout the 18th century. The town's population increased by only 25 per cent between 1765 and 1800 (2,133 to 2,643), while in nearby Salem the population more than doubled during the same period (4,427 to 9,457). Although Danvers was not as populous or prosperous as Salem, it also was not subject to the social and economic dislocations of a thriving commercial seaport. A class of propertyless laborers had not developed in Danvers, for example, because poor and unskilled workers tended to settle in Salem where employment prospects were better.<sup>14</sup> Under these circumstances, most residents could easily maintain a subsistence livelihood and dependent poverty never reached crisis proportions. Danvers' officials were already familiar with indoor relief, since the poor of Salem had been supported in an almshouse from as early as 1719.<sup>15</sup> But prevailing social and economic conditions rendered such a solution superfluous. It was still cheaper to care for the poor on an outdoor basis, and the overseers were given discretionary power to do so in whatever manner they thought best.

In 1802 the question of building a poorhouse in Danvers was raised for the first time since 1766. This time, a committee was authorized to purchase a house, two barns, and fifteen acres of land.<sup>16</sup> If taken out of context, the decision to establish an almshouse appears to represent a significant break with past policies and practices. It was, in fact, a logical development in the town's administrative history. The primary rationale behind all poor relief arrangements was one of economy. Indoor relief had always been a possible alternative in Danvers, but it was not adopted until it offered a cheaper solution than outdoor assistance. Annual expenditures for poor relief prior to the purchase of the farm ranged between \$2000 and \$2500; subsequently costs were reduced to \$1500 per year.<sup>17</sup>

In terms of size and function, the Danvers almshouse bore little relation to the same institution in Salem. It was established to meet the needs of a homogeneous agricultural community in which the major causes of poverty were illness and advanced age. Although the physical dimensions of both the Salem and Danvers almshouses are unknown, they were clearly designed to deal with problems of a very different scale. The Salem almshouse had an average inmate population of about 120 at the time of the Revolution; by 1792 the number had increased to 150. The Danvers poorhouse contained an average of two dozen or fewer inmates during its first decade of operation.<sup>18</sup>

After a period of commercial depression following the Revolution, the pace of economic development in Salem began to accelerate. By 1800 Salem merchants operated over 200 trading vessels and monopolized the East India trade. With a population of over 9,000, Salem was the sixth largest city in the country, one of the nation's wealthiest communities per capita, and perhaps one of the most economically polarized. At the height of Salem's prosperity the almshouse had grown so overcrowded that the overseers found it necessary to rely on outdoor assistance with increased frequency. These and other conditions prompted the townsmen to vote to build a new almshouse in 1815. It was constructed of brick, contained

50,000 square feet of space, and could accommodate over 200 inmates, making it one of the largest social welfare institutions of any kind in the early 19th century.<sup>19</sup>

When the new almshouse was completed in 1816, it offered testimony not so much to the radical nature of social change, as to its essential continuity. The changes were more quantitative than qualitative in nature. The purposes of the institution were the same as always: to provide relief for the aged and disabled in the cheapest manner possible, and to provide a place where the idle and unemployed could be forced to labor. "Rules and Regulations" for the Salem almshouse published in 1816, 1826, and 1836 were virtually identical to the rules that had been adopted in 1749.<sup>20</sup>

In the years after 1815, Salem entered a period of economic decline and stagnation which lasted well into the 1840s.<sup>21</sup> From 1810 to 1840 the town experienced a significant decline in the rate of population growth. Danvers, on the other hand, witnessed a corresponding increase in population, as the town entered a period of economic expansion. During the first few decades of the 19th century, Danvers grew from a small agricultural village into a burgeoning manufacturing town. The basis of this expansion lay in the transformation of the shoemaking industry from a handicraft and custom basis to a mass production "putting out" system. By 1837, Danvers was the sixth largest shoe producing town in Massachusetts. The transition from an agricultural economy to one tied to large-scale manufacturing pursuits had important implications for the administration of poor relief. Much of the population increase in the period after 1840 was due to migrations from outlying areas of Massachusetts and New England, and to the steady influx of Irish immigrants.<sup>22</sup> Attracted to Danvers by employment prospects, a sizeable number of men found themselves unable to earn even a subsistence income. The overseers were soon confronted with problems of transiency, unemployment, and idleness on an unprecedented scale.<sup>23</sup>

Officials in Danvers responded in piecemeal fashion to the new demands created by a changing social structure. The enforcement of numerous rules and regulations had been unnecessary in the early days of the farm, but once it held large numbers of able-bodied men and culturally distinct immigrants, increased restriction became a necessity. The town voted to prohibit the use of "ardent spirits," except for medical purposes, in 1831. A year later, they instructed the overseers to enclose the almshouse and work-shops "with a good and sufficient fence" so the "tenants" could no longer "go to and from, the same without the knowledge and permission of the Overseers of the House." In addition, an increased number of able-bodied men living at the farm sparked a new emphasis on work relief. All inmates were to labor as directed by the overseers, no inmate was entitled to demand any compensation for his or her work, and "refractory or disorderly behavior" was "to be punished by confinement, for such term not exceeding six days."<sup>24</sup>

These changes made it obvious that the existing institutional facilities

were no longer equal to their task, so the town decided in 1843 to build a new almshouse. Plans for the new structure included a three story brick building "92 feet long and 38 feet wide, with a projection in front of 8 feet long from the middle part of the house, and forty feet in length." The town meeting of 1849 adopted a formal code of by-laws "for the government of the Danvers Alms House" which closely resembled the rules of the Salem establishment. Reinforcing regulations that had been adopted over the years, a host of new rules further restricted the range of acceptable behavior within the establishment: inmates were to be segregated by sex into different parts of the house; they were forbidden to beg alms of visitors, to sell their utensils, or to leave without being properly discharged. "All aggravated offenses" were to be punished by "solitary confinement in a cell with a fare of bread and water."<sup>25</sup>

On the surface, the administration of poor relief in Danvers had undergone a radical transformation by the middle of the 19th century. But when considered in relation to Salem, the changes appear less revolutionary, and a more complex picture begins to emerge. Both the quantitative and qualitative changes which occurred in Danvers during the 1840s had taken place in Salem nearly a century earlier. Given the geographic proximity of the two communities, it is obvious that the policies adopted in Salem always existed as possible alternatives for Danvers. Not until Danvers had reached a certain level of socio-economic development, however, were those alternatives either necessary or practical.

Like Danvers and Salem, Deerfield and Greenfield were settled in the 17th century. Deerfield, the oldest town in Franklin county, was settled in the 1660s and incorporated in 1682. Well into the 18th century Deerfield existed as the northern frontier town of Massachusetts. In 1753 the Green River section of Deerfield was set-off as a separate district, and subsequently incorporated as the town of Greenfield.<sup>26</sup> Because of their rural location, both towns experienced patterns of social and economic development very different from the coastal towns of Essex County. By the time Deerfield was settled, the rise of a merchant class in Salem had already produced a marked pattern of economic stratification. In the towns of Franklin County, on the other hand, there were few differences in living standards or life styles during the 18th century. Most residents were fulltime farmers engaged in production for household consumption. Both Deerfield and Greenfield remained small, homogeneous, self-sufficient communities into the first third of the 19th century.<sup>27</sup>

The conditions of scarcity and subsistence characteristic of frontier communities meant that there was little recognition of poverty as a social problem in Deerfield or Greenfield prior to the Revolutionary period. If individuals or families did need assistance, their needs were met on an *ad hoc* and informal basis without much "official" intervention. Although the selectmen of Deerfield were empowered to perform the duties of overseers of the poor in 1745, they did not regularly act in that capacity until the 1770s.<sup>28</sup> When the administration of poor relief did become an ongoing



concern, town officials responded by drawing on the traditional cultural mechanisms already seen in Danvers and Salem. Within that framework, factors of economy, convenience, and individual discretion had an important influence on the modes of treatment adopted.

One of the initial solutions to the problem of poor relief, in both Deerfield and Greenfield, was the almshouse alternative. The residents of Deerfield voted to build a work house in 1776, and directed that the house be thirty six feet in length, eighteen feet in width and one story in height. The house was not in use for very long; in 1789 and 1790 the question of building another work house was put before the town meeting and defeated. Ten years later, in 1800, a building was purchased for that purpose, and the overseers of the poor were delegated as "overseers of the work house." This house did not last very long either; in 1810 and again in 1814 officials considered enlarging the building or constructing a new one. When neither alternative was adopted, the overseers began to use the practice of boarding out on a regular basis.<sup>29</sup> A similar reliance on indoor relief was adopted by officials in Greenfield during the same period. The town records contain only a few scattered references to poor relief prior to the 19th century.<sup>30</sup> Overseers of the poor were elected for the first time in 1798. Not until 1808, however, did the town begin to make a specific annual appropriation for the support of the poor. In the following year the overseers purchased a poor house which remained in use for over two decades.<sup>31</sup>

Although Deerfield and Greenfield continued to have similar social and economic structures during the early 19th century, poor relief policies in the two communities underwent a curious divergence after 1820. For a brief period in 1818 and 1819, the selectmen of Greenfield considered selling the town poorhouse and adopting some other method of relief. Instead, they repaired the house and began to place greater emphasis on its use.<sup>32</sup> Three years later, in 1822, the residents of Greenfield voted that the existing poorhouse be considered a "work house for the employment of idle persons who neglect and refuse to exercise any lawful business to support themselves and families and for the poor and indigent who want means to employ themselves." It was also "voted that the overseers of the poor place all persons who are paupers, in the poor house, unless they can be supported elsewhere as cheap."<sup>33</sup> The same policy was still in force ten years later. In response to a legislative inquiry, the overseers of Greenfield reported, "It is a standing rule to aid none, except at the house, but in extraordinary cases, as of mental derangement; and, when a few families may need few and small supplies for their comfort."<sup>34</sup>

At the same time that officials in Greenfield committed themselves to a policy of indoor relief, the inhabitants of Deerfield did just the opposite. Proposals to repair and enlarge the poorhouse which the town had purchased at the turn of the century were defeated in 1822. Instead, the town entered into a contract with John Wilson to support all of the town poor, for a term of ten years, for the sum of \$450 per year. At the expiration

of Wilson's contract, similar arrangements were made with other individuals.<sup>35</sup>

It is not completely obvious why these two communities adopted the social policies they did. Authorities in Greenfield seemed more concerned with problems of idleness and unemployment than their neighbors were. But the reality of the situation belied their rhetoric. The so-called work house in Greenfield was a small one story building of four rooms, and a garret running the length of the house. When the overseers described the establishment to the state legislative committee in 1832, they reported that two of the female inmates were capable of a day's work, and none of the others could perform any labor.<sup>36</sup> Considerations of economy do not explain the differences either. The annual cost of poor relief in Deerfield during this period was fixed at \$450; in Greenfield annual expenditures were about \$400.<sup>37</sup> Both the contract method and the almshouse were practical and economical alternatives.

Expansion of the railroad network in the two decades prior to the Civil War had important consequences for the towns of western Massachusetts. They became completely embedded in a market economy, and a gradual in-migration of Irish laborers transformed the ethnic composition of the population.<sup>38</sup> Although a majority of people in Franklin County were employed as farmers or farm laborers prior to the Civil War, important manufacturing enterprises were established in both Deerfield and Greenfield by mid-century. The first cutlery factory in the United States was opened in Deerfield in 1834; in 1855 it employed 300 persons and produced \$250,000 worth of cutlery. The largest industry in Greenfield was a woolen mill which employed 120 men and women. These same transformations occurred throughout the state but on a clearly different scale in coastal and rural communities.<sup>39</sup> The economic structures of Deerfield and Greenfield, by the middle of the century, resembled that of Danvers during the 1820s, and dependent poverty was not a serious problem. Social welfare institutions in both towns remained more malleable, and continued to include a mixture of indoor and outdoor relief.

The overseers of Deerfield continued to find the contract method a convenient form of aid during the 1830s and 1840s. They made a five year contract with Asa Edwards, in 1844, to support the town poor for \$475 per year. Three years later, however, Edwards asked to be released from the remainder of his contract. The town agreed to his request, began to board the poor out to individual families, and immediately voted to purchase a poor farm.<sup>40</sup> A suitable farm was not found until 1850, and even then the overseers continued to place greater reliance on outdoor assistance. Of 41 persons aided in 1851, only 4 were supported at the farm, "the remainder with their relatives and friends by contract—upon the best terms that could be made."<sup>41</sup> This mixed pattern continued until 1866 when the poor farm was sold once again.

Twenty years after officials in Greenfield had decided to aid none except

at the poorhouse, the town reverted to a policy of outdoor relief. In 1842, the selectmen were requested to look into the possibility of selling the house and purchasing a new one. They submitted a report to the town in which the existing establishment was described as "small, old, cold & fast going to final decay," and recommended that a new house be built. The report was not accepted, and another committee recommended that the town make a contract "for the support of the poor for a term of years." Instead of making an agreement with one individual, however, the overseers were instructed to have "the poor supported in private families at their discretion."<sup>42</sup> Proponents of the poor farm solution were not satisfied with this arrangement and continued to press their point of view until a farm was purchased in 1850. Over the next few years, the selectmen reported that "very little assistance [was] rendered to paupers outside of the Alms house" and that they had no reason to change their opinion as to the economy of this method.<sup>43</sup> The Greenfield poor farm continued in operation throughout the remainder of the 19th century.

This analysis of social welfare policies during the 18th and 19th centuries demonstrates that the prevailing historical interpretation is in need of revision and clarification. The transition to indoor relief attributed by historians to 19th century ideologies about the nature and causes of poverty did not occur uniformly in time or over space. The development of a dynamic economy and a highly stratified social structure in Salem, at an early period in the town's history, was an important factor in the decision to rely on indoor assistance, almost exclusively, by the middle of the 18th century. The timing of developments in Danvers appears to fit the prevailing interpretation better than those in any of the other three towns. But the changes which occurred in Danvers were not the result of a coherent social policy. They represented the gradual transformation of traditional forms to meet the needs of a community undergoing rapid social and economic development. In both Deerfield and Greenfield, modes of treatment vacillated between outdoor and indoor relief during the period between the Revolution and the Civil War. Their economies were such that the poorhouses they did establish never fulfilled the same functions as those in Danvers and Salem, in either a quantitative or a qualitative way. In each of the towns under consideration, the almshouse was seen as a viable alternative throughout the 18th century as well as the 19th. At no time did any of the towns experiment with policies which went beyond the traditional cultural vocabulary of poor relief. The history of public welfare administration in Massachusetts is one of continuity, persistence, and gradual modification, not one of radical or revolutionary change.

## NOTES

1. Robert H. Bremner, "The State of Social Welfare History," in Herbert Bass (ed.), *The State of American History*, (Chicago, 1970), pp. 89-98. The first major study of poverty in America written by an historian was Robert H. Bremner, *From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States*, (New York, 1956).
2. A few important examples of historical studies of poverty are: Robert H. Bremner, *American Philanthropy*, (Chicago, 1960); Blanche D. Coll, *Perspectives in Public Welfare: A History*, (Washington, D.C., 1969); Douglas L. Jones, "The Strolling Poor: Transiency in Eighteenth Century Massachusetts," *Journal of Social History*, 8 (Spring, 1975) 28-54; Benjamin J. Klebaner, "Pauper Auctions: the 'New England Method' of Public Poor Relief," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 91 (1955) 195-210.
3. Robert Bremner, for example, began his study with the 1830s because of an assumption that only then did poverty begin to emerge as an important social issue. Similarly, in *Charity and Correction in New Jersey* (1967), James Leiby dealt with the history of public welfare from the colonial period to 1860 in only one chapter.
4. The best example of this perspective is Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, (1971).
5. For a useful discussion of different methodological and conceptual approaches to historical time see Robert F. Berkhofer, *A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis*, (New York, 1969), chapters 10 and 11.
6. For a good discussion of this problem see Edward M. Cook, Jr., "Geography and History: Spatial Approaches to Early American History," *Historical Methods Newsletter*, 13 (Winter, 1980) 19-28.
7. Excellent descriptions and illustrations of each of these methods can be found in Benjamin J. Klebaner, "Public Poor Relief in America, 1790-1860," Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1951, printed by Arno Press, New York, 1976. See also: Klebaner, "Pauper Auctions," and Elizabeth Wisner, "The Puritan Background of the New England Poor Laws," *Social Service Review*, 19 (1945) 381-390.
8. Donald W. Koch, "Income Distribution and Political Structure in Seventeenth-Century Salem, Massachusetts," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 1969 (105) p. 59; Richard P. Gildrie, "Salem Society and Politics in the 1680s," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 114 (1978) pp. 187, 206.
9. Salem Town Records: December 6, 1698; March 17, 1707; January 21, 1709; March 9, 1719. (Essex Institute, Salem, Mass., ms.)
10. Salem Town Records, January 1, 1776.
11. Salem Town Records: May 10, August 7, November 17, 1749; March 12, 1750.
12. For a discussion of the social and economic differences between Salem Village and the Town of Salem see Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), esp. pp. 39-45, 80-103. J.W. Hanson, *History of the Town of Danvers, From Its Early Settlement to the Year 1848*, (Danvers, 1848), pp. 19, 51-52.
13. Selectmens Records of the Town Meetings of Danvers (hereafter, Danvers Town Records): August 6, September 6, 1756; February 27, 1758; May 4, 12, 1761; March 2, 1762; February 28, March 14, 1763; February 29, March 12, 1764; May 6, May 22,

- 1765; February 27, 1766; (Danvers Archival Center, Danvers, Mass., ms.; hereafter DAC).
14. For a general discussion of Salem in 1800 see Robert Doherty, *Society and Power: Five New England Towns, 1800-1860*, (Amherst, 1977), pp. 12-18.
  15. Josiah Quincy, *Report of the Committee on the Pauper Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, (Boston, 1821), p. 7.
  16. Danvers Town Records: October 18, November 1, 1802. "Overseers Report of April 4, 1803," Overseers Records, (ms., DAC).
  17. "Letter from the Overseers of Danvers to the Overseers of Hallowell," Overseers Correspondence, 1821, (ms., DAC).
  18. Salem Town Records, January 1, 1776; Anne Farnam, "Uncle Venner's Farm: Refuge of Workhouse for Salem's Poor?," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 109 (1973) p. 70; Danvers Almshouse Register, 1807-1841, (ms., Public Welfare Office, Peabody, Mass.).
  19. Morris, "Wealth Distribution in Salem, Massachusetts, 1759-1799: The Impact of the Revolution and Independence," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 114 (1978) p. 89; Farnam, "Uncle Venner's Farm," pp. 68-72. Anne Farnam notes that the almshouse built in 1815 was designed on a level with the one in Boston, a city twice the size of Salem.
  20. "Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Alms-House in Salem," 1816 and 1826, (Broadside); "Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Alms-House Establishment. 1837," (Salem City Documents, 1838); "Rules and Orders for the Management of the Work House, 1749," (ms. Salem Public Welfare Dept. Records, v. 14; Essex Institute).
  21. Doherty, *Society and Power*, pp. 20-22, 25-29.
  22. The development of the shoe industry in Danvers is covered in Alan Melchior, "Tradition and Innovation, Nineteenth Century Industrialization in the Massachusetts Town," unpublished paper, (Brandeis University, 1977), pp. 25-26, 29-30, 48-49; Blanche Evans Hazard, *The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts Before 1875*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1921), p. 74; Barbara M. Solomon, "The Growth of Population in Essex County," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 95 (1959) 82-103.
  23. Louis Piccarello, "Social Structure and Public Welfare Policy in Danvers, Massachusetts: 1750-1850," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Social Science History Association, 1980.
  24. Danvers Town Records, June 8, 1831 and March 5, 1832; "Overseers Report and Accounts," March 3, 1828, Overseers Records. "Overseers Report," March, 1834, in Danvers Town Records, March 28, 1834. "Report of the State of the Poor & c., April 16, 1840," in Danvers Town Records, April 20, 1840.
  25. Danvers Town Records: February 24, March 6, 1843; "Committee Report on the Purchase of a New Almshouse," in Danvers Towns Records, May 26, 1843. Danvers Town Records, August 28, 1849.
  26. John H. Lockwood (ed.), *Western Massachusetts: A History, 1636-1925* (New York, 1926), vol. 2, pp. 654-655, 711-717.

27. William August Reader, "Yankees, Immigrants, and Social Climbers: A Study of Social Mobility in Greenfield, Massachusetts, 1850-1970," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1973, pp. 37-51.
28. Deerfield Town Records, May 19, 1745, (microfilm, Henry N. Flynt Library, Deerfield, Mass.)
29. Deerfield Town Records: October 7, 1776; December 2, 7, 1789; April 5, 1790; April 7, August 4, 1800; November 19, December 3, 1810; May 11, 20, 1814.
30. In 1773, for example, thanks was given to Mr. Newton for his gift of \$20 to the poor of Greenfield and in 1793 Greenfield was party to a legal suit with the town of Shelburne over the inhabitancy of "certain poor persons." Greenfield Town Records: December 6, 1773; February 18, March 4, 1793; October 27, November 7, 1796; (ms., Town Clerk's Office, Greenfield, Mass.).
31. Greenfield Town Records: March, 1798; December 5, 1808; April 3, 1809.
32. Greenfield Town Records: April 6, May 4, 1818.
33. Greenfield Town Records: March 4, 1822; April 1, 1822.
34. "Report of the Commissioners Appointed by the House of Representatives, February 29, 1832, on the Subject of the Pauper System of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," House Document No. 12, 1835 (Reprinted from the House Documents of 1832), p. 82.
35. Deerfield Town Records: February 23, April 2, May 7, 20, 1822; July 9, 1832; April 1, 1833; March 5, 1838; April 5, 1841; May 27, 1844; March 1, 1847. "Report on the Subject of the Pauper System of Mass.," 1832 (1835), pp. 95-96.
36. "Report on the Subject of the Pauper System of Mass.," 1832 (1835), p. 82.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96, 82. Greenfield, Overseers of the Poor Cash Book, 1818-1841, (ms., Town Hall, Greenfield, Mass.).
38. Reader, "Yankees, Immigrants, and Social Climbers," pp. 70-72.
39. The total value of manufactured goods in 1855 was nearly \$5 million in Salem, over \$2½ million in Danvers, and less than \$½ million in Deerfield and Greenfield. Mass., Secretary of the Commonwealth, *Statistical Information Relating to Certain Branches of Industry in Massachusetts, 1855*, (Boston, 1856), pp. 120-122, 159-162, 181-182, 185-187.
40. Deerfield Town Records: May 27, 1844; March 1, 2, 1847.
41. Deerfield Town Records: April 15, 1850; March 3, 1851.
42. Greenfield Town Records: February 23, 1842; April 4, 1843; March, 1844; April 7, 21, 1845. Overseers Records, "Poor House Report," November 14, 1842; "Overseers Report, 1843"; (ms., Greenfield, Town Hall).
43. Overseers of the Poor of Greenfield, "Poor Farm Report," March 4, 1850. Greenfield, *Selectmen's Reports: 1852-53*, p. 6; 1859-60, pp. 4-5.