



Dana (Mass.) Collection

1801-1938

21 vols. (digitized), 1 folder (0.1 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 012 bd



Collection overview

Situated in the northeastern reaches of the Swift River Valley in western Massachusetts, Dana was one of four towns inundated in the 1930s to create the Quabbin Reservoir. Rural and relatively sparsely populated, Dana's economy centered on agriculture, leavened with manufacturing wood products and soapstone quarrying.

The Dana Collections include a comprehensive records of town meetings from incorporation through disincorporation (1801-1938), plus rich records for the Congregational Church and its affiliate organizations, the Ladies Aid Society, the Orthodox Congregational Society, and the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. Most of the materials listed in this finding aid are held at the [Swift River Valley Historical Society](#) in New Salem, Mass., and were part of a cooperative digitization project centered on the records of the Quabbin towns.

See similar SCUA collections:

[Civic organizations](#)

[Massachusetts \(West\)](#)

[Politics and governance](#)

[Quabbin](#)

[Religion](#)

Background on Dana, Mass.

Incorporated from parts of Greenwich, Hardwick, and Petersham in 1801, the town of Dana, Massachusetts, was situated in the northeastern reaches of the Swift River Valley. A fairly sparsely populated town (695 residents in 1890), Dana benefited from a relative abundance of flat and arable land that resulted in an economy centered on farming and pasturage, but the availability of water from the Swift River promoted the development of manufactures as well. In addition to the cottage industry of weaving palm-leaf hats, particularly in North Dana, the town supported factories that produced pianos, wood products (the Swift River Box Company), sawmills, gristmills, and textiles. Quarrying of granite and especially soapstone added to the employment.

Like its neighbors in the Swift River Valley (Dana, Enfield, and Prescott), Dana's fortunes dimmed considerably after the 1890s. Confronted with a critical demand for water in the Boston metropolitan region in 1895, the Commonwealth authorized the new Metropolitan Water District to seek new supplies in the western parts of the state. Construction of the Wachusett Reservoir along the Nashua River (1897-1908) bought time, but ultimately failed to meet projected demand, and by 1922, the MWD officially signaled its intention of damming the Swift River Valley, signifying an end to habitation there. All residents were ordered removed

from the valley, with homes, farms, and places of business systematically destroyed, the land cleared, and even the graves removed.

Work on the Quabbin Reservoir began four years later with construction of the Ware River Diversion, a tunnel connecting the Wachusett Reservoir with the Ware River, followed in 1936 by construction of the Goodnough Dike and Windsor Dam. Dana was officially disincorporated by the state in 1938, with the above-water portions annexed to nearby Hardwick, New Salem, Petersham, and Ware. On Aug. 14, 1939, the reservoir began to fill.

Scope of collection

The Dana Collections include a comprehensive records of town meetings from incorporation through disincorporation (1801-1938), plus rich records for the Congregational Church and its affiliate organizations, the Ladies Aid Society, the Orthodox Congregational Society, and the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. Most of the materials listed in this finding aid are held at the **Swift River Valley Historical Society** in New Salem, Mass., and were part of a cooperative digitization project centered on the records of the Quabbin towns.

Inventory

Dana (Mass. : Town)

1801-1938

7 vols

Contents:

Includes town meeting minutes, elections, perambulations, etc.

Location of originals:

Originals held by the **Swift River Valley Historical Society**, New Salem, Mass.

Dana (Mass. : Town), v. 1

1801-1824

Dana (Mass. : Town), v. 2

1824-1845

Dana (Mass. : Town), v. 3

1845-1872

Dana (Mass. : Town), v. 4

1873-1905

Dana (Mass. : Town), v. 5

1898-1912

Dana (Mass. : Town), v. 6

1905-1936

Dana (Mass. : Town), v. 7

1936-1938

Town Reports (printed)

1869-1937

Official Reports of the Town of Dana, Mass.

1869-1907

Official Reports of the Town of Dana, Mass.

1908-1921

Official Reports of the Town of Dana, Mass.

1917-1929

Official Reports of the Town of Dana, Mass.

1930-1937

Dana (Mass. : Town). Overseers of the Poor

1864-1883

2 vols

Location of originals:

Originals held by the **Swift River Valley Historical Society**, New Salem, Mass.

Dana (Mass. : Town). Overseers of the Poor, v. 1

1864-1874

Contents:

Includes financial records and letters written and received concerning persons who required financial support

Dana (Mass. : Town). Overseers of the Poor, v. 2

1875-1883

Ladies' Aid Society (Dana, Mass.)

1849-1935

5 vols

Contents:

Includes constitutions and bylaws, lists of members, records of meetings, financial records. North Dana Ladies braiding Circle was formed in 1849 and the Ladies Aid Society in 1856. Other names are Ladies' Aid Society of Dana Congregational Church and Community (1924; 1925); Ladies' Aid Society of the Dana Orthodox Congregational Church and Community (1926-1927); Ladies Aid Society and Sewing Club of the Orthodox Congregational Church of Dana, Mass. (1926) Orthodox Congregational Church and Community (1926-1927); Ladies Aid Society and Sewing Club of the Orthodox Congregational Church of Dana, Mass. (1926).

Location of originals:

Originals held by the **Swift River Valley Historical Society**, New Salem, Mass.

Ladies' Aid Society, v. 1

1849-1877

Ladies' Aid Society, v. 2

1877-1898

Ladies' Aid Society, v. 3

1924-1925

Ladies' Aid Society, v. 4

1926

Ladies' Aid Society, v. 5

1927-1935

Orthodox Congregational Society (Dana, Mass.)

1852-1938

2 vols

Contents:

Includes minutes of meetings, lists of members, and financial records. The Orthodox Congregational Society was established in Dana, Mass. on July 12, 1852.

Location of originals:

Originals held by the **Swift River Valley Historical Society**, New Salem, Mass.

Orthodox Congregational Society, v. 1

1852-1897

Orthodox Congregational Society, v. 2

1897-1938

Records of the Orthodox Congregational Church, at Dana Centre, 1852-1938

1852-1938

Contents:

Includes minutes of meetings, lists of members, and financial records. The Orthodox Congregational Church at Dana Centre, a successor to the Storrsville church, was formed on September 28, 1852.

First Universalist Church (North Dana, Mass.) Vesper Service Programs

1934-1936

1 folder

Contents:

Programs for the Monson-Hale Memorial Vespers, musical services held at the First Universalist Church in North Dana, Massachusetts, since 1929. Also included is a news clipping indicating the history of the North Dana Vespers.

Vital Records of Dana, Massachusetts, to the year 1850, ed. by Thomas W. Baldwin. Boston: Burr Printing Co.

1925

Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor (Dana, Mass.)

1892-1917

4 vols

Contents:

Includes: Dana Y.P.S.C.E. Secretary's book (1892-1904), Dana Y.P.S.C.E. Treasurer's book (1898-1914), Dana Y.P.S.C.E. (1904-1907), Dana Christian Endeavor Society 1911 (1911-1917)

Location of originals:

Originals held by the **Swift River Valley Historical Society**, New Salem, Mass.

Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. Secretary

1892-1904

Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor

1904-1907

Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor

1911-1917

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of Donald Howe, 1960; digital content made possible through a collaboration with the [Swift River Valley Historical Society](#).

Location of Originals

This finding aid includes materials digitized in partnership with the [Swift River Valley Historical Society](#) in 2014, where the originals remain.

Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, Ken Fones-Wolf, Linda Seidman, and others, 1984-2014.

Related Material

Additional material relating to the history of the four Quabbin towns is indexed in SCUA's online catalog, [UMarmot](#), and includes the following of note:

[Howe Family Collection](#)
[Enfield Collection](#)
[Greenwich Collection](#)
[Prescott Collection](#)

The [Swift River Valley Historical Society](#) contains other records for the Quabbin towns that have not been digitized. Among these include photographs of residents of the town and materials relating to town finances and taxation.

Digitized content

The official records of Dana have been largely digitized and are available both through the [Internet Archive](#) and [Credo](#).

Language:

English

Copyright and Use ([More information](#))

Cite as: Dana (Mass.) Collections (MS 012 bd). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Search terms

Subjects

Congregational churches--Massachusetts--Dana--History
Dana (Mass. : Town)
Dana (Mass. : Town). Overseers of the Poor
Dana (Mass.)--Appropriations and expenditures
Dana (Mass.)--History
Dana (Mass.)--History--19th century
Dana (Mass.)--Politics and government--19th century
Dana (Mass.)--Religious life and customs
Dana (Mass.)--Social conditions--19th century
Dana (Mass.)--Social life and customs--20th century
Poor--Massachusetts--Dana
Quabbin Reservoir Region (Mass.)--History
Quabbin Reservoir Region (Mass.)--Social life and customs--20th century
Quabbin Reservoir Region (Mass.)--Surveys
Women--Massachusetts--Dana
Women--Societies and clubs

Contributors

Dana (Mass.) [[main entry](#)]
Ladies' Aid Society (Dana, Mass.)
Orthodox Congregational Church (Dana, Mass.)
Young Peoples Society of Christian Endeavor
First Universalist Church (North Dana, Mass.)

Genres and formats

Church records.

Link to similar SCUA collections

[Civic organizations](#)
[Massachusetts \(West\)](#)
[Politics and governance](#)
[Quabbin](#)
[Religion](#)