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The Family of Capt. Samuel Haskell, Mariner

Richard E. Haskell



Headstones of Samuel and Peggy Haskell, Central Cemetery, Beverly, MA

SAMUEL⁶ HASKELL, (**NATHANIEL⁵**, **BENJAMIN⁴**, **ROBERT³**, **WILLIAM²**, **MARK¹**) was born in Beverly, Massachusetts on June 15, 1779, in the middle of the Revolutionary War, six months after the British captured Savannah, Georgia. That launched their Southern Campaign, which ended over two years later with the surrender of General Cornwallis at Yorktown. Samuel's father, **Nathaniel Haskell**, was six years old when his father, **Benjamin Haskell**, died in 1746, and he was brought up by his grandfather, **Robert Haskell**, in the Haskell homestead at 680 Hale Street in Beverly.

Samuel was the eighth of ten children of **Nathaniel Haskell** and his wife, **Elizabeth Edwards**. Samuel's twin brother, **Joseph**, died as a four-month-old infant. An older sister, **Lydia**, had died at the age of five months in February 1773, and a

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younger sister, **Sophia**, died shortly after birth in May 1791. In 1800, Samuel's 23-year-old brother, **Daniel**, was lost at sea. This did not deter Samuel from following a life at sea.

By the age of 21, Samuel had most likely served as a mate on several ship voyages, and he was a mate on the Schooner *Hawk* that sailed from Beverly to Bilbao, Spain on 28 January 1801 under the command of **Captain Jeremiah Lovett**. Another mate on that voyage was Jeremiah's brother, **John Lovett**. Their cousin, **Josiah Lovett**, was also a ship master, who had sailed the schooner *Swallow* each winter, except one, between 1754 and 1765 from Beverly to Virginia or Maryland. He would typically leave in late November or early December and return in late February or March after a three- or four-month voyage. **Josiah Lovett's** daughter, **Lucy Lovett**, was born on 1 April 1756. Lucy married **Capt. John Thissell**, another sea merchant, on 27 August 1772. Their daughter, **Peggy Thissell**, was born on 18 March 1785. Peggy was eleven years old when her father, **Capt. John Thissell**, was lost at sea on 4 January 1797, and she was fifteen when **Samuel Haskell** sailed on the Schooner *Hawk* to Bilbao in January 1801.

Samuel returned from Bilbao and collected his wages of \$73.41 on 8 June 1801. **Peggy Thissell** had turned sixteen and Samuel most likely had known her from an early age. However, he was making plans to be the master of his own ship, and records show that he was master of the Schooner *Hawk*, which left Beverly for Bilbao, Spain with a cargo of fish in mid-February 1802.

Samuel arrived in Bilbao in mid-April with his cargo of fish and sailed from Bilbao around the first of May, arriving back in Beverly on 5 June 1802. Ten days later, Samuel turned twenty-three and had a few months to court seventeen-year-old **Peggy Thissell** before sailing the schooner *Nancy* from Salem to Baltimore in early December and then on to Figueira, Portugal, not returning to Salem until 2 June 1803. Two months later, on 7 August 1803, **Samuel Haskell**, age twenty-four, married eighteen-year-old **Peggy Thissell**.

In 1805, Samuel became co-owner, with **William Gray**, of the 97 tons schooner *Two Brothers*, registering it in Beverly on 10 December 1805 and sailing it as master to Bilbao later that month. Samuel was most likely back in Beverly in time for the birth of their first child, a daughter, **Mary Ann**, born on 12 July 1806. A second daughter, **Augusta**, was born on 16 November 1807. The *Two Brothers* sailed on regular two-month trips to the Caribbean and was sold in May 1809.

William Gray was a prominent Salem merchant who owned many ships. One of his ships, the 310 tons *Lucia* was registered on 13 June 1810 and shortly thereafter it sailed out of Boston to St. Petersburg, Russia, with **Samuel Haskell** as master. Two months earlier, on 3 April 1810, Samuel's third daughter, **Elizabeth**, was born. The trip to St. Petersburg took Samuel across the top of

Scotland between the Orkney and Shetland Islands into the North Sea, and then between Denmark and Sweden into the Baltic Sea. Samuel arrived in St. Petersburg in mid-August, probably stopping in Denmark on the way. He left St. Petersburg on 29 September 1810 and after two stops in Sweden arrived back in Boston on 6 December 1810. Peggy, who had been attending three young daughters under the age of five, was undoubtedly happy to see him after a nearly six-month absence.

Less than six months later, toward the end of May 1811, Samuel set sail again on the ship *Lucia* for a second trip to St. Petersburg. When he hadn't come home by the end of the year, Peggy must have been quite concerned. Finally, on 5 February 1812 he arrived back in Salem and was able to explain to Peggy what had caused his delay and how lucky he was to have made it home.

The trip over was uneventful, taking only 27 days to reach Helsingor, Denmark. By September 3rd, he was in Kronstadt, Russia, a town on Kotlin Island, just west of St. Petersburg. After conducting business in St. Petersburg, he returned to Kronstadt and stayed until October 5th.

The Napoleonic Wars had been going on for nearly a decade, and the British Royal Navy had destroyed much of the Dano-Norwegian Navy in two Battles of Copenhagen, the first in 1801 and the second in 1807, after which Danish Privateers began going after British merchant ships. As a result, British Naval ships would escort large convoys of merchant ships through the strait between Denmark and Sweden, going through the Danish Great Belt, connecting the North Sea to the Baltic Sea, from Gothenburg on the west coast of Sweden to Hana Bay on the southeast side of Sweden.

When Samuel left Kronstadt on October 5th, he sailed to Matvik, Sweden on Hana Bay where he joined a convoy of 129 merchant ships being escorted by a group of Royal Navy ships including *HMS Victory* and *HMS St George*. On November 1st, the convoy began leaving Hana Bay, but a storm forced the convoy to turn around. They left Hana Bay again on November 9th and passed Rugen, Germany heading west. On November 12th, the *HMS Cressy* left Rostock, Germany and joined the convoy east of Fehmarn Island. A heavy storm forced the ships to anchor at Rodsand, a sandy reef south of Nysted, Denmark, where many of the merchant ships were damaged and twelve were lost completely. On November 15th, *St George* collided with another ship and went aground at Rodsand, losing all masts and its rudder. The next day it was freed from the reef, and timber from *Cressy* was used for a make-shift rudder. *Cressy* then towed *St George* when the convoy left Rodsand on November 21st, and arrived at Vinga Island, just west of Gothenburg, Sweden on December 2nd, one day after the rest of the convoy. Further repairs were made on *St George*, leading **Rear Admiral Reynolds** and *St George's* captain, **Daniel Oliver Guion**, to believe that *St George* could make the journey across the North Sea.

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Around December 18th, Samuel's ship, *Lucia*, was one of about 150 merchant ships leaving Vinga in three separate convoys sailing northwest into the strait between Denmark and Norway on their way to the North Sea. Two of the convoys, one including *St George*, planned to turn south toward London and the English Channel. The third convoy, including Samuel's *Lucia*, continued northwest toward the north of Scotland through heavy winds, passing Aberdeen on December 26th, and sailing past Fair Island between the Orkney and Shetland Islands on December 30th.

Samuel finally arrived back in Salem on 5 February 1812. Only later, would he learn that *HMS St George* and *HMS Defence* were wrecked near the village of Thorsminde on the west coast of Denmark with only about a dozen survivors. The nearly 1,400 drowned bodies that washed on the beach south of Thorsminde included **Admiral Reynolds** and **Captain Guion**. It would turn out to be the greatest loss of lives for the Royal Navy, and the sand dunes of Thorsminde would become known as "Dead Men's Dunes."

The War of 1812 seems to have kept Samuel at home during the war years from June 1812 to February 1815. During that time, a son, **Samuel Haskell**, was born on 24 August 1814. Then on 2 June 1815, his oldest daughter, **Mary Ann**, died of epilepsy. Just three weeks later, on 20 June 1815, **William Gray** registered his 407 tons ship, *Rubicon*, and shortly thereafter, Samuel, as master, sailed the *Rubicon* out of Boston Harbor on its way to St. Petersburg. He was in St. Petersburg by August 8th, after a stop in Helsingor, Denmark. By the end of August, he was at Kronstadt, leaving there about a month later and arriving back in Massachusetts around November 11th. This trip was less eventful and more normal than his last trip to St. Petersburg in 1811. However, his next trip to St. Petersburg, planned to begin four months later, would be anything but normal.

On 18 March 1816, Samuel set sail again on the *Rubicon*, headed to St. Petersburg. Ten days later, while sailing about ten o'clock at night east of the Grand Bank off Newfoundland, the *Rubicon* struck a very small iceberg, but one large enough to break off the front of the ship and break and loosen planks and vertical timbers on the starboard side. Water was pouring in the front, and for the pumps to keep up with the leak, thereby allowing the bow to rise, it was necessary to jettison the bow anchor, a cannon, and about 40 tons of cargo, including oil, wine, sugar, rice, and bark.

After the crew stabilized the ship, Samuel headed back to Boston. On April 2nd, the ship *Ann Maria*, heading to New York from Liverpool appeared, and its captain, **Isaac Waite**, came aboard and offered help. The two ships sailed together for four days, after which another of **William Gray's** ships, *Pactolus*, coming from Lisbon, escorted the *Rubicon* the rest of the way to Boston, where it arrived on April 16th. One of the newspapers reported that, "**Capt. Haskell** gives great credit to his officers and

crew for their great activity and exertions on the occasion, when it was thought nothing could prevent the ship from going down. Perseverance and great coolness affected the preservation of the ship, most of the cargo and their lives."

About a month later, the *Rubicon* had been repaired, and Samuel sailed again to St. Petersburg, arriving there by June 26th, and then sailing over to Kronstadt where they stayed until October 10th. Samuel arrived back in Boston on 13 December 1816 with various goods including iron, hemp, sail cloth, linen cloth, quills, and feathers. When he arrived home, Samuel was greeted by his second son, **Joseph Thissell Haskell**, who had been born on 15 September 1816 while Samuel was in Kronstadt. However, Samuel's father, **Nathaniel Haskell**, had died on 13 July 1816 at the age of 76.

The following spring, around 9 April 1817, Samuel again sailed the *Rubicon* to St. Petersburg and Kronstadt, sailing back on July 15th. After a stop in Helsingor, Denmark, Samuel was back in Boston on September 4th, where he learned the tragic news that his older son, **Samuel**, had died on 16 June 1817 at the age of two years, nine months. Samuel's mother, **Elizabeth (Edwards) Haskell**, had also died on 22 August 1817 at the age of 71. Whether or not these were the reasons, Samuel never went to sea again, retiring as a ship master at the age of 38.

The following summer, on 13 July 1818, **Peggy** gave birth to a third son, whom they also named **Samuel**. This Samuel would live to be seventy-three, and his grandson, **Amory Lawrence Haskell**, would become founder, president and board chairman of Monmouth Park Racetrack in Oceanport, New Jersey, where the annual *Haskell Invitational* is held to this day.

On 5 March 1820, a fourth son, **John Thissell Haskell**, was born, but he died on 30 August 1821. Samuel and Peggy's last child, a daughter, was born on 25 October 1822, and was named **Mary Ann**, the same name as their first-born, who had died at the age of eight.

Samuel was already the owner of the 200 tons brig, *William*, when his brother, **Nathaniel**, sailed it as master to Martinique in November 1816. Other masters sailed Samuel's *William* between 1817 and 1822, bringing back goods that Samuel sold. In his role as a merchant, Samuel had interests in goods from Russia on other ships, including the brig *St. Clair* in 1818, and the ship *Bramin* in



Samuel Haskell was one of six owners of the Brig *Rajah*

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1819. Samuel was one of six owners of *Rajah*, a 249 tons brig, which was registered on 16 September 1822.

Samuel was active in his community, replacing selectmen in 1825 and 1827. He also served on the South District School Committee in 1826, 1828, and 1829.

On 22 August 1827, Samuel's wife, **Peggy (Thissell) Haskell**, died at the age of 42. Samuel was left with five living children: **Augusta**, age 19, **Elizabeth**, age 17, **Joseph Thissell**, age 10, **Samuel**, age 7, and **Mary Ann**, age 4. The following year, on December 24, 1828, Samuel married **Elizabeth Ober**, his second cousin, one time removed. Elizabeth's first husband, **Isaac Ober**, her first cousin, had died the previous March, leaving her with a two-year-old daughter, **Elizabeth A.** A month before Samuel's marriage to **Elizabeth Ober**, on 22 November 1828, his oldest daughter, **Augusta**, now 21, had married **Benjamin Thorndike Ober**, a second cousin to her new stepmother.

Only eight months after his marriage to **Elizabeth Ober**, on 28 August 1829, **Samuel Haskell** died at the age of fifty. His obituary in a local newspaper read,

Capt. Haskell was one of our most active and enterprising merchants; and, as such, was of great importance to the town of Beverly. He was always remarkable for decision of character and inflexible perseverance. Whatever he undertook he followed up to its completion, neither turned aside by difficulties, nor disheartened by ill success. He was a warm friend of general education, and for many years has devoted much of his time to the improvement of the common schools in Beverly. The loss of such a man leaves a vacant place in our society not easily or soon to be supplied.

On 13 May 1834, Samuel's daughter, **Elizabeth**, at age 24, married 46-year-old **Capt. Ezra Ellingwood**, who had spent his life as a ship master and owner. Six days after her marriage, Elizabeth's grandmother, **Lucy (Lovett) Thissell** died, and Ezra was appointed guardian of Elizabeth's under-age siblings, **Joseph, John, and Mary Ann**, to oversee their portion of Lucy's estate.

Ezra probably knew Elizabeth all her life, having been a 20-year-old crewman on Samuel's schooner *Two Brothers* on a trip to the West Indies in October 1807, over two years before Elizabeth was born. Ezra and Elizabeth had three sons, **Edward Payson, Charles Henry, and Lyman Haskell**. On 10 June 1844, **Elizabeth** died of tuberculosis at the age of 34.

On 2 November 1845, 57-year-old **Ezra Ellingwood** married 23-year-old **Mary Ann Haskell**, Samuel's

youngest daughter and Elizabeth's sister. **Mary Ann** gave birth to their first child, a daughter named **Melanie Augusta**, on 3 September 1846. Melanie died the following March, and a second daughter, whom they also named **Melanie Augusta**, was born on 9 June 1848. Another daughter, **Ella Torrey Ellingwood** was born in February 1851.



Mary Ann (Haskell) Ellingwood

Samuel's son, **Joseph Thissell Haskell**, married **Nancy Adams Lamson** on 26 May 1839. Joseph was twenty-two and Nancy was twenty. Joseph followed in his father's footsteps and became a ship captain and owner. He and **Ezra Ellingwood** were co-owners of the 149 tons brig, *Poconocket*, which was registered on 30 September 1853 for a trip with **Joseph T. Haskell** as master. By 1856, **Joseph T. Haskell** had sold his interest in the brig, *Poconocket*, to his sister, **Augusta Ober**, when it was registered on 13 August 1856 for a trip with Augusta's brother-in-law, **Joseph F. Ober**, as master. That same year, **Joseph T. Haskell** became part owner of the barque, *Montpelier*, along with six other owners, including his sister, **Augusta**, and his brother, **Samuel**. The *Montpelier* was registered in Gloucester on 30 June 1856 when **Joseph T. Haskell**, as master, sailed to Europe, taking with him his wife, **Nancy**, and his five-year-old daughter, **Elizabeth Ellen**. They were in the Bay of Marseille in 1857 where the painter **Pelegrini** painted the *Montpelier*, showing **Joseph, Nancy, and Elizabeth** standing on deck (see *Notes from the Chairman* on page 2). **Nancy** most likely got pregnant on this trip, as a son, **Joseph Thissell Haskell**, was born in Beverly on



Ezra Ellingwood



Brig Poconocket

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Notes from the Chairman



Ellingwood House on the corner of Cabot and Federal Streets in Beverly. President Taft, with a summer home in Beverly, enters the church across the street

24 December 1857. The following year, **Joseph Thissell Sr.** sailed the *Poconocket* to the East Indies, where he was lost at sea on 22 October 1858.

Ezra Ellingwood and his family lived in a house on the southwest corner of Cabot and Federal Streets in Beverly. Ezra died on 22 April 1869 at the age of 81. His wife, **Mary Ann**, died on 6 Dec 1893 at the age of 71. Their daughters, **Melanie** and **Ella** continued to live in the house on the corner of Cabot and Federal Streets. When the town of Beverly decided to widen Cabot Street in 1900, the daughters refused to move, even after the town had removed the front steps and portico of the house. Only after **Melanie** died in 1924 and **Ella** moved out, was the building torn down and replaced with a commercial building called the *Ellingwood Building*, which still stands today.



Mary Ann (Haskell) Ellingwood with Melanie and Ella Ellingwood

References

1. [Beverly Vital Records.](#)
2. [Doug Sinclair's Archives.](#)
3. [Historic Beverly Online Archives.](#)
4. [Ship Registers of the District of Salem and Beverly, Massachusetts, 1789-1900.](#)
5. [Ship Registers of the District of Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1789-1875.](#)

14, 1854 at the Port of New York states, "Brig *Poconocket*, (of Beverly.) Haskell, Sagua la Grande 14 ds., with sugar to master." This would indicate that **Joseph T. Haskell** sailed the *Poconocket* to Cuba for sugar. The second register date of Aug. 13, 1856, with **Joseph F. Ober** as master, was at a time when **Joseph T. Haskell** was on his trip to France on the *Montpelier*. The *Ship Registers* entry indicates that the *Poconocket* was [Lost], but that could not have been on the August 1856 trip, as **Joseph F. Ober** died in 1879 at the age of 70. I have not been able to find a later ship register for the *Poconocket*, but most likely in the first half of 1858, family history holds that **Joseph T. Haskell** sailed the *Poconocket* to the East Indies, where the ship went down on 22 October 1858 in an area between Indonesia and Borneo.

Joseph Thissell Haskell, Jr. therefore grew up never knowing his father. His mother, **Nancy Adams (Lamson) Haskell**, was a widow for 45 years when she died on 6 December 1903 at the age of 84. **Joseph Thissell Haskell, Jr.** married **Lydia Danforth Gallop** on 1 January 1884. They would have a daughter and two sons, and they both died within two days of each other in May 1935.



Joseph Thissell Haskell, Jr.
(1857-1935)



Lydia Danforth (Gallop) Haskell
(1862-1935)

Elizabeth Ellen Haskell (Aunt Lizzy) never married and lived to be 94. When I was a child, we would drive to Beverly where Uncle Ted (**Edmund G. Haskell**), a dentist, would give me gas to put me out and then fill my cavities. I hated it. But on these trips to Beverly, we would always visit Aunt Lizzy, who lived alone on the corner of Lovett and Thorndike Streets. She would always be sitting at a round, center-post table in her small living room. I have that table in my basement work area near my desk, always filled with papers. It is jarring to think that I used to visit the woman who, as a five-year-old girl, stood on the deck of the barque *Montpelier* in the Bay of Marseille 165 years ago!



Elizabeth Ellen Haskell
(1852-1946)