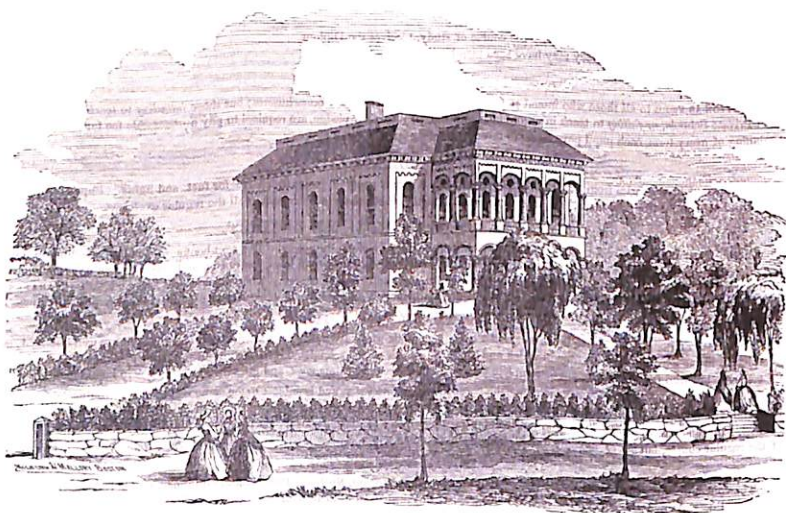


"A BEAUTIFUL EMINENCE"



STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,
FRAMINGHAM, MASSACHUSETTS.

How America's first public teachers college,
now Framingham State College, found its
permanent home in Framingham, Massachusetts

Stephen W. Herring
Framingham Town Historian

Published by
Framingham Historical Society and Museum
Framingham State College 150th Anniversary Committee

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“The institution is situated on a beautiful eminence commanding a fine westerly view that embraces part of the village and a wide and varied landscape.”

George N. Bigelow
Principal, Framingham State Normal School, circa 1860

“America’s First Public Teachers College decided to locate itself on ‘a beautiful eminence’ in Framingham. One hundred and fifty years later, the word ‘eminent’ can be used in another context to refer to Framingham State College itself, selected as one of America’s 100 Best Public Colleges, combining great academics and affordable tuitions, by *Kiplinger’s Personal Finance Magazine*. The College continues to be a leader in public higher education, particularly in terms of its wireless laptop program, a requirement for all entering freshmen since the fall of 2000.”

Dr. Helen Heineman
President, Framingham State College, 2003

Introduction

This booklet is one of several activities planned to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the presence of the institution now known as Framingham State College in the town of Framingham, Massachusetts. It is the story of a town with a special interest in education and a school dedicated to improving public education, and how their destinies intersected in 1853.

Framingham became aware of the importance of education soon after America threw off its colonial bonds and became a free nation. Beginning with the Framingham Academy and continuing through reforms to its school system and the establishment of two public high schools, the town displayed an unusually sophisticated attitude toward education, considering its rural and agrarian character at the time. This was due to several prominent and progressive local citizens who recognized the importance of public education in securing the future of the new nation. This view was a local reflection of the state-wide educational reform movement with leaders such as Horace Mann, the man most credited with bringing about state institutions for the training of teachers. The crowning triumph of the Framingham reformers came with the relocation of the state's first normal school to Framingham in 1853, fourteen years after it was founded in the town of Lexington and nine years after it had moved to West Newton.

From the beginning, the school-town relationship was a symbiotic one. The normal school gained a roomy and picturesque campus while the town could boast of a prestigious institution at its center. After a promising but false start, the school and the town went on to become lasting partners in the cause of public education.

One hundred and fifty years after the normal school opened its doors on the western slope of Bare Hill the school and the town remain bonded by time and tradition, both adjusting to the changes brought about by a growing nation and a shifting public sentiment that remains committed to providing a quality public education for its youth.

Telling the story of how the first public teachers college in America became forever associated with the town of Framingham would not have been possible without access to the resources of the special collections of Framingham State College's Henry Whittmore Library, and the files of the Framingham Historical Society and Museum. I am particularly indebted to FSC Archivist Christopher Carden for answering my questions with professional thoroughness and for directing me to relevant materials, thus saving me from hours of wild goose chases.

I am also indebted to those who took the time to review, correct, and comment on this work, including Dr. Helen Heineman, President of FSC, Dr. Mary Murphy, President of the FHS&M, Dr. Peter Dittami and Dr. Bob Grant of the FSC 150th Anniversary Committee, Dr. Dana Dauterman Ricciardi, Curator of the FHS&M, and Martha Flinter, chair of the FSC 150th Anniversary Committee. Debra Regan Cleveland of the FHS&M and FSC class of '73 helped move the project into its actual publication.

Stephen W. Herring, FSC '76
Framingham Town Historian

Chapter 1 Framingham Becomes an Education-Minded Town

During colonial times in the town of Framingham, Massachusetts, providing a basic education for its children had been a burdensome chore to be avoided if at all possible. From the time of the town's incorporation in 1700, Town Meeting dragged its collective feet whenever the question of building a school or hiring a schoolmaster came up. They were warned by the courts, and then after an inadequate school house had been thrown up, the town was fined. This was often the case in rural colonial America where book learning had little to do with the skills needed to scratch out a subsistence living from the land. Those seeking to become skilled craftsmen, such as wheelwrights, shoemakers, or millers, learned as apprentices to masters of the craft—on-the-job-training handed down from generation to generation. The idea of going to a college was unheard of, unless, of course, you wanted to become a minister.

All this changed after the American Revolution. By 1792 a new class of citizen had come to power and prominence in Framingham. Many were veterans of the Revolutionary War, including several officers of the Continental Army. If the new nation they had helped bring about was going to succeed, the rudimentary literacy provided by the rural schools of colonial days would not suffice. They knew that America's future depended on how well it would educate its future citizens.

The colleges of America were beginning to offer a widening range of opportunities, but these were still out of reach for the youths of rural towns like Framingham. There were no high schools then. Any child with an aptitude for a

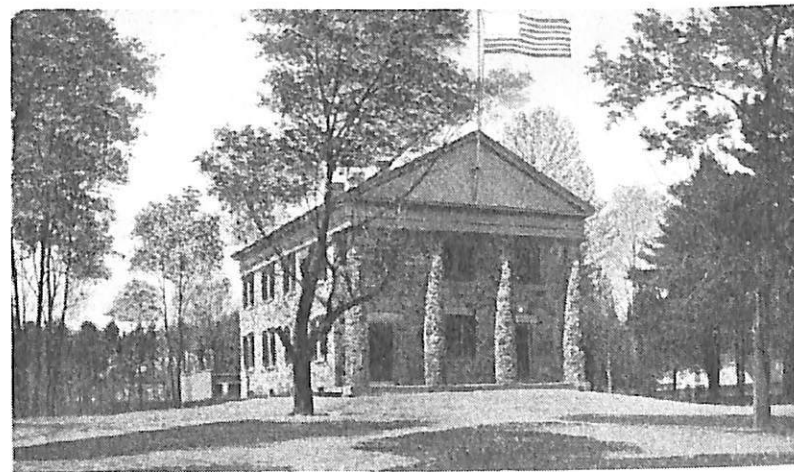
professional career would have to be tutored or sent to an expensive preparatory school. The leading citizens of Framingham took it upon themselves to bridge the gap between what local public schools could offer and what colleges required. They decided to form an academy for Framingham.

In 1792 the Reverend David Kellogg, minister of the Framingham Church, recruited twenty-two prominent citizens who organized themselves as "The Proprietors of the Brick School in Framingham." Among these proprietors were several Revolutionary War veterans including Capt. Jonathan Maynard, Major Andrew Brown, Major Lawson Buckminster, and Capt. Simon Edgell.

In spite of its unassuming name, this new school was part of the American academy movement, a concept initiated by Benjamin Franklin and based on a philosophy that America's greatness as a new republic would depend on a liberal education available to its middle classes. One of the first such academies in Massachusetts was Phillips at Andover, founded in 1778. Framingham joined the ranks of Academy towns on November 27, 1792, when the doors of the Brick School opened to its first students. The school's first headmaster, called "preceptor," was James Hawley, a Harvard graduate. According to its charter, all preceptors of the Academy had to be college graduates. Tuition was charged, but there were none of the narrow restrictions of the old Latin grammar schools. Religion and Latin were deemphasized, modern subjects such as science and mathematics were introduced, and it was made clear that "children of both sexes shall be admitted upon equal terms." Admission was not restricted to students from Framingham, and in time the Academy earned a wide reputation as a school of quality. In 1799 the Brick School was formally incorporated by the state as the Framingham Academy.

Josiah H. Temple, Framingham's nineteenth century historian, said of the Framingham Academy, "It became an important factor in the social life, the educational standing, and the material prosperity of the town." Temple himself was a product of the Framingham Academy which prepared him for Amherst College and a career as a minister and author of town histories.

The presence of an academy in town may have been a factor in bringing about reform to its public school system. School administration had been the responsibility of "prudential committees" set up for each district with uneven and often troublesome results. Framingham's first steps toward a centralized school committee were taken in 1798 with the appointment of a town-wide "visiting committee" of five persons "to inspect and regulate the schools." At this time Framingham also embarked on an ambitious school rebuilding program. Following the example of the Academy, all schoolhouses were replaced with brick structures from 1792 to 1818.



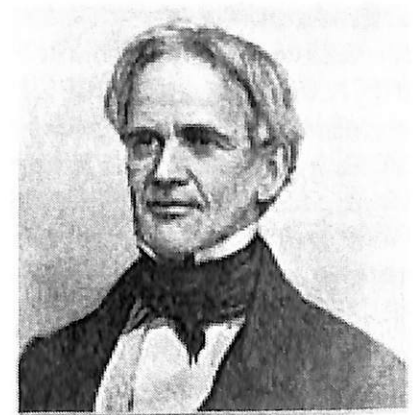
The Old Framingham Academy c.1910

Framingham thus entered the nineteenth century as an education-minded town. It was an academy town with a centralized school administration and new district schoolhouses, demonstrating a new respect for the role of education in the community. Such a town would be an ideal location for an institution of higher learning dedicated to improving the quality of public education in America. But before that could happen, the ideal of educational reform would have to take root at the state level, and that would require a reform movement with dedicated leadership. Many such leaders would step forward over the next forty years, most notably Horace Mann.

Chapter 2 Horace Mann and His Revolution

In the first half of the nineteenth century Massachusetts became the stage for some of the most profound and articulate thinkers and reformers in American history. It was the time of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, Lucy Stone, and Dorothea Dix. The anti-slavery movement became a dominant issue in American politics with such proponents as William Lloyd Garrison. And much needed reform in public education found worthy advocates in such men as James G. Carter, George B. Emerson, and Horace Mann. Of all the educational reformers, the one who would become known down through history as “the father of American education” was Horace Mann.

Horace Mann was born in 1796 in Franklin, Massachusetts, only four towns to the south of Framingham. Unsatisfied with the scant schooling provided by the common schools of his youth, Mann educated himself at the town’s public library. That library had been started with a gift of books from Benjamin Franklin himself in appreciation of the town



Horace Mann

being named in his honor. It was an education that qualified Mann for entrance to Brown University as a sophomore. After graduating in 1819, he studied law and used the oratori-

cal skills he developed at Brown to launch a career in politics.

As a state senator in 1837, Mann voted with the majority to form the Massachusetts Board of Education. Carrying out the policies of the board would be the job of its Secretary (equivalent to director or commissioner today), and it was expected that the post would go to James G. Carter, a prominent advocate of "a seminary for the education of teachers, with a model school attached." But the board appointed Horace Mann to that post, and what followed was a spectacular twelve year career that transformed public education in Massachusetts and eventually in America.

The centerpiece of Mann's career was the fulfillment of James Carter's desire for public teacher "seminaries" working together with model practice schools. Similar private schools already existed such as Samuel R. Hall's Seminary for Teachers at Andover. The task of making such schools a public responsibility required all the oratorical and persuasive skills that Mann had honed during his years as a lawyer and a politician. A skeptical and reluctant legislature eventually agreed to an experiment, a three-year trial with funding limited to matching what could be raised privately. Mann would have to find the startup money if the experiment was to get off the ground at all. That money came from merchant Edmund Dwight in the form of a \$10,000 gift, which Mann called "the origin, the source, the *punctum saliens* of the Normal Schools of Massachusetts." Framingham State College's Dwight Hall is named in honor of that visionary benefactor.

With Dwight's funding and the support of Governor Edward Everett, Mann and the Board of Education proceeded to establish three normal schools (the term normal derived from *norma*, the Latin word for "standard" or "rule") for the preparation of teachers in the Massachusetts

school systems: the first at Lexington in July, 1839; the second at Barre in September, 1839; and the third at Bridgewater in September, 1840. Lexington was designated for the training of women only while Barre and Bridgewater were to train both men and women teachers.

The school at Lexington thus became the first public teachers college in the nation. Its principal was the Reverend Cyrus Peirce (the unusual spelling causing the name to be pronounced *purse*). Peirce had been invited by Mann "to take over the new, difficult and doubtful experiment at Lexington," as it was described by the Reverend Eben Stearns, a later principal of the school. But the experiment did succeed, surviving a storm of criticism in 1840 and the constant need for private funding. It was renewed for another three years in 1842. At the end of that time, in 1845, the experiment was deemed a success. The three schools were formally adopted by the legislature as State Normal Schools.

Of Horace Mann Framingham State College Professor Emerita Beverly Weiss wrote: "It is to his credit that he had the vision to understand the importance of a movement that, if successful, would restore the quality of the Massachusetts public system that dated back to 1647. The 'Massachusetts Experiment' became a model for America."

Principal Eben Stearns said of Horace Mann that he was "the prime agent in establishing the Board of Education, its soul as well as its secretary, he was the establisher of this school [Framingham], and its most earnest and constant friend, so long as it continued within his reach."

Mann's career, however, did go beyond the reach of public education when, in 1848, he accepted a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He continued speaking up for public education, but became more involved with the great moral issue of the abolition of slavery in America. His strong stand caused him to break with Senator Daniel Web-

ster over the Compromise of 1850 and its odious Fugitive Slave Law. He eventually ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1852 as a Free Soil candidate

Exhausted and frustrated by politics, Mann decided to return to his first love, education. He accepted the presidency of Antioch College in Ohio in 1853. At his last address to the graduating class at Antioch, two months before his death in 1859, he spoke what may be his most famous words: "I beseech you to treasure up in your hearts these my parting words: Be ashamed to die unless you have won some victory for Humanity."

Chapter 3 Framingham at Mid-Century

By 1850 all the original proprietors of the Framingham Academy had passed from the scene and Framingham was a very different town than it had been in 1792. It was now a railroad town with bustling commercial and industrial interests crowding out the old agricultural base. But the central village, always referred to as Framingham Centre in the records, kept its head above all the new enterprise and new money, and became the seat of the landed gentry.

Framingham Centre had grown up around the Worcester Turnpike, a toll road built by a private corporation and opened in 1810. When railroads came on the scene in the 1830's the turnpike corporation resisted plans to share its direct right-of-way between Boston and Worcester. The Boston and Worcester Railroad was therefore built two miles south of the Centre, where a sleepy village called Clark's Corner would blossom and grow as South Framingham, a thriving new commercial and manufacturing center. A branch line connected South Framingham to the Centre with a single track, passing through a pastoral pleasure park and meeting place called Harmony Grove.

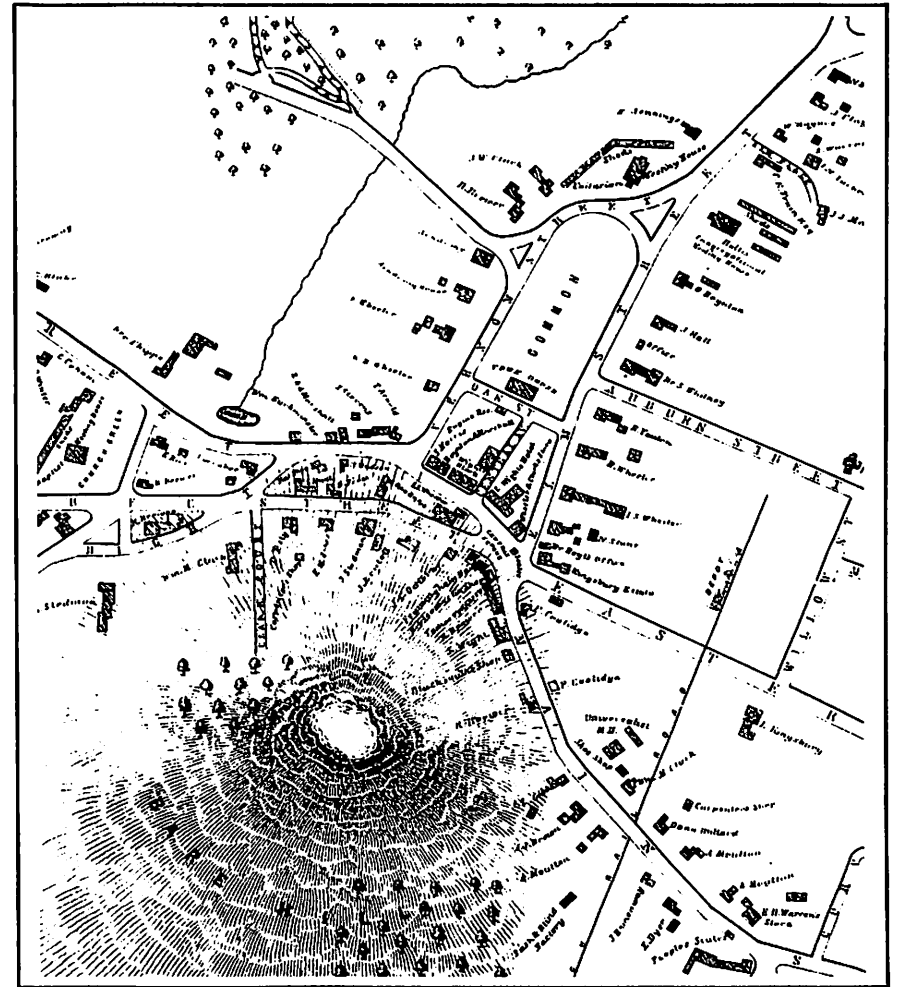
The Centre was home to the Town Hall, the churches, the bank, and of course the Academy. It had a tin shop, a hat shop, carpenters, blacksmiths, and public scales for the weighing of farmers' produce. There was a hotel and several stores. One store housed the post office and became the general meeting place of the village where farmers would gather around the stove or the cracker barrel, share news, and debate the great issues of the day. The Centre was also the home of several lawyers, including three future U.S. Congressmen.

The Framingham Academy was going through a transformation at that time. The Massachusetts Board of Education won another battle in its ongoing mission of education reform by sponsoring legislation requiring towns and cities to provide public high schools. In 1852 the Framingham Academy became the Framingham Academy and High School, a part of the town's public school system. The old Academy building thus became Framingham's first high school until a larger schoolhouse could be built next door. Soon after, a second high school was established in the Saxonville district.

In 1850, a twenty-four-year-old local man by the name of Gustavus A. Hyde drew a very detailed map of Framingham Centre. On the north side of the Centre we see the Academy, Town Hall, two churches and other buildings facing the Centre Common (the common was a village green later to become the site of Framingham State College's commencement ceremonies). The south side of the Centre is dominated by Bare Hill. Rising 289 feet above sea level, Bare Hill was notable to early settlers for its lack of trees, a convenient feature for posting sentries on the lookout for a sneak attack during the early colonial wars, while townsfolk gathered in the meetinghouse below.

In Hyde's map the only buildings on the hill are those strung along High Street and Main Street at its northern edge. A short road called Clark's Court climbs the hill, running alongside the home of merchant William M. Clark. By 1850 a grove of trees had grown on the western slope of Bare Hill. According to Josiah Temple's *History of Framingham*, Clark owned the "beautiful grove of native trees" that protected the hill. Surviving trees from that grove later became a traditional part of the Framingham State College campus, "the Grove Walk," that ran along the front of Wells and May Halls. While the Grove Walk has been widened as

a roadway, many of the tall pine and oak trees still stand on that part of the campus.



Map of Framingham Centre – 1850, Gustavus A. Hyde (detail)

William Clark and several other prominent men of the Centre owned swatches of property on Bare Hill. We may never know if they had any plans for the development of those tracts, for events unfolding outside of the town would eventually put that land to a very different type of use, as a college campus.



The Grove Walk c.1908

Chapter 4 Growing Pains

A year before the state acknowledged the success of Horace Mann's experimental normal schools in 1845, the schools at Lexington and Barre had been relocated to other towns. The Lexington school had moved to West Newton and the Barre school to Westfield. The move to Westfield turned out to be a permanent one (the school is now Westfield State College), but the move to West Newton was less satisfactory.

Principal Peirce had resigned due to ill health, and was replaced by the Reverend Samuel May. May and Horace Mann found a former academy building in West Newton that offered more space for the growing school at a bargain price, but the fit between town and school did not prove to be a comfortable one. West Newton was a railroad town, like Framingham, but the school's close proximity to the main line turned out to be more of a nuisance than a convenience. According to *The Massachusetts Teacher* (March, 1854), "...the house became too small and inconvenient for the purposes of the school, whilst increasing travel in the vicinity, especially on the Worcester Railroad, directly under its windows, made it seem desirable to secure other and more suitable accommodations."

Another problem at West Newton had to do with the requirement that students attend a church of their choice every week. This was made onerous by the presence of a single church in that town, with a preacher of the old fire-and-brimstone style, a situation that irritated not only the hapless students but Horace Mann and other reformers who leaned toward a more liberal style of theology.

Cyrus Peirce's health improved to the extent that he was able to return as principal shortly after the move to West Newton and serve five more years. He was affectionately known to all as "Father Peirce." In 1849 a much younger principal, Eben Stearns, was appointed to succeed him. Stearns, a Harvard graduate and former high school principal, quickly saw the need to impose a higher standard on students who themselves had not received the best preparation in the common schools. The course of instruction was extended to a third term. Advanced classes were added, as Stearns said, "for such as sought a still higher culture." In spite of the higher standards, school enrollment continued to grow. Something needed to be done about it.

The Board of Education turned to the legislature to solve the problem. On May 15, 1852, an act was passed granting \$6,000 "to defray the expenses of providing a more commodious site and building, and the necessary appurtenances and apparatus for the accommodation of the State Normal School now established at West Newton." The act allowed six months for receiving proposals, and limited the possibilities of a new location to the towns within a fifteen mile radius of Boston.

The fifteen mile limit proved to be too confining. West Newton was interested in retaining the school but their proposal was deemed "too feeble to carry with it much weight." The act was amended to extend the perimeter to thirty miles, taking in dozens of additional towns including Framingham. Many of these towns expressed an interest. Among them was Salem, a wealthy seaport fifteen miles north of Boston. If Framingham was to win this competition, it would require quickly pulling together both private and public resources.

Chapter 5 The Framingham Offer

As with the formation of the Framingham Academy sixty years before, the task of assembling an attractive offer of land and funds to convince the Board of Education to move the first of its state normal schools to Framingham would require the leadership of some of the town's most prominent citizens. From the existing records of that activity, three respected members of the community emerge as major players in this drama: a politician, Charles Russell Train; a minister, the Reverend B. G. Northrop; and an educator, James Watson Brown.



Charles Russell Train

Charles Russell Train was perhaps the most ambitious man in Framingham at the middle of the nineteenth century. He was educated at the Framingham Academy and, like Horace Mann, at Brown University. He became a lawyer and by 1852 had served two terms as Framingham's state representative and several years as the district attorney for the Northern Criminal District of Massachusetts. In that year President Millard Fillmore offered him a seat on the supreme court of the Oregon Territory, which he declined. His future was to be with the new Republican Party. He would serve two terms as a Republican representative to the United States Congress (1859-1863) before leaving his native Framingham for Boston

where he eventually was elected Attorney General of Massachusetts. In the fall of 1852, however, he was working with a group of local men to bring before Town Meeting a proposal to spend money the town did not have.

A special Town Meeting was called for October 18, 1852. The warrant for the meeting included Article 3: "To see if the Town will take any action to procure the location of the State Normal School within this Town, or pass any vote relative thereto." And Article 4: "To see if the Town will grant any money to fulfill any contract which may be authorized to procure the location of the State Normal School in this said Town, or pass any vote relative thereto."

At the meeting the articles were voted on as follows: "Voted to choose a committee of five to make a report at this meeting, on this article." The committee consisted of Charles Train, John Wenzell, Warren Nixon, Ebenezer Stone, and William Hastings. Nixon was not present and was replaced with Albert Ballard. By the end of the brief meeting the report was ready, no doubt drafted in advance by the lawyer among them, Charles Train:

Your committee believes that they state the unanimous voice of the inhabitants of this location when they say that the location of the Normal School in the Town is very much to be desired.

The advantages to be derived from its influence on the schools in the Town and in giving the Town character at home and reputation abroad can hardly be overestimated.

Beyond this, your committee is of the opinion that its location here may be made a matter of direct primary benefit.

We are advised and believe that a contract may be made with the Board of Education by which teachers would be furnished to the Town from the Normal School free of expense to the Town and so as to work a savings on the part of the Town to a very considerable extent.

No objection can be made to a grant of money to carry such a contract into effect on the grounds of illegality. Such a grant would be strictly legal and it is perhaps the only way in which the Town could appropriate money for the purpose of obtaining the School to be located here.

Your committee therefore recommends that a committee be chosen by the Town with authority in their discretion to make such a contract or arrangement with the Board of Education as shall procure the location of said School in the Town and the services of such teachers in the various schools of the Town in such manner and for such time as they shall deem expedient and advantageous and for the best interest of the Town and that the sum of two thousand dollars be granted to enable said committee to carry the same into effect. All of which is unanimously submitted by your committee.

Town Meeting voted to accept the report, form the recommended committee, and grant the \$2,000, with a follow-up vote "that the Treasurer be authorized to borrow said \$2,000." Charles Train and his committee were thus able to extract borrowed money from Town Meeting, no small feat in itself, primarily by arguing that it was an investment to reduce future expenses for the town schools, truly the work of an astute politician.

The committee that was appointed to work out the contract with the Board of Education consisted of the school committee with a few extra citizens added. A leading member of the committee was Rev. B. G. Northrop, the most likely candidate for carrying out the negotiations for the contract. Northrop was a graduate of Yale College and was serving as pastor of the Edwards Congregational Church in the Saxonville district of Framingham at that time. He had a strong interest in education, as evidenced in his later work as a lecturer in moral philosophy at the normal schools and as an agent of the Board of Education, visiting schools throughout the state and delivering hundreds of lectures.

The committee must have been involved with some hard bargaining with the Board of Education as the competition with Salem and other communities was coming to a head. In December, just two days after Christmas, another hastily called Town Meeting was asked to approve "an additional sum not exceeding five hundred dollars" to the amount previously granted. And so the total monetary offer from the town was upped to \$2,500.

The sum offered by the town was augmented with a grant from an unexpected source, the Boston and Worcester Railroad. Framingham was the central town of that railroad. The branch line to Framingham Centre was about to be extended to Northborough and the track realigned to pass by the western foot of Bare Hill. This may have been a contributing factor in the railroad's decision to add some money of



Rev. B. G. Northrop

its own to the offer for Framingham. Most accounts attribute the benevolence of the B&W to its superintendent, Ginery Twichell, a colorful figure from stagecoach days who became a railroad tycoon. He later became president of the B&W and, like Charles Russell Train, was active in the formation of the Republican Party and a member of Congress.

The B&W Railroad added another \$2,000 to the pot, bringing the total contribution to \$4,500. With \$6,000 from the state, the money available to build a suitable new schoolhouse at Framingham stood at a reasonable \$10,500. All that was needed was the land to put it on.

It is doubtful that Charles Train and Town Meeting would have proceeded with their offer without some understanding that land for the normal school would be made available, and not from town resources. This is where James Watson Brown came on to the scene.



James Watson Brown

James Watson Brown was a respected schoolmaster and former town selectman living in Framingham Centre. He came from a family with deep roots in Framingham's history. His great-grandfather was Deacon William Brown, best known as the owner of slave Crispus Attucks, celebrated victim of the Boston Massacre. His great uncle Andrew Brown was one of the original proprietors of the Framingham Academy. His maternal grand-

father was John Fiske, a wealthy tanner who built a fine home on the Worcester Turnpike at the foot of Bare Hill known to later generations as "The 1812 House."

Brown was educated at the Phillips Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire, then at Williams College where he graduated in 1840. It has been said that he taught school to help pay for his tuition at Williams. He then taught at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Stow, Massachusetts, and finally his native Framingham. By 1852 Brown and his family were living in his grandfather's grand house on the old Worcester Turnpike where he ran a boarding school for boys. (Among his educational innovations was an unusual birdhouse that illustrated the Pythagorean Theorem of geometry with three square boxes as the sides of a right triangle.) In the 1930's, when the house was operated as a restaurant called Seiler's 1812 House, the main dining room was dubbed "the Schoolroom" in recognition of the house's earlier educational function.

The 1812 House, which still stands as a commercial building, was situated on a narrow wedge of land bounded by Salem End Road, but Brown also owned several acres on Bare Hill on the other side of the road. When the Board of Education invited proposals for a new location for the West Newton normal school Brown collaborated with neighbors William Clark, Josiah Stedman, and Increase Sumner Wheeler, all owners of bits and pieces of Bare Hill land, to put together a parcel of more than five acres to be offered to the state at no cost. Brown's contribution of two and a quarter acres was by far the largest of the four.

All four deeds bear the date December 30, 1852, just three days after Town Meeting had added \$500 to their offer, and were all contingent on the normal school relocating to that property within the following eighteen months. Apparently, these gentlemen were familiar with the unpredictable ways of state government.

When the Board of Education announced its decision in favor of Framingham it cited not only the generous offer of land and money, but the central location of the town. Salem's offer was compelling enough, however, to cause the Board to recommend that a new normal school be placed in that city (now Salem State College, founded in 1854).

After fourteen years the state's and the nation's first public teachers college had found a permanent home. As reported in *The Massachusetts Teacher*, "The former pupils and special patrons of this institution, as well as the public generally, will be gratified to learn that its long period of wanderings and abode in tabernacles has at length ceased, and that it now enjoys a permanent resting-place."

With the money and land secured, it was now up to the Board of Education to put a schoolhouse there worthy of the institution, and complete the move.

Chapter 6 A New Campus in a New Town

Thomas Kinnicutt and Isaac Davis of the Board of Education were appointed as a building committee to oversee the erection of a new schoolhouse for what was to be the Framingham State Normal School. Their report brings out an important feature of the relocation that does not seem to have drawn much attention in the negotiation process: the school's new home was to be on a spectacularly beautiful site. Kinnicutt and Davis describe the site as "situated a few rods south of the central village of the town, on the southwestern slope of a hill of gentle declivity, protected on the north by a grove of forest trees, and commanding a view of the surrounding country of wide extent and great beauty."

This sentiment was repeated often. In 1855, *The Massachusetts Teacher* reported, "This institution occupies a charming location, not far from the geographical center of the State, in a town remarkable for natural beauty, and greatly embellished by the good taste of its inhabitants." When Principal Stearns' successor, George N. Bigelow, described the campus in an informational circular published about 1860, he wrote, "The institution is situated on a beautiful eminence commanding a fine westerly view that embraces part of the village and a wide and varied landscape." Writing in 1889, Mrs. Electa Lincoln Walton, class of 1843 and former teacher at the normal school, declared, "The land chosen, as you see, was beautiful for situation, on rising ground, affording extensive views and giving opportunities for pure air and cool summer breezes."

The building committee goes on to point out other features of the new location that seem to address the concerns the Board had about West Newton: "The neighboring

village is retired and quiet, containing three churches of different denominations, and a sufficient number of inhabitants to afford homes for the pupils, while the character of the people, owing to the absence of large manufacturing establishments, to the predominance of moral pursuits, and the residence in the neighborhood of many gentlemen who have either retired from business, or pursue it in the city, at a distance from their dwellings, is calculated to exercise a favorable influence upon the young ladies who will compose the school."

The first job of the committee was to find an architect. They sponsored a competition, offering a prize of \$100 for the best design. They accepted the design submitted by a twenty-six-year-old Framingham native, Alexander Rice Esty. Esty had recently opened his own architectural practice in Boston, but his home was in Framingham, at the foot of Bare Hill, not far from the home of James Watson Brown. Many years later, Judge Constantine C. Esty said of his brother's accomplishment, "When the State Normal School was established here... he gained the prize, in competition with several older architects, for the best design of the school building, and the supervision of its construction was entrusted to him."

The design was of a massive two-story building, sixty feet on each side, made distinctive by a two-tiered portico on the front, called an arcade. While Esty later would be known for his use of the Gothic Revival style (including his design for St. John's Episcopal Church on Bare Hill, now the Framingham State College Ecumenical and Cultural Center), in the early 1850's he was designing churches in the Romanesque Revival style. The architectural elements seen in the Prospect Street Congregational Church in Cambridge (1851), the First Congregational Church of Winchester (1853), and the South Framingham Baptist Church (1854) can be seen in

his Framingham Normal School of 1853, including round-headed windows set in ornamented panels. Instead of a spire or tower, Esty used the portico to give the building its theme. Its specifications called for it to be made of brick, but none of the bids that came back from contractors were within the \$10,500 budget, leading the committee to make the fateful decision to build the schoolhouse out of wood.



Alexander Rice Esty

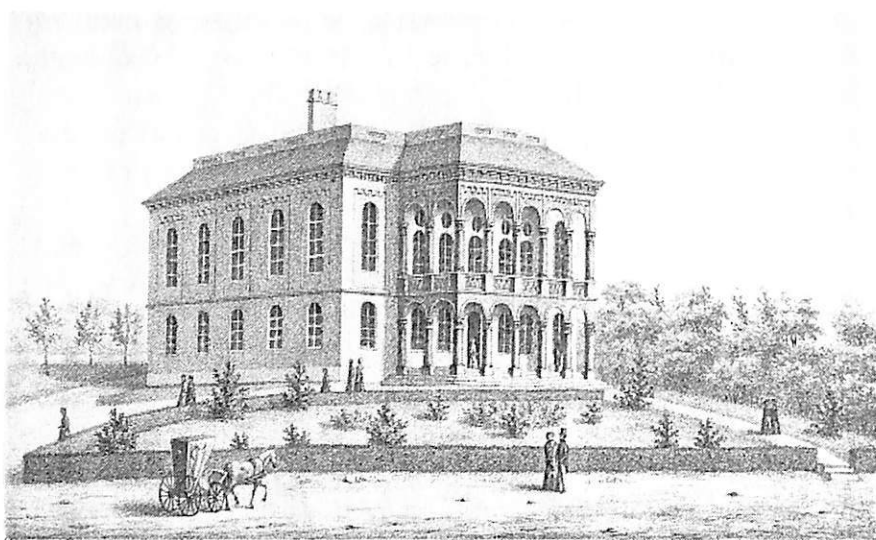
Esty received a total of \$700 for his work for the building committee. He would go on to do more commissions for college buildings, including at the Worcester and Westfield State Normal Schools, the University of Rochester, and Colby College. Over the next thirty years he pursued a highly successful career designing churches, libraries, stylish homes, a Boston railroad station, and interior details for the Library of Congress, all while living within view of his early success on Bare Hill.

Construction began in March of 1853. The building committee was able to augment its budget with \$250 from the sale of old furnishings and equipment from the West Newton school, but this was hardly enough to compensate for the cost of a furnace, plumbing, new furniture, window blinds, grading the hilltop, drainage, and fences, all of which brought the total cost to \$15,750, or \$5,000 over budget. The committee would have halted construction pending legislative approval had it not been in part for the time limits set down by the former property owners of Bare Hill.

The committee justified the extra costs, arguing that "it seemed proper that the house should possess some degree of architectural beauty, and that it should be thoroughly built of good materials. It was necessary, in order to accomplish the object of its erection, that it should have a large and commodious schoolroom, recitation rooms in sufficient number, and properly arranged, a convenient lecture room and apparatus room, a library, a master's private room, pupils' dressing rooms, etc.; that it should have a heating apparatus of sufficient capacity to warm the whole house; that it should have water apparatus and water closets within doors, the school being exclusively for females; that it should be well ventilated; that all the rooms should be appropriately furnished, and that the furniture, especially that of the schoolroom, should be made of the most approved form, and made of the best materials, in a manner which should preclude the necessity of frequent repairs or renewals."

The building's construction time also went over budget. Planned for completion on November tenth, it was not finished until December fourteenth when, according to the committee, "the school was removed to it." But before

classes and other routines of school life could resume there, the building had to be properly dedicated, and that was carried out the next day, Thursday, December 15, 1853.



Alex. H. Soley, Engr.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL BUILDING,
Framingham, Mass.

The State Normal School building at Framingham shortly after its construction in 1853.

Chapter 7 The Dedication

In spite of bitterly cold weather the dedication program was mobbed. So many people turned up to witness the proceedings that some had to be turned away. The main schoolroom on the second floor was designed to hold 120 pupils with the possibility of accommodating 150, but with standing room there may have been many more on hand that day.

According to the College's centennial history (*First State Normal School in America: The State Teachers College at Framingham, Massachusetts, 1839-1939*), "The dedication of the old school in its new home took place on December 15, 1853, on one of those sparkling winter mornings when every tree and shrub and even the ground itself glittered with a crystal cover. His Excellency Governor Clifford presided, and Mr. George B. Emerson, educator and member of the Board of Education since 1848, together with other Board members, educators, friends, and townspeople were present. Mr. Emerson, for long an especial friend of the school and its principals, gave the dedicatory address of the school's new home site and its new building."

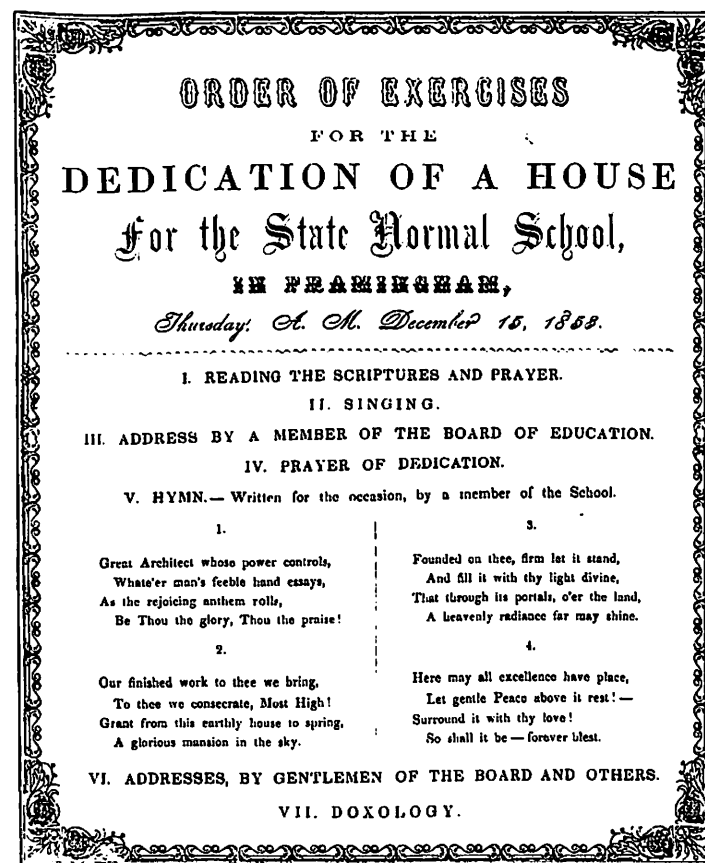
The program started at ten o'clock. It opened with an address by Thomas Kinnicutt of the building committee. After scriptural readings and prayers George Emerson delivered his address. Emerson was one of the early leaders of the movement to reform public education in Massachusetts, and a worthy representative for Horace Mann, who had left Massachusetts for Antioch College in Ohio a few months earlier. Had Mann been present, it might have been a bit awkward. Governor John Clifford was there, the man who had defeated him in the 1852 gubernatorial election. Even

Framingham had favored Clifford over Mann, giving him 366 votes to Mann's 128.

Emerson's address was fashionably long. It takes up more than twenty-two pages in the Annual Report of the Board of Education. He opens by saying, "We have come together for the purpose of dedicating this house to the work of preparing teachers for the Common Schools of Massachusetts. In doing this, we trust we are devoting it to the service of God and man, and the advancement of Truth." He said that the Board of Education had to determine "what town in this section of the Commonwealth would value most highly the privilege of having a Normal School within its limits," and went on to extol the virtues of the Framingham Centre location. Most of the address reviews the dismal record of the common schools, the advent of normal schools, and the ways in which different academic subjects have been enhanced through this new approach to the preparation of teachers.

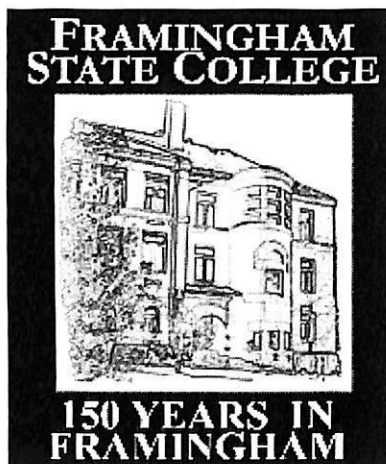
After Emerson's address a hymn printed in the Order of Exercises was sung. It was written by Caroline Greeley, a graduate of the class of March, 1852, who was enrolled in the post-graduate program. Then Governor Clifford spoke, followed by Reverend Dr. Barnas Sears (Horace Mann's successor as secretary of the Board), and finally, on behalf of the town of Framingham, the Reverend B. G. Northrop of the school committee. In the audience were the two former principals of the school, Cyrus Peirce and Samuel May. The president of Harvard University was there as was one of its most famous professors, Louis Agassiz. The president of the Boston and Worcester Railroad was also there. After the program, Charles Russell Train presided over a reception for the dignitaries held in the Town Hall on the Centre Common where there were more speeches "characterized by good sense, and a profusion of wit." In its cover-

age of the dedication, *The Massachusetts Teacher* concluded that, "Rarely has any occasion brought together so large a company of gentlemen distinguished for their literary and scientific character."



Dedication ceremony program with hymn written by student Caroline Greeley.

While billed as the dedication of the schoolhouse, the occasion also marked the beginning of a new and promising relationship between a school dedicated to better education and an education-minded town. As for the schoolhouse, unfortunately time would prove that the quality of the materials and capacity of its furnace were not up to the claims of the building committee. These were factors that, along with the use of wood instead of brick, would doom the building to a relatively short life of thirty-six years. It was replaced by the sturdy brick May Hall in 1889.



May Hall is featured on the FSC 150th anniversary pin designed by Teresa Pagliuca, FSC Class of 1991.

Chapter 8 Symbiosis

With all the fuss over governors and distinguished gentlemen at the dedication program, accounts of that event overlooked the most important people of all: the faculty and students who would bring the school to life when the school term resumed the next day.

In addition to Principal Stearns, the faculty consisted of his assistant teachers Lucretia Crocker (for whom Crocker Hall would be named), Abby C. Gardner, and music teacher Benjamin F. Baker. The student body included thirteen women who would graduate as the class of March, 1854, and seventeen women who would graduate as the class of February, 1855. There were also seven women in the advanced or post-graduate class, mostly graduates of the class of March, 1852, who stayed on for that "higher culture" Stearns spoke of, and who would complete the course in 1854. In addition to these thirty-seven women there were a number of other students who, for one reason or another, would not stay the course.

The faculty also included the position of practice school teacher. Five teachers had filled this role since the years at Lexington, but it was not filled at the time of the move to Framingham. Principal Stearns needed time to work with the Framingham School Committee to plan how the practice school would involve the schools and schoolchildren of Framingham.

Over the next ten months a great deal of time and effort went into perfecting a "Model School Plan for the Town of Framingham." The School Committee was cooperative and enthusiastic. With Reverend B. G. Northrop at its head, the Committee reported that it had great confidence in the

normal school system: "There is happily no longer any necessity for employing any other than competent and well-trained teachers. Our High Schools and Academies, and, more than all, our Institutes and Normal Schools, are supplying the increasing demand for thoroughly qualified female teachers for our public schools."

The School Committee had actually set a policy for using only female teachers for the primary schools, reporting proudly that, "their wages are usually about half those of male teachers. Hence, by this change, we have been able to gain an additional term, and secure annual schools."

The model school plan offered an opportunity for the town to save even more money, as was promised when Town Meeting voted to support the move to Framingham in 1852. The School Committee introduced the plan in its annual report for 1853-1854, starting with a warm reference to the relocation: "During the year covered by this report, the Normal School has been removed from West Newton to this town... Our citizens already know something of its aims and results, and our estimate of its usefulness has steadily grown with our growing experience of its influence upon those of our schools which have come under the care of its graduates, and indirectly upon others. In this way, indeed, a pleasant acquaintance with the school was formed prior to its removal to this town."

The plan takes up nine pages of the report, including the forms to be filled out by the students. It defines the primary, grammar, and high schools at Framingham Centre (District 1) as the Model School. The town would provide the "permanent teachers" of the schools and the normal school would supply assistant teachers as needed. The plan was approved by Principal Stearns and the School Committee on November 6, 1854 and went into effect in December. The school term was already well underway. The normal

school assistants would be available until their term ended in February when it was arranged that the Board of Education would supply assistants during the ensuing vacation. There is every indication that the plan was succeeding until something went dreadfully wrong.

In its report for 1854-1855 the School Committee reported that the plan continued until the close of the term of the normal school, and then stated: "The plan was not in operation long enough to have a fair trial of its advantages or disadvantages; but the working of it during the part of one term, and that, too, in most unfavorable circumstances, fully convinced the committee of its eminent utility in our schools, in case of its continued existence."

The report then makes references to "untoward events" and "misapprehensions" that must have been boiling up within the town during the two months that the plan was in operation. The committee fell back to the financial incentive when summarizing the benefit derived from the program: "While the Model School plan was in existence in the winter, our schools in District No. 1 were favored with the assistance of seven young ladies daily, from the Normal School,--an amount of service, in the aggregate, more than equal to the entire labors of one teacher. This was furnished without any expense whatever to the town... But this has been lost to the town and it will be necessary, unless this arrangement be renewed, to pay, from the town's treasury, for services which otherwise would have been gratuitous."

The rift between school and town, whatever its causes, would take a long time to heal. Principal Stearns resigned at the start of the 1855 fall term, succeeded by George N. Bigelow. Bigelow led the school through the tumultuous years leading up to the Civil War and through the war, when the demand for female teachers to fill posts vacated by men was very high. Bigelow was also often in ill health and

finally gave up the post in favor of his first assistant, Annie Johnson, who was inaugurated in September, 1866.

Plan for a 'Model School,' in connection with the State Normal School at Framingham.

1. It is proposed that the Primary, Grammar and High Schools, already existing in the Centre District, constitute the Model School, on the general principles proposed by the Board of Education of Massachusetts, and agreed to by the School Committee.

2. The Town of Framingham is expected to provide suitable rooms for these schools,—keep them in repair,—warmed,—cleansed,—ventilated, and furnished with such apparatus and conveniences as may be deemed expedient to successful instruction.

3. The Town is expected to pay the salaries of COMPETENT PERMANENT TEACHERS,—who shall be a male teacher for the High School, and female assistant, if necessary, and a female teacher for each of the other schools.

4. It is proposed to *organize* the MODEL SCHOOL as follows:—

ORGANIZATION OF THE MODEL SCHOOL.

1. The PRIMARY SCHOOL shall consist of pupils gathered from within limits prescribed by the SCHOOL COMMITTEE of the town of Framingham,—of each sex,—and from *the lowest age*, prescribed by law, to *eight years*;—provided, however, that pupils of greater age may be retained if a want of proper

The first page of Principal Stearns' ill-fated plan for a model school program in Framingham. From the Framingham School Committee report for 1853-1854.

It was under Miss Johnson that the model school program was revived. This time, instead of using Framingham's schoolhouses, the model school was established in the normal school itself, first in a small classroom and then in an addition to Normal Hall that held two full schoolrooms, where children from the Framingham community would come to attend classes. The first notice of this arrangement is in the School Committee's 1868-1869 report on the District 1 primary school: "During a part of the year this school was crowded, and some pupils were sent to the intermediate school before they were fully prepared. Some relief has also been obtained by *lending* to the State Normal School twelve pupils each forenoon during the year. The town furnished twelve desks at the Normal School for this class, which has been carefully and thoroughly instructed and drilled by the young ladies of that institution." The next year a full class of thirty pupils was assigned to the Normal School as a separate school within the Framingham system. Thereafter that school is listed in School Committee reports as the Normal Practice School.

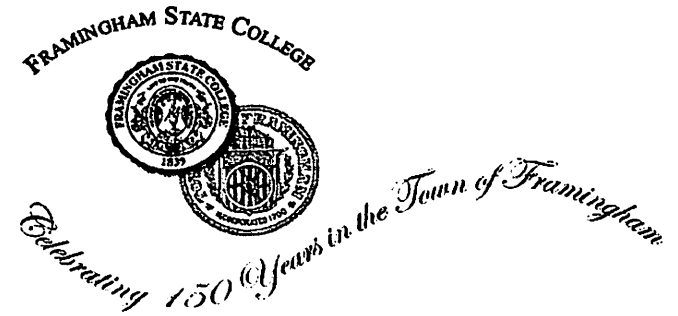
Thus began a long and successful relationship that endured over the next century. Professor Beverly Weiss has stated, "The Model School became an important part of the Framingham experience, improving the students' opportunities, opening the way for more cooperation with the town, and demonstrating a pedagogical point for educators willing to observe."

The importance of the normal school to Framingham's sense of civic pride and identity was emphasized when, in 1900, on the occasion of the town's 200th anniversary, it adopted a new Town Seal with May Hall as a prominent feature. In explaining this part of the design, the Framingham Bicentennial Committee stated: "Very few,

probably, even of those citizens who have given thought to the matter, realize how much has been added to the good name or fame of our town, during the nearly fifty years of its location here, by the Framingham State Normal School, the first of the kind in America. Not only is this true of its past history as its pupils have come from and gone forth to all parts of the world, but in its work of today, this school stands for the best and noblest ideals of a free public school, and combines under one roof the education of children and their future teachers. It seemed eminently fitting that the noble building in which this grand work is carried on should be selected to represent on our Town Seal the educational life here made prominent."

By 1953, when it celebrated its 100th anniversary in the town of Framingham, the normal school had become a fully accredited four-year college, the Framingham State Teachers College. For that occasion a special invitation was extended to the people of Framingham to "be present in Nevins Hall, on October 29, to receive an expression of appreciation for the generosity of the town in 1853 and for the kindness and goodwill through the intervening years to 1953."

By 2003, many more changes have transformed the college and the town. But one thing has been constant. Even though the campus has grown from one building in 1853 to twenty-one buildings today, the site remains, in the words of Principal Bigelow, a "beautiful eminence." As stated by Framingham State College President Helen L. Heineman, "Today, we are at the intersection of busy MetroWest thoroughfares. People who visit the campus for the first time are always amazed at how we have preserved a feeling of quiet New England at the top of this beautiful hill."



The official logo of the FSC 150th anniversary features the seals of the College and the Town, with the College's May Hall featured on the Town's seal. Designed by Jill Larrabee, FSC class of 2003.

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Illustrations

All illustrations in this booklet are from the archives of the Framingham Historical Society and Museum with the following exceptions: the portrait of Horace Mann is from the Brown University web site, www.brown.edu; the design for the FSC 150th Anniversary pin and the official FSC 150th Anniversary logo are courtesy of Framingham State College.

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Within weeks of receiving his baccalaureate degree from Framingham State College in 1976, Stephen W. Herring was elected Curator of the Framingham Historical Society. During his thirteen-year tenure he wrote *South Middlesex: A New England Heritage*, an illustrated regional history. In 1990 he was appointed to the Framingham Historical Commission and served as its chairman from 1991 until he stepped down in 2000. He is the author of *Framingham: An American Town*, written for Framingham's tercentennial in 2000. In 2001 he received the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution's History Award Medal. He has been serving as Framingham's official town historian since 1996.

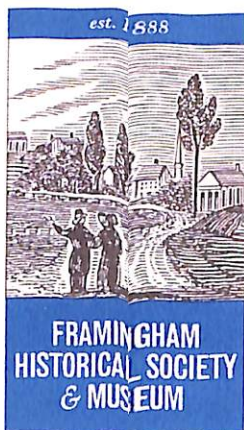
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