

STATE  
NORMAL  
SCHOOL



AT SALEM  
MASSACHUSETTS



HISTORICAL  
SKETCH 

READ AT THE DEDICATION OF THE  
NEW BUILDING, JANUARY 26, 1897

By 

ELLEN M. DODGE





STATE NORMAL SCHOOL

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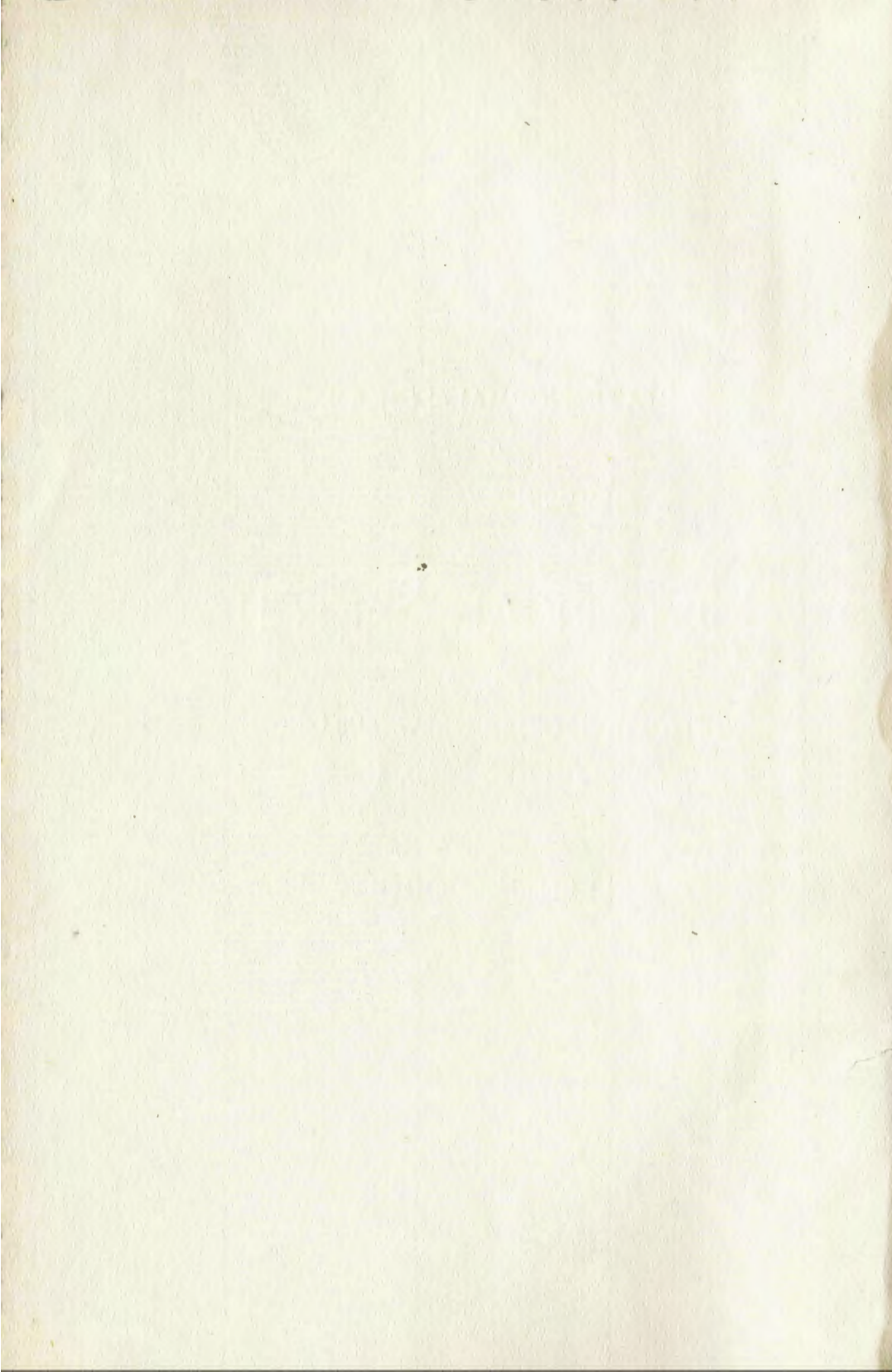
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## HISTORICAL SKETCH.

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Forty-two years ago, on the thirteenth of September, 1854, in what would seem a very humble birth-place compared with this stately edifice, our beloved school, the fourth in the family of Massachusetts, was born. That first home was a plain, square, two-story building, fronting upon Summer Street. But the new-born school was fortunate in having come into existence in this ancient, cultured city. From such an environment influences go forth which are none the less potent that they cannot be definitely measured.

The infant school had as its sponsors ex-Governor George S. Boutwell, shortly afterwards Secretary of the State Board of Education, and Dr. Henry Wheatland, whose name is a synonym of public spirit and good works.

It was first committed to the care of Richard Edwards and Miss Martha Kingman, now Mrs. Crosby, both graduates of the Bridgewater Normal School. Miss Elizabeth Weston, who has passed beyond our sight, but not beyond the grateful memory of those whose privilege it was to be her pupils, was soon summoned to their assistance.

The new life at the very outset was strong and vigorous. To drop the figure, the first class was large, numbering seventy-two, of a higher average age than

many of the succeeding classes, and possessed of great earnestness and ability. This class made ample return for what it had received, by giving to the school three superior teachers, namely: Miss Sarah R. Smith, Miss Mary B. Smith and Miss Phebe A. Breed, the last no longer living. Through all the years that have intervened, this first class has distinguished itself by its large attendance at the triennial gatherings, and, in general, by the unfailing interest that it has shown, in the school.

Dr. Edwards brought to this work the fervid enthusiasm which could not but communicate itself to his pupils; but, after three years of faithful and effective service, he heeded a call from a distant city, "Come over and help us," and Massachusetts lost him. Massachusetts' loss was Missouri's gain; he became principal of the city normal school in St. Louis. He afterwards presided over the Normal University at Bloomington, in the State of Illinois, and still later was superintendent of schools for that State. He is now engaged in writing for "The Public School Journal," published at Bloomington, a series of papers upon "The Rise and Progress of Normal Schools in the United States."

Alpheus Crosby, for many years Professor of Greek in Dartmouth College, was appointed to succeed Dr. Edwards. Professor Crosby realized keenly the lack, as things then were, of educational opportunities for women; and it was chiefly his ardent desire to do what in him lay to bring about a change for the better,

that led him to accept the appointment. He entered upon his work October 29, 1857.

His accurate and profound scholarship made itself felt in the school. He introduced some additional studies into the curriculum; among them, psychology into the undergraduate course. It had before been pursued as a distinct branch of study only by the advanced class.

As early in the history of the school as its fourth term, in 1856, an advanced class of thirteen members existed; but it was not until July, 1860, that the first graduation from such a class occurred. Six young women then received a second diploma.

Professor Crosby's views in regard to the teaching of geometry were in advance of those generally held, or at least acted upon, in those days. In a little book that he had written a few years before coming to Salem, he had aimed, by questions and hints, to lead students to originate demonstrations instead of reproducing them. This method was now adopted in the school.

During those early years, two days were set apart at the close of each term to be devoted to a public oral examination of the different classes in the various studies and to exercises of graduation. The latter, consisting, for the most part, of the reading of essays, usually occupied the last half-day. These oral examinations were examinations in the proper sense of the word, as the topics were often assigned by members of the Board of Education.

On one of these occasions, at the close of Professor Crosby's first term of office, among those who were present were the principals of all the other normal schools in the State, namely: Mr. Bigelow of Framingham, Mr. Conant of Bridgewater, Mr. Dickinson of Westfield, and Mr. Seavey of the Girls' High and Normal School, Boston.

In the year 1860, additional accommodation was provided for the growing school by the raising of the roof of its house and the finishing of certain rooms in the third story thus secured.

The last four years of Professor Crosby's administration were our country's period of "storm and stress." The school quietly pursued its work, though its numbers diminished. The Union cause lay very near our principal's heart, and he never suffered us to forget, if it could have been possible for us to do so, those who on distant battle-fields were striving, "at life's dear peril," to preserve for us the blessings that we were enjoying. When the war ended, he felt that the freedmen needed his help more than the school, and he resigned his position in order to edit a paper, "The Right Way," devoted to their interests. His own words were: "The critical condition of the country at the present time and the danger that the rights of the colored people will not be duly regarded in the coming reconstruction, have recently produced in my mind the decided conviction that I ought for a time to devote myself to efforts that would not consist with the proper discharge of my duties as principal of this school."



The resignations of Professor and Mrs. Crosby were deeply regretted. From its establishment, for a period of eleven years, Mrs. Crosby had been connected with the school. Her strong and beautiful personality had had a very large share in the moulding of its character, and she had greatly endeared herself to pupils and teachers. Those who were associated in the work of instruction with Professor Crosby know with what untiring zeal and utter disinterestedness he gave himself, during the eight years of his administration, to the duties of his office.

The board had, however, no hesitation in regard to the filling of the vacancy caused by Professor Crosby's withdrawal. They elected as his successor Daniel B. Hagar, then at the head of the high school in Jamaica Plain, and widely known in educational circles. Professor Crosby said in reference to the appointment, that he was "happy in committing the beloved school into the hands of one so admirably fitted to continue and increase its success and usefulness." On the sixth of September, 1865, the new principal began his long and eminently successful term of service.

The students had heretofore put their theory into practice by teaching their own schoolmates. This they continued to do, but Dr. Hagar made arrangements to have the senior class give in addition object-lessons to children from the neighboring primary school.

The Board of Education had decided to extend the course of study in the normal schools from a year and

a half to two years, and the first graduation from the two years' course took place in January, 1866.

After the close of the war there was a rapid increase in the number of pupils, and it became necessary to enlarge the school building. The work was begun in the summer of 1870. The city of Salem, which had earnestly desired that the school should be located in its midst, and had accordingly given the site and defrayed a considerable part of the cost of the original structure, generously gave the necessary additional land, and, while the changes were in progress, accommodated the school in a part of the high school building. In June, 1871, in connection with the customary exercises of graduation, the building, enlarged and altered, was re-dedicated.

Seats were now provided in the main hall for two hundred and ten pupils, but there were times when the number considerably exceeded this limit and some of the students had to be seated in other rooms. The largest number present during any term since the opening of the school was two hundred and fifty-eight, during the term which closed in January, 1878.

As time passed, the importance of instruction in the common schools in music, in drawing, and in the natural sciences was more and more recognized, and hence these subjects received more and more attention in our normal school. Through Dr. Hagar's efforts greatly improved facilities were provided for the teaching of physics and chemistry. In 1874, a chemical laboratory was completed in which the students could

perform their own experiments, and later, one for individual work in physics; and these branches have since, with the exception of a single year, been in the hands of specialists.

In 1882, manual training was introduced to some extent.

Gymnastic exercises began during Professor Crosby's régime and have continued to the present time.

From the first the school has been favored with lectures by persons eminent in their respective departments. I remember with what delight and profit we listened to a course upon physical geography, by Professor Guyot. And who that heard Professor Atkinson, of the Institute of Technology, can ever forget the charm with which he invested his favorite authors?

To renew old friendships, to interchange experiences, and to gain inspiration for the future, the past members of the school have held triennial gatherings.

On July third and fourth, 1879, the Quarter-Centennial Anniversary was celebrated. Interesting letters were read from certain of the alumnae who were working in distant parts of our own land or in other lands. The chief feature of the public exercises, held in the South Church, was the oration by Dr. Edwards, the first principal. From his closing words I extract the following:—

The Fourth of July is an eminently fit day for celebrating the anniversary of a normal school. Education is the source and the symbol of all true freedom. What is national independence to a man shrouded in mental darkness? What is

personal liberty to a man who has not the control of his own faculties? The fathers of '76 did well. Blessed be their memories! They set free the bodies of men; they ordained that outward tyranny should hold its hand. But there is a nobler independence. It is that which comes with culture. It comes as the soul looks forth upon new fields of knowledge.

Of all educational instrumentalities, the normal school is the most democratic. It has in it the largest measure of the genuine spirit of the Fourth of July. And so allow me to close with the earnest prayer that God may bless, and that men may honor and support, the normal school and the freedom represented by Fourth of July.

At the end of the summer term in 1890, Dr. Hagar had completed twenty-five years of devoted labor, and it was deemed fitting that the triennial convention which occurred at that time should be mainly commemorative of his valuable services. On this occasion a fine oil portrait of Dr. Hagar was presented to the school on behalf of his former pupils, by Miss Mary N. Plumer, then President of the Association of the alumnæ.

The school counts among its precious treasures portraits also of the first two principals and of Mrs. Crosby: that of Dr. Edwards, the appropriate gift of the last class admitted by him; the others, gifts of the Normal Association.

As the classes have one after another gone forth, they have left behind, in the shape of books or pictures or other benefactions, tangible evidence of their kindly interest in those who were to come after them.

Our telescope, bought with the contributions of many classes, is a perpetual reminder of such an interest.

I must not omit to make mention of our indebtedness also to Miss Mary N. Plumer, now Mrs. Hawken, a former teacher, for the accurate and complete catalogue of the school from its organization in 1854 to 1887, which, at great expenditure of time and labor, she prepared during her presidency of the Association.

With the passing of the years, the school has become more and more professional, has approached nearer and nearer to what the Board of Education contemplated in establishing normal schools; but, for the attainment of the best results, it had been felt for some time to be an absolute necessity that the students should have more, and better opportunities for the practice of teaching. It was impossible to give them such opportunities in the old building. The visitors therefore recommended in their report in 1892, the purchase of a new lot and the erection of a new building. The recommendation met with the approval of the entire Board, and, to carry it into effect, the Legislature appropriated the sum of two hundred thousand dollars.

Accordingly, in the spring of 1893 the necessary land was bought, and in the fall of the same year work was begun.

To the unremitting attention which Mr. Charles E. Adams, of our body of teachers, has given to every least detail of the construction and furnishing, are

largely due the convenience and attractiveness of our new home.

Within the limits of Salem, no spot could have been found that commands a fairer outlook than this which here greets our eyes. The quiet beauty of the hills, the water, and the sky rests and gladdens, and day by day weaves itself into the imperishable texture of mind and heart.

As this "House Beautiful" was approaching completion, our joy in the prospect of occupying it was overshadowed by the severe illness and consequent resignation of our principal, followed a few weeks later by his death.

He was succeeded in September, 1896, by Dr. Walter P. Beckwith, whose long experience as superintendent of schools and intimate acquaintance with their needs made eminently fitting his appointment as head of a normal school.

To recapitulate briefly, our history falls naturally into three periods: the first, of three years, from 1854 to 1857, during the administration of Dr. Edwards; the second, of eight years, from 1857 to 1865, during the administration of Professor Crosby; and the third, of thirty-one years, from 1865 to 1896, during the administration of Dr. Hagar.

Four thousand, two hundred and thirteen pupils have attended the school. If we include those who go out from among us to-day, two thousand, one hundred and thirty-two will have graduated from the first course and one hundred and twenty-six from the

second. While our own State has furnished the majority of these, a considerable number have come from other parts of our country and some from other countries. The distant States of Florida, Texas and Washington have sent their contribution, and on our roll of graduates stands one name from remote Japan. Fields of work, too, are as widely separated, although the larger part of those who leave us, by teaching in our own Essex county fulfil the purpose had in view in the location of the school.

In this spacious and beautiful dwelling, erected for it by its far-seeing and noble mother, the Commonwealth, and equipped by her with every facility and appliance for the best of service, the school seems about to enter upon a larger and richer life than it has hitherto been able to lead.

Sixty teachers in all, in one capacity or another, have thus far ministered to its needs. Of these, twelve have passed on to other ministries. We listen in vain for their words of wisdom and of cheer.

"No voice is heard, no sign is made,  
No step is on the conscious floor."

Yet may we not believe that, even in that new experience, the interest that they once felt in the school for which they so faithfully labored, they still feel? Surely he whose life for more than thirty years was one with the life of the school is with us to-day. Though we may not see him, we feel his gracious presence. He rejoices with us in the future of grow-

ing prosperity and usefulness that is opening before the school which was and is so dear to him.

For that future, what wish more fitting on this day of our school's new birth than the one which was uttered on the day of its first consecration to its life of service: "The Normal School of Essex County, — may it succeed in reviving and establishing the normal method of learning, teaching and living, in this elder portion of our old Commonwealth!"

Be it ours, by the clear vision of those high ideals, that "solemn beauty," which guided the earnest spirits who went before us, and by the strenuous will which strives continually toward the realization of such ideals, to enter into and possess that future, and thus to help that wish to its fulfilment.



