

The *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* has evolved and expanded over its forty-year history. Covers from 1979, 1981 and 1987.

## PHOTO ESSAY

# The *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* and Westfield State University: A Brief History

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This special double issue of the *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* marks the publication's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. The journal's founder, Dr. Martin Kaufman, joined the history department at Westfield State in 1969 and taught until his retirement in 1998. His strong interest in state and local history led him to establish the *Historical Journal of Western Massachusetts* in 1972. The first few issues were forty-eight pages each. In 1980 the journal's focus was expanded to include the entire Commonwealth. It was renamed the *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* and quickly grew to more than one hundred pages.

In 1981, Dr. Kaufman established the Institute for Massachusetts Studies at Westfield State. The institute sponsored an annual Conference on Massachusetts History (1979-1991) and developed a book publishing program, eventually publishing twelve collections, including: *Massachusetts in the Gilded Age* (1985), *Education in Massachusetts* (1989), *Labor in Massachusetts* (1990), *Sports in Massachusetts* (1991), and *Massachusetts Politics* (1998). During this time, Joseph Carvalho III served as associate editor (1978–2003). Currently, Carvalho serves on the Board of Trustees of Westfield State University.



**Dr. Martin Kaufman**

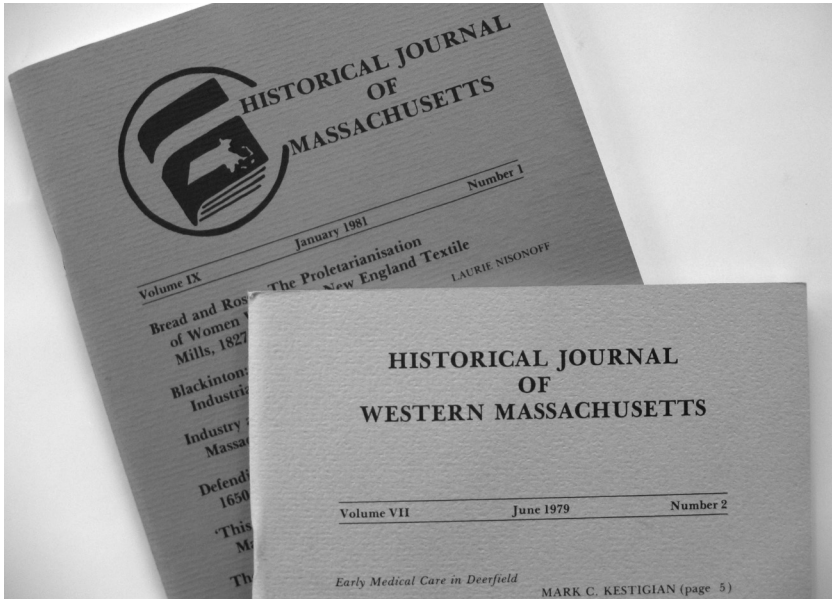
Many authors who first published their research in the journal went on to publish books which have added significantly to our understanding of Massachusetts history. Dr. Kaufman also initiated HJM's internship program which has trained hundreds of undergraduates in the skills involved in producing a historical journal. Interns remain crucial to the journal's success.

From 1997-2008, Dr. Michael F. Konig served as editorial director and Timothy Symington as associate editor (2000-08). Dr. Konig authored *Study in Leadership: Springfield and Its Mayors* (1986) and co-authored two other books published by the Institute. In the summer of 2008, Dr. Mara Dodge became editorial director. Her areas of research include women's history, labor

history, legal history, and the history of crime and punishment. She is the author of *"Whores and Thieves of the Worst Kind": Women, Crime, and Prisons, 1835-2000*. Her current research focuses on the life of a Holyoke textile union leader, Anna B. Sullivan.

Today, HJM is produced by a part-time but highly dedicated team that includes three associate editors (Fred Cooksey, Dr. Chalet Seidel and Dr. Robert Weir) along with numerous volunteers: eight editorial board members, two dozen advisory board members, one graduate assistant, and numerous interns. HJM is a highly labor-intensive endeavor. As a peer-reviewed or "refereed" journal, every article that is submitted is read by two editors and two outside expert "peer reviewers" before it is accepted. Currently, our acceptance rate is approximately thirty-five percent. Even after the initial review, most articles go through three to four drafts before a final version is ready for copyediting, several rounds of proofreading, and then, finally, printing. The photographs over the next few pages provide a "behind-the-scenes" glimpse into our production process.

At the same time that the *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Westfield State University approaches its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The university has a long and distinguished history that reflects the history of education in America. Its origins can be traced to noted educator and social reformer Horace Mann; it can proudly declare itself the first public, co-educational, "normal" (or teacher training) school in the United States.



In 1980 the publication was renamed and expanded its focus from western Massachusetts to cover all of Massachusetts history.



In 2009 HJM was completely redesigned to create a more modern and graphically appealing publication that would appeal to both scholars and the general public. In 2010 it received the first Mass History Commendation Award.



As these photos suggest, HJM is produced with a barebones budget and enormous volunteer labor. Our workplace is a crowded section of an office shared with two faculty members. The “HJM corner” houses a single computer and is boxed in by overflowing bookshelves and banks of filing cabinets. It is always filled with interns and staff vying for work space. Folding tables add some extra room.



Left: Dr. Nicholas Aieta reviews a manuscript with editorial assistant Ryan Bell.

The *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* would not exist without the very generous institutional and financial support of Westfield State University and the WSU History Department. Westfield State University underwrites 75% of our costs and has done so for the last forty years.



The first “Editor’s Choice” selection in this fortieth anniversary issue explores the history of Westfield State University during its years as a normal school. The normal school was a distinct institution designed primarily for training elementary school teachers (Kindergarten through eighth grades). It was explicitly modeled after the Prussian, state-supported system of teacher training, as well as after the French *école normale*, from which the normal school name was derived. Its purpose was to establish teaching standards or *norms*, hence the name. Normal schools were designed to provide standardized and regulated teacher preparation and to help produce a cohort of trained educators to meet the needs of the elementary schools (referred to as “common schools” at the time).

Horace Mann explained in the *Common School Journal*:

The term Normal Schools has for some time been familiar to the literary men of this country. In Prussia, where schools for the qualification of teachers have long been in successful operation, they are universally known by the epithet, Normal. France having copied, to some extent, the Prussia system, has borrowed the name . . . . A normal school signifies a school, where the rules of practice and the principles of guidance and direction in the various departments of Education are taught.<sup>1</sup>

In 1837, Horace Mann was elected Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education (the first such position in the United States). In 1838, as a result of Mann’s forceful leadership, the state legislature voted funds to match a \$10,000 gift from Edmund Dwight of Boston to fund a “three-year experiment” in “qualifying teachers for the common schools.” The legislation was signed by Governor Edward Everett on April 19, 1838.

In order to pass, the law was intentionally left vague: it did not specify where or how the funds should be spent and left all decision-making to the discretion of the newly established State Board of Education. Some legislators argued that the funds should go to develop teacher training programs at the state’s many private academies (or high schools). The Board of Education, however, under the leadership of Horace Mann, insisted that the funds be used to establish three public teacher-training schools as “experiments.”<sup>2</sup> In 1839, two schools opened: the first at Lexington (female only, later moved to Framingham) and the second at Barre (co-educational, later moved to Westfield). In 1840, a third school was established at Bridgewater.

Eventually, most states adopted a version of the system Mann pioneered in Massachusetts, especially the program for normal schools to train

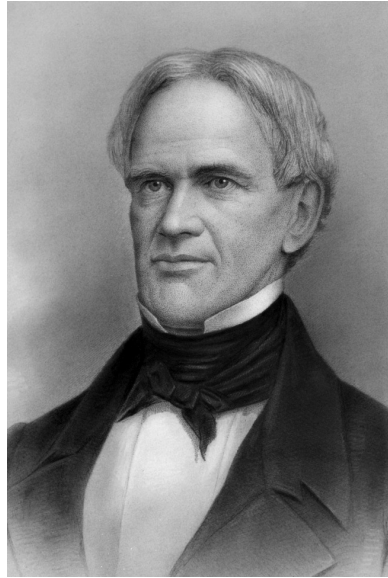
professional teachers. Nearly two hundred state colleges and universities throughout the United States began as normal schools.<sup>3</sup> As historian John R. Thelin explains, “The history of the normal schools is confusing because it is not always clear how they were classified in the education taxonomy. At times they were lumped with secondary schools. At other times, they were considered a distinct category within higher education.”<sup>4</sup>

Westfield’s precursor, the co-educational school at Barre, MA, (located twenty-three miles northwest of Worcester), first opened its doors in September 1839 with twelve female and eight male students. No building existed and classes were held on the second floor of the town hall. The Barre school, however, closed in 1841. Many factors contributed to its demise, including geographical isolation, lack of local support, and the principal’s untimely death.<sup>5</sup>

The State Board of Education was aware that a co-educational school could be controversial. From the beginning they proceeded cautiously and were primarily motivated by issues of economy, efficiency, and convenience. In 1838, they reported:

How far it may be deemed expedient to establish schools where both sexes shall be admitted, must depend on public opinion in the section of the State where the school may be placed; and on this point the Board was unable as yet to form a definite opinion. Where no objection is made to the admission of both sexes, there will of course be a convenience in organizing the school on this principle.<sup>6</sup>

As no objections had been raised by the residents of Barre, that school was created as a co-educational experiment. This bold experiment was continued at Westfield.



**Horace Mann, 1796 – 1859**



The campaign to move the school to Westfield was led by Reverend Emerson Davis, pastor of Westfield's First Congregational Church, and William Gelson Bates, a Westfield attorney and member of the state House of Representatives. At the time, Westfield was a thriving industrial community and the largest settlement between Springfield and Albany. It was the ideal location for a school devoted to teacher training. (WSU's Davis and Bates Halls are named in their honor.)<sup>7</sup>

From 1844 to 1932, the institution was known as the Westfield Normal School or the State Normal School at Westfield. During these decades, the student body fluctuated, sometimes wildly, between one hundred and two hundred students annually.<sup>8</sup> Although founded as a co-educational institution, the percentage of men in the student body declined rapidly from 45% male at Barre (1839-42) to a mere 5% during the years 1882-96. After 1898, only a handful of men attended until a special program to prepare junior high teachers was created in 1938. The drastic decline in the number of male students reflected the rapid feminization of primary school teaching. This was due, in part, to the profession's increasingly low status and pay. Whereas in 1834 men represented 44% of Massachusetts primary school teachers, by 1880 only 14% were male.<sup>9</sup>

Similar to its sister schools, it would take a century before Westfield was transformed into a college-level institution. A high school degree was not a requirement for admission until 1895, and a certificate was the only "degree" conferred. Many students could only afford to attend for one or two "terms" (semesters), although some were able to complete an advanced and academically demanding three-year program. In 1928, the required program of studies was increased from two to three years. In 1932, a dramatic transformation occurred: all of the Commonwealth's normal schools were renamed and their mission redefined. The institution became the State Teachers College at Westfield. For the first time in its history, Westfield was allowed to offer a four-year, Bachelor of Science in Education degree. In 1933, the first BSE degrees were conferred.<sup>10</sup>

In 1938, Holyoke native Edward Scanlon, for whom Scanlon Hall is named, arrived on the verge of Westfield's 100th anniversary and began his twenty-two years of battling repeated legislative attempts to close the college. He served as president from 1938 to 1961 and was fortunate to see, in the 1950s, a new era dawn for the state's teacher colleges. This was due, in part, to the post-World War II baby boom and national economic upturn. In 1951, the state legislature appropriated three million dollars for a completely new campus. Two years later, the Westfield City Council voted to convey to the Commonwealth for one dollar a tract of twenty-six acres of city-owned

land on Western Avenue as the site for a new campus for the Westfield State Teachers College. In 1956, the college left its tiny downtown location for a spacious campus setting; its student body stood at 358, the highest in its history.<sup>11</sup>

Massachusetts' private colleges no longer felt threatened by the state's public teachers colleges. Unlike earlier decades, the private schools offered little resistance to the legislature's 1960 decision to allow the state teachers colleges to offer degrees in fields other than education. At Westfield, freshmen of the class of 1962 were the first eligible to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree rather than a BS in Education. In 1966, the first BA degrees were awarded to students with majors in English, history, and mathematics.<sup>12</sup>

On May 24, 1968, the legislature again voted to change the names of the state teachers colleges in order to redefine and broaden their mission: the institution was now Westfield State College. The curriculum expanded rapidly, and by 1969, majors were available in Spanish, psychology, criminal justice, and general science, in addition to English, history, mathematics, and the traditional education degree. In 1970, music, art, social science, and special education were added; 1972 brought biology, followed by physical education (1973), economics (1974), political science (1976), computer science (1979), and media studies (1980). The size of Westfield's student body grew equally rapidly: from 358 students in 1956, to 1,472 in 1966, and 2,626 in 1974. Meanwhile, the number of bachelor's degree graduates rose from 135 in 1965 to 549 in 1974. At the same time, the campus expanded from five buildings in 1965 to twelve in 1974.<sup>13</sup>

From 1968 to 2010, the institution functioned as Westfield State College. As a liberal arts college, it continued to expand throughout the 1980s and 1990s, adding many more new majors while developing both MA and MEd programs in many fields. Today, it offers thirty-one undergraduate majors and forty-three concentrations. In 2010, the institution became Westfield State University. WSU's dramatic growth and many transformations over the past two centuries are a testament to its many visionary leaders and their dedication to the cause of public higher education.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Horace Mann, *The Common School Journal* (February 1839), p. 49. In 1923, one teachers college president jokingly referred to normal schools as “the adaptation of a German idea, tagged with a French name, and developed in a new continent.” Quoted in James W. Fraser, *Preparing America’s Teachers: A History* (NY: Teachers College Press, 2006), p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Robert T. Brown, *The Rise and Fall of the People’s Colleges: The Westfield Normal School, 1839-1914* (Westfield, MA: Institute for Massachusetts Studies, 1988), p. 14-15. According to Brown, technically these first three normal schools were not legal creations of the Commonwealth until 1870 when they were first explicitly named in Chapter 106 of the Resolves of 1870.

<sup>3</sup> Christine A. Ogren, *The American State Normal School: “An Instrument of Great Good.”* (NY: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press; 2nd ed., 2011), p. 85. Both Ogren (op. cit) and Thelin delve extensively into the history and evolution of the Massachusetts normal schools. See also Jurgen Herbst. *And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> Brown, p. 22-23. As Brown aptly notes, “By the spring of 1842 the first two normal schools in America had been dismal failures.” The state’s initial three-year “experiments” at both Barre and Lexington were forced to relocate.

<sup>6</sup> *Second Annual Report of the Board of Education* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, State Printers, 1839), p.12. In their *Third Annual Report* the board again reassured its readers that the Barre normal school was co-educational while the Lexington school was female-only due to the “public preference in the two places.” (p. 7)

<sup>7</sup> Brown, 29-31.

<sup>8</sup> In his text, Brown reports that 260 students were enrolled. According to the 1856 Annual Report, however, the college catalog listed only 145 students that year (p. 43). In footnote #28, Brown explains that “enrollment figures vary depending on the method used for counting pupils and the source of the data. The Annual Reports always give the highest number.” These numbers often included many students who did not complete the semester. The numbers Brown presents in his appendix from the college catalogs (p. 127-29) appear to be more accurate.

<sup>9</sup> Student gender ratio percentages calculated from enrollment numbers presented in Brown, pp. 127-28. State teacher gender ratio percentages calculated from numbers provided by Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A. Vinovskis, *Education and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1980), Table A7.12

<sup>10</sup> Massachusetts WPA Writers’ Project, *The State Teachers College at Westfield* (Boston: Massachusetts Department of Education, 1941), p. 74-75.

<sup>11</sup> Brown, 123-25. By 1950 Westfield had completely outgrown its nineteenth-century buildings in downtown Westfield. In 1953 it was the only state teachers

college not to be accredited “due primarily to shortages in the physical plant.” However, in 1951 the state legislature had already appropriated funds for a completely new campus (Burkett, 21).

<sup>12</sup> Susan Burkett, *Westfield State College: 142 Years as a Cinderella School*, MA Thesis (Westfield, MA: Westfield State College), 1980, p. 23. Burkett’s colorful title is taken from a quote by a state legislator in 1924: “The normal schools have been the Cinderellas of the Education family in Massachusetts. Themselves neglected and looked down upon, they have done far more than their full share in giving to the state its distinguished position in all other phases of Education.” (quoted on title page) See Burkett for more on the campaign to close the state teacher’s colleges in the late 1930s, pp. 17-19.

<sup>13</sup> Burkett, p. 25.