

Framingham History Center Scope of Collections

We collect artifacts, tangible and intangible, that are quintessentially Framingham. Our collections hold up a mirror to the community while answering the question “What makes this place special?”

Our collections tell the stories of:

- Our Special Places: villages, neighborhoods, and communal spaces (Downtown Common, Centre Common, places of worship, Shopper’s World)
- Industry and Business: The evolution from cottage industries to global corporations and their impact on the community (straw bonnets, mills and manufacturing, biotech...)
- The Creative Spirit: moments of invention, innovation, and art (Margaret Knight, Meta Warrick Fuller, Floyd Walser, Dennison products...)
- The Land: Its variety, its beauty, and its natural resources
- The Changing Built Environment: the coexistence of rural, urban, and suburban development
- A Regional and Cultural Crossroads: The intersection of railroads, highways, and diverse communities
- The Volunteer Spirit: serving community and country (The Heart Study, Civil War enlistment, Peter Parker in China, the Military Girls’ Club...)
- The Lived Experience of Framingham: attending its schools, building its houses, working in its factories (farm diaries, personal letters, photos...)
- Families: Old families, new families, and families of choice; the ways they direct and drive the community
- Institutions, Traditions, and Celebrations: Those that are lost and those that continue (Town Meeting, Centennial celebrations, the FHC, the First Parish...)
- Immigrant Communities: how they developed, interacted and became part of the fabric of Framingham
- Class: class mobility, where classes mingle, where they diverge (Millwood Hunt, The North/South divide, Gentleman Farmers, Mill workers...)
- Community Inflection Points: Moments of change and resistance to change
- Presence: Framingham’s participation in significant national and international events. (Harmony Grove, Crispus Attucks, Heart Study, President Clinton in Framingham...)

The FHC does not collect:

- Artifacts based solely on aesthetics
- Artifacts that have no specific tie to Framingham
- Artifacts with no provenance or story