

## Edward Devotion and the Edward Devotion School: A Chronology

1645 - Edward Devotion (1621-1685), an immigrant French Protestant (or Huguenot) first appeared in the records of Muddy River, a hamlet of the Town of Boston.

c.1680 – This first Edward Devotion, or possibly his son John, built a house on what is now Harvard Street.

1740 - Edward Devotion (1668-1744), the son or grandson of the first Edward Devotion — records are unclear — sold the Harvard Street house and land to Solomon Hill. (Devotion's primary residence at this time was another house on Washington Street.) The current Edward Devotion House was probably built by Hill over the frame of the c1680 house.

1744 - Death of the second Edward Devotion. His will, executed the year before his death, decreed that any money left over after payment of his debts and funeral expenses and other bequests be used "towards building or maintaining a School as near the centre of the said town as shall be agreed upon by the town." If a site for a new school could not be agreed upon, the money was to be used to purchase a wood lot for use by the town to support the town's school and church. An inventory of his property compiled after his death included land, livestock, household goods, and "one Negrow" valued at 30 pounds.

1762 - The former Devotion land and house on Harvard Street reverted to Devotion's widow Mary upon the failure of Solomon Hill to pay the mortgage on the property. It was then sold, and the town, as stipulated in the will, received funds. In 1837, these funds were recorded as amounting to \$2,281.01. The town added additional funds received from the Federal government, bringing the total amount to just over \$4,500.

1844 - The money in the Edward Devotion Fund was allocated toward the construction of the new Brookline Town Hall on Prospect Street, near the location of the current Town Hall. The building contained two rooms used as school rooms.

1884 - Town Meeting, apparently considering the use of the funds for the Town Hall not to have fulfilled Devotion's bequest, voted to add \$5,000 to the Devotion Fund to be put toward expansion of the Brookline High School on School Street. A large hall in the school was named the Edward Devotion Hall in recognition of Devotion's bequest, and a plaque commemorating his gift was placed in the school. (The plaque was lost when the old Brookline High School was replaced by a new building on Greenough Street in 1893.)

1891 – A large portion of the former Edward Devotion property, including the Edward Devotion House, was purchased by the Town from the estate of a later owner, Nahum Smith, for \$61,000. The property had passed through several owners after 1762, including William Marshall, Israel Thorndike, and George Babcock.

1892 – A new school named the Edward Devotion School was built on the site. (No record of a discussion of the naming at the time has been found.) Other buildings were added in 1898 and 1913. The 1892 and 1898 buildings were later replaced. The 1913 building is incorporated into the new school scheduled to open in September 2018.

Brookline Historical Society, April 2018

Additional Facts

2006 - The Town's Human Relation-Youth Resources Department established the Hidden Brookline Committee "to bring to light the hidden history of slavery and freedom in our town."

2009 - The Hidden Brookline Committee, with the support of the Town's Cemetery Committee, placed a carved memorial stone in the wall of The Old Burying Ground. Titled "Slavery in Brookline," this stone honored those who had never received honor in their lifetimes. Several hundred attended the hour-long ceremony.

2012 - For the first time since the days of slavery in Brookline, Town Meeting discussed and acknowledged the history of slavery here. Hidden Brookline Committee's warrant article passed. The resolution "acknowledges with profound regret the enslavement of Native-Americans and African-Americans and the exploitation of slave labor by this Town, within this Town, and amongst the citizens of this Town." The 2012 Resolution specifically mentions that Edward Devotion owned a slave at the time of his death.

2017 - In August 2017, residents began writing School Committee officials and the Superintendent about renaming the Edward Devotion School. They either received no response or were told that they would get back to them.

March 8, 2018 – Submitted Warrant Article to change the name of the Edward Devotion School.

HELP US IN ESTABLISHING A MORE SUITABLE NAME FOR THE DEVOTION SCHOOL  
[www.renamedevo.com](http://www.renamedevo.com)