



BETWEEN 1845–1849 famine struck Ireland after the country’s potato crop was blighted. Thousands of starving Irish-Catholic families fled to America. The Irish had been coming to Massachusetts for decades to work, but not in such great numbers. Many settled in cities such as Boston, where they faced anti-Catholic prejudice and a life of poverty. A Boston memorial to the Great Famine, unveiled in 1998, has since caused controversy on both sides of the Atlantic.

EDUCATION CHAMPION TAKES SEAT

HORACE MANN, the Franklin-born educational reformer, yesterday began a new chapter in his remarkable career—as a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Massachusetts. He plans to make his first congressional speech on the evils of slavery, *writes our education correspondent, April 4, 1848.*

Mann is best known for championing public education. It has been said no one has done more to establish that, in a democratic society, education should be free and universal, and promote civic virtue.

As Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, he has won support for building public schools. Since then, many U.S. states have adopted a version of the education

system he has pioneered in Massachusetts.

Mann strongly believes that education should be provided by well-trained, professional teachers. To this end, he devised a “normal” school system for the training of professional teachers in Bridgewater and other centers in Massachusetts. He believes that women are particularly well suited to becoming teachers.

Mann, whose father was a farmer, grew up facing poverty and hardship. He had little schooling as a boy but made use of Franklin Public Library, one of America’s first public lending libraries. Aged 20, he gained admission to Brown University. He later served in the Massachusetts legislature after choosing law as a career.