

The Framingham History Center Presents:

# Framingham House Tour

Sunday, May 15, 2016  
12 p.m. - 5 p.m.

[www.framinghamhistory.org](http://www.framinghamhistory.org)  
Framingham, MA

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## The Framingham House Tour is Presented by:

The Framingham History Center  
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508-626-9091  
[www.framinghamhistory.org](http://www.framinghamhistory.org)

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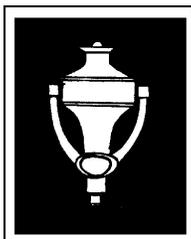
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### Acknowledgments:

The Framingham History Center would like to thank the homeowners who have made this tour possible by graciously opening their homes and the many volunteers who have contributed their time and services.

We thank our contributors, sponsors, patrons and advertisers for their support. We encourage you to patronize these businesses.



Welcome to the Framingham History Center's 14th House Tour. This year, we present a wonderful opportunity for you to visit sites spanning four centuries of Framingham life (1696-1980). If this is your first House Tour, please note that the tour is self-guided and you can enjoy the afternoon at your own pace with family, friends and neighbors. Be sure to include a stop at the Quaker Meeting House to not only tour this 1839 schoolhouse but to also enjoy complimentary refreshments. There is a restroom here as well. Our popular raffle will be set up at the Dennison Avenue home outside as you tour the beautiful terraces overlooking Gleason Pond. Winners will be drawn at 5 p.m. today and you do not need to be present to win.

This year's House Tour is sponsored by Arbella, Bernardi Auto Group, Fitts Insurance, Murphy, Edwards, Goncalves and Ferrera, PC and MutualOne Bank. In addition to our sponsors, we thank the many businesses who advertise in this booklet. Please support them, as they consistently support the Framingham History Center. We would also like to extend our thanks to the 100+ volunteers who greet and assist guests at our featured homes, run the raffle, provide refreshments, stage the Patron's Party and generally contribute to this effort through our House Tour Committee.

Finally, we couldn't have this event without the homeowners who so generously open their homes up to you in support of our organization. This tour is the Framingham History Center's largest fundraiser and all proceeds benefit our operations in support of our FHC's mission. We are a non-profit 501c3 organization. We are not funded by the Town of Framingham and we are dependent on your participation in events like this, membership dues, donations and bequests. To learn more about FHC membership, programs, events and volunteer opportunities, visit [www.framinghamhistory.org](http://www.framinghamhistory.org). If you would like to get involved with next year's House Tour or any of our programming please contact Jennifer Toth at 508-626-9091 or email [jennifer@framinghamhistory.org](mailto:jennifer@framinghamhistory.org).

Susan Silva, House Tour Chair

*Mission*

*The mission of the Framingham History Center is to preserve and share Framingham's history in order to encourage connection to community.*

**This Guide is your ticket!**  
**Please present it for admission at each house.**

**Please follow these guidelines:**

- Houses are open between 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. only.
- **Use the following link to access an on-line map.**  
**<http://bit.ly/HT2016map>**
- Observe all Framingham parking regulations and note any special parking instructions in this booklet.
- As you enter each house please present your booklet opened to the correct page so it may be checked off.
- No photographs may be taken in any of the houses.
- Children must have their own ticket unless they are in a backpack.
- Strollers or carriages are not allowed in the houses.
- Food and drink are not allowed in the houses.
- Restrooms are available at the Quaker Meeting House. Restrooms are **not** to be used in the tour homes. 
- Please respect the privacy of the homeowners and abide by all requests of the host/hostesses. Do not open any closed doors or drawers.
- We reserve the right to ask visitors to leave the tour.
- Visitors assume full responsibility for protecting their own safety and the property of the others while on the tour.

Join us for complimentary refreshments at the Quaker Meeting House and take part in our raffle at 81 Dennison Ave.



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## 1) 10 HILLTOP LANE

*(Take Wayside Inn or Nixon Road to Parmenter Road.  
Please park on Hill Top Lane, same side as house.)*



**Their Dream Home:** This husband and wife team knew they wanted “a new house that looked old” and quickly sketched a farmhouse-styled home on a paper napkin before seeking out master craftsman Tedd Benson of Bensonwood. This industrious pair worked alongside Tedd and his crew for 9 months before completing their home in July, 1980. They drilled 1,200 floor pegs and laid the breezeway’s Mexican terra cotta tile and recruited family and friends to help install the knotty pine ceiling. Together they created a warm, open-concept, timber-frame house in Framingham’s furthest northwest corner - a home where they raised their three sons and daughter, a home they still love after 35 years.

**Its Design:** Our homeowners selected Tedd Benson as their builder because he helped spearhead the U.S. return to this once popular “built to last” timber-frame technique. The exposed central frame consists of heavy timbers and woodworking joints secured by pegs not nails which add to the home’s natural beauty. A soaring 28’ cathedral ceiling, floor to ceiling field-stone fireplace and south-facing, Palladian window immediately capture your attention. Details Not to Miss: the timber-frame master bedroom suite and the 1930s style pantry; the wide variety of woods used - from the Northern Red Oak frame to the fir trim, knotty pine ceiling, old growth Southern Yellow Pine flooring and Roasted Curly Maple pantry counter tops; the purchased New England antiques including the kitchen’s 124-year old wood stove, the kitchen ceiling’s reclaimed railroad beam, the sunroom’s stained glass window and the staircase’s newel post; and a wide array of eclectic furnishings from the Victorian to the modern era. No wonder they’ve hosted four weddings here.

**Some History:** The 1 1/2 acre house plot was once part of “Old” Dr. Dinsmore’s Farm. Dr. Richard John Dinsmore (1875-1961) was a Harvard (Class of 1899) educated veterinarian who focused his practice on large farm animals. His proximity to many local farms in Framingham, Southborough and Sudbury allowed him to establish a decent following and livelihood even though he was not the only vet in town.<sup>7</sup>



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2) 847 EDMANDS ROAD  
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**First a Schoolhouse:** Framingham's District No. 7 schoolhouse was built in 1839 and is one of two surviving schoolhouses in town. This was actually the third schoolhouse at the Nixon and Edmands Road notch. This one-story 29' x 38' wooden structure has an oak and pine frame, a clapboard exterior, and 10' ceilings. The front entries remain located on the building's gabled end. The 12 over 12 double-hung windows still have their iron counter weights. You will traverse the outside steps made from the granite sills that were once part of the schoolhouse's foundation. In 1881, the numbered district schools were replaced by more centralized, larger schools except in the town's more remote areas. NW's District No. 7 and 8 schoolhouses stayed in operation into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Around 1915, this schoolhouse was given to the Park Department for community events and local farm families cared for the building into the 1950s.

**Now a Quaker Meetinghouse:** In 1964, the Quakers bought the schoolhouse and it became the meetinghouse for Framingham Friends. They moved the building a mere 150' onto land donated by local member Margaret Pearmain Welch. They have expanded the structure several times to fit their needs. The schoolhouse itself serves as their meeting room for worship. The original woodstove was replaced by a central heating system and a large, brick fireplace which warms the room during winter months. On the wall opposite the fireplace, sits the original schoolhouse chalk tray. Seating is now provided by wooden benches but notice the original teacher's desk located opposite the main first floor entrance and the student desks throughout the meetinghouse. Feel free to walk the grounds. On the building's left rear you will find the Friends Circle Garden added in 1991 as a burial ground for ashes only. Near the northeast corner of the meetinghouse is a small wood shed that may have once served as the building's outhouse. The Framingham Friends Meetinghouse is one of many Quaker Meetinghouses and Churches in the world. In 2011, it was estimated there were 377,000 Friends worldwide.

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### 3) 71 HARRINGTON ROAD

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**Its Beginnings:** In 1705, Jonas Eaton bought the 80 acres of land listed on the 1699 map of Framingham as “half mile square 1693” and built his homestead. It was most likely a two story box – two rooms deep that evolved into this Brick End Federal Style post and beam home. The brick sides, hipped roof, four towering chimneys and symmetrically aligned 6 over 6 double-hung sash windows all contribute to the home’s graceful exterior.

Members of the Eaton family lived here until 1840 and subsequent owners have ensured the survival of its historic features. The lay-out of the house was flip-flopped when Harrington Road needed to be rerouted to accommodate the railroad in 1834. The back of the house became the front and the current homeowner recently made improvements to give the home a proper front entryway with stately federal period columns that would have reflected the nation’s growing wealth in the 1790s.

**Inside the Home:** Upon entering the house, note the steep stairs that were originally the back stairs used by servants. This stairway differs dramatically from the “good morning staircase” toward the back of the house and is noteworthy as the single set of stairs splits in two at the landing. Imagine family members emerging from either side of the house and greeting each other at this landing. On the summer solstice, the sun shines directly through the open door onto this formal staircase. The dining room’s beehive oven is a must see. The wainscoting and doors in the den are original along with the door hardware. Both the front and back doors have their original metal strap hinges. The back door’s lower lock is also original. Note how the living room was formerly two rooms. An early 20<sup>th</sup> Century addition on the north side of the house holds the kitchen and laundry. The third level, which is not accessible for this tour, contains a built in Captain’s bed and bath. During the Victorian Era, it was the maid’s quarters.

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#### 4) 161 BELKNAP ROAD (Please park on the even side of the road.)



**The Pike-Haven House**, built in 1696, is one of the few existing homes that pre-dates Framingham's June 25, 1700 incorporation as a town. The home's namesakes are Jeremiah Pike, a spinning wheel maker, and Gideon Haven, an apprentice married to Jeremiah's granddaughter.

This 12 room Gambrel is so well preserved because it was in the same family for 252 years until Annie Foster died in 1948. The original house consisted of only two stacked rooms creating a two storied, peaked roof structure. These rooms may be identified by the leaded glass, diamond-shaped windows, low ceilings and curved gun-stock corner posts. From the original 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bedroom, the one plank floor allows you to see into the room below. Over the home's lifespan, there have been 7 additions which the former owner painstakingly documented in an article published in *The Bulletin for the Preservation of New England Antiquities* in the October-November 1954 issue. The article is available at <http://bit.ly/pikehaven>. When entering the 1750 addition, notice the higher ceilings, painted beams and beaded doors over the fireplace. Throughout the house you will see antique blown glass windows; raised paneling; broad, hand-planed feather-edged boards; period latches and hinges on doors; bee hive ovens; and bull's eye door glass. In the 1960s, a Federal Style room was added as a music room. It is a grand space with large, hand blown glass windows, a vaulted ceiling, beautiful moldings and a herringbone-patterned wood floor - all set off with a crystal chandelier. The room now serves as a game or family room.

**It's Role in the American Revolution:** Pike Row was a trail leading from the Pike-Haven House down Belknap Rd. crossing over what is now Edgell Rd. to Brook Street where Jeremiah's son Michael lived. It was an ideal spot to conceal Colonel Henry Knox's cannon train as it made its way from Fort Ticonderoga, NY to Boston. The train, representing the Continental Army's entire artillery arsenal, arrived in Framingham on January 24, 1776 where cannons were hidden in barns throughout the area. John Adams stopped by to inspect the arsenal on his way to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

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*Featured on the 2009 House Tour*



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vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity."  
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## 5) 33 GROVE STREET

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**Connections to Notable Framingham Residents:** This butter-cream clapboard-sided Antique Colonial Home, built in 1812, has long been known by locals as Mrs. Gordon's House. The recently widowed Mrs. Gordon moved here in 1828 from Charlestown to run the boarding house for students who came as far away as Maryland to attend Framingham Academy, a prestigious school located on Vernon Street. Her two boys – George who was then 5, and Robert 7 - attended and received the benefit of a free education. George rose to the rank of General in the Union Army. His moral instruction, academic discipline and many Academy friends have been considered contributing factors to George's becoming a Civil War hero. Antiquarian Wallace Nutting, most famous for colorized New England landscape photographs, restored this home in 1912 when it was part of his Nutting Holm Estate. The enclosed Neo-Georgian entry, knotty pine floors and decorative mantle pieces are attributed to his upscale redesign. Look for the two Nutting prints as you tour.

**The Home's Changing Footprint:** The house was originally sited to the left of the Framingham Academy on Vernon Street. To accommodate the building of a new high school, the home was moved in 1957 to its current location. This 2 1/2 story, five bay, end gable house has 2 rear wall chimneys. The small house had common rooms downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs but now has been enlarged twice. The date July, 1884 ("1884 VII") is carved into a kitchen beam and records the first addition when bedrooms, a bathroom and kitchen eating area were added. A steep, narrow staircase, part of that addition, was recently removed but you can visualize it from where the pantry now sits. The current homeowners further extended the house in 2013 making it more comfortable for their living and entertainment needs. Items excavated during this renovation will be on display. For over two hundred years, its location near the Framingham Centre Common has allowed its residents to participate in community events. The current family enjoys summer-time concerts and the Farmers' Market.

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## 6) 81 DENNISON AVENUE

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**A Little Local History:** Built in 1902 on Elizabeth Merriam’s Estate, this home is best known as Doc Murray’s House. Dr. Murray was the doctor for the Dennison Manufacturing Company for many years and used his home office (to the right of the front door) to see patients. He also served for a time as the doctor for the Framingham Public Schools. He and his family lived in this home from 1923 to 1993.

**From the Homeowners’ Perspective:** When the homeowners found this character-filled house overlooking Gleason Pond with “good bones”, they set out to restore and maintain its integrity as innkeepers might do for a historic inn. They replaced vinyl windows with wood and exposed soffit-covered rafter tails around the perimeter of the house. Other improvements within the original structure and its seamless addition include repurposed windows, doors and cabinetry as well as specifically-crafted and matched light fixtures and pocket doors.

**An Arts and Crafts Home filled with Art:** It is no coincidence that this home attracted a family (father, mother, son and daughter) of artists because the Arts and Crafts Period was a return to simple designs and handcrafted artistry available to the common man. The period was a reaction to Victorian architectural excesses and the machine-driven Industrial Age. The home’s architectural detail and style start right at the front door. Open, light-filled spaces contrast with finely crafted dark gum wood trim, columns and exposed beams. The original brick and tile fireplace and summer porch overlooking the water are just some of the special features of this elegant house which has provided the owners a space for creating and displaying each of their own art pieces as well as collected art. The repurposed, hand-crafted and antique furnishings complete their home’s personalized flair. You might also be charmed by the birdhouse collection - each a special occasion gift from the children to their mother. The restored artist’s studio, currently used by the homeowners’ daughter, and the art-filled back terraces and gardens are also on today’s tour.

"If you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you are." - James Burke

History is important to the Fitts Family, especially Framingham History. For five generations Fitts families have owned and operated businesses in Framingham. Beginning in the 1800s Jonathan Harvey Fitts opened a grocery store. His two sons Arthur and George bought the business from him in the 1880s and expanded the store to include three locations and renamed the business Fitts Brothers Food Supplies. Later Arthur would become Chairman of the Farmers and Mechanics Savings Bank. In 1932 Arthur Fitts Jr. opened Fitts Insurance Agency which has now been serving families and businesses in Framingham and beyond for over 80 years and is in its third generation of business. The Fitts family is proud to support the Framingham History Center and the 13<sup>th</sup> annual House Tour. We admire and appreciate the accomplishments the History Center has achieved and wish it continued growth and success in discovering, preserving and presenting the rich history of the Town of Framingham.



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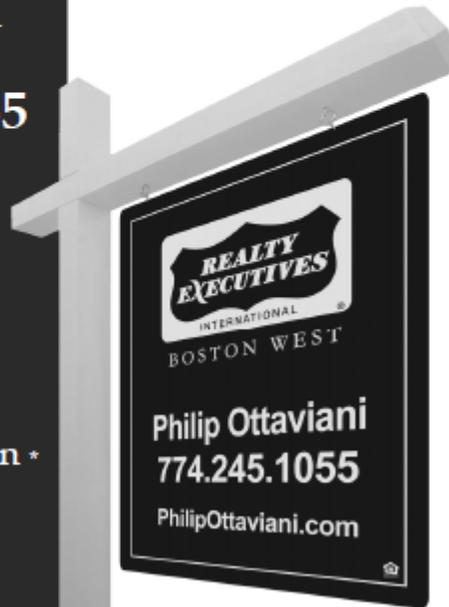
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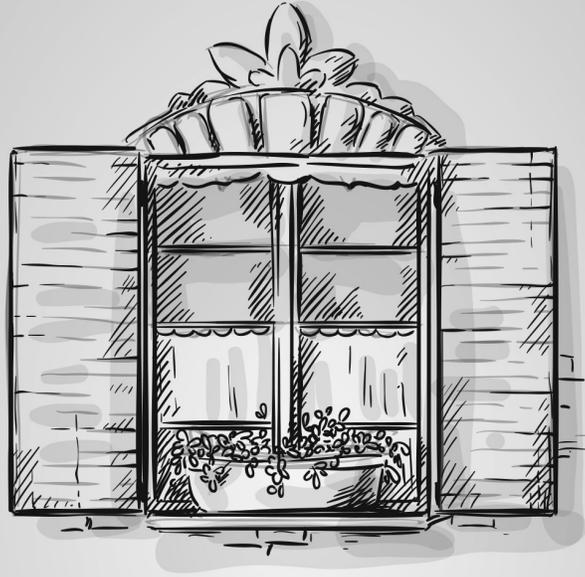
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- Two free hours of research assistance\*\*

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\*\*Research assistance does not include item appraisals as we are not licensed appraisers

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Coordinators-Meg Kelley, Natalie Mullen, Bonnie Henricksen and  
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**Homeowner Baskets:** Bonnie Henricksen

**Map:** Janet LoCastro, Town of Framingham Engineering Department

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