

ENTRANCE GATE TO NORTHAMPTON STATE HOSPITAL



BROWNSTONE PILLARS were erected in 1867-69 as part of the main gate which was always open. Looking through this gate, one could glimpse the majestic main building at the end of a curved driveway, atop Hospital Hill.

Linked to the gate was an iron picket fence, a mile in length, that enclosed the main campus. Overall, the Northampton State Hospital's property occupied more than 500 acres. The land now occupied by Smith College's athletic fields, the Hampshire County Jail and House of Correction, and the Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School's agricultural fields (now under agricultural preservation restriction) once belonged to the Hospital.

Northampton State Hospital was located on both sides of Route 66 (Prince Street). On the north side was the Old Main complex, begun in 1856, and on the south side was the Memorial Complex, first constructed in the late 1920s and early 1930s. It was built on property across Prince Street, some of which was first purchased in the 1860s as a buffer and for future needs.

ACROSS PRINCE STREET (ROUTE 66)

In 1925 work began on the Memorial Complex, the Hospital's largest expansion project, designed to accommodate as many as 1,000 patients. The complex consisted of patient dormitories for chronically ill and long-term patients, staff residences, as well as a power plant and a laundry which served the entire Hospital. The buildings were linked by enclosed walkways, and a tunnel under Prince Street connected the Memorial and Main complexes. Much of the Memorial Complex was built with funds from federal relief programs in the 1930s.

The new complex allowed the number of patients to rise until, in 1955, the patient population peaked at 2,500. Northampton became the center of mental health services for the four western Massachusetts counties.



ENTRANCE GATE

These stone pillars at the main entrance to the Hospital framed a view to Old Main and its rotunda. The wrought iron fence, from the 1870s, extended in two directions for a total length of more than a mile. It was dismantled and donated to a scrap metal drive during World War II.



THREE EMPLOYEES HOMES

These buildings stood near the entrance gates. The building on the left, built in 1855, was the home of George Ellsworth, one of the farmers whose land was purchased for the Hospital. Later, it became the home of the head farmer and then the Hospital's engineer. The two brick houses to the right, built in 1928, were homes for the steward and an assistant physician.



Photos: Moore & Schuleit Haber. Images of America: Northampton State Hospital (Arcadia Publishing, 2014)



SOUTH SIDE OF MEMORIAL COMPLEX

The Memorial Complex, begun in 1925, comprised four buildings and a separate kitchen and dining complex by 1936. The buildings stretched along the top of the hill across Prince Street. Pliny Earle (2nd superintendent of the Hospital), who purchased the land in the mid-19th century, said it commanded "a view that can scarcely be equaled in Western Massachusetts."

MEMORIAL COMPLEX AND THE POWER PLANT

This view from South Street looking north shows the Memorial Complex stretching across the brow of the hill. The attached buildings are C, D, E, and F (the "letter" buildings) which housed longer-term chronic patients transferred from the Main Complex. To the right is the Power Plant on Earle Street, completed in 1935, and just to its left is the Laundry (1936). The new Power Plant was close to the railroad tracks (now the bike path) for easier delivery of coal.

