

BEGINNINGS



AN ORAL HISTORY OF JAMAICA PLAIN
AND ITS HIGH SCHOOL

Front Cover: West Roxbury High School
on Elm Street in 1875
Courtesy of West Roxbury Historical Society



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AN ORAL HISTORY OF JAMAICA PLAIN AND ITS HIGH SCHOOL

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In July of 1984, when I first talked with Stacy Johnson, Headmaster of Jamaica Plain High School, he explained that the school had received a Carnegie Challenge Grant that would allow the students to explore the school's past through its alumni. The focal point was to be a book comprised of photographs and an oral history taken from interviews with alumni. All of this was mere abstraction. We had no photos and no interviews; but we did have the students.

When I later talked with Bard Hamlin, Project Coordinator, we determined the challenge was not in our doing the project, but rather in the students doing the project. Little did we know that our challenge was largely initial organization. The students were ready, willing and able to take the helm and sail our research vessel into the past and back to the present. At first they looked to us to point the direction, but later they were discovering their own courses and referred to us for our experience. The result is BEGINNINGS.

BEGINNINGS is one of three products of an overall Carnegie Project in which the students and teachers were involved as co-workers. Besides this book, the students have produced a slide show that deals with the history of Jamaica Plain and a video tape that describes the entire project. The students were responsible for gathering and organizing the information, and the teachers acted as resources. In fact, this introduction is the only part of this project I have done without the students. Even now while I write, I keep looking over my shoulder expecting one of them to pop into the room and ask me what I'm doing. As a teacher, I like that feeling.

BEGINNINGS is a book about many beginnings — the beginnings of Jamaica Plain, the beginnings of the high school, the beginnings of eras, the beginnings of this project, and, hopefully, the beginnings of future student projects.

The quotations in this book are segments of eighteen interviews conducted by the students over a four month period. They also researched and selected the photographs, organized the material and were instrumental in the editing, design and layout. During one of their work sessions, the student editors decided to include only short excerpts rather than entire interviews, because they thought the format would make their first book more readable. The remainder of the interviews, some of which are ten to twelve single-spaced pages, are available for use in other oral history projects. Therefore, this is not intended in any way to be an attempt at a complete oral history. BEGINNINGS hopefully will give the reader a feeling for the past and present involvement of a community and its high school.

Our primary educational goal was to discover the past of our community and school, and in doing so become more complete citizens of the city, this seemingly endless classroom called Boston. We had some failures and many successes, but in my opinion, the high point occurred during one of our filming sessions. A student mentioned not knowing much about her residential community. "What about Roxbury?" she asked. She wants to know. Education begins with such questions and, judging by the past, the asking of such questions and the searching for answers never end.

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE
ENERGETIC INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE RESPECT
FOR THE PAST, LOVE FOR THE PRESENT AND
POSITIVE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

In the first Jamaica Plain High School yearbook in 1940, the following account of the history of the school appears:

"THE JAMAICA PLAIN HIGH SCHOOL has an interesting history. Its origin dates back more than one hundred years before the Declaration of Independence. On March 23, 1676, Hugh Thomas gave to the town of Roxbury his 'house, home lot and night pasture' to be used for a school. October 1676, John Ruggles gave a triangular piece of land at the Junction of South, Centre, and Eliot Streets, Jamaica Plain, for the 'use of a school only,' and here was erected the first schoolhouse. July 10, 1689, John Eliot, Apostle to the Indians, conveyed to trustee seventy-five acres of land 'to and for the maintenance, support and encouragement of a school and school-master at that part of Roxbury commonly called Jamaica or Pond Plain, for the teaching and instruction of the children at that end of the town (together with such Negroes or Indians as may or shall come to said school) and to no other use, interest, or purpose whatever.' In this gift, Eliot sounded the keynote of democracy by establishing a free school, open to all races and in 1787, a third building was erected on Eliot Street where the present Eliot School now stands. In 1855, the town of West Roxbury assumed control of the Eliot School. In the same year, the girls were transferred to a separate building, Village Hall, Thomas Street; three years later, the boys, also, were removed to the same building. Since that time, the school has been co-educational. Later, a new building was erected on Elm Street on the site of the Loring Greenough Garden. In 1873, West Roxbury was annexed to Boston and the name of the school was changed to West Roxbury High School; the old name of Eliot High was dropped.

"Up to 1879, very few young people had been given a high school education, for it was considered a luxury rather than a necessity. In 1901, a new building was dedicated. In 1925 an Annex replacing the old part of the school was built — a modern fireproof structure. This provided a new office for the headmaster, a school library, a new art room — the largest and brightest in the city — new laboratories for science, a demonstration lecture hall, new classrooms and shops for the Agricultural department, a lunch room, and lockers."

In 1979, the school moved to a modern facility at 144 McBride Street. The present school, housed in the renovated Boston Gas Building, has a full auditorium, large gym, modern labs, graphic and industrial arts facilities, and extensive playing fields. In 1980, Stacy T. Johnson became headmaster of the new school. Since that time the school has made great strides in school improvement, reading and math score gains, and is offering a wide variety of programs with collaborating agencies, businesses and colleges. The student population of the school continues to reflect the longstanding pride in the excellence of its school and community.



— THE COMMUNITY —

Jamaica Plain is different now. A lot of physical changes. The little school on Brewer Street is gone. They had Curtis Hall where you could swim. There were tennis courts there too where you could play all summer for \$15.00. Walking down Centre Street is a lot different today. We never walked down the street in shorts, but we could walk up or down the street any time of day or night and not have to worry. It was more countrified then.

Joan (Heffernan) Jacobs
Class of 1944

Then they used to have an Omnibus, which is like a bus is now only it was horse-drawn. I can remember the first time I ever went to Mt. Benedict Cemetery. My father took me out. We took the street car out to Corey Street in West Roxbury. There we caught an Ominbus to take us out to the cemetery. They used to call them Jitney Buses. Do you know what a Jitney is? It's a nickel and that was the fare. That would run you up to the cemetery. I was very young at that time — six or seven.

Henry Keaveney
Born 1904

There used to be a lot of movie theatres on Centre Street. When I was a kid, movies cost 6¢.

Joe Galeota
Class of 1923

Did we have dances? Sure. Every holiday and quite often on Saturdays. There were halls all over the place. Where Today's Bread is, there was a dance hall upstairs. There was a dance hall where the corner sub shop is. A dance hall where the Knights of Columbus is. They'd have dances on all holidays, sometimes Saturday afternoons and one night a week. And song publishers — sheet music was the thing in those days until records began. I can remember the first time I ever heard them. They were on cylinders. But every 5 & 10 had a music stand and a piano. You'd give the girl the sheet and she'd play it for you before you bought it. I used to love to hear that. There used to be a Woolworth's and a Kresge here, then Kresge moved out and Grant's moved in. Then Grant's failed.

Henry Keaveney
Born 1904

Pages 12 and 13:
The Omnibus on Centre Street in 1883
An Omnibus Ticket

Opposite:
Centre Street in 1938
Courtesy of West Roxbury Historical Society

Did you know that the first baseball factory in Boston was in Jamaica Plain? On Lamartine off Green Street. There's a little terrace off Lamartine and that was the location of the first baseball factory in America. I don't know when it closed. The man who started Dole Pineapple lived in Jamaica Plain. I don't remember his full name but they called him "the Pineapple King." We also had two mayors, James Curley and Maurice Tobin, who lived in Jamaica Plain. Also, Serge Koussevitzky, Director of the Boston Symphony lived here.

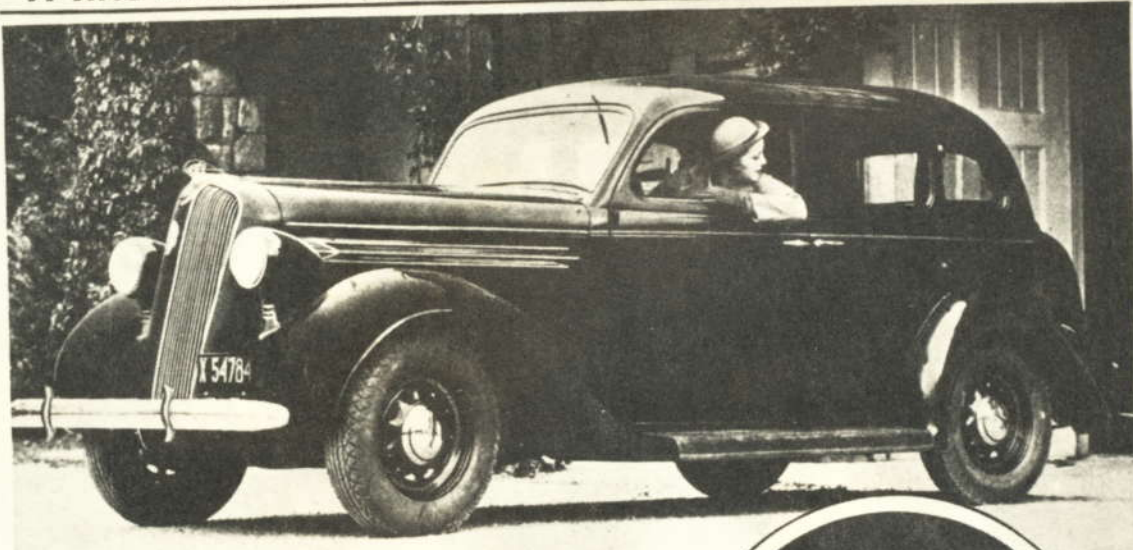
Edna Bradley
Class of 1940

In the old days I worked for a fella who had a printing business on McBride Street — Keyes Street then. Keyes Street had sort of a bad reputation. Rossmore Road, which was sort of an extension of Keyes Street, asked to have their name changed. So Rossmore Road became gentrified, you might say, and Keyes Street changed their name to McBride. Keyes Street had a strong military tradition. They had more volunteers during the Civil War than anyone in the area. Volunteers in the army, of course. I don't know if you know this, but they'd take the place of a draftee for \$100. If you were being drafted, you could get a replacement for \$100. McBride was a World War I hero. Maybe that's why they chose that name.

Henry Keaveney
Born 1904

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In the old days when you had a snowfall, there were no autos, or very, very few. They'd plow the sidewalks and gutters with horse-drawn plows, but they wouldn't plow the streets. Everything was pungs and sleighs. A pung then was what we call a truck now, and a sleigh was what we'd call a passenger car, a little bit more dressy. They were made by the Fisher Body people that make the GM cars today.

Henry Keaveney
Born 1904

We lived in a completely different environment than the present generation. When we went out at night, we had to be in at a certain time, but you could go anywhere. You could walk in the Boston Common at night and never have a fear of anything. We had no car. One of the boys did, so we all chipped in 10c each, because you could get 12 gallons of gas for a dollar, and we would go to the beach for the day.

Betty (Hogan) Bugbee
Class of 1937

We used to skate on Jamaica Pond. My mother would tease us, because when she was a little girl — she was brought up on Mission Hill — they would walk from Roxbury to skate on Jamaica Pond from Thanksgiving to March, steadily, all winter long. She said it was a lot colder then.

We used to skate a couple of months in the winter. They would test it for thickness before they would let anyone go on, because there were moving springs underneath. I think it had to be 19 inches thick before they let anybody on.

We got out of school one day because it was 18° below. We went skating to Jamaica Pond. It didn't bother us that it was 18° below, because we had a day off school and we were skating. The cold didn't bother us.

Edna Bradley
Class of 1940

We often walked around Jamaica Pond. In the wintertime we skated there on the ice. That was wonderful.

Margaret (Heffernan) Laughlin
Class of 1945

My sister did a write up about Jamaica Pond. She belonged to a group up at the Sedgwick Library for a while. They were doing a little history of Jamaica Plain, and she found out why most people do their laundry on Monday. Monday is washday; can you guess why that is? Because they had to pay for their water in colonial times and Monday was a free day. So they'd get into the habit that Monday was washday.

Jamaica Pond supplied the fresh water for the whole city. Jamaica Pond goes down to Ward's Pond, to Leverett's Pond, and then down through the Fenway. So there's a watershed there into Boston. Even up to a few years ago they fished out wooden pipe that used to run from the pond down to the city. They used to cut ice from the pond in winter.

Edna Bradley
Class of 1940

I noticed a lot of changes in the neighborhood when I was growing up. There were all kinds of stores, and bakeries and pie shops, multicultural. I think that's changed. My house is still on Centre Street. We used to live on Centre Street across from the All Saints Church, and when we thought the expressway was coming through, they tore down the entire neighborhood. It was very traumatic. My mother refused to move. She said no one was going to take her away from her neighborhood. My father had built that house. They tore down many of the stores and houses, but for my mother it was the end to see her church go. But the house is still there, and she did not leave the neighborhood until she died a few years ago. And now when I pass that and go by District 9, I just have a strange feeling to see that house still there.

Ann Larkin
Class of 1955



THE SCHOOL

I have a lot of fond memories from school. I have some negative ones as well. But I have a lot of fond memories. High School is an experience you never, ever, never get again.

Ella Robinson
Class of 1967

When I was in the school there were about three times as many girls as there were boys. A lot of the boys went to all boys' schools.

The girls ate on one side of the cafeteria and the boys on the other. They also used separate entrances.

George Hogarty
Class of 1926

We had a fine principal, John Casey, who prepped us. He saw us as a reflection on the school. He took a certain amount of pride in his students and how they performed in his school. He had already been there ten years prior to my coming, and he was a very powerful person in terms of gathering steam in the school. He had a great deal of pride and you could see that by simply talking to him.

Phil Gibbons
Class of 1952

I credit a lot to my teachers. The ones who used to get on my case. You're lucky if you know those teachers. They always demanded me to do work. That's how I got through college. I had the foundation of those teachers.

Albert Holland
Class of 1965



My freshman year we had a major dramatic production that was directed by Marian Chesley. She was a teacher, head of her department if I remember. It was her own creation, her own work, the story of Christmas in England in the times of the lords and ladies in their big houses. We had wonderful costumes. This was especially important to us, because it was during the aftermath of the Depression, and we didn't have any money to work with. Everything was very creative.

Betty Hogan Bugbee
Class of 1937

In terms of knowledge, students should get everything and anything out of a teacher they can. It's a serious business. When I was in school, theatre was not taken seriously, but students have to realize there are many career choices. Even if they don't become actors, it is a discipline.

Mario Soto
Class of 1984

In the old days the horticulture course at the high school was well thought of. Also up on Eliot Street, the Footlights Club opened in 1877. It is the oldest amateur theatrical group in the United States. Very good productions there. They're still going today.

Edna Bradley
Class of 1940



I remember that everybody went to school for the same length of time. Whether you had a study period for the last period or not, you stayed until 20 till 3. We had military drills, the boys that is. We wore uniforms and practiced drills and had parades through the streets of downtown Boston. There was competition in the schools, and the best from each school would compete with other schools. The school that won would lead the parade. Major Kelly from the army instructed them. It was required for all males.

George Hogarty
Class of 1926

There used to be a demonstration every year at the Carolina Avenue playground. All year in the gym classes we were trained in dancing and gymnastics and marching. That kind of thing. It was a big event for girls only. Ms. Carter was the gym teacher. She was an old school type.

Then there was a big game and our boyfriends would go down Tremont Street in military uniform. The boys all took military drills at school. Long rifles, it was required for the men, and they loved it. They had band competitions, and the bands from each school would march and were given honors. The trophies were encased. Jamaica Plain got a lot of awards.

Then we'd go to Essex Grill and have a hot pastromi for 20¢. It was a big day.

June Grandy Shea
Class of 1937



What did I do on weekends? Usually played basketball. And went to parties at night. Does that sound familiar?

Albert Holland
Class of 1965

When I was in high school, we used to go bowling every Saturday night. Another one of the things we did when I was young was go to the tank up at Curtis Hall, the swimming pool. Also in the high school we used to run two mile races. So that took up a lot of time practicing.

Joe Galeota
Class of 1923

When I was in school, there was very little sociability. I like sports, so I played basketball. But it was very limited. It was only in the school. We didn't have games with other high schools. The emphasis was all on boys and boys' sports. There was very little attention paid to girls socially. The attention to girls was academic rather than social, so I missed that part of high school life.

Betty Hogan Bugbee
Class of 1937

The first thing I remember is that I loved school and the close relationships I developed in those days. The school spirit was fundamental, whether it was sports or any other event.

Ann Larkin
Class of 1955



HORSE
RIDE
USE BRIDLE
ON LEFT
OF ROAD
MOTOR VEHICLES
EXCLUDED

We did a lot of outdoor things, whatever the season. I was very athletic, and I loved sports, so I was doing a lot of things. We had a riding club in Jamaica Plain, and we would horseback ride through the arboretum.

Margaret Heffernan Laughlin
Class of 1945

We had very little equipment in the old gym. We had mats. Nothing else. Jamaica Plain was poor at that time. We were surprised that so many graduated, especially the boys. All the families were big, like six or seven children, and at that time a lot of the boys would have to leave school to work at the coalyard and help support the family. And then a lot of them went into the service and got killed. That was just before the war. World War II.

Betty Hogan Bugbee
Class of 1937



During WWII, everybody you knew couldn't get stockings, so we wore leg paint. They'd have it in different shades like face makeup now. The girls would shave their legs and then smooth the leg paint on. That was our stockings, even in the wintertime. Sometimes if you got caught out in the rain, it would run and you looked like I don't know what. They needed everything for the war effort.

In Jamaica Plain a group of us formed the Victory Club. Each and every service person from J.P. received a knitted garment-sock, scarf, sweater-from home. The local churches provided the lists as the boys entered the service so we could keep an updated list. I think we were the only community in Boston doing this.

Edna Bradley
Class of 1940

We gave parties for the service boys. We gave such good ones, we had to make a sign-up sheet, because so many wanted to come. We used to go down and roll bandages at the USO. It was a time of duty. By the time we got to the senior class, there were very few men, because everyone was leaving for the service. We couldn't get a boyfriend!

Margaret Heffernan Laughlin
Class of 1945

During the early 50s, we had the anxiety of war. Someone who was 17 was grown up, because their life was spent in the armed forces. For the children it was a sense of relief when their fathers came back. For men it was a question of military service. For women, the men they loved were involved.

Alice Casey
Guidance Counselor 1952-57





Champions

My memories of Jamaica Plain High are good ones. The teachers and students were friendly. Of course, the football team was tops in the city of Boston. All the time we had good ballplayers, both baseball and football. The 1929 team won the championship. The coach was Mr. Duffy.

Harry E. Hewes, Jr.
Class of 1929

We had football games. But the problem was the boys might be on the football team one week and in the Army or Navy the next. These were the war years. So it was pretty unstable.

Joan Heffernan Jacobs
Class of 1944



I remember the losing football team. We went out and diligently screamed and hollered. We never won anything. Really though, it was the school spirit.

Ella Robertson
Class of 1967

Some of the major people who influenced me were Rev. Michael Haynes, who was a minister at the Twelfth Baptist Church, Jeep Jones, who was the first black Deputy Mayor of Boston, and Fred Gumms, who was the physical education teacher and basketball and football coach at Jamaica Plain High School. I credit those three people with having the greatest influence on my life.

Albert Holland
Class of 1965

The person who influenced me most was Mr. Richardson, my coach. He gave me a pat on the back when I did something good.

Kevin Chin
Class of 1980

BULLETIN

OF THE

Children's Museum of Boston

OLMSTED PARK. JAMAICA PLAIN

VOL. II. BOSTON, MASS., SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER, 1915. No. 1.



READY FOR A FIELD TRIP
THE GEOLOGY CLASS

Back then we wore knickers, heavily ribbed woolen stockings and ties. I guess they were compulsory in those days. Also we wore a blouse rather than a shirt. It didn't go underneath your pants like a shirt does . . .

In 1918, I stopped high school and started in printing at \$6.30 a week. Then there'd be a bonus, if you weren't absent or late, that came to \$6.93. Then the printing place on McBride Street paid \$7.00 a week. I figured I knew it all. I was going to continuation school. Have you ever heard of continuation school? In those days you could stop school at 14, provided you went to continuation school, which was four hours a week and located where the Don Bosco is now on Common Street. They'd give you two hours of academic work suitable for printers and two hours of printing work. Then, when you were 16, you got a working certificate. So I hired myself out as a press feeder in town. Jobs were a dime a dozen then. You'd get laid off on a job and get hired at another place the same day.

Henry Keaveney
Born 1904



Mrs. Washington was an art teacher at Jamaica Plain who got me motivated toward art. She was also one of the people who helped me stay on top of the real reason I was in high school. Over half my class got married directly out of high school or got pregnant; at that time you couldn't go to school if you were pregnant, so a lot of my friends graduated from Crittenton, a kind of holding pen. She was one of the people who made me realize there was something else out there. She spent a lot of time with Black students. She talked to us and invited us to her house. We wanted to go to an art museum in New York City. They didn't do field trips. You didn't leave school. I can remember vividly we almost had a riot when they told her she couldn't take us. She had a heck of a time. We went to New York. She took us to see an art museum.

Ella Robertson
Class of 1967

I think it's real good, all the activities they have here in the school now. The different courses students take, like computers, we never had anything like that. Now I think it prepares them better for the outside world. Now they can go into college or industry, with all the things being taught. Students shouldn't go to school just to pass the time and comply with the requirements. They would do well to study and take advantage of what they have. They have whole lives to live after high school.

Joe Galeota
Class of 1923

Even though I have graduated, the school will always be my home, and I have every intention of coming back for special events.

Michelle Grays
Class of 1984



—THE MELTING POT—

Jamaica Plain is a different community than when I was in high school. At that time, you had a German section, and you had an Italian section, and an Irish section, and most of them pretty much stayed together. One of the reasons was the neighborhoods were into ethnic groups. They went to the same churches in the neighborhoods. In fact, German was taught in the high school.

Joe Galeato
Class of 1923

We've lived in a three family house in Jamaica Plain since 1935. 50 years this year. The neighbors have all changed since we moved in. Everyone used to know each other. Our children used to play with one another. Children help you to bring the neighborhood into the house. I think our street is the most integrated in Jamaica Plain. Everyone gets along.

George Hogarty
Class of 1926

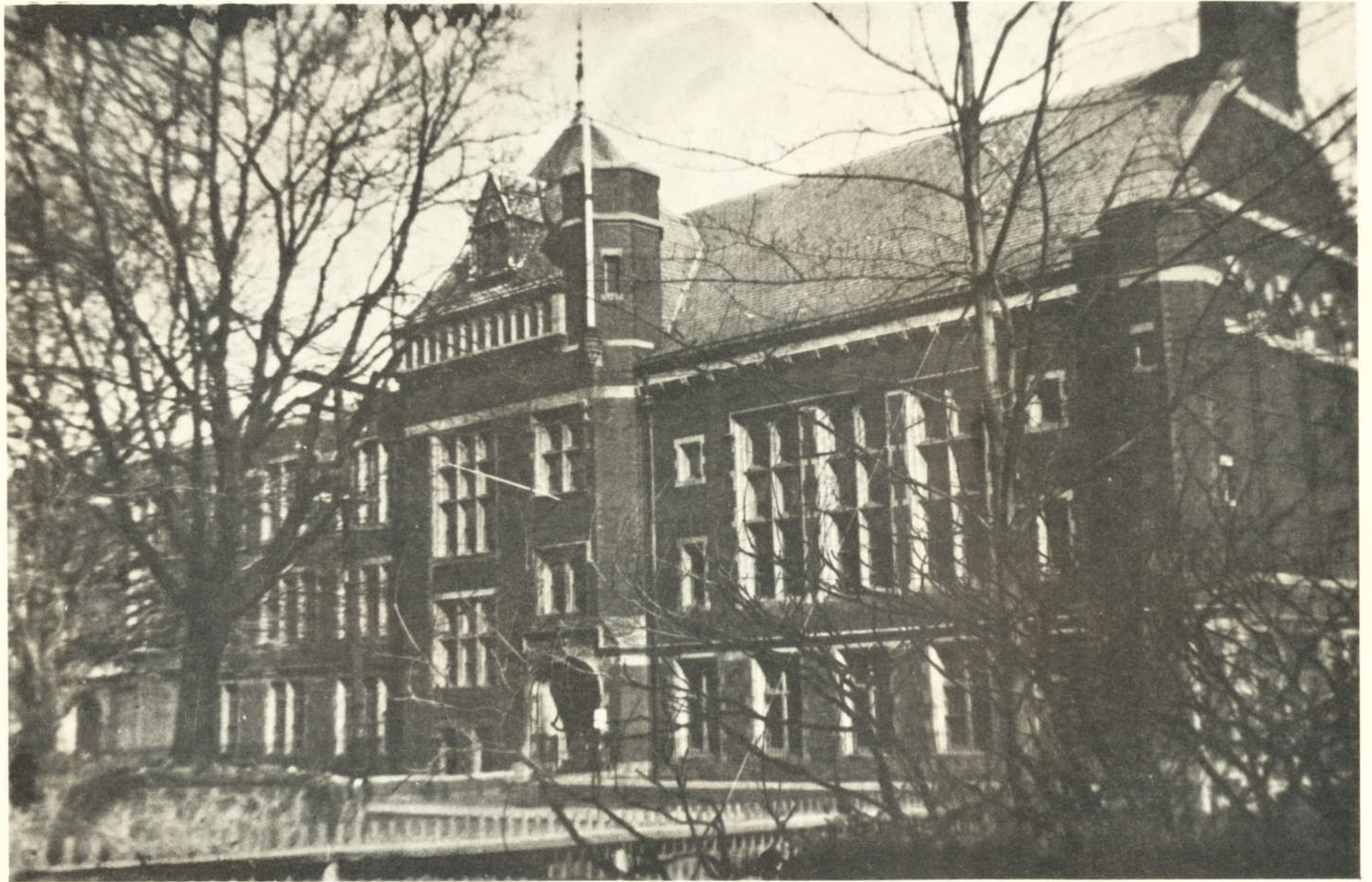
If you look through our class list, you'll find all kinds of names and nationalities. Jamaica Plain has always been integrated. When we were growing up, there were a lot of German people because of the breweries. Then there were a lot of the Boston Symphony Orchestra players living in Jamaica Plain, and many of them were German. That's why the streets in Jamaica Plain are named after composers — Mozart Street, Schiller Street, and others. Then there were a lot of Scottish people in Jamaica Plain, because during that time out at Readville were what they called the carbarns where they kept the trains and repaired them, and the Scottish people were very adept at doing that. Then there was a scattering of Irish, Italian and Negro families living in Jamaica Plain.

So over the years, Jamaica Plain changed. It's no big deal. Another family moved into Jamaica Plain, we welcomed them, no big deal, no prejudice. You wouldn't dare come home and call someone a derogatory name. You'd be punished. So you just wouldn't do it.

Edna Bradley
Class of 1940

During the war we had our problems. It was an unstable time. I don't think there was a lot of pressure to find yourself; mostly it was an unsettled time. They didn't have guidance departments as such in those years, and I think that was a problem. We created our own fun. We couldn't get into trouble. Everything was so strict. We all went to church, and our friends went to church. We didn't have problems, because we always had a lot to do. We had a lot of respect for parents and old people. We all had the same beliefs.

Joan Heffernan Jacobs
Class of 1944



When I attended Jamaica Plain High, it was located in the older building, which most of you, I don't think, have been in. It's quite a great building architecturally to those of us who went there. It was quite different. I was in the college course when I went there, but the major program in the school was agriculture. Agriculture was the magnet for the community, which has been traditionally agrarian going back a couple of hundred years. About 15% were business students, and about another 15% were college-bound. We had no assistant headmasters and no department heads. Just a single headmaster in our organization.

But probably the most evident change is racial and ethnic. When I attended Jamaica Plain High School, there was one Black student in my class and no Hispanic students. Jamaica Plain was largely a German community. Roxbury had a small Black population and was largely northern whites. The transition of the Southern Blacks to Boston took place later, and for the school, in the late '60's. Right on the tails of that was the Hispanic influx into the neighborhood.

Phil Gibbons
Class of 1952

In the '50's, Jamaica Plain was a well-organized school for students who were interested in college, landscaping, architecture or business. Those were the four tracks. There were a surprising number of students interested in agriculture. We didn't have farms in the middle of the city, but the program grew because of the school's closeness to the Arboretum. It was a delightful place and quite charming. At that time, there was a small population of Blacks at the high school, because Jamaica Plain had a small population of Blacks as residents. The school reflected the population around it. But the '60's, the concern for desegregation in Boston and all across the country, changed that.

Alice Casey
Jamaica Plain High School
Guidance Counselor 1952-1957



When I started Jamaica Plain in 1961, I would say Jamaica Plain High was about 5% Black. By the time I graduated in 1964, the percentage went up to perhaps 40%. I think that the teachers were not very understanding about the problems of Black students, but I never felt any real negativity about being there. And I feel that any negative situations that developed really were around a lot of the misunderstandings between the races. I'd say the majority of the students got along very well. If there was any conflict, and I remember one or two, it always happened in the spring time when it was warm and people were feeling their Cheerios. But it wasn't anything near like it was with the Boston busing thing.

Janaya Majied-Janey
Class of 1964

I lived in two worlds, the Roxbury area, and that's a whole 'nother set of problems, and the school. I think our biggest problem was getting back and forth. We fought a lot, but not for the same reasons kids fight now. We fought because my class and a couple of classes before us were the first real influx of Black students into Jamaica Plain High School. Most of the time you just dealt with the slurs and went in and out. At the beginning of each school year, I mean, we looked forward to the first three weeks of fighting. We just fought for three weeks. Sometimes we'd have to fight our way down to the monument, onto the bus, and back home. It got to the point that it was a ritual. But you never saw the ones in school you ended up fighting with. These kids just popped out of somewhere. I'm not sure where they came from. They were not the kids we went to school with, and I knew most of my graduating class. We got inside the school and everything was fine. We interrelated, we laughed and joked, and we did those kinds of things.

Ella Robertson
Class of 1967



Growing up, I was living in Dorchester. And very few minority students, Black students, lived in Jamaica Plain. We all took public transportation. We all called it the EMBA. So we used to take the EMBA to JP. Sometimes we had problems going through the community because we were Black. And we had some fights that were racial. Now things have changed. Number one, JP High has a new building and the minority communities are expanding in terms of the number of minority Blacks and Hispanics in Boston. I think that has helped. I think there's more communication going on than ever before. I think that we have a new mayor that, for the first time, is not as political, but more community-oriented. So that helps a great deal.

Albert Holland
Class of 1965

I remember the friends I had at JP High and the faculty who kept me straight in line. When I started, prejudice was a problem. When people knew you were from Puerto Rico, they didn't give you a chance. Jamaica Plain is different now. There are a lot of new faces, a lot of changes, the rules are different. There are more chances for kids to go to college and more teachers to help them.

Angel Hernandez
Class of 1984

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Angel Hernandez
Class of 1984



I think Jamaica Plain will have a long history. It's been a district high school for many years and there's definitely a place for Jamaica Plain High School in the future. The school plays a major role in the communities it draws from. It impacts on Jamaica Plain. It impacts on part of Dorchester, part of Roxbury, and part of the Southwest Corridor where the new orange line is being built. And Jamaica Plain is one of the few communities that is sort of like a melting pot. It has a lot of different ethnic groups and nationalities. So it is, and will remain, a key institution in terms of education. You have a good school.

Albert Holland
Class of 1965

— AN AFTERTHOUGHT —

A lawyer named Welsh once said, "It's great to be poor and not know it and want for nothing." That's the way I was. I wanted for nothing. I've never been broke. I've never wanted for money. I'm very self satisfied. An eager beaver. Of course, if someone was getting something for doing the same job I was, I'd want justice. I always wanted justice.

Did I have problems? I don't remember the hardships. Being an only child, I was totally happy. But, as Bob Hope said, "There are three things about old age; you get wrinkled, and your legs slow down, and . . . I can't remember the third thing."

Henry Keaveney
Born 1904

