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Acknowledgments

People from every section of Dorchester have come together to contribute their energy, skills and enthusiasm to writing and publishing this booklet. There is no better testament to the strength and vitality of our neighborhoods. At its simplest level this is a directory of Dorchester's neighborhoods, and from it we can better understand the role that our neighborhoods play in shaping the day-to-day experiences of living in Dorchester. Community is the underlying force that sustains many of Dorchester's neighborhoods, and it can be found in much of what is said on these pages. Community is the subject of *Living in Dorchester*.

One of the most gratifying aspects of this project is the enthusiastic support it has received from the institutions and individuals whose names are shown at right. The costs incurred in printing this booklet have been borne solely by their contributions. Their participation testifies to their faith and commitment to the future of Dorchester's neighborhoods. For many of these institutions this project is only one of many to which they contribute their time, energy and resources. Their efforts deserve the recognition and support of the community.

We have divided Dorchester into four areas for our convenience and (we hope) the reader's. The lines we have drawn are totally, absolutely, and unequivocally arbitrary and should not be taken to represent real divisions within Dorchester.

This booklet is distributed free. However, we accept contributions which will be used to defray incidental expenses incurred during distribution.

Living in Dorchester, Inc.
36 Fairmount Street
Dorchester, Massachusetts 02124

1979

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Preface

This is a booklet about Dorchester by Dorchesterites who think Dorchester is a fine place to live. It is directed both to our neighbors and to those who might consider becoming our neighbors. It is, quite frankly, meant to counter Dorchester's "image problem," a problem that persists both outside and, sadly, even inside some segments of our community. It is not intended, however, to put a shiny and superficial gloss over what we freely admit are problems. It is instead designed to suggest that no one "image" of Dorchester is appropriate, that it is an area of considerable diversity and strengths that, with its problems, offers a wide variety of attractive and inviting residential opportunities for a wide variety of people.

Much of Dorchester's "image problem" is rooted in the fact that it is so large, both geographically and demographically. Comprising nearly half of Boston in area, it is home to more than one-fourth of the city's population. And surely in the public mind what happens anywhere in Dorchester happens everywhere. It is that blurring of Dorchester that we seek to counter by offering a neighborhood-by-neighborhood presentation. If some sectors of Dorchester have a crime problem (and they do), all sectors of Dorchester are not living in fear; if some neighborhoods of Dorchester are becoming "gentrified," causing older residents to feel economic pressures to move (and they are), all neighborhoods are not feeling that pressure; if racial problems persist in some sections of

Dorchester (and they do), other neighborhoods have been peacefully integrated.

From its earliest days, Dorchester has been a diverse community. It was initially settled in villages around the seven hills that are its principal topographical features. That diversity has persisted. The housing stock runs from apartments to three families to Victorian era mansions; for those seeking economical housing, there is economical housing; for those seeking a certain opulence, there is that too. In age and in race, in income and in lifestyle, Dorchester reflects the diversity one would expect in the largest residential sector of a major urban center.

In assembling this booklet, a deliberate effort has been made to reflect that diversity. Within the restraints of stylistic consistency, truthfulness and balance, we have sought to have residents of each of the neighborhoods prepare the material on their own neighborhoods. We hope in that way we have been able to reflect some of the "feel" of each of the neighborhoods, to hint in the brief space available at its character. In supplementary material, we have tried also to address the question of schooling, to suggest the range of cultural, recreational and social facilities that are available and to direct readers to sources of more information on all aspects of Dorchester.

Any effort such as this can, of course, be discounted as so much boosterism. There is perhaps no way we can disabuse readers of this notion. We can only invite you, encourage you, whether you live in Dorchester or are just thinking about it, to get off the Red Line, to drive off the major arteries and to come in to the neighborhoods and look for yourselves. We believe this booklet will withstand that scrutiny and that Dorchester—and you—will benefit from it.

Why I Chose Dorchester

My wife says I chose Dorchester because it was cheap. I can't argue with her. I mean, where else could we buy a ten-room Victorian house with five natural woods, wainscoting that's the envy of our friends, two working fireplaces, two dazzling stained glass windows (well, one dazzling one, anyway), a skylight, a church pew on our front porch (compliments of the previous owners) and all this for less than it would cost to buy a one-bedroom condominium in Cambridge?

But I really didn't choose Dorchester because it was cheap. It ain't. Because for our low purchase price—we also got a heating system that must have been designed by Exxon's leading stockholder in 1921, 90-year-old shingles that are audibly beginning to cry "replace me, replace me" and enough drafts to nominate Edward Kennedy for President in 1980.

No, I didn't choose Dorchester because it was cheap. I chose it because it is good.

It's good for me because—as a resolute non-driver—I, like most Dorchester residents, am within easy walking distance of the subway and all the thrills and chills Boston and Cambridge have to offer. It's good for me because when I want to reaffirm how smart we were not to consider exorbitant suburbia, I can run down the street and buy a Sunday paper and gloat over the prices in the real estate section. It's good for me because I can complain to all my friends how many meetings I have to attend every week; it's either my kid's Racial Ethnic Parents' Council at school, my gung-ho neighborhood association, or trying to get out this booklet you're reading now.

And Dorchester is good for me because it gives me an incurably argumentative wretch lots of chances to fight. Yes, fight. Fight for my kid's education in that bottomless labyrinth officially known as the Boston school system. Fight the supermarkets that want to leave my neighborhood because, unlike the people here, they don't have a vision.

But the people here do. My neighbors do. They are investing in their homes, fixing up their streets, and spreading the word. They spread the word in Dorchester—they really do—and if you live in a neighborhood that doesn't have a neighborhood association, you, my friend, are culturally deprived. You may as well apply for federal aid. Why, I know some people who, living on the "border" of two

neighborhoods, make sure they attend the monthly meetings of each association.

But I did not choose Dorchester because it leads the Western Hemisphere in neighborhood associations, civic groups or historical societies.

Nor did my wife, an Iowa native who detests cities but actually likes Boston. She says she likes Dorchester, despite the fact I do, too. She likes it, she says, because she likes big houses. She likes space—for herself and our two kids. She even likes Dorchester yards, where you can usually acquire a green thumb but don't have to spend an entire Sunday behind a lawn mower. She likes the sense of community, the friendliness, the genuine caring.

But I did not choose Dorchester because my wife likes it—we never agree on anything anyway. I chose it, in part, because Dorchester for all its problems—is in the act of becoming. You can see it happening in neighborhood after neighborhood. People are staying. People are moving in. And all of them are waking up to the fact that Dorchester is the future. If gas costs \$1 a gallon, you must live near your work. If you have one car, you must use mass transit. And, surprisingly, it works. And, finally, you realize—as I did—that few other places can offer you such valuable housing at such reasonable prices, that few

other places can give you such a sense of vitality, of variety, and that few other places can offer people such a damn good place to live and to raise a family. Or to not raise a family.

Someone I met recently said that it used to be that people in Dorchester invariably dropped their voices when acquaintances asked them where they lived. They don't anymore. They may not shout "Dorchester," but they don't mumble it as much, either.

Yet, truthfully, that isn't why I chose Dorchester.

But let me tell you a story.

Five years from now, maybe ten, some guy is going to come up to me, perhaps come over with his wife for dinner, and he's going to ask me how much I paid for my house. And I'm going to tell him. And he won't believe me.

Now that's not really why I chose Dorchester, but you're getting warm.

It's home.

— Ross Jerome



Schools

A school system that can provide quality education is an essential element in the life of every community. After considerable debate among our editorial group searching for an approach to the subject of Boston's schools, we selected the articles which appear below. The articles were written by parents of public and parochial school children. Although they are personal accounts, and they come from parents whose perspectives differ widely, the conclusions they reach are quite similar. Quality education is available in Boston. Finding it for your child demands participation and may require generous amounts of patience, perseverance and persistence.



Ten years have passed since I registered my first child for kindergarten I in the Boston public schools. Things were quite different then; my neighbor and I alternated walking our little ones to their "neighborhood" school. In the ensuing years Boston has undergone a court-enforced desegregation plan and the implementation of the 766 special education law.

Through all the changes I have retained, indeed, increased, my optimism and respect for the Boston public schools. We have accelerated our degree of parental involvement in the schools to a position of strength and meaning rather than tokenism. Our system of special education is not perfect, but it offers creative alternatives for children with special needs. Boston also has excellent programs to serve our academically gifted children. Three schools in Boston are consistently ranked among the top schools in the commonwealth. They are Boston Latin School, Boston Latin Academy and Boston College High School.

This is a large and complex city. When complications do arise, it is often very

frustrating to work through the red tape of a big city school system. We also have many teachers and administrators who are entrenched in "the way we were" and are not ready to accept the many changes made in the past four years. These same people have also been reluctant to accept any meaningful parental involvement in the schools. Therefore, it hasn't always been easy having children in the Boston public school system. However, I have found that in the long run it has been well worth the effort. My children have received services, and I have been involved in programs of a much higher quality than would be available in many other areas of the commonwealth.

I attribute many of these positive aspects of our schools to the fact that a growing number of Boston parents are active and sophisticated regarding what constitutes "quality education."

— Diane Molle

My wife and I are members of a somewhat secret, but by no means exclusive, Boston society—the society of parents of public school students who are reasonably well satisfied with the education their children receive. Despite the reams of bad publicity the school system receives, the fact of the matter is that it is possible to get an education, a good education, in it.

That is not to say that it is easy. One of the strengths of the public school system is that, through something known as the magnet school program, any public school student can potentially enroll in one of more than a dozen public schools across the city as well as the one assigned to the neighborhood in which he or she resides. But that means that to make the best choice a parent has to scout around and interview teachers and other parents. And that means work. Further, it is truthfully rare to meet a satisfied parent who does not participate in the affairs of the school, at least to the point of attending open houses and assemblies if not actively participating in parents organizations or actually volunteering in the school. And that means work. In addition, the public schools of Boston are the public schools of a major urban center. There is a diversity of kids with a diversity of strengths and weaknesses. To a youngish child, at least, that diversity can be frightening. It must be explained in ways that the schools are not always forthright in doing. And that means work.

But Boston has scores and scores of

teachers committed to challenging and encouraging their students. And it has institutions—for example, the Museum of Science—willing and anxious to assist the schools. To gain the maximum advantage of these resources it takes an effort to master the idiosyncracies of the system, to avoid the inevitable bureaucratic pitfalls and to reinforce the whole learning process. But in the end it works. The kids learn and the parents participate. And neither of those is a bad thing at all.

— Kirk Scharfenberg



Parochial schools in Dorchester share a common educational philosophy while varying from school to school in approach, parental involvement, costs, and acceptance of non-Catholic students. As with the public schools, talking to parents who have children in each of the schools you might be considering can be very helpful.

I was educated at St. Mark's school as have been seven of our children. This grammar school (grades 1 thru 8) is under the direction of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, but it is also staffed by a complement of lay teachers. Their efforts to provide the basic education of reading, math, social studies, spelling and science have prepared our four oldest children well for high school. Of course, being a Catholic school, religion plays a great role in molding these children for the world ahead of them. The main objective of everyone concerned with St. Mark's is to insure that the child will be able to handle any situation both academically and spiritually, and have an effect on all persons he or she will meet in the years ahead.

I feel certain that, as in my days at St. Mark's, these are still the main goals, and I hope, as a parent, that they will continue to be. We are very happy to be in Dorchester where we feel education is still a main issue of everyday living.

— Marion Dalton

Cultural Opportunities

The Dorchester Community Arts Council Inc. is a non-profit corporation which assists Dorchester artists in promoting themselves and strives to bring cultural events to Dorchester residents. They are a clearing house of cultural information for the community and a vehicle for finding funds for cultural groups in Dorchester. 825-8942.

The Dorchester Community Players are a small but growing group of theatre lovers who perform two plays a year in various locations in Dorchester. Although they have been using St. Mary's Episcopal Church at 14 Cushing Avenue on Jones Hill as a rehearsal hall for the past two years, they have rehearsed and performed at the Murphy School in Neponset, the Cleveland School in Fields Corner, St. William's School in Savin Hill and at the University of Massachusetts Harbor Campus. The group has also been a part of Boston's "Summerthing."

Originally known as the Arts Center Community Players, it was formed in 1973 by Dennis Magee with the help of the M. Harriet McCormack Center for the Arts and a few individuals from UMass. The Dorchester Community Players are scheduled to perform twice at the Strand Theatre this fall and will continue to take on interns from the University's Theatre Arts Department.

Membership in the group has ranged from ten to twenty individuals over the past seven years, and new members are always welcome—no auditions necessary. For information, call Dennis Magee at 825-4885.

Cultural Resource Center Inc., 84 Nightingale Street, is a group of volunteers who use their artistic abilities as a medium for community development. Through projects such as mural painting (take a look at the side of the Dorchester YMCA on Washington St.), participation in craft fairs, fundraising and advertising for community organizations, adults as well as high school students are improving their neighborhood's spirit and physical appearance while developing their talents and finding artistic expression. For more information, call Roland Crosby or Sally Agro at 923-2148

The New Neponset Players, under the direction of Jack Morris, present two colorful

cabaret shows per year complete with cocktails, hor d'oeuvres, dinner and dessert. Their fall show, which runs for two and a half weekends in November, is a black tie, formal dinner affair at St. Ann's Hall in Neponset. Their spring show, which is also presented five times in the parish hall, has an additional performance on the 4th of July. For that occasion, the City of Boston lends the Players their "Summerthing" stage. "Tenean Beach Day" is celebrated with a cabaret show on the beach. Although the Players call St. Ann's home and enjoy a cooperative relationship with the parish, they are not a parish organization.

Mr. Morris, whose first Neponset Players were CYO children from St. Ann's in the late 50's and early 60's, has nurtured the rebirth of the group since 1974 when the original players, now in their early 30's, came to him in the hopes of resurrecting the group. Currently, there are 76 players, 45 of whom are performers, and members spend five months each year rehearsing songs and dances in their leisure time. It is all done in the name of fun, and their performances are an unabashed, energetic labor of love. Past shows have included: "New and Old Songs," "We Get a Kick Out of Cole," "Say it with Music," "Richard Rodgers with Hart and Hammerstein" and "Neponset Goes to the

Movies." For ticket information call: 436-7652 or 265-3286

The University of Massachusetts Harbor Campus in Dorchester offers a wide range of cultural events—from art exhibits to jazz on the lawn to on-campus guest speakers.

The Theatre Arts Department performs two major productions per year as well as four or five smaller ones. For its major productions, the department chooses serious dramatic pieces. Past shows have included Harold Pinter's "The Birthday Party," John Webster's "The Dutchess of Malfi," and Goethe's "Faust." These performances are all open to the public and most are free. For schedule and ticket information, call 287-3181.

The art exhibitions in the Harbor Gallery feature the works of students and faculty as well as those of outside artists. These exhibitions are free.

Last year UMass brought area artists together for the first "Spring Arts Festival," which is slated to become an annual event. The festival presented artwork, crafts, mime and jazz while this year's festival will concentrate on music. Once again, all are welcome. To find out what's happening at UMass, contact the campus Information Center at 287-3100.



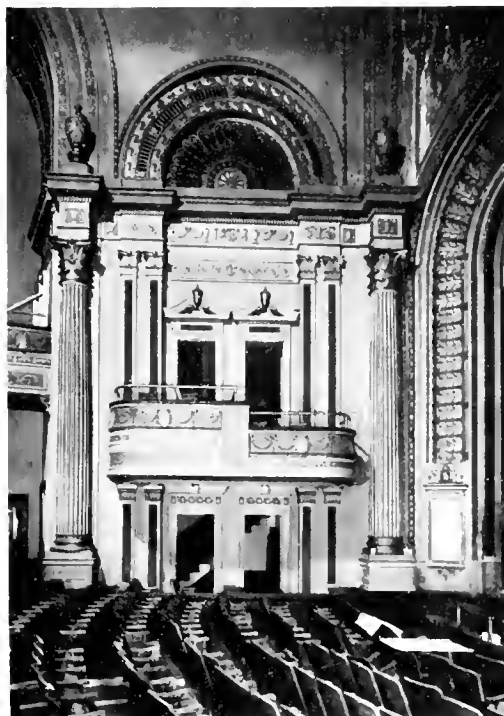
New Neponset Players, "A Few of Our Favorite Things"

The Strand Theatre, located on Columbia Road in the heart of Upham's Corner, was built in 1918 as a movie palace and vaudeville house and is said to have hosted such performers as Milton Berle and Dorchester's own Fred Allen and Ray Bolger. Known as "Dorchester's own Million Dollar Movie Palace," the theatre was closed in 1968 as the movie-going era gave way to television.

According to architectural historian Douglass Shand Tucci, the Theatre is of architectural significance due to the fact that it is "probably the first movie palace built in Boston from the ground up." It was originally designed by Funk and Wilcox and its architectural style, according to Mr. Tucci, is movie palace "adamesque." Its manner is similar to the Loews' Orpheum, flamboyant in decor, and the exterior is a classical revival Roman Triumphal Arch technique.

The city of Boston assumed ownership of the Strand Theatre in 1975 and began an ambitious renovation project with the intention of leasing the theatre to the M. Harriet McCormack Center for the Performing Arts. The Center is a multi-purpose cultural facility intent on providing easy access to the arts in the community. The Strand is scheduled to reopen in Fall '79. Planned programming includes performances for the elderly, children's film and entertainment festivals, a classics film series, a Hispanic film festival, jazz concert series, concert recital series and live theatre and entertainment events.

As correspondent Christine Temin wrote in last fall's *Boston Globe*: "To the people who



have guided the project for the last eight years, the renovation of the ornate old movie palace means not just the salvaging of a fascinating example of period architecture and a part of the history of their community, it also symbolizes what those residents see as the salvaging and rebirth of Dorchester itself, and the beginning of a new era in the history of their neighborhood." For more information contact Michael T. Stanton at 282-5230.

Dorchester Historical Society. An organization made up of members from throughout Dorchester, its purpose is to chronicle, study and preserve the physical, personal and social history and culture of Dorchester, both as independent town and Boston neighborhood. New members welcome. For more information, contact Anthony Mitchell Sammarco at 436-8367 or through the society's headquarters at 195 Boston Street.

The John F. Kennedy Library, currently nearing completion on Columbia peninsula next to the University of Massachusetts Harbor Campus, will open this fall. The library will house the presidential papers and mementos of the late president. The museum and visitor facilities will be on the lower levels of the eight-story structure. The remaining floor space will be used for the archives and research facilities.



SAVIN HILL

Since Dorchester's first English settlers came to Savin Hill in 1630 and met the Neponset Indians, much has changed, but the natural qualities of the area that attracted those settlers remain among its outstanding features. Today, Savin Hill is a striking mixture of urban and suburban living styles only five subway stops from downtown Boston. In the 1950's, Savin Hill, named after the savin trees, was divided by a section of the Southeast Expressway. This separated a half of the community that was already isolated on two sides by water and on a third side by the sprawling *Boston Globe* complex. As a consequence of its seclusion, the area "over the bridge" is a very close knit neighborhood in which many of the lovely one and two-family homes have been maintained by the same families for several generations. Savin Hill Beach, O'Connell Park, the Dorchester and Savin Hill Yacht Clubs, the tennis courts, and the ruggedly wooded, eight-acre "hill" provide an ideal environment for families who enjoy the city's proximity but not its crowded streets. The Savin Hill families who live "below the bridge" do not share the seclusion of their neighbors and have borne the brunt of the problems common to every urban community of the seventies. The most common neighborhood unit here is the three-family home, which in most cases is owner occupied. Though local commercial activity is limited, all of it takes place in this half of the community which extends westward along Savin Hill Avenue from the Expressway bridge to a few blocks beyond Dorchester Avenue.

St. William's Church serves the largely Italian and Irish Catholic population. Its youth activities, especially its well-known band program, are a unifying force throughout the parish, which includes all of Savin Hill. St. William's Church and School are central to the strong neighborhood identification felt by most Savin Hill residents. This local pride is

reinforced by organizations such as the Daniel Marr Boys' Club and the Columbia-Savin Hill Civic Association, both of which have done much to make Savin Hill an attractive place to live.

Although the area has been largely unaffected by the development of Morrissey Boulevard and Columbia Point over the past twenty-five years, the new harbor campus of the University of Massachusetts, the Kennedy Memorial Library, and the uncertain future of the Columbia Point housing project are sure to affect it in some way in upcoming years. For more information on Savin Hill, where the housing market is charitably described as "tight," contact Mike McGonagle at 265-8067.

EDWARD EVERETT SQUARE

I was born and brought up in the Edward Everett Square area, and I'm proud of the neighborhood. Take a walk through our neighborhood, and you will see well-maintained, attractive homes that display a variety of architectural styles. Some of the homes in our area are truly unique. Victorian mansions are scattered among multi-family garden apartments and three families. The three families are large, and the carpenters who built them gave careful attention to detail and craftsmanship.

It is a concerned and caring neighborhood. Many of the families in this area have lived on the same street in the same house all their lives. It is not uncommon to find a home that has been in the same family for several generations. It is a cosmopolitan neighborhood made up of people from many ethnic backgrounds and a broad range of ages. St. Margaret's Church and School play an important role in the neighborhood. Edward Everett Square has all the advantages and conveniences of city living, including easy access to stores, churches, beaches and recreational facilities. With the gasoline situation these attributes are like money in the bank. I'm sure if you go door to door in this area you will find that people here are proud of this neighborhood and glad to be living in our part of Dorchester.



COLUMBIA

Bisected by the Southeast Expressway, the Columbia section of Dorchester falls into two distinct neighborhoods. Columbia Point, the half that juts out into Dorchester Bay, is itself a study in contrasts. The University of Massachusetts Harbor Campus, the Kennedy Library (now under construction), the prestigious Boston College High School, the studios of Channel 56 and the *Boston Globe's* main plant all make major contributions to the cultural life of Boston and represent heavy corporate investment.

Sharing the peninsula with these institutions are the projects. Of the original 1500 living units, only about 300 are occupied, mostly by black and Hispanic families. Perhaps 200 more units are used by such agencies as the Columbia Point Health Center, but most of the area remains vandalized and boarded up. Plans to revitalize this problem spot are still undefined, but it seems likely that some buildings will be renovated, some converted into elderly housing, and others razed to make way for mixed-income housing experiments.

On the other side of the Expressway, the largely Irish and Polish population lives in an area bounded by South Boston, Edward Everett Square and Savin Hill. The people here are proud of the stability and continuity of their neighborhood; the many long-time residents successfully avoided the "invasion" of students that was predicted when UMass Boston was built. Twenty-six percent of the people are retired, and the number of elderly will increase when the seven-story Catherine Forbes Clark Elderly Housing facility at Edison Green is completed. Columbia's three families are eighty-five percent owner occupied, and the tenants tend to be related by blood or marriage to the landlord.

However, newcomers are attracted to this community for several reasons. Like most of Dorchester, Columbia has rents that are much lower than similar accommodations in other

parts of Boston, and leases with tenancy at will are easy to obtain. The centrally located Columbia MBTA stop provides quick access to downtown Boston. Even when winter storms put this Red Line stop out of commission, Andrew, the first of the underground stations, is within easy walking distance.

The Atlantic breezes keep residents cool in the summer and take some of the nip out of the New England winter. The athletic facilities of Southie's L Street Bathhouse and UMass Boston's sports centers are easily reached by anyone who enjoys a leisurely jog through the sands of Carson Beach.

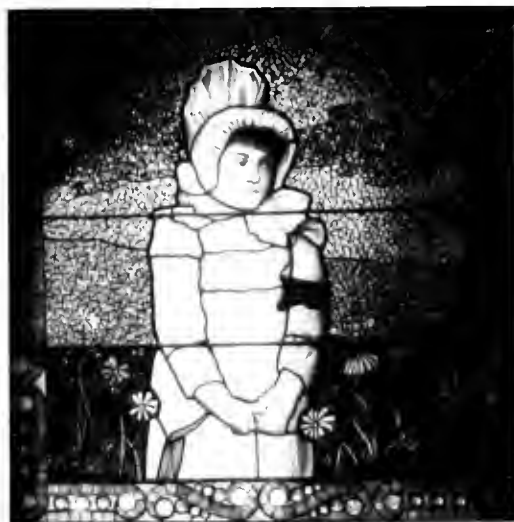
While this diverse and conservative neighborhood cannot be said to have a unifying community spirit, there are several centers which bring people together. Poles gather at the Polish-American Citizen's Club (82 Boston Street) to polka and hear the latest news from Warsaw on Friday and Saturday nights. St. Margaret's Church has very extensive CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) sports and recreation programs, and its Wednesday evening beano games draw hundreds of faithful players.

The Little House (275 East Cottage Street), the social service center for the area, provides the widest variety of activities. Under the vaulted roof of what was once a Congregational church, kids play basketball and hockey, and the active Columbia-Savin Hill Civic Association holds its meetings on the first Monday of each month. Little House



programs include child care, community recreation, drug treatment, alternative school, elderly services and the Little House Health Center, which soon will be located in two buildings on Dorchester Avenue.

The Blake House in Richardson Park and the Clapp House are colonial landmarks that constantly remind residents of the rich history of the area. The Columbia-Savin Hill Neighborhood Housing Service (812 Dorchester Ave.) vigorously promotes the renovation of homes in ways that accentuate, rather than disguise, original architectural beauties. For more information about Columbia, call the NHS at 282-2900.



QUINCY-GENEVA

In 1957, people said to me, "You can't organize so many streets." They thought trying to get just one block organized was difficult. But we organized the whole Quincy-Geneva neighborhood. Afterwards, people came around to investigate me. They were afraid I was a communist or something, but all I wanted was a clean neighborhood. I saw the beauty that was here and could be here, and I wanted us to get together for it. I wish you could see the pictures I have that show what we've done. We had block captains for each street and we worked to get things for the neighborhood, like tot lots. You know, those were hard to get then. They told us down at the City Hall to go to Franklin Field. That was just too far for the children.

About ninety percent of the people here are black with about ten percent Spanish speaking. The houses are large with high ceilings and stained glass windows. I think they're all about ninety to 100 years old. About fifty percent of the people here are homeowners. There are some large apartment



houses with absentee landlords that have been a problem. The thing that we have, though, is pride. There are many new people and lots who stayed when the banks and insurance companies red lined us and you couldn't get a mortgage or any insurance. Some people were told to go to Lloyd's of London. They don't red line us now.

The physical appearance of the houses here today is better than it was a few years ago. The streets, however, need cleaning and so do some of the vacant lots. The city owns the lots but never cleans them. We've often worked together to clean up.

The neighborhood association is actually called the Quincy-Geneva Area Neighborhood Improvement Association Incorporated. We're hoping to get neighborhood improvement funds from the Blue Hill Avenue Commission. The houses here vary in cost. You can get some through HUD, and others are worth a lot more. I would want a lot before I'd ever sell my house. They are mostly two and three-family houses. Some families live in the whole house and rent out a floor when they need the money. It's very flexible.

This area is also called the Brunswick-King area, the name of the model cities program that was supposed to do a lot for this area. Model Cities is gone, but we're still here.

We used to have things like baseball teams for the children, and we need people to lead such things now. We will have a talent and fashion show this year for the children, and that will bring parents together, too. Monthly meetings are held at Mrs. Louvenia Brewster's house. For more information, contact her at 442-5309.

QUINCY-OLNEY

Dorchester in general is a very diverse area, and this neighborhood is no exception. The ethnic makeup is black, white and West Indian. These Caribbean immigrants give the neighborhood a relaxed flavor that is in direct

contrast to the every day hustle and bustle experienced elsewhere in the city. Perhaps because of this relaxed attitude the neighborhood is relatively free of racial tension.

St. Peter's Church, a landmark in the community, was finished in 1872 and constructed of stone cut from a huge rock outcrop in whose place it now stands. Every Friday evening St. Peter's runs a Bingo game which draws hundreds of people from the community. The bingo game has been a major attraction for years and is an important social event as well as a fund raiser for the church and school.

The neighborhood has a variety of school opportunities nearby, including the Holland community school; the Raphael Hernandez, a bi-lingual magnet school; St. Peter's parochial school and a private Montessori school which recently located in the neighborhood. There is an active business district along Bowdoin Street which offers the services normally found in a neighborhood shopping area. Bus service is conveniently located and offers connections to Fields Corner, Andrew and Dudley Stations.

During the last few years, the neighborhood has enjoyed a quiet renovation, with many houses undergoing extensive repair often with the assistance of the city's housing improvement program. If you would like more information on the Quincy-Olney area, contact Leroy Schillingford at 825-1415.



JONES HILL

What makes Jones Hill a special place to live? Well, when you live on the highest point in Dorchester you're bound to have a fantastic view. But views don't make a neighborhood special. The heart of the hill is its people. The people who live here are concerned with the welfare of the community. They take pride in saying, "I live on Jones Hill." Good neighbors abound here, helpful, watchful, and yet they respect a person's privacy. The neighborhood association and the house bank play an important role in the vitality of the neighborhood.

The streets are a mixture of Victorian one, two and three-family homes. Some streets are filled with children playing, while others are as quiet as the early morning. We are very fortunate to have many community services within ten minutes walking time. St. Margaret's hospital, the best maternity hospital in the area, is on the hill. The Uphams Corner Health Center, The Bird Street Gym, which is currently being renovated, and the library share a building in nearby Uphams Corner. St. Kevin's Church and School, Pilgrim Congregational Church and St. Mary's Episcopal Church serve the needs of the neighborhood. And, of course, the Strand Theatre is at the foot of the hill.

There is easy access to transportation. If you are a bit more adventurous, you can hop on your bike and pedal into the city in twenty-five minutes.

Whether you live in the house that was known as the "Lead King Mansion" or a dramatically remodeled three family or a traditional three family, it is a thousand times better when you live on Jones Hill. To learn more about Jones Hill, contact Mimi Parr at 265-0807.

MEETING HOUSE HILL

Meeting House Hill, located in central Dorchester, is one of Dorchester's oldest neighborhoods. The name derives from a meeting house built in 1631 at Adams and East Streets.

The neighborhood sits high overlooking all of Dorchester and affords particularly fine views of Dorchester Bay. Founded in 1630, the area was settled around the First Parish Church (1631), the oldest parish in the country. The Colonial-styled Christopher Wren renovation stands on the summit of The Hill. Around the turn of the 20th century, The Hill became home to a predominantly

NOTICE.

There will be a

MASS MEETING OF CITIZENS, AT WINTHROP HALL, UPHAM'S CORNER, . . .

Wednesday, Dec. 5, 1900 at 8 P. M.

TO FAVOR A MUNICIPAL BUILDING AT UPHAM'S CORNER TO CONTAIN

A Branch of the Public Library with reading rooms
for boys and girls

A Branch Post Office.

A Ward Room.

A Free Gymnasium with bath and recreation
rooms

PROMINENT SPEAKERS WILL ADDRESS THE MEETING.

HIS HONOR THE MAYOR IS EXPECTED
TO BE PRESENT.

Irish Catholic population, and with nickel and dime contributions St. Peter's Church was erected. Both of these parishes remain vitally active in community affairs, offering the area direction and stability.

Although the area remains largely Irish - one need only to enter the Horse Shoe Tavern to hear the brogue cut deep from Donegal and Galway Bay - it has in recent years become increasingly integrated with black, Hispanic, Haitian and West Indian people, making it one of the most heterogeneous neighborhoods in Boston.

The area boasts two low-cost neighborhood health centers and a thirteen-acre recreational site that is a source of neighborhood pride - Ronan Park. As one resident put, gesturing expansively, "We probably have the finest park in the state. Where are you going to find a view like this, overlooking Dorchester Bay? We've got three baseball diamonds along with basketball and tennis courts and, what's more, they're all lighted."

For the resident who seeks quick, convenient shopping and services, Bowdoin Street offers a wide variety of stores, and nearby Fields Corner shopping center provides more stores and specialty shops.

Housing on The Hill primarily takes the form of the traditional three family. Built in the mid to late 1800's, these houses feature high ceilings, spacious rooms, and front and rear porches. They lend themselves to a

variety of design possibilities and represent a sound, economical investment for the home buyer. There is a lot of renovation work being done in the neighborhood by homeowners and by the Homesteading Program. The renovation of an old Victorian manse on Percival Street was televised by WGBH-TV, Channel 2, in the weekly series, "This Old House."

Meeting House Hill has an active civic association which serves both as a forum for the community and as a "meeting house," where residents can get to know each other. For further information on Meeting House Hill, contact David McCarthy at 265-0323.



VIRGINIA-MONADNOCK

The Virginia-Monadnock area is one of the lesser-known members of the Dorchester family of neighborhoods. A fan-shaped pattern of hilly residential streets makes up an environment of surprising beauty and diversity. The rich assortment of large Victorian frame houses, once the homes of some very prominent Bostonians, echoes the character of Dorchester's other hills, and some of the houses have spectacular views of the Boston skyline. Today, this neighborhood has an added feature - it includes the widest variety of ages, classes and ethnic backgrounds anywhere in Boston.



In the 1880's, when most of the houses were being built, the main feature of the Virginia-Monadnock area was convenience. The New Haven Railroad Midlands Line had a stop right in Upham's Corner, and all the major trolley lines of Dorchester intersected there. A unique business district sprouted up at the foot of Virginia and Monadnock Streets that included the first supermarket in America. Shoppers from all over Dorchester would stop to make purchases as they transferred from one train or trolley to another. The mansions on Virginia and Monadnock Streets attracted the medical profession, and at one time as many as thirty-three doctors lived on Monadnock Street.

Today, the variety of backgrounds in the people who comprise the neighborhood has been likened to a "little United Nations." There is representation from Yankees, Blacks, Cape Verdeans, Chinese, Greeks, Irish, Italians, Poles, Puerto Ricans and other West Indians. This is a family neighborhood, and where barriers still remain they are often broken down by the children, for whom language—whether it be English, Spanish, French or Portuguese—is no obstacle.

Virginia-Monadnock is convenient to the Upham's Corner business district, one of the most complete neighborhood shopping areas in Dorchester. Within walking distance are a five and ten, a complete hardware store, a cleaners, a cobbler, a sub shop, a deli and an ice cream parlor. There are five banks, the major churches, St. Kevin's School, a Little

City Hall, a post office, a neighborhood health center, a public library and the Bird Street Gym. Although the original trains and trolleys no longer run in Upham's Corner, the trains will be back in late 1979 with a stop at the original station.

A neighborhood association was formed in January 1978 to help residents meet their neighbors and share solutions to common problems. Each summer a block party gives people a chance to sample the food, culture and customs of all the residents. To learn more about the area, please call Juan Evertze (825-5959), Bob Haas (436-0494) or Mordecai Wilson (436-3039).



ST. PAUL'S

St. Paul's was among the earliest sections of Dorchester to be affected by the growth of the city of Boston and by the expansion of the streetcar tracks to Upham's Corner. This area offers the same diversity in population and housing stock, attractive location, views, ease of transportation and access to a local business center as the nearby Virginia-Monadnock neighborhood. Many of the homes in the neighborhood were lost due to abandonment and demolition. Those that remain are an interesting collection of nineteenth-century dwellings.

Rosetta Griffiths lives on Folsom Street with four of the thirty-two foster children she

has cared for over the years. She has cared for the neighborhood, too. Though "Mama" does not speak Spanish, she has often helped some of her Hispanic neighbors whose spoken English is stronger than their ability to read it. She helps people deal with the bureaucracies in their lives. And the care she shows is returned. "When I was in the hospital, every one of those Spanish people came to visit me. I didn't understand what they were saying, but I was glad they came." Marion Gladman, who lives on the other side of the hill, recounts a similar story. "When my husband died, neighbors I knew just to say hello to helped a lot. I know my neighbors. If anything's wrong or you need help, you can get help."

People caring for their neighbors have helped in other ways. "There used to be crime problems up here, but it seems to have quieted down over the last couple of years. I haven't heard of any more breakins. It's more of a community." People seem to feel that the crime problems that exist are related to Dudley Street and some of the bars. "You don't have the trouble around here that you have in other areas. You don't have that racial problem."

"Most of the people here are middle aged or elderly with a few new younger families. A lot of families with children, teenagers and younger, live around here. The kids all know each other. They all play together." Over 250 of them attended St. Paul's day camp this past summer.

The neighborhood's attractions for Marion Gladman are the neighbors, the convenience and the homes. "I like the houses. This is a three-family house and it's beautiful. Most of the homes on my street are owner occupied. Most of the people have lived here at least six years. I have lived here eleven years, and the people next door were here when I came. We are getting some stability."



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MATTAPAN

In 1630, under the leadership of the Rev. John White, a group of 140 people landed at what is now Nantasket. Scouting parties were sent out to find good pasture land, and so the settlers were led to Mattapanock, an area which included what is now southern and western Boston and several suburban communities to the south and west. The first settlement was on Allen's Plain (near Pleasant Street), and the area was renamed Dorchester. By 1633, the first corn grist mill was built on the Neponset River in what is now known as Mattapan. As Dorchester grew, many of its sections were given distinctive names. Mattapan retained its old Indian name and its boundaries were loosely defined.

About 1880, the Morton Street area was developed, and by 1910 the large farms and estates were being sold to building companies. Following World War I there was an influx of Jews, and by 1930 Mattapan had become one of the larger Jewish communities in the state. Today, Mattapan includes a large number of blacks as well as Haitian, Jewish, Irish and Italian people. Mattapan's boundaries have never been very well defined and even today there is very little agreement on where Mattapan begins and ends, or even whether it is a section of Dorchester. It is included here because of its historic and current ties with Dorchester. Mattapan is a lively and vital collection of neighborhoods with its own distinctive flavor which adds to the rich diversity that is Dorchester.

WELLINGTON HILL

Given a seat at a second story window on Wellington Hill, it is possible to spend hours watching the run of traffic on Blue Hill Avenue, until night seeps among the flat rooftops and trees for miles around, and the



Boston skyline vanishes into a maze of lights. And on a Fourth of July, the same seat may even serve for watching a spray of fireworks set off from out in the harbor.

Vaunted as one of Mattapan's two best places with a view, Wellington Hill lies between Blue Hill Avenue and Harvard Street, from Morton to Walk Hill Streets. This area could be called a neighborhood of two-family houses, but there are also three family and later one-family structures, all ringing the hill on a climb to a summit appropriately dubbed "Outlook Road."

At present, the area is home for a strong black community, though not without a representation of other ethnic groups. It is easily reached by the Mattapan-Egleston Square bus line, and is not far from shopping centers in Morton Village, American Legion Highway and Mattapan Square.

Once a predominantly Jewish community, Wellington Hill changed rapidly in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Many of its new residents had difficulty keeping up their homes or obtaining the necessary financing for repairs, but the neighborhood is now viewed as generally much more stable, with housing deterioration and abandonment on the wane.

A homesteading program has rehabilitated some of the vacant houses on Wellington Hill, and many homeowners in the area have been taking advantage of the low-interest Section 312 loans offered for home repairs.

Although many of its residents are younger couples with families, Wellington Hill lacks a sizable playground. However, neighborhood youngsters take advantage of the programs at the nearby Mattahunt Community School, while adults might even try their hands at growing vegetables in a community garden space on the grounds of the Mattapan State Hospital, located off Harvard Street.

There are a number of community institutions serving the Wellington Hill neighborhood, including the New England Medical Health Services, Inc., the Mattapan Community Health Center and the Lena Park Community Development Corporation. The neighborhood also houses a nursery school, which provides day care for pre-school age children.

Even though Wellington Hill does not have an active community association all to itself, residents do voice their concerns on neighborhood issues through the District 3 Community Council, which includes members from throughout Mattapan. And, short of gathering for a meeting, residents of Wellington Hill are known to be quite apt to look out for one another on a neighbor-to-neighbor basis. "Right around here, it's kind of nosy," an eleven-year resident of the neighborhood observed. "They know who comes in and who goes out all the time. And I like that." To discover more about this revitalizing neighborhood, contact Violet Burch at 298-7134.

ALMONT PARK

My husband and I moved to Mattapan from Back Bay, Boston, in September of 1977. That rickety-rackity Red Line trolley from Ashmont to Mattapan Square is worse than the slickity-shakity Green Line trolley, but I am thankful for it.

During the summer, despite several racial confrontations in the area, Almont Park was alive with activities. There was tennis and





soccer, crafts and games for little people and concerts for the whole family.

I was fortunate enough not to have met the burglar who visited our home in autumn, but I did meet some nice folks at a newly formed Mothers' Club.

Winter came again, and I met more fine folks, the Mattapan Neighborhood Block Association. They are a group of residents who have done many things to help improve Mattapan, and I've decided to join them to become part of the solution.

I enjoy browsing the neighborhood. I walk to the library, Little City Hall, the post office, the bank and the stores in the square. Since Finast is closed, I can no longer walk over for groceries. We do have a car; I'm just gas thrifty. Walking through the neighborhood relaxes me. The streets are neat and the homes are nicely kept. When I become a homeowner, I'll have a property my neighbors can be proud of.

No neighborhood is perfect, but I love Mattapan. There are problems of crime and racism and lax city services, but there are also people who care. And people are the foundation.

VIOLET STREET

Ask Roberta Eldridge and her husband, Melvin, if they would consider moving out of their neighborhood, and they're both likely to answer in unison, "For what?"

The Eldridges have lived at their present residence on Violet Street in Mattapan for the past eight years, and they are quite happy with their neighborhood. In fact, the couple believe they have the "best of both worlds" in their middle class, predominantly black neighborhood.

"We have all the conveniences of city living," says Mrs. Eldridge, "and yet, when we want to retreat into a more suburban setting, we have our privacy, too." The "privacy" she

speaks of is largely afforded by a backyard that is an unusual blend of rock and greenery landscaping, with a touch of artistry added to the rocks. (Mrs. Eldridge is a self-taught painter, wood carver and clothing designer.) The "conveniences" are closeby shopping areas, easy access to public transportation, proximity to Franklin Park and its zoo, and enough entertainment—movie theaters, a golf course (Melvin is an avid golfer), tennis courts — to satisfy most weekend urges.

The Eldridges' home, like many of the small, ranch style houses in this neighborhood is made of beautiful "knotted" pine. The tree-lined blocks that surround Violet Street are kept immaculate, and city services are adequate. Plus, there is true pride among area residents in maintaining the appearance of their homes, according to Roberta. "All you have to do is hear one lawn mower, and it creates a sort of chain reaction around here."

The Violet Street neighborhood is not perfect, however. There are problems. Because of inadequate police "visibility," "the residential areas have had to create their own neighborhood CB patrol," says Mr. Eldridge. He claims this has been helpful in strengthening police-community relations and, more importantly, has created a greater sense of community spirit and concern among neighbors.

Another concern of the Eldridges is the fact that, while there are still some white families in the area, many have moved away in the past five years. This, like previous "red lining" practices, has hurt the "balance" of the neighborhood.

The irony, says Mrs. Eldridge, is that many of the white families that moved away "are now sorry they did." Taxes, while they have increased since the Eldridges moved to Violet Street, have not risen a great deal. And, of course, housing prices in suburbia have made Mattapan much more attractive.

To discover more about what the Eldridges call "the best of both worlds," contact them evenings at 296-9097.



MESSINGER STREET

Ranch-style houses. Well-kept lawns. Two-car garages. And people working on their houses. This is the Messinger Street neighborhood, one of Boston's newest communities (most of the houses date from post-World War II) and perhaps Mattapan's most affluent neighborhood.

To Mohammed Farrakhan and his wife and seven children, the Messinger Street area, a fifteen-block section just west of Mattapan Square, it's been home for five years. A good home. Mohammed, who manages the new Our Market in Codman Square, owns one of the bigger homes in the area, a sixteen-room brick house. He came because "the neighborhood was clean, had good schools, and gave my children the opportunity to play with other children their ages."

Five years ago, when he moved to Favre Street, he says the area was perhaps sixty percent black. Today, it's about seventy percent black, but, according to Mohammed, "Young white families are beginning to move in." They are being joined by black professionals—teachers, nurses and the like. Why? Well, for one thing, prices are still reasonable. For another, the neighborhood has a real suburban "feel" yet offers all the amenities of city living. And, perhaps above all, people live in harmony.

One of the major reasons for this harmony is the Messinger Street Citizens' Group, Inc., a group of area residents that successfully operates a volunteer security patrol, fights for (and gets) "Tot Lots," runs movies for the neighborhood youngsters, and quietly, but effectively, tries to make Messinger Street a "Shangri-La," the name coined for the area by Gareth Kinkead, Jr., the group's president.



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stretch between Greenbriar and Waldeck Streets there are at least 200 youngsters.

The residents of Tonawanda and especially Lindsey Street have formed active block associations. One of their purposes is to organize their voices to ensure more adequate services from the city. An important function of the Lindsey Street Association, which was formed in 1976, is to plan the annual block party held every summer. Making various contributions in time, money or food, the Lindsey Street residents put together a celebration that all enjoy, especially the children.

The Fields Corner stop on the Red Line is just a few minutes walk from neighborhood residences. The shops, banks and entertainments of Fields Corner are also within easy reach. Homes in the area are modestly priced, but there are few available. For more information, contact Richard Plano at 288-0529.

LINDSEY-TONAWANDA

Lindsey Street and neighboring Larchmont and Tonawanda Streets have a rich diversity of people and homes. On them can be found both single and multiple-family housing, built primarily in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many homes are well-preserved examples of Victorian craftsmanship. Some homes have been renovated, and many are at various stages in between, in this predominantly working-class neighborhood.

Most of the homes in the area are spacious. Because of this, Lindsey-Tonawanda is a neighborhood many people have chosen for raising their families. On the few streets that

MOUNT BOWDOIN

In 1965, Helen Horner moved from an apartment on Columbia Road to the "country." "We wanted to be out of the city, and we wanted a house, and we didn't want to move to suburbia. We used to hear crickets all the time up here. That's as far country as I wanted to go. You can see downtown from

Mount Bowdoin, and you can get there easily, too, with the bus just at the foot of the hill, and when you get back up here it's ten degrees cooler."

There are lots of spacious houses on Mount Bowdoin, especially at the top of the Hill around the green. "We have been here for fourteen years: the neighborhood is pretty stable. Most of the people have been here for ten years or more. I walk my granddaughter down to school in the morning, and all the people I see are the same people I always see. Almost all the houses on this street are owner occupied. One family rents its home, but they have been here so long that we think of them as the owners. We have a lot of young kids up to age twelve around, and they have the park. Even the little kids have a community feeling. They wanted to march down to Parks and Recreation to get swings and play equipment for the park. They are good kids. They get into mischief up at the park sometimes, but we keep an eye on them."

The Mount Bowdoin Betterment Association has become active again. "We're all working people, and the costs that come with maintaining these houses are great. The association is trying to find a way to make this neighborhood eligible for low interest rehabilitation loans. There are also some abandoned buildings. Some of them are beautiful little houses that need to be bought and fixed.

"I have several friends who have moved to the suburbs who are thinking about moving back, and for the same reasons that the whites are starting to move back—economics and gas. Some of them have already moved back into the Washington Park area. We've begun to see some of them up here, too." If you would like to learn more about the Mount Bowdoin neighborhood, please contact Helen Horner at 288-4836.

CHARLOTTE-ESMOND STREET

"They write about the burglaries, the assaults, and the abandoned buildings," said Larry Gaines, a resident of Esmond Street for fourteen years. "but they never write about the success stories here. They never write about the kid who just got accepted to law school, the first black to go to Mass Maritime Academy, the members of street gangs who are now building a better community, the many families who are raising children and making ends meet. We never read about these and many other—success stories."

Gaines, a former deputy sheriff who now works for the post office, is chairman of the City-Wide Coalition for Justice and Equality.



a non-funded volunteer association that aims to fight racism and the conditions that breed it. He is also a homeowner who plans to stay on Esmond Street, part of a neighborhood that has been battered in recent years by publicity about its burglaries, assaults and abandoned buildings.

But in recent months the burglary rate has fallen dramatically, partly due to a re-awakened spirit of community among neighbors who aren't about to be driven out of their homes. An undercover police presence—plainclothesmen—has reduced the number of assaults and the city has acted, albeit slowly, to board up four of the seven abandoned buildings, mostly apartment buildings, that disfigure the otherwise attractive tree-lined street whose one, two and three-family houses are well maintained.

The houses, many with Victorian features, are occupied by a predominantly black population, which includes many professionals as well as blue-collar workers. Most own their homes. There are a number of young children on both Esmond and Charlotte Streets, a beautiful, spacious block with large one and two-family homes predominating.

McClellan Street and Bucknell Street, two of the other blocks that make up this small neighborhood south of Mount Bowdoin, are also neatly kept and characterized by many three-family homes.

Public transportation, as in most of Dorchester, is close by, and shoppers are within walking distance of the American Legion Highway shopping area and other food and retail outlets on Washington Street.

Two spiritual anchors in the community are St. Leo's Catholic Church and Twelfth Baptist Church. The Lee Community School on Talbot Avenue offers many after-school programs for both children and adults. Lena Park provides area residents with a host of recreational facilities.

"This community has a lot to offer people and that's why I'm staying," says Larry Gaines. "Working together, we can make it better." To learn more about the Charlotte-Esmond Street area, call Larry Gaines evenings at 825-2666.

BROOKVIEW STREET

The trees on Brookview street give it a cool shady atmosphere on a summer's day. The Spences moved into one of the two three families on Brookview Street sixteen years ago. The second floor porch affords a pleasant view of the street, and when Dan Moore

comes up the walk someone's waiting to let him in. He has seen a gradual change in the eighteen years he has lived on the street, and not all the changes please him. The increase in crime during this time is not something peculiar to Brookview Street, however. He adds, "This is one of the nicest streets around. Most of the people take some interest in the property. We have from ten to thirty teenagers on this street at some times. But they respect where they live. When one of the adults on the street corrects them, they respond." Louise Green concurs. "Everyone who lives here or visits here respects the property. That gives people the security to keep the property up." "I like Brookview Street because it has a Southern atmosphere," she adds. Janet Spence explains, "If you had a fire, everyone on the street would come and help you. Out on the street we stop to talk, so we know what's happening in the neighborhood. We watch out for each other."

Most of the homes on Brookview Street are single family and owner occupied. The Brookview Street Association is open to residents of other streets as well and meets when the need arises or the spirit moves. During the past year the members have been trying to establish community gardens in the neighborhood. Dan Moore comments, "There are obstacles and it's up to each one to participate." The association is a member of the District 3 Community Council. The Council acts as a community development corporation as well as improving police and community relations.

Louise Green's comment about the present, "I think it's really nice," is completed by Janet Spence's hope for the future, "I see positive things if we can continue to work together."

FRANKLIN FIELD

"The beauty of this neighborhood," says Marjorie Perry, a seventeen-year resident, "is the space between each home, affording each house a small yard for grass and flowers, an outdoor leisure spot and even a small garden." The recreational facilities that one can walk to from here are truly exceptional. Franklin Field has baseball diamonds for the little leaguers as well as the adult teams, and other areas in the park are used for soccer and cricket matches. In addition to the playing fields, the MDC operates a skating rink and swimming pool. The Franklin Field Tennis Center is a community-operated facility which brings tennis to neighborhood children from all sections of the city. Franklin Park offers a golf course, zoo, horseback riding, the annual



kite festival and a beautiful spot for a walk or a picnic. The Lee Community School, which plays an important role in the community, offers a pool, gymnasium and a full program of after-school activities.

Most of the streets in the area are lined with well-maintained houses and large trees. The housing mix consists of spacious one, two and three-family frame structures, many of which are about 100 years old.

The neighborhood is home to an economically and culturally diverse population of professionals and non professionals, young and old, black and white and Haitian and West Indian and Hispanic. Often three and even four generations live in the same house, creating a sense of continuity. The commitment of these families shows in the care they give their houses and streets. Bus service is a short walk from any house and the area enjoys first rate health services from the Harvard Street Health Center and the Charles Drew Family Life Center.

The community has several neighborhood associations including the Community Betterment Group and the Grass Roots neighborhood group which often join forces in addressing problems.

The Franklin Field neighborhood is full of contrasts and surprises: the blight on Blue Hill Avenue and well-kept streets behind it, the white uniformed cricketers having a match in the Field on a Sunday afternoon, the Mass in French at St. Leo's. For more information on the Franklin Field area and what it has to offer, call Marjorie Perry at 825-9388.



WEST TREMLETT STREET

The street where I live is ninety percent owner occupied. My family purchased our home ten years ago. During that time, the street and the many families were the supposed victims of what is now identified as "white flight." My neighbor on Merlin Street, who has lived in this area for 23 years, has observed that those streets and houses that were well maintained when he moved to the area are still well maintained, and the areas and homes which manifested neglect then frequently have continued to be neglected. In the ten years I've been here, I have seen a great deal of pride displayed by many of the homeowners. There has been significant improvement in many of the houses owned and occupied by the black families on my street. The ethnic composition creates a homogeneous atmosphere, which leaves my family and myself with a somewhat secure feeling when having to leave our house untended.

Our street has access to two MBTA train stations, is within walking distance of the business district and has many large trees and spacious yards which lend the appearance of a small country town street.

Many households reflect a mixture of both working class and middle-class families. In addition, all age groups are represented among the residents.

If these facts give the impression that this is a generally satisfactory neighborhood, this does not mean that there is no room for improvement. We would like to see increased crime protection. Also, we are distressed by the deterioration of the business district. It was a particular point of pride for the residents of our community when we were able to save the supermarket, which was closing, by converting it into a community



owned and operated enterprise. With this success in mind, we now look forward to the revitalization of other businesses, so that the commercial district will be as pleasant as the neighborhoods around it. If you want more information about our neighborhood, talk to Mary Ray at 825-5399.

MELVILLE-PARK

Perhaps no other neighborhood in Boston has received as much favorable publicity recently as Melville-Park, a series of small squares and streets centering around Melville Avenue. With its large Victorian homes, tree-lined streets and flowering greens, it suggests a suburban Newton or Hingham. Yet its proximity to Boston and its rich ethnic mix make it a cosmopolitan neighborhood where people of various racial and ethnic heritages, ages and classes live.

What has attracted the people—and the publicity—is a reasonably priced ensemble of large, comfortable Victorian homes that allows each family the maximum of privacy and space. Built up on a grand plan in the late 1800's, the houses represent a number of styles and designs: Queen Ann, Eastlake, Second Empire, neo-Colonial clapboard, shingle and stick. Many of the houses retain their period details: fireplaces, parquet floors, leaded and stained glass, inglenooks, oak paneling and even gas fixtures. The neighborhood has remained remarkably stable through its almost 100 years of existence.

with many of the houses now being occupied by only their fourth or fifth owners. While property values in Melville-Park have appreciated more than in other areas of Dorchester, they are still below the national average for existing housing and still represent one of the great housing buys in the metropolitan area.

Another obvious attraction is the diversity of age groups. Both the old timers, who have introduced the newcomers to the area and have maintained it for years, and the newer residents, who have brought to it their enthusiasm and energy, combine to give the neighborhood its distinctive air of confidence and beauty.

The Melville-Park area is serviced by the Shawmut and Fields Corner stations on the MBTA Red Line, a twenty-minute subway ride to the center of Boston and is convenient to the boating facilities and beaches of Dorchester Bay, recreational centers, schools, churches, libraries, health facilities, parks and several shopping districts.

The Melville-Park Association, founded in 1976, is open to all residents and is primarily social in its function. It provides an opportunity for people to meet their neighbors as they discuss and work to solve common problems. For more information on the Melville-Park neighborhood, call Florence Rawls at 436-3646.

SHAWMUT

Taking the name of the original native American inhabitants of the region, the Shawmut neighborhood lies adjacent to Melville and Wainwright Park, between Dorchester Avenue and Washington Street. Its fine one and two-family Victorian homes (there's a Tudor here and there) are owned and occupied by people from many walks of life, racial and ethnic backgrounds, religions and lifestyles. The quiet, tree-lined streets and the easy access to Boston via nearby Shawmut station are assets of a strong community enjoying an energetic renewal. Shawmut





neighborhood “boasts” the original Greek revival building of Dorchester Academy, alma mater to presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams, and a Revere bell at the Second Congregational Church that faithfully announces the hour of the day. One of the more unusual attractions of this friendly neighborhood is a free yoga class taught weekly on Kenwood Street by members of the industrious Sikh community.

The Shawmut United Neighbors (SUN) Association, has become increasingly active and enjoys widespread support and participation. Its purpose, as stated in the monthly SUN newsletter, is “to bring together area residents to think about the neighborhood, unite to work on common problems and to make sure this remains a safe, pleasant place for anyone to call home.” Recent events have included a house tour, a street fair, a paint-in at a house damaged by an electrical fire and a series of workshops on fire prevention, security, energy conservation and urban gardening. The SUN Association also maintains a neighborhood Hot Line and a free house bank service that brings together buyers, renters and sellers.

A small, but growing, group of newcomers have purchased homes in the past year. As a consequence of the area’s increasing confidence and stability there are few homes on the market and prices have risen somewhat. To find out more about the Shawmut neighborhood, call Tom at 436-4497 or Ann at 265-6603.

WAINWRIGHT PARK

The Wainwright Park neighborhood is located between Welles Avenue and Center Street. Flanked by the Ashmont Hill and Shawmut neighborhoods, it shares some of their Victorian character, but the larger number of two and three-family homes reflects the fact that the homes that were built around Ashmont playgrounds (now called Wainwright Park) date from a slightly later era. They are roomy, comfortable and for the most part well maintained.

The neighborhood, too, is comfortable, and its friendly, family character is evident even though there is diversity of family situation, age, race and culture. The park itself is an important factor, because it is not only the physical focal point of the neighborhood but also the center of much of its social and recreational activity. As with most parks this is a mixed blessing, but on balance it is considered more of an asset than a liability. It is the site of league softball, baseball and football games for young and old and innumerable pick-up games of all kinds. There is skating in winter and a playground program in the summer. In addition to the opportunities the park affords, there are many activities for children and teens organized by nearby churches.

The convenience of the Wainwright Park neighborhood increases its attractiveness. Residents have only a five-minute walk to either Shawmut or Ashmont station on the



MBTA’s Red Line which provides a twenty-minute ride to downtown Boston. Also within walking distance are many small neighborhood stores as well as larger shopping areas, the new Codman Square regional library and a soon-to-open neighborhood health center.

The neighborhood character varies from street to street. Some blocks are tightly knit and supportive. Everyone knows everyone else, and one need only call to obtain help at any time. Others are less cohesive. There is a Wainwright Park House Bank, a referral service for persons wishing to buy, sell or rent a home or apartment in the neighborhood.

If you wish to know more about the Wainwright Park neighborhood, call Liz MacNeil at 265-8827.

WECAN

“We saw this three family on Armandine Street three years ago, and it was just what we wanted. The place needs work, but we’re doing it a little at a time. Meanwhile, we can live here comfortably.”

“I would never give this place up. A good house, good neighbors—what more could I want?”

“My husband and I want to buy the house we’ve been renting. It’s been great having a one-family house, especially with the kids. It’s big, there’s a yard out back and a driveway—you should see my front yard in the summer when my rose bushes are in bloom!”

A variety of one, two and three-family homes make up the WeCan neighborhood. Many were designed and built individually, no two the same, by local craftsmen with the quality and detail you don’t see in modern houses. Outside are porches—encircling the house, built on the side or built on each story. Inside are dining rooms with built-in china closets, kitchens with separate pantries, carved stair railings and hardwood floors. Prices are moderate because many houses need some repair. The style of the houses reflects the area’s history.



“My parents live on Edson Street in what used to be a farmhouse before this street existed, back when all this was farmland. There used to be a barn out back. This house I live in on Milton Avenue, and the ones next door, were built in 1874 by the Baker’s Chocolate Company for their managers and foremen.”

“I was born in this house. My father bought it in 1912. We used to buy milk from Walker’s Dairy Farm—Richard’s Playground covers part of that old farmland now. Where Dorchester High is now used to be a frog pond.”

“This place has trees, a country atmosphere—here we have space. You don’t see rows of houses, all the same, one on top of the other.”

Black, white, Latin, and West Indian people share the WeCan neighborhood. Most are owner occupants and are doing the work needed on their homes themselves. Often people have relatives living close by. While many people have moved here within the past five years, many have been here ten, twenty years and longer.

“This neighborhood is integrated—I couldn’t find this outside the city. It’s important that my kids grow up in a place like this.”

Most people plan on staying. Buses and subways and main roads are convenient. Codman Square is within walking distance and offers stores, a library, a YMCA and the soon-

to-open neighborhood health center. There are several churches in the neighborhood, as well as Dorchester High School and Fifield Elementary School. Roberts’ Playground offers a sports field, and some of the lots are used for gardens and recreation areas.

The WeCan neighborhood has faced serious problems over the last decade. “This neighborhood went through some changes, but I believe there has been a change of attitudes, a getting to know each other, a getting closer. People are more conscious of what is around them. Every neighborhood has problems and many people here have decided to hang in there.” The neighbors have formed the WeCan Neighborhood Improvement Corporation and have begun working together to solve problems they share. For more information about the WeCan neighborhood, call 288-1620.

THE RAMS NEIGHBORHOOD

The RAMS section of Dorchester adopts its acronym from the first letter of each of the streets that comprise the area—Rockwell, Armandine, Mora and Stockton—although the blocks do not appear in that order. These four long blocks are bordered on the west by Milton Avenue and on the east by Washington Street.

The neighborhood is for the most part residential and is marked by many turn-of-the-century, two-family houses, with the ones on Armandine and Stockton Streets in particular predominantly owner occupied. Mrs. Lillian Johnson, who has lived on Stockton Street for sixteen years, is decidedly positive about her neighborhood, about her home.

“If anyone doubts that old can be beautiful, just step into one of the homes in this neighborhood and feel the warmth of their traditional wood moldings,” she says. “I’m not interested in moving,” she adds. “I’m interested in staying.”



And, apparently, so are others. The Kennedys, Ernest and Gloria, are a young married couple who recently bought a house in the area. “A year ago, we thought our dream of owning a home was just a fantasy,” says Ernest, “but it came true. We’ve put a lot of work into the house, but it’s ours.” Adds Gloria, “A home—like a neighborhood—is what you make it, and we’re happy with our decision.”

The ethnic and racial composition of the neighborhood has changed over the years, especially the past fifteen. Most families are either of black or Hispanic heritage, although many white families still remain.

The RAMS neighborhood is blessed with nearby mass transit—Ashmont station on the Red Line and regular bus service on Washington Street. There are several “Mom and Pop” shops conveniently located for that container of milk or loaf of bread or other variety-type item residents may need. Joseph’s Pastry Shoppe, located on the corner of Stockton and Washington Streets for many years, provides a tantalizing experience as you walk by breathing its characteristic aromas. The Codman Square Library is within walking distance. Currently housed in new facilities, it offers an excellent collection for youngsters.

To find out more about the RAMS neighborhood and the opportunities it offers, call Herbert Hentz at 436-6989.



CODMAN HILL

The Codman Hill neighborhood is located in the southern section of Dorchester and represents one of Dorchester's younger communities. The tree-lined streets are bordered by a variety of large, comfortable two-family and one-family homes as opposed to the earlier and more traditional Victorian and three-family forms. It is the housing mix and the neighborhood's quiet spaciousness that make Codman Hill an ideal area for people with families.

Traditionally a strong middle class neighborhood, the housing stock has been meticulously maintained over the years. During the past five years the neighborhood has become home for an increasing number of black, West Indian, Hispanic and young white families while retaining many of its long-time residents. The neighborhood has kept its traditional character while becoming a successful example of urban integration.

Originally the site of the Codman estate, a prominent feature in the landscape of 19th-century Dorchester, the first houses were built in the years surrounding the turn of the century. Although the two family is the predominant house form, there are a number of post-war one-family homes and a scattering of three families. The second floor unit of the two families frequently includes a couple of finished attic rooms which offer unobstructed views of the Boston skyline to the north and Dorchester Bay to the east. The southern slope of the hill catches the summer evening's breeze and offers a panorama of the Blue Hills. Yards are large enough for gardens and play space yet small enough not to be burdensome.

Parks, beaches and shopping facilities are within minutes of the neighborhood. Ashmont station on the MBTA's Red Line is a ten-minute walk and bus service is available at the foot of the hill.

The Codman Hill Civic Association meets monthly to socialize and discuss common problems. The association has a house bank which provides information and assistance to people interested in buying or renting in the neighborhood. The house bank keeps track of available houses and apartments and offers a more personal introduction to the neighborhood. If you would like to know more about the neighborhood, contact Patrick Cooke at 282-0707.

ALICIA ROAD-MERCIER AVENUE

The Alicia Road-Mercier Avenue



neighborhood is a convenient, family-oriented community with a surprisingly suburban feel to it. Built on what was the Codman Estate, these well kept one and two-family homes with comfortable yards are located on tree-lined streets with little traffic. The area is predominantly white, characterized by both professional and blue-collar workers.

St. Gregory's Church and School, which are important influences on life in this community, are within walking distance. Proximity to Ashmont Station, Camey Hospital, Walsh Park, the new Codman Square library, Dorchester YMCA and the availability of many local sports programs make this a particularly favorable location for young families. For more information about this neighborhood, contact Ellen Hanley at 288-2897.

ASHMONT HILL

Ashmont Hill is a neighborhood with a distinctive late-Victorian flair. The majority of the homes were built between 1890 and 1910, and many retain the fancy shinglework, stained glass, porches, columns and gables typical of turn-of-the-century architecture. The generous-sized yards and hilly topography add to the neighborhood's pleasant atmosphere.

Ashmont Hill is conveniently located between the Codman Square shopping district

and the Ashmont terminus of the MBTA's Red Line, both no more than a ten-minute walk from anywhere in the neighborhood.

The population of Ashmont Hill, although predominantly white, is ethnically and economically diverse. There is a strong mix of young families, households with growing children, single individuals and older residents who have in many cases lived here for fifty years or more.

An informal neighborhood organization, the Ashmont Hill Association, has been meeting monthly since 1972 and has sponsored several neighborhood house tours and yard sales. Meetings are held in residents' homes and are open to all; there are no "official" members or elected officers. Besides providing a forum for discussion of neighborhood issues, the meetings give neighbors an opportunity to become better acquainted.

The homes on Ashmont Hill consist mainly of one-family and two-family structures. Some of the larger houses have been converted into two or three apartments over the years, and there is also a smattering of three families. Although house prices have risen substantially in recent years, they still cover a broad range, depending on size, architectural design, location, condition and rental income.

For more information about the Ashmont Hill neighborhood, contact Robert Rugo or Vicki Kayser at 288-8867.

4



DIX-WHITTEN

The Dix-Whitten Street neighborhood, named for two of its dominant thoroughfares, like so many communities in Dorchester, rests on a once expansive estate named, aptly enough, the Whitten Estate. This 19th-century estate was the site of an apple orchard and one can still see the orchard keeper's home, a vestige of Dorchester's not too distant agricultural past.

During the early 20th-century, when Dorchester's many acres of fields gave way to classic Victorian and three-family homes, the Dix-Whitten area became home to a seafaring population who hailed from Nova Scotia.

Today, while the neighborhood is predominantly Irish, there are several black families and, yes, even some Nova Scotians. The community has a varied age mix and the young adorn the street under the watchful eyes of their parents. This essentially working-class neighborhood is truly closely knit—so much so that as one neighborhood woman said, "It wasn't long ago that most of the women on Whitten Street worked at one place—Linda Mae's restaurant. At five o'clock, you could see the doors of their houses open and waitresses fall in line for duty."

Houses in the area range from large, attractive two-family homes to three family, sporting well-developed and neatly-kept hedges. Yards are large, providing children with ample play space and adults with enough room to prepare barbecues on summer nights.

The neighborhood is served by St. Mark's parish socially and educationally, as well as religiously. The area enjoys an active civic association, and information on the neighborhood may be obtained by calling Norman Farrell at 825-6991.

CLAM POINT

Clam Point is a "waterfront" community abutted by Morrissey Boulevard on the east, Freeport Street on the north, Victory Road on the south and separated from central Dorchester by the MBTA Quincy Line. Its relative isolation has lessened the impact of the social changes in the last two decades. The result is a closely-knit community of people from various age groups and lifestyles striving to maintain and enhance its neighborhood identity.

The area itself is residential but lies within easy walking distance of a shopping center that includes a movie theater, grocery store, department store and other specialty shops. Bus service is provided during commuter hours to the Field's Corner MBTA station, about a half mile away. The area's proximity to Malibu Beach, Dorchester Bay and Tenean Beach is particularly attractive during the summer months. In addition, Clam Point known as Commercial Point until successful clamdiggers renamed the area around thirty years ago—is bordered by and accessible to the University of Massachusetts and the almost completed Kennedy Library.

The homes of Clam Point are primarily one-family Victorian, many subdivided into apartments. A handful of post-World War II ranches offers a sharp contrast to the stately mansions of bygone eras. Property values, as in much of Dorchester, vary widely. Recently, values have been escalating at a pace greater than that of inflation. This may be attributed

to the deflated values of the early seventies coupled with an active neighborhood clean-up and restoration effort.

The wide variety of trees lining the streets are the result of a former resident's association with the Arnold Arboretum. And speaking of associations, Clam Point has a very active neighborhood association. As John O'Reilly, a longtime Clam Pointer and association member, puts it, "We're an organization of citizens from varied economic and social backgrounds assuming an active role in community affairs. Our monthly meetings include educational speakers and provide a forum for discussions of community problems. They also provide the opportunity for people to discover each other. Last September our block party attracted over 400 area residents."

If you would like to talk to someone about Clam Point, call John O'Reilly at 265-0947 or Doug at 825-4025.

PORT NORFOLK

"One thing that often happens," says Mary Maloney, a life-long resident of this working-class area, "is that people don't realize we exist. You probably can look at a lot of maps of the city and they don't even have us on them."

Were the name "Port Norfolk" to appear on a map, it would settle upon a small stump of land jutting into the mouth of the Neponset River at the southeast corner of

VOTERS OF DORCHESTER!

Do you wish to pay \$38,500 each year as Dorchester's part of the interest of Boston's old debt?

Do you wish to be taxed 50 per cent, higher on an exorbitant and fictitious valuation of your real estate?

Do you wish to pay more for compulsory improvements than you could buy them for without annexation?

Do you wish to place the management of your public affairs, and the expenditure of your taxes entirely beyond your control?

Do you wish to change from somebody to nobody, and be the fish in Boston's kite?

Do you want your house-rents largely increased?
If you do not, go to the polls on Tuesday and vote

NO!

A public meeting of the Opponents of Annexation will be held at the Rink at Port Norfolk, Monday Evening, June 21st, at 8 o'clock, P. M.

Addresses will be made by several gentlemen in reply to the arguments of those favoring annexation.

All interested in the question and especially those whose minds are yet undecided are cordially invited to be present.



CEDAR GROVE

Cedar Grove is just a small part of Dorchester, but we have a lot going for us. The area is made up of hills, low sections, a river running behind us, a friendly neighborhood restaurant where you're sure to catch up on all the local politics as well as the recent births and deaths, trolley tracks running through the huge Cedar Grove cemetery and many lovely homes with new coats of paint.

There's also a certain feeling which we know is there but which is really hard to define like, say, electricity.

The restaurant, one of several, is on a corner where a local kid grew up, hung around—I'm not sure which came first—bought a store and added a restaurant. That type of thing seems to be happening a lot lately. People grow up in our area and when it comes time to settle down either with spouse or in business they don't look outside—they settle here. Like Mike, who owns the hardware store, lives on Milton Street, and has just about anything you need either to fix your house or to make a scout project (he gives you a break on scout projects 'cause he knows all the kids). Pat and Marty run the florist shop for the romantics; they live in the area, too.

Maybe part of the feeling comes from knowing so many people that you are comfortable spending a half hour talking with as you buy a newspaper. Sometimes the wives mind the wait, but one just can't walk in and walk out, especially without saying hi to Jim or some of the other guys. A bigger part of the feeling derives from having people such as Father Jim among us. He is with us in good times and bad and has a special gift for doing so many nice things. The school adds to the feeling or, perhaps, guarantees that the feeling will continue. The children's choir or the May Procession surely provides hope that the feeling will endure.

We have more than the usual selling points real estate people use . . . certainly we are close to public transportation . . . use it, too, plenty of stores . . . walked to them all during the blizzard of '78, beauty salons for the women to look lovelier, new health center to keep us fit, sports shops for the kids to get their skates sharpened. But we have much more. We have a wonderful church which provides dearly for its people (just let someone try to get a seven-day liquor license). We have good, strong families (the core of all society) who work hard at family life.

When someone is ill in our area, you wouldn't believe the outpouring of helpers to ease the burden, when a child is born the gladness that abounds is joyful, when a

Dorchester. A onetime seaport village, the "Port" is all the more cut off from the rest of Dorchester by the Neponset Bridge and the Southeast Expressway. But for all its isolation, Port Norfolk is only a short walk away from Tenean Beach, the Garvey Playground, with its newly built skating rink, and the recently enlarged Neponset Health Center. The area is also within easy reach of stores on Morrissey and Gallivan Boulevards. Access to downtown Boston and to other points in Dorchester is provided by a bus which now stops at Neponset Circle. "Having a stop there has been a tremendous help," says Mrs. Maloney. "It makes a big difference."

Port Norfolk has its own civic association, and its Neponset Community Church sponsors activities for area residents. But with ties to St. Ann's Parish and nearby neighborhood groups, people who live in the "Port" are apt to speak of all Neponset as their community.

Almost entirely owner occupied, the relatively modest mix of one and two-family houses and occasional three family generally predate the year 1900. The housing stock has been labeled "fair," exactly the term used by twenty-year resident Ben Tankle, who boasts the area's lack of flooded cellars but voices little optimism on cleaning up its chronic sewage problems. But the value of the waterfront land? Well, that's something else again.

"The only remaining land left in Dorchester is Port Norfolk—on the water, that is," says Tankle, eyes beaming. "It's a peninsula. There is no other land that you could build a mud hut on except Port Norfolk. It's prime waterfront land. We know this and we consider it to be one helluva place."

Although the "Port" is no longer a neighborhood from which many could commute by foot to work at a foundry, lumber yard or ship builder's, it is still the predominantly working-class bastion it was at the beginning of this century. Where home sales are spoken of as few and far between, often prompted by birth, marriage or death, and made by word of mouth to a friend or relative.

scholarship is won everyone feels happy, when the guild runs a cake sale on election day, not only does everyone get out to vote (we're very politically oriented) but they all bake and buy cakes, cookies . . . when the choir gives a concert the mothers and friends sew while they practice and senior citizens even go out at night just to hear the children sing (that's support!), when a teacher is sick, a mother who is a certified teacher substitutes.

Families are promoted here. We have family roller skating and ice skating parties; in the summer we bring lawn chairs to cheer on the little leaguers; in the winter we bundle up to cheer the hockey teams.

Homes . . . they're at such a premium that everyone seems to be in the real estate business because they know someone who is looking for a house and there are just not enough.

We look way out there in the suburbs and say, well, I wouldn't really know my neighbor well enough to feel I could correct his child or call him up to inform him. But here—when you grow up with these people—you know he'd want you to call him just as you'd want him to call you . . . so you do.

Maybe it's just me (I'm sure it's not), but I see our neighborhood as a place that's as perfect as all of us working together can make a place. Yet I see people still working to make it better. It's a beautiful place to live and we're lucky to live here.

To learn more about Cedar Grove, call Maureen McGoldrick at 436-1088.



LOWER MILLS

Lower Mills, at the southeast end of Dorchester, is one of the oldest of Dorchester's neighborhoods, established well before the American Revolution. For most of its history, the community's focus was the Walter Baker Chocolate Factory complex on the Neponset River fall line. The chocolate factory closed fourteen years ago, and some of the buildings are now leased to small businesses, but Lower Mills retains much of the flavor of a small New England mill town.

There are three families and apartment houses in Lower Mills, but most of the homes are one and two families, with tiny fenced yards, trees, and flower and vegetable gardens. Lower Mills has one of the highest owner-occupancy rates in the city, and participation in Boston's Housing Improvement Program is heavy. The effects show in the care with which many old houses have been preserved.

Many of the old wooden homes date from the Greek Revival period, between 1820 and 1860, and can be recognized by their imitation Greek Temple columns and triangular roofs. As the town prospered after the Civil War, Victorian "cottages," many still with barns and outbuildings intact, were built farther from the river. Eighteen years ago, the last working farm was converted to house lots, so that the neighborhood has modern tract homes as well.

The rapid ethnic changes that occurred in some parts of Dorchester have come more slowly to Lower Mills. A few Yankee families still live in the neighborhood, but the predominant ethnic group today is Irish. Lower Mills borders the predominantly black community of Mattapan. Some black families now live in Lower Mills, and, although the area has not been completely free of racial conflict, problems have been fewer than in more transient areas. Lower Mills has not been the object of "gentrification," but the convenient location and the strong community orientation may bring professional people in the years to come. Although Lower Mills looks isolated on a map, an old interurban trolley line (one of the few remaining in the United States) provides easy access to Ashmont Station and the Red Line to downtown and Harvard Square.

Several factors have been crucial in keeping the community stable. St. Gregory's Church, with both grammar school and a girls' high school, has been a vital part of community life. A large number of neighborhood children attend St. Gregory's School or participate in programs in the church. The senior citizens' housing on Dorchester Avenue, considered the



best public housing in Boston, has also been a stabilizing influence, and many retired people have moved to the area to take part in its programs.

The business district, streets of small shops more like a country town than a city, has been a positive force and has been able to resist the deterioration that overcame many Dorchester shopping areas. When a national grocery chain recently closed its store in Lower Mills, the building was quickly bought and renovated by a local businessman and is now open again.

The factory buildings and open space along the Neponset River are now the subject of a joint study undertaken by the City of Boston and the Town of Milton (which borders Lower Mills to the south) entitled: *Lower Mills: A Heritage State Park*. The authors of this study want to see the Baker Mill areas classified as a



historic district. Their proposal also seeks to create outdoor recreational space and preserve the older mill buildings, giving Lower Mills residents open, country-like space in the midst of an urban neighborhood. For more information, contact Gary Tondorf-Dick at 236-4873.

ASHMONT

The Ashmont section of Dorchester well illustrates what may be Dorchester's most notable characteristic: its many, identity-conscious, self-contained and self-sufficient neighborhoods, complete within rather narrow boundaries and offering all the amenities and conveniences of comfortable urban life. Ashmont's generally accepted limits are Dorchester Avenue, Ashmont Street, Adams Street and Gallivan Boulevard, no more than a half mile in any direction. School, churches, banks, restaurants, drug stores and every variety of shop are thus within easy walking distance from any point in the neighborhood.

Adams Village anchors the southeast corner of the Ashmont rectangle. It is perhaps the Main Street of this "little town within a town," a meeting place for Ashmont neighbors. There is a supermarket, drug stores, the well-known Eire Pub, good restaurants, including a Chinese establishment, a fish market, Irish store, laundry and shoe repair, hardware and many other shops. Peabody Square, at the Dorchester and Ashmont corner, is the location of the Red Line's newly refurbished transit station, from which downtown is but ten to fifteen minutes away. The station also is a major terminal for bus lines to many parts of the city and surrounding areas. A fire engine company occupies another corner of Peabody Square.

Housing in Ashmont is a healthy mix of beautiful old turn-of-the-century homes, many now in process of renovation and restoration, well-kept three families and two families and a great number of modern one-family homes—all reflecting the care and pride of long-established families. Home owners far outnumber renters; rooms for rent are scarce and real estate dealers report scant turnovers of home properties.

The people of the Ashmont neighborhood, as might be expected from the housing pattern, represent the nearly full range of employment in any small city. There are blue-collar craftsmen and tradesmen, business executives, nurses, teachers, lawyers, artists, musicians and a generous sprinkling of city, state and federal officials. Ashmont residents are actively involved in the nearby Neponset

Health Center and Carney Hospital and in Dorchester Fair Share and similar organizations. The American Legion club house of Old Dorchester Post No. 65, at Gallivan and Adams, is the scene of many friendly gatherings.

Ashmont has no formal neighborhood association, perhaps because its problems are few. Its streets are well lighted and paved—with the usual complement of car-jarring pot holes. There is only one through street from Ashmont to Gallivan—Carruth—and cars move slowly through the section's narrow side streets. There are no abandoned or boarded-up buildings, vandalism is rare, and the fire trucks are seldom seen. For more information, call John McGill, 825-4968.

POPE'S HILL

Who are the people in our neighborhood? They're teachers, lawyers, "phone" men, "gas" men, mailmen, firemen and home management engineers (formerly known as housewives). They're blue-collar workers and white-collar workers. They're Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, but mostly Catholic. They're Irish, Italian, Polish, German, but mostly Irish.

Pope's Hill, one of the original seven hills of Dorchester, is one of the southernmost neighborhoods of the city of Boston. It boasts being part of Neponset and being resoundingly "strong," according to a recent M.I.T. survey. It boasts the Murphy Community School program, St. Ann's Church and School and all the activities connected therewith, educational, recreational and health facilities and families. Families and a unique sense of quality family life are indigenous to Pope's Hill. Neighborhood activity here is not a substitute for family, but an outgrowth thereof. Some of the families are third, fourth, fifth or whatever generation "Neponset," going back to the days of the stagecoach stop. There are new families as well, moving here because by reputation this



is the sort of area in which one would like to raise a family.

At the present time, purchasing a home is not the easiest task—not because of price but because of availability. The Stay In Neponset organization has a housing referral service for rental and sales, but at just about any time the demand exceeds the supply. Stay In Neponset started a local newspaper, *The Neponset Scene*, which has recently merged with another neighborhood newspaper. This serves as an information source for the neighborhood as well as an outlet for opinion.

Problems? Of course there are. One of the characteristics of the people here, though, is their grasp of reality. Since Richard J. Murphy, for whom the community school is named, first proposed the idea of a neighborhood association, the one in Pope's Hill has served as a public forum for airing problems, planning and policy setting.

If you are interested in finding out more about Pope's Hill—the name, incidentally, stems from . . . please call Kathy Sweeney at 288-9085.

NEPONSET

The Neponset section of Dorchester is a stable neighborhood that lies between Dorchester Bay and the Neponset River. Its housing stock runs the gamut from the wooden-pegged Pierce House (1630) to modern split-level ranch type homes. Atop many of the houses built on higher elevations, perched like majestic crowns, one can observe "widows' walks," relics of days gone by, where the wives of sea captains kept a vigil for the ships of their loved ones returning from ocean voyages.

From its beginning, Neponset has always been noted for its business and residential qualities. Today, neighborhood stability is indicated not only by the scarcity of available houses or apartments in the area, but also by



the numerous banks and businesses that have chosen to organize or relocate there.

While most families have been residents for many years, new residents seem to be either newly-married persons with family roots here or those who have endured a few years of suburban living and are moving back into the city.

Neponset's assets include: close proximity to public transportation, beaches, schools, churches, shopping centers and recreational facilities, with easy access to the Southeast Expressway heading north or south, to Route 128 or the roads leading to Cape Cod.

The area boasts numerous youth programs, an abundance of parish activities, many neighborhood civic organizations, fine schools and churches, strong involvement and representation in political government, an active community school and a neighborhood health center.

Most of the homes are owner occupied and well cared for, but the greatest asset that the people of Neponset have is themselves. As long as residents of a neighborhood care about the area and each other, the neighborhood will remain stable. There is more to Neponset than just a group of houses and some stores. It is a community in the true sense of the word, and its people are working hard to keep it that way.

For more information about Neponset, call George Harden at 282-1416.



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Marian Gladman, Fr. Bill Francis

AREA 2

Wellington Hill Violet Burch, Mabel Graham
Almont Park Gloria Lee, Paula Ross
Violet Street Melvin and Roberta Eldridge
Messinger Street Mohammed Farrakhan

AREA 3

Lindsey-Tonawanda
Mount Bowdoin
Charlotte-Esmond
Brookview Street

Franklin Field
West Tremlett
Melville-Park
Shawmut
Wainwright Park
WeCan
RAMS
Codman Hill
Alicia-Mercier

AREA 4

Dix-Whitten
Clam Point
Port Norfolk
Cedar Grove
Lower Mills
Ashmont
Pope's Hill
Neponset

Richard Plano
Helen Horner
Larry Gaines
Janet Spence, Dan Moore,
Louise Green
Marjorie Perry
Cynthia Younger, Ed Tyler
Robert West
Paul Wychules
Mary O'Donnell
Carolyn Hernandez
Herbert Hentz
Michael J. Quinn, Pat Cooke
Ellen Hanley, Barbara Kelly

Jim Coleman, Norman Farrell
John O'Reilly, Doug Wert
Ben Tankle, Mary Mahoney
Maureen McGoldrick
Gary Tondorf-Dick
Thomas "Ed" Hanlon
Kathy Sweeney
Ken Bruynell

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History

Settled one month before its neighbor, Boston, in May of 1630, Dorchester has a history nearly as old as that of America. For its first two hundred years, Dorchester remained apart from Boston, existing primarily as a farming community with small commercial and industrial outposts along the Neponset River at Lower Mills and Mattapan Square, and along Dorchester Bay at Commercial Point.

The patterns of Dorchester's earliest settlement are preserved today in its road system. Pleasant Street linked the original settlement area of Allen's Plain (where the Old Blake House built in 1648 still stands) to the fortifications atop Rock (now Savin) Hill. Adams Street (then called the Lower Road) connected the meeting house on Meeting House Hill to Israel Stoughton's grist mill on the Neponset River at Lower Mills. The Upper Road, later named Washington Street because George Washington regularly used it during the fortification of Dorchester Heights, connected the "Rocksberry" settlement to the South Shore.

Other early roads are Boston, Stoughton, Harvard, Bowdoin, Freeport (the road to the free port), Crescent (to the salt marshes on Columbia Point), Pond, East Cottage, and River Streets. The earliest of Dorchester's roads is Norfolk Street, which follows a pre-settlement Indian trail.

The development of the railroads in the 19th century tied Dorchester closer and closer to Boston. The Old Colony Railroad's stops in the Dorchester countryside brought suburban development, first to hilltops such as Pope's,

Harrison, Jones', Savin, and Ashmont. The suburbanization process was formalized with Dorchester's annexation to Boston in 1870 and completed with the extension of the streetcar lines throughout Dorchester around the turn of the century, and the subway line in the 1920's.

Dorchester never developed beyond the stage of a suburban residential community, and many of its houses and monuments have been preserved from the destruction that goes with industrialization. The two oldest houses in Boston (two of the five oldest houses in New England) are the Blake House on Columbia Road and the Pierce House on Oakton Street, and more than a dozen pre-Revolutionary War dwellings are still standing.

Other historic places in Dorchester include the site of the Triumphal Arch in Lower Mills where then Ambassador John Adams was welcomed back to America in 1798; the site of the Battle of Dorchester Heights (now called South Boston); Roswell Gleason's famous pewter and silver works on Washington Street north of Codman Square; and Walter Baker's chocolate mill on River Street in Lower Mills.

Dorchester has also been home to many famous Americans. The patriarch of the Mathers in Colonial times and three Harvard University Presidents came from Dorchester. Suffragette Lucy Stone lived on Pope's Hill, and statesman and orator Edward Everett was born near the square that now bears his name.

Lucy Stone



More recently, notable Dorchesterites have included: Speaker of the House John McCormack; historians Theodore H. White, Francis Russell and Thaddeus Mason Harris; Rose Kennedy; Ray Bolger; Leonard Nimoy; Norm Crosby and Donna Summer.

The true glory of Dorchester's history—besides its people—is in its "firsts." Dorchester was the first town to support a public school by taxation, and the site of the first town meeting. Other firsts include the first water mill and powder mill in America, and even the site of the world's first supermarket.

Dorchester's history is one of the great joys of living here. Every neighborhood in Dorchester can claim its own famous person or event, and history permeates the life of "our town."



Lower Mills Village, circa 1900-1910

Dorchester's Houses

A quiet rural area, a weave of small villages and narrow lanes until the 19th century, Dorchester began taking the shape that we recognize today only after its annexation to Boston in 1870. From a population of scarcely 10,000, the next fifty years saw Dorchester grow to a quarter of a million people. Although important 17th and 18th-century landmarks do survive (including the Blake House and the Pierce House, the two oldest standing houses in the city), Dorchester is overwhelmingly Victorian in its architecture. For this reason, the story of Dorchester is largely the story of its Victorian housing—single-family houses and triple deckers.

One of the most ubiquitous comments heard about Dorchester is that: "It's all triple deckers!" In fact, there are over 5,000 of these uniquely New England apartment dwellings in Dorchester, but they are by no means the complete story of Dorchester from 1870 to 1914. Let's examine the single-family areas of Dorchester and then return to the triple decker, for no discussion would be complete without describing both.

The Victorians loved their houses, saw them as the glittering prizes that put a final cap on their own exertions in the activities of life. Dorchester's upper middle and middle-class owners lavished time and money to assure themselves of the best in design and finish throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century. A developing streetcar system and an expanding Boston brought the old summer homes on Jones Hill, Meeting House Hill and Savin Hill into the orbit of these middle-class clients: further south large pockets of single-family houses were erected by individual architects and carpenter-builders in the Melville Park area, Ashmont Hill-Carruth Street, Mt. Ida, Mt. Bowdoin, Adams Street and on Washington Street (near Codman Square).

These areas were suburbs of Boston, but in a way inconceivable of our own later suburbs. These rows of houses in a grid or facing small parks are not our idea of leafy suburban glades. The reason for the small set backs and narrow gardens was not meanness or lack of vision. (Rather, it was the idea of a large house near the city that offered privacy, coupled with a summer place or an annual summer holiday further south or in the hills.) The middle class, unless living on older pre-streetcar estates, tended to build after the fashion of

town houses. The houses had porches and, occasionally, balconies. The greater number also tended to be on or near hilltops to take advantage of the spectacular views and light those locations allow. However, it is interesting to note the urban, rather than suburban, feeling of Dorchester's single-family houses standing row upon row in detached townhouse lots. Another unusual feature of development was the "block park look," meaning the open ground look around blocks with few, if any, boundary fences or walls and vegetation hugging the contour of the individual house. Even today this attractive feature remains on many a street and hill slope site.

Following the same southward push of urbanization and dependent on the same streetcar system (and on the cross-city lines as well), the lower middle and working class expanded into Dorchester. While some were employed in industrial sections near the

Neponset River in Lower Mills or near Freeport and Dorchester Avenue, the vast majority of small business people, government employees and working families commuted daily into Boston. They commuted from either two-family structures or three-family wood-frame structures called three deckers or triple deckers. These structures, with origins in Worcester and Fall River, and with South Boston as a base have become almost symbolic with Dorchester although they comprise less than half its housing stock. Just as the upper middle-class house was a compromise between a town house and a detached suburban dwelling, so too was the triple decker a compromise between the single-story worker's cottage and the wooden apartment house. Built by small groups of speculators and carpenter builders, the triple decker, even in its infancy reflected much of the society around it. For example, the builders of the triple deckers tended not to be architects until the 1900's and even then many of the most



Hobart Homestead, Mattapan, circa 1895

successful buildings were put up by old line builders without any training other than experience. The companies and partnerships themselves reflected the changing social base of Dorchester—the oldest were Yankee, followed by Irish firms by the late 19th century and then joined by Italian and finally Jewish firms by the 1920's. The last of these structures were built in 1930. As a social and architectural solution to Boston's horrid overcrowding problems the triple decker was a great success. It enabled the owner occupant to live economically with the help of monthly payments of his two tenants or to house his own extended family in the same house, yet with separate units. It provided a strong social bond to neighborhoods (and still does), since neighborhood activity tends to be in the street under watchful eyes on the family balcony or in windows. This socialization of the street and the cooperation instilled by housing patterns was a critical factor not only in creating strong neighborhoods but in housing



Collins Home, built in 1870 on "Mount Ida" (now Ronan Park)

the newly-arrived (or immigrant) family with a comfortable dwelling unit.

Triple deckers began without balconies and

cornices, but after the 1870's took on the classic or Queen Anne style and within 20 years began to round the bays and appropriate towers with finials from the single-family house. Houses on Pope's Hill, for example, have the towered bays and broad balconies with the squared off cornice line of the roof powerfully decorated. By the turn of the century, the wave of triple deckers in central Dorchester and further south began to resemble the colonial-revival architecture being erected throughout the country, and finally in the 1920's the last triple deckers developed a spare Prairie-Modern look without the decoration and pediments that were popular 25 years before.



Bowdoin Avenue at top of Mount Bowdoin, circa 1900.

The last great speculative building wave was in Mattapan in the southwest corner of Dorchester. Here many attractive bungalows and cottages were built before the Second World War. There are small pockets of post-war housing in Dorchester, but the peak of population and the triple decker boom were a simultaneous occurrence and one that has determined much of Dorchester's history (and future).

Today, increased housing costs in Boston's suburbs, as well as the soaring price of gasoline, are factors in turning many potential home buyers towards city neighborhoods. They find what old time Dorchester residents have always known— that Dorchester's houses, after her people, are her greatest assets and as housing stock are a major physical and aesthetic achievement.

Housing Programs

Housing Improvement Program (HIP). Offers rebates at a percentage of rehabilitation value to owner-occupants of 1-6 unit homes: 20% for moderate income; 40% for low-income; and 50% for low-income over the age of 65. Serious code violations must be repaired as part of program if homeowner is to participate. Technical assistance on work and financing available, along with tax shelters for eligible repairs. For more information, call local site offices of the Mayor's Office of Housing: Ashmont (436-6600), Mt. Bowdoin (436-1442) or Mattapan/Franklin Field (288-5400).

Rehabilitation Loan Program. These are 3% (Section 312) loans made available to owner occupants in Dorchester and Mattapan homesteading areas (Meeting House Hill, Wellington Hill, and north and west of Codman Square) for terms up to 20 years. Serious code violations must be included in rehabilitation work if homeowner is to participate, though range of eligible repairs wider than under HIP. Offers technical assistance on work specifications and cost estimates, along with checkups on progress and quality on contractor's work by Rehabilitation Specialists. For more information, call the Mayor's Office of Housing at Mt. Bowdoin (436-1442) concerning this program in either Dorchester or Mattapan.

Interest Reduction Program. A new program for owner-occupants (of 1 to 6 unit houses) unable to get conventional home repair financing. Available only in small area of Franklin Field (from Glenway to McClellan Street, from Blue Hill Avenue to Bradshaw Street). Produces effect of a "3% loan" by reducing principal on a home repair loan by as much as 51% (at 15% interest for 15 years) or by lesser amounts at lower rates and shorter terms. Cosmetic and functional repairs are eligible under program. Serious code violations must be repaired also if applicant is to qualify. For more information, call the Mayor's Office for Mattapan/Franklin Field at 288-5400.

Urban Homesteading Program. An opportunity for homeownership for buyers willing to invest in a rehabilitated property, which they must occupy for at least three years. Homesteading properties (formerly HUD-owned) are made available at a cost equal to or less than the cost of rehabilitation. Buyers must complete the property's required "sweat equity"

rehabilitation items and meet the program's financing and occupancy requirements. Homesteading areas are in Meeting House Hill, Wellington Hill and north and west of Codman Square. For further information, call 725-3490.

Federal Housing Assistance Payment Program (HAP). Provides guaranteed rent subsidies for approved applicants in privately owned rental units. All existing housing units in Boston with rents within program guidelines and in decent, safe and sanitary condition are acceptable for the program. For more information, contact the Boston Housing Authority, 53 State Street, Boston (telephone: 227-3850). An equal opportunity housing program.

WeCan Neighborhood Improvement Assn., Inc. This community-based organization is implementing a neighborhood improvement program between Washington and Norfolk Streets, roughly from Codman Square to St. Matthew's Church. The improvement effort consists of a program to acquire and rehabilitate vacant structures, together with funds to aid owner-occupants of multi-family homes by means of a five-year rent subsidy for their tenants. The WeCan group is seeking to set up an interest reduction program for home repair loans to owner-occupants. Financial and rehabilitation counseling is also available. For more information about the program, go to the WeCan office at 643 Washington Street, or call at 288-1620.



Flag Pole Raising, Mount Bowdoin, circa 1900

Alianza Hispana. Offers a counseling program for prospective homeowners, giving advice on such matters as purchase of HUD-owned properties or taking advantage of other housing programs, such as the HIP. For more information, contact Julie Valentin or Ana Hernandez at the Alianza Hispana, 413 Dudley Street; or call 427-7175.

Neighborhood Housing Services, Inc. (NHS), Columbia-Savin Hill. This community based organization serves much of north Dorchester, including Jones' Hill and areas near Uphams Corner. Offers free property inspection, work write-ups, estimates for home repairs and help in picking contractors. Also gives free financial counseling, bank referrals, advice on other housing programs. Homeowners unable to get normal home repair financing may be eligible for help from NHS's revolving loan fund, and NHS counseling also gives help for those who wish to do repairs on their own. In addition, NHS is running a "Homebuyers Opportunity Program" (HOP), which helps homebuyers rehabilitate previously vacant houses with the aid of the city's HIP (at special rebate rates) and the backing of participating banks. For more information, go to the Columbia-Savin Hill NHS office at 812 Dorchester Avenue or call 288-2900.

Lena Park Community Development Corp. This non-profit community-based agency concentrates housing efforts in the Franklin Field neighborhood. Its Rehabilitation and Counseling Program provides an opportunity for home ownership to families at a price less than or equal to the cost of rehabilitation. For more information, contact the Lena Park Community Development Corp., 150 American Legion Highway, Dorchester, MA 02124; or call 436-1900.

Mayor's Office of Fair Housing. An agency to help those who may have difficulty finding a place to live because of their race, sex, religion, national origin or color. Also offers counseling to prospective tenants and homeowners, whether on developing a personal budget or picking a day to move in. The agency is also developing a housing resource file containing up-to-date housing opportunities plus listings of other agencies offering housing programs and services. For more information, contact the Mayor's Office of Fair Housing at 5 Doane Street, Boston, MA 02109; or call at 725-4408.

DOORHILLS

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Savin Hill
Edward Everett Sq.
Columbia
Quincy-George
Quincy-Olney
Meeting House Hill
Jones Hill
Virginia-Monadnock
Saint Paul's

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Lindsey-Jonawanda
Mount Bowdoin
Charlotte-Esmond
Brookview Street
Franklin Field
West Tremlett
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