

# **Codman Square: History (1630 to present), Turmoil (1950-1980) and Revival (1980-2000): Factors which lead to Racial and Ethnic Placement, Racial Segregation, Racial Transition, and Stable Integration**

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## Introduction

The study of the history of a community can reveal the role of geographic, topographical, social, cultural and technological forces in the development and change of communities in the United States, and what brings them together and pulls them apart. The neighborhood described in this study – Dorchester – is interesting as a subject, for its history is nearly as old as America itself. The town of Dorchester was settled in 1630, and was a farming community for nearly 250 years before developing into a suburban, then urban, area.

Yet to summarize Dorchester as a rural to suburban to urban neighborhood is to oversimplify. Dorchester contains as many as 36 sub-neighborhoods whose differences may not be detected by a casual passerby, but are very obvious to residents. This paper focuses on a collection of sub-neighborhoods which come together at a point of geography known as Codman Square, located in the geographic center of Dorchester.

Codman Square is a fascinating place. The center point of the central Dorchester neighborhood, it has nearly 50,000 individuals. It is made up of people from fifty nations, with socio-economic and social differences ranging from low income Caribbean immigrants to working class African American districts to middle class professional neighborhoods of mixed races and lifestyles, to extremely impoverished Latino residents of housing projects. These various slivers of community today constitute a vibrant, transient, occasionally violent area which has undergone dramatic changes over the past 50 years, and has made tremendous improvements over the past 20 years after having hit bottom in the late 1970s.

I have chosen Codman Square as a subject of study for a number of reasons. First and foremost, I have spent more than a quarter century as the head of the Codman Square Health Center, which was started as a committee of a civic organization in 1974 as a vehicle to allow the community a way to improve itself. My involvement started as a civic activity – I was a member of the civic association that debated the idea of starting a health center, and I was chosen as the chairman of the committee after raising my hand a few too many times during the debate. The Codman Square Health Center, true to its origins, has been a catalyst for community redevelopment over its history, and I have been a part of this history. Second, I have found Codman Square to be a microcosm of urban America during this period. Codman Square, over the past 50 years, has been racially transformed, became a destination point for immigrants, and has experienced rebirth.<sup>1</sup> Its commercial district has been burned and rejuvenated. Its housing stock has

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<sup>1</sup> “Gentrification” had been used initially in this sentence, but aroused the ire of a number of community residents in their readings of this paper. Gentrification is a loaded term. It implies the change of a low income minority community into an upper income white community. In fact, the areas in this study which have had an influx of middle class outsiders had been middle class since they were built. However, this

been abandoned, burned and restored. It has experienced abandonment, racial and ethnic tension, riots, and unity. Thirdly, I have been collecting and reading articles and books about Dorchester and Codman Square for almost 30 years, and this paper allows me to put some of what I consider important into print.

Over this period, I have marveled at the changes I was witnessing and in which I was participating. I have developed some ideas as to what has worked and what hasn't in redeveloping a neighborhood, and what factors have led to both racial transition and resistance to it, and the factors that lead to stable integrated neighborhoods. This paper allows me the opportunity to write down some of the history I have learned, to study some of the data which tells part of the story of why Codman Square declined and improved, why certain areas re-segregated and other areas did not, and to make note of some of the trends and factors which are part of that story.

#### Background: Early Dorchester and its changes from 1630 to 1870 (annexation to Boston)

“But ... receiving advertisements by some of the late arrived ships from London and Amsterdam of some French preparations against us (many of our people brought with us being sick of fevers and we thereby unable to carry up our ordnance and baggage so far) we were forced to change counsel, and for our present shelter to plant dispersedly; some at Charlestown, some at Boston, some of upon Mistick, which we named Meadford, some westward of the Charles River, four miles from Charlestown, which place we named Watertown, others of us two miles from Boston in a place we named Roxbury; others upon the River Saugus, between Salem and Charlestown, and the western men four miles south of Boston at a place we named Dorchester.”

From a letter written by Deputy-Governor Thomas Dudley in 1630 to a friend in England. <sup>2</sup>

The Puritans who settled Dorchester were part of the group which obtained a charter allowing the Massachusetts Bay Company to settle the land between the Charles and Merrimack Rivers. Part of this group sailed on March 20, 1630 aboard the Mary and John and landed on June 6, 1630 at a place called “Mattapanock” (Columbia Point) by the Indians<sup>3</sup>. These settlers built houses and a meeting house nearby at a place later called Allen's Plain (roughly where Pleasant Street is today).

Before leaving for America, the colonists had determined that for purposes of mutual protection they would build closely together. For this reason all settlers built homes within one-half mile of the meeting house on lots of four to six acres. South of what is now called Meeting House Hill, “Great Lots” (in what is now Central and

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study also points out that there has been a dramatic increase in income relative to the entire area in those areas, and that the new residents of these areas tend to be from outside of Boston.

<sup>2</sup> Roxbury Past and Present, pp. 2-3

<sup>3</sup> “Dorchester/Uphams Corner, p. 1

Southern Dorchester) for general farm purposes were granted<sup>4</sup>. Thus, the first roads built by the Dorchester settlers centered around the Meeting House (Cottage Street and Settlers' Lane), led to the fortress atop Rock Hill (now Savin Hill) by way of Pleasant Street, to the Cow Pasture (Columbia Point) by way of Pond Street and Crescent Avenue, and to the Burying Ground by way of Burying Place Lane (now Stoughton Street).

Later, as the danger from the Indians disappeared, homes were erected on the "Great Lots" and the center of town life shifted to Meeting House Hill. This resulted in the building of new roads connecting other settlements and parts of Dorchester. Dudley Street connected Dorchester with the Roxbury settlement, and Boston Street connected Dorchester Neck and Heights (now South Boston) with the main settlement. When Israel Stoughton set up a grist mill on the Neponset River, a road was built across the "Great Lots" connecting the original settlement with it. This became known as the Lower Road (now Adams Street).

In 1654, the Massachusetts Bay Colony ordered the construction of a road from Roxbury to Braintree (now Warren and Washington Streets). This road became known as the Upper or High Road. In 1661, River Street was constructed connecting the upper falls with the lower falls of the Neponset River, and soon after this, Centre Street was built connecting the Upper and Lower Roads. Centre Street was a continuation of an old Indian trail from the upper falls of the Neponset to salt water, partly perpetuated in Norfolk Street<sup>5</sup>.

These roads, which set the pattern for the future development of Dorchester, were strongly affected by Dorchester's topography, which is made up largely of a series of drumlins. Drumlins are smooth glacial hills of uniform shape, alignment, and composition, found in areas that had experienced continental glaciation. The Boston region possesses dozens of drumlins, left by the North American ice sheet thousands of years ago. "A particularly fine swarm of drumlins occupies much of the Boston Basin and the harbor."<sup>6</sup>

It can be safely presumed through a study of early 19<sup>th</sup> Century maps of the area that, even 150 years after its settlement, Dorchester remained a farming community, with most of its small population clustered around the original northern Dorchester settlement areas of Meeting House Hill, Allen's Plain, and the southern Dorchester waterfront communities at Commercial Point, Port Norfolk, Lower Mills and Mattapan. With few exceptions, the hills of central and southern Dorchester were uninhabited. The only development in Central Dorchester occurred along the Upper Road, near what would become Codman Square, where there were homesteads of wealthy businessmen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dorchester Old and New in the Old Bay Colony, p. 12

<sup>5</sup> Dorchester Old and New in the Old Bay Colony, p.13

<sup>6</sup> Lewis, George, "Boston's Drumlins" p. 5

<sup>7</sup> Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century homesteads along the Upper Road included the Welles House, occupied in 1784 by General Henry Knox and in 1822 by Daniel Webster, the Codman homestead, and the Baker house. The Dorchester Book, pp. 53-54

With the turning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, stage coach services began the process of linking Dorchester to Boston, as wealthy Bostonians began building country estates and summer homes in central Dorchester to escape from increasingly crowded conditions in Boston.<sup>8</sup> An 1837 guide to Boston describes Dorchester: “The soil is generally rich and highly cultivated. The roads are numerous and crooked, but mostly level and kept in good repair. Many fine country seats and substantial farmhouses are thickly arranged on their sides, surrounded with fruit and other trees, which give a very picturesque appearance to the face of the country. The population amounts to 6000.”<sup>9</sup> The Dorchester of the mid-nineteenth century was rural and saw itself as separate from urban Boston at its northern border. When Irish immigrants arrived in the 1850s and urbanized the northernmost part of Dorchester, the section closest to Boston known as Washington Village (now Andrew Square), it decided to secede and join Boston as part of South Boston rather than remain part of rural Dorchester.<sup>10</sup>

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a number of events and circumstances combined to change the face of Dorchester from a cluster of rural villages to a more densely settled suburb. The emergence of a large middle class of merchants and manufacturers, and the Irish immigration of the 1840s and 1850s created tremendous housing pressure in Boston. The development of the first public transportation system – the railroad – provided the means of relieving urban crowding. The opening of the Boston-Providence Railroad in 1835 and the Old Colony Railroad line to Lower Mills in 1844 made Dorchester accessible to the upper middle class. The Old Colony line, however, initially followed the coastline (along what is now the MBTA line), and so early suburban development in Dorchester centered in northern Dorchester, particularly on the hilltops of Savin Hill and Jones Hill.

Dorchester as a whole began to develop quickly with the development of horse-drawn railroad cars in 1857 and the development of the New York and New England Railroad line. “Already in the forties and fifties, the railroad had snaked through the rural landscape, scattering mansard roof summer cottages and estate mansions all over the place. And soon the trolley had followed, and all at once, it seemed the city. For a burgeoning Boston could not long tolerate a sleepy rural Dorchester on her borders.”<sup>11</sup> As Dorchester became increasingly a suburb of Boston, more rural Hyde Park broke with Dorchester and formed a separate town in 1869 to avoid annexation to Boston. A year later, the people of Dorchester voted 928 to 726 for annexation to Boston.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “Dorchester/Uphams Corner” p.1

<sup>9</sup> Bowen, Abel, Bowen’s Picture of Boston, p.244

<sup>10</sup> Boston’s Immigrants, p.99

<sup>11</sup> Tucci, Douglas Shand, All Saints’ Ashmont Dorchester, Boston, p. 15

<sup>12</sup> “Dorchester/Uphams Corner,” p.2

## Background: The Development of Codman Square (1654-1870)

As noted above, the intersection later known as Codman Square was created in 1654, when the government of Massachusetts Bay Colony built a road to connect the Roxbury Meeting House with the Braintree Meeting House along the hills of central Dorchester.<sup>13</sup> This road was named the Upper or High Road, and at the point where the Upper Road intersected a pre-European settlement Indian Trail, the intersection later known as Codman Square was created. A later road connecting the Upper and Lower Roads was built as a continuation of the Indian Trail, then and now called Centre Street. The Upper Road's name was changed to Washington Street after Washington's inauguration as president in 1789, and the intersection became a commercial district where farmers could sell their goods and where locals could purchase dry goods, lumber, and food. By 1803 the intersection was called Baker's Corner in honor of Dr. James Baker, a merchant who developed the first chocolate mill in the United States in 1765 along the Neponset River, and who lived at the intersection.<sup>14</sup> During this period Dorchester was nicknamed "Chocolate Village", noting its prominence as the home of the country's first chocolate factory. *Baker's Chocolate* is still sold in grocery stores, though the Dorchester factory that created it was purchased by General Foods in the 1960s and moved to Delaware.

Baker's General Store made the intersection an important point of geography, and in 1806 the Second Church meeting house was built at the intersection, reflecting both the need for a second major church due to increased population in southern Dorchester, and the importance of that intersection for Dorchester residents. A few years later, due to the Trinitarian/Unitarian split in the church of the Puritans, the Second Church became a Congregational Church.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps because of the intersection's new importance and its central location, the Dorchester Town Hall was constructed at the intersection of Washington Street and Norfolk Street in 1816.<sup>16</sup> The Town Hall was necessitated by the Trinitarian/Unitarian theological split, which made the church meeting house connection with government problematic. Despite this development, the area continued to be sparsely developed. An 1831 map of Dorchester (by Edmund J. Baker, Survey'r) shows only fourteen buildings (including the Town Hall and 2<sup>nd</sup> Church) within a quarter mile of the intersection. An 1850 map (Surveyed by Elbridge Whiting for S. Dwight Eaton (Old Colony Railroad)) indicates 21 buildings within a quarter mile of the intersection.

Baker's Corner was re-named Codman Square for the Rev. John Codman, the first minister of the Second Church, who presided as minister of the church from 1808

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<sup>13</sup> Dorchester in the Old Bay Colony, p.13

<sup>14</sup> Stevens, p.8A

<sup>15</sup> The Dorchester Book p.20

<sup>16</sup> Dorchester Old and New p. 56

until he died in 1847.<sup>17</sup> Rev. Codman was a well known minister, famous for his “fire and brimstone” preaching.<sup>18</sup>

Other main streets of the Codman Square area include Talbot Avenue (laid out in 1892, (named in honor of Newton Talbot, a member (1872-82) of the Board of Street Commissioners), Ashmont Street (shown as a private street in 1831, laid out in 1849, and a private way until 1898), and Melville Avenue.<sup>19</sup>

#### Dorchester and Codman Square – Annexation to the Modern Era 1870-1950

The annexation of Dorchester to the city of Boston brought about speculation and intense growth which changed the character of Dorchester forever. The extension of both Lake Cochituate water and railroad and streetcar lines into Dorchester resulted in a boom which increased the population from 12,000 in 1870 to 80,000 in 1900 to 150,000 by 1920, an increase of 138,000. In the fifty years previous to 1870, the population rose only 8,316.<sup>20</sup> As early as 1873, the pastor of the Second Church remarked, “What a few years ago was a rural town, is now a part of the growing metropolis. And these fields where cattle grazed, are soon to be occupied by a compact population.”<sup>21</sup>

The first pattern of development in Dorchester after annexation was suburban in nature. Starting in the 1870s, real estate entrepreneurs divided old hilltop estates into smaller lots suitable for large Victorian homes. This happened in different ways. In some areas, such as Jones Hill, numbers of landowners would sell off pieces of property in a haphazard fashion.

The areas around Codman Square developed in a much more organized fashion. An example of this is the land immediately east and southeast of Codman Square in an area bounded by Washington Street, Talbot Avenue and Ashmont Street. Almost all of this land had been part of a farmstead in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Sometime before 1850, the land came into the possession of John Welles, who died in 1855. Following a period in which the land was in the possession of the heirs of John Welles, it passed in 1870 to George Derby Welles, John’s grandson. Then 26 years old and living in Paris, Welles hired an agent and began developing the land for housing. A street and subdivision plan was drawn up in 1871 which divided the area into 6000 square foot lots along with six new streets (see 1874 map). Land sales began in 1872, with many of the buyers acquiring lots much larger than the 6000 square foot lots shown in the original plans. Welles had three new houses built to stimulate the sale of house lots.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The Dorchester Book p. 29

<sup>18</sup> President John Adams, who occasionally tired of his own Quincy church’s theological liberalism, attended Rev. Codman’s services from time to time, to hear homilies from Trinitarian traditions.

<sup>19</sup> from A Record of the Streets, Alleys, Places, Etc., in the City of Boston, published by the Boston Printing Department.

<sup>20</sup> “Dorchester,” Boston Redevelopment Authority, p.3

<sup>21</sup> Gamm p.177

<sup>22</sup> Ashmont Hill Study Committee Report, p.8

The most important stimulant to house lot sales, however, was the building of the Shawmut Branch of the Old Colony Railroad through Fields Corner to Ashmont Station (.25 of a mile east of Codman Square) in 1870-72. This railroad line provided direct and consistent service to downtown Boston, and commenced the suburbanization process in the area east of Codman Square. By 1900 nearly every house lot east of Codman Square had been developed, mostly into middle class housing for families able to pay for steam railroad service into Boston.

Streetcar service began on Washington Street in 1897 and was added to Talbot Avenue in 1899. Because the streetcars were much cheaper and stopped more frequently than railroads, and were much faster than horsecars, they brought many areas of Dorchester, including the areas west of Codman Square, within range of a much broader class of people. In addition “the streetcar lines produced a pattern of commercial strip development along major streets, providing services within walking distance of most dwellings and convenient to the major transportation system.”<sup>23</sup> Thus, with the new-found mobility of tradesmen and small shopkeepers, due to the proximity of downtown Boston via streetcar, and the development of commercial and service enterprises all along Dorchester’s major streets, Dorchester experienced the proliferation of a new building form: the three-decker.

The three-decker gave the average family the benefits of a suburban life style (owning your own home) while living close to city jobs. It was affordable housing both for tenants on the first and third floors and the owner on the middle floor. Between 1890 and the Depression, over 5,000 three-deckers were built in Dorchester, causing a population and building boom. The three-decker allowed immigrants with working class jobs access to Dorchester. “A great many second-generation Irish, however, had moved to better quarters in the neighborhoods of Charlestown, East Boston, South Boston, and Dorchester. There they lived in ... the new two- and three-decker houses that were becoming a distinctive form of architecture in Boston’s immigrant neighborhoods.”<sup>24</sup>

The development of three-deckers occurred outside the central city where fire laws prohibited wood construction multi-family housing. Three-decker construction followed the building of streetcar lines. “In a very real sense the three-decker and the trolley were part and parcel of the same suburban landscape. Originally both were quite independent of one another, each developing separate functional identities during the Civil War era. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century their paths had crossed and Dorchester became the essence of the streetcar suburb.”<sup>25</sup> The period from when the streetcar lines first extended to Codman Square in 1897 to World War I saw the buildup of three-deckers in the Codman Square area, particularly on undeveloped parcels of land in the Centre Street and Talbot Avenue areas, on land in between existing houses, subdivided land on newly laid out streets, and along main arteries. This same period also saw the

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<sup>23</sup> “Dorchester” BRA, p.3

<sup>24</sup> The Boston Irish, p. 137

<sup>25</sup> Krim, Arthur J., *Three-Deckers of Dorchester: An Architectural Historical Survey*, pp. viii-x. Much of the information on three-deckers comes from this booklet.

development of single and two family houses on small lots (averaging 3000 square feet in size) on the remaining lots west of Washington Street. By the Great Depression, nearly every house and commercial lot in the Codman Square area had been developed.

Finally, in 1927, the Boston Elevated Transit Company transformed the former Old Colony railroad line into an extension of its subway line, placing Boston only 20 minutes from the eastern neighborhoods of Codman Square. Codman Square's neighborhoods were complete.

The commercial district of Codman Square was radically transformed by the streetcar line. As late as the 1890s, large estates still lined Washington Street, but these were replaced with small stores at the very end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1899, the City of Boston built Dorchester High School at the intersection of Washington and Centre Streets and Talbot Avenue at a cost of \$250,000.<sup>26</sup> In the same year, the large commercial building called The Lithgow Building on the corner of Washington and Talbot, containing stores, offices and a Masonic Hall, was built by commercial entrepreneur Lydia Taft (who owned it into the 1950s). In 1903-04, the City of Boston built a branch library at the intersection of Washington and Norfolk Streets on the site of the Town Hall, which was demolished to make way for the Library. These buildings, along with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Church, form the Codman Square Historic District, which was created by the Department of the Interior in 1984. Over the next twenty years, additional stores, generally one story art deco style structures, replaced nearly all the residential structures along the ¾ mile strip of Washington Street on either side of Codman Square.<sup>27</sup>

By 1920, Dorchester was the largest geographic area in Boston, and its population of 200,000 was also the largest of any of the city's neighborhoods. On the eastern side of Washington Street lived primarily Irish Catholics, while the western side was primarily Jewish. (see map)<sup>28</sup>

How the various sections of the community became Catholic or Jewish (and how they declined) is the subject of Urban Exodus: Why the Jews Left Boston but the Catholics Stayed by Gerald Gamm (1999). In the book, Gamm argues that the settlement of Catholics, Jews and Blacks in the various sections of Dorchester and Roxbury was the direct result of the placement of institutions at different points in Dorchester.

“Patterns of ethnic settlement in Dorchester and Roxbury were not pre-ordained. One household at a time, newcomers have searched for places to live. Simple laws of supply and demand have guided this search. In areas where older residents have been firmly rooted, members of new ethnic groups have been more likely to encounter hostility and less likely to find homes on the market. But in areas where older residents have been only weakly attached to their neighborhood, newcomers have been able to purchase or rent homes more easily. Similarly, the demand for housing in a particular

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<sup>26</sup> The Dorchester Book, p. 27

<sup>27</sup> from the Nomination Form for the Codman Square Historic District, National Park Service.

<sup>28</sup> Gamm, Gerald, Urban Exodus

neighborhood is a function of that neighborhood's desirability for new ethnic residents."<sup>29</sup>

As housing was built in the years following annexation to Boston, residents purchased land and houses without creating a definite racial or ethnic pattern at first. But soon religious groups began building institutions at various locations in Roxbury and Dorchester. When the first Jewish synagogue was built in upper Roxbury (near Dorchester) in 1900 (Adath Jeshurun), there were few Jews living in that section of Boston, and they were widely dispersed. Adath Jeshurun, however, became a magnet for other Jews, who began settling in large numbers and established residential patterns which led to dozens of Jewish institutions moving to, or being created in, the upper Roxbury, northern Dorchester area over the next 20 years.

Similarly, there were few blacks living in upper Roxbury when St. Mark Congregational Church moved to upper Roxbury in 1926. This movement, however, created a new setting for middle class blacks, and before long, numbers of blacks and other black institutions began moving into upper Roxbury, though these numbers remained small in comparison to the Jewish population.

Gamm argues that the opportunity for blacks and Jews to settle in this area was due to the fact that Catholic institutions were weak in that area. The Catholic Archdiocese had planted Catholic churches in the area of upper Roxbury/western Dorchester which were weak due to the small size of three of the parishes, which limited their ability to build schools and other complementary buildings, and the poor locations of the parishes. This led to a weakened sense of turf on the part of Catholics, which allowed for easy movement by blacks and Jews into the fringes of the Catholic parishes, where they developed settlements and spread. "The failure of the archdiocese to consolidate a strong institutional presence throughout Dorchester and Roxbury had consequences for Jewish settlement. Where Catholic institutions were weakest, Catholic residents proved most vulnerable to displacement. Thus it was at the margins of parishes – above all, at the margins of parishes already straining to maintain basic services – that Catholics were least likely to resist Jewish in-migration, and it was at the centers of strong parishes that Catholic resistance was strongest."<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, Catholics settled in eastern and southern Dorchester because strong Catholic institutions were built there. In eastern Dorchester, Catholic parishes were strategically placed to create strongly defined communities. Thus, institutional strength, or lack thereof, led to clustering of residents by Catholics, Jews, and blacks, and resulted in segregated patterns, which became distinct in the 1920s. By the mid-1920's, the Jewish population had become a dominating presence in western Dorchester with over 85% of residents east of Blue Hill Avenue and west of the railroad tracks being Jewish, a percentage that dropped below a third immediately east of the railroad tracks and dropped to less than 10% of the population a half mile east of the tracks. East of the tracks the neighborhoods were overwhelmingly Catholic. A small but growing

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<sup>29</sup> Gamm, p. 59

<sup>30</sup> Gamm, p. 74

population of blacks shared the upper Roxbury community with the dominant Jewish population.

Even as Jews became dominant in western Dorchester, however, the Jewish community experienced the migration of upper middle class residents to more distant locations, first in Dorchester, then to suburbs. This was due to the continuing influx of lower income immigrants, the increasingly crowded conditions as developable land was turned into three-deckers, and as the automobile allowed well off residents the opportunity to move further out into the inner-ring suburbs of Milton and Brookline. This exodus was reinforced by the construction of automobile roads such as Old Colony Parkway (now Morrissey Boulevard), Gallivan Boulevard and the Jamaicaway, though this movement was slowed by the Great Depression and World War II.

This movement would have catastrophic consequences for the Jewish community later. For the movement of higher income Jews to the suburbs took much of the financial support of the Jewish institutions away, and by the late 1920s, many of the congregations began to experience financial difficulties, even as they built new schools and buildings. “The great body of middle class Jews, who had established the Jewish enclaves of Roxbury and Dorchester and built the area’s leading institutions...moved away, following the middle-class Protestants to the suburbs... Suburban Jews were role models for Jews in these urban neighborhoods, continuing reminders that attaining middle-class social status meant moving to a new home in a distant place... But another consequence of the Jewish exodus threatened to undermine the entire institutional base of Roxbury and Dorchester Jewry... Though memberships in old synagogues and social clubs eased the passage to life outside the city, suburban Jewish families, once settled in their new homes, began establishing new institutions in more convenient locations. The total number of Jews in upper Roxbury and Dorchester almost doubled in the 1930s and remained relatively stable until the early 1950s, but the number of middle-class Jews supporting the area’s institutions diminished year by year. From the middle 1920s onward, these institutions reckoned with financial crisis.”<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, Catholic parishes are governed by rules which are geographically based – a parish has distinct boundaries, and, during this period, only those living within the boundaries of a parish could be members of that church. Thus, the price of moving out of the parish was to be removed from that parish community. “Middle class Catholics, anchored by rules that required members to live within parish boundaries, were much less likely to relocate to the suburbs... Any Catholics who left for the suburbs were immediately shut off from their old institutions. Thus few middle-class Catholics left, the few who left were quickly forgotten, and the many who stayed continued to support their churches and schools.”<sup>32</sup>

By World War II, the Codman Square area was a working to middle class area, predominately Jewish to the west, and predominately Irish Catholic to the east. Its

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<sup>31</sup> Gamm p.186-187

<sup>32</sup> Gamm, p.186

commercial strip was one of the largest and most prosperous in Boston, with over 100 stores along its three-quarter mile strip.

Theodore White, who grew up Jewish near Codman Square in the 1920s and 30s, described the various enclaves of the community – “Within the boundaries of our community we were entirely safe and sheltered. But the boundaries were real. We were an enclave surrounded by Irish. To the south of us, across the railway tracks, lived very tough Irish – working-class Irish. The local library (in Codman Square) lay in such an Irish district, and my first fights happened en route to the library, to get books ... Across Franklin Park to the west lay the lands of the lace-curtain Irish, who lived in Jamaica Plain and Roslindale; they were, if not friendly, at least not pugnacious. South of Mattapan Square there were original settlers, Protestants – and Protestants were not dangerous at all ... There was a tiny pocket of black people in the South End, but they were curiosities and one had to be kind to them. Beyond lay terra incognita – “Hic Sunt Leones” (“Here Dwell Lions”) - but I did not care.”<sup>33</sup>

Hostility between Irish and Jewish groups peaked during the Depression. “Whether because of the severity of the Great Depression, the frightening charges by Father Coughlin of an international Jewish conspiracy, the increasing number of Jewish people moving into Irish neighborhoods, or reports of Nazi atrocities against the Jews in Hitler’s Germany, Boston experienced an outbreak of anti-Semitic violence during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Bands of Irish youths ranged up and down Blue Hill Avenue (just west of Codman Square) in the Jewish district of Dorchester (the Irish disparagingly called it “Jew Hill Avenue”), harassing shop owners, beating up Jewish boys on their way home from school, scrawling swastikas and ugly graffiti on Jewish homes and temples.”<sup>34</sup>

Though there were hostilities between the Irish and Jewish communities, the communities remained stable in population and identifiable through the Depression and World War II. The black population was clustered in the Upper Roxbury area, a few miles north of Codman Square. Its population had increased from fewer than 1000 in 1920 to 3,200 in 1930, to 5,700 in 1940, and 11,100 in 1950. “Though a source of occasional neighborhood tension, the growth of this African-American district in the 1940s continued a longstanding pattern of gradual expansion. It caused little excitement or comment among Jews.”<sup>35</sup>

### Codman Square at the End of World War II

At the end of World War II, the Codman Square area was a community that was complete - - its commercial area was at its peak, and nearly all land for housing had been developed. Therefore, a comparison of demographic data from this point to 2000 would indicate changes other than the changes wrought from the building of a significant number of housing units.

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<sup>33</sup> In Search of History, p. 29

<sup>34</sup> The Boston Irish, p. 204

<sup>35</sup> Gamm, p. 197.

A Data snapshot of the ten census tracts that made (and make) up the Codman Square community at 1950 looks like this<sup>36</sup>: There were 60,763 residents, of which 60,541 were white, 183 were black, and 40 “others”, in a total of 15,620 families or 16,402 households. Household size ranged from 3.57 persons/household to 3.89, not a significant difference. Median annual income ranged from a low of \$2,996 (\$21,400 in 2000 dollars) in the westernmost section of the community including and adjacent to the Franklin Hill and Franklin Field housing projects, to \$3,729 (\$26,636 in 2000 dollars) in the southernmost section in the area called Codman Hill. There is about a \$100 (\$714 in 2000 dollars) difference in annual income east and west of Washington Street, with east side families having somewhat higher income. There were 16,516 total housing units of which 5,181 (31.4%) were owner occupied, and median monthly rent ranged from \$35.61 (\$254 in 2000 dollars) in the area just northwest of the Square to \$46 (\$329 in 2000 dollars) in the area northwest of Codman Square immediately adjacent to Franklin Park. A total of 147 housing units were classified as “vacant.”

Socially, there were strong north-south dividing lines which separated different communities. These were Washington Street, east of which was almost entirely Catholic (two entire census tracts and the eastern halves of two census tracts), a transitional swath between Washington Street and the rail line west of Codman Square (three census tracts and the western halves of two census tracts), which was nearly a third Jewish, and the area between the rail line and Blue Hill Avenue (three census tracts), which was over 85% Jewish.<sup>37</sup> (These three areas exhibit very different tendencies over the period to 2000, and will be examined in depth for the rest of this paper.) Transience (the percentage of residents disclosing that they had lived in another county or country the year before) ranged from 1.4% to 2.9% with little difference east and west of Washington Street. Median years of schooling completed differed little in the neighborhoods east and west of Washington Street (west 11.9 years of schooling, east 11.85), but west of the railroad tracks, the median years of schooling completed was 11.27. Foreign born residents ranged from a low of 17% to a high of 33.3%, with the highest percentages in the mainly Jewish district west of the railroad tracks (combined average of 3 census tracts 31.4%). Most of these immigrants were classified as being from the “USSR,” though many had immigrated before the Russian Revolution. West of Washington Street, immigrants made up 19.6% of the population (mainly a mix from Ireland, Canada, and the USSR). East of Washington Street, immigrants made up 15.9% of the population, and were mainly from Ireland and Canada.

Household income was up after the war. In the period between 1945 and 1950 Boston family income increased by 148% over the period immediately before the war, while retail prices were up only 75%. Unemployment was at 4% and housing and utility costs as a percentage of income dropped from 29.3% to 18.1%. This was a growth economy. As a result, there was a significant growth in ownership of consumer products among families. Car ownership by Codman Square area residents increased from 14% to 42% between 1936 and 1950 (nearly all in the years since the end of WW2), with 20% of

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<sup>36</sup> All demographic and income data come from the US Census, 1950-2000

<sup>37</sup> Gamm, p.12.

car owners indicating that they had purchased their car in the previous year. Refrigerator ownership jumped from 20% to 67% in the same period.<sup>38</sup>

### The Commercial District

The commercial district was at its peak. Despite automobile ownership, the commercial economy was non-automotive. With nearly 60% of residents without a car, public transit and walking were the major ways to purchase goods. Even among the group who owned cars, households were headed generally by working men who drove, with homemaker wives who largely didn't. As a result, purchasing was very local with small enough orders to carry home. The commercial district also contained important entertainment and social capital generating facilities, such as the movie theater, bowling alley, the high school, social clubs like the VFW, library and churches.

The result was a commercial district with 186 businesses, including 22 food stores (2 supermarkets), 16 clothing service stores, ten clothing stores, three banks, four utility offices, 37 specialty stores, 20 medical offices and 13 law offices. It was the heart of the neighborhood.<sup>39</sup>

### The Late 50's

Change, however, was in the offing. Increasing access to automobiles, federal government support of suburban development, and changes in technology, such as improvements in refrigeration, and a television culture which provided advertising which prompted the geometric growth of the consumer society, began a process of change in American cities, and, in Boston, Codman Square was a locus of that change. In the commercial district, businesses based on a model of meeting daily marketing needs began a 30 year decline into oblivion with the development of shopping centers along motorways such as Morrissey Boulevard, which allowed families to shop on a weekly basis. The late 1950s saw the closure of thirteen food stores, as four supermarkets were built on local motorways or in shopping plazas. By 1960, the number of businesses in the commercial strip had decreased to 176.

In the residential districts, young families began to forsake the old neighborhood in favor of federally subsidized mortgages for houses in the suburbs. In the Jewish neighborhoods, Jewish institutions which formed a glue for neighborhood cohesiveness began to move to the suburbs or be replaced by suburban institutions. Among these were the G&G Delicatessen, a long time center of Jewish community life, which was replaced by Brookline based delicatessens, and religious institutions such as Temple Mishkan Tefila, the Maimonides School, Hebrew Teachers' College, and the Beth El and Atereth Israel Orthodox congregations moved to Brookline and Newton in the early and mid 1950's. This happened despite the relative stability in numbers of the

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<sup>38</sup> Data in this paragraph come from a study by Codman Square Community Development Corporation

<sup>39</sup> CSCDC, p. 19.

Jewish population in Dorchester.<sup>40</sup> The reality was that the leadership of the Jewish community had moved to the suburbs and was attracting Jewish institutions (on whose boards they were members) to their new communities. Although the Jewish population west of Codman Square was stable in numbers during most of the 1950's, there was a tremendous increase of Jewish people in certain suburbs, and most of the Jewish middle class was moving there.<sup>41</sup> This was being driven by a decline in the Jewish population and racial succession northwest of Codman Square (out of the study area), which was beginning to occur in the Grove Hall/upper Roxbury neighborhood. "In the early 1950s, ethnic boundaries that had endured for three decades started to shift and disintegrate... As Catholics and Jews left for the suburbs, African Americans settled in Dorchester and upper Roxbury in ever-increasing numbers. Many of these black families came from the South End and lower Roxbury, where they had been displaced by urban renewal. Many others were newcomers to Boston. In Roxbury alone, the Jewish population fell from 24,500 to 15,500 between 1950 and 1955."<sup>42</sup>

The Jewish institutions which departed often did so before their communities changed. "Because institutions could move from Dorchester and Roxbury only when they were still viable, most left neighborhoods that were predominately Jewish. These institutions relocated once their leaders had become convinced that the urban exodus posed threats to institutional survival, but before those threats were fully manifest."<sup>43</sup> The institutions which remained were often financially crippled and several were unable to pay for rabbis, which left them leaderless at a critical time. The institutions which indicated that they intended to move also played a role in the increasing instability of the Jewish community. The Jewish community of Dorchester and Roxbury was in crisis, yet were losing institutions which could have promoted stability, and, with the institutions remaining, lacked the leadership to promote stability.

On the more Catholic east side of Washington Street, the community was more removed (by several miles) from the racial change which was occurring at the fringe of the Jewish community northwest of Codman Square. In fact, Catholic parishes were expanding on both sides of Washington Street, and several of the parishes were building new schools. In addition, the moving of institutions, which could occur in the oligarchic Jewish religion, was not possible in the autocratic Catholic religion. Catholic parishes could close only by the decision of the Catholic Cardinal and Catholic rules dictated that a territorial parish could not relinquish responsibility for its geographical area.<sup>44</sup> As a result, there is no indication in the 1950's that the eastern sections of Codman Square were experiencing destabilization, even as the white Catholic population was dramatically increasing in the suburbs. In fact, the Catholic parishes of eastern Dorchester not only were debt-less, but several had substantial surpluses which were loaned to emerging suburban parishes.

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<sup>40</sup> Gamm, p.226

<sup>41</sup> Gamm p.227, 233

<sup>42</sup> Gamm, p.225

<sup>43</sup> Gamm, p.233

<sup>44</sup> Gamm, p. 237

## Into the Maelstrom: Codman Square 1960-80

As of 1960, census data indicate that the black and other populations increased by 329% since 1950, but it was still only 1.3% of the overall population. Almost 99% of the population was still white. The population decreased by 5.8% during the decade, a decrease of 3,497 to 57,266. There was a 3.8% decrease in numbers of families, but an increase of 3.6% in numbers of households, with an average household size of 3.37.

Median family income ranged from a low of \$5,009 (\$29,139 in 2000 dollars) in the area immediately adjacent to Franklin Park to a high of \$7,303 (\$42,484 in 2000 dollars) in Codman Hill (the southernmost part of the district) which also had the highest income in 1950). The income gap had widened to about \$1200 (\$6,980 in 2000 dollars) annually with the western census tracts falling further behind the eastern ones. There was an increase of 947 housing units (5.7% over 1950), with the largest increase (391) coming from the census tract containing the Franklin Hill and Franklin Field housing projects, which added units during this period. 31.8% of the housing units were owner-occupied, a slight increase over 1950, and 2.7% of the units were vacant (up from .9% in 1950). Median rents ranged from \$62 to \$69 (\$361 to \$401 in 2000 dollars).

Median school years completed declined to 11.7 east of Washington Street (from 11.85), to 11.3 west of Washington Street (from 11.9), and to 10.9 west of the railroad tracks (from 11.27), an indicator that, despite the small change in racial makeup, a social change was occurring. The census changed its indicator of transience in 1960 to show the percentage of residents who had changed residence since 1955. In this indicator, there is a slightly higher rate of stability east of Washington Street than west – 58% of residents east of Washington Street were in the same house as in 1955, vs. 51.4% in the west. Percentage of immigrants dropped to 27.6% west of the railroad tracks mainly from the USSR (from 31.4% in 1950), to 16.6% west of Washington Street mainly from the USSR, Canada and Ireland (from 19.6%) and to 14.4% east of Washington Street mainly from Ireland and Canada (from 15.9%).

Despite the racial transition of neighborhoods to the north, the Codman Square area experienced the period around 1960 as the calm before the storm. Socially, the neighborhoods were still able to be identified as Jewish or Catholic, despite the institutional instability in the Jewish community. The Codman Square commercial district was still a bustling area of 176 stores despite suburbanization.

## 1970

By 1970, the country entered a new era. The Vietnam War and Civil Rights era were transforming the social climate in the country, and the country was in turmoil following assassinations of leaders and the emergence of the baby boom generation. Suburbanization was at full throttle. Boston's black population dramatically expanded from the South End and Roxbury into Dorchester as neighborhoods changed from white

to black. Boston's population was shrinking as the suburbs' population dramatically expanded.

In the Codman Square area, the 1970 census shows only a slight decline in population from 1960 (a decrease of 699 people or 1.2%). However, the white population has decreased from 56,531 to 33,996 - - a decrease of 22,535 or 40% of the white population. The black population went from 629 in 1960 to 22,180, while "others" increased from 106 to 391.

West of Washington Street, the change was dramatic. The two westernmost census tracts (adjacent to Franklin Park and Franklin Field) went from 15,496 to 2,932 whites in 10 years, while blacks went from 410 to 11,991. The two easternmost census tracts went from 10,936 to 10,546 whites, while blacks increased from 7 to 295. Put another way, during the decade, every week on average 43 white people per week left the community, and were replaced by 42 black people, all in the census tracts west of Washington Street. "Jews...were in a panicked rout by 1967."<sup>45</sup>

The number of households declined slightly from 16,996 to 16,590, a decrease of 2.4%, with an average household size of 3.41 (up from 3.37). Household size, however had increased in most of the western census tracts (reversing the decline of the previous decade), while the eastern census tracts continued a slight decline. The number of families decreased by almost 12%, which would seem to indicate that the number of children per family is increasing, as are the number of single elderly households.

Median family income ranged from a low of \$7,145 (\$31,713 in 2000 dollars) in the area adjacent to Franklin Park, to a high of \$11,659 (\$51,749 in 2000 dollars (in Codman Hill and its slope east of Washington Street). The east/west income gap of \$2,828 (\$12,552 in 2000 dollars) has nearly doubled since 1960, and is 17 times greater than in 1950. There has been a small increase in income west of Washington Street from 1960, but a large \$9,265 (in 2000 dollars) increase in income east of Washington Street. Housing units increased slightly from 17,463 to 17,785, but owner occupancy has slipped from 31.8% to 28.8%, with 6.7% of total units vacant (up from .9% in 1950 and 2.7% in 1960). Median rents ranged from \$90 to \$101 (\$399 to \$448 in 2000 dollars, up from \$361 and \$401 ten years earlier). A new item in the census indicated the number of housing units which were owner occupied, an important indicator of stability. East of Washington Street, 37% of units were owner occupied, west of Washington Street 31.5% were, and in the area west of the railroad track, only 18.1% of the units were owner occupied. The stability indicator on percentage of residents living in the same house as five years before showed the dramatic decrease in stability west of Washington Street, with only 30% west of the railroad tracks living in the same home (versus 51.4% ten years before), and 33.2% west of Washington Street (versus 51.4%). East of Washington Street showed a slight decline from 58% to 54.6%

By 1970, immigrant numbers showed dramatic changes. West of the railroad tracks, the percent of residents who were immigrants decreased from 27.6% to 19.4%,

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<sup>45</sup> Gamm, p. 241

and west of Washington Street, immigrant percentages increased from 16.6% to 25.8%. But the predominate country of origin has changed from the USSR to “Other America”, with the exception of the southernmost western tract. East of Washington Street, the percentage of immigrants has increased by 261% to 37.6%, mostly from Ireland and Canada as before.

Median years of schooling showed increases – from 10.9 to 11.6 west of the railroad tracks, from 11.3 to 11.7 west of Washington Street, and from 11.7 to 11.9 east of Washington Street.

While the Jewish community was in rapid decline, the Catholic parishes east of Codman Square were mostly secure. West of Codman Square, however, the two parishes, St. Leo’s and St. Matthew’s, which shared the Jewish neighborhoods, began a period of racial transition. The response by leadership in the Catholic parishes, however, was quite different from that of the Jewish institutions. “By the middle 1960s, large numbers of Catholics had begun to move from the parish. Rev. James Lyons, who served as a curate in St. Leo’s at that time, recalled the efforts made by the parish’s priests to stop the exodus. The parish held many meetings in the middle 1960s, at which priests attempted to teach racial tolerance and urged white Catholics to stay. At each meeting, Lyons remembered, St. Leo’s priests vowed that the parish would continue its work. Priests exhorted white Catholics not to abandon St. Leo’s arguing that the parish would survive.”<sup>46</sup>

In the commercial district, the number of businesses dropped by 11.4% to 156 as more shopping occurred along major motorways and at new shopping centers. By 1972, 80% of the families of the Codman Square district east of the railroad tracks owned cars.<sup>47</sup> In addition, the commercial district suffered from the loss of its post office, which moved a half mile out of the district in 1966, and other social indicators showed that something was radically changing – membership in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Church fell to 328 members (from 1,218 in 1950), and book circulation at the Codman Square Library fell from an all time high of 141,375 in 1960 to 66,582 in 1970.<sup>48</sup> Codman Square had lost much of its luster, and it was clear by 1970 that it was in decline.

### The Collapse – the 1970s

In the 1970s Codman Square collapsed. The demographics from Census 1980 show a dramatic population change: the ten census tracts of Codman Square lost 14,932 residents, a decline of nearly 29 residents per week every week for ten years. The white population lost 22,742, going from 33, 996 to 11,254, while the black population went from 22,180 to 28,073. “Other” races increased from 391 to 2,341. The rate of loss of whites was a consistent 43.7 people per week, while the increase in black residents slowed to from 42 to 11.3 per week over the ten year period. West of the railroad tracks

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<sup>46</sup> Gamm, p. 245

<sup>47</sup> CSCDC Study, p. 22

<sup>48</sup> CSCDC study, p. 23

lost 35.5% of its population (34.2% decrease in families), 89% of its white population, but also 24% of its black population. The census showed that 877 housing units were vacant. West of Washington Street lost 28.3% of its population (33.4% decrease in families), 89% of its white population, but increased its black population by 43.3%. There were 422 vacant housing units. East of Washington Street lost 19.6% of its population (31.6% decrease in families), 60% of its white population, but increased its black population by 1173%.

Overall, the number of families decreased by 28% (from 13,274 to 9,561), while the number of households decreased from 16,590 to 13,147 (20.8%), and household size decreased from 3.25 to 2.97. The total number of housing units shrank by 2,766 overall – over half from west of the railroad tracks, which explains part of the 35.5% loss in population. Owner occupied units decreased – from 18.1% to 17.8% west of the railroad tracks, from 31.5% to 29% west of Washington Street, and from 37% to 35.5% east of Washington Street. Median rents ranged from \$174-\$293 (\$364 to \$612 in 2000 dollars). But the total rent increase over the decade west of the railroad tracks was only 6.7%, whereas east of Washington Street, rents increased 39% over the decade (in 2000 dollars).

Median family income ranged from a low of \$9,779 (\$20,407 in 2000 dollars) in the area adjacent to Franklin Park, to a high of \$19,847 (\$41,473 in 2000 dollars) (in Codman Hill and its slope east of Washington Street). The east/west income gap of \$6,647 (\$13,891 in 2000 dollars) continues to grow, but income in all areas is down. Income west of the railroad tracks has decreased from \$32,849 to \$20,407 in 2000 dollars. East of Washington Street, income has decreased from \$48,258 to \$34,660 in 2000 dollars. Persons with income below the poverty level ranges from 8.8% east of Washington Street to nearly 30% in one census tract west of Washington Street.

Stability figures showed a decline, as the percentage of residents living in the same address dropped overall to 37.5% (from 40%). A survey in 1979 by the Boston Redevelopment Authority asking the likelihood that a family would move by 1982 indicated that 27.7% expected to move, mostly to the suburbs or out of the Boston area <sup>49</sup>.

The percentage of residents who were immigrants west of Washington Street showed the dramatic increase of native born blacks, with a drop in foreign born from 25.8% to 16.6%. This population is also significantly younger, with a median age of 25.9, versus 32 east of Washington Street. West of Washington Street also has more adults who have been unemployed in the past year – 14%, versus 11-12% east of Washington Street.

In the midst of this period of change, a housing program called BBURG (Boston Banks Urban Renewal Group), expanded in the late 1960s in response to riots in Roxbury, made matters worse. Ostensibly designed to encourage home ownership among African Americans traditionally left out of the housing market, in reality it increased blight by allowing badly maintained homes to be sold to persons with incomes

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<sup>49</sup> CSCDC study, p. 26

and options too limited to provide needed repairs and upkeep. The designers of the program drew a line through Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, within which low income blacks could purchase homes with federally guaranteed mortgages. The line was drawn down Washington Street in Codman Square, and the result was that low income blacks were encouraged to live only in the already re-segregating western part of Codman Square. Besides ensuring that west of Washington Street would continue to attract only low income blacks, the program's corruption (inspectors were paid to falsify the condition of houses) allowed poorly maintained houses to be sold to people who generally did not have enough income to maintain them. With a falling real estate market, it became cheaper to move to another house or apartment rather than to attempt to maintain houses that were falling apart. The net result was that more than 1,000 houses were abandoned by their owners, and because the mortgages were federally guaranteed, the properties wound up in the possession of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, which had no capacity to maintain or sell them. Over the 1970s, hundreds of abandoned houses west of Codman Square were burned and/or demolished, leaving hundreds of vacant lots.

With burgeoning poverty and income decreasing, a large outflow of population, nearly two thousand vacant housing units, hundreds of vacant lots, and an oncoming recession, Codman Square collapsed economically. Houses sold for as little as \$1000, many went without buyers altogether. Houses became vacant and many burned. In some cases the houses were burned by youths for "entertainment," and in other cases they were burned for insurance, as the insurance value was far higher than the sale value, which was often zero. In 1976, there were more than 350 house fires west of Washington Street. Elderly persons were unable to maintain their homes, further decreasing local property values.

Community groups tried to grapple with the enormous change and chaos which ensued. Civic and neighborhood associations sprung up, but they had few tools to counter the dramatic changes. In 1975, the president of the major community organization of Codman Square, the Codman Square Civic Association, moved to the suburbs while president.

With the decline in community, crime shot up. At the time, newspapers reported the death of a community with bold headlines. "Urban Terrorism in Boston", "Youths Roam Dorchester Badlands," "Surviving in Codman Square", "Police Guard Family in Dorchester Attack", "Blight a Source of Dorchester's Woes", "The Unlivable City", "Can the Neighborhoods Survive," and "Codman Square: Sudden death on the disputed turf" were among the headlines of Boston Globe stories on the Codman Square area.

Problems between white and black students at Dorchester High School (located near Codman Square on the border between white and black areas) caused an eruption in violence in 1973. With Judge Garrity's desegregation order, busing began in 1974, causing even more chaos and white flight. The last few Jewish institutions in Dorchester, located southwest of Codman Square, closed in the mid 1970s.

The commercial district, already obsolete due to the development of plazas and malls, and the end of the shopping patterns that created it, suffered greatly. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of businesses decreased from 153 to 103, but most of the businesses remaining were very fragile. The commercial district began to look decrepit, as owners of buildings stopped maintaining them. Many storefronts became vacant, and several burned in arson fires. The Lithgow Building suffered three fires from 1969 to 1973 and was boarded up. In 1974, the city government announced that it would close the Codman Square Library in 1975 and open a new one several blocks out of Codman Square, and in 1977, the “Shakespeare Apartment Building,” one of the larger apartment buildings in Codman Square, burned to the ground. In 1978, following the blizzard of 1978, looters rampaged through a dozen stores, smashing windows, and burning several buildings. Dozens were arrested, but the damage was done. Ten stores closed immediately afterwards, and the largest remaining store and last remaining supermarket, the First National Store, closed by the end of the year. Then, in 1980, the School Department announced that it would move Latin Academy, located in the former Dorchester High School building, to another location, abandoning the school. By 1982, of the five most significant buildings in the center of Codman Square, two were burned and one (city owned) was abandoned.

The Codman Square community entered the 1980s in a state of chaos and disinvestment, with racial turmoil and transition unabated, losing significant population, while social indicators, such as rates of infant mortality and violent crime were increasing. In the 1983 Mayoral election, Codman Square became something of a poster child for blight, as five of the seven mayoral candidates referred to Codman Square as an example of what was wrong with Boston’s neighborhoods, and in one case, the candidate promised to “rebuild” Codman Square if elected.

### A Turning Point

But not all was lost. New organizations, spawned from civic groups, learned lessons of community activism, and began to seek creative ways to regenerate the community. In the mid 1970s, a committee was created to start a community health center with the aim of using the health center both to meet community health care needs and to help revitalize the commercial district and community spirit. This group opened the Codman Square Health Center in 1979 in the former Codman Square Library. In addition, the Codman Square Community Development Corporation was formed in 1977 partly to fight the threatened closure of the First National Bank, and succeeded in preventing the bank’s closure. The CDC also attempted to create a community owned supermarket to replace the First National Store, called Our Market, but the effort failed after a year from problems with financing and management. The Health Center and CDC in 1982 co-developed the former Latin Academy building into 56 units of housing.

In addition, in the early 80s, the area began to see an influx of immigrants from the West Indies, who began moving into the areas west of Washington Street, and the influx of what at the time were called “Young Professionals”, who were mainly college

graduates who had grown up in the suburbs, and who began to move into the Victorian housing stock east of Washington Street. “We must account for recent evidence that younger, more affluent households are moving into Codman Square. Some of the attractive residential neighborhoods near the commercial district, with large Victorian homes, are receiving infusions of new income and investment. However, this new type of neighborhood change only offsets a small proportion of the transition which has been in progress for over 30 years.”<sup>50</sup>

Though small in numbers at first, the influx of both the West Indian immigrants and the young, affluent suburbanites changed market dynamics and ultimately led to more stability in the neighborhoods. Although it was clear that the Victorian housing stock attracted the young affluent newcomers, it is not clear what attracted the West Indian immigrants. A Boston Globe article in 1996 indicated that the early 1980s wave of Haitian immigrants was caused by the downturn of the Haitian economy, and that Boston was a destination because of its educational reputation.<sup>51</sup> In any case, Haitians by the mid 1990s numbered over 70,000 in Massachusetts, with the area between Codman Square and Mattapan Square the largest of the state’s Haitian communities. Other West Indian groups which also came to Codman Square starting in the 1980s included Jamaicans, Barbadoans, Trinidadians, and Guyanese immigrants and smaller numbers from over 50 Caribbean countries.

It was the combination of these new groups, which re-created a market for housing in the Codman Square area and disrupted the 30 year long malaise which had gripped the area, and the growing sophistication of community non-profit groups, which turned around the Codman Square community. The impact of the non-profits was enormous in the 1980s. Through their growing knowledge of government policy, regulations and programs, ability to bring media attention on community problems and opportunities, and ability to mobilize the community, they began to bring in investment dollars from the government to begin the rehabilitation of decrepit housing and buildings in the commercial district. In addition, they built themselves into strong institutions, capable of building a new image for the community. Newspaper articles of the times continued to refer to problems in Codman Square (“Study: Malnutrition high in Codman Square”, “Flynn: Codman needs investment”, and “Codman Square Business District Needs Shot in the Arm”), but more and more articles referred to the positive changes occurring in Codman Square (“In Codman Square, A move toward unity”, “The Miracle Workers of Codman Square”, “Looking for incentives in Codman Square”, “Residents Take Aim at Dorchester Crime”, and “Codman Square: Neighbors Come Together to Make the Community Safer, Stronger.”)

The defining moment of the efforts to revitalize Codman Square in the 1980s came at the end of the decade. All of the non-profits supported a community wide effort to create a plan for the complete revitalization of the Codman Square community. From June to September, 1989, over 300 residents, black and white, supported by the non-profits, worked to create a 40 page document defining the problems and opportunities of

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<sup>50</sup> Commercial Revitalization in Codman Square, p. 13

<sup>51</sup> “From Haiti to Boston” Boston Globe Magazine, 12/15/96, p. 23

Codman Square. Called the Codman Square Action Agenda, it was the first such effort the City of Boston had experienced, and established Codman Square as the community to watch in the 1990s. By the end of the 1980s, Codman Square was racially segregated, but efforts were underway to build multi-racial coalitions to deal with the problems of the community. Ironically, the December 31, 1989 lead article in the Boston Globe – “A promise not kept, New decade begins with Codman Square still awaiting a rebirth,” while pointing out the inability of the City government to deliver on key development issues, actually was a recognition of the community’s ability to mobilize the community and get media support for the developments which occurred in the 1990s.

## 1990

The 1990 census showed a continuation of the dramatic change of the past 40 years. The white population dropped by 40%, from 11,254 to 6,765, with fewer than 1,000 whites remaining west of Washington Street. The black population increased by 17.7% to 33,049 from 28,073, while other races increased by 70% to 3,984. The east side of Washington Street by 1990 was integrated. But, in a change from the past 40 years, the population of the entire area increased from 41,635 to 43,653, a 5% increase in population. The increase was entirely west of Washington Street, as east of Washington Street, the population decreased by 5.5% with a similar drop in numbers of families. West of the railroad tracks, the population increased by 3.5% with a 12% increase in numbers of families; west of Washington Street, the population increased by 12.4% with an increase of 15.5% in number of families. This was partly due to some increased building of housing in the vacant lots and the rehabilitation of derelict housing west of Washington Street, where the number of vacant units dropped by 42% to 759 units. East of Washington Street, there were few vacant lots and vacant houses.

Median rent reflected the change in income, as west of the railroad tracks median rent was \$546 (in 2000 dollars), a 21.6% increase over 1980. West of Washington Street saw a 32% increase in median rent from \$532 to \$702 (in 2000 dollars), and east of Washington Street saw a 34% increase from \$561 to \$751 (in 2000 dollars). Owner occupied units west of the railroad tracks increased from 17.8% of total units to 22% over the decade, west of Washington Street went from 29% to 33.7%, and east of Washington Street remained stable at 35.5%

Median family income continued the increasing stratification of income by section. West of the railroad tracks showed an increase of 28.3% in income (from \$20,769 to \$26,654 in 2000 dollars), and the area west of Washington Street showed an increase of 54% (from \$26,084 to \$40,178 in 2000 dollars), the area east of Washington Street increased from \$34,660 to \$49,523 (in 2000 dollars), an increase of 43%, or 86% greater than the family income of the area west of the railroad tracks.

A major change in population is the number of persons claiming West Indian ancestry. Of the 43,653 people in the ten census tracts, 6,812 (15.6%) claimed West Indian ancestry, and 1,170 (2.7%) claimed Subsaharan African ancestry. Almost all of

this new immigration occurred west of Washington Street. The area became a major center for West Indians of which the largest group was Haitian, and West Indian restaurants, social clubs and stores began to dominate the commercial strip. The two Roman Catholic parishes west of Washington Street became predominately Haitian. In a 1996 article on Haitians in Boston, Boston City Councilor Charles Yancey remarked, "They are stimulating local economic development, particularly in the Mattapan area, opening businesses that fill what otherwise would have been a void. New Haitian churches and community organizations are opening almost weekly."<sup>52</sup>

The second major population change was the increasing presence of middle class residents in two sections east of Washington Street. During the late 1970s and through the 1980s, the "back to the cities" movement discovered the middle class-built and occupied Victorian-style housing in two sub-neighborhoods east of Washington Street. A slow migration of middle class residents to the areas named "Ashmont Hill" and "Melville Park" by residents interested in promoting their neighborhoods as new discoveries for the middle class, resulted in the two neighborhoods being identifiable as distinct communities by 1990. Housing values dramatically increased through the 80s, pushing up the income numbers. In fact, because the two neighborhoods are only sections of the 922 and 1005 census tracts, the income differential is even more pronounced than is apparent in the data. And in a remarkable change from the previous 40 years, the two sub-neighborhoods showed increasing racial diversity even as its population became wealthier and housing prices increased.

## 2000

Although at this writing there is no long form data available from the 2000 census, the short form data show that from 1990 to 2000 the population trends from the previous decade continued. For the second consecutive decade, the population increased, up to 45,789 from 43,653, a 5% increase. West of the railroad tracks showed a 12% increase in population, probably the result of the rehabilitation of the housing projects in that area; west of Washington Street, the population had a decrease of 5.2%, and east of Washington Street saw a 9.4% increase in population.

The white population showed an increase for the first time since 1950 west of the railroad tracks, a 124% increase from 373 to 835, probably from the effort to de-segregate the public housing projects. West of Washington Street, the white population decreased by 26%, and east of Washington Street the decrease was 47%. Overall, the white population made up only 10.1% of the overall population, with  $\frac{3}{4}$  of it east of Washington Street. The black population decreased by 1.3% overall, with a decrease west of Washington Street, a 3% decrease west of the railroad tracks, and an increase east of Washington Street. Other races increased by 46% to 5,830, with a more than 50% increase east of Washington Street, mainly the result of the new presence of Vietnamese residents, and a 72% increase west of the railroad tracks to 1,768. West of Washington Street had no significant change.

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<sup>52</sup> Radin, Charles, "From Haiti to Boston" p.20

The population trends which had begun in the 1980s had continued with the areas west of Washington Street increasing in numbers of West Indian immigrants, and the areas east of Washington Street becoming increasingly non-white, with the exception of the two middle class neighborhoods which maintained their integrated status. Interestingly, the area immediately east of the study area, east of Dorchester Avenue, showed a substantial decrease in white population in the 1990s.

By 2000, the commercial district had become fully occupied – there were almost no vacant storefronts. Nearly all the stores were individually owned stores run by West Indian or Korean immigrants, ranging from restaurants to nail and beauty stores, with an array of services, including health care, legal and community services. Although substantially smaller than the 1950 district, the 2000 commercial district had re-emerged due to gaining an understanding, albeit Darwinian in process, of what could work in an urban commercial district in the post-suburban era. Clearly, non-specialty or ethnic food stores and clothing stores could no longer work with the existence of shopping centers and malls. But people do not go to shopping centers and malls for certain products, and this is what the Codman Square commercial district became – a purveyor of products and services that are not usually gotten in shopping centers – health care, legal services, ethnic foods, restaurant food, banking, dry cleaning, insurance services, pharmaceuticals, and services.

The non-profits of Codman Square produced tens of millions of dollars in community improvements, with most of the funding coming from government sources, though a substantial amount came also from philanthropic sources, mainly foundations. Among the rebuilding and building efforts accomplished in the 1990s were the rebuilding of the YMCA, the \$6 million purchase and rehabilitation of an abandoned community nursing home into a new 29,000 square foot clinical building for the Codman Square Health Center, then the addition of a \$7million wing, the creation of a \$3 million Youth and Technology Center by the Health Center, the rehabilitation of the old Library into the community facility known as The Great Hall, the creation of a new community central green space called the Codman Common, the rehabilitation of the roadways of the Square to make them more pedestrian-friendly, the complete rehabilitation and doubling of space for the Dorchester Courthouse, the rehabilitation of more than a dozen decrepit store fronts, including the historic Lithgow Building, and the rehabilitation of hundreds of housing units by the Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation, and the creation of a Main Street Program to better coordinate commercial activity. An estimate of the value of capital improvements in Codman Square in the 1990s is pegged at over \$35 million.

The 1990s were also a golden era of community activism, as new community block groups and civic associations were created, and most of the Codman Square area was covered by a civic group. A result of this activity and activism (along with the greatly scaled up jailing of criminals) was the dramatic decline of crime, which, with a dramatically improved commercial district and policy changes such as the end of rent control in Boston, Brookline and Cambridge, made the eastern sections of Codman Square a destination point for new homeowners. Prices on homes shot upward through

the 90s, as some three decker prices west of Washington Street reached \$200,000, and some single family homes east of Washington Street reached over \$500,000.

Though the 90s began with a headline which talked about the lack of progress in Codman Square, the headlines of the 90s were anything but downbeat. Codman Square became the “urban miracle” story. Despite stories such as the Globe’s “Birth in the Death Zones” series, and articles such as “In Defense of Dorchester”, and articles on crime, most headlines from the 90s were more upbeat: “Loyalists fiercely defend neighborhood”, “Codman Square Pride Shines Through Lithgow Rehab”, “A community digs in, Determined to reclaim their streets, Dorchester residents focus on youth”, “The teething of Codman Square”, “Codman Square sees revival of business”, “Rebirth of Codman Square an inner-city success story”, “In Codman Square, Strong Resident Effort Continues to Keep Things Stable”, “HUD Secretary Cisneros Visits Codman Square”, “New life in Codman Square”, “Residents spark revival of Codman Square”, “Success in Codman Square”, “The welcome mat is out in Codman Sq.”, “Dorchester neighborhood eyes new goals”, and “Codman Square Celebrates Art, Community.” The decade ended with a new community planning process, modeled after the “Action Agenda” ten years before. The community process created the Codman Square Millennium Report, released in early 2000, which detailed the needs and opportunities of the community, and goals for the future and suggestions on how to achieve them.

### **Summary and Analysis**

There is a reason for everything. Codman Square was formed through the creation of an intersection when a 1654 road crossed an Indian trail. Intersections were important because travelers from four directions would come past an intersection, making it more valuable for stores and commerce to occur there than elsewhere. As a result, the intersection later named Codman Square became an important place, leading to important institutions being placed there over the years and a large commercial district to be built as the population increased.

When Dorchester was annexed to Boston, land speculation ended the Codman Square area as a farming district, and it became a densely built suburb. Catholic and Jewish families, among the new immigrant groups, populated the area in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, solidifying in ethnic enclaves built around religious institutions. These religious institutions were extremely important to the new residents, as many of them were recent immigrants or new Americans, and the religious institutions were the cultural institutions which allowed them to form cohesive communities. The western part of the Codman Square district became a predominately Jewish enclave and the eastern part became a predominately Catholic area. In the 1920s, an African American population was created north west of Codman Square after a few black churches located there.

By 1950, although the community appeared to be stable in terms of population, size and structure, in fact the seeds of destabilization had been planted. The Jewish population became destabilized as early as the 1920s, as its middle class and leadership

groups left the city for the suburbs, destabilizing Jewish religious institutions in the process. Some left the city for the suburbs, and most of the ones remaining in Dorchester became weak, thus weakening even more the underpinnings of community. As Jews left the city, a burgeoning black population replaced them.

Unlike the Jewish religious institutions, Catholic religious institutions were wedded to the communities in which they resided, a glue which made them much more resistant to change than the Jewish neighborhoods.

By 1970, the former Jewish neighborhood had all but disappeared, replaced by a much poorer African American population. The speed with which the community changed, combined with the poverty and difficult social circumstances of its newcomers, resulted in chaos. Crime and violence, the collapse of the commercial district and housing markets, an inability of government to adequately respond, and the lack of institutions to create community resulted in the 1970 to 1980 decade characterized by loss of population, almost daily arson fires, looting following the Blizzard of 1978, the abandonment of housing and the commercial district, a lack of access to health and human services by newcomers, and a general sense of despair.

By the mid 1970s, busing and the Catholic Church's waning hold on the community resulted in Catholic residents moving in large numbers out of the eastern sections of the Codman Square community.

But stalwart community residents responded with the creation of new community institutions. A health center and a community development corporation began the process of revitalization, luring in tens of millions of dollars over the last 25 years to improve access to services, rebuild the commercial district and build or restore housing.

In addition, beginning about 1980, the community saw the influx of new residents. West Indian immigrants and younger college educated people began to locate and purchase housing in various sections of the Codman Square area. West Indians were attracted to the area by the availability of cheap housing west of Codman Square and the young college educated group was attracted by the closeness of subway access and high quality, lower cost housing in an era which celebrated the restoration of older houses and the move back to cities on the part of the mainly suburban-raised college graduates. In the mid-1980s, the dramatic loss of population had halted and population increased in the 1990 census, which has continued to the 2000 census.

Although racial transition has continued in many sections, new realities have emerged. These realities have been the result of cultural and economic shifts, immigration into Boston, the maturation of the community non-profits, and other factors.

## Culture and Economic Shifts

Before the 1950s, the culture of the Codman Square neighborhoods was built on an understanding that, for the working class, community life revolved around community and religious institutions and that life could be completely lived in a single neighborhood. That culture shifted as the new ideal of suburban life became available to working class families. The abandonment by these white working class families resulted in opportunities for lower income African Americans to move into the communities in transition. Racial differences and fears and the collapse of community institutions, along with government policy which assisted racial transition, accelerated racial transition in the mainly Jewish neighborhoods, such that it nearly disappeared by 1970. Though Catholic community “glue” was able to hold residents longer in their old neighborhoods, by the mid-1970s that hold was greatly diminished. Racial fear on the part of whites, the growing closeness of black neighborhoods, the school desegregation plan and its implementation, and the decline in quality of schools further accelerated working class white departures from the neighborhood, a situation which continues to this day.

The increase in immigration from the West Indies, and their decision to locate in the African-American community west of Washington Street, combined with the increase in income among African Americans, re-stabilized the housing market west of Washington Street, and brought new life into the commercial district. The “discovery” of high quality housing in sections of Codman Square east of Washington Street resulted in the replacement of working class whites with a mixture of middle income professional class residents, who have stabilized the housing market east of Washington Street.

This “professional” group is racially mixed, though mainly white. It is made up largely of people raised in the suburbs who have adopted a new “ideal” of city life and a belief in multi-culturalism. Although small in number in comparison with the population of the entire district, its presence has a strong impact on the overall district as a driver of housing prices and its ability to demand higher quality services from government and community institutions.

The presence of this group in the Codman Square area is built on a shift in culture that allows the neighborhoods in question – Melville Park and Ashmont Hill - to be viewed as “Boston” neighborhoods, rather than Dorchester neighborhoods.

In the 1970s, Boston was a city of distinct ethnic neighborhoods. The “downtown” neighborhoods were Beacon Hill and Back Bay. Even neighborhoods such as the North End and South End were considered ethnic neighborhoods or places separate from the downtown culture. As the old ethnic neighborhoods have ended (a generational shift), the newcomers to those neighborhoods have identified with Boston culture more than the neighborhood. This trend started in the 1970s with the North and South End, but has continued to this day, with Charlestown, Jamaica Plain, and parts of South Boston and Roxbury joining the downtown culture. Melville Park and Ashmont Hill represent an addition to this group of neighborhoods. The phenomenon is built upon residents who are graduates of Boston institutions of higher learning, though not exclusively so. It is

also built on the emergence of large numbers of people with alternative lifestyles, especially gays and lesbians, who often do not have to deal with issues that come from raising children in the city such as participation in the public school system. Most of them are politically liberal and have middle class cultural beliefs, which include a belief in living in an open, multi-cultural community. The reality that Codman Square is multi-cultural, combined with the added enhancements of high quality housing and access to good subway service, has created this middle class section which has withstood racial transition while remaining racially integrated for more than 20 years.

Thus, while the return of the housing market has increased income across the district, income differentiation east of Washington Street has dramatically increased, even as racial change has occurred. Though there is still a great deal of poverty, it tends to be located in the housing projects and in the tremendous numbers of subsidized apartments west of Washington Street.

### The Non-Profits

Another major factor in the revitalization of Codman Square is the presence of mature non-profits with stable leadership, which has produced tremendous improvements in the commercial district, and has provided new institutional connections for new residents through various social, civic and community-building activities in addition to providing services. In some ways, these institutions have supplemented or replaced the community glue which was formerly exclusively provided by schools and religious institutions. The non-profits have also been a force in assisting community residents organize themselves into resident groups which have been essential in dealing with crime and other problems. They succeed because they are part of the communities they serve, and have Boards made up of community residents who keep them focused on the community.

The non-profits also have become the economic engines of the commercial districts. As an example, the Codman Square Health Center is the largest employer in Central Dorchester, with 275 employees and a budget of \$13 million. About 75% of its employees live in nearby neighborhoods, and it draws nearly 3,000 visits per week to the various programs and services offered. With staff included, Codman Square benefits from nearly 4,000 visits to the commercial district each week due to the presence of the Health Center. Although many may come and go, others stop at other businesses, buy lunch, or even walk through the area, an activity which discourages crime.

All of the initiatives which improved the commercial district and most of the initiatives which have improved the residential districts have had the direct involvement of one or another of the non-profit institutions of Codman Square.

Some of these trends were recounted in a recent book by Paul Grogan called Comeback Cities. "Reviving markets, dropping crime rates, and deregulating public systems open vistas for the inner city not seen in nearly fifty years, before the great

postwar exodus and decline. These new trends combine powerfully with the now-extensive grassroots revival efforts. Together these four trends could engineer a far-reaching change in the social, economic, and physical environment – indeed, the whole *idea* – of the American inner city.”<sup>53</sup>

## The Future

Over the past fifty years, the Codman Square area has gone through a hellish period and is still recovering. Though there are still major problems affecting Codman Square, it has some good indicators: there is a housing and commercial market, its commercial strip is mainly occupied and its buildings are generally in good shape. While the population continues to change, there is a sense that the future will be better.

A 1998 study of Codman Square area residents asked residents east and west of Washington Street of their opinions of the future. “Using a scale of 0-100, with 100 being the most positive, interviewees were asked to rate their overall feeling about life in Codman Square at three points in time: when they first moved in, at the time of the interview and projecting in 5 years. At all 3 points, the average (mean) response was over 50 points, with the rating increasing at each interval (then: 53, now: 60, future: 75)... These scores indicate that people have seen improvements in Codman Square since they first moved in and they expect to see more. THESE SCORES SERVE AS A “HOPE INDEX” AND THE TREND IS THAT HOPE IS UP AND INCREASING IN CODMAN SQUARE. IT REINFORCES BELIEF IN CODMAN SQUARE AS A COMEBACK COMMUNITY WITH SUSTAINED PROGRESS.” (author’s emphasis)<sup>54</sup>

So the issue isn’t the creation of an idyllic community, it’s the creation of a community that steadily improves, where people feel that things are and will get better. This trend is dependent on factors such as crime and small things – “they want their street to look nice and their neighbors to be friendly; they want to be able to shop for their own daily needs in their own community and to walk or take transit wherever else they want to go; and they want their neighborhood to feel, and be perceived externally as being safe and welcoming.”<sup>55</sup>

So far as maintaining the integrated neighborhoods, it appears that integration does not hold well in working class areas, but can hold in middle class areas provided there are people of various racial groups who continue to move to the area. It also depends on the ability to maintain reasonably affordable housing stock. Although the housing stock of Ashmont Hill and Melville Park has remained lower than similar housing in nearby suburbs, there are some fears that the price of housing could eclipse the current integrated community and produce less integration over time. A recent column on real estate prices entitled “Home pornography” included this segment on a street in the Codman Square district: “What’s most addictive about real estate porn is that it’s double-

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<sup>53</sup> Grogan, Paul, *Comeback Cities*, p.7.

<sup>54</sup> CivicHealth Institute, “The Health of the ‘Hood Report, Resident Perceptions of Life in Codman Square”

<sup>55</sup> CivicHealth Institute, “The Health of the ‘Hood Report, Resident Perceptions of Life in Codman Square”

X-rated. You get to leer and gasp at both the tasteless excess and the twisted prices. ‘Want to see something really outrageous?’ my wife asks. ‘Look at this Queen Anne Victorian in Wellesley Park. They want \$689,000 for it. You could have bought the whole neighborhood for that 25 years ago.’”<sup>56</sup>

But housing policy also has a dramatic effect on neighborhoods. Public Housing programs have had the tendency to segregate low income residents in compact, confining communities which do not support the ability of low income residents to move toward prosperity. In the 1960s and 1970s, the BBURG program decimated sections of working class communities. And in the 1980s and 1990s, the Section 8 program caused additional segregation of the poor and promoted speculative ownership of three deckers by absentee landlords. Communities have learned of the ill effects of bad housing policy oftentimes after the damage is done.

And so the future is dependent on what happens to the current trends. As the old ethnic neighborhoods continue their 40 year decline, new ethnic neighborhoods have sprung up. Will the new immigrants root themselves in the community or will they follow previous working class groups out of the city? I would guess the latter, which means that the continuation of these new ethnic neighborhoods will be dependent on a continuing stream of new immigrants.

I would also predict the expansion of the “downtown neighborhoods” into additional areas with quality housing stock, so long as crime does not dramatically increase, and folks with alternative lifestyles do not decide to adopt a suburban ideal. Middle class families with school-age children will continue to have a great deal of difficulty staying in the city, as the school system continues its trend toward being a system for the poorest residents of Boston.

Factors such as fear of terrorism in cities, federal immigration policy changes, the state of the economy, price of gasoline, cultural trends of the babyboom generation as it ages, and changes in housing policy will have tremendous impact on how the Codman Square neighborhood changes, but alas, what happens with these are part of the great unknown.

The history of the past 25 years gives reason to hope that residents will continue to be able to act collectively to deal with what comes.

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<sup>56</sup> Powers, John, “Home Pornography,” Boston Globe Magazine, p. 5.

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175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary handout, Second Church in Dorchester, 1980.

## **Appendices**

- I. Maps of area showing location of census tracts
- II. Data 1950-2000 on spread sheets.
- III. Maps from Urban Exodus.
- IV. Codman Square maps.
- V. Inflation Measures 1950-2001
- VI. Key Facts and Dates in Boston History (for comparison purposes)

# **Appendix I**

## **Location of Study Area**

**Census Tracts as defined in 1950**

**Census Tracts as defined in 1990**

## **Appendix II**

**Data 1950-2000**

## **Appendix III**

### **Maps from Urban Exodus**

Codman Square is roughly at the “I” in “Washington Street in the lower center of each map.

## **Appendix IV**

### **Codman Square Maps**

- 1831 map of Dorchester**
- 1874 map of southern part of district**
- 1898 map**
- Current map with location of institutions and other places**

## **Appendix V**

**Inflation measures 1950-2001**

## **Appendix VI**

### **Key Facts and Dates in Boston History (for comparison purposes)**